



Hustak

Irving Layton

I am a quiet madman, never far from tears, I write poems to cause trouble. The sparks fly, I gather each one, and start a poem. ~ Irving Layton

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Iran: A response to a different paradigm of "rationality"

Prof. Aurel Braun

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I do not propose in this article to address the intricacies of private rivalries among various members of the ruling Iranian regime (I do however, strongly differentiate between the long suffering people of Iran and the repressive regime that rules over them). Rather, my expertise is in international relations, strategic studies and international law. My focus will be on international behaviour and threats. Among the works that relate to this area is one of my books entitled *The Middle East in Global Strategy*.

It has been my experience that in analyzing international risks and behaviour the questions that we ask are often as significant as the answers that we provide. Consequently I would like to shape my views around a series of questions followed by a series of recommendations.

1. Is the Iranian regime rational?

Perhaps it is best to start with a definition of rationality that may apply here. One of the most useful ones was provided by Sidney Verba in 1969. Rationality, he noted, is a purposeful goal-oriented behaviour which is exhibited when "the individual responding to an international event uses the best information available and chooses from the universe of possible responses that alternative most likely to maximize his goals." We also know however that in some ways this represents an ideal and that there are limits to rational choice in many circumstances. Research by scholars, including Ole Holsti, has shown that in conditions of crisis, for instance, the limits to rationality are magnified.

So how does the Iranian regime fit into this paradigm of rationality as enunciated by Verba? By normal standards of international relations it is hard to categorize the Iranian regime as rational by Verba-like standards. We may start with some of the most flagrant manifestations of extremism by the Iranian regime, such as

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1500 "model" UN participants hear message of challenge and responsibility from the Met publisher McGill conference third largest next to Harvard and Penn State

By Alan Hustak & P.A. Sévigny

"An informational currency based on hatred, falsehood and arrogance, is devoid of any moral or legal value. The new currency of international relations must not be, to paraphrase Martin Luther King, Jr., a cheque drawn on the moral capital of mankind that is returned for insufficient funds."

Métropolitain publisher and editor Beryl Wajzman, who is also the founder of The Institute for Public Affairs of Montreal, gave the keynote speech to some 1500 participants in McGill's annual Model UN Conference and lost little time sending them a

message for a new model for the international system, the bankruptcy of the current one and the moral challenges the future leaders who made up the audience had a responsibility not to betray. Attendees at the four-day conference at the Sheraton Centre came from over fifty North American universities. The McGill model UN Conference is held every year, and this year was the biggest such gathering behind only Harvard and Penn State. Harvard and McGill have consistently been the largest over the past decade.

Nida Nizam, of Syracuse, N.Y., who has attended 31 such youth assemblies, and was Chair of McMun's world economic forum downplayed the comparisons. "The others may be a bit bigger,

but McGill's is more innovative." This year, she pointed out, McMun (McGill Model UN) introduced social networking as a forum for public debate. "We went over 40 topics in three days, with critical conversations on line - so many have never been tried before - all on a social network."

Wajzman was in good company. Previous keynoters have included former Prime Minister Joe Clark, former Liberal leader Stéphane Dion, Canada's former ambassador to the United Nations, Paul Heinbecker and Jordanian Princess Badiya Bint El Hassan.

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DU VIN AIGRE DANS DE NOUVELLES OUTRES : DE L'ANTISÉMITISME CLASSIQUE AU NOUVEL ANTISÉMITISME

Prof. Jean Ouellette

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Dans sa plus récente formulation, l'antisémitisme contemporain peut se définir soit comme la passion suicidaire de ceux qui organisent le pouvoir politique contre les Juifs soit comme l'obsession mortelle de ceux qui envisagent une autre solution finale, génocidaire, destinée à réduire à néant l'État sioniste sur lequel ils concentrent leur haine des Juifs et de tout projet auquel ces derniers sont associés. La première formulation

est celle de Ruth Wisse, auteur de nombreux essais sur l'antisémitisme classique dit conventionnel. La seconde est celle de l'historien anglo-israélien Robert S. Wistrich, auteur d'une monumentale histoire de l'antisémitisme.

Cet historien comme d'autres avant lui, voit dans la montée de la critique radicale hantée par la délégitimation d'Israël le signe indéfectible de la résurgence de l'antisémitisme classique mais sous une nouvelle forme. Le nouvel antisémitisme, qualifié par certains de nouvelle judéophobie, prendrait pour cible, non plus le Juif traqué dans son individualité, mais l'État sioniste conçu comme collectivité juive. Dans cette perspective, Israël représenterait le

persécuteur de l'opprimé arabo-palestinien qui se voit menacé d'un nouvel holocauste aux mains d'un État qui pratique l'apartheid et se rend donc coupable de crimes contre l'humanité. Une métamorphose identitaire sans précédent transforme sans scrupule le Jésus des chrétiens en martyr de la cause palestinienne et permet au Palestinien spolié de tous ses droits de prendre sa place au sein des nations comme le Juif des Juifs.

Dans les années qui ont suivi la création de l'État d'Israël, on aurait pu constater en Occident la régression, sinon la disparition totale, de l'antisémitisme théologique (le mythe

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Ex-dramaturge, romancier persévérant, essayiste et poète à ses heures, Pierre K. Malouf fréquente des fédéralistes et des indépendantistes, des gens de gauche et des gens de droite, des jeunes et des vieux, des écrivains et des ingénieurs. Gentil comme tout, il ne dit pas toujours tout ce qu'il pense, mais pense toujours ce qu'il écrit.

LA PATRIE

L'argument fallacieux

La bêtise et le mensonge ont la vie dure. Ceux qui se sont donné pour tâche de les combattre auront toujours du pain sur la planche. Dans mon dernier Brasse-camarade, Les troubles continuent sur la rue Saint-Denis. Qui y mettra fin ?, je revenais sur les manifestations organisées chaque samedi sur la rue Saint-Denis dans le cadre de la campagne BDS (Boycott, désinvestissement Sanctions) par l'organisme appelé PAJU (Palestiniens et Juifs Unis). Il faut malheureusement que je revienne à la charge.

Stéphane Gendron, maire de Huntingdon et coanimateur (avec Caroline Proulx) à l'émission du matin «Face à Face», au canal V, tenait le 29 décembre 2011 des propos virulents contre l'État d'Israël, qu'il qualifia alors de «régime d'apartheid». Rendant hommage au député de Mercier Amir Khadir, qui avait appuyé ouvertement en décembre 2010 le boycottage de la boutique Le Marcheur sur la rue Saint-Denis — et ensuite continué de le faire, mais en catimini —, Gendron déclarait : «Les produits faits en Israël sur des terres [volées] aux Palestiniens qu'on maintient emmurés dans un régime d'apartheid où on leur coupe leurs vivres, c'est grave ! » Conclusion de Gendron : « Malheureusement Israël ne s'est pas encore effondré. Un pays comme ça ne mérite pas d'exister. »

Très critiqué pour ces propos — V télé reçut de nombreuses plaintes —, Gendron présenta ses excuses le 27 janvier 2012. Lisant en onde un communiqué, il affirma que les Juifs avaient bel et bien le droit de former un État et

se dit désolé d'avoir offusqué certaines personnes, tout en précisant que dénoncer les politiques du gouvernement israélien face aux Palestiniens ne faisait pas de lui un antisémite. Manifestant l'espoir que les Palestiniens et les Israéliens puissent un jour vivre côte-à-côte, de façon pacifique, Gendron conclut en disant qu'il ne voulait plus entendre parler de cette affaire. Le même jour V télé publiait un communiqué dans lequel on pouvait lire : « V a réitéré aujourd'hui que le réseau se dissocie des propos regrettables de l'animateur Stéphane Gendron à l'endroit des Juifs et d'Israël. V tient à rassurer le public que de tels propos ne seront plus tolérés sur ses ondes. En outre, M. Gendron a exprimé ses regrets en ondes aujourd'hui. »

L'affaire semblait donc réglée. Gendron avait proféré des sottises, il s'en était excusé, il pouvait croire qu'on lui ficherait désormais la paix avec cette sale histoire ! C'était sans compter sur le zèle de Bruce Katz, le président de PAJU (Palestiniens et Juifs Unis). Katz se porta donc au secours du maire de Huntingdon dans une lettre ouverte qui parut dans *vigile.com* et dans *L'Aut'e journal*.

Le texte de Katz, que je vous invite à lire, est stupéfiant de mauvaise foi et mêle à qui mieux-mieux demi-vérités, mensonges, interprétations biaisées voire délirantes. J'aurai l'occasion dans un autre contexte de reprendre point par point les arguments fallacieux utilisés par Katz. Je dois me contenter ici d'attirer votre attention sur un détail d'une grande importance : Gendron et Katz

affirment tous les deux ne pas être antisémites. À cet égard cependant, Katz et ses amis de PAJU de même que leur ami Amir Khadir, ont précédé Gendron de plusieurs mois.

Dans une entrevue avec Benoît Dutrizac le 20 janvier 2010, Amir Khadir utilisa, pour blanchir ses amis de PAJU de tout soupçon d'antisémitisme, l'argument suivant : « La gang de malades dont vous parlez, disait Khadir, c'est des professeurs de cégep d'origine juive, c'est une jeune Juive des Laurentides qui a vécu toute sa vie... » « Ça change rien ! » répliqua Dutrizac. Et Khadir de poursuivre : « [...] Vous avez des jugements un peu faciles, un peu rapides qui sont tous taillés sur le modèle du B'nai Brith puis du Congrès juif canadien qui sont aveuglés par les millions, d'accord ? ! »

Le mois suivant, en février 2010, le « chef » des manifestants, William Sloan, qui est un proche collaborateur de Bruce Katz, suivit la piste tracée en janvier par Amir Khadir et déclara : « On ne peut pas nous traiter d'antisémites puisque nous sommes juifs pour la plupart... »

Non antisémites parce que Juifs... l'argument est fallacieux. Il existe dans l'histoire de nombreux cas de Juifs judéophobes ou antisémites. Karl Marx et Ferdinand Lassalle en sont d'illustres exemples, ainsi que la romancière française, Irène Némirovsky, que son hostilité envers les Juifs et la culture juive n'empêcha pas d'être gazée en 1942 à Auschwitz-Birkenau. Michel Epstein, son

mari, qui allait être gazé quelques mois après elle, écrivit à Otto Abetz, ambassadeur du Reich en France pour expliquer à ce dernier que bien que Juive, sa femme n'avait jamais aimé les Juifs. Démarche qui ne les sauva ni l'un ni l'autre. De nos jours on ne parle plus de Juifs antisémites mais de Juifs antisionistes, comme Noam Chomsky ou Norman Finkelstein. Plusieurs vivent en Israël (Gideon Levy, Ilan Pappé, Michel Warschawski, Schlomo Sand, etc.). Ces individus sont tous d'extrême gauche, sauf certains groupes ultra-orthodoxes, que le plus virulent des antisionistes contemporains, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, exhibe parfois devant les foules iraniennes comme des phénomènes de foire.

Je n'affirme pourtant pas que les PAJUstes sont antisémites. Stéphane Gendron non plus, d'ailleurs. Ils sont purement et simplement antisionistes, mais ont adopté par rapport à l'État juif la même attitude par rapport aux Juifs dans leur ensemble. Le rejet d'Israël a succédé au rejet des Juifs, devenu politiquement incorrect. Il n'en va évidemment pas de même dans les pays musulmans, ni dans les greffons islamistes implantés dans les pays occidentaux, où antisémitisme et antisionisme sont amalgamés. Constatons seulement que les PAJUstes, leur Ami Khadir — et le maire Gendron quand il se met à divaguer — tiennent à propos d'Israël le même discours, visent les mêmes objectifs et utilisent les mêmes moyens — moins les mortiers et les bombes humaines — que leurs alliés islamistes du Proche-Orient.



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Gérald Larose: militance antisioniste

Mise en contexte générale

La résolution 3370 de l'ONU -associant le sionisme à une forme de racisme- était adoptée le 10 novembre 1975 et abrogée ensuite en 1991. Cette résolution a été une immense déception pour les partisans du « monde libre ». Mais elle a été très satisfaisante pour les esprits totalitaires à la nuque raide. N'oublions pas l'investissement à cette époque de toutes sortes de groupuscules marxistes-léninistes (trotskistes, maoïstes) qui s'imposaient dans bien des facultés affaiblies (y compris chez les catholiques). Rappelons-nous aussi que cette résolution onusienne « antisioniste » a été un vecteur très important pour qui voulait se (re)faire une virginité intellectuelle sans l'empreinte infamante de l'antisémitisme. C'est dans ce contexte bien précis que les écrits de Larose se situent sur l'échiquier national et international.

Pour bien comprendre cette militance « antisioniste », reportons-nous à un discours fleuve du Symposium international sur le sionisme et le racisme tenu à Tripoli en Lybie en juillet 1976 par le président de l'Association du Barreau lybien, Abdullah Sharafuddin, qui affirmait des propos tout à fait délirants:

« Notre monde est maintenant confronté à l'émergence d'un nouveau type de nazisme dont les adeptes clament que leur doctrine remonte loin dans l'Histoire. La vérité est qu'ils se sont écartés des lois d'Abraham et de Moïse au point d'adhérer à la doctrine diabolique qui se résume à "Je suis mieux que les autres; je suis né du feu et eux de l'argile". Le Sionisme, avec ses principes ethniques, racistes, inhumains, avec ses projets diaboliques qui engendrent le chaos dans le monde entier, avec ses plans dangereux de domination, (...) et avec ses ramifications qui jouent un rôle presque décisif dans la direction de la politique des plus grands pays du monde, ne peut être considéré comme une menace pour cette région seulement, mais pour le monde entier (...). »

Cette satanisation nuance du sionisme ont eu un certain succès. Il suffit de rappeler les visites en

Lybie de l'ex-leader syndical de la Centrale de l'Enseignement du Québec Yvon Charbonneau qui avait très bien intériorisé la propagande « antisioniste », laquelle puisait sa source autant en Union Soviétique qu'en monde arabe. On voit ici l'ancien dirigeant de la CEQ travestir sournoisement et cyniquement la noble lutte antiraciste sous le mode d'une lutte « antisioniste » :

« Il est une forme d'injustice et de violence complètement inacceptable et que nous ne devrions pas cesser de combattre dans toutes ses manifestations et ramifications : il s'agit du racisme sous toutes ses formes (sionisme, apartheid, discrimination dans l'emploi, ségrégation, etc.), qui sert un peu partout à travers le monde d'intermédiaire à travers divers projets impérialistes. À l'invitation du Barreau lybien, il m'a été donné de participer le mois dernier à un imposant séminaire sur le racisme et le sionisme, et j'en ai retiré la conviction d'un immense travail de justice à réaliser. (...) Comme travailleurs de l'enseignement, nous avons déjà appuyé de nombreuses luttes anti-racistes et nous supportons la résistance palestinienne contre le sionisme et l'impérialisme » (Ripostons dans l'unité, Discours du Président, 25e Congrès de la CEQ, 1976).

