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A MONTH IN THE LIFE OF THE WORLD

David T. Jones



jones@themetropolitain.ca

Canada and the arrogance of Amnesty International

Washington, DC - All human rights organizations are imperious; didactic; and self-righteous. They perceive their role as afflicting the comfortable and belaboring malefactors whose sins of omission as well as commission demand vitriolic criticism. Amnesty International (AI) is a human rights organization and by definition seeks to criticize: the mote in your eye gets the same intense condemnation as the beam in the eye of another offender.

And on March 31, AI released "Getting Back on the 'Right' Track," a comprehensive set of directives for Canada to straighten up and fly right. Indeed, the report is almost a caricature of AI's inherent arrogance; in a 1,005 word press release, condensing a 22-page full report, it employs "must" 17 times, coupled with five "should" and one "have to."

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Pierre Brassard



info@themetropolitain.ca

L'indécent cirque médiatique des flottilles pour Gaza

Ainsi donc un bateau canadien se prépare à briser le blocus naval et aérien qu'Israël impose à Gaza. Une coalition canadienne, comprenant entre autres Amir Khadir, Gérald Larose et l'abbé Raymond Gravel, appuie sans nuances ce bateau, contre l'avis du gouvernement canadien. Regardons la question de plus près.

Gaza meurt-elle de faim, de maladies? Des milliers de camions passent pourtant les points de contrôle d'entrée à Gaza et y apportent les denrées dont ont besoin les Gazaouis, dont plus de 700 par mois pour les seuls matériaux de construction. (1) Les marchés en sont remplis comme le montre le reportage du journaliste danois Steffen Jensen. (2) Les hôpitaux de Gaza ne manquent pas de médicaments, comme le montre le journaliste italien Lorenzo Cremonesi. (3) Deux méga-centres

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Robert Presser



presser@themetropolitain.ca

Teetering on the edge of the unknown

An economist friend of mine remarked to me recently that she felt like she was living in the "pre" period of some kind of major world-changing event. This comment stayed with me for several weeks as I watched the Europeans struggle to bail out Greece, the Americans wrestle with deficit reduction and the debt ceiling, and the West in general fight against tyranny in Libya and Syria.

As I write this article I cannot say with any degree of optimism that any of these struggles will produce a positive outcome. The unprecedented, multi-dimensional (military, social and economic) tumult we are currently experiencing is unprecedented in modern history outside of a major world war. Our collective ability to muddle through thus far is testament to the efficacy of modern international cooperation among developed

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Akil Alleyne



info@themetropolitain.ca

To War or Not to War

President Barack Obama has finally declared his intention to begin a phased withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, in a gradual process to be completed by 2014. America is thus lowering the curtain on its long, bitter slog through a society that has already stymied more than one imperial interloper. Perhaps more significantly, the US pullout appears to be garnering something approaching bipartisan support. Even some Republican presidential candidates like Mitt Romney are now averring that the president is right to make America scarce in Central Asia. There are obviously countless ways to look at President Obama's decision, and as many judgments to be made about it. I prefer to focus on what I see as the fundamental lesson to be learned from the tortured US mission in Afghanistan: the importance of picking one's fights wisely.

To my way of thinking, there are two general criteria on which the decision to go to war should be based. First of all, is the war necessary? Second

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THE MÉTROPOLITAIN

Ensemble et Libres ~ Together and Free

Édifice Hermès, Tour A, Suite 155, 1470 rue Peel,
Montréal, QC, Canada, H3A 1T1

Tel: 514-759-8541

Fax: 514-759-8544

e-mail: info@themetropolitain.ca

Rédacteur en chef et Éditeur
Beryl P. Wajzman

Senior Editor
Alan Hustak

Contributing Editor
Brigitte B. Garceau

Managing Editor
Dan Delmar

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Photojournaliste
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Editorial Artwork
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Ventes et Marketing
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submissions@themetropolitain.ca

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Éric Duhaime

info@themetropolitain.ca

Éric Duhaime possède près de 20 ans d'expérience comme conseiller politique à Ottawa et à Québec et comme consultant international en développement démocratique. Il est co-fondateur du Réseau Liberté-Québec.

LA PATRIE

ALLAH CAFÉTÉRIA!

Ceux qui suivaient avec passion la comédie dramatique des accommodements raisonnables à l'affiche dans tous les médias québécois en 2006-2007, changez de poste ou lisez maintenant les journaux anglophones. Après avoir injustement accusé les Québécois de quasi-racisme, le Canada-anglais vient de lancer ce qui pourrait fort bien être un film s'intitulant « Les Accommodements 2 ». La grande première se déroulait la semaine dernière à Toronto, à la Valley Park Middle School.

Dans le quartier le plus musulman au pays, l'école publique, financée à 100% par les contribuables ontariens, décidait de transformer sa cafétéria en mosquée pour la prière du vendredi. À la demande de l'imam, les élèves sont installés en rangées, à plat ventre vers la Mecque: les garçons à l'avant, les filles derrière et celles menstruées reléguées tout au fond.

PENTE GLISSANTE

Au nom de l'ouverture et de l'inclusion des nouveaux arrivants, on nous a d'abord demandé de sortir la religion catholique et protestante de nos établissements publics. Ensuite, il fallut accepter le port du kirpan et du voile. Puis, vinrent les menus hallal.

L'arrivée de la mosquée dans l'école s'inscrit comme la prochaine étape pour les intégristes islamiques qui souhaitent implanter chez-nous la Sharia.

Voilà où 40 ans de multiculturalisme débridé nous auront conduit.

WÔ L'ISLAMISATION!

Heureusement, certaines organisations brisent le silence qu'impose une certaine rectitude politique pour dénoncer cet accommodement religieux qui n'a plus rien de raisonnable. Des hindous, chrétiens, juifs et même le Muslim Canadian

Congress s'inquiètent publiquement de la présence de radicaux religieux dans les écoles et réclament le retour à la laïcité.

Ce qui surprend, cependant, c'est le silence de nos grandes féministes gauchistes. Comment doit se sentir l'adolescente qui se fait carrément refouler dans le coin si, en plus d'avoir le malheur d'appartenir au sexe faible, elle a un écoulement naturel de sang dans le vagin? Une impure, une malpropre,

L'immigration façonna notre passé, façonne notre présent et façonnera notre avenir. Nous pouvons tirer une grande fierté de permettre à des millions d'individus de fuir l'oppression ou la pauvreté pour venir chez-nous s'offrir un avenir meilleur, à eux et à leurs enfants, tout en nous enrichissant collectivement.

Les valeurs qui permettent une telle contribution ne doivent

Heureusement, certaines organisations brisent le silence qu'impose une certaine rectitude politique pour dénoncer cet accommodement religieux qui n'a plus rien de raisonnable.

une intouchable?

Pourquoi les défenseuses des droits de la femme restent muettes comme des carpes devant ce recul moyenâgeux? L'égalité des droits s'applique à tous ici, peu importe le sexe, la couleur de la peau, l'orientation sexuelle ou même le cycle menstruel.

OUVERTS, PAS NIAIS

Le Canada et le Québec s'enorgueillissent de compter parmi les plus accueillantes et tolérantes nations du monde.

cependant pas être remises en cause au nom de vouloir plaire au fondamentalisme religieux. Au Canada et au Québec, nos lois, nos us et coutumes ont préséance sur le Coran.

Tous les immigrants doivent savoir, dès leur arrivée, qu'ils sont bienvenus, à condition de respecter notre démocratie, nos législations et nos moeurs. Les Canadiens-anglais reprennent enfin présentement ce message sur grand écran. Leur débat promet d'être rempli de suspense. Espérons juste qu'ils réussiront là où Bouchard-Taylor a lamentablement échoué.



Ideas before identities.
Justice before orthodoxy.

THE MÉTROPOLITAIN



Alfred Apps

info@themetropolitain.ca

WWW.THEMETROPOLITAIN.CA

From subject to citizen

Keeping the promise of the authentic Canadian liberal revolution

*“Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and
everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.
Surely some revelation is at hand”.*

-William Butler Yeats

On May 2, 2011, the Liberal Party of Canada suffered the most devastating election defeat of its long and storied history. There can be no doubt about that. In terms of both elected members and voter support, Liberals swapped places with the NDP. And it all seemed to happen in one fell swoop over the last half of a very short campaign.

No sooner had voters pronounced their judgment than the pundits were pontificating. Defeat was inevitable. It was a long time coming. Liberals had ignored their grassroots for too long, lost touch with their base. Their party had been hi-jacked by an aging establishment elite. Middle age white guys clinging to power and brought down by their own hubris. An out-of-date structure, badly in need of modernizing. A party completely out of sync with the facebook generation. Crippled by an approach to campaigning from a bygone era. Poisoned by old leadership squabbles that had sapped internal trust and eroded public confidence for years. In short and with all the benefits of 20/20 hindsight, an entirely predictable Liberal apocalypse. That, at least, is the media narrative. The Liberal Party as broken institution. An organization in a state of crisis.

In fact, all of these arm-chair observations probably contain an element of truth. Liberals will almost certainly consider each and every diagnosis of the disaster, because most of them point to a ‘fixable’ problem and fixing the problems is the first priority of most Liberals. Still, whoever and whatever is ultimately found to be responsible for our rout at the polls, it was President Kennedy who said - “Victory has a thousand fathers, but defeat is an orphan”. And, since it happened on my watch, I accept my share of the blame. But this is not a post-mortem. The Liberal Party may be badly bloodied but, to paraphrase Monty Python, it’s “not dead yet”. Nor should we engage in public self-flagellation.

I want to address a larger issue. Something I am going to call ‘the threshold question’.

Because the ‘broken party’ theory of liberal defeat is not the only one out there. Some have described our predicament much more dramatically, predicting the permanent demise of the party. Their theory is not just about a broken party – its about a political ‘paradigm shift’. They see a world with no oxygen for Canadian Liberals. Centrist parties, they say, are being squeezed from the right and the left the world over. Why should Canada be different?

They believe the moderate Canadian political consensus has evaporated. Some think it has been swamped by ideological extremism and single-issue activism from both sides of the spectrum. For them, polarization is inevitable. On this view, the only hope for liberals is to merge with the NDP. Unite the left to fight a united right!

Others believe the traditional liberal middle ground has been completely co-opted, with both left and right moving to the centre all at

relevance of their fundamental *raison d’être* today. We need to understand not merely that we must rebuild, but why we must rebuild. Is there a reason why the Liberal Party should and can continue to exist?

Let me first qualify my perspective for all its weaknesses. I became a Liberal on election night in 1972, when Pierre Elliott Trudeau came within a hair’s breadth of losing his second general election. Since then, I have worked in 11 provincial and 12 federal elections, a total of 23 campaigns. We have lost 12 and won 11 of them. And I have been before where we are today.

I ran twice myself for Parliament. It was 1984. I was a sacrificial lamb in a safe Tory seat against a four term incumbent. We came out of the election with just 40 seats nationally. I got my clock cleaned, losing by over 12,000 votes. For my second bid in 1988, we had rebuilt the party locally and, with the Tories

Liberalism today, once again, is in existential crisis. And we need to take the risk of asking the threshold questions.

What if...?

It was President Kennedy who observed that “the Chinese use two brush strokes to write the word ‘crisis’. One brush stroke stands for danger; the other for opportunity.” Danger and opportunity. That is why the worst of times can become the best of times. Make no mistake, there is a very real danger for liberals in asking the threshold question. Because we have to look hard in the mirror. We have to reach deep inside ourselves, scour our history and rediscover our principles. And we have to ask the tough questions.

What if the only reason for our party’s existence really has always and only ever been to win and hold power?

What if we never really were a party of the people?

Has the paradigm shifted? Do Liberal political ideas remain relevant to Canada in the 21st century?

once. So convergence is inevitable. If you are a liberal in that world, you have no choice but to migrate to the other major party whose extreme faction offends you least. Hold your nose, cover your eyes if you must, but surrender to one or the other and do so quickly.

Shifting paradigms?

So this is the pivotal question. Has the paradigm shifted? Do Liberal political ideas remain relevant to Canada in the 21st century? Is it still possible for a political party committed to those ideas to earn the confidence of Canadians again? Is there a distinctive vision of Canada rooted in Liberal ideas that is worth fighting for? If the answer to all of those questions is ‘no’, than Liberals need to pause and understand why. Because all their deep reflections on what happened won’t matter. And all the well-intentioned reforming, rebuilding, renewing and re-imagining of the party that we are about to undertake will come to naught - a pointless exercise doomed to failure.

But if the answer to all of these questions can be ‘yes’, than Liberals really need to understand those answers too. Because the commitment, the energy and the passion required to succeed in all the historic work Canadian Liberals are about to undertake for the third time in a half-century demands, first and foremost, a profound rediscovery of the

still winning a majority nationally, reduced that same invincible incumbent’s margin in my riding to about 1,000 votes. The pain that night was even worse.

But my point is not the defeats. Because in the next three elections, with the incumbent retiring and the vote on the right split between conservatives and reform, the Liberal candidate who succeeded me - my high school principal in fact - went on to win three successive elections as part of the Chrétien majorities. So its not all ‘sham, drudgery and broken dreams’. There have been some victories as stunning as our losses along the way too.

Like 1993, when Liberals swept every seat but one in Ontario, and the Tories were reduced to just two ridings in the whole country. Or 1985, when the Ontario Liberal Party moved from third position in the Ontario Legislature in 1975 – behind the NDP I hasten to add - into government, after 42 long years in the political wilderness. At that point in time, we too easily forget, there was not one other Liberal government anywhere in Canada.

Liberals who think things are tough today should check out some of our not-so-distant history. Because we have found ourselves in places worse than nowhere before. Lonely places where you have to ask yourself why you are a Liberal. And just as importantly, does it matter that you are? Let’s be honest. Canadian

What if we have never really carried the banner of popular purpose?

What if we have always been less a political movement than a cult of leadership?

What if the secret of our success in the 20th century was really just the good luck of producing the right prime minister for the time - leaders able to capture the zeitgeist, to respond to the one big challenge of their day - the depression of the 30’s, the war and rebuilding that followed, the unbridled optimism of the 50’s, the liberation movements of the 60’s, the threats both to Canada’s unity and to its fiscal solvency beginning in the 70’s and culminating in the 90’s.

What if we discover that, in fact, the Liberal Party has always been a rather closed and hierarchical institution – a club for Canada’s elites – a brokerage party that pays lip-service to grassroots democracy but, in truth, functions like a presumptive palace from which the good and the great in Canadian business, law, academe and public service deign to govern the ordinary people?

