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# THE MÉTROPOLITAIN

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# IRAN RISING

## Open letter to the people of Iran

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To my fellow compatriots, the brave Iranian men and women, who for the last few weeks have unleashed a spirit of energy that has been repressed for 30 years under an oppressive and undemocratic regime... we love, admire and support you.

Oh how we, living in exile, wish we could be at your side at this critical juncture in history.

Please keep the momentum going with acts of nonviolent civil disobedience. Like a snowball in motion, once underway, cannot be stopped by anyone.

The eyes of the world are watching your every step and are behind you. World leaders are closely observing the country proclaiming their desire to see the wishes of the Iranian people met. They simply need to see the sheer numbers of the population that seek change and reform. They too will be on your side.

This is our chance to regain our destiny as the freedom loving sons and daughters of Cyrus the Great. This is our chance to bring down the theocracy and rise up to establish a democracy so that our children will be able to enjoy the fruits of liberty:

Continued on page 6



Members of Montreal's Iranian community march through the downtown core.

## Of Persians and power

Akil Alleyne

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In politics as in so much else, talk is cheap; it is deeds that have coinage. This has been one of my key criticisms of US President Barack Obama since the spring of 2008, when the luster of his political ascendancy began to fade in my eyes as his gaseous campaign rhetoric burrowed deeper and deeper under my skin. I looked askance as his handlers and speechwriters set him up in one vainglorious set-piece after another—promising to “heal the planet” and “slow the rise of the oceans” after the last Democratic primary, speaking in front of a row of ridiculous Roman columns at the Democratic National Convention, and so on. Windy rhetoric in politics has

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## Heed Neda's 'call'! Tehran matters

Beryl Wajzman Editor & Publisher

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The pictures flood us. They flood us with pride, poignancy and pathos. A people struggling to be free. The images come from around the world. From citizens of Tehran confronting the terror of theocratic tyrants, to students marching in the streets of Paris to Montrealers — some using walkers — standing up and being counted. The palpable reality of mankind's transcendent yearning for redemptive change.

They flood us too with memory and witness. Budapest 1956. Prague 1968. Gdansk 1980. Wenceslas Square 1989. Tiananmen Square 1989. Berlin 1989.

Continued on page 6

## Iran's revolt Grassroots green

The Hon. David Kilgour

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Among many e-messages coming from Iran in recent days, I found one from a woman especially moving: "...this is the most authentic, grassroots and beautiful movement from the people, by the people and for the people."

Iranians have spoken, with defiant demonstrations in the hundreds of thousands, and in rallies elsewhere, including one last weekend near Paris of 90,000, in protest against widespread election fraud and the fist of a regime unleashing terror.

June 12 election

The ayatollahs' election monitors this week admitted that the number of ballots cast in fifty cities on June 12th exceeded the number of eligible voters, although they insisted lamely that this affected only three million votes. Adding to the mounting skepticism is an analysis by the respected Chatham House and Institute of Iranian Studies at St. Andrew's University, which challenged the official results, based on a comparison of the 2009 votes with those of 2005.

The study also showed that in a

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## MILLES MOTS • THOUSAND WORDS



Tehran protestors in downtown Montreal.

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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

LA TRADITION ANTI-CAPITALISTE REPRISSE PAR QUÉBEC SOLIDAIRE

## Les héritiers (suite) : cadavre à bord

Minoritaire, voire marginal, le rejet du capitalisme constitue au Québec une tradition plus que séculaire, dont je donnais dans mon dernier *Brasse-camarade* deux menus échantillons tirés au sort à l'époque de la « Grande noirceur » : Gérard Filion directeur du *Devoir*, Mgr Desranleau, archevêque de Sherbrooke. J'aurais pu trouver mieux chez les ultramontains de la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle ou parmi les élites traditionnelles des années vingt à quarante du XXe, qui voyaient d'un bon oeil les régimes d'extrême droite qui sévissaient en Europe. Confortés dans leur rejet du libéralisme par la Crise économique, plusieurs rêvaient pour le Québec d'un régime autoritaire dont le Portugal de Salazar, l'Italie de Mussolini, voire l'Allemagne de Hitler, et, à partir de 1939, l'Espagne de Franco, ou, en 1940, la France de Pétain, fournissaient d'alléchants modèles, qui, il faut le préciser, avaient aussi leurs admirateurs ailleurs au Canada.

À la même époque, on a tendance à l'oublier, le communisme ne manquait pas de partisans. Le POP (Parti ouvrier-progressiste) fit élire en 1943 et 1945 un député fédéral dans la circonscription de Montréal-Cartier, Fred Rose, alias Rosenberg, ouvrier électricien juif né en Pologne, à qui la justice canadienne réserva plus tard un sort assez injuste. Plus bavarde, plus influente que l'extrême gauche, l'extrême droite n'obtint jamais un tel succès électoral.

Dans les années 50, le fascisme et le nazisme, défaits sur les champs de bataille et déconsidérés dans les esprits, ne présentaient plus beaucoup d'attraits, ce qui n'empêchait pas la critique du capitalisme. De quel bord se tourner, sinon vers la gauche ? Au milieu des années soixante, la critique marxiste parvint donc à dominer la scène, en particulier chez les syndicats, surtout à la CSN, plus tard à la CEQ et dans une moindre mesure à la FTQ. Pour se débarrasser du capitalisme certains voulaient instaurer au Québec un « socialisme démocratique » !

Foisonnèrent ensuite dans les années 1970 les partis maoïstes

ou trotskistes ainsi qu'une pléthore de groupuscules, dont le plus petit dénominateur commun était la haine du libéralisme économique et du libéralisme tout court, accusés de tous les maux. Ces coteries à visées totalitaires disparurent pour la plupart dans les années 80, mais point leurs militants, qui avaient travaillé d'arrache-pied à préparer la Révolution. Déçus par les Staline, les Mao, les Ceausescu, les Castro et consorts,

Joseph Facal faisait justement remarquer le 4 mai que « bien des membres de Québec solidaire militaient jusqu'à récemment dans des groupuscules marxistes-léninistes. » Voilà qui est légitime et n'a rien d'étonnant.