Une décision « antisioniste » du congrès syndical de la CEQ en 1976 ira dans le même sens et fermera toute reconnaissance de l'État hébreu à côté d'un État palestinien. La CEQ manifesterait, là aussi, un profond aveuglement qui laissera encore des traces jusqu'à aujourd'hui.

« Que le Congrès mandate la Centrale aux fins de participer à la lutte pour l'élimination de la discrimination raciale sous toutes ses formes (sionisme, apartheid, ségrégation et discrimination), en conformité avec les résolutions adoptées en ce sens par l'ONU » (Décisions du 25e CONGRÈS de la CEQ tenu à Québec du 23 au 27 août 1976).

Il faudra aussi écrire un jour sur le personnage Charbonneau. Cet homme qui a été un ami et un camarade de combat de Larose a été promu il y a

quelques années dans les hautes sphères politiques (dont un poste à Paris pour l'UNESCO) sans renier d'un iota son antisionisme absolu. Il est manifeste que l'ex-chef de la CEQ a très bien joué ses cartes et mis discrètement dans sa poche cette position extrême qui pouvait bien lui servir à d'autres moments. Il a saisi l'opportunité d'un poste hautement prestigieux.

Sionisme et antisionisme

Encore tout récemment, Gérald Larose écrivait un texte imprudent et exalté intitulé Israël: du 1000 pour un. Ce texte est embarrassant. On peut le qualifier certainement « d'antisioniste » dans la mesure où il nie explicitement au peuple juif le droit à un État à côté d'un État palestinien. Voici ce qu'il déclare : « Quand, suivant qu'elles nous interpellent ou interpellent les autres, on accorde une valeur différente à la vie, à la liberté, à la démocratie et aux règles internationales qui régissent la paix dans le monde, on milite sérieusement pour ne plus être considéré comme une partie de la solution mais finalement comme la totalité du problème. Après plus de 40 ans d'occupation, il faut bien reconnaître que cette impression s'incruste de plus en plus comme une certitude » (Gérald Larose, Israël : du 1000 pour un, Branchez-vous.com, 12 juillet 2010).

Pour mieux cerner l'antisionisme absolu, ne faudrait-il pas d'abord commencer par définir son contraire, le sionisme ? Qu'est-ce que le sionisme dans l'histoire du peuple juif ? Comment définir le sionisme ? L'auteur et documentariste français Jacques Tarneroen donnait une bonne et large définition dans un ouvrage collectif publié il y a quelques années:

« Politiquement, c'est le mouvement d'émancipation nationale du peuple juif. Historiquement, c'est le mouvement né en Europe au XIX^{ème} siècle, constitutif de l'État d'Israël. Idéologiquement, c'est le mouvement de pensée (religieux, athée, nationaliste ou ouvriériste) qui veut rassembler les Juifs dispersés dans leur patrie historique »

L'antisionisme absolu tel qu'il apparaît depuis

plusieurs années est un refus brutal. Un refus sans concession à l'émergence d'un État pour le peuple juif au Moyen-Orient. Répliquons ici aux sophistes. L'antisionisme absolu n'est pas une simple critique d'une décision de tel gouvernement israélien (de gauche comme de droite). La critique de toute décision du gouvernement israélien est parfaitement légitime. Mais la démesure déraisonnable de l'antisionisme absolu est sans contredit une arme idéologique qui vise expressément l'anéantissement et la destruction de l'État hébreu que ses ennemis nourrissent dans certaines officines de propagande palestinienne et arabe. Ne soyons pas dupe de cet esprit sectaire qui arrive parfois hypocritement jusqu'à nous sous le langage doucereux d'une fausse résonance perçue comme « progressiste » ou « antiraciste ». Le travestissement du langage est une arme dangereuse qui existe, ne l'oublions pas.

Encore aujourd'hui, nous observons au Québec cette obsession « antisioniste » dans certaines organisations syndicales. L'actuel président du syndicat CSQ (l'ex-CEQ) Réjean Parent maintient toujours cette grotesque position « antisioniste » à son agenda syndical. Cette position est perçue comme « anti-impérialiste ». Ce qui règne décidément à cette Centrale syndicale n'augure rien de bon pour ceux qui veulent tendre la main et favoriser un rapprochement dans le conflit israélo-palestinien. S'exprimant lui-même sur cette « lutte antisioniste », ne disait-il pas encore récemment qu'il ne veut surtout pas se laisser « endormir par un certain courant sioniste » ?

M. Parent et M. Larose ne savent pas ou ne veulent pas comprendre que lutter pour un État palestinien démocratique sous les décombres de l'État hébreu est une parole qui alimente la pensée génocidaire que le Hamas, le Hezbollah et l'Iran nous servent depuis plusieurs années. Rappelons ceci: l'antisionisme absolu est une arme de guerre et elle nous conduit tristement à cette conséquence.



Ideas before identities.
Justice before orthodoxy.

THE MÉTROPOLITAIN



CEDEC study indicates "...more than a perceived discrimination" against anglophones in the workplace

Bill 101 still contracting community

If you're an underpaid, under-employed or unemployed middle-aged Anglophone living in Montreal, you're not alone. Apart from your dismal French, your age and what many would politely describe as 'your limited skill set', the results of a new survey indicate your prospects for a good job are dim-very dim. Based upon results of new research conducted by Montreal's CEDEC (Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation), anglophones face a serious range of obstacles which can effectively limit, or effectively destroy their employment opportunities in what is already Montreal's severely depressed labor market.

"This is serious," said Marianna Balakhnina-CEDEC's coordinator of research and development for the greater Montreal area. "This is more than a perceived discrimination."

According to their survey, a number of factors, including the prospect of radically declining retirement earnings, are forcing a significant sector of the city's population to search for viable options which usually include an unexpected return to the workforce. Unfortunately, the survey's results also appears to confirm what many believe to be one of the more unpleasant facts of life when you happen to be a middle-aged Anglophone who is wants to find a decent job in Montreal. According to the survey's 684 respondents, Montreal's jobless Anglos are often frustrated because they are forced to deal with situations and problems over which they have little or no control. Among others, survey respondents indicated that the most prevalent obstacles to finding worthwhile employment include:

A) Level of French language speaking skills and / or writing skills considered not bilingual enough;

B) Age discrimination which becomes seriously acute after the age of 50;

C) Low level of computer skills;

D) Recent immigrants face numerous challenges including a lack of adequate French skills, racial or religious discrimination and are less likely to know about available resources for

the nation. Even as almost 70% of them know how to speak French, and even if 48% of them have a university education, almost 50% of those polled in the survey have spent more than a year looking for work. According to Balakhnina, the CEDEC report indicates 83% of Québec's Anglos and Allophones consider their level of French language skills to be an issue, if not an obstacle, when they're looking for a job.

"For sure they're bilingual," said Balakhnina,

While Balakhnina said the numbers paint a dim picture for the city's unemployed Anglos, she also pointed out how, unlike most people in their position, a solid majority among them refuse to give up and let the state take care of them.

"They're willing to do whatever it takes to learn new skills," she said. "They're not afraid to go back to school if that's what it takes to get a new job."

The survey also indicates Québec's Bill 101 is still destroying what's left of their community because 38.7% of Montreal's anglophone population is now aged 45 years and more. Simply put, they stayed while their children left home and went down the road to Toronto and wealthier parts of the nation.

finding employment.

E) Those living outside the city but within the greater Montreal area tend to have a lower level of education, are less likely to have undergone some type of training program and are far more likely to say their French language skills are an obstacle to their prospects of landing a job.

However, upon closer investigation, the survey also indicates Québec's Bill 101 is still destroying what's left of their community because 38.7% of Montreal's anglophone population is now aged 45 years and more. Simply put, they stayed while their children left home and went down the road to Toronto and wealthier parts of

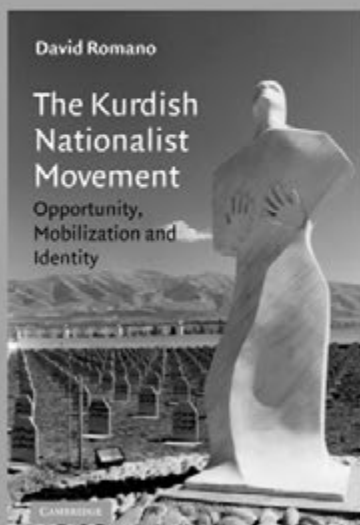
"...but according to these numbers, they're not bilingual enough!"

In a province where it's not unusual for politicians to apologize before speaking in English at a press conference, 38% of Québec's native Anglos believe their French language skills are "very much" of an issue, if not an obstacle to finding some kind of decent work in both the city and the province. For those born outside the country as well as for those born in the ROC (Rest of Canada), it's closer to 60% per cent and that doesn't include considerations about their computer skills, their race, their religion or worse-their age.

Based upon the survey's results, she also told The Métropolitain about CEDEC's plans to improve their chances to get the big job. Apart from the obvious benefits to be gained from hiring people who are already know what's expected of them in any kind of work environment, Balakhnina said mature workers have a lifetime of experience to offer their new employer.

"These are the people who have a lot of work experience," she said. "They're dedicated, they're disciplined, they have lots of life experience and more than anything else, they really need the job and they know it."

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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The price of austerity

Austerity, we have been told repeatedly by pundits and political leaders, is the defining issue in these uncertain times, the solution to our economic challenges.

We have been given fair warning that the next federal budget will be first about cuts – cuts to government even as we continue to cut taxes. We can expect the same from most provincial budgets.

This, we are told, is what must be done. Austerity is not simply the best way, the argument goes, but the only way, and not just for us but for our friends and allies. Canada has become the champion of austerity.

Politically, it is a pretty potent argument to make. It builds on our internationally recognized success in the 90s in balancing the budget and reducing debt (which unquestionably made us more resilient during the tough times that followed, though with equally undeniable costs to health and social programs, among other things). It draws on a powerful thread that runs through our history – one of pragmatism and frugality. It feeds off our growing disenchantment with government, but also the serious troubles we are seeing elsewhere, in Greece for example. And in this uncertain time, we are told that we have no choice. Austerity is the answer.

Opposition voices are reluctant to offer alternatives for fear of being seen as fiscally imprudent or as stuck in the past, defending “big government”. And so, presented with no options, we come to believe that in fact there are none.

A good rule of thumb for public policy is that when we are told that there is no alternative, that usually means the opposite: that not only is there an alternative but it is probably one that we would prefer if it were offered.

We do indeed have choices – better choices. Of course we have to be prudent as we dig out of current deficits, partly a result of wise government action to mitigate the worst consequences of the global recession. But this is not the 1990s. Our situation is not dire. Canada is not Greece.

1) This is not the 90s and we are not Greece

Before the 1990s assault on the deficit, about one-third of every tax dollar was going to service the federal debt and dire warnings were circulating that Canada was at risk of hitting a debt wall and falling into 3rd world status with respect to global capital. So we cut. But the thing is, the global economy was pretty strong and getting stronger. We were contracting; others were spending. As it turns out, economic growth – along with real sacrifice – was crucial in balancing the budget and exceeding all reduction targets. And it didn't hurt that taxes then were higher. So deficits turned to surpluses – more quickly than anyone expected – and those tax-fueled surpluses were quickly bringing down our debt.

Today, our level of debt is still the envy of others. But now the global economy is slowing and the future is less certain, less promising than in the 1990s; the recession lingers like a bad cold. Even here in Canada, and we have been pretty lucky, we continue to shed good jobs and, like everywhere else, our markets can expect to be battered by continued volatility. This is not the 1990s. Neither the fiscal urgency nor the economic conditions are

the same.

And most important, we ought to understand how we got back into deficit and increasing debt in the first place, at least at the federal level. It was just a few years ago that we were running surpluses year after year. In the year that the current federal government took the reins, the surplus was at \$16 billion. Clearly program spending was not putting us at risk. That surplus meant that we would have great resilience in the face of economic downturns – times when we inevitably spend more and lose revenue. It also meant that the federal government would be able to help the provinces, especially those hardest hit and that we would have fiscal room to manage the stresses of an aging population in a way that would be intergenerationally fair.

So what happened? Certainly part of the answer is that we are paying off the costs of stimulus spending made necessary during the recession. But that spending stopped – earlier than some would have hoped – and so, even with moderate growth, we should be able to return to balance with a bit of prudence and without draconian measures. If we want to.

But recession spending is not really the culprit. Our big problem is that our revenues as a percentage of GDP are far lower than they were in the 1990s, not just because of recession and slow recovery. In many respects our current and future fiscal challenges at the federal level are self-induced, the result of a succession of unaffordable tax cuts. Just think of the tens of billions annually taken out of our budgets since 2000 – and particularly more recently – in reduced income taxes, capital gains taxes, corporate taxes, and the GST, not to mention the long list of boutique tax “benefits” that amount to little more than tax cuts disproportionately benefiting those who need help least.

So our fiscal situation is not dire, at least not at the federal level. We are still reaping the benefits from the 1990s decade of sacrifice, and the challenges we do have are largely self-inflicted. And if we chose to get here, we can choose to get out.

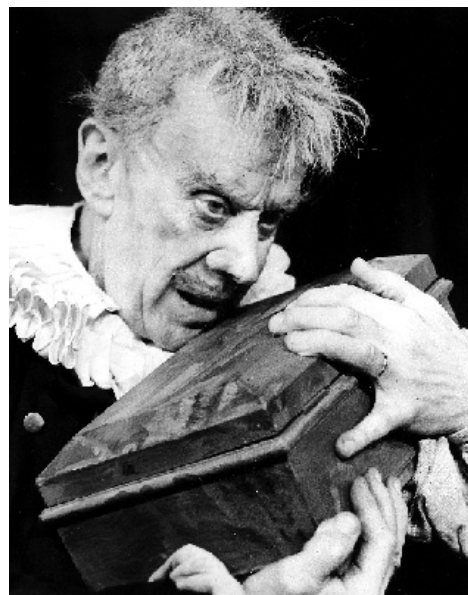
2) Austerity is not fiscally prudent

Let me be clear that I share in the broad consensus that we must be fiscally prudent. But let's pause on what fiscal prudence really means: It means spending wisely, reducing waste, collecting sufficient taxes to pay for the public goods and services we want, and keeping debt coming down, at least during reasonably good times.

Of course there is always room to cut and we have important choices to make on our priorities. I, for one, believe that we probably and understandably overbuilt our security apparatus after 9/11 and that in particular deserves a close look.

And make no mistake, the costly plan to build more prisons and penitentiaries – unjustified by the evidence – either increases our debt or diverts money from priority services such as health and education.