Well – if that is the sum total of what it means to be a Liberal in Canada, then we are in serious trouble. Because we now live in an era of dime-a-dozen celebrity, when elites have lost all their luster, where digital democratization has bestowed the power of information everywhere on everyone. Insiders beware.

Most of the traditional barriers to success have come crashing down, giving way to a rampant, albeit rambunctious, democratization, where the ease of public expression and the possibilities for influencing people, ideas and events has given everyone the right and many the motivation to play. On their own terms and by their own rules.

The new political community

The new politics is based on revolutionary conceptions of human connectedness and political community - a world of "friends" in the hundreds or thousands and from anywhere, where associations can be formed virtually and almost instantly around any topic or cause, and where thoughtful analysis and dialogue can occur in real time - or be completely supplanted, not just by the 30-second clip, but by the instant blog and the nano-second tweet.

Others see that Canadians of this generation are yearning for a more radical democracy - one that can embrace the increasingly varied aspirations of a relentlessly and enthusiastically more diverse society. And more and more, tomorrow's voters see traditional processes for effecting change - especially political parties - as irrelevant to their goals. And Canadians of today's generation are cynical - suspicious that old-line politicians and political parties are not listening because they are in the pockets of vested and powerful interests.

Bluntly, we live in a culture that no longer wants to defer to the authority of our political establishment. A culture that, because it has unprecedented access to information, not only forms its own opinions, but expects them to be heard and is not only demanding political processes that will make that possible; they are already inventing new ones outside all of the conventional channels.

Liberals, more than ever, need to rediscover their basic principles. We have to figure out how truly Liberal ideas can be successfully applied in the new political paradigm. And like any other organization that has been left bleeding in the dust by its opponents, we have to re-think, re-tool and re-build from the ground up in a way that responds to the new paradigm. And the re-imagining of a Canadian Liberalism must start from first principles.

Liberalism is relevant, more than ever

When you strip it all down, what does a Canadian Liberal really stand for? I say 'Canadian Liberal', because the word 'liberal' is now attached to political parties of widely varying orientations the world over. And Canadians have built their own special variant of liberalism in the context of the unique political experiment that is Canada.

Our party traces its philosophy to a line of English liberal thinkers going back to the enlightenment including Hooker, Locke, Mill, Green, Acton, Popper and Berlin. We have also drawn heavily on ideas born in the French revolution and from Rousseau, de Toqueville and de Montesque. Americans like Jefferson and Madison and, much more recently, Rawls. And, we have produced some powerful Liberal minds of our own - like Pierre Trudeau, Will Kymlicka and, to my mind, the greatest of them

all, Toronto's own C.B. MacPherson.

It should be no surprise that our party's intellectual foundations are diverse. But Canadian liberalism reflects a lot more than the glib and easy phrases we have adopted of late - like that "fiscally responsible, socially compassionate" formulation, or the "progressive centrist" label. Nor is it enough to say that we are not an ideological party of the left or the right, but a pragmatic party of the middle. That may all be true, but in fact, Canadian liberalism is built on some very clear ideas.

First, we believe not only in the dignity and worth of the individual, but in the absolute primacy and autonomy of individuals. We are not a party of the entitled classes. Nor are we a party of class entitlement. In an age of unprecedented and assertive individualism, that makes us relevant.

We stand first and foremost for freedom. We believe that wealth is created and social progress is achieved when we unleash the full capacity of individuals to think and act. We see the protection and extension of freedom for individuals as the key to personal happiness, the chief responsibility of the state and the paramount purpose of statecraft.

At a point of unprecedented human creativity driving us to new levels of intellectual and

and freedom from religion, that while church should be separate from state, the public square must be open to Canadians of every faith background including those of no faith at all.

At a time when some seek to have matters of faith drive our political discussion and others seek to shut them out, Liberal respect for the overlap between the spiritual and the temporal makes us relevant.

We are capitalists, not socialists. We believe in the profit motive. For liberals, profit is not a dirty word. We are ready to fight for workers' rights at every turn but we also defend the right of individuals to accumulate and profit from their own capital, including especially their intellectual capital - capital whose development and commercialization has become so important and has been so dramatically democratized in our lifetime.

In the knowledge economy of today, the ability of liberals to balance the interests of labour and capital makes us relevant.

We believe in equality. Equality before the law and equality of opportunity. Beyond property, civil and legal rights, we believe that the enhancement of the economic, social and cultural rights of all Canadians is critical to ensuring a fair and equal chance for every citizen. Just as we believe that equality of

individuals, that while the state is precluded from interfering with the basic freedoms of its citizens without their consent, its proper role extends well beyond merely protecting its people from internal and external threats.

In modern circumstances, where the genuine will of the people is more continuously and profoundly ascertainable than at any time in history, our concept of the servant state makes us relevant.

We believe in the power of government to do good but that citizens must be vigilant to constrain and define the power of government by expanding the rights of individuals and promoting the strength of markets. We do not believe that the government that governs least necessarily governs best. In fact, we have seen that politicians who think government is bad, generally deliver bad government while those who think that government is the solution for all our problems invariably govern in a way that creates even worse problems.

But we are the party of nation builders. The party of a strong national government. The party of the Canada Pension Plan, of Medicare, of bilingualism, of multiculturalism, of the flag, of the charter of rights and freedoms, to name just a few. And we are the only party in the House of Commons today that would

When you strip it all down, what does a Canadian Liberal really stand for? I say 'Canadian Liberal', because the word 'liberal' is now attached to political parties of widely varying orientations the world over.

technological advancement, that love of freedom makes us relevant.

We believe in the human spirit and its unlimited potential - that every citizen is entitled to live in conditions of personal security and opportunity and to optimize his or her potential to the fullest, regardless of age, sex, creed, race, sexual orientation or any other accident or incident of birth, culture or country of origin.

At a time of unprecedented aspiration, self-actualization and choice, our commitment to human possibility makes us relevant.

We believe that our diversity is a strength, that immigration should be open, that social and cultural differences should be embraced and that tolerance and accommodation are the essential virtues of liberal society.

During a period within which Canada has produced a single society consisting of two distinct diversities - one anglophone and the other francophone - where multiculturalism has blossomed into full flower in both official languages, the accommodation of minority cultures still has its opponents. That is why the generosity of our worldview makes us relevant.

We endorse pluralism over secularism because we believe both in freedom of religion

outcomes is neither possible nor desirable, we also believe that the fundamental advantages in life should not flow from the circumstances of one's birth.

In a society where basic fairness has become the measure of freedom, that makes us relevant.

Liberals believe in democracy and that its privilege imposes some duties on the citizen. We think Canadians have a responsibility to participate in their governments, to pay their taxes, to respect the rule of law, to fill out their census forms and, most importantly, to vote. We believe that Canadians should be given ever wider rights to participate in the political process, including through political parties, and that democratic input and institutions need to be continually modernized strengthened.

At a point in history where technology has finally made a more radical and engaging democracy possible, our posture toward broadening participation makes us relevant.

We believe in the 'servant state', not the 'nanny state' of the left or the 'watchman state' of the right. We believe that the sovereignty of the state - its permissible scope of action - is dependent entirely upon the will of the people and circumscribed always by the rights of

assert a nation-building federal jurisdiction, that is not either pandering to provincialists and separatists or abandoning the field. The only party that believes we need a strong and active national government to build a stronger and more united Canada in an ever more complex and shrinking world. That makes us relevant.

And we believe in free and fair markets. In fact, the liberal party is the only Canadian political party whose core philosophy is genuinely pro-market.

We believe that free and fair markets - open competition - are the biggest drivers of innovation and creativity, engine of economic growth and creator of wealth and jobs. Those on the left sometimes have trouble understanding that, unless there is the possibility of profit, there can be no market. To move forward, you not only have to put the horse before the cart; you also have to feed the horse.

On the other hand, those on the right seem to have trouble understanding that free markets only remain free and fair in the face of their inability to self-regulate and their natural tendency to monopoly if they are not regulated appropriately - that regulation, in fact,

FROM SUBJECT TO CITIZEN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

preserves the marketplace and is a good thing, that properly regulated markets are stronger markets because regulation protects and empowers the participation of individuals in those markets. Unlike socialists, conservatives know to put the economic horse before the cart and they certainly know how to feed it. What they don't seem to appreciate is that the beast has to be reined in if you want to prevent it from bolting and avoid driving your cart right into the ditch.

In a world where the connectivity has created entirely new markets for goods and services never before conceived or, as Adam Smith might say, a whole new universe of virtual 'shopkeepers', and where progress in transportation and communication technologies have vastly expanded Canadian global trade, the liberal balanced pro-market approach makes us very relevant.

Children of the enlightenment

But at the core of everything, liberals are children of the enlightenment. We believe in the power of reason. We value education and learning. We see intellectual curiosity and skepticism as good things. We are open-minded, pragmatic reformers who think that public policy should be based on evidence and logic about what really works, rather than something that's more superficially seductive just because it resonates in the 'gut' and is more 'sellable' as policy. Because Liberals know that knowledge is constantly advancing and that the logic of scientific discovery sometimes does involve shifting paradigms - the constant replacement of old assumptions with new ones - we learned long ago that 'conventional wisdom' is often out of date or just plain wrong, that so-called 'common sense' - you all remember the 'common sense revolution' - often has little to do with good sense.

In a society that has achieved the highest level of general education ever, the Liberal focus on the reasoned application of learning and knowledge to public policy makes us relevant.

And liberals are resolutely internationalist, committed to the continued progress of global civilization and to the enhancement of the human condition generally. We are the Canadian party that has led on questions of peace and human rights, but we also understand that sometimes soldiers-in-arms are required to preserve that peace and protect those human rights. More than that, we understand that the national interest on questions of sovereignty, security and defence cannot be compromised.

In the context of a growing and much more mobile population on a shrinking planet, that makes us relevant.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, liberals believe that inter-generational stewardship matters as a fundamental question of public morality. We must do whatever we can to ensure our aging and infirm are cared for. We should not mortgage our children's future by burdening them with an unfair inheritance of public debt. We must do better in trying to leave our environment better than we found it.

Given the sophistication and complexity of all the issues modern governments have to manage in the 21st century, all of these themes

make Canadian liberalism relevant. And our commitment to balanced and evidence-driven government has taught us that the old ideologically-driven public policy silos just don't make sense anymore.

So I believe it is easy to show how liberal values are more relevant than ever to Canada and Canadians today and how liberalism fits with the amazing paradigm shift in our political life that is underway. In fact, I believe that the new political paradigm is a very Liberal paradigm.

A very liberal paradigm

Some of you may be thinking that most of what I have described is now embedded in our political economy and generally supported by all sides in the House of Commons; that the liberal principles I have laid out are now only opposed by the extreme factions in the conservative and socialist movements; that liberal democracy has triumphed and, for that very reason, fighting from the centre is no longer required. And I concede that much of what Liberals have accomplished in Canada cannot be undone easily or quickly.

But the difference between conservatives and socialists, on the one hand, and Liberals, on the other, is that Liberals believe in the continuous application of these principles, whereas the ideological right and the ideological left are determined to continuously and insidiously undermine them - slowly, quietly, incrementally - until, suddenly, Canada is something that liberals no longer recognize.

If self-satisfied or complacent Liberals walk away and allow liberal principles to become the

first is something I hope to put in motion as President of this party. The second will become the cause of my life as an ordinary rank-and-file Liberal once I leave office in January.

My first idea is about our democracy generally, because I not only believe Canadian democracy is in much worse shape than the Liberal Party but that in improving and extending our democracy, the Liberal Party will benefit hugely.

I think Liberals should commit to the idea of creating a registered voters' list as part of a broader package of wholesale democratic reform that will enhance democratic participation among Canadians profoundly.

A voter's list that would ultimately be administered by elections Canada requiring all eligible voters to register either as (1) an 'independent' voter or (2) a conservative, liberal, new democrat, bloc Québécois or green voter or (3) an exempted voter on medical or other grounds including conscience.

And, just as we permit Canadians to file and pay their taxes online, we should enable Canadians to vote online in federal general elections and byelections. It should be as easy to vote as it is to order theatre tickets.

The apparatus of Elections Canada should be made available to any Canadian political party that wishes to open the franchise for nominating its riding candidates or electing its leaders by universal franchise extended to every registered party voter, rather than just to its members.

The most important aspect of these proposals, given that Liberals are nowhere near being in a

course of the year.

A Liberal outreach strategy focused squarely on re-connecting with and rebuilding our base. Its also the way to recapture the playing field from our opponents - for building the database Liberals need to have about our supporters and for finding the thousands of small donors we need to build a war-chest capable of defending our next leader when the inevitable onslaught comes and for fighting the next campaign.

Furthermore, when that registered list of Liberal voters is built, we can transform the selection of our next liberal leader in about 18 months' time from a one-member, one-vote process as its currently designed into a one-liberal, one-vote process that truly engages Canadians.

Either way, whether every member votes or every Liberal votes, I believe we should run our next leadership selection process as a series of primaries over the last two months of our constitutionally-mandated five month campaign.

With voting on one weekend in British Columbia, New Brunswick and parts of Ontario, for example. And two weeks later in Alberta, Newfoundland and parts of Quebec. And so on until one big final super-Saturday by which every part of Canada will have voted. And leading up to each primary vote, rather than having party delegates converge on the big cities to meet their candidates, we send the candidates to debate the future of our country and our party everywhere in the regions where the next primary vote is going to occur, in small towns and large.

My first idea is about our democracy generally, because I not only believe Canadian democracy is in much worse shape than the Liberal Party but that in improving and extending our democracy, the Liberal Party will benefit hugely.

victim of their own success, it is the continuing success of Canada and Canadians that will become the real and permanent victim.

The challenge is to apply liberal values in specific ways - ways that will shape and define the future of Canadian political life - not just for today or tomorrow - but for 5, 10 and 20 years down the road. Slowly and methodically tending and nurturing the little green shoots that will emerge in the wake of the forest fire that occurred on May 2. Because we have the time. The time to re-imagine who we are and what we must become as Liberals.

My personal response to that challenge is to leave you with two big liberal ideas for the future. I think they are 'leapfrog ideas'. And I hope you agree.

The leap forward

The first idea requires us to look forward just a year or two. The second could become the cause of Liberals for an entire generation. The

position to make them law these days, is that our party should begin functioning as if this were the law now.

Just as the precursors of the current conservatives presciently organized their fundraising on a basis that assumed the need to access thousands of small individual donors well before election financing reform was enacted. They had a huge head start. We unilaterally disarmed and paid the price.