Gros-Jean comme devant, mais toujours tenaillés par la même aversion, plusieurs se recyclèrent à partir de 89 ou 90 dans l'altermondialisme, l'antisionisme, l'antiaméricanisme (communément appelé « socialisme des imbéciles »), l'anarchisme, le négativisme, le gâtisme, etc.

Que font ces gens-là aujourd'hui ? Rêvent-ils encore d'un monde idéal ou d'un homme nouveau ? Existe-t-il un club, une

ligue, un parti qui puisse incarner leur utopie ? Utopie qu'un mot résume à la fois trop bien et trop mal : collectivisme, une notion que l'on retrouve dans toutes les idéologies et toutes les pratiques socialistes depuis Saint-Simon.

On m'accusera de tirer sur une ambulance, mais tant pis. À Québec solidaire, ce qui reste du socialisme, et qu'il faut bien qualifier de cadavre vivant, se voit administré des hectolitres de solutés et est à jamais branché sur un respirateur. Qu'à cela ne tienne, pour faire accroire que le moribond est toujours vigoureux, ses zélés ambulanciers le promènent d'un bout à l'autre de la province toutes sirènes hurlantes, stridence où perce une voix : Amir Khadir administrant au peuple amusé des doses massives d'anticapitalisme primaire. Les ambitions grandioses des anciens M.-L. se voit réduites à moins que rien : un bruyant chiâlage.

Joseph Facal faisait justement remarquer le 4 mai que « bien des membres de Québec solidaire militaient jusqu'à récemment dans des groupuscules marxistes-léninistes. » Voilà qui est légitime et n'a rien d'étonnant. Pour sa part, Françoise David, la voix la plus respectée du parti, s'est repentie naguère d'égarements de jeunesse en tous points semblables aux leurs. Elle travaille désormais, ne riez pas, à l'avènement d'un État-providence exacerbé qui redistribuerait des richesses qu'il serait interdit de produire.

Assemblage hétéroclite de doux rêveurs et d'orphelins de la Révolution (1), Québec solidaire ne peut faire autrement que d'ânonner contre le capitalisme — vocable péjoratif qui dissimule pudiquement l'objet réel de leur haine, le libéralisme — les poncifs les plus éculés, seul refrain que la chorale sache entonner à l'unisson. Cette gauche vouée aux luttes de tendances sombrera dans la cacophonie dès qu'il s'agira d'appliquer des politiques réalistes dans le monde réel.

Ne craignons rien, un tel événement n'aura pas lieu, Dieu merci. (à suivre)

(1) J'emprunte cette expression à Pierre-André Taguieff.

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

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

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# Le vrai fondateur d'Hydro-Québec, c'est lui

Le 11 juin dernier, dans le « blogue de l'éditorial » sur Cyberpresse, André Pratte répétait un mythe qui, bien que grotesque, est savamment entretenu par les indépendantistes.

En effet, Pratte affirme que « Jacques-Parizeau-est-l'un-des-architectes-du-Québec-moderne », ce qui, soit dit en passant, est l'une des nombreuses hyperboles complètement ridicules auxquelles les nationalistes nous ont habitués quand il s'agit de mousser la gloire des semi-divinités qui trônent dans leur Panthéon imaginaire.

Au sujet des prétendues compétences économiques de Parizeau, il paraît évident que l'éditorialiste en chef de *La Presse* n'a pas lu la biographie de René Lévesque signée Pierre Godin, où l'on apprend que Lévesque, fâché par la tendance de Parizeau à MENTIR en plein conseil des ministres quant à l'état réel des finances publiques, lui avait retiré la présidence du Conseil du Trésor. L'ego hypertrophié du grand seigneur Parizeau en a été atteint en plein cœur, cela au point où il avait contemplé la démission, ce qui aurait pourtant été salutaire à l'économie québécoise de l'époque, vu l'état désastreux dans lequel il avait plongé les finances publiques. En tout cas, si André Pratte avait été au courant de ce fait, il se serait sans doute retenu un peu plus avant de qualifier à son tour Jacques Parizeau d'architecte de quoi que ce soit d'autre qu'un monument à sa propre gloire, dont l'éditorialiste, mal informé, se fait malheureusement le chantre.

Donc, pour ce qui est du fameux « Parizeau-grand-économiste-et-brillantissime-gestionnaire-public », on repassera. Quant à « Parizeau-architecte-du-Québec-moderne », j'aime mieux penser que les Québécois, dans leur ensemble, auront été eux-mêmes les architectes de la modernisation de leur société, au lieu de se contenter d'être les serviles laudateurs de quelcon-



T.-D. BOUCHARD (1881-1962)

ques demi-dieux nationalistes à la Parizeau ou autres qui leur auraient servi de bergers, et dont tous les prédécesseurs et inspirateurs se sont surtout acharnés à maintenir les Québécois dans un lamentable état d'arriération culturelle, économique et politique. Tout cela, clamaient-ils, afin de sauver la « Race » et la « Langue, gardienne de la Foi ». Vous n'avez qu'à lire les « œuvres » du pseudo-économiste François-Albert Angers, apôtre de l'idéologie fasciste-corporatiste et l'une des plus grandes inspirations d'un Jacques Parizeau qui se revendique encore de lui, pour vous rendre compte du beau projet réactionnaire qu'il destinait aux paisibles brebis québécoises, que lui et ses semblables ont toujours rêvé de tondre à souhait.