As for waste, it is probably time to look at the layers of bureaucratic control and oversight that make government less innovative and efficient – and arguably less accountable and transparent. But as our Parliamentary Budget Officer repeatedly



reminds us, the numbers here don't add up; we will not balance the books on efficiencies and cuts to operating budgets.

Yes, government has become too central, authoritarian and remote from our everyday lives. We have a big job to do to close the gap between citizens and their governments. And there are no doubt savings to be had here. But these are not primarily fiscal issues nor will austerity be the answer to our fiscal challenges.

Today's austerity, however, is not primarily about fiscal prudence. If it were it wouldn't be proceeding in tandem with large, unaffordable and unnecessary tax cuts for the most affluent among us. These tax cuts make deeper program cuts inevitable.

The persistent emphasis on low taxes and cuts to services and public goods looks more like ideology masquerading as fiscal common sense. In this light, austerity seems rather to be about cutting back the state and rolling out the free market agenda. Less public, more private; less collective, more individual. It is, in other words, the fulfillment of the neoliberal counter-revolution rather than an economic plan for the future.

We know that some pretty smart economists, Paul Krugman and Joseph Stiglitz for two, have taken on the austerity agenda and tax-cutting neoliberal ideology that underpins it. They argue that this is in fact the time for spending, the time for investments in education and infrastructure and for putting money in the hands of those in greatest need. They argue that the consequences of premature austerity could match what we saw in the 1930s, that in any case, this strategy will not yield the growth and opportunities we need. And, they add, it is also about time to stop the tax cuts and to start increasing taxes on those who can afford it. (And in the U.S., a growing number of rich Americans are calling on their government to raise their taxes.)

Frankly we don't have to try to weave our way through the debates among economists to be worried about the consequences of austerity. A recent report from the (not-left-leaning) IMF has surveyed the international evidence and has concluded that government spending cuts do not, at least in the short-term, create jobs and growth but do create very significant costs to society, the economy and quality of life for the majority.

3) The consequences will fall most heavily on those who can bear them least

What does the IMF report tell us? The benefits of austerity cannot be seen but its negative consequences can, and these fall most heavily on the people who can bear them least. Specifically, the authors show that austerity, especially when it cannot be offset by significant lowering of interest, brings with it increases in unemployment – particularly enduring unemployment – suppression of wages for the majority, and deepening income inequality.

So, as we dig out, we ought to make sure that we are not stripping away the very tools necessary to withstand future shocks and to create jobs and opportunities now and for the future. We ought to make sure that we are not hollowing out the country, allowing the erosion of those things that give meaning to our shared citizenship and that should be a source of comparative advantage going forward. And we ought to make sure that we are not undermining our ability to invest in those things that will make us stronger and greener for the future.

Austerity will take us down the wrong track. It is not fiscally prudent. It is not an economic plan so much as a surrender to the market. And its costs will be heavy for the most vulnerable certainly, but for us all. So let's reject the politics of inevitability and look at the choices we have and what the evidence tells us about what works best for the majority, not just for the few, and for the future, not just for now.

We need to have the debate – and the starting point cannot be some assumption about the inevitability of austerity. In fact, it ought not to be about big government versus small government. It ought to be focused on what will work to enhance the quality of life for most Canadians and what will make Canada more resilient for future generations. It ought to be a debate about what challenges, what problems, most urgently cry out for our collective attention and action. The preoccupation with austerity should not blind us to what really matters for our collective well-being.

I, for one, would propose that inequality, not austerity, be the defining issue for us now. Income inequality is growing fast in Canada and even the traditional deniers are coming on board. The gap is simply too big, the risks too high to ignore. Indeed, extreme inequality will continue to grow in an agenda dominated by austerity and tax cuts, an agenda that reduces our capacity for mutual aid and for collective solutions to our major challenges – our low productivity, climate change and environmental deterioration, and declining political participation.

Of course we ought to be fiscally prudent and that means asking of each cut and each expenditure, including every tax cut: will this help reduce inequality or will it make things worse?

Let's make inequality in all of its manifestations – child poverty, the reemergence of elderly poverty, the squeeze on working Canadians and students, and the excessive incomes at the top – a national priority.

We can afford the investments. We cannot afford to ignore the threat.



Power play at the pumps

"The premise of shortage of supply is, by any standard, a fallacy of staggering proportions. The "invisible hand" of the marketplace will not come to our rescue. Above all other economic activity energy is, in the final analysis, a political matter."

Short-term memory loss is normally considered a worrisome symptom. But for the companies that sell refined gasoline it is the greatest blessing. To us, the general public that is squeezed everyday by the power play at the pumps, it should be a source of shame. To be a citizen of a democracy requires responsibility. And part of that responsibility is to be an educated consumer of public information. We need a populace that can remember the relationship of crude to pump as well as it does the stats of the local hockey heroes. If we don't wake up soon, we won't be able to afford those tickets to the Bell Centre.

Expenditures on gas prices just crossed 6% of individuals average monthly budgets in North America. According to government estimates, 4% is the ceiling before consumers start tightening their wallets and the economy contracts. The reasons for it are a scandal. It's a squeeze play. Over the past year, the price for a barrel of crude has fluctuated from lows of about \$80 to highs near \$130. That a 60% swing based on the lowest baseline. Have you seen drops in the price per litre when crude falls anywhere near that? Of course not. And here's why.

Everytime the price of a barrel of crude goes up, the big refiner/retailers jack up the price at the pump. Of course they always blame the wellhead price and "seasonal demand." So just as an easy example using round numbers let's say at \$100 a barrel our price is \$1 per litre at the pump. When the price falls to \$80 do we see a 20% drop at the pump. No. We may see 3-5%. And when the

barrel price shoots up to say \$110, the pump price doesn't jump by 10% it is normally increased by 20 to 30%. The excuses used by the refiner/retailers – let's call them the R&Rs – is that they have to cushion against "potential" further increases. But when there are decreases instead of increases, we the consumers get very small reductions.

The R&Rs get away with this because they change the baselines. They count on the broad public not being able to match up numbers. So when crude drops by 20% and our pump price by 3%, they know that no questions will be asked. There will just be long lines of people ready to fill up on "cheaper" fuel. The reason the R&Rs get away with this is one of the dirtiest little secrets on

The premise of shortage of supply is, by any standard, a fallacy of staggering proportions. The "invisible hand" of the marketplace will not come to our rescue. Unlike any other economic activity, energy is, in the final analysis, a political matter.

the public agenda.

R&Rs do not include your corner station owners. Don't get mad at them. They're victims like us all. Nor strangely enough does it include the countries like Saudi Arabia who produce the crude. The Chairman of Saudi Arabia's Kingdom Holdings recently admitted on CNBC that it still only costs the Kingdom some \$4-6 a barrel to get the oil out of the ground and pipe it to the ships. This is not to deny that oil-producing states production manipulations don't play a role. They do. But it is not constant. Even if OPEC wants to "punish" the west, it can only do so for a few weeks. These nations exist on selling their oil. No, the R&Rs are those oil companies who not only explore and drill but also refine. They have cut refining capacity in North America by over 50% since 1973 even though by their own numbers

demand in North America grows 1-2% a year. But they control the refining so they control the price.

Over the past four decades refiners in Canada have closed 26 refineries. We have gone from 45 to 19. The picture in the United States is the same. And Canada plays a role. Several years ago Sen. Carl Levin of Michigan, Chairman of the Senate's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, uncovered regular manipulation of prices by oil refiners that of necessity would have required collusion. A startling example was the discovery by Levin's investigators of internal memos from then BP Amoco PLC that set out a plan to "...influence the refined crude supply/demand balance by offering supply

agreements to other oil majors in exchange for refining capacity shutdown and movement of product from the U.S. to warehousing in southern Ontario."

When Levin asked Rob Routs, then president and chief executive of Shell U.S., whether he was troubled by, "The fact that gas prices go up and down together everywhere almost at once," Routs replied, "No, it doesn't trouble me at all." Levin suggested that such pricing, while legal, ought to be considered "an anti-competitive act" and that juries should be allowed to consider whether that is an antitrust violation. But why will we never see anti-trust or anti-monopoly action by government? Because depending on the state or province, 40-60% of the price at the pump goes to taxes. No administration will ever kill the golden goose.

Should anyone think that oil is a declining

resource – or hard to extract - and that would justify the price manipulations by refiners to assure their existence, the facts belie that argument. Several years ago The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) admitted that our oil sands projects are economically viable at market prices of \$18-\$20 a barrel. Well they've been way over that for decades. The U.S. Department of Energy's International Administrator Guy Caruso stated in a 2006 report that Canada's oil sands are viable at much higher production levels and that Canada's real reserves are 180 billion barrels. Saudi Arabia's are 264 billion barrels. Interestingly, despite the industry's arguably justifiable opposition to Kyoto, CAPP once admitted that Canada's ratification of Kyoto would add only 25 cents to 30 cents a barrel in development costs.

Finally, for those who would argue that reserves and discoveries have fallen behind growth in demand, the numbers demonstrate otherwise. Reserves have kept pace and more. According to the industry bible, the Oil and Gas Journal, reserves have grown by 55% since the mid-1950s as against a 24% increase in demand. And these numbers do not take into consideration Russian reserves which, even though they are the world's most difficult and unconventional to exploit, are proven as to quality and are second only to Saudi Arabia's in quantity. The premise of shortage of supply is, by any standard, a fallacy of staggering proportions. The "invisible hand" of the marketplace will not come to our rescue. Above all other economic activity energy is, in the final analysis, a political matter. As citizens we need to force our elected officials to reign in the voracious appetite of what is quickly becoming an oligarchic industry operating without restraint of consequence.

"You will find *true*
SUCCESS in those *efforts*
 that captivate your
heart and soul.
 Belief fuels **PASSION**
 and *passion rarely fails.*"



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The continuing quest to define what Canada is all about

Washington, DC - Collectors of political trivia may remember U.S. Hollywood actor George Clooney promised to leave the United States for Canada if "Dubya"

Bush was re-elected in 2004. Dubya was—but Clooney didn't grace your doorsteps. He would have had competence in one official language and sufficient funds not to be a public charge so he probably would

have navigated your immigrant labyrinth.

Now Justin Trudeau seems to be taking a related approach to Canada, Trudeau's comments, regardless of the context he tried to put them in,

are indicative of the existential problem of Canada. While the United States solved its national unity problem with a bloody and long-remembered civil war, Canada's national unity issue remains extant. Not that anyone would recommend the U.S. solution, but Canada - and some of its most important sons - are still in search of a solution.

For Canada regardless of the dormancy of the sleeping dog of Quebec sovereignty, barely a nudge produces reaction. And massive amounts of politico-social energy are necessary to maintain the construct that is labeled "Canada."

Inherent in Trudeau's statement

is it would not be unfair to ask for some specificity once and for all. Both from commentators and from Trudeau.

The debate must focus on whether issues currently on the public agenda could be the straws that break the camel's back. Abolition of restrictions on private medical care/user fees under the Canada Health Act? Rescinding the 1969 Official Languages Act? Building a Northern Gateway pipeline? Joining a military "coalition of the willing" without the sanction of the United Nations? Are all these issues of identity or ideas that legitimately change with different governments.

For Canada regardless of the dormancy of the sleeping dog of Quebec sovereignty, barely a nudge produces reaction. And massive amounts of politico-social energy are necessary to maintain the construct that is labeled "Canada."

are the issues of what constitutes Canada's unfinished identity, and the still unfinished debate over it. He said, "I always say, if at a certain point, I believe that Canada was really the Canada of Stephen Harper—that we were going against abortion, and we were going against gay marriage, and we were going backwards in 10,000 different ways—maybe I would think about making Quebec a country." So must one ask:

- Are "abortion" and "gay marriage" defining elements of Canada? Canada is the only western country without a law on abortion of some kind. And only 10 countries (not including the UK or France) permit same-sex marriages. Both issues topics are almost the definition of "red herrings" as the governments run from such subjects like scalded cats;

- And about those "10,000 different ways" in which Canada could be "going backwards?" We've heard such phrases before from polemi-

Trudeau's comments, as much as I find them disagreeable, bring to light once again that Canada must once and for all come to terms with its never-ending identity crisis.

As an ancient combatant diplomat, my personal opinions of various foreign officials and citizens were pungent; but they remained personal. But the core of the problem remains that Quebec would be a perfectly viable independent country. To be sure, not without a plethora of difficulties, economic/social problems, demographic dislocations, and a legacy of lawsuits that would outlast all of its "founders." But it would not be a third-world basket case either.

So identity politic comments by a leading Quebec federalist are disconcerting evidence that the commitment to Canada may lie rather lightly even on the most committed. At least until Canada, and its federalist advocates, decide what it is really all about.

admona
management



Proud to be Canadian?

Canada provides hundreds of million of dollars in aid to dictators, tyrants, and corrupt governments around the world.

Of the 25 countries named in the new International Policy Statement as key recipients of Canadian aid, only 6 are deemed by Freedom House to be free, while 19 are unfree or dictatorships. All 25 are identified as having corruption as a major problem, combined with weak parliaments, a lack of transparency and little respect for the rule of law.

Instead of working to bring about positive change, Canadian aid allows these dysfunctional and sometimes tyrannical regimes to remain intact while we apply band-aids to the symptoms.

Canada consistently fails to support democracies around the world such as India, Taiwan, America and Israel. In many cases, we actively work against them. And with the exception of Ukraine, Canada refuses to take measurable action to support the billions of people aspiring for democracy, freedom and accountable governments around the world.

Make Democracy a Guiding Principle

Canada's foreign policy is centred around three Ds (Defense, Development and Diplomacy). CCD believes that our policies should be guided by a 4th D, Democracy. Canada must make ending corruption, respect for the rule of law, and open, accountable and transparent governments key foreign policy priorities. If you agree, become a member of the CCD.

Founded in 2003, the Canadian Coalition for Democracies (CCD) is an organization of concerned Canadians dedicated to the protection and promotion of democracy at home and abroad. CCD will influence the Canadian political process and public opinion to achieve a more pro-democracy foreign policy.

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IRAN: A RESPONSE TO A DIFFERENT PARADIGM OF "RATIONALITY", CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's denial of the Holocaust, which he characterised as "the pretext for the creation of the Zionist regime... it is a lie based on an unprovable and mythical claim." He has further stated that "Israel must be wiped off the map" and that "very soon this stain of disgrace [i.e. Israel] will be purged from the center of the Islamic world - and this is attainable." Similarly the Supreme Leader of Iran the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has called Israel a "cancer" that obviously must be eliminated. This characterization of Israel as "a cancer", one that requires eradication, is constantly repeated by Iran's proxies, the terrorist organizations Hezbollah and Hamas.