So, if we can pass any necessary enabling reforms at our January convention, then, instead of a membership drive, we can launch a nationwide Liberal voter registration drive for 2012. Liberals in every riding across the country going out to visit with their neighbours at their doorsteps, over the phone and, yes, through the now ubiquitous and powerful tools of social media, encouraging them to sign up as a registered liberal. No charge. 100,000 liberals engaging with 150 households each over the

This is a process that would truly engage grassroots liberals. This is a process that would truly engage the media across the country and re-connect liberalism with millions of Canadians.

And it would give a new generation of aspiring Liberal leaders a wide-open chance to test the waters for a bid without needing assurance up front that they can have the kind of support and can raise the money to go the full distance.

And six months after the leadership is over, fully two years before the next election is scheduled to occur, we could start the process of nominating our candidates in ridings across the country, again in a way that engages every registered liberal voter in that riding in selecting the liberal candidate. With no protection for incumbents and no holds barred. Just our best, brightest and hardest-working. And something in which every Liberal can be involved, young

and old and even including the middle aged white guys.

Keeping the promise

And now to my final point. The Liberal Party has always been a party of the future, a party that governs for tomorrow, that leaves a legacy for the next generation. You all know that legacy and I have already spoken about it.

It is clear after almost 6 years that the current government has left no legacy. And the only legacy it seems to be promising today is more Canadians in prison, more guns in our streets and more fighter jets in our military arsenal – the ‘watchman state’ at its best.

So I believe we should leave this strange new Parliament to polarize, or converge, as it chooses on the static left-right axis of a set of issues that belong to yesterday. And let’s not worry too much about where the centre of Canadian political life is today. Let’s make sure the Liberal Party defines the centre for tomorrow by thinking about its next big legacy for Canada and Canadians. And we come full circle to paradigm shifts.

Our core assumptions in politics are about power. Liberals believe that the inexorable progress of mankind, the constant expansion of freedom, demands the ever more democratic disbursement of power. That the primary ongoing role of the state is to transfer power from the powerful to the less powerful. And because we believe in the primacy of the individual, we think of that power being placed in the hands of individuals to the maximum extent possible. Personal empowerment.

Just as we need to bring Liberals who have been marginalized and ignored back into the life of our party with a massive outreach exercise, we need to bring Canadians whose agenda has been marginalized and ignored by the current government back into the centre of our political life around a completely new consensus building idea. Who are those powerless and marginalized Canadians?

Our aboriginal population, especially the young people Women, especially single mothers and working women with families New Canadians The urban poor who are jobless, homeless and hungry. Rural and remote Canadians. People suffering from mental health issues. Volunteer caregivers. All Canadians who believe that Canada’s international mission can no longer be undermined by its reputation abroad for how it treats the poorest of citizens within its own borders.

These are the Canadians we should be empowering as Liberals. Canadians whose hope is frustrated by powerlessness. Citizens whose future lives might be enhanced if we broadened the protection of the Charter to include certain basic economic and social rights - rights which we would want to see as essential badges of citizenry for every Canadian - like the right to quality education and healthcare, to a minimum income and basic retirement security.

As constitutionalists, our Liberal conception of power is tightly linked to our concept of sovereignty. The authority to exercise power. And we know that the whole course of western political development has been about the

evolution of sovereignty or, more precisely, the devolution of sovereignty from the powerful to the powerless. That is why we call our system a liberal democracy.

Sovereignty is always a question of power, the prerogatives and rights from which power flows. And over the centuries our paradigm of sovereign power has shifted many times.

And at the time of Confederation, our constitution divided the ‘Crown in Parliament’ into two separate but overlapping sovereign jurisdictions, federal and provincial.

But long before Canada was formed, Americans revolutionaries had already taken things one step further. First, they got rid of the king altogether, brashly asserting the sovereignty and equality of the ‘people’. Then, in addition to devolving the ‘people’s sovereignty’ upon their elected representatives in two jurisdictions, federal and state, they eventually affirmed powers for an entirely new political jurisdiction: the individual citizen on and for his/her own account. This totally new sphere of sovereignty for persons was reserved and defined through a series of US constitutional amendments that have come to be known as the Bill of Rights, now a near sacred document which extends and protects basic civil and political liberties to all citizens as a counterweight to the potential tyranny of

democratic majorities.

In effect, the US constitution has translated the notion of earthly sovereignty from being something that once flowed exclusively from God to something that now flows exclusively from the children of God or ‘the people’, both collectively and individually.

The rights conferred on individuals under the US Constitution were essentially negative rights (i.e. freedom from state constraint of and/or interference with thought, expression, association, property and certain specific types of action).

Two hundred years later under Trudeau, Canada followed the American example and, in 1982, engrafted a Charter of Rights and

Freedoms into the Canadian constitution which, for the first time anywhere, entrenched individual rights in priority to the supremacy of the Crown as exercised through elected legislatures. In fact, the scope of rights conferred in Canada was broader than those under the US constitution, even extending to some so-called ‘positive’ rights pursuant enabling individual citizens to require governments to do things (e.g. provide minority language schools).

The notion of granting additional sovereignty to citizens in the form of positive economic, social and economic rights is not new. In his State of the Union Address on January 11, 1944, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt proposed what he described as a ‘second Bill of Rights’ on the grounds that: “We have come to a clear realization of the fact that true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence. Necessitous men are not free men.”

His prescription then, the extension of individual rights to such areas as health, education, housing, income and retirement security. Roosevelt died a year later and his constitutional proposals died with him.

Fifty years later (1994), Canada was one of the signatories to the UN-sponsored International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. However, this charter has

area of federal jurisdiction. Still, it provides a uniquely Canadian benchmark worthy of reinforcement as we push toward a new frontier of liberalism.

In entrenching basic economic, social and cultural rights in Canada, my view is that their interpretation by the Courts should be “subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified by fiscal prudence and the limits of a mixed market economy in a global marketplace.”

While the broadening of Charter Rights could never realistically result in any overnight change or sudden empowerment of powerless Canadians, the process of debating and promoting the entrenchment of such rights would change Canadian politics. It would open the next frontier of Canadian values that inform our fundamental concept of Canadian citizenry.

The way forward

A constitutional reform agenda from Liberals would not only provide an important beacon for all Canadian legislatures to consider in enacting future laws; it would also provide a tremendous organizing tool around which Canadian Liberals at both the provincial and federal levels could organize. I think it something worth fighting for.

Achieving the entrenchment of basic

It is clear after almost 6 years that the current government has left no legacy. And the only legacy it seems to be promising today is more Canadians in prison, more guns in our streets and more fighter jets in our military arsenal – the ‘watchman state’ at its best.

not been constitutionalized in Canada. It is not legally binding on Canadian governments or enforceable in Canadian courts.

One of the few jurisdictions that has adopted a ‘Bill of Rights’ approach that extends positive economic, social and cultural rights to citizens is Quebec under the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms enacted by the Bourassa provincial Liberal government in 1975. It guarantees a range of rights including the right to child care, public education, environmental security etc. However, this law only has quasi-constitutional status as, like any other Quebec statute, it is amendable solely by vote of the Quebec National Assembly and, of course, has no application whatsoever in any

economic, social and cultural rights for Canadians would place all marginalized Canadians, especially aboriginal Canadians, in the forefront of liberal democratic progress and provide, for Canada, a concept of citizenry that would continue to be the envy of the world. And that’s the Liberal paradigm shift. From subject to citizen.

So let me now leave you with one final thought. Canada is a fabulous country. But it is not just a country. It is an idea. An idea that knows no borders. An evolving idea. A powerful idea about what modern citizenship can be. Canada is fundamentally a liberal idea. And that idea has a future.

If we stand up and fight for it.



David T. Jones

info@themetropolitain.ca

David Jones, co-author of *Uneasy Neighbo(u)rs: Canada, the USA and the Dynamics of State, Industry and Culture*, is a former U.S. diplomat who served in Ottawa. He now lives in Arlington, Virginia."

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CANADA AND THE ARROGANCE OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

One would think that Canada was Iran, Burma, or North Korea given the range of demands laid out by AI and the intrusive nature of its requirements for Canada to win again the AI seal of approval.

So Canada "must" reclaim its leading role in human rights. Inter alia, it must guide efforts to tackle maternal mortality (without mentioning the Canadian G-8 initiative on the topic). Work must be undertaken to develop an implementation plan for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (without mentioning that Canada has just endorsed the Declaration). Economic, social, and cultural rights must be protected by allowing individual international level complaints to be brought against foreigners from Canadian courts. And Canada must recognize the right to water and sanitation in international law.

AI dismisses Canadian concern over differentiating between legitimate refugees and human traffickers by demanding that draft legislation in this regard not be reintroduced in a new Parliament (talk about interference in internal domestic affairs). It demands greater attention to aboriginal issues at every level--and particularly abuse of aboriginal women and girls. More basically, it excoriates Canada's "consistent and longstanding failure...to recognize [aboriginal] land rights"--without an iota of appreciation that aboriginal land claims cover huge areas of the country.

Internationally, AI seems especially incensed over Canadian support of Israel (it notes in

particular the absence of Canadian criticism for the 2009 Gaza fighting). One doubts that it will pay much attention to the mea culpa by Judge Richard Goldstone retracting his earlier conclusion that Israeli military deliberately targeted civilians in Gaza. Nor has it anything to say regarding Canadian participation in Libya or the ongoing effort to stabilize

AI dismisses Canadian concern over differentiating between legitimate refugees and human traffickers by demanding that draft legislation in this regard not be reintroduced in a new Parliament (talk about interference in internal domestic affairs).

Afghanistan (beyond contending that Canada transferred Afghan detainees to prospective torture.)

Perhaps it is the skewed absence of judicious judgment that is most depressing. Ottawa's effort to pressure Beijing on human rights is derogated as "erratic" and that "no ...strategy

exists" for advancing human rights concerns in China. What Canada does is never enough; it is not enough to have eliminated capital punishment domestically or to vote in the UN against capital punishment. Canada must also co-sponsor such UN resolutions. It is not enough to criticize Iran's, Burma's, Cote d'Ivoire's, and Cuba's human rights records;

comparable action should be taken publicly regarding Colombia's "worrying" record--a record more worrisome to AI than to most observers.

Nor should its release at the opening of the Canadian election campaign be regarded as coincidental. Since there is barely a scintilla

of even back-handed praise for the current Canadian government's actions internally or internationally even a naïve observer could conclude that it was the equivalent of a gratuitous attack advertisement against the government.

But Canada is not alone. AI now acts as the universal scold; reportedly with idiosyncratic positions on breast feeding, littering, double parking, and soccer rules. When AI earlier tried in-your-face charges against the United States regarding U.S. security practices, Washington bluntly blew them off.

The foregoing commentary is not meant to conclude that Canada is a poster child perfect illustration of human rights. For example, the 2010 Department of State's annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices itemized abuse, e.g., employment of Tasers; detention of noncitizens and security certificates rulings; and gave extended examination of aboriginal problems. Nevertheless, in the grudging language of these reports, in 2009 Canada received the equivalent of "A" (The government generally respected the human rights of its citizens...) The 2010 report eliminated such language, but Canada's exemplary status was clear.

As a result, the AI screed had zero effect on the recent campaign. The government ignored it; and the Opposition apparently appreciated that embracing its inherently flawed construction would likely backfire. The report was more an embarrassment to AI than to Canada.

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Capitalism's insurance not citizens' 'entitlements'

The global economic crisis has led many commentators and politicians to engage in heated debate over the appropriate balance between increasing government revenues and decreasing government spending. With sovereign debt in doubt throughout the west, the debate is sorely needed. But what is not needed is the hijacking of language and the misrepresentation of the issues that

not only was capitalism likely to fail, but revolution could not be ruled out. Just 18 months before his inauguration he had witnessed 10,000 veterans encamped in the park in front of Congress for a month demanding that they be paid some form of pension so they could survive the Depression. Republican President Herbert Hoover ordered Generals Douglas MacArthur, Dwight D. Eisenhower and George

budgets, depending on the jurisdiction, just to enforce. The yoke of the burden is so heavy today that small businesses in Quebec, for example, must spend 19 full working days a year complying and completing government requirements. The burden is not much lighter in the rest of Canada or in the United States. In Europe the situation is so onerous in countries like Italy, that the European Bank has made de-bureaucratization and liberalization conditions for an economic bailout of that country.

This is not to say that changes are

not needed in our social security system. We need to allow some private medical care. We need to reform state pensions so that those who need them get more while the rich don't. We need to expand job retraining and skills development in our employment insurance system. But we also need to get rid of tax breaks like the oil depletion allowance for instance. It's not a one way street. Before politicians demonize the public by calling our social security insurance "entitlements" and seek to cut them, let

them cut the nanny-state out and get real savings and use them to help those in need, streamline and reform the system, reduce our national debt and secure our futures.

Yes, I know it's hard for them. They will lose some of their command-state power. But we, the people, will gain "entitlements" that are the true birthrights of every citizen of a free society. Freedom from fear and freedom from want. The entitlements from governments that serve, not control. If we will it, we can make it so.

It happened because human greed knew no limits while human reason and compassion were in short supply.

flow from that act by placing the vulnerable among us at the greatest risk.

Over the past few weeks the word "entitlement" has been used to describe the social security programs in place broadly in the west since the Great Depression as well as the medicare programs that came later. It is always followed with a comment that they need to be reduced. The use of the word "entitlement" is a gross distortion.

Seniors' pensions, employment insurance and medicare are not "entitlements" with the implication that citizens somehow feel they are owed these at no cost. These programs are insurances for which we pay dearly through our taxes. And the first two began as capitalism's insurance.

Too many of those who shape opinion today have little sense of history. They would do well to remember that the 1930s almost brought an end to the free market system. It had been mercilessly ravaged and pillaged. One third of this continent was left destitute. Another third teetering on the edge.

It happened because human greed knew no limits while human reason and compassion were in short supply. President Roosevelt realized — in addition to his sincere concern for the suffering — that without constraints on the privileged and a security system for the vulnerable,

S. Patton to lead an armored corps supported by tanks and force the "Bonus Army" protesters — all World War I veterans — out of Washington. Some 20 were killed, hundreds wounded. It was the first time the Army of the United States was called into the streets of the Capitol for a military operation since the Civil War.

The social security system that arose out of the havoc of the Depression was the highest and best promise of industrial liberalism. It is not a gift. It is a service. One we pay for as we do with medicare. It is an appropriate and essential part of the services that a state must provide its citizens. Services offered by the state and paid for by us. And herein lies the problem that we must cure.

Over the past four decades, western politicians have forgotten that the primary responsibility of government is the provision of essential services, not social engineering. They've forgotten that they are called public servants. Instead, they have engaged in a frenzied orgy of prohibition and regulation truly unmatched in modern history. They have perverted the liberal industrial state into a nanny state with armies of bureaucrats and inspectors giving them more power over "we the people."