Mais bon, nous pouvons concéder que cette méprise d'André Pratte n'est tout de même pas trop maligne. Mais là où il commet une faute grossière, c'est quand il affirme que la nationalisa-

tion de l'électricité, ce serait « en grande partie » l'œuvre de Jacques Parizeau. C'est de la pure foutaise. Le vrai champion de la nationalisation de l'électricité et le véritable fondateur d'Hydro-Québec, ce n'est ni Parizeau, ni même René Lévesque comme le veut un autre mythe très persistant. Le vrai fondateur d'Hydro-Québec, il s'appelle Téléphore-Damien Bouchard (1881-1962), et il en a d'ailleurs été le premier président.<sup>1</sup>

L'Hydro-Québec a été créé non pas en 1962, comme le prétendent les nationalistes aujourd'hui afin d'en attribuer la paternité à Saint René Lévesque, mais en 1944 par le gouvernement libéral d'Adélard Godbout, sous la pression expresse de T.-D. Bouchard, numéro deux du gouvernement. C'est T.-D. Bouchard qui, tout au long des trois décennies précédentes, avait mené la bataille pour la nationalisation des ressources hydro-électriques. Aussi, il faut savoir que la part du lion des entreprises hydro-électriques avait été nationalisée dès 1944. En 1962, le gouvernement québécois ne s'est emparé que des morceaux restants de cette industrie, après que T.-D. Bouchard ait largement ouvert la voie deux décennies plus tôt. On doit au très nationaliste Maurice Duplessis, qui avait battu les libéraux en 1944 et qui maintint son régime réactionnaire au pouvoir jusqu'en 1959, le gel de presque 20 ans de la croissance d'Hydro-Québec.

Il est à noter que T.-D. Bouchard était un antinationaliste convaincu et affiché, qui n'a jamais craint les attaques des élites nationalistes qui le traitaient lui aussi de « traître », de « vendu », entre autres épithètes infamantes qui, encore de nos jours, sont réservées aux Québécois francophones qui osent dire autre chose que ce qu'autorisent les canons de la pensée unique nationaliste. Il faut aussi rappeler que cet homme

d'État, qui était l'ennemi juré des élites cléricales et racistes, a aussi été le principal champion de mesures progressistes très importantes comme le droit de vote des femmes et l'éducation gratuite et obligatoire, qu'il a fait adopter dès le début du mandat du gouvernement Godbout (1939-40).

Comme quoi on peut être antinationaliste et agir CONCRÈTEMENT pour l'émancipation globale et le mieux-être des gens qui vivent dans notre société. Comme quoi aussi les nationalistes d'aujourd'hui n'ont aucune espèce de leçon à donner en matière de patriotisme, bien au contraire, à ceux qui ne pensent pas comme eux et qui, comme T.-D. Bouchard dans son temps, ont l'audace de l'affirmer ouvertement et de faire preuve d'hérésie vis-à-vis la foi nationaliste.

Là où notre société a pu progresser dans l'histoire, on le doit d'ailleurs à des hérétiques comme T.-D. Bouchard, et c'est pour cette raison que je n'hésite pas à dire qu'on a besoin plus que jamais de nouveaux hérétiques dans le Québec d'aujourd'hui.

Enfin, André Pratte occupe une situation professionnelle qui devrait, il me semble, l'inciter à faire un peu mieux ses devoirs au lieu de se contenter de répercuter sans vérifier des mythes qui nous empêchent de voir clair sur notre histoire telle qu'elle a eu lieu en réalité. Surtout quand on tient compte du fait que je lui ai déjà donné deux des trois tomes des Mémoires de T.-D. Bouchard, dans lesquels est raconté en long et en large son long combat en faveur de la propriété publique des ressources hydroélectriques québécoises.

<sup>1</sup> Pour en savoir plus, voir la biographie de T.-D. Bouchard écrite par Frank Guttman, *The Devil of Saint-Hyacinthe*, New York, i-Universe Books, 2007. La version française de cet ouvrage sera lancée d'ici environ 6 mois.

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# Montreal's war on cars endangers citizens

## Battleground in Côte-des-Neiges-NDG highlights wrongheaded policies

With a municipal election only months away, anti-car policies are being forced on citizens, notably in the borough of Côte-des-Neiges-NDG, where merchants are left scratching their heads.

The trendy Monkland Village commercial district has been hit hard with anti-car measures in the past couple of months. Merchants say they feel powerless and frustrated in dealing with a borough administration that doesn't take their viewpoints into consideration. Over the past few weeks, more parking spaces were removed on Monkland Ave. in favour of large, round concrete sidewalk extensions; some business-owners had no clue what was going on until the shovels hit the ground.

"This is symptomatic of the waste and idiocy of this city," said Allan Lazar, who owns a 30-year-old service station on Monkland. "There's no logic. Why are they fixing what isn't broken? It's the same kind of mentality that led to the bike path on de Maisonneuve Blvd. Why spend so much money on infrastructure that isn't needed?"

Many other businesspeople wonder why the borough would proceed with a second round of sidewalk extensions. Five years ago, extensions were installed on Monkland and last year, spots were taken away in favour of yellow paint at every corner in an effort to slow down traffic and improve pedestrian safety.

"They're making our lives as difficult as possible. No one ever consults the merchants," said George Krausz, owner of the Buzz clothing boutique. "This is a commercial area. There should be parking. I pay \$9,000 in taxes and have zero say."

Monica Turcotte said it's unacceptable that another parking spot was taken away in front of her shoe repair shop; also frustrating was that she was not made aware of the sidewalk enlargement project.

"We arrived that Monday morning and saw orange paint on the road, but had no idea what they were doing," Turcotte said, questioning the removal of yet more spots and lamenting the concrete slab in front of her store. "If they would have put a bench with trees, it would have been something. This is just cement. I think it's stupid."

"What are they doing to encourage business to come to this street instead of being a deterrent? What is the city going to do for us?" asked Dany Roseman, head of the Monkland Merchants Association and owner of the Ciel Bleu boutique. On the occasions that his organization has been consulted about public works projects, he got impression that the chats were strictly a courtesy call. "I go to these meetings just to find out what is going to be done to us."

Borough mayor Michael Applebaum has been mum in the past few weeks on the outrage felt by merchants as drivers, through increasingly invasive infrastructure, are coerced into leave their cars at home in favour of public transit or a bicycle. In his stead, outgoing NDG councillor Marcel Tremblay defended the city's transport plan and apologized to merchants who were taken by surprise by the construction work.

"Citizens are very happy with this because it permits them to walk safely on Monkland. We're trying to create an atmosphere with fewer cars and more people walking," Tremblay said. Regarding communication issues with business-owners: "On that aspect, we missed. They should have been informed."

Homeowners and merchants alike were wondering earlier this month just "what was Applebaum smoking," when the borough began eliminating parking spots in other areas in the borough, in favour of bike paths.