It would be a grave mistake, though, to reduce the Iranian issue to an Iran-Israel problem. We need to recognize and remember that the genocidal regime in Tehran has long held itself above international law and has repeatedly demonstrated a wanton and reckless disregard of international norms. In both 1979 and 2011, for instance, in what is emblematic of the regime's utter contempt for the international community, it chose to violate one of the most basic norms of international behaviour. It condoned and in many ways encouraged the destructive invasion of the American and British embassies respectively. The 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations is not only very specific in providing diplomatic immunity for diplomats but also stipulates that the premises of the diplomatic mission and the private residence of a diplomat are inviolate, as are the archives, documents and other property belonging to the diplomatic mission and diplomats. Consequently the attacks in 1979 and 2011 constituted one of the gravest violations of international law and were a fundamental affront directed at the entire international community. It showed stark contempt for one of the most basic precepts of international law, one that both by custom and convention guards international communication and is a prerequisite for peaceful resolution of disputes.

Can we then conclude that the Iranian regime is irrational? Not necessarily. It has been able to engage in such gross international behaviour and to disregard international laws and norms with relative impunity. Moreover, it has felt that such contempt for the international community has increased its legitimacy both domestically and in the region. Consequently, even if the behaviour of the regime may seem irrational to us it is not a manifestation of an inability to differentiate between right and wrong, a condition of non compos mentis, but rather it is the case that the regime abided by a different paradigm of rationality, driven by its inner (extreme) theological logic. In other words, the Iranian regime does think differently than democratic governments - and is prepared to behave in a fundamentally different fashion than that stipulated by international law and norms since it believes that it is responding to a higher authority.

2. Can deterrence work?

Deterrence is foremost a psychological relationship that involves a kind of mutual mind reading where one party tries to induce the other to perform the same kind of cost benefit calculation that itself would do, and as a consequence the target party would logically come to the conclusion that the costs would outweigh the benefits if it engages in some inimical action against the first party. By this standard I would suggest that deterrence cannot work with the current Iranian regime. As noted, the regime

does not operate (or make decisions) the same way as much of the international community - certainly not the democracies. Its death-worshipping theology where salvation and a rich afterlife can be attained by destroying the designated enemies of God - "the Great Satan" and or "the Little Satan" - stands in sharp contrast with the rest of the world where life is cherished. It's a very different calculation of costs and benefits. The Iranian regime, in sum, operates on the basis of a different logic where the threat of death or of mutually assured destruction does not play the same role as elsewhere since the ultimate goals sought by this regime are not temporal.

3. Can deterrence during the Cold War provide a useful analogy?

This is a tempting analogy but ultimately dangerously wrongheaded. It is true that East and West faced each other with many thousands of nuclear weapons and yet nuclear war was avoided, allegedly because of mutual deterrence. It is also true that Iran does not or will not have the vast nuclear capacity of the Soviet Union. This is however where the comparisons end and misunderstanding begins.

First we should know that the Cold War was a tremendously risky period where there was a grave danger of global nuclear devastation a number of

...the notion that there may be some comfort if Iran develops a capacity to make and deploy nuclear weapons but does not actually do so is a dangerous distinction without a difference. It gives Iran a rapid surge capacity on which no neighbour or country can rely as protection.

times, particularly in 1961 and 1973. J. David Singer perceptively observed that "the world may have escaped nuclear devastation by sheer luck - less a consequence of intelligent policy than a fortunate concatenation of conditions."

Second, and crucially, we must remember that the Soviet leadership was driven by an ideological imperative that pivoted on the victory of the proletariat on earth and not in heaven. The Soviet Union consequently could not achieve its ideological goals if there was a nuclear holocaust. In comparison to Iran we are looking at starkly different goals and strategies. On the one hand we had very clear ideological constraints whereas on the other we are looking at theological licence. Comparing the Iranian regime and the Soviet Union and looking at Cold War analogies is not only wrong but encourages a movement from what had been a major risk during the Cold War to an utterly reckless and unconscionable gamble with Iran.

4. What are the risks of a nuclear Iran?

No one can say with certainty that an Iran, armed with nuclear weapons, will launch a nuclear war against anyone. At the same time no one can provide any assurance whatsoever that such a regime which has clearly declared genocidal goals would not employ nuclear weapons once it develops a capacity to try to fulfill those goals. Add the theological licence and the regime's belief that the ultimate reward is in heaven and is in significant measure derived from destroying those whom they identify as the enemies of God, and we exponentially multiply risks that were already large during the Cold War.

We also need to appreciate that the Iranian threat applies to far more than Israel. The fanatical and genocidal theology of the Iranian regime also puts Christian, secular and opposing Muslim states at risk. It is instructive that Arab states in the Gulf tremendously fear a nuclear Iran. In Eastern Europe several states including Romania, the Czech Republic and Poland are in the process of deploying American anti-ballistic missile (ABM) systems that are designed to protect them from an attack by a nuclearized Iran. These countries have made it very clear that these ABM systems are not directed at, nor could they be in the least effective against the massive Russian missile capacity but it is the regime in Tehran that may at some point have its collective finger on a nuclear trigger, that alarms them. It should also be noted that democratic opposition leaders in Russia as well view a nuclear Iran as a deadly and unacceptable threat. Boris Nemtsov, one of the key opposition leaders in Russia, stated during his February 2012 visit to Canada that he and the opposition view a nuclear Iran as a direct threat to Russia and that the nuclear weaponization by Iran must be stopped. The development by Iran of delivery systems including sophisticated missiles that can now reach just about any part of Europe

The problem that Canada and other countries face in the case of the Iranian regime is not only that the latter is rushing headlong to develop and deploy nuclear weapons but it is a government that has repeatedly enunciated its goals to commit genocide and has continuously negotiated in bad faith. Consequently the international community needs to take whatever steps necessary to have this regime removed. The following are some possibilities:

1. As both Canada and Iran are parties to the Genocide Convention [ratified respectively in 1952 and 1956] and since the convention states that persons who engage in direct and public incitement to commit genocide shall be punishable whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals, President Ahmadinejad and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, having publically incited to commit genocide against the Jewish people should be put on trial. Since it would be highly unlikely that Iran would keep its promise to Canada [through the Genocide Convention] to punish those who incite genocide, Ottawa as a contracting party, could ask for a referral from the United Nations Security Council to the International Criminal Court. As this may be blocked in the Security Council, Canada, under the Genocide Convention, could and should submit the failure of Iran to prosecute Ahmadinejad and Khamenei, for incitement to genocide, to the International Court of Justice.

2. Opposition groups inside and outside of Iran should be encouraged to bring about regime change. The People's Mujahedin Organization of Iran [PMOI/MEK] which many view as a secular organization and which has sought to overthrow the Iranian regime (and is encamped but under threat in Iraq) should be carefully re-examined. This group has been designated as a terrorist organization by the U.S., the European Union, Canada and Australia but as a result of litigation that designation has been lifted in Europe. Canada of course needs to make its own independent determination. If following that should we conclude that the PMOI is not currently a terrorist organization, the designation then should be lifted, they should be encouraged in their actions against the Iranian regime and some of those under threat in Iraqi camps should possibly be offered refugee resettlement in Canada.

3. We should take steps in Canada to allow Iran to be sued civilly for torture, crimes against humanity, genocide and incitement to genocide. The State Immunity Act before parliament as part of the omnibus Bill C-10 is very useful in terms of the victims of acts of terrorism and should be amended to broaden its scope to encompass the other offences listed above.

4. Sanctions should be sharply increased and promptly implemented by Canada and its allies in NATO. The focus has to be on banking, flows of money, sales of oil and natural gas, as well as air travel. These sanctions need to be designed to drastically undermine the ability of the genocidal Iranian regime to bribe its key supporters and to indicate to the population at large that this regime has lost all international legitimacy.

5. The military option, as a very last resort, should most definitely and visibly be kept on the table. Canada and her allies must make it clear that under no circumstances will Iran be allowed to develop a capacity to build or to deploy nuclear weapons.

moreover shows that their goal is not merely directed against "the Little Satan."

Further the notion that there may be some comfort if Iran develops a capacity to make and deploy nuclear weapons but does not actually do so is a dangerous distinction without a difference. It gives Iran a rapid surge capacity on which no neighbour or country can rely as protection. Worse, it offers the Iranian regime a new subterfuge to get to the nuclear destination while minimizing the risk of international action to prevent them from doing so.

5. Should the military option be taken off the table?

War should be always viewed as a last resort and any military action against Iran by any state or combination of states involves great risks and thus preferably avoided. That said, as Nobel Laureate Robert Aumann noted "war itself is not irrational...". International law provides for self-defence and historically, Canada has repeatedly engaged in military action to fight for principles and for the rights of others in the international community. International law moreover, is increasingly moving towards accepting the principle of "Responsibility to Protect" [R2P] in the face of genocide. In more recent times Canada has participated in military action in Kosovo as well as Libya. Taking the military option off the table therefore would mean that the international community would be voluntarily forgoing both its rights and responsibilities under international law and would grant the genocidal regime in Tehran additional licence.

Recommendations



DU VIN AIGRE DANS DE NOUVELLES OUTRES : DE L'ANTISÉMITISME CLASSIQUE AU NOUVEL ANTISÉMITISME, SUITE DE LA PAGE 1

du peuple décide) ou de celui, plus délétère encore, qui s'abreuve aux sources d'un racisme primaire. On pourrait penser que nos contemporains ont réussi jusqu'à un certain point, à interioriser les leçons du suicide collectif qu'ont entraînées l'impasse du nazisme et les horreurs de l'holocauste. Aujourd'hui, pourtant, force nous est de constater que l'antisémitisme nouveau genre dans sa version antisioniste gagne en respectabilité et n'est plus objet de scandale aux yeux de ceux qui combattent l'État Juif au nom même de l'antiracisme et de l'universalisme qui doit caractériser les droits humains les plus fondamentaux.

L'actualité reflétée dans les médias fournit d'innombrables exemples de l'apathie générale devant les attaques d'universitaires issus de prestigieuses universités pour qui la solidarité avouée des Juifs à l'endroit d'Israël compromettrait l'intérêt national des États-Unis. C'est là une des thèses développées par John Mearsheimer de l'Université de Chicago et Stephen Walt de l'Université Harvard dans un ouvrage qui s'est révélé un best-seller. En septembre 2011, ils ont même appuyé publiquement la publication antisioniste d'un auteur né en Israël qui se proclame comme un « ex-Juif » ou même comme un « Juif qui se hait lui-même. ».

Plus près de nous, les tirades haineuses du maire de Huntingdon sur les ondes de V-télé et la condamnation récente de ses accusations par la direction du réseau n'ont guère suscité de réaction en dehors des cercles proches des organisations juives. De même, la fin de non-recevoir exprimée par un animateur

de Radio-Canada à l'endroit des positions défendues par le Ministre John Baird devant un auditoire israélien à Herzliya est révélatrice d'un état d'esprit qui tend à oblitérer le tort causé aux Juifs par la remise en question de la légitimité d'Israël. Le Ministre, en effet, venait d'exprimer sa conviction que la négation de la légitimité de l'État Juif faisait en quelque sorte partie des dogmes immuables du nouvel antisémitisme.

Ce nouvel antisémitisme, dans la mesure où on ne remet pas en

en manque d'un sang assez pur (pensons « limpieza de sangre ») pour assurer leur intégration dans la bonne société. Dans les années trente, on leur reprochait, entre autres méfaits, de pas être pourvus du bon profil racial. Aujourd'hui, c'est la nature même de l'État juif que ses détracteurs décrivent à l'unisson et impunément. Resurgit l'accusation jamais prouvée de détournement de l'eau de ses voisins. Pire, l'État sioniste s'emploierait sciemment à empoisonner les puits de ses

missiles lancées à partir de bases ennemies. Une analyse plus fine devrait permettre l'identification de méthodes plus douces pour contrer la menace des quelque 200 000 missiles (selon un estimé récent) que des régimes radicaux pointent vers une entité sioniste jugée par trop militariste.

Faisons l'hypothèse de la nécessité d'un débat sur la prétendue émergence d'un nouvel antisémitisme. Mais ce débat a eu lieu. À Ottawa même. Et plus près de nous encore. À Gatineau où le

douteuse : « L'antisémitisme est une certaine perception des Juifs, pouvant s'exprimer par de la haine à leur égard. Les manifestations rhétoriques et physiques de l'antisémitisme sont dirigées contre des individus juifs ou non-juifs..., contre les institutions de la communauté juive et contre les institutions religieuses juives ». Dans un ajout important, cependant, la définition se voit élargie de façon à inclure les vexations dirigées contre Israël : « En outre l'État d'Israël, perçu comme une collectivité juive, peut être aussi la cible de ces attaques ».

Au Québec, très peu de journalistes se sont intéressés aux travaux de la Coalition parlementaire et ses conclusions ont l'objet de peu de commentaires. Certains journalistes ont vu à tort dans la définition du nouvel antisémitisme une tentative perverse de museler le droit à la liberté d'expression et, partant, celui, inaliénable, de pouvoir critiquer les politiques de l'État d'Israël.

Le débat n'a pas eu lieu et nul ne voit pour l'instant à partir de quelle tribune il pourrait s'amorcer. Dans l'intervalle, les détracteurs de l'État d'Israël continueront de proposer des définitions de l'antisémitisme qui leur épargneront la balle meurtrière enfouie dans une définition moins écriquée d'une idéologie libérale en apparence seulement mais conventionnellement haineuse et restrictive dans sa mesquinerie à l'endroit des Juifs. Pourquoi les victimes revendiqueraient-elles le privilège de contrôler les paramètres essentiels d'une pathologie qui affecte au premier chef ceux et celles qui en sont infestés?

Au Québec, très peu de journalistes se sont intéressés aux travaux de la Coalition parlementaire et ses conclusions ont l'objet de peu de commentaires.

question sa pertinence, puise aux sources de l'antisémitisme conventionnel mais grâce à un subterfuge intellectuel grossier les détracteurs d'Israël se complaisent à occulter l'infamie antijuive en dressant devant le caractère juif de l'État d'Israël le paravent commode de l'opposition au sionisme. En d'autres temps, on a pu reprocher aux Juifs de ne pas partager la religion des Chrétiens. Frappés d'exclusion ou forcés de se convertir à défaut d'une démarche de conviction qui aurait pu leur éviter bien des ennuis, les Juifs se sont vus plus tard pratiquement impuissants face à l'accusation qui leur était faite d'être

ennemis. Il s'activerait même, derrière les murs aseptisés de ses hôpitaux ultramodernes, à développer des politiques eugénistes dans l'espoir de voir émerger l'homme nouveau de la rédemption juive! Telle est la conclusion à laquelle est parvenue récemment une journaliste hollandaise après avoir bénéficié des soins prodigués par une unité de néonatalogie dans un hôpital de Tel Aviv.