The groaning corpus of prohibitory law and legislation now takes up from 18-25 percent of

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Jack Layton, a happy warrior

"If I've tried to bring anything to federal politics, it's the idea that hope and optimism should be at their heart; we can look after each other better than we do today."

— Jack Layton

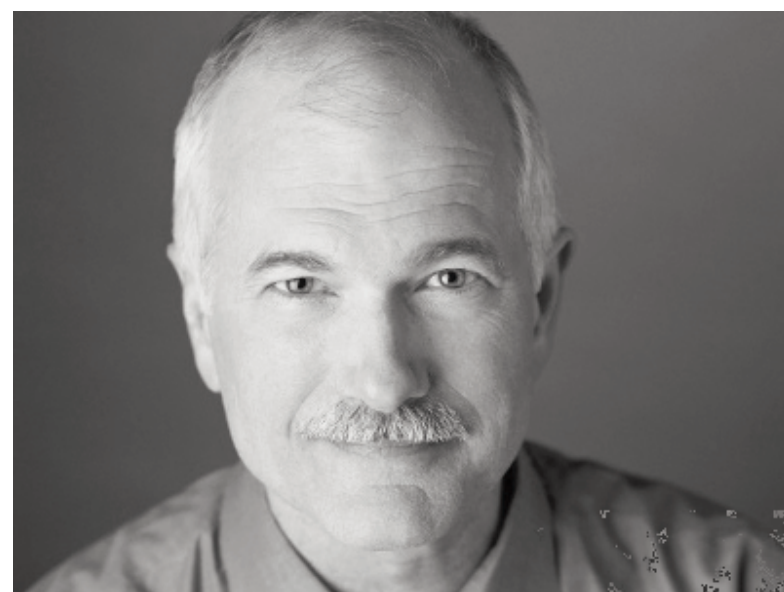
There can be no argument that Jack Layton built a place in history. "Bon Jack", was

today's NDP.

A cheerful political warrior, Layton's always positive, often too sunny demeanour resonated with many. In the recent federal election Quebecers felt, because of Jack, that the NDP was a comfortable pace to park their votes and propelled him into the Opposition leader's seat. And this year, many Ontario

Liberals abandoned their leader to become, at least for one election, "Layton Liberals."

John Gilbert Layton was born in Hudson, July 18, 1950. His street French was colloquial and his syntax often faulty, but he could communicate in both languages and won the admiration of many a Blocquiste.



The most succinct eulogy among the many being voiced, perhaps came from former Bloc MP Serge Menard: "Layton was never a demagogue, he was very authentic," said Menard.

The most succinct eulogy among the many being voiced, perhaps came from former Bloc MP Serge Menard: "Layton was never a demagogue, he was very authentic," said Menard. "He really loved Quebec, and the difference there is in Quebec from the rest of Canada. He saw a richness. At the beginning he was criticized for being too jovialiste. You know what? He was jovial, but he was also profound."

Jack Layton was an unlikely socialist. His grandfather, Gilbert Layton, was a National Union cabinet minister in Maurice Duplessis' government; his father, Robert, was a Progressive Conservative cabinet minister in Brian Mulroney's government.

It was McGill philosopher Charles Taylor who brought Layton to the NDP right after Pierre Trudeau brought down the War Measures Act.

"Tommy Douglas (the NDP's founding leader) summed it up well when he said that we can make a better world collectively, and that

our individuality can flourish in the context of projects we can work on together," Layton said, "These are the values I'd been raised by my parents to believe in, but I hadn't nailed down the political thinking behind them until I met Taylor. He is the one who laid out a concept of liberty that I found very powerful."

Layton moved to Toronto in 1970, obtained a Ph.D. from York University, and was elected to Toronto city council in 1982. In 2003 he became the leader of the NDP, the party's most successful in its 50-year history.

With his death the nagging question is can the New Democrats continue as a potent political force? Can the NDP survive without him, or was his dramatic rise a fluke?

His body is expected to lay in state on Parliament Hill before the funeral in Toronto on Saturday.

Layton leaves two children from his first marriage to Sally Halford, whom he divorced after 14 years, and his now widow, MP Olivia Chow, whom he married in 1988.

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Candles, tears and a song for Jack

Three generations after friends and supporters first raised the city's monument to honor George Étienne Cartier, more than a thousand people came out to honor another great Canadian. As the sun was setting over the mountain, women dressed in black with nothing more than a bright orange scarf began walking down the street towards the monument. Others used the bus while some rode in on their bikes. There were lots of smiles and friendly greetings as everyone caught up on the news after they dropped out of sight after the last campaign. While some women were pushing baby buggies, others were helping their mother shuffle along with her walker. Some were happy to be with friends while others stood alone with their thoughts at the foot of the monument. Candles were lit as someone began to read the letter Jack Layton wrote only hours before he died.

"To other Canadians who are on journeys to defeat cancer and to live their lives I say this: please don't be discouraged that my own journey hasn't gone as well as I had hoped. You must not lose your own hope... You have every reason to be optimistic, determined and focused on the future. My only advice is to cherish every moment with those you love at every stage of your journey as I have done this summer."

With bright eyes, no eyebrows and nothing more than a black bandana to cover his bald head, one man kept to the edge of the crowd as he listened to Layton's message with tears running down his cheeks. As the night began to fall, the crowd began to light some candles as they listened to what Layton had to say to both the young and the old.

"...we can build a prosperous economy and a society that shares its benefits more fairly. We can look after our seniors. We can offer better futures for our children. We can do our part to save the world's environment... Don't let them tell you it can't be done."

Outremont MP Thomas Mulcair could be seen among the back rows of the crowd. Visibly moved by the depth of the crowd's emotion, he



was polite but refused to make any further comments about what was clearly a deep personal loss. Other MPs made a point of showing up at the vigil but nothing could hide the grief caused by the loss of their leader and the man whom many considered to be a close and personal friend.

"I have been privileged to work with each and every one of you. Our caucus meetings were always the highlight of my week. It has been my role to ask a great deal from you and now I am going to do so again... Colleagues, I know you will make tens of thousands of members of our party proud of you by demonstrating the same seamless teamwork and solidarity that has earned us the confidence of millions of Canadians in the recent elections."

After a moment of silence, a couple of musicians stepped up and began to play a lively cover of the Canadian version of Woody Guthrie's 'This land is your land'. The crowd began to sing along but once they heard the song's chorus, more than a few women (and some men) had tears in their eyes when they heard the following lines.

"The sun comes shining
As I was strolling,
The wheat fields waving,
And the dust clouds rolling
The fog was lifting, a voice came chanting

This land was made for you and me."

Soon afterwards, someone began to sing a soulful version of Raymond Lévesque's 'Quand les gens vivront d'amour' after which everyone who knew the lyrics joined in. In a special part of his letter, Layton had a special thought for everyone in French Canada who supported the NDP during the last election.

"On May 2nd, you made a historic decision. You decided the way to replace Canada's Conservative federal government with something better was by working together in partnership with progressive minded Canadians across the country. You made the right decision then... and it will be the right decision right through to the next election... You have elected a superb team of New Democrats to parliament. They are going to be doing remarkable things in the years to come to make this country better for us all."

Visibly moved, at least one woman who is a serious presence in the city's legal community said she deeply touched, and not a little impressed by the fact Layton composed his final letter only hours before he died. As she herself is living with a serious illness, she believes Layton's final wish for both Canada and its people will end up being the most important part of his impressive legacy.

"My friends, love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. Optimism is better than despair. So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic. And we'll change the world."

And as one of this country's great Canadians and as one of Québec's favorite sons, George Étienne Cartier would probably have agreed with Jack Layton's wishes for their country, their province and their fellow Canadians.

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Europe has known such violence before

To protest Europe's inundation by Muslims, Anders Behring Breivik killed 76 fellow Norwegians. He evidently thought that putting Christians to sleep would wake them up. This puts the mass murdering 32-year-old in a class with Count Anton von Arco-Valley, until now a contender for the title of all-time sicko among political assassins.

Arco-Valley was a half-Austrian, half-Jewish army officer who in February, 1919, assassinated Bavaria's first republican president, Kurt Eisner, for being insufficiently German. "Eisner is a Bolshevik, a Jew, he isn't German, he doesn't feel German," the Austrian-Jewish count wrote of his victim. Insanity being contagious, Arco-Valley's act became a source of inspiration to young Joseph Goebbels, who happened to be in Munich when the disgruntled aristocrat shot the president in the back. Today a glance at the Internet will reveal that there are putative Goebbelses lurking in Europe to whom Breivik's killing spree seems equally inspirational.

The European Union is beginning to look eerily like Germany under the Weimar Republic. Comparisons are never exact, and anyone could come up with a string of obvious differences, but in the EU many groups of citizens are at odds with their society's principal values, just as they were in Weimar, and by now several have expressed it through acts of political terror, targeted or random, as their soul-mates did in Germany between 1919 and 1933.

Like their Weimar counterparts, the EU's bullies, brawlers and assassins have emerged from a combination of colours on the political palette, from neo-Marxist red and neo-Nazi brown all the way to environmental or Islamist green. The last group leads the body count after bombing the train and subway systems, respectively, in Madrid (2004) and London (2005). But last week's Norwegian madman amply demonstrated (if such demonstration were necessary) that acts of hebephrenic malice are available to all regardless of ethnic, political or theological persuasion.

The assassin's act is often counterproductive. When Arco-Valley, the mad Count, shot the president, Eisner was actually on his way to resign his presidency. All his killer achieved, apart from inspiring future reichspropagandaministerGoebbels, was to invite reprisals next month from communists and anarchists against the right-wing Thule Society, costing the life of one of their stars, Prince Gustav of Thurn and Taxis. Bavaria even had a Soviet-style dictatorship installed in 1919 as a result of

Eisner's shooting, to the dismay of an up-and-coming dictator named Adolf Hitler.

The assassination of Eisner wasn't the first in Weimar's series of political murders. That distinction belonged to the killers of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, she a Marxist thinker and he a Marxist doer who should have left all thinking to her. The two were drowned in Berlin's Landwehr Canal after Liebknecht's communist Spartacus League made a rather foolish coup attempt against the social-democratic government in Berlin. That's how it came about that in the left's great WhoDrownsWhom contest the social democrats led for a glorious moment in 1919, though the communists made up for

the left along with their derivatives were piffle compared to the paramilitary organizations of the emerging Nazis. Still, they were piffle with a sting. Thought not as formidable an instrument of evil as the sturmabteilung or SA, in the summer of 1922 a group of freikorps-types still managed to ambush and murder the Weimar Republic's foreign minister, Walther Rathenau. Two of the assassins committed suicide when cornered by the police, eliciting The New York Timesheadline: Germans Repress Royalist Terror. Even if they had, it wouldn't have helped Weimar. By then Nazi terror was just around the corner.

The Weimar Republic was democracy's temporary bridge leading Germans from the shoals of empire to the cataracts of

The European Union is beginning to look eerily like Germany under the Weimar Republic. Comparisons are never exact, and anyone could come up with a string of obvious differences, but in the EU many groups of citizens are at odds with their society's principal values...

it by drowning, shooting, beating and starving social-democrats en masse around the world.

In the Weimar period the edge really belonged to the terrorists of the right. The thugs of the ultranationalist OC (organisation consul) were leading the thugs of the Marxist RFB (roter frontkämpferbund) by a comfortable margin, both in terms of murders committed and murders gotten away with. According to one source, right-wing terrorists served a combined 90 years for 354 political murders between 1919 and 1922, while the terrorists of the left served 250 years for killing 22, in addition to suffering the death penalty in 10 cases.

The various freikorps -- war veteran legions -- of the right and

tyranny. It tried to govern on the basis of values it didn't share with its people -- or they with each other. Consensus wasn't Weimar's strong suit, and neither was coercion, which made it an asylum without straitjackets. In this, if nothing else, it resembled the EU.

Some lament that Breivik is a rightwing nutcase; others rub their hands in glee. Both are wasting their time. Misdeeds don't invalidate ideas any more than ideas validate misdeeds. When people who are wrong try to discredit people who are right on the basis of something the lunatic Norwegian said in the days when he was only shooting off his mouth, remember that $2 \times 2 = 4$, even if the Unabomber says so.

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L'INDÉCENT CIRQUE MÉDIATIQUE DES FLOTTILLES POUR GAZA, SUITE DE LA PAGE 1

commerciaux y ont été récemment construits, de même que des hôtels de luxe, comme le Grand Palace Hotel en 2010 (4) ou le Commodore Hotel. Les rues de Gaza ressemblent à celles d'une ville de Floride, pas à celles d'un camp de concentration, contrairement à ce que prétend l'indécente propagande islamogauchiste.

Si Gaza avait suivi la route politique des Palestiniens qui vivent sous le gouvernement du Fatah en Cisjordanie, ils auraient sans doute connu la même prospérité caractérisant cette région, qui est parmi celles qui se développent le plus vite au monde ! De quoi souffre Gaza? De l'oppression islamiste. Cremonesi montre que les femmes, les jeunes et tous ceux qui osent s'exprimer contre l'oppression du Hamas sont harcelés, torturés, assassinés. (5) S'il faut libérer Gaza,

c'est du Hamas d'abord. Les Gazaouis souffrent, certes, mais pas plus que les Arabes de Lybie, de Syrie, du Yémen, du Bahreïn ou d'ailleurs, écrasés par la soldatesque des régimes dictatoriaux. C'est là qu'il faudrait envoyer des flottilles humanitaires. Gaza souffre depuis que le Hamas a pris le pouvoir. Le Hamas a éliminé physiquement des « frères » palestiniens du Fatah. Si les Gazaouis ont élu en 2006 le Hamas, c'est pour se débarrasser de la corruption du Fatah. Le but du Hamas est de lever le blocus autour de Gaza ? L'Égypte semble avoir levé le blocus sur sa frontière avec Gaza, mais se méfie des infiltrations des islamistes venant de Gaza. Et pour cause. Chaque fois que des cargaisons à destination de Gaza sont interceptées, elles ne contiennent pas que des vivres ou des médicaments, mais aussi des armes,

des mortiers et des roquettes. Il serait aberrant de laisser entrer camions et bateaux à Gaza sans contrôle.