That's what Ian Morantz, owner of Snowdon Deli, asked as he was trying to explain the sudden lack of parking space to his



Côte-des-Neiges-NDG Borough Director Stéphane Plante tries to calm irate residents who cannot park in front of their Fielding Ave. homes.



Large, round concrete eyesores were built on many Monkland Ave. street corners, taking up parking spots and enraging merchants.

**This is symptomatic of the waste and idiocy of this city. There's no logic. Why are they fixing what isn't broken? Why spend so much money on infrastructure that isn't needed?"**

customers on Isabella Ave. at Decarie Blvd., outside his 63-year-old restaurant. What makes the decision so curious is that borough politicians and civil servants work directly across the street and often dine at the deli. Strange, area merchants say, that they didn't foresee the consequences of their actions.

"I was shocked," said Dave Spence, owner of Flex Nutrition on Decarie and Isabella. On May 29, he drove into work as he has been doing since 2002, "turned the corner and saw the 'no-stopping' signs. There's no parking around here as it is. Customers won't want to do business with you if there are no spaces."

The borough had held public consultations on its bike plan, which was conceived with the help of Vélo Québec, but didn't go out of their way to publicize it. All the Decarie/Isabella merchants The Métropolitain spoke with said they never received an invitation to any such meeting. On May 28, Applebaum said no spaces on Isabella would be sacrificed. The

very next day, no-stopping signs were posted, confusing merchants and customers alike.

Morantz collected 500 signatures on a petition in the first 48 hours alone, in support of the restoration of all spots on Isabella. Morantz said he's seen a slight reduction in business due to the new rules; Spence said there was a noticeable decline. Optometrists, notaries and others along the two-block stretch of Decarie complained it would be impossible for their clients to continue to use their services if the bike path were placed in a prime parking area.

"The city is promoting the use of public transit and active transport," said councillor Marvin Rotrand, who represents the Snowdon district. "There has been increased investment in augmenting metro and bus service and the extension of the network of bike lanes."

Rotrand said the decision to put the path on Isabella was taken by centre-city. The executive committee member responsible for urban planning and transport is André Lavallée, who was recently pictured with Applebaum inaugurating the borough's new 12.4 km worth of paths. Fielding Ave. is among those who also saw parking spots taken away for the special lanes and residents there were just as displeased with the decision.

Earlier this month, about a dozen irate homeowners met with borough director Stéphane Plante and communications director Michel Therrien on the corner of Fielding and Cavendish Blvd. In terms of both safety and logistics, that path is also a horrible idea, the residents said.

"It's very dangerous here. A girl died a few years ago," said Guy Duchesne, who lives on Fielding. "I would never put a bike path here. It's fast enough with car traffic. They're putting kids in danger."

Duchesne was among the residents who Plante tried his best to calm, saying that the borough would look at a compromise. He also pointed out that the decision was a political one and civil servants were only following orders. Parking was eliminated on both sides of Fielding between West Broadway Ave. and Cote St. Luc Rd.

"If you want to have a debate on bike paths, it's not with me that you should be speaking with," Plante told residents, in lieu of Applebaum. "The validity of bike paths as a debate has been thrown out there. We are confident that a solution can be found."

Spots were restored on Isabella just over one week after they were taken away. The prospect of a total reversal in policy is less likely for Fielding residents.

The lanes do not resemble the de Maisonneuve Blvd. route, which is separated from car traffic by a concrete median. In some cases, the only way a driver or cyclist can tell that they're on a "bike path" is if they see a logo spray-painted on the road every few metres. The route on Terrebonne Ave., for example, has no other safety measure in place; no solid lines nor any traffic-calming poles to separate cyclists from motorists.

"That's how it works in a lot of areas in Montreal," Applebaum said. "It's just like reserved bus lanes. If it is painted there, it's because it's respecting the norms that permit a bicycle and also a car to circulate."

Sticking to centre-city norms and policies just won't cut it for some irate residents who don't understand why cyclists are being given special treatment by the city.

"How are my tenants going to unload their groceries?" asked Roco Domenico, who has lived on Fielding since 1974, and now can't park anywhere around his home. "\$5,000 in taxes! This doesn't allow me to stop in front of my home?"



## HEED NEDA'S 'CALL!' TEHRAN MATTERS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Kiev 2004. Tehran 2009. Everybody just wants to be free. Velvet revolutions and Prague springs. Some succeed, some fail. But what is so inspiring — particularly to a North America grown apathetic to the slow undoing of personal liberty — is that there are people ready to die for freedom. To spend one day as a lion — the symbol of pre-Mullah Iran — than a lifetime as a lamb.

But there is a series of images that overwhelm even the brutality of all the others. Of police batons cracking heads; of Iranian Revolutionary Guards' water cannons spouting boiling water searing skin and eyes and lips. The image of a beautiful young Iranian woman dropping to her knees, her face frozen in shock as she feels the impact of a bullet. The next of her lying on the street being tended to by passersby, one screaming "Don't be afraid!" The third of her dying, eyes rolled back and blood spouting from her mouth and nose. Neda Agha Soltan, dubbed the "Angel of Freedom" as her image sped around the world through the efforts of citizen journalists and their cameraphones, was not even a



Neda Agha Soltan

demonstrator. That made her death even more tragic. Drove home the point even more of the indiscriminate terror even against innocents of the Mullahs' regime.

Ironically her name, Neda, means "the call". Yes, we must all heed the call.

"Democracy is the best revenge," Bilawal Bhutto Zardari quoted his mother Benazir Bhutto as saying soon after her assassination in January 2008. That could be the credo for

those in the streets of Tehran. They fight for us all.

They fight for sanity. They represent hope. What happens in Iran over the next while will determine much. A free Iran will radically change everything from the borders of Pakistan to the Israeli seacoast. What is happening in Tehran matters.

It matters because as members of the family of the free we are reminded again that the survival and success of liberty comes at a high price and is by no means assured. It matters because despite some fleeting happy encounters with progress the history of mankind is riddled with spectacular and frequent failures. It matters because if we do not resolve to turn back the darkness those failures will haunt us forever. In the dead of night we will feel those failures like thin, humid rivulets of sweat crawling over us. Mankind's failures to beat back tyranny has cost us dearly. Perhaps we should be haunted.