Enfin, plus grave encore apparaît l'accusation formulée périodiquement dans nos médias selon laquelle Israël utiliserait une « force excessive » en tentant de protéger ses populations civiles contre les

débat s'est transporté le 9 novembre 2010 en présence de parlementaires venus du monde entier lors de la conclusion des travaux de la Coalition parlementaire canadienne de lutte contre l'antisémitisme.

Cette commission, instaurée par des bénévoles avec le concours du Gouvernement conservateur du Premier Ministre Harper, a utilisé dans ses travaux la définition de l'antisémitisme proposée par l'Union Européenne. Cette définition ne postule nullement l'existence d'un nouvel antisémitisme mais ne l'exclut pas. Elle nous est livrée dans une formulation pour le moins maladroite et grammaticalement

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1500 "MODEL" UN PARTICIPANTS HEAR MESSAGE OF CHALLENGE AND RESPONSIBILITY FROM THE MET PUBLISHER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Wajzman took less than forty minutes, speaking without a set text, to remind his audience that among its challenges and responsibilities was the duty "...to speak truth to power, stand up for what is right and just and change a UN that has become morally bankrupt and increasingly illegitimate in a desperate world moving toward bilateral and multi-lateral arrangements to counter the UN's irrelevancy."

After complimenting McMun's organizers for the decorum, efficiency and depth of the gathering, Wajzman then drove home the point that each must now take the next step and become, in Robert Kennedy's words, "part of the thousand centers of energy and daring" to tear down the walls of nullification and resistance put up by the tyrannies that now control the UN and make it such a dangerous influence on the international system.

Wajzman's speech quickly took on the form of a personal conversation which maintained the crowd's rapt attention right up to the point when he received a standing ovation. After warning his audience not to fall in love with their own sense of moral righteousness and worse- "...your own PR," he also reminded them that in the beginning, there's always the word and words do matter. Following a reference to the fact that last Friday was the 67th commemoration of the liberation of Auschwitz and the deportation of Leon Mugesera back to Rwanda because of an alleged hate speech in which his words sparked that country's genocide, he quoted Irwin Cotler-Canada's former justice minister- that

It took less than a decade after its founding before the compromise of the UN's original mission began as tyrannies gained membership and tyrants began to use their so-called 'sovereign rights' as a justification for murder and mayhem and using the world body as a cover.

"Holocausts begin with words-not bullets," and Wajzman warned that the words coming out of the UN are dangerous in their "mendacity and demonization."

Addressing the title theme of the gathering "Information: The new currency of international relations," Wajzman said that even if instant information has become an influence on what nations do and how fast they do it, he made a point of reminding his audience that disinformation spread by the same media is its evil twin sister. He asked where was the coverage of the liberals now betrayed, marginalized and jailed in the betrayals of the Arab Spring and described that both Joseph Goebbels and Joseph Stalin practiced the art of the "big lie" that if repeated often enough is "believed by the broad masses." And with one sentence that struck much of the audience, Wajzman dismissed much of what passes for the truth in today's media coverage of international affairs as nothing more than "...new cloaks for the old tyrannies."

Wajzman described how it took less than a decade after its founding before the compromise of the UN's original mission began as tyrannies gained

membership and tyrants began to use their so-called 'sovereign rights' as a justification for murder and mayhem and using the world body as a cover. Citing such current examples as Syria's brutal suppression of its own people, the ongoing genocide taking place in Somalia and China's ongoing repression and suppression of both its own people as well as the people of Tibet, Wajzman told his audience that they too would have to take a stand against the UN's complacent, compliant and sometimes complicit political leadership which can no longer do anything but tolerate lies while millions die and democracies demonized. And he directly linked the Arab world's ability to get away with attacks on one of the UN's few democracies, Israel, on its oil power and the common thread of hatred of the "other" as an essential tool to maintaining the power of despots and dictators not only over their own people but over the direction of the world body.

"An informational currency based on hatred, falsehood and arrogance, is devoid of any moral or legal value," said Wajzman. "The new currency of international relations must not be, to paraphrase Martin Luther King, Jr., a

cheque drawn on the moral capital of mankind that is returned for insufficient funds," said Wajzman. "It is your challenge, and responsibility, as future leaders, to ensure that the world bank of morality is never leveraged, nor compromised, to the threats of tyrants or the cowardice of moral relativism."

The two rows of ribbons stitched on Cadet Russ Boston's uniform had a lot to say about the time he spent as a fighting soldier during America's recent conflict in Iraq. The former Marine is presently studying at the U.S. Army's elite West Point Military Academy. When asked about Wajzman's address, Boston said he was more than impressed by what Wajzman had to say about international relations in the age of instant communication. "He had a lot to say," said the young cadet, "...and he left us with a lot to think about." Many in the audience agreed that Wajzman's speech was both a warning and an inspiration.

Over its four days the Conference grappled with such substantive global issues as media strategy, Afghanistan, the joint crisis in Libya, and the Ladakh Summit, human rights, racism, genomics and biotechnology.

Nir Kumar, who served as secretary

general, is a 4th year political science and economics student from India studying at McGill. "The international system is always evolving," he said, "Which is why we have attempted in some cases to reinvent McMun. Without completely abandoning the past model, we have taken steps to emphasize the domestic and individual actors...in an attempt to find new ways of representing the global social environment so as to provide the most ambitious of students an undistorted glimpse into the real world." Delegates are required to ignore their own particular interests and defend the interests of the country to which they have been assigned. So, you could have a Muslim student on Israel's delegation, or a U.S. student having to defend the Charlottetown Accord on the Canadian delegation. We make delegates research opposite opinion, we expect them to hone their skills defending the other guy's point of view."

McGill student Aditya Swarup, whose father is Indian Ambassador to Japan, was director of public relations for the conference, and has experienced first-hand the life of being a diplomat's son. "McMun is completely theoretical," he said, "It gives you the soft skills we want to be a diplomat, not the hard skills."

Each year the Conference adopts a local charity and this year it was Dans Le Rue. The Conference raises several thousand dollars for the organization that helps street kids. For more information on the McGill model UN you can learn all about it online at mcmun.org

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Canada should stand against Chinese slave labour



Prisoners, who are about to be released after serving their sentences, listen to information about a company at a job fair held for them inside a prison in 2009.

On his trade mission to China last month, Prime Minister Stephen Harper should have asked his hosts to stop exporting the products of slave labour to Canada, and to shut down their extensive network of slave-labour camps. Toward that end, he should have begun negotiating an arrangement with China that would ensure Canadians do not unwittingly buy products made with slave labour.

China engages systematically in forced labour in all forms of detention facilities — prisons that house sentenced criminals, administrative detention centers for those not yet charged, and “re-education through labour” camps.

A 1998 declaration of the International Labour Organization (ILO) commits all member states, including China, to eliminate forced labour. The Government of China reported to the ILO that its constitution prohibits forced labour, and that there is a national policy of eliminating the practice. Yet, forced labour in detention remains part of Chinese domestic law: Article 58 of the Chinese Law on Prisons stipulates that a warden may punish a prisoner who is able bodied but refuses to work.

The United States signed a memorandum of understanding with China in 1992 committing Beijing to ensure that prison labour products are not exported to the United States. In 1994, Washington signed a statement of co-operation that in principle allowed U.S. officials to gain access to Chinese production facilities suspected of exporting prison-labour products. But the U.S. China Economic and Security Review Commission, in its report to Congress for 2008,

wrote that “the Chinese government has not complied with its commitments” under the 1992 and 1994 agreement, thereby “making it impossible for U.S. officials to conduct complete and useful investigations of such allegations.”

But even if compliance with these agreements is poor, their mere existence is a good first step. Canada should enter into similar agreements with China, and then do what it can to enforce them. The more countries that enter into such agreements, the more combined pressure can be exerted on Beijing.

Speaking to U.S. journalists in 1993, in answer to questions about the desire by rights groups to inspect prisons, then Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen said: “I believe that if the Red Cross does put forward such a request ... we would give positive consideration to that request.” In fact, the Red Cross did put forward such a request, and there was no positive consideration. Though almost 20 years have passed since then, Mr. Harper should ask the Chinese President to make good on those 1993 words, and permit unrestricted International Committee of the Red Cross access to Chinese places of detention.

Under the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review, the government of Canada, along with the United Kingdom, Hungary, the Czech Republic, France, Sweden and New Zealand, recommended in 2009 that China abolish all forms of arbitrary detention, including “re-education through labour” camps. The Government of China said no to this recommendation. But there is no reason why

Canada should not keep pressing the issue.

Most of the population of Chinese slave labour camps are practitioners of Falun Gong, a spiritual movement that the Communist Party banned in 1999 out of fear that the ideological supremacy of the Party was threatened by its popularity. The U.S. State Department has concluded that “Falun Gong adherents constituted at least half of the 250,000 officially recorded inmates in [China’s] re-education through labour camps.” (Unofficial estimates suggest that there are actually 1,200 forced labour camps, with 2 million inmates.)

We concluded, in two reports in 2006 and 2007 and a book published in 2009 under the

title *Bloody Harvest*, that Falun Gong practitioners have been killed in the tens of thousands, and their organs sold for transplants. Chinese arbitrary detention facilities are not just forced labour camps, in other words: They also are vast forced organ-donor banks.

Goods imported into Canada should withstand scrutiny on both economic and ethical terms. A trade mission to a communist state exporting the products of slave labour around the world at rock bottom prices should do more than seek favourable terms of trade for Canada. Its leaders, including the Prime Minister himself, should do what they can to end the abhorrent practice of slave labour in China.

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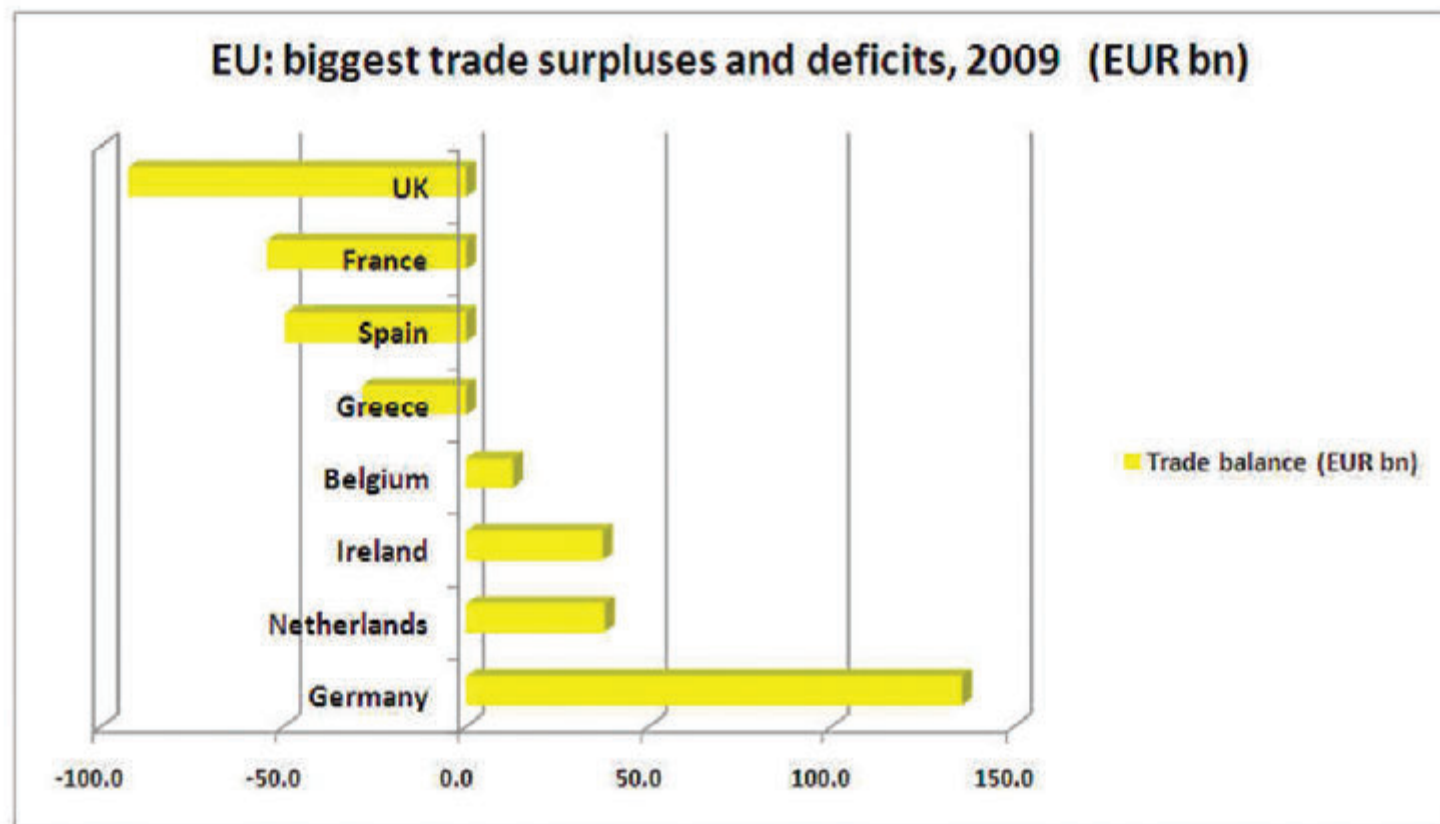
Deutschland Uber Alles?

Decades ago, Konrad Adenauer spoke of Germany's postwar place in Europe when he said, "A European Germany, not a German Europe." Since Adenauer uttered those words, Germany, together with France have been at the core of all the great initiatives to create greater European integration and cooperation – the formation of the EU, the opening up to former Eastern Bloc nations, and the adoption of the Euro. Now that the EU is in crisis over debt, deficits and currency devaluation, Germany has chosen to assert greater leadership in its own interests, effectively vetoing repeated calls to have the European Central Bank act as a bank of last resort and buy up Greek, Italian and Spanish debt (as a start).

The greatest problem within Europe is the vast chasm of wealth creation between the powerful economies of the north, like Germany, and the spendthrift nations in the south, like Greece. What the Greeks could not purchase via internal wealth creation they financed through the issuance of debt, much of which was purchased by financial institutions in northern Europe. These debts were accepted as investment grade because they were denominated in Euros and the general market perception was that the wealthiest Euro members would never allow the Euro to falter. The Euro was never going to be as secure a currency as the Deutschmark was or even as the German Bund is today, but it was certainly going to be almost as solid as the US Dollar.

No nation believed in the solidity of the Euro more than Germany. It was the pledge of conservative management of the Euro (made by Helmut Kohl, Chancellor at the time) that sold the German population on the Euro and allowed the project to go forward. Germans today maintain their conservatism towards the currency and prefer its stability over the opportunistic calls from debtor nations to allow the ECB to buy up debt and print money, essentially as the Federal Reserve has done in the United States.