Quel jeu jouent l'abbé Gravel, Amir Khadir et Gérald Larose? Ils appuient cette flottille commanditée encore cette année par l'organisation islamiste IHH (une ONG frériste turque), qui avait très efficacement utilisé la flottille pour tenter de pénétrer à Gaza, bafouant ainsi les conventions maritimes et que le juge français Jean-Louis Bruguière, spécialiste de la lutte anti-terroriste, qualifie de terroriste dans son soutien actif à Al Qaeda. Cette coalition ne joue-t-elle pas plutôt le rôle d'idiots utiles? Va-t-on vraiment aider les Gazaouis en appuyant cette flottille canadienne ou renforcer le Hamas qui les opprime? Une chose est sûre : sans épouser entièrement les objectifs spécifiquement islamistes de l'IHH, la flottille

canadienne se place dans une posture qui la rapproche inévitablement de l'IHH et du Hamas. Il faut le reconnaître.

Présence Musulmane (section d'Ottawa) et la Canadian Islamic Congress. La Canadian Islamic Congress, par exemple, a déjà

Si Gaza avait suivi la route politique des Palestiniens qui vivent sous le gouvernement du Fatah en Cisjordanie, ils auraient sans doute connu la même prospérité caractérisant cette région, qui est parmi celles qui se développent le plus vite au monde !

Ce qui irrite aussi dans cette coalition hétéroclite, c'est ce qui gravite autour du groupe, sans susciter d'objections ou même de réserve chez les "progressistes" de la coalition, en particulier l'association

affirmé par l'entremise de son ancien leader Mohamed Elmasry, qu'elle cautionnait les attentats-suicides parce que "tout civil israélien de 18 ans et plus est une cible légitime". Que dire de plus! Il faut le reconnaître : le bateau canadien pour Gaza est utilisé avant tout par le Hamas comme une arme, afin de renforcer l'aura et le "prestige" de cette organisation frériste, en la plaçant dans une situation de victime face à Israël.

Tant que votre flottille jouera la vedette dans les médias, on oubliera les horreurs quotidiennes, viols, lapidations, massacres et oppression des dictatures du Moyen-Orient. Messieurs Khadir, Gravel et Larose, Khadafi, Al-Assad, Saleh et Ahmadinajad vous en remercient.

Jean-Charles Chebat (HEC)

Germain Belzile (HEC)

Jacques Brassard, ex-ministre du Québec

Pierre Brassard, Montréal

Steve Ambler (UQAM)

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Akil Alleyne

info@themetropolitain.ca

WWW.THEMETROPOLITAIN.CA

TO WAR OR NOT TO WAR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of all, is it winnable? It is useful to examine how the last true morass in which the US got bogged down, Vietnam, was turned into such an abattoir. Despite the hackneyed use of that war to caution against every new American military adventure, rarely have the correct conclusions been drawn from it.

In the Korean War of the early 1950s, the coalition fighting to reverse communist North Korea's invasion of the South was ultimately shoved back by a massive Chinese counterattack. This taught US policymakers that China was loath to tolerate any anti-Communist beachheads on its border. A decade later, North Vietnam's location next door to China enabled Moscow and Beijing to supply the Vietnamese communists with relative impunity. Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon could not eradicate the enemy's supplies at the source without risking another direct—and possibly nuclear—confrontation with China. Thus they settled for carpet-bombing North Vietnam and slaying as many Viet Cong guerrillas as they could until the South Vietnamese army could defend the country independently. Unfortunately, the South Vietnamese army proved incompetent and unreliable, and the regime for which it fought grew corrupt and autocratic. Both this and the military havoc wreaked on the country alienated South Vietnamese civilians in droves, pushing many into the Viet Cong's waiting arms. Moreover, the North Vietnamese possessed greater patience—and a far higher tolerance for bloodshed—than the American people did. All of these factors and more made the Vietnam War basically unwinnable.

Furthermore, in training its sights on Southeast Asia, the United States had picked a fight with the wrong commies. North Vietnam never did truly serve as a bastion of Soviet-sponsored subversion or aggression. Like Marshal Tito's Yugoslavia, Ho Chi Minh's Vietnam was Marxist, but neutral between the dueling superpowers, fearing Russian and Chinese as well as American domination. In fact, Hanoi had barely emerged victorious before it found itself at war with its Communist neighbors in Cambodia and China before decade's end. This made the Vietnam War unnecessary from its very inception.

I view the true lessons of Vietnam as follows. First, be careful not to target enemies whose threat to national security is unclear, for that leads to unnecessary war. Second, avoid fighting counterinsurgencies in locations where the rebels' supplies are geographically untouchable, for that

leads to unwinnable war. The Bush Administration, in its hegemonic hubris and profound historical ignorance, learned not one of these lessons. The guerilla warfare that followed the toppling of the Taliban and the Ba'athists in Iraq caught Uncle Sam with his striped pants down. Having never seen these insurgencies coming, the Pentagon put too few boots on the ground to grapple effectively with the guerrillas in either country. Hence the belated troop "surge" implemented by President Bush in Iraq in 2007, and the more recent surge in Afghanistan which President Obama ordered shortly after taking office and which has now come to an end. These have to be two of the deadliest games of catch-up ever played.

Meanwhile, the Taliban have found supplies and shelter in neighboring Pakistan, while Iraq's Shi'ite militias benefit from aid from their coreligionists in adjacent Iran. The US military cannot tackle Iran directly, and the Pakistani government has so far proven unable—or perhaps unwilling—to suppress the Taliban sympathizers within its own borders. (The fact that US commandos found Osama bin Laden holed up in a large residential complex in a major city, apparently unmolested by Pakistani authorities, casts further doubt on Pakistan's trustworthiness.) Once again, the US has gotten itself—and its NATO allies—into a scrap with guerrillas whose sources of supply are all but untouchable. The fact that US forces have yet to win the hearts and minds of most Afghan and Iraqi civilians only compounds these colossal blunders.

Conclusion: the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq may well prove to be unwinnable.

The news that Saddam Hussein possessed no weapons of mass destruction and posed no threat to anyone outside Iraq's borders grew stale almost a decade ago. At this point, it almost goes without saying that the Iraq War was unnecessary. The initial casus belli in Afghanistan, however, was virtually unassailable, complicating the question of that war's necessity. Al-Qaeda had planned the greatest civilian mass slaughter in American history from its caves in Afghanistan and executed it with flying colors. Their ruling Taliban allies refused to turn the perpetrators over to the US to be brought to justice. Therefore Al-Qaeda, Taliban and all had to go.

Yet the Taliban regime was toppled, and the country cleansed of Al-Qaeda bases, almost eight years ago. The counterinsurgency that ensued has aimed to enable the Afghan government to prevent the Taliban's return to power on its own. It has also struggled

to bequeath to Afghanistan at least the basic framework of a stable, durable democracy. On both counts, the war has thus far gone atrociously. On at least the latter of those two counts, the same can be said for Iraq. Both countries' new constitutions establish Islam as the state religion and enshrine Islamic sharia in the laws of the land. Afghanistan's criminalization of conversion from Islam to any other faith and its legalization of intramarital rape bode ill for the flourishing of the tolerance that makes true democracy possible. The backward cultures that enable such injustices make for a shaky foundation on which to build governments of, by and for the people.

The initial military campaign in Afghanistan, then, was both necessary and justified. The sanguinary nation-building, democratizing effort that followed it, however, may not be.

So why the reluctance to "bug out" of both conflicts? Once again, a comparison with the ignominious US retreat from Vietnam in 1975 comes in handy. The US withdrawal was indeed followed by a bloodbath; not for nothing did thousands of Vietnamese refugees flee the country's Communist crackdown in the late 1970s. The disco era also saw Marxist forces gain strength throughout what was then still known as the "Third World." From Nicaragua to Grenada to Angola to Afghanistan itself, it seemed that America's defeat in Vietnam had emboldened its enemies to seek ever greater advantage. Nor was it only the Soviets and their clients who concluded that the US was in fact a "paper tiger," to use Mao's memorable phrase. Iran went Islamist in 1979, and has been a persistent thorn in America's Middle Eastern flank ever since. Shortly before Syria invaded Lebanon in 1976, President Hafez Al-Assad is said to have sneered at Henry Kissinger: "You've betrayed Vietnam. Someday you're going to sell out Taiwan. And we're going to be around when you get

tired of Israel."

When the US beats a premature, hasty retreat from a conflict to which it has committed immense amounts of blood and treasure, anti-American forces worldwide take note—and take advantage. Osama bin Laden, for example, took inspiration from the US retreat from Somalia in 1993, concluding that the Great Satan lacked the belly to quell a protracted insurrection. Thus American war hawks' insistence on "staying the course" should not be dismissed out of hand. Islamist forces, whether Sunnis sympathetic to al-Qaeda or Shi'ites allied with Iran, will not be kind to any country the US leaves in the lurch.

President Obama, then, in deciding to begin withdrawing US troops from the so-called "graveyard of empires," now inevitably risks allowing that war-torn land to collapse into even greater mayhem. This could pave the way for the Taliban's eventual return to power. As tragic as this outcome would be for the people of Afghanistan, however, it might not necessarily threaten US or international security. America's withdrawal from Vietnam, for instance, caused a humanitarian catastrophe, but this left the US unscathed, mainly because the Vietnamese communists never sought to do any international dirt in the first place. As for Afghanistan, the goal of the war there was to demolish Al-Qaeda, or at least to destroy its capacity to attack the US and other targets. The Taliban fought on long after Al-Qaeda was largely driven from Afghanistan, suggesting that their alliance with the terrorist group was not integral to their rule. Therefore, even if the country fell back into their hands, this need not mean a revived Al-Qaeda presence in Afghanistan—which remains the most important consideration. It is conceivable that the US could end the war and yet still carry out surveillance and narrowly targeted counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan to keep Al-Qaeda from

ever setting up shop there again.

I would hate to see a recrudescence of Taliban tyranny in Afghanistan as much as anyone, if only for human rights reasons. Nonetheless, given Afghanistan's democratic deficiencies, it makes little sense to keep wasting NATO lives and tax dollars on a militarized nation-building effort with dubious chances of success. As long as we destroy Al-Qaeda's ability to spill innocent blood, we may have to deal with a newly empowered Taliban—especially if the alternative is seemingly endless war. As the National Post's George Jonas has written, "By 2004... the government of Afghanistan... [was] no longer supporting terrorists or plotting against the West. [...] By Dec. 7, 2004, our soldiers could have gone home from Afghanistan. The military mission was over. The war was won."

In the century or so since the United States first emerged as a world power, it has grappled with guerrillas in at least four conflicts, beginning with the Philippines after the Spanish-American War. It ultimately suppressed the Filipino rebels partly because they enjoyed no outside benefactor, from which they would have been geographically cut off anyway on their tropical archipelago. The US has not enjoyed that advantage in any counterinsurgency it has waged since then—not in Vietnam, Afghanistan or Iraq. How many prolonged bloodlettings will it take for Washington to learn its lesson?

To war or not to war: that is the question. Foreign policymakers in Washington and elsewhere must consider the aforementioned factors before answering that question. If the US is to continue to lead the free world, its leaders must develop a knack for avoiding these dead-end conflicts in the first place. Being—and remaining—the world's greatest power means knowing when to stay off the warpath. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

"You can get anything you want in life if you help others get what they want."

- George F. Lengvari, Sr.

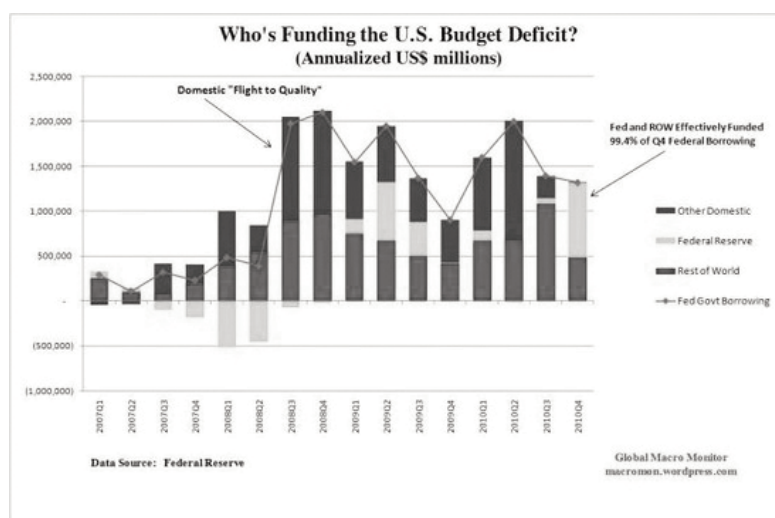

TEETERING ON THE EDGE OF THE UNKNOWN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and developing nations. Those who believe that our institutions like the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the European Bank, the G20 and others are compromised and ineffectual should pause and consider what would have happened since 2008 had these institutions not provided a forum for discussion and coordinated response.

The greatest threat facing the world economy is the failure of the United States to get serious about deficit reduction and the political brinkmanship surrounding the raising of the debt ceiling. Not since the Romans debased the value of the coinage has a world reserve currency been so purposefully devalued by its issuing nation. To quote Nathan Lewis from his book, *Gold, the Once and Future Money*, "Roman coinage began to be debased under the rule of Nero (AD 54-68) with the content of money being reduced from 100% silver to 90% silver. The trend continued in AD 193-210 when the silver content was reduced to 50%. So in a period of 150 years a 50% debasement was put into effect."

The Roman experience did not end well, with traders in the empire eventually refusing to take the currency. Today, a more subtle trend is underway, with the primary US banker, China, no longer buying significant quantities of US debt. Absent the Chinese, the US Federal Reserve has been purchasing the majority of recent debt issued by the US Treasury, as evidenced in the table below. If any other nation flooded the markets with money in this fashion they would immediately be labeled irresponsible profligates and castigated in public economic forums for printing money. Since this is the United States and the US Dollar remains the de-facto international reserve currency, other nations are issuing warnings to the US, some economists are using the more genteel term "debt monetization" to describe US behaviour, but no one dares to call the US government insolvent – yet.

The financial flippancy of the current crop of Tea Partiers in Congress is beyond comprehension. One does not seek to "make a point" by engineering a technical default on the US debt by refusing to authorize an increase in the debt ceiling. The standoff between the US Congress and the Executive could trigger a loss of confidence far larger than the moment in the fall of 2008 when



Lehman Brothers was allowed to fail. The parallel to today's situation is simple; if Lehman was not to be saved, the no bank was safe. If the US debt system is not safe, then no nation's debt, nor its currency is safe. This is the kind of scenario that promotes notions of the price of gold hitting \$5,000 USD per ounce, making gold bugs giddy at the prospect.

has faced muted criticism within Europe, mostly because everyone knows that the same model will have to be used for a Spanish restructuring. Those who have been brave enough to call the Greek debt repackaging a technical default are quite right, but are being ignored for now. Looking at the effective interest rate on Greek debt trading in the secondary market clearly

The financial flippancy of the current crop of Tea Partiers in Congress is beyond comprehension. One does not seek to "make a point" by engineering a technical default on the US debt by refusing to authorize an increase in the debt ceiling. The standoff between the US Congress and the Executive could trigger a loss of confidence far larger than the moment in the fall of 2008 when Lehman Brothers was allowed to fail. The parallel to today's situation is simple; if Lehman was not to be saved, the no bank was safe. If the US debt system is not safe, then no nation's debt, nor its currency is safe. This is the kind of scenario that promotes notions of the price of gold hitting \$5,000 USD per ounce, making gold bugs giddy at the prospect.