Haunted by the mounds of ashes that once were one and a half million smiling children playing in the streets of "civilized" Europe.

Haunted by the bloated bodies floating in the Yangtze of Mao's China. Haunted by the corpses frozen in the wastes of Stalin's Gulag. Haunted by the betrayal of the free people of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Haunted by the killing fields of Cambodia. Haunted by the bodies rotting in the jungles of Rwanda and in the fetid fields of the Balkans. And haunted today by the memory of the devastated of Darfur, victims of the 21st century's first genocide.

The consequence of failure will be dire. We cannot afford to have the hope in Tehran snuffed out. It is a beacon for enslaved millions living under the oppressive regimes of the Islamist middle rim of this small planet. French poet Paul Valéry once wrote that «La liberté est l'épreuve la plus dure que nous pouvons infliger sur un gens. Savoir comment être libre n'est pas donné à tous les hommes et toutes les nations également.» Committing ourselves, and teaching others, how to be free is the greatest testament and witness we can propound for the bold and the brave in the streets of Tehran.



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## OPEN LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF IRAN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

freedom, equality, the rule of law, separation between religion and state and a constitution based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We see your struggles on the streets, we feel your passion and pain, we smell the fear of the ruling minority, we hear your cries for change, we understand the sacrifices you are making

and we hope to taste victory with you when we unite once again as family in our great and beautiful homeland.

Drop by drop we can create an ocean of

change and put out the fires of injustice.

In solidarity and in spirit,  
Nazanin

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

- George F. Lengvari, Sr.



## The Hon. David Kilgour

The Hon. David Kilgour is Canada's former Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific and for Central & Eastern Europe and the Middle East. He is a tireless international human rights campaigner and has co-authored, with David Matas, the seminal study on the tragedy of organ harvesting in China. He is the co-author with David T. Jones of *Uneasy Neighbours*.



### IRAN'S REVOLT - GRASSROOTS GREEN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

third of all provinces the official results, if accurate, would have required Ahmadinejad to win not only all 'conservative' voters, all former centrist ones and all new voters, but up to 44 percent of formerly 'reformist' voters despite a decade of conflict between the two groups.

Among numerous other indications of ballot stuffing are reports that before the election a number of officials in the Interior ministry (where the votes were counted) were fired because their loyalty to Ahmadinejad was questioned. Overall, the incumbent's declared victory by eleven million votes now looks fabricated.

#### Ballots vs. Bullets

The ongoing confrontation of ballots and bullets across Iran underlines an important major issue of the 21st century: how the direction in the Koran --"commanding right and forbidding wrong"--is to be resolved in 48 nations with Muslim majority populations.

Recent voting trends are revealing. Indonesia, the largest Muslim democracy, held parliamentary elections in April 2009. Support for fundamentalist parties declined. Most voters seemed concerned about good governance and economic development. Overall, support for fundamentalist parties fell from 39% to 29.5%. The largest, the Prosperous Justice Party, won only 8.4% of the votes.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's Democratic Party

captured 20.5% of the popular vote and he is also expected to win re-election in the upcoming presidential election. His strategy of co-opting the good governance agenda and launching a wide-ranging anti-corruption campaign was well received.

#### Pakistan and Malaysia

Similar conclusions can be derived from elections during 2008 in Pakistan and Malaysia. In both, most of the electorate voted for parties that promised good governance. Parties that had purely religious agendas did not do well. In Pakistan, votes went overwhelmingly to secular parties.

In Malaysia (which has a 65% Muslim majority), voters resoundingly rejected the ruling party in four major states despite its attempts to appeal to religious sentiments. For the first time since independence in 1957, the government fared very poorly; it was seen as corrupt and inefficient.

The elections in all three countries, as well as the more recent one in Lebanon, have important implications for other governments: the best thing they can do is to encourage good governance that will deliver on education, economic growth and stability.

#### Conclusion

Iran is a vitally important country to the world for many economic, geographic and security reasons. It's culture is thousands of years old; it has a large and youthful population, with almost two-thirds under thirty.

What has transpired in Iran in recent days is home-grown and the brave people of Iran should be applauded for trying to establish a government for all. They might not succeed this time, but the momentum for change, for greater freedom, is rising and cannot be easily stopped.

The world was transfixed by Neda Soltan lying in a pool of blood, presumably because she got out of a car caught in traffic within sight of a sniper. The international community must consider with care its role in the future of Iran. Western governments should look for ways to be supportive without attempting to co-opt this movement into their own agendas. We hurt more than help if we are seen using the Iranians' movement to accomplish our ends. Democracy will come to Iran, but it will come not because of international agendas, but because the people of Iran want it and are prepared to sacrifice for it.

To its credit, the Harper government has taken a firm stand against the terror of Khamenei-Ahmadinejad. To side unequivocally with the people of Iran, more should be done, including:

Supporting the demand of the Iranian opposition for a nuclear-weapons-free Iran, with equal rights for women and minority ethnocultural communities and religions, separation of church and state; the rule of law and independent judges; representative democracy; and good relations with neighbours and the world. A first step here would be to follow the lead of

Continued on page 8



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## Akil Alleyne

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### OF PERSIANS AND POWER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

never sat well with me, no matter how young, intelligent or charismatic the politician.

Even less am I impressed by the idea that oratory alone can move mountains; hence the skepticism with which I greeted Obama's "race speech" in Philadelphia last year and his speech at Cairo University earlier this month. America's perpetual "conversation on race" has not made any readily obvious progress since March 2008; and as for the claim that Obama's address to the Muslim world has won over many hearts and minds throughout the umma, well, seeing is believing.

On the whole, eloquent oratory that is untethered to any concrete, effective action is worse than useless in my book. Highfalutin words are best backed up with meaningful deeds; when nothing meaningful can be done, silence—or careful circumspection, at any rate—is golden.

This is why I look with contempt at the flak President Obama is now taking from the Right over his refusal to openly support the Iranian opposition in its current confrontation with the mullahs in Tehran.