Germany also enjoys significant trade surpluses with the weaker members of the EU. Germans wish to maintain those trade surpluses because they generate wealth for the nation, sustaining employment and both personal and government revenues. The problem for the debtor nations is that they eventually need to generate surpluses within the EU in order to be able to repay their debts. The paradox is clear: Germany and other creditor nations of the EU must allow their trade surpluses to shrink or even turn into deficits in order to enable the weaker nations to build up surpluses for debt repayment. The longer the Germans resist a rebalancing of intra-European trade imbalances, the worse the problem will get. The alternative to a normalization of these trade balances is the



Source: Eurostat, 2010

Germany will continue to favor austerity programs for the debtor nations coupled with debt write-offs and restructuring, even though it will mean that German and French banks will have to seek recapitalization from the markets or even seek mergers or bankruptcy.

forgiveness of the weaker nations' debts, similar to the proposed write-off of 70% of Greece's privately-held debt that was announced at the end of January. Either the wealthy nations of the EU curb their future net trade inflows, or their banks take the hit. Behind all the cacophony of debate over how to solve the crisis this is a basic pillar of its resolution.

This is not the first time that the trade imbalance analysis was used to predict a future currency reversal. Back in the early 1980s when the Reagan deficits topped \$200 billion per year, economists argued that the USD would have to fall against the currencies of its trading partners in order to generate the net cash inflows to repay the federal debts contracted with foreigners. This situation never came to pass because foreign investors in US debt were content to purchase even greater amounts over time since the USD was the world's reserve currency. Also, US debt

as a percentage of GDP was far lower in the early 1980s than it is today. Europe will not enjoy the same kind of "free pass" that the US enjoyed 30 years ago. Firstly, because overall debt levels in Europe are far higher than those of the US, either today or in the past. Secondly, the Euro is not the world's reserve currency. The US currency has declined in value since 2000 against a basket of foreign currencies and as a result, US manufacturing is enjoying a resurgence and has been a leading job creator over the past 2 years. The Euro trade imbalances are intra-European so a devaluation of the Euro benefits the same large exporters of sophisticated manufactured goods like Germany, but does relatively little to solve Greece's problems.

Germans already believe that they have made great sacrifices for the cause of European integration. If Angela Merkel were to announce to the Bundestag that she was going to take steps to reduce Germany's trade

surpluses or, in the alternative, give in to calls for the ECB to become a "bad bank" and start buying debt, she would lose her governing coalition. Telling Germans the truth is a one-way ticket out of power. The socialist opposition is probably more favorable to an ECB-led solution, but could not get elected if they proposed it. Therefore, all German political parties are wedged in by their avoidance of the unspeakable solution.

Germany will continue to favor austerity programs for the debtor nations coupled with debt write-offs and restructuring, even though it will mean that German and French banks will have to seek recapitalization from the markets or even seek mergers or bankruptcy. This policy will deepen and prolong the coming European recession of 2012 and, ironically, will lead to a reduction in German trade surpluses because their southern consumers will have far less disposable income. Therefore, the Germans are going to see their trade surpluses evaporate either due to a European recession or through deliberate policy initiatives. The policy initiatives are politically unpalatable, so German intransigence will prolong the suffering of the entire Eurozone.

The Euro requires a new political structure that will impose strict financial controls on spendthrift governments that will prevent the debt excesses that exist today from reappearing in the future once the current mess gets sorted out. Who will be at the helm of this new structure? Why, the Germans, of course! Prepare for the Euro II and a German Europe, at least in the financial sense.



Heard the one about the priest, the Rabbi and the Imam?

It's no joke, but there is a punch line: faithblender.com.

The new inter-faith blog which went on line three weeks ago (Feb 14) features postings by Montreal broadcaster and Roman Catholic priest John Walsh, Orthodox Jewish Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz, and Imam Ziyad Delic of Ottawa, who is considered to be among the world's 500 most influential Muslims. The three have no intention of making converts, but rather are blogging about what their respective faiths have in common. "The three of us have different traditions, but we are like minded, and we wanted to create a dialogue," says Walsh. "As we go along, we'll respond to each other, and as people come to the blog, to them as well. We've decided to go with the flow and see where it leads us." Rabbi Steinmetz and Walsh know each other, and they recruited Imam Delic to join the endeavor.

"What triggered the idea, is that

each of us have been well received in each other's houses of worship – church, synagogue and mosque," adds Delic. "Since we managed our relationships in the community in a productive manner, and got to know and respect one another, we decided to put the philosophy in action by blogging." Everything is on the table – politics, religion, ethics and pop culture.

In his first blog, Rabbi Steinmetz, who leads Congregation Tifereth Beth David in Cote St. Luc, managed to link the Superbowl and the Slaughter in Syria. "We recognize that in our collective history what was done in the name of G-d begs for forgiveness," reads the blog's mission statement. "We begin with reconciliation and hope to build stronger bonds of friendship and of faith. All three of us share the golden rule; do unto others what you would have them do unto you, which is but the beginning of what we can share with you.

Check it out at faithblender.com



Left to right: Imam Ziyad Delic, Orthodox Jewish Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz, Roman Catholic priest John Walsh.

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

- George F. Lengvari, Sr.





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There is no such thing as an “honour killing”

It has become part of the Canadian lexicon thanks to the furor surrounding the Shafia quadruple murder trial. This concept of an “honour killing” has been widely condemned and strikes most people as shocking and revolting. But the condemnations are in vain and may even be counter-productive. In reality, these types of murders are no more or no less heinous than any other; let us dismantle the Muslim straw man and stop pretending that honour killings really exist.

The notion first gained steam in the public discourse when, at the start of the trial in Kingston, Ontario, the Crown argued that Mohammad and Hamed Shafia and Tooba Yahya plotted to murder Zainab, Sahar, and Geeti Shafia, along with second wife Rona Amir Mohammad, because the four women had brought dishonour onto the family.

Evidently, the head of the household believed that drowning them all would restore honour to the Shafia name. By all accounts, Mohammad failed on that score.

After the trio were found guilty of first degree murder, Justice Robert Maranger reminded the Court of the following crucial points:

The murders were “cold-blooded, heinous and honourless,” he said, adding that the women were murdered because they “offended your completely twisted concept of honour... that has absolutely no place in any civilized society.”

With an air-tight case thanks to diligent police work, one can’t help but wonder how the tone of media coverage would have differed had the Crown not bothered weaving the concept of honour killings into its argument. But they did and a more titillating

narrative was sold – and bought by the jury and the media consumer.

Before long, pundits were sounding the alarm about a supposed rise in Muslim extremism in Canada and calling for reactionary legislation to respond to what, by all accounts, was an isolated incident (tragic and horrifying, yes, but isolated nonetheless). By simply acknowledging the murders as honour killings, the Crown and journalists did a disservice to those who believe in a fair and impartial justice system; not to mention the majority of sane Muslim-Canadians across the country.

It may seem like an absurd question at first glance, but... had Mohammad Shafia decided to murder half of his family because a talking purple unicorn told him to do so, would we then have labelled the crime a “purple unicorn killing,” and treated the case as somehow more disturbing or more relevant because of the unicorn factor? Or would we have processed the events like any other story of a killing on the evening news: With fleeting, superficial grief and proportionally fleeting resentment toward the misogynistic sociopath who committed the crime?

The aggravating factor that made the case more sensational was the element of foreign intrigue; the Shafias are Muslims newly emigrated from Afghanistan. They come from a place that isn’t exactly a leader in women’s rights – or justice (by our standards) in general. Although honour killings are also seen in South-Asian cultures and not accepted by mainstream Islam (the practice was, in fact, outlawed by the Prophet Mohammed), many still viewed this as a Muslim issue.

In arguing against the wearing of burqas and

niqabs in public, I found myself reiterating that a practice seen amongst only the most delusional religious fundamentalists and rejected by the vast majority of Muslims around the World should not be accepted by Canadians as a legitimate facet of Islam. The same should apply to honour killings. Yes, Mohammad Shafia happened to be Muslim – but he also happened to be a bloody lunatic. At a certain point, one must avoid blaming an entire religion or ancient scripture for the actions of a free-thinking individual, and instead focus the blame on that flawed individual who either perverts his own cultural parameters or laughably tries to apply stone-age practices to modern living.

Muslims themselves are doing a disservice to their culture in addressing the honour issue. Calgary imam Syed Soharwardy, founder of the authoritative-sounding Islamic Supreme Council of Canada, recently issued a fatwa (decree) along with 34 other North American imams condemning honour killings and domestic violence. Publicly stating that violence against women is, in fact, forbidden in 2012 essentially demonstrates to Canadians that a significant part of the community is still living as if it were 2,000 years in the past. Issuing a religious decree to combat crimes committed in the name of religion is simply attempting to combat lunacy with more lunacy.

Islam is as much to blame for the Shafia murders as Christianity was to blame for Guy Turcotte killing his two young children in 2009. There is no rationalizing an act so irrational – the religious element should be irrelevant. Whether the motive was to bring honour back to the family name or to seek revenge

on a former lover, these men were angry misogynists who viewed women as their property. In practical terms, that was their motive; anything else is just a fairytale concocted in their twisted minds.

There is no such thing as an “honour killing” because the concept exists only within a few insular, antiquated subcultures that accept the killing of women based on their wardrobe. Those subcultures are so backward and primitive that their beliefs ought not to even be dignified by Canadians because they’re so absurd and wrong. Doing so, as the Crown and some journalists did in the Shafia case, only legitimizes practices that are found in populations suffering from mass delusion. It opens the door for defence lawyers and practitioners of cultural relativism to advocate for more lenient sentences for murderers like the Shafias because it’s not their fault... it’s all they know.

Interestingly enough, the Shafia defence team denied (and continues to deny) that this was an honour crime – or any crime, for that matter, as they maintain their innocence and plan an appeal. The denial could be construed as a positive sign because perhaps their legal team established that the ‘culture clash’ defence just wouldn’t work in a Canadian court.

Under exceptional circumstances like these, it is perfectly acceptable to reason that one culture is better than another. And Canadian culture is superior to whatever culture the Shafias consider themselves to be a part of. So superior, in fact, that when cases like these come up, it’s probably best to just offer up a simpler, less dramatic narrative and call it like it is: Murder. Ignore the purple unicorn in the room.



Charles Ghorayeb

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Time to decriminalize

The ever vigilant forces of law and order (mostly the Surete du Quebec) seized 1.7 billion dollars in illegal drugs in 2011. Some of these drugs were seized from shipping containers “randomly” selected by Customs for inspection at the Port of Montreal or at one of the rail yards, others in police raids against organized crime operations and a few on the street. At first glance, this doesn’t seem like a bad year’s work. Upon further scrutiny however, the numbers are far from convincing. Coming in a proud and perennial First Place Winner by a comfortable 10 to one margin, weighing in at a staggering \$1.3 BILLION (76%), was marijuana; hashish was a comfortable second at \$122 million. All other drugs combined added up therefore to less than \$400 million.

There is no evidence to suggest that making these drugs illegal has slowed their flow into the country in the past 50 years. Quite to the contrary, police believe it has accelerated. Less than 2% of all containers entering Canada are inspected. Since the searches

are not quite “random” – country of origin, informant tips, targeted importers are major factors in determining which containers will be searched- it is fair to assume that approximately 10% of the drugs entering the country are therefore seized. This is a mere minor inconvenience, a cost of doing business, to the importers who simply build it into their enormous profit margins.

The logical extension of that argument therefore, is that \$14 BILLION of marijuana and hashish enter the country each year. The cost of searching and policing these operations in Quebec exceeded \$450 million in 2011. If we legalized those two drugs and kept that same budget in place to stem the flow of all other drugs into La Belle Province, it logically follows that we would stop a higher percentage of shipments and put a larger dent in the traffickers’ wallets, rendering those drugs even more expensive and therefore lowering their use by the general public.

It is generally accepted that the markup on

marijuana and hashish between its importation stage and the time it hits the streets is roughly 500%. If those two drugs had entered the country legally, the GST alone would amount to \$700 million. The gross profit involved by selling those drugs through the SAQ or a similar style government operation would be a staggering \$11 BILLION. This money could funnel into our health care system, our roads, our education system, and in all three cases inject a healthy overdose of much needed funds where our society most needs them.

Opponents will bring up the issue of morality. Do we really prefer, on “moral grounds”, to put all this money in the hands of organized crime? Do we really prefer to know that users are being sold low-grade diluted drugs, which are more likely to harm them? Do we really believe that marijuana and hashish are in fact more harmful than cigarettes or alcohol? Do we really want all those shady characters lured by the appeal of a quick buck to hang around our schools pushing their product to our

kids? All studies, both theoretical and practical, empirically prove that consumption actually drops marginally when these drugs are legalized and age-restricted. The allure of the forbidden fruit is eliminated and the elusive high is demystified.

Organized crime would suffer a major if not mortal blow, and the period of reorganization which it would then be forced to endure as it realigns its illegal activities to recover from the loss of such an income, would leave it all the more vulnerable to a potentially fatal offensive by the now wealthier forces of law and order.

I am normally the last person on earth to call for more Government controls, but some things just make sense. Ottawa is busy and urgently promoting other opiates such as professional sports and institutionalized religion to the masses. I think maybe the time is right to urge them to consider one that we can actually all benefit from as a society: Legal Cannabis. Now, where the hell is my shisha?!



Knut Hammar skjöld, Diplomat 1922-2012

Knut Hammar skjöld was the Swedish diplomat who served in Montreal for 18 years as the second executive director of the International Air Transport Association, which regulates the interests of most of the world's commercial airlines. Hammar skjöld was the nephew of the United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammar skjöld, who was killed in a mysterious plane crash in Africa in 1961. Knut Hammar skjöld, who died at his home in Lidingö on Jan. 3, two weeks shy of his 90th birthday, considered his distinguished uncle as a second father.

"There was an intriguing aura of mystery and of things left unsaid in his conversations which added to his fascination," said long-time friend Diana Thébaud-Nicholson. "He was a Renaissance man with many facets: diplomat, linguist, patron of the arts, perpetually curious about new things. He was at ease with people of all ages. Normally somewhat reserved, he could be engagingly impulsive."

Knut Olaf Hjalmar Akesson Hammar skjöld was born into a patrician family in Geneva, Switzerland on Jan 16, 1922. His grandfather, Hjalmar had been Sweden's Prime Minister during the First World War. His father who was a court registrar and later a judge died in 1937 when Knut was only 11 years old and away at a boarding school in the Netherlands. After his father's death he was mentored by his uncle, Dag.