The Euro was once the great hope for a gradual replacement of the US Dollar as an international reserve currency. After the Irish, Portuguese and Greek bailouts, the European banking system is basically playing a shell game of "extend and pretend", by swapping short term debt that could not be repaid for long term debt that will very likely share that same fate, just not now. The collusion between the French and German governments to spare their private banks the losses that would have resulted from a Greek default

indicates that investors expect an eventual Greek default of at least 20% of the outstanding debt. Former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan said as much in a recent interview, though as the original architect of easy money from the Federal Reserve he has been more careful in his criticism of current monetary policy at home.

Having recently returned from China and spent ten days reading the *China Daily*, I have surmised that the Chinese plan to support the Euro and the European debt markets because

they would like to use the Euro as an alternative investment vehicle to the US Dollar. To the Chinese, Europe may be sick but at least they are taking the bitter medicine of austerity and restructuring. The Chinese regard the US being in denial and avoiding the difficult and painful decisions that the Europeans have had forced upon them by being a lesser world economic bloc.

China has its own debt problems. Over the past three years, municipal governments created local investment companies that were allowed to borrow hundreds of billions of RMB to fund economic projects, many of which have failed. The federal government is now considering initiatives to take over much of that debt which will result in that debt becoming visible on the national balance sheet for the first time. The total amount outstanding is not clear, but estimates run as high as 24 trillion RMB, or approximately \$3.5 trillion USD. At least China is still

Assad to cease attacking his own people in Syria, the message to Iran is that they are increasingly untouchable. When the Israeli Prime Minister says that Iranian containment is an existential question for the Jewish state, it is not empty political diatribe. The Israelis have lost faith in the United States to deal effectively with Iran and its satellite, Syria, and will eventually be compelled to act to derail the Iranian nuclear effort. The Iranians would certainly attempt to respond with a "dirty bomb" that would spread radiation rather than produce a typical nuclear explosion. The effect on the region and the world economy is too long to speculate on in this article, but suffice to say we would all look back longingly on the banking crisis and the quaint Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s.

The instability of Pakistan is another potential flashpoint, with the possibility of Pakistani nuclear weapons falling into the hands of rebel forces or worse, Al-Qaida. The current ineffectual Pakistani regime makes me sentimental for the decisiveness of Pervez Musharraf, who spoke recently at the Montreal Conference. While not a perfect leader, he stands a much better chance of encouraging the Pakistani military to enforce Pakistani sovereignty in the Pashtun territory where Al-Qaida roams free and secure its nuclear arsenal from subversive forces. The danger is that the next Pakistani presidential elections are years away, and that India will not stand by and watch its neighbor descend into civil war. India and Pakistan have been at war before; but Pakistan has never had to face an internal insurgency at the same time that would seek to exploit the war to gain access to the most destructive cache of weapons available.

So we are on the edge of something; or perhaps on multiple edges in a political and economic collage where all the potential crises are intertwined. If we have learned anything from the 2008 banking crisis it is that bailing out everyone, deserving or not, is still cheaper than letting even one player fail and the markets losing confidence in the rest. I am concerned that our balancing act so far on the economic front has distracted and weakened the international community when it comes to critical peace and security issues. Our international institutions and skilled diplomats, and even military

SOCIETY



Brigitte Garceau

garceau@themetropolitain.ca

WWW.THEMETROPOLITAIN.CA

Why "The Children's" is not just any institution

"Suffer the little children..."

The Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation recently held its 12th annual ball at Windsor Station. This one, under the chairmanship of the indefatigable Mirella and Nadia Saputo, raised a record \$900,000. Several years ago I had the privilege of co-chairing this important community event. I want to tell you why it's not just another society ball.

Several years ago Montreal had a crisis in children's health care. Every paper in the city, including this one covered it. The crisis involved waiting lists for children's operations. Montreal had just over 5000 waiting for elective surgery. Toronto at that time had just over 1500.

Don't let the term elective surgery mislead you. Though not life threatening in most cases, delays in ear, nose and throat procedures for example can leave debilitating effects if not attended to fast enough. In many ways children's bodies are more resilient than our own, but in many other ways they are not. Scars, physical and emotional, are left from the neglect of certain conditions. Only through the engagement of each of us can we assure that a centre of excellence such as the Children's continues to have the resources to prevent such an occurrence again.

An American Senator once said that a society is judged by how it takes care of those "in the dawn of life and in the dusk of life." In other words, our children and our seniors. They are the two groups most vulnerable to the exigencies, political and economic, of our health care system. Without citizen and community involvement – raising money, organizing volunteers and just caring – even



the best of our institutions could not keep up. And the Children's is one of our best. In an emergency situation, there are no huge wait times at the Children's. Response is immediate, care is efficient and the staff is compassionate. Just think how many times so many of us have shown up with our children – anxious, tired, a bit helpless – and been given prompt, professional and personal attention even in the middle of the night.

I want to share a story with you. Several years ago tragedy struck a young girl. She had just turned eight and was struck with cancer. She fought it bravely and with the help of her family and friends, overcame the emotional trauma of the experience. But this little girl, in the midst of her own pain,

noticed that not all the other little boys and girls had the same number of visitors, or toys or smiles. Just too many tears. Despite the excellent program at the hospital for creating a more social environment for the kids, not everybody could get everything they needed.

When she got out, she convinced her parents to start a fund-raising effort with the Foundation, to aid the hospital in broadening the number and quality of emotional support facilities at the hospital. The program has flourished. And it has flourished because so many people volunteered. People who were very involved with the Foundation Gala – one of its main fundraising functions – but who also understood that more was required. Of course the yearlong work of the founda-

tion in raising money for better equipment and staff and patient amenities is crucial. But those involved with the Foundation understand that their moral as well as material commitment is required. And as someone involved in both community and political activism I can tell you that I have rarely seen such selflessness as I see in the Children's Foundation volunteers, and not just at gala time.

The theme of this year's ball said it all, "Because they are so precious." There has never been a more important time to give the Children's all the backing it needs. This year marks the start of construction of the new Children's on the Glen Campus of the MUHC, and our work must continue to assure that "the best care for children" – the name of the campaign headed by Marc A. Courtois – is always assured.

The legacy of all those involved with the hospital, from the singularly groundbreaking work of its Chairman Dr. Nicholas Steinmetz and the extraordinary commitment of president Louise Dery-Goldberg, down through all its staff and volunteers is selflessness. It is a selflessness bred from commitment to relieve the suffering of children. And it is the selflessness of family. How often have I heard the term "second family" used by everyone involved with this vital institution. It is a sentiment shared by all the award winners that night from the junior achievers to the medical specialists to the corporate supporters.

They bear witness to the truth of what that Senator said. They all choose to pass this litmus test of our civility as a society – to make the care of those in the dawn of life the vital priority it should be.



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To slowly suck the life out of a mockingbird

“When you go into court, you are putting your fate into the hands of twelve people who weren't smart enough to get out of jury duty”

- Comedian Norm Crosby

Today I became part of a jury pool – a group of 200 people who would be whittled down to twelve jurists for a criminal stabbing case; a group that spent the better part of the morning trying to find a loophole that would get them out of jury duty.

Here in Quebec when the judicial system wants you to fulfill your civic obligation, it sends a letter informing you of where and when to appear, along with a series of reasons why you may be disqualified.

The list includes many ways to get out of a trial, so I won't bore you with all of them. I'll just list a couple from the Quebec Jurors Act. You can't be on a jury if you are, among other things: a person charged or convicted of a criminal act; a minister of the cult; a person afflicted with a mental illness or deficiency; a lawyer. Now isn't that an interesting grouping?

The day started at 9:30am with the judge giving us our instructions and filling us with pride at the honour and chance to serve our common justice system, all the while as some people quietly grumbled about whether they would run out of time on their parking meters. He then explained to us that names would be called out in batches of twenty. They would be randomly chosen from the lucky pool of 200.

Once names were called, the “chosen ones” would line up in the order they were announced. Frankly, it looked like a scene from the Miss America Pageant. They would then file out of our courtroom and into another, never to be seen again, interrogated by both the defence and the Crown, thereby weeding out the convicted, the cult leaders, the mentally deranged and of course other lawyers.

The judge assured us that this would be a fast process. It is here that I remind you that justice moves at a glacial pace. His Honour informed us that before the selection process could



begin, both sides had to hammer out some legal matters in another room.

So there we sat as time ticked by. At 10:30am a straggler who wandered over to the door noticed an oasis just outside in the hall. He yelled to the room, “Hey there's free coffee and pastries out here!” Three quarters of the crowd rushed to the door like it was a Boxing Day sale, or they were trying to get a cheap wedding dress in Filene's Basement.

At 10:45am the beauty pageant started in earnest. The first twenty names were called and were shuffled out of the room like quarantined POWs. We would never know if we'd see our comrades alive again. At 11am another twenty were picked. Some people had difficulty remember their names.

But there was joviality in the room as people began to think this process was moving along at a torrid pace. However that was all the movement that took place for over an hour. Many in the room were beginning to understand why The Twelve Angry Men were so . . . well . . . angry!

Just before noon one of the first 40 chosen, came back into the room. She had a huge smile on her face. She exploited her loophole and was free to go, but before leaving she wanted to

impart her wisdom and reconnaissance on the rest of the class. Yes, the lawyers were acting like TSA officials, checking through the prospective jurors' emotional baggage before they could embark on their legal journey. “Oohs & Aahs” were heard as she regaled them with the fact that she was a teacher of developmentally disabled children, and thus exempt. She had a greater calling than us mere mortals and was free to go skipping out of the courtroom. We watched her as she vanished down the hall. Unlike Steve McQueen on a motorcycle in The Great Escape, there was no barbed wire to stop her.

At 12:10pm they came for only ten of us. This day was dragging on. Some people were now becoming claustrophobic, desperate to leave the room. Others didn't want to leave. They were developing Stockholm Syndrome.

At 12:25pm they came for another 20. That means they had churned through 70 of us looking for that elusive twelve.

But then it happened. Ten minutes later, at 12:35pm, the daylight deprived, antsy, fidgeting, bladder filled remaining potential jurors were all told that the twelve had indeed been chosen. While this didn't carry the gravitas of picking a new Pope, one could almost envision a puff of white smoke coming from out of the other courtroom.

My name was never called. I never got to the swimsuit competition or talent portion of the program. I was free to go – for now. After all, since I was on the jury list, it's quite possible that I could go through this procedure again in the very near future, perhaps in just a few weeks.

Even though the spectre of having to repeat this process was hanging over everyone's head, they all left quickly with a smile on their face. That's because we each had a voucher to redeem downstairs for transportation and meal costs, and after all \$20.30 is \$20.30!

This day was just like the Academy Awards. We all lined up on a somewhat reddish carpet. We waited in a room for hours for our names to be called. Some were; most were not. And in the end, it was an honour just to be nominated.

That's the Stuph – the way I see it

...si le Gouvernement nous protège de tout,
qui donc nous protège du gouvernement ?

...if the Government protects us from everything
else, then who protects us from the government?

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Rima Hammoudi

info@themetropolitain.ca

WWW.THEMETROPOLITAIN.CA

NOUS APPLIQUONS

Graduates need more pragmatic expectations

We've all heard the 20-something lament before. Some of us struggle through university, surviving off vicious amounts of coffee while juggling thesis statements, part-time jobs and whatever we can muster up to deem as a social life. When our degree is complete we're sent off to conquer the market with our 'expertise' and our entry-level fervor. What we're met with, of course, are tight-knit industries with little to no room for our amateur portfolios to expand from. Degree or no degree, opportunity is scarce, or at least it seems so from this standpoint. Figuring out what you want to spend your entire life doing is not even half the battle. Once you've narrowed down your aspirations and shimmied them into the confines of a trade or industry, you then have to get up and fight your way in. That means finding an existing organization that not only shares your passion but also has room for you to join their team. If there is room, you need to land an interview. If you land an interview, you better be sure to knock their socks off. But impressing employers with your potential is not the real problem. The crux of the crisis lies in the fact that there are very few interviews being granted, let alone the jobs that they lead into.

After completing my B.A. almost three years ago, I was introduced to the harsh reality of the impenetrable workforce. There I was, stuffing my big ideas into even bigger dream clouds, completely baffled as to why my seeming genius wasn't able to take shape in any real way. Jobs in my field were either unavailable or beyond the bounds of my relentless search. Granted, I limited my pool of prospective employers to those operating within my coveted field. But that's what being young and mindful is all about, right? Right. But in retrospect, this is so very, very wrong. It wasn't long before I realized that in order to find work, I had to explore options that sat outside of my field. Since then, I have worked a handful of jobs that can be deemed legitimate careers. I've accepted positions that offered me better than decent salaries, travel perks and amazing benefits. With no real reason to complain insofar as I was able to sustain my independence, I felt, and still do feel, professionally unsatisfied. I wasn't working in my field, which meant I was investing forty hours a week (fifty hours if you include transit time) into a job that I didn't enjoy enough to see myself still doing it in the near future. The only logical solution was to quit my desk job and re-focus my time and energy into working in my field.

Since taking the leap, I'm just as busy as ever, if not busier, and my days are filled with good things, like productive projects and enthusiastic conversations with people whose ideas inspire me. My mind is thinking creatively again and I'm working hard to put my ideas out there. While I feel great about this, I am also fully aware of the disappearance of payroll deposits and, as a result, the shrinking sum at the bottom of my bank statement. I'm working harder and better, and thinking stronger, yet I'm also facing financial woes. Money is a scary thing when you don't have it. While I don't regret the years I spent completing my degree, part of me resents the fact that the hard work that was demanded of me has left me facing this paycheck vs. passion struggle.