Iran's clownish and hateful President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, was credited with victory in the theocracy's recent elections by an absurd margin. (According to [www.someecards.com](http://www.someecards.com): "The unrest in Iran makes me proud to live in a country where corrupt politicians are smart enough to keep

rigged elections close.") Ahmadinejad's chief rival, Mir-Hossein Mousavi, promptly demanded a revote while his supporters took to the streets of Tehran in multitudes, objecting to this naked affront to the will of the Iranian people. The country has been roiled with protest ever since, prompting widespread speculation about the potential consequences for the regime's longevity—not to mention the more, shall we say, controversial elements of Iran's foreign policy, namely its nascent nuclear program and its support for terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah.

President Obama has so far taken the wisest of all available tacks with regard to Iran. He has expressed his skepticism about the election results and his disapproval of the Iranian regime's thuggish crackdown on dissidents. Yet he has been careful not to go too far in denouncing the regime or in endorsing Mousavi or his supporters—a smart strategy on both counts. The mullahs and their flunkies, after all, are still armed to the teeth, and can brutally crush this largely unarmed uprising at any time, Tiananmen-style. Mousavi, for his part, has not called for an end to the regime's nuclear ambitions, to its sponsorship of Hamas and Hezbollah or to its enmity with Israel. It remains unclear whether his supporters seek to overthrow the Shi'ite theocracy altogether or merely to replace one mullah-approved marionette with

another. This is not the kind of horse on which Obama would be wise to bet.

The last negotiating partner the US needs is an Iranian regime flush from the victory of flattening an internal insurrection—and incensed at the President's endorsement of that revolt to boot. In such a scenario, Obama could no longer expect to get the mullahs to beat their uranium centrifuges into ploughshares—and forget about convincing them to rein in Israel's terrorist tormentors. With the odds already stacked against that success even in the absence of the current strife, President Obama is in no mood for his plans to be disrupted by the events in Tehran.

Nonetheless, a growing chorus of mostly conservative critics has been braying for President Obama to bless the Iranian protestors with just a touch of his oratorical magic, in the name of democracy. It would be foolhardy for him to take their advice, for the United States has no leverage over Iran at present. Armed intervention is out of the question with American troops still bogged down in Iraq and Afghanistan. Economic sanctions would only supplement the largely ineffectual ones already in place, and it is ordinary Iranians who would probably feel the pinch. A US-sponsored coup d'état is no option; the country's Islamist theocrats are eager enough to blame the unrest on Yankee interference as it is. In any case, the US and Iran have already gone down that road once before, in 1953—with miserable results for everyone involved.

Given the limited options available, why pillory the president for exercising caution? How can the same conservatives who, like me, were happy to deride Barack Obama's treacherous cant not so long ago demand even emptier rhetoric from him now? Why vociferously denounce the mullahs' skullduggery when the US can do nothing to back it up? Of what use would such inspiring words be without commensurate deeds?

In August 2008, President Bush's strong objections did not stop Russia from manhan-

dling tiny Georgia. In 1991, President George H.W. Bush's public musings that the Iraqi people should overthrow Saddam Hussein led to a bloodbath, when the Kurds and Shi'ites proved too weak to finish off Saddam and the US refused to help them get the job done. In 1989, the world watched helplessly as China's Deng Xiaoping bloodily shattered the Tiananmen Square protestors' dreams of democracy in a country that called itself a "People's Republic". Poland in 1981, Czechoslovakia in 1968, Hungary in 1956, East Germany in 1953: on goes the long, tragic list of popular uprisings that failed because tyrannical regimes had the muscle to suppress them and the will to use it—and because the US had no way of stopping them.

Displays of "people power" such as the current one in Tehran never fail to thrill and inspire; but their chances of success depend on how well organized and well armed—and how ruthless—both the people and their rulers are. If the latter are mightier, and neither the US nor any other outside benefactor is in a position to step in to level the playing field, the rulers will likely win out, at least in the short term. The Iron Curtain was rent in 1989 primarily because Mikhail Gorbachev refused to use Soviet might to prop up the Eastern European Communist regimes any longer. South African apartheid began to crumble the following year because the regime eventually wilted under the international community's ostracism. These rulers caved partly because they lacked the bloody-mindedness it took to keep locking up or gunning down their opponents.

Only time will tell whether the mullahs will similarly lose their nerve. If not, then they will probably win this confrontation. It would be treacherous for President Obama to egg the protestors on if he cannot have their back if and when the crackdown begins in earnest. Fortunately, whatever his shortcomings, Barack Obama is not the treacherous type.

### IRAN'S REVOLT - GRASSROOTS GREEN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

the 27 EU countries and delist the PMOI opposition as a terrorist organization.

Support the work of Iranian Canadians and others in their efforts toward good governance and the rule of law. For example, Canada should play a more active role in the work of Stop Child Executions, led by the Iranian-born Canadian, Nazanin Afshin-Jam.

Propose additional UN sanctions against Iran's government until an election can be held with sufficient independent monitoring to provide a fair process.

In her email quoted above, the young Iranian also spoke of "a spirit of fraternity, determination, resistance, courage, solidarity and generosity that no word can describe." It is this spirit the international community should share because the blood shed by Iranians are sacrifices made for the basic rights of us all.



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## David T. Jones

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# Human dignity, religious rights, and Obama

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948 without dissent. It proclaimed: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights....Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."

Article 18 deals with religion: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes...freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.'

Eleanor Roosevelt was chair of the original Commission on Human Rights, a standing body of the United Nations, constituted to undertake the work of preparing what was initially conceived as an International Bill of Rights. The drafters, which included the Montrealer John Humphrey, hoped that it would quickly be followed by a more detailed listing of rights in a legally binding form, but it was not until 1966 that the two international human rights' covenants--the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)--were adopted. Almost a full decade later, the covenants finally came into force.

The Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief was passed in 1981, primarily because the UN General Assembly was concerned about continuing intolerance and discrimination based on beliefs. It provides for the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and seeks to ensure that no-one should be discriminated against because of their beliefs.

The General Assembly reaffirmed this Declaration in 1997 in a resolution that focuses on encouraging states to provide within their legal systems genuine freedom of thought, conscience and religion and effective redress against violations. The United Nations has to date been unable to codify the Declaration into a more binding document.