"He was extraordinarily attached to Dag. He told me he cried for a month when Dag was killed. He had a life-long passion trying to find out exactly what happened to his uncle," said McGill University ethicist Margaret Somerville, a close friend from his days in Montreal. On the 50th anniversary of the plane crash in 2011 Knut accompanied U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to his uncle's grave in Upsalla. New evidence had surfaced to suggest that Hammar skjöld's DC-6 was



deliberately shot down while he was on a mission to Africa. Knut called for a new inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the death. "Knut was positively charming and at the same time self-disciplined. He was fiercely intelligent, always capable of surprising those who knew him with the originality and depth of his insights," said Somerville. For example, he once remarked that lawyers should consider themselves sherpas of the next generation, which engendered the notion, that like Sherpas, lawyers "are trusted, tenacious, skilled guides who open up new terrain, work in a rarefied atmosphere, have great vistas from the peaks they conquer, and take others with them to greater heights to enable those others to achieve what has not been previously achieved."

Hammar skjöld joined the foreign service, worked in Bulgaria, and in the early 1950s was sent as an envoy to the Moscow in an attempt to secure the release of Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who mysteriously

disappeared after being arrested by the Soviets during the Second World War. He developed an interest in civil aviation and became head of the department of foreign relations for the Swedish Civil Aeronautics Board, before being named deputy-secretary of the European Free Trade Association. He also became Chairman of the Board of Sydvenska Dagbladet Snällposten, a Swedish newspaper. He jokingly referred to himself as "the mini Rupert Murdoch." In 1966 he was named head of IATA, which had been started in Havana in 1945 to promote reliable and economical international air passenger service. During his tenure in Montreal key parts of the organization were restructured, an aviation training program for developing nations was inaugurated, and he was largely responsible for establishing the first international billing system to regulate and administrate fares. It has evolved into today's Billing and Settlement Plan (BSP) and Cargo Accounts Settlement System (CASS) and remains the

backbone of the modern \$300-billion a year industry. "He led IATA through a period of profound change, a period of turbulence and transformation, during a period when jet aircraft replaced propeller driven aircraft," said Perry Flint, IATA's corporate communications director for the Americas told The Globe & Mail. "It was a period also marked by the beginning of hijackings, especially from the United States to Cuba. Hammar skjöld was personally involved in one such incident, and went to Cuba to negotiate the release of the aircraft and of those passengers involved who did not want to remain in Cuba."

Hammar skjöld continued to serve as a consultant to the airline industry after he left IATA and regularly attended the association's annual general meetings. In 1987 he was appointed head of an independent commission that recommended ways to improve staff efficiency and management at United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (UNESCO) "He had a gravitas about him, he was the quintessential diplomat, highly observant, extremely inquisitive, and he compartmentalised his life, making different parts of it open to various people at various times so no one person knew the whole truth about him," said Norbert Gilmore who recently retired as a professor medicine at McGill University. He was the silent type, in a good way. You always had the impression that there was something inside him that he would never reveal, never tell people."

During his almost 30 years in Montreal Hammar skjöld served as head of the Atwater Institute, a think tank which focussed on the implications of technological advances, and he was one of the panellists at the 1992 Couchiching conference.

He leaves two sons from his first marriage and two sons from a third marriage, and his fourth wife, Inga-Lill.

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ARTS & STYLE



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Un film à l'écart des modes : monsieur Lazhar

En littérature, l'œuvre se crée lentement : on bâtit mot à mot. Le lecteur va de même, qui appréhende le monument, dans le détail, à tout moment. Le cinéma se poursuit dans ce continuum, avec, en prime, un autre niveau de lecture; l'histoire trouve une autre incarnation, et se fixe visuellement au monde, comme pour ajouter à notre compréhension, et bien sûr à notre plaisir. Ainsi, j'étais joyeusement impatiente d'aller voir ce film : « Monsieur Lazhar », et je me souviens de la toute première fois que je l'ai vu, lui, ce professeur débarqué tout droit d'Algérie; je me suis dit : « quelle belle chose que le talent d'enseigner. » En effet, on aura beau dire, on aura beau faire, c'est une qualité irremplaçable. Ainsi, travaillez, prenez de la peine, nous dit le fabuliste, c'est le fond qui manque le moins. Bien sûr; mais celui qui, précisément, manque le plus aux professeurs actuellement, c'est le talent. Avec nos sempiternelles réformes en éducation, nous avons perdu le sens du mouvement visant à « élever » l'enfant, du dynamisme de l'action portée vers l'étude et la compréhension des œuvres classiques, de l'art oratoire, et de la vérité psychologique. Pour « Monsieur Lazhar », le plus récent film de Philippe Falardeau, tout a commencé par le talent, ensuite, par sa passion communicative. Tout est là. Pourtant, la mise en situation se construit tout de suite autour d'un suicide, l'ancien professeur s'étant pendue dans sa classe, craquant sous la pression; car oui, enseigner est difficile, oui cela engage toutes les facettes de la personnalité, et craquer, cela veut dire dans le milieu de l'enseignement : burn-out, congés maladie, dépressions, et parfois l'irréparable arrive, un peu comme dans le film. En effet, la vie a plus d'imagination que les écrivains, la plupart du temps, mais pour les cinéastes, du moins pour Philippe Falardeau et son film « Monsieur Lazhar », il faut y voir un compte-rendu assez fidèle de ce qui passe concrètement, sur le terrain, dans nos écoles. Ainsi, l'action, les personnages, les lieux, -après la prémisse tragique de départ-, nous amènent dans le quotidien de cet immigrant algérien, fraîchement débarqué au Canada, in extremis suppléant d'une classe pour le moins particulière, dans une école typique du Québec. Ainsi, Monsieur Lazhar, pose ce geste heureux d'aller poser sa candidature comme suppléant au bon moment, comme on s'élançait dans l'espace soudain touffu, soudain gorgé d'odeurs

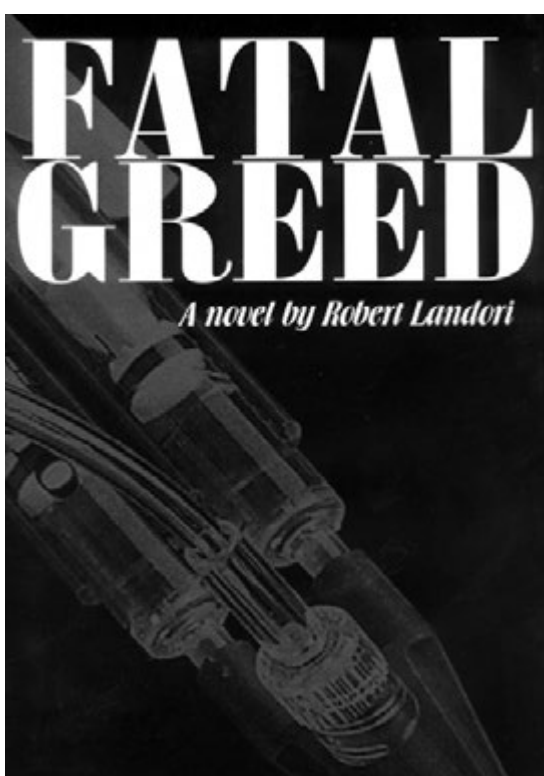


nouvelles; un regard rempli de nécessité : ce sont des moments de ferveur, ceux-là qui nous font agir avec l'énergie du désespoir, et poser précisément le bon geste, au bon moment. La tentation de critiquer le système d'éducation actuel se dresse aussi, infinie. En effet, on sort de la salle de cinéma avec le goût d'écrire, la responsabilité d'exprimer cette réalité, l'odeur de la craie sur le tableau, l'odeur des atmosphères, jusque dans les mots. Aussi, surtout, afin de comprendre la sensation de l'immigrant, sa réalité, jusque dans l'évitement de la souffrance, et ces joies partagées dans ces silences ou tout se livre, ou tout s'entends, à commencer

par l'inhabituel. En effet, chez Philippe Falardeau se devine ce souci de bâtir les histoires à même la vie, se terminant par d'honnêtes vérités, sagesse des nations appelées moralité. Impossible, donc, de sortir de ce visionnement sans avoir le cœur navré, tout pantois, en même temps qu'illustré de riches images colorées, mais à l'extrême opposé de l'art naïf, avec ce genre de satisfaction grave de celui qui sait le long chemin, la traversée du désert, et les illusions : ces contes de tous les jours.

De plus, l'intrigue dicte la matière, ses luttes et ses paradoxes pas toujours brillants : l'éducation, sa réalité. Il y a de quoi là provoquer un petit scandale, penser à une autre révolution. En effet, j'ai été touchée par le tempérament de Monsieur Lazhar, ce qu'il porte de puissant : un genre de résistance, de liberté, un symbole de transmission, par exemple la manière dont il arrive à créer une complicité avec sa classe, ses collègues. Une lente et belle patience dans un pays enclin aux murmures, à l'effacement, qui ne se résout pas à faire. Ainsi, il serait déraisonnable de penser qu'il se sent à l'aise comme un poisson dans l'eau dans cette petite école du Plateau Mont Royal, mais nous assistons néanmoins, jour après jour, à sa métamorphose, tout en partageant ses relents du passé, sa démarche existentielle, de laquelle Falardeau va nous entretenir, jusqu'à la toute fin du film. En même temps, le fil cinématographique nous amène dans le récit d'anecdotes, amusant souvent Monsieur Lazhar, mais qui ne masque pas ses plaies, qui laisse deviner la tension intérieure de cet homme solitaire, algérien, qui a laissé sa femme là-bas, et dont nous apprendrons plus tard tout le drame personnel et politique. Bref, Philippe Falardeau est un véritable portraitiste et un critique social efficace; son style est discret, travaillé, mais souple et surtout parfaitement naturel.

En somme, je vous invite toutes et tous à voir, et même revoir, ce film; à en discuter autour de vous, à écrire si vous le pouvez, afin de le porter plus loin, plus haut, pour le fixer concrètement dans nos réflexions sur l'avenir de l'éducation au Québec, vaste sujet s'il en est, et dont nous semblons parfois avoir peur de dépeindre collectivement. En effet, au Québec, on passe souvent à deux doigts de faire quelque chose, à deux doigts d'aller au bout du monde, à deux doigts de créer de véritables chefs-d'œuvre.



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Irving Layton

I am a quiet madman, never far from tears, I write poems to cause trouble. The sparks fly, I gather each one, and start a poem.

~ Irving Layton

Irving Layton wrote more than 50 books of poetry during his lifetime. When he died seven years ago Leonard Cohen eulogised him as "our greatest poet and our greatest champion of poetry." Had Layton lived, he would be 100 on March 12. To mark the centennial of his birth in Tîrgu Neamţ, Romania, poetry readings from his works were held in 20 cities across Canada, including Montreal. "This is the first time that Canada was connected through poetry," said Elias Letelier, co-founder of the online magazine, Poetry Quebec, which sponsored the Montreal event, which took place March 11 at Concordia University.

Once described as being both "the Picasso and the Mae West of poetry," Layton is being celebrated for his often-erotic verse, his abrasive ego, his outrageous opinions, his entertaining love life and his bitter feuds.

Among the luminaries who attended in Montreal were NDP Heritage critic, Tyrone Benskin, television magnate Moses Znaimer, Mount Royal MP Irwin Cotler, and Montreal's poet laureate, Claude Beausoleil. Margaret Atwood was on hand for the celebrations in Toronto.

Born Israel Pincu Lazarovitch, his parents changed the family name after they immigrated to Montreal in 1913. Young Irving was raised in the Plateau Mont Royal district. He received a BSc in agriculture from Macdonald College. He later wrote of that experience: "The college's single agitator, single poet and single Jew, I was too absorbed in my messianic dreams to realize what an outlandish figure I cut among the simple-minded Canucks from Quebec's farms and middle-class homes."

In 1936, when he was 23, he moved to Halifax, and became a Fuller Brush salesman. He enlisted in the Canadian army in 1942 but was not sent overseas. When the war ended, Layton went back to university and in '46 gained an MA from McGill in economics and political science. He also

He didn't begin to write poetry until he was in his 30s; he once explained that, as a schoolboy reading Wordsworth and Byron, he "naturally thought that in order to be a poet one

had to be either English or dead, preferably both." His first collection of poetry, *Here and Now*, was published in 1945. For the next couple of decades, he taught English in Montreal. Cotler, who was one of his high-school students, remembers. "I learned very little about physics, chemistry and math and a lot about philosophy and literature -- the humanities," Cotler recalled. "He was an inspiration to me then and he remains so today. He was a mentor, a colleague, a friend."

In the '50s, Irving Layton became one of Leonard Cohen's mentors, and the two remained close after Cohen became internationally famous. "I taught him how to dress. He taught me how to live forever," Cohen once said of their relationship.

Layton's reputation as a poet became firmly established with his 1951 collection *The Black Huntsmen*. Once he hit full stride he became amazingly prolific, producing almost a book a year between 1951 and 1991. In 1959 Layton won the Governor



General's Award for his collection *A Red Carpet for the Sun*. Some of his other notable volumes -- all published between 1953 and 1968 -- are *Love the Conqueror Worm*, *Balls for a One-Armed Juggler*, *The Laughing Rooster* and *The Shattered Plinths*.

In 1969 Layton quit Montreal in a blaze of invective, "squeezed out by French-Canadian nationalism," and went to teach English at York University in Toronto. During the '70s, he raged against the onset of age. Poetry was always Layton's prime focus, but he also wrote two books of

essays and reviews, one with the apt title *Taking Sides*. He also edited a landmark anthology of Canadian love poetry, *Love Where the Nights Are Long*. In 1976 he was invested as an Officer of the Order of Canada as "a prolific poet whose work has won him renown in Canada who is also widely known elsewhere through translation." Chastened by his years in Toronto, which he described as "a godforsaken place where people know only material success, and nothing of love," Layton returned to Montreal in 1978. The Nobel committee twice nominated Layton for the Nobel Prize for literature. In 1993 he became the first non-Italian to win the distinguished Petrarch Prize for Poetry.

IN IRVING LAYTON'S WORDS:

- "It is as dangerous to overestimate the goodness of people as to underestimate their stupidity."

- "God is indeed dead. He died of self-horror when He saw the creature He had made in His own image."

- "Idealist: a cynic in the making."

- "If poetry is like an orgasm, an academic can be likened to someone who studies the passion-stains on the bedsheets."

- "My neighbour doesn't want to be loved as much as he wants to be envied."

- "When you argue with your inferiors, you convince them of only one thing: they are as clever as you."

- "Since I no longer expect anything from mankind except madness, meanness and mendacity; egotism, cowardice and self-delusion, I have stopped being a misanthrope."

- "Blake was right; praise is the practice of art. Joy, fullness of feeling, is the core of the creative mystery. My dominant mood is that of ecstasy and gratitude. To have written even one poem that speaks with rhythmic authority about matters that are enduringly important is something to be immensely, reverently thankful for -- and I am intoxicated enough to think I have written more than one."



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Local wine prisoners?