To my surprise (and, admittedly, to my relief) I'm not the only one feeling suckered by the workforce. It turns out that this city is flooded with an over-qualified, hyper-driven and completely unsatisfied population of late-20 and early-30 somethings. I've come across a slew of brilliant thinkers who suffer from this sense of career doom. PhD grads are competing over clerical

positions because there just isn't any room for their expertise. While there isn't anything wrong with clerical positions, there is something seriously unsettling with not being able to apply years of knowledge and training into a respective field. Industries are tight and there is very little wiggle room for untenured academics or under-experienced experts, so they settle into jobs that they neither enjoy or feel satisfied by.

Why do they settle? Well, that's easy: Money. Regardless of our stronghold to live out our own passions and knowledge, we still need to get paid. It's pretty difficult for the brain to keep rolling when the stomach is rumbling, or the landlady is knocking down the door for rent. Part of being a young professional may be a matter of accepting unfulfilling jobs, at least for a little while. Or perhaps it is a matter of redefining what you need to be doing and experimenting with ways to get there in order to satisfy your dreams. Or maybe it's both, or a combination of the two.

Or maybe we're the problem here. Maybe our disappointment in the workforce is a product of our high expectations of it and of ourselves. I will full-heartedly admit that yes, I did in fact expect to land an amazing position right out of university. I wasn't hoping to land my dream job (whatever that is) nor was I hoping to gain riches, but I was pretty confident that I'd find a position that I would like by virtue of it requiring me to put my hard-earned skills to use. Is this unrealistic? I didn't think so at first, but I am quickly realizing that sure enough, it is.

Unlike me and so many of us, Bethann McLaren knew early on during her trek through her university degrees that slipping into a great job right after school was not in the cards. After receiving both her B.A. and M.A. in English Literature from McGill University, Bethann retreated back to her Ottawa hometown and began waiting tables at a local restaurant. Before you let out a scoff toward the seemingly stereotypical result of an Arts degree, give yourself a second to be surprised to know that working as a waitress is exactly what Bethann knew she'd be doing right out of school: "I honestly was not expecting to get any specific kind of job with my degree and I was always prepared to have a tough time finding a glamorous, high paying job right out of university. Many of my friends who completed Arts degrees had unrealistic expectations. McGill really likes to push the idea that they are the best of the best and their graduates can do anything, which is not entirely untrue, but "doing anything" requires a lot of work and doesn't just fall into your lap upon graduation."

The difference between Bethann and so many other 20-somethings is the sort of expectations she set up for herself. Bethann wants to find a more fulfilling job, and knows she will, but she also acknowledges the pains that come with expecting instant success. Bethann's high-bar setting ambition is met with her keen ability to be pragmatic, making the hunt for a job in her field more fruitful and much less stressful. For now, she loves her job at the restaurant, and is more than happy to stay put while keeping her ear to the ground for something that suits her better.

As painful as it can be, out-of-field work is not the end of the world. With the continual rise of academic fees, most graduates come out of school with a cloud of debt hanging over them. Bottom line is that bills need to be paid, and if it means waiting tables or filing papers, sometimes any job is better than no job at all. Even if we do manage to slide into our preferred field, we'll probably be taking on an entry-level position that demands very little from us. But is this really so bad? At the risk

of sounding a tad old-school, I'm going to echo the "no pain, no gain" philosophy. Starting off at the bottom, as they say, can be difficult, and sometimes discouraging, but often times it is necessary to progress within an industry.

Take Fatima Nabi as an example. From an early age, Fatima knew that she wanted to pursue a career as a CEGEP teacher, and so she dove into the academic world and completed the degrees necessary to get her where she wanted to be. She completed her Master in Counseling Psychology from McGill University in spring 2008, and almost three years later, Fatima hasn't been able to get passed the interview stage. At 26 years old, Fatima faces the same problem most young professionals do, which is being perceived by potential employers as too amateur for the job: "What it always came down to was experience, or lack thereof. I have a bit of teaching experience, but there is always someone else with more. It's tough because although there are opportunities in the industry, they are often filled internally and by senior candidates".

Fatima's struggle not only includes convincing employers that she is qualified, but that she is just as suitable for the job as a senior in her field is. When it comes to it, a senior in her field is most likely more qualified for the position than she is, but until an employer gives Fatima the opportunity to gain experience, she will never be able to escape the double-edge sword sitting in the middle of conference table. Although she isn't working as a professor like she hoped, Fatima managed to work her way into her field as a psychologist at the senior campus at Peter Hall, a school for children aged 11-21 with special needs. "I have let go of an aspiration I had for a long time. I'm one of the lucky ones though, because my 'day job' is not really a backup; I actually love working with this population!"

As far as fulfillment goes, no job is good enough if you're not doing what you love to do. And although this may sound idealist in some regard, I will not downplay how important it is to find work that will actually contribute to your overall happiness. We are all contenders in a world that demands that a huge chunk of our days be dedicated to work. Whether this is fair, ideal or conducive to living well, is beside the point. The point I want to make is that if we're living in a place where work dominates our days, we should dedicate a lot of effort in ensuring that we find work that we enjoy. Fatima is right in thinking that she's lucky because she has figured out a way to stay in her field by redefining what she expected to do with her degree. Her disappointment in not living out her initial dream lingers, but for now she remains patient while understanding that part of being a professional is working your way through the profession and really grasping the highs and lows of the industry.

Truthfully, my faith in the very existence of the 'perfect job' has ceased to exist. The more I explore the market, the more I realize that most positions are products of corporate molds and are designed to serve a particular purpose. While some are admittedly more intriguing than others, almost all are far from being perfect. Although deserting the notion of a dream job sounds depressing, I think I'm better for it. What contributes to the dreaminess of any dream job is the acquisition of it. The people we admire who hold these seemingly too-good-to-be-true jobs didn't get to where they are without hard work. We admire these people because of what they do, and they're able to do what they do because they pushed for it. The workforce is not nice, and they don't care how badly you want in. So push, dear dreamers. Push hard.

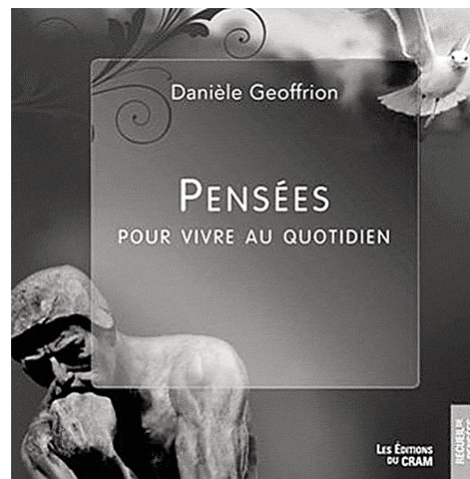


Une pensée en équilibre

La philosophie vécue et appliquée au quotidien, vous connaissez ? C'est l'indispensable objet de la philosophie, soit la dimension du travail journalier, critique, quotidien, dans l'expression des valeurs-philosophiques, afin de donner ou redonner de l'énergie, de la vie, aux choses parfois les plus simples, voire les plus banales, de nos moments de tous les jours. La philosophie est un genre culturel particulier, indissociable de la raison, et s'expliquant ainsi concrètement dans la réalité vécue. En effet, elle demeure une dimension importante, se situant en amont de la rhétorique. En fait, il n'existe pas de vie « ordinaire » en philosophie, car à l'intérieur de toutes vies coexistent « le devenir réel », ce qui présuppose, comme disait brillamment Hegel, qu'il faille s'exercer à renoncer aux méthodes de spéculations pures, pour favoriser a contrario de nouvelles formes d'incorporation du réel au monde humain, dans la vie de tous les jours, afin de pouvoir philosopher simplement, car la vie est quotidienne, et tellement quotidienne !

Justement, je souhaite, par la rédaction de cet article, vous entretenir d'un livre intimement et entièrement associé à cette attitude philosophique : « PENSÉES pour vivre au quotidien », deuxième recueil de la très éclairée auteure et philosophe : Danièle Geoffrion, publié aux Éditions du CRAM. De toute évidence, ce livre s'inscrit dans le continuum

de la publication du premier recueil « Philosopher pour vivre au quotidien - du sens et des mots -, tout en suggérant une ouverture pour aller plus loin en soi, plus profondément, afin de susciter l'envol de tout ce que l'on porte enfouis, et qui ne demande, souvent, qu'à se laisser happer par la lumière de la réalité. De plus, ce tome 2 ajoute une facette supplémentaire à la dimension individuelle, pour entrer au cœur de l'action sociale, à l'intérieur des liens étroits de la concrétude, afin de favoriser des passerelles entre ce qui constitue et conduit nos sociétés démocratiques. En effet, le philosophe pratique est celui qui capte la grandeur de toutes ces idées, afin d'y réfléchir à partir d'une démarche philosophique vécue loin des cartographies abstraites, pour mieux la transposer sur le quotidien, pour aider tout un chacun à habiter le monde avec sérénité, à réfléchir avec simplicité et intelligence, sans cultiver d'ambiguïté volontaire ou involontaire, ou autres mécanismes de défense. Ainsi, nous devenons toutes et tous des philosophes, à l'intérieur de cet objet philosophique incroyablement riche qu'est le quotidien. De ce fait, cessons d'être effrayés par la philosophie ! Bien au contraire, c'est avec une exquise simplicité, sans argumentation, complications ou autres brusqueries, que nous invite l'auteure, pourtant savante et fort érudite, à philosopher, au-delà des théories, concepts, et schémas intellectuels. C'est que la philosophie



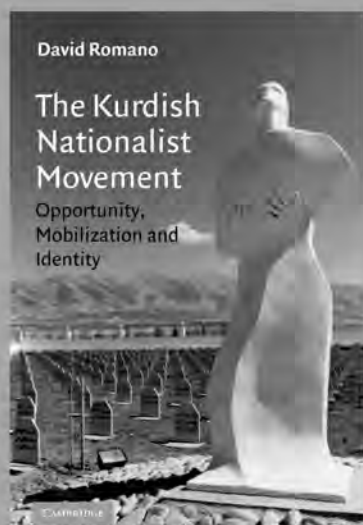
est avant tout populaire, et doit le demeurer, condition sine qua none à sa compréhension réelle. C'est ce qu'on appelle : « vivre sa pensée », et c'est ici, précisément, que ce petit livre-bijou de Danièle Geoffrion, « PENSÉES pour vivre au quotidien » prend toute son importance, en nous invitant à une méditation quotidienne par des aphorismes inspirants, puisés à même la vie de personnes réelles, et qui constitue, en ce sens, une véritable recherche d'équilibre, favorisant l'hygiène mentale de chaque instant.

En somme, il est impossible de ne pas tomber complètement sous le charme de cette invitation, tellement que cela peut surprendre, l'espace d'un instant, les esprits agités. De la

même manière, ce livre invite à l'observation attentive de tout ce qui nous entoure, en particulier la nature, afin d'entrer petit à petit dans un état de contemplation bienfaisant. De plus, les instants de grâce de la vie sont également riches à noter, par exemple une marche en forêt dans le calme voluptueux, ou tout autres moments duquel nous avons le sentiment profond d'être en accord parfait avec le monde. En effet, il est bon d'apprendre à observer la nature, la manière spéciale qu'elle a de se régénérer, ses bruits familiers, son ordre naturel, ses cycles et ses saisons. La sagesse, au cœur de l'homme, est bien nichée dans sa solitude existentielle, et puise en elle-même un espoir, dont ce livre se fait un doux écho. À la lecture, et cela dès les premières pages, ne soyez donc pas étonnés de vous sentir particulièrement apaisés, conscients, et déterminés dans la découverte des pages suivantes. C'est également à la tendresse que ce livre invite, et à la paix, avec une nouvelle manière d'aborder la vie, une autre manière de respirer, de voir le monde, en embrassant un horizon plus large, et surtout plus harmonieux. Bref, un nouvel art de vivre, certes, et aussi un réel engagement, dans la libre-pensée, pour un nouveau vivre-ensemble, à l'intérieur d'une philosophie réellement humaniste.

Geoffrion, Danièle, « Pensées- pour vivre au quotidien- », Éditions du CRAM, Montréal (Québec) CANADA, 158 pages, 2011.

Cambridge Middle East Studies



David Romano focuses on the Kurdish case to generally try and make sense of ethnic nationalist resurgence. In a world rent by a growing number of such conflicts, the questions posed about why, how and when such challenges to the state arise are becoming increasingly urgent.

Throughout the author analyzes these questions through the lens of social movement theory, considering in particular politico-social structures, resource mobilization strategies and cultural identity. His conclusions offer some thought-provoking insights into Kurdish nationalism, as well as into the strengths and weaknesses of various social movement theories.



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Robert K. Stephen

info@themetropolitain.ca

Robert K. Stephen is a freelance travel writer.

WWW.THEMETROPOLITAIN.CA

Surreal and Serene New York

Returning to New York from the peaceful environs of slow paced Greenport, North Fork of Long Island, which is some 80 miles from New York City, leads one to think of contrasts as New York City's massive silhouette assaults the senses on approach. New York City is New York City but as all cities do has its own distinct neighbourhoods and character. It is not just a big city but a collection of neighbourhoods and experiences both surreal and serene in the midst of its bustling exterior. Now, where to find these contrasting experiences is not easy. The serene and the surreal are difficult to locate and based on subjective interpretation. For example one can easily dismiss Times Square as gaudy and tacky but look closely and its tackiness is surreal full of small town and innocent middle Americans strutting about in shorts and running shoes gaping with wonder at the bright lights taking pictures and having the time of their lives eagerly chatting about their great moments on their cell phones with friends in Kansas City about the ball dropping on New Year's Eve which they will not be there to witness.