The effort for now over 60 years has been to transform paper principles into practical protections. The protection of human dignity, including religious freedom, is normally more effective in countries where there are independent judicial systems, including effective and sensible human rights commis-

sions. Canada has been a leader in upholding the rights promoted in the UDHR.

Gao Zhisheng

Unfortunately, in many parts of the world, human dignity backed by an independent judiciary remains a distant dream. Many individuals have paid terrible prices for their courageous pursuit of what Canadians often take for granted.

Consider the case of Gao Zhisheng, a Beijing lawyer and Nobel Peace prize nominee. In 2001, he was named one of China's top ten lawyers. He donated a third of his time to victims of human rights violations, representing miners, evicted tenants and others. However, when he attempted to defend members of the Falun Gong spiritual

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community, the party-state unleashed its wrath. This included removing his permit to practise law, an attempt on his life, having police attack his wife and 13-year-old daughter, and attempting to deny the family any income.

In 2006, Gao was sentenced to three years in prison for "inciting subversion of state power," although international pressure appears to have caused a suspension of the sentence for five years. Predictably, Gao spoke out again. In his most recent article, he wrote about over 50 days of excruciating torture. Happily, his family was able to depart China for safety in the United States, although he remains in China--circumstances unknown.

UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

Given its predilections, it is regrettable but

unsurprising that the government of China instantly rejected many basic recommendations made in the report of the UN Human Rights Council Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, released on February 11. Even though one can argue that these recommendations were "gotcha" in design, with the wide expectation that they would be rejected, they include a number of basic human rights positions, including ones to:

- guarantee all citizens of China the exercise of religious freedom, freedom of belief, and freedom of worshipping in private. As Canada in its statement to the Working Group noted, respect for this freedom includes respecting the freedom of belief of Falun Gong practitioners;
- publish death penalty statistics. As the UN

gation of the claims that some Falun Gong practitioners have been subjected to torture and used for organ transplants and take measures, as appropriate, to ensure that those responsible for such abuses are prosecuted and punished, and

- take effective measures to ensure that lawyers can defend their clients without fear of harassment. Gao Zhisheng is only one of a number of courageous lawyers who have been persecuted.

Religious Freedom and Social Harmony

To be sure, Beijing is not alone in being guilty of gross and systematic human rights violations against their own peoples. For example, Iran has often used religion as an excuse to persecute its own people and to confront other nations. We are witnessing that now in its repression of its citizens demands for democratic reform.

These countries, of course, are not alone in using religion to justify crimes against their people and humanity in general. One observer noted that "More people have been slaughtered in the name of religion than any other single reason." Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who spoke in February at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, noted the obvious: religion, he said, is "an excuse for so much evil." On the other hand, such violence demonstrates the power an enduring ideal will have. Religion is not tiddly winks--or one might suggest that it has been the decline of religious commitment in the European/West that has eliminated it as an impetus for mass violence. If it isn't important, why fight about it? But for others, it is life and death important.

Using religion as cover for evil stems from the doctrine that religions are exclusive. Religious extremists deny the rights of others whose beliefs or non-beliefs are different from their own. This offends the principles of the UDHR as it is offensive to the basic foundation of all religions, which is love for all humanity.

Religious freedom is about acknowledging and respecting others' rights to choose a different belief -- or no belief. If we grant such freedom to each other, harmony among religions will become reality.

In our daily lives, how do we achieve such harmony? How indeed when it takes two to make peace while it takes only one to make war?

First we might consider how to build harmony among the three Abrahamic religions.

Abrahamic Religions

There is a perhaps apocryphal statement to

- implement the recommendations of the Committee against Torture of November 2008. The Committee recommended that China conduct or commission an independent investi-

## HUMAN DIGNITY, RELIGIOUS RIGHTS, AND OBAMA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

the effect that a British prime minister, upon contemplating the problems of the Middle East, sighed and said "If only Jews and Arabs could act like Christian gentlemen." Of course, one could also hypothesize the proverbial Jew or Muslim making a comparable statement directed at the ignorant hostility of the other religions.

Several years ago a seminar at the National Prayer Breakfast in Ottawa was told that one of the major causes of violence in the Middle East was the widespread view that Jews and Muslims do not worship the same God. This misunderstanding, we were told, encourages members of both faith communities to dehumanize and thus to demonize followers of the other.

In reality, Jews, Muslims, and Christians worship the same God, albeit in different ways and with differing emphasis. Each of these monotheistic faiths believes that life has profound value and meaning.

The widespread ignorance about each other is a major obstacle to mutual respect and building harmony. All of us must work harder to eliminate this knowledge deficit, while recognizing that greater knowledge may also prompt greater intensity over differences by eliminating the vague aura of good feeling that may conceal diametrically opposed principles. We may conclude that knowledge is a better

base for understanding than ignorance, but the phrase "to know him is to love him" is not always accurate.

Karen Armstrong writing in her book "The battle for God" states, ".the liberal myth that humanity is progressing to an ever more enlightened and tolerant state looks as fantastic as any of the other millennial myths. Without the constraints of a higher mystical truth, reason can on occasion become demonic and count views that are as great, if not greater, than any of the atrocities perpetrated by fundamentalists."

Armstrong wrote her book before the events of September 11, 2001, but some of the related points she makes still seem valid. First, liberals and fundamentalists in all three faiths must build bridges and attempt to avoid future confrontations. Each side must try to understand what motivates the other. Fundamentalists must develop a more compassionate assessment of their opponents to be true to their religion's traditions. Secularists, says Armstrong, "must be more faithful to the benevolence, tolerance and respect for humanity which characterizes modern culture at its best, and address themselves more emphatically to the fears, anxieties, and needs which so many of their fundamentalist neighbours experience and which no society can safely ignore."

Obama

U.S. President Barack Obama also spoke at the Prayer Breakfast in Washington in February emphasizing the importance of developing religious harmony.

"We know too that whatever our differences, there is one law that binds all great religions together... the Golden Rule--the call to love one another; to understand one another; to treat with dignity and respect those with whom we share a brief moment on this Earth."

"It is an ancient rule; a simple rule; but also one of the most challenging. For it asks each of us to take some measure of responsibility for the well-being of people we may not know or worship with or agree with on every issue. Sometimes, it asks us to reconcile with bitter enemies or resolve ancient hatreds. And that requires a living, breathing, active faith. It requires us not only to believe, but to do - to give something of ourselves for the benefit of others and the betterment of our world."

These doubtless fine words presumably are deeply believed by the president; however--and it is a vital "however," such "leave well enough alone" logic requires immense restraint by those who believe themselves the recipients of God-given truths that either (a) must be vigorously shared with non-believers if necessary by force; or (b) are not open to compromise with non-believers. And when

compromise is accepted at the cost of your soul and/or eternal damnation, the incentive to compromise disappears. It is easy to compromise when the topic under discussion is not existential for the discussants.

The UDHR and its core values, including non-discrimination, equality, fairness and universality, apply to everyone, everywhere and always. The Declaration continues to affirm the inherent human dignity and worth of every person, without distinction of any kind. Independent courts must be vigilant in their roles--always resisting pressure from the executive or inflamed public opinion. Unfortunately, even this "given" requires caveat--courts have judges and justices with agendas beyond the abstract perfection of The Law, and higher courts reverse lower courts. Which law, e.g. Sharia, is operative will often determine the verdict.

Ultimately to protect our human rights, we must be prepared to defend those of others. We must be prepared to defend the rights of everyone for due process and a fair defense vigorously. We only have true religious freedom when we allow others the freedom to choose their beliefs--or non-beliefs--based on our common and fundamental pursuit of a better world with legal equality for all. Only when we protect the dignity of all members of the human family do we truly enjoy our own.

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# Montrealers take to streets to support Iran's people

Over the past 10 days thousands of Montrealers have marched through the downtown core to protest what they described as a “stolen election” and Iran’s “Islamic coup d’état”. As the march made its way through the downtown core on its way to the Guy Favreau complex on René Lévesque Blvd, many participants told *The Métropolitain* they were there to support all their friends and relatives who were facing gas, water cannon and police bullets on the streets of Iran’s capital city, Teheran.

“As long as people keep taking to the streets,” said student spokesman Farzan, “you can be sure the mullahs will step up the violence.”

Following Iran’s June 13 general elections, millions of people opposed to the nation’s theocratic rulers were outraged to see how incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad declared himself the winner long before the day’s votes had been counted.

“It was fraud, pure and simple,” said Concordia student Reza who refused to cite his real name because he has family back in Iran. “There’s no way Ahmadinejad could have won this election with those numbers.”

After massive popular demonstrations began to pour onto the streets, authorities began to arrest and detain various opposition leaders, cell phone messaging systems and assorted internet services came under attack and were systematically cut off after which the government began to flood the streets with police and para-military troops. While the state’s media report only 17 dead over the past week, Farzan said thousands were injured, hundreds arrested and scores of people were killed or simply “gone”, never to be seen again. What could become a revolution is now being televised as Iranian students are using instant communication venues through Facebook and Youtube facilities to get their story out as to what’s happening on the streets of Teheran. Farzan (not his real name) said students are a favorite target for the government’s paramilitary police

corps because students are on the cutting edge of the nation’s movement for political and social reform. Despite efforts to close the media down, reports of midnight beatings, rapes and students being thrown out of windows are beginning to slip through the cracks and protests against the regime’s escalating violence are being seen and heard around the world.

Dressed in stylish black with a green scarf wrapped around her head and shoulders, “Tara”, a Concordia biology student, said she had to hide her face because she was soon going back to Iran and she did not want to have Iranian security agents waiting for her at the airport. As a member of the city’s growing Iranian student community, she said everybody had to be careful because

the Iranian government is supposed to have placed its own agents among the city’s student community.

“You never know if there’s going to be a problem with your papers or with your visa,” she said. “If they really want to make trouble, someone just walks up to the table while you’re having a coffee, drops a picture of your sister on the table and tells you to behave because your sister’s going to be in big trouble if you don’t shut up....nobody really knows but there’s enough going on within the community to keep everybody nervous.”

Reza agrees with Tara.

“This isn’t going to stop and the violence will just get worse,” he said. “During the Islamic revolution, over 300,000 people were thrown in jail after which only a few people



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHAHRZAD ARSHADI

were released. The rest were killed because the authorities didn’t know what to do with them. Trust me,

these people aren’t afraid to kill their own people....so things are going to get worse — a lot worse.”



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# The Abousfian Abdelrazik Puzzle

**W**hat was I missing? What was it that I didn't understand?

The continuing saga of Abousfian Abdelrazik, marooned in the Canadian embassy in Khartoum for over a year, had a "Kafkaesque Catch 22" quality to it that sounds more like the opening scene of some comedy/suspense thriller than a "we're telling you this with a

straight face" diplomatic explanation. Even with his return it leaves an outside observer head shaking.

For perspective, let's suppose some hyphenated-U.S. male citizen was picked up by the gendarmes of a country with a generally unsavory reputation for pristine respect of the civil rights of any citizen—foreign or domestic (think *Midnight Express*). Thus, we appreciate the

reality that even if the arrested individual is in a semi-privileged category and thus given special treatment, e.g., being chained next to the latrine bucket rather than some distance away, circumstances are not world class.

As a consular officer, you are aware of his incarceration and visit him officially, attempting to obtain his release, or if that is not possible,

to assure that he is not treated worse than the citizens of the country. In the fullness of time, the individual is released; high tails it to the U.S. embassy; and demands "assistance", that is, a "get me out of here" plea, claiming that he has been physically disrespected while jailed.

The process is straight-forward. No personal or family funds available? Extend a short-term, limited loan with interest to purchase a one-way return to U.S. ticket. No passport? Even easier; issue a time-limited, destination-limited passport on the spot. Individual is a psychiatric case? Individual can be accompanied by a qualified attendant. And if we really want him back (reverse rendition?), he can be shipped on official USG aircraft.

In short, if we want him home, we get him home.

Thus the moving goal posts nonexplanations as to why Mr Abdelrazik couldn't travel suggested that the explainers were disingenuous. Compare, for example, Mr