There is nothing like travel to broaden the mind, relax the spirit and learn about local, life, culture, food and wine. You will have different experiences depending on where you stay, where you visit, how you get to and from where you are visiting and what you eat and drink. For example assume you are staying at the Westin Palace in Madrid. You can eat in their glass domed dining room in elegance and be waited on hand and foot in the traditional old style Euro fashion with grand bottles of aged Rioja or you can a tuck around side streets to tapas bars just behind the Westin serving mostly locals all manner of delectable seafood tapas and various bottles of cheap and cheerful Cavas and white wine chilling in huge ice filled bowls on the counter. Or you could be having a can of mackerel splitting a bottle of Cava at a youth hostel. Each experience evokes or will evoke a sense of place and time all leaving a bit of Madrid in your memory and soul. All are "local memories". I always try and go local when it comes to wine and travel. By local I mean wine produced closest to where I am staying whether straight from the barrel or tanks in local wine shops or produced and bottled within the geographical boundaries of where I'm staying. Italy and Spain really seem to make this easy for you as there is good wine flowing every nook and cranny. Local wine is the rule in almost

all wine producing Euro countries unlike Ontario and Quebec where the LCBO and SAQ favours "international wines" which only hampers the development of a local wine movement in Ontario and Quebec. Seen any British Columbia wines at an SAQ or more than a sad bottle or two of Ontario wine? If there are few Canadian wines available in the distribution market it's logical that there will be little Canadian wines in Canadian restaurants. And of course there are those restaurants who think too much Canadian wine shows a lack of "sophistication". Let's take a look at Lake Erie North Shore which is a small appellation in Ontario just south of Windsor which has just over 13 wineries.

Let's say you live in Montreal or Toronto and want to make a mad rush to Lake Erie North Shore or as it is known in wine circles "LENS". Why go to LENS? It produces international class wines and is more or less unknown except amongst oenophiles and loyal locals. Go to LENS and you'll have some interesting wine experiences to share with your friends almost all of which will be saying what an adventuresome savvy wine person you are. Being in the news game let's just say you have the "lead story" next time you and some friends open up a bottle of wine from LENS. As a gringo tourist to Windsor the destination of choice as your stopover might just be Caesars

Windsor (377 Riverside Drive East). The hotel and casino complex is perhaps as close as you will get to Las Vegas in Canada. Modern and comfortable rooms but as an aside the wimpiest low powered water flow in the bathroom taps and showerheads I have seen in a long time! Rooms with a view of Detroit are especially attractive for viewing its skyline. Nice comfy beds and a mini-fridge...not a mini-bar so you can bring your own wine and chill it down without having to wrestle with an army of overpriced beverages. Homey touch! As for food and wine the star of Caesars is no doubt Nero's Steakhouse with classic steakhouse fare available for tourist and local alike!

I visited Neros to check out the wine list and particularly what LENS wines were available. I know that in LENS wine country there is a proud local food and wine attitude so I was curious to see if that local attitude was present at the premier hotel in Windsor. As it is on the gateway to LENS I expected a big selection of local wines! Neros is a Wine Spectator Award of Excellence Winner which makes Neros one of 2,827 "winners" in the world which according to Wine Spectator (after paying a fee to the Wine Spectator) is a "basic award for lists that offer a well-chosen selection of quality producers along with a thematic match to the menu in both price and style." Neros does not disappoint except for its dearth of

LENS wines! There is a 19 page wine list offering 23 wines by the glass, 4 of which are Canadian and close to 400 labels which is on par with the luxury hotels I have reviewed in New York City so in terms of numbers and quality it is no slouch. As far as Canadian wines go there are 5 sparklers, 13 whites and 19 reds but only two LENS bottles in this crowd one being a Pelee Island 2006 Gewürztraminer Reserve and a 2002 Colio Estates LENS Merlot. My initial reaction to this LENS prejudice was like LENS wines were being treated like Rosa Parks.

I probed deeper about this with Henry Aboagye the manager of Neros an intensely charming man of passion and pride for Neros and its staff. Henry indicated previous attempts have been made to introduce more LENS wines to Neros but there is a preference for big Cabernet Sauvignons to match the heavy red meat emphasis at Neros as after all it is a steakhouse. For example he noted that the most popular reds were the 2005 Hartenburg Cabernet Sauvignon from Stellenbosch in South Africa and Katnook Founder's Block Cabernet Sauvignon from Australia. I'll personally vouch for the Hartenburg after trying it with Neros Peppered Bison Carpaccio. Divine. As for whites the Chardonnays from Stoney Ridge in Niagara and Italian Pinot Grigios were leading in popularity. Most customers know what they want said Henry which explains the fact that their sommelier is only present two days a week.

I am certain you will enjoy your meal at the well designed and comfy Neros and by all means grab table # 20 with its magnificent view of the Detroit skyline. But I just can't help but think why there is a dearth of local wines in the capital city of LENS? Tourist types surely would not be disappointed nor would the local economy. It just takes a bit of effort to find LENS wines that match the Neros menu. Someone has gone to the effort of getting wines on Neros wine list. Who has expended effort to get LENS wines on that list? Who is to blame for this sad state of affairs for local LENS wineries at the Casino?

Now let's move from huge sophisticated Caesars Windsor and see what is happening in the countryside in LENS as we move to pizza maker supreme Mettawas Station in Kingsville which features 6 LENS and Pelee Island wines.

As Janet DelBrocco of Mettawas Station says, "In regards to our local wine selection we wanted to support

the local wineries, especially the ones in Kingsville and surrounding area because they in turn are very supportive of us. Some of the local wines have been selected based on customer demand as well. From time to time we will bring in other wines to use as a feature for the weekend just to see how they sell and if there is good response we try to work it into our local wine list. As for wineries promoting their products, it is important to let us know when they have a newly released wine. As a small business owner it is very difficult to keep up to date on all of the wines carried by different wineries."

The local spirit is further exhibited by Tecumseh Roadhouse in Windsor with 8 local wines. Tecumseh Roadhouse is home of the nastily delicious pulled pork sandwich of which there is no rival in Ontario! Jim Renaud certainly reflects the local movement when he says, "When I first took over the restaurant we had wines from all over the place but being a roadhouse we have never had an extensive wine list. The reason for local is that I am trying to support our local businesses and economy. We use local beef and pork from local farms as well as most suppliers to the restaurant are local. We are also growing our own vegetables in our gardens out back and raising our own chickens and goats, goats for the kids and chickens for the eggs to be used in the restaurant at some point. One of the biggest reasons on using local wines is the fact that they use us for events and caterings and for things like the vintage tasting a few weeks ago. The customers love the fact we are using local products and I think one of the reasons we are so successful is because of that fact." Tit for tat!

The rapidly expanding Armandos with 10 locations and more expansion in mind has 24 "international wines" on its wine list and 12 Lake Erie North Shore wines. That is a very generous representation indeed.

Can we point the finger anywhere? I think we can and primarily I am pointing at the state liquor monopolies founded with greed and temperance as bed fellows. Their decisions show a failure to really promote Canadian wines stranding local producers in a shipwreck of limited markets. This in turn fosters uneducated consumers as without choice there can be no real consumer education. Uneducated consumers just keep drinking what is on the monopoly's shelf. A vicious cycle that can only be broken by consumer demand and political and market changes.

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Milton Cohen: St. Urbain St.'s war poet

Discovery of father's World War II poems spark search for lost sisters

Judie Benjamin hopes that her late father Milton Cohen's newfound fame as a Canadian war bard will help her to find sisters whom she has never met.

The St. Laurent resident said that she was so unnerved when the *Globe and Mail* unexpectedly published some of her father's poems in November, that she "cried off-and-on for days."

"I felt like I had found my soul again. It really affected me very much."

Ms. Benjamin said that—until they were published—she knew nothing of the poems, which have helped her to understand and come to terms with her father, from whom she was estranged for most of her life.

She recalled that the Canadian Army veteran was never the same after the war, where he fought his way north through Italy, then liberated a concentration camp and was hospitalized for months with a badly shattered leg, after his jeep was blown up.

Globe and Mail reporter Adrian Morrow, who wrote the Remembrance Day article, described the long-buried verse contained in evocative letters to Baron Byng High School friend Sam Borer.

"It's intriguing how he had this high seriousness mixed with the sense of humour that he brought with him from Montreal," said Mr. Morrow. "He clearly had trouble coping



Milton Cohen, during the war

with his experiences in the war and his temper. But, at the same time, he retained the humanity that he had before the war and during the war that never really left.

"My father returned from the war a tortured man, and my parents' marriage didn't survive for long afterward," Ms. Benjamin explained.

She observed that his volatile personality was the product of what today would be called post-traumatic stress disorder.

"He married at least two other times and I have siblings whom I know nothing about," she continued. She said that one of his brides was former Ice Capades skater Elsie Palmer, and another might have been named Norma Bernstein.

children but I don't know what their names are or where they live, other than that one was evidently a musician who lived in Chateaugay, Quebec, during the mid-1990s. One might have been named Diana or Dinah or Diane or something similar. It is also possible that he had a third child."

Milton Cohen passed away in Burnaby, British Columbia, in 2000.

The publication of her father's poems have helped to heal her loss she says, "I'm a much happier person." She is deeply grateful to the Borer family for releasing her late father's missives...

The publication of her father's poems have helped to heal her loss she says, "I'm a much happier person." She is deeply grateful to the Borer family for releasing her late father's missives and now hopes that the national publicity will lead her to her lost sisters.

"I understand that he had at least two other

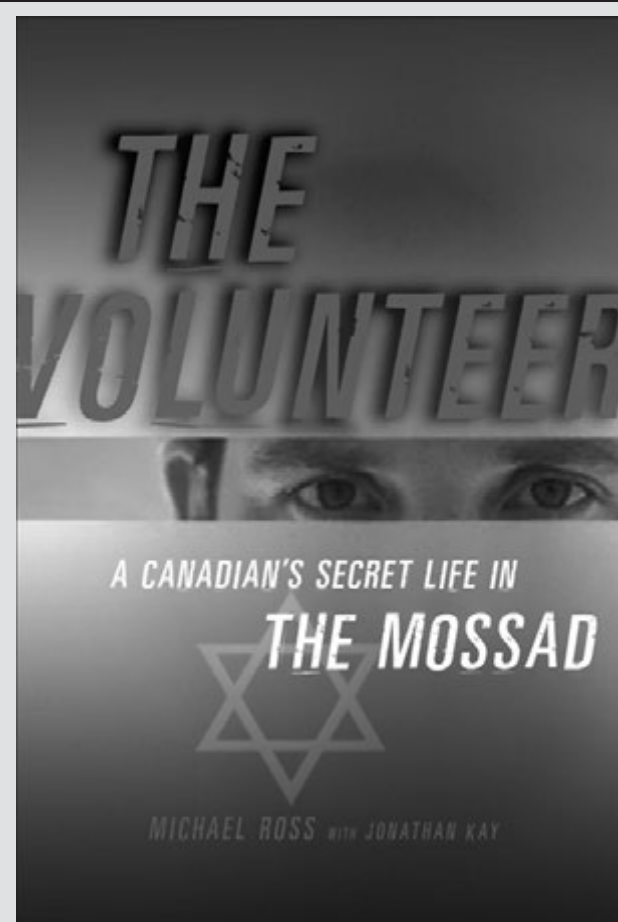
Note: Robert Frank is Judie Benjamin's step-brother. Their grandfather, Samuel Cohen (no relation to Milton) was also traumatized and abandoned his wife and eight children to abject poverty several years after being gassed while serving in the trenches during World War I.

THE VOLUNTEER

The riveting story of a Canadian who served as a senior officer in Israel's legendary Mossad.

For seven-and-a-half years, Ross worked as an undercover agent — a classic spy. In *The Volunteer*, he describes his role in missions to foil attempts by Syria, Libya, and Iran to acquire advanced weapons technology. He tells of his part in the capture of three senior al Qaeda operatives who masterminded the 1998 attacks on American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania; a joint Mossad-FBI operation that uncovered a senior Hezbollah terrorist based in the United States; and a mission to South Africa in which he intercepted Iranian agents seeking to expand their country's military arsenal; and two-and-a-half years as Mossad's Counterterrorism Liaison Officer to the CIA and FBI.

Many of the operations Ross describes have never before been revealed to the public.





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High and lowbrow antics at the Centaur



Actors zip in and out of doors, making their entrances and exits in spectacular fashion, - none more spectacular than Gil Garratt's campy Arlequino. Garrett upstages everyone with his rubber-kneed antics.

The *Game of Love and Chance* at the Centaur Theatre until April 1st is a deliciously theatrical, interpretation of Pierre Carlet de Chamberlain de Marivaux's 18th century piece *Le jeu de l'amour et du hasard*. Adapted and translated from the French into English by Nicolas Billon and directed with overheated passion by Matthew Jocelyn, the artistic director of Toronto's Canadian Stage Theatre, the co-production is a contemporary reworking of the classic.

Marivaux is either turning over in his grave or applauding this audacious 90 minute retelling of his romantic comedy. The story involves the duplicitous couplings and mistaken identities of a pair of high-bred aristocrats pretending to be low-bred servants.

Marivaux is either turning over in his grave or applauding this audacious 90 minute retelling of his romantic comedy.

Of course the social order is compromised, and what we have here is a kind of gallic l'abbe Downton with guffaws.

Orgon (William Webster) has told his headstrong daughter, Sylvia (Trish Lindstrom) that he will not consent to her arranged marriage to Dorante (Harry Judge) if she doesn't like the guy. So Sylvia pretends to be her maid Lisette, (Gemma James Smith) in order to check out her suitor from a distance. And Lisette pretends to be Sylvia. Adding to the confusion, is the fact that Dorante, too, switches roles with his valet, Arlequino (Gil Garratt). The servants, too,

discover a mutual attraction for each other, but of course no one can disclose their true identities until their respective relationships are sorted out. Will love prevail?

The action takes place in a highly stylized mirrored drawing room of a French Chateau designed by Anick La Bissonniere. Actors zip in and out of doors, making their entrances and exits in spectacular fashion, - none more spectacular than Gil Garratt's campy Arlequino. Garrett upstages everyone with his rubber-kneed antics. Gemma James Smith, with her pop-eyes, and admirable energy is no slouch at scene stealing either. With a nod to the exaggerated style of Commedia dell'Arte, much of the hilarity in the chatty play is the pure slapstick. Although the

goings on around him are frenetic, William Webster as Orgon, - who is in on the game of deception - gets honest laughs with his solid delivery. Zack Fraser rounds out the cast as Sylvia's brother, Mario. Feather boas and garish costumes clash with the lipstick red walls, mirrored set and sparkling chandelier. Bursts of sound punctuate scene changes, including Vivaldi's highly appropriate Gloria.

This Toronto-Montreal co-production is as bracing as a splash of Coca-Cola in a glass of Chateau Lafitte Rothschild. Purists may complain. It may not be to everyone's taste. But, hey, don't knock it until you've tried it.

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