There is plenty of light and sunshine in Greenport as there are no tall buildings to block the sunlight. It takes

some adapting to deal with the lesser amount of light in the big city. New York City has its fair share of sunshine but there are so many skyscrapers there are many patches of shade. Many a hotel room is darkened by proximity to skyscrapers. In some cases dark is seen as hip in hotels. Take for example the Thompson "6 Columbus". Just about everything in the hotel is "in the shade". Sort of like "Blade Runner". The lighting in the rooms is subdued except for the bathroom which has a neon tube around the mirror over the sink. Pull your drapes and you'll get the natural light you need if you love natural light. The bathroom is a throwback to earlier days and so much of a throwback you wonder if it's ahead of its time with its shower curtains... gone is the glass encased shower and for that manner lack of privacy! Gleaming blue tiles encircle you. Yo... I'm back in the 1970's having a shower! Super Frette bathrobes and just slightly rough towels which is just the way I like them. The rooms come with flat screen televisions, regrettably unfree Wi-Fi access and the wardrobe is a standalone wardrobe (which I haven't seen in a hotel room since communist Romania in 1973) with black and white panelled doors. The

floors are large planked black wood. There is a big writing and work desk in my King Deluxe room with plugs for my laptop at eye level instead of way down at floor level so I do not have to grovel for a plug in. Micro and convenient thinking! The drapes are grey and blue striped. The hallways are wallpapered with shiny rippled blue wallpaper with gray brown Thompson logoed carpet. Complaints? Ice bucket is fashionable but impossibly tiny so my wine can't chill properly and do I really want to call room service for a bucket of ice?...and why oh why must they charge for internet access? According to "management" the age of the typical guest is in their 40's but certain sources tell me it is more in the 30's. This is a playful hotel. There is a rooftop bar and a Blue Ribbon Sushi Bar and Grill with 41 sakes, 17 wines by the glass and 115 wines by the bottle. Unfortunately there is only a single wine from New York State. I am told the most popular wine with sushi and sashimi is Sauvignon Blanc. I tried 5 of the sakes and all of them had differing characteristics some being dry and clean others funky, some fruity, some with subtle notes of coffee, liquorice and cocoa. There is even a Taru Sake which is aged in

cedar barrels. Definitely worth a stop to have some sushi and sake. In conclusion I'd like to say coming in from the natural beauty and light of North Fork into Manhattan was not easy and arriving at 6 Columbus was a bit of a shock and a difficult transition from light, light and more light. However once the senses adopted to the canyons of Manhattan and its shadows the cool shadiness and retro feel of 6 Columbus slowly grabbed hold of you like an intriguing wine. It just kind of grows on you in a positive way. There is hotel written all over this place as it was formerly the West Park Hotel (look at the original bannisters) and it was gutted and rebuilt in 2007. Rack rates are running from \$540-\$5,500 but there are so many specials running on this place who knows what you can find on the internet or on the hotel website itself. (Six Columbus (A Thompson Hotel) 6 Columbus Circle, New York, New York 212.204.3400, www.thompsonhotels.com). I think I need another visit to check out this place! That's a good sign like a complex bottle of wine. Although there is a concierge available don't be afraid to ask Peter a very affable doorman who has a good command of the local scene surrounding the hotel. He is eminently charming, informative and just the type of ambassador Six Columbus needs. He is entirely relaxed and himself and so very mellow. Just nice to talk to. Need a loose leaf green tea...he'll tell you in a snap where to pick one up. It seems this Thompson Hotel has staff to suit its low lighted relaxed personality.

The 6 Columbus is not quite Lou Reed singing, "Take a Walk on the Wild Side" but nonetheless this "boutique hotel" is very well located on Columbus Circle and breaks the barriers of what you might consider as a "traditional" hotel. Give it a try and see the new wave of the hotel future. Funky and fun but is it for you!

Just up on street a few paces is the Hudson Hotel which has public spaces that verge on the surreal with its lime green escalator leading up to a shadowy lobby with its bizarre furniture and a high end self-serve cafeteria. What is really way out is the exterior bar "Hudson Private Park" which sits encircled by high-rise buildings but the décor is whimsical and surrealistic like Alice in Wonderland has turned into an interior

decorator. You can sit down and order a drink but the \$18. Martini was not ice cold and was served in a plastic martini glass and the rum based cocktail was served with wilted mint leaves unattractively dangling on the sides. This bar obviously is a money machine with absolutely no pride in its drinks. Hopefully this is not indicative of the state of the rooms.

Even food can be surreal. Can you imagine eating at a very traditional tiny French Bistro by the name Deux Amis and all of a sudden finding at the end of the menu a "Bucky Burger"? Well a Bucky Burger all three of us had and it was a delicious monster with captivatingly delicious fries and even a salad to remove the guilt from eating a burger! Three Bucky Burgers with a bottle of Beronia Rioja will set you back \$96.89. (Deux Amis, 356 East 51st, 212.230.1117).

While we mount our saddles after our Bucky Burger we head up back to Columbus Circle to more surreal matters and it is an exhibit at the Museum of Arts and Design called "Otherworldly; Optical Delusions and Small Realities" which is running to September 18th. There are mostly bizarre little dioramas which are models made by an artist then photographed, created into film or simply left as a model creating otherworldly views of our world. Kever's mountain landscape shot is brilliant ad Jonah Samson's model ("The Flasher") of a women flashing herself in the woods to a group of boy scouts is hilarious. (Museum of Art and Design, 2 Columbus Circle). You may also wish to check out the show going on at the Metropolitan Museum of Fine Art...."Savage Beauty" showing some of the late Alexander McQueen's designer's wildly creative clothes from his brief career. Really wild stuff with most of it being theatrical. In my view it's waaaaay out there and in the surreal category. Just take a look at the photo attached here! (The Metropolitan Museum of Fine Art, 1000 5th Avenue at 82nd Street, 212 535.7710). I have heard that the show originally slated to close on August 7th has been extended until September but this has not been reflected on the Museum's website. It has been a wild success with huge line-ups to get in. Now if this is all getting too much for you are you interested in hopping on a city bus

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and heading up to a piece of Tuscany or do you need a break for lunch first. You may wish to check out the massive Whole Foods in the basement of The Time Warner Center which is just opposite the 6 Columbus Circle Hotel where there are salad, bars, Indian food bars, breakfast bars, sushi bars and never ending amounts of food ready to chow down on. All in takeout format which really is an appreciated welcome for those tiring of too much restaurant food. It's all top quality and reasonably priced. The baked goods are also very good and grab some fruit and coffee and voila eat in the comfortable take out area or bring up to your room with beer you can get at Whole Foods or wine you can pick up at the well-stocked Columbus Circle Wines and Spirits at 1802 Broadway. Chilled whites are available.

If you've read my latest article on a few restaurants I reviewed in New York you might be getting a bit downcast but Esca on 402 West 3rd Street in NYC never has disappointed and once again certainly did not disappoint with its tasteful furnishing, relaxing colour scheme and impeccable service. We were fortunate to have been there for lunch for a three course meal specially priced at \$24.07 for "Restaurant Week". Fried clam strips were to tender perfection, the Bavette (putanesca with fresh tuna) was rich and settled in an awe inspiring sauce. Arctic char and Spanish mackerel were done to perfection. A lemon olive oil cake was sublime. Lunch for 3 with a bottle of wine was \$127.61. You will earn your New York foodie stripes by eating at Esca. Superb Italian based cuisine focusing almost exclusively on the ocean. If you are a meat eater and a lover of other than Italian wines then Esca may not be the place for you! (Esca, 402 West 43rd Street, 212.564-7272). Without reservations good luck. There are some 7 pages of mostly Italian wines broken down by region. I know the basics about Italian wines and can barely get through this wine list. You'll need some help from the staff and don't be afraid to ask for help from Dani, the wine director.

Now as a last point there can be a serene moment built into your NYC experience and that is a visit to The Cloister Museum and Gardens at the tippy top of Manhattan. A cab will cost you a fortune so consider hopping



on an MTA bus and ride all the way up there to 9 Margaret Corbin Drive. You'll see a fair bit of New York in doing so including Washington Heights and Harlem. Been to Harlem lately? It isn't what you think it is. And you'll enter a world more suited to the quiet Tuscan countryside than to Manhattan! The Cloisters is a branch of The Metropolitan Museum of New York which is where you will see the "Savage Beauty" exhibit referred to above. But here there is only beauty and it's quiet and tranquil beauty with no savagery involved. It is difficult to describe The Cloisters other than saying it is an exact copy of a monastery in France and is devoted to the art and architecture of medieval Europe. There are many architectural fragments that have been incorporated into the architecture of the building itself. It was designed and built as a museum of works of art from the Middle Ages. It is as if the pieces form the architecture of the building itself.

Please excuse me but I have been to New York so many times I am not a resident but I am more than a casual observer which leads to some impartiality on my views of the city. If there is anything I am really tiring of its Times Square. It may be fun the first time but after that it becomes an increasing annoyance with everyone from small-town USA walking mouths open aghast at what they see on New Year's Eve. Hawkers bellowing out inanities such as, "Ladies get your tattoos tonight and you'll sleep well tonight." It is the home of con

games so well chronicled in Claude Brown's "Manchild in the Promised Land". Just off this most annoying area there is an oasis in the Paramount Bar in The Paramount Hotel. The madness stops as you enter with Bridgette Bardot staring at you in a black and white photo on the wall. Just cascading mellow dark browns and a dash of plush red upholstery. All so cool and relaxing like the madness of Times Square is in another land far away. First and foremost I am a wine guy and will say that six wines on the

bar list make me uncomfortable but there is just enough to keep me somewhat content. And lo and behold thank goodness there is a New York Finger Lakes Pinot Gris in the mix. But cocktails are paramount at The Paramount. A first test of a martini was successful so they had my attention. There are 14 cocktails on the menu including 10 exclusive Paramount creations. I tried a sip of 5 of these beauties. Complex, pensive and very serious. These are dynamite cocktails that challenge the taste buds

like a complex wine. The tropical Mexican resort experience is taken ten levels up with the "Disco Punch" with rum, cocoa rum, pineapple juice, muddled raspberries and blackberries. My favourite was the "Pepino Diablo" with jalapeno tequila, lime juice, agave nectar and muddled cucumber. The biggest seller is of course "The Paramount" with Grey Goose Vodka, St. Germain, lime juice and fresh muddled ginger. I could go on and on but you get the idea here. The bartenders immaculately attired have great pride, skill and enthusiasm unlike the factory bar approach at The Hudson and their enthusiasm shows in the end product. If you want to chill out in relative quiet visit before 9 p.m. as things get hopping after that particularly on Thursday nights. These guys make a damn good martini which creates the credentials necessary to progress to their exotic and complicated but delightful cocktails! This is also a hotel with a very cool Alice in Wonderland lobby. I really have no idea what the rooms are like but if they are like their cocktails you might not be barking up the wrong tree! (The Paramount Bar, 235 West 46th Street just a smidgen above Times Square).

Coming soon...aliens are visiting Colchester Ridge Estate Winery and just may be throwing the dice at Caesar's in Windsor!



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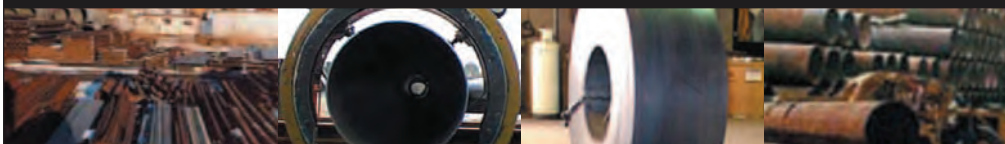
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Carravaggio the outcast and artist

The National Gallery in Ottawa has scored a coup with its blockbuster Carravaggio exhibition that runs until Sept. 11.

Carravaggio and His Followers in Rome features ten paintings never before seen in North America, two that have, and another 50 paintings by artists who were influenced by his work. In view of the fact that only 70 of the artists works known to exist, and many of them are altar pieces that cannot be moved, it's an extraordinary collection.

"Carravaggio was a character out of the film 'Fight Club.'" Said the gallery director, Mark Mayer, "He was someone who was on the lam for the last 15 years of his life for all kinds of crimes and misdemeanours." Carravaggio's paintings are an expression of his own outlaw exuberance, fashioned from darkness and light. As Andrew Graham Dixon writes in his Carravaggio biography, *A Life Sacred and Profane*, "His pictures represent spotlight moments of extreme and often agonized human experience. A man is decapitated in his bedchamber, blood spurting from a deep gash in his neck. A man is assassinated at the high altar of a church. A woman is shot in the stomach with a bow and arrow at point blank range. Carravaggio's images freeze in time, but also seem to hover on the brink of their own disappearance."

The show offers an opportunity to come face to face with his masterpieces. The show's curator, Sebastian Schutze, who chairs the University of Vienna's Art History Chair, says the exhibition is not only about the work of a single artist, but about "a radical pictorial innovation, a new perspective, a whole new approach to art that spread like wildfire. It is an artistic dialogue between Carravaggio and his contemporaries." Included in the exhibition are such famous, highly dramatic canvasses as *The*



Cardsharps, *St. John the Baptist in the Wilderness*, *Sacrifice of Isaac*, *Boy Bitten by a Lizard* and *Saint Francis of Assisi in Ecstasy*. Other highlights by other painters include Gentileschi's gruesomely arresting *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, completed in 1613, and Gerrit Van Honthorst's *Saint Sebastian*, 1623.

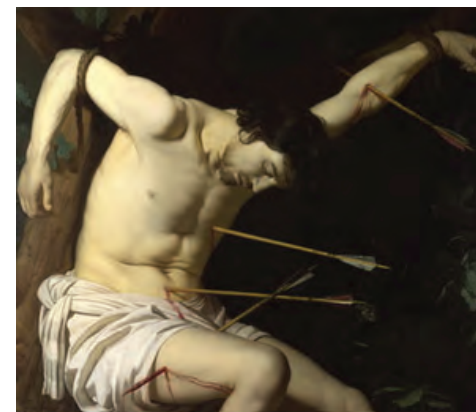
Michelangelo Merisi de Carravaggio was born in 1571. The fragments of his life that we know about can be found in police records, his paintings and in widespread gossip. He was nearly killed in a savage street fight, he offended powerful churchmen, and he was jailed for libel. With a price on his head he fled Rome for Naples, and then went to Malta, and on to Sicily where he was pursued by a gang out to destroy him. He found inspiration for his paintings among the street toughs and prostitutes that shared his bed and served as models for his saintly images. His pictures were very explicit, very



personal, and conveyed an almost electrical connection between sex and religion.

"The convention by which the great events of biblical or secular history could only be enacted by magnificent physical specimens, handsome, perfect and well groomed, went on for a very long time. Only a very few artists, perhaps only Rembrandt and Carravaggio were independent enough to challenge it," suggests art historian Kenneth Clark.

Carravaggio died in 1610 on a deserted beach somewhere between Naples and Rome as he was seeking pardon for his crimes from Pope Paul V. He was either murdered or died of malaria. There was a Carravaggio exhibition in New York 25 years and one last year in Rome to mark the 400th anniversary of his death. The National Gallery's show is even better. It represents the second largest assembly of Carravaggio's works, ever. The exhibition ostensibly was



put together to mark the 150th anniversary of the unification of Italy. It took four "long and complicated" years for the NAC's former deputy director David Franklin, now director of the Cleveland Museum of Art, to persuade the Metropolitan, the Louvre, the Prado and the Uffizi, among others, to loan their holdings. The show moves to the Kimball Art Museum in Texas in October.

Four films about Carravaggio, including Derek Jarman's 1986 documentary will be screened at the Gallery in August. Tickets to the exhibition are \$15 for adults, \$12 for seniors and students, and \$7 for children. A 334 page catalogue is available in English and in French.

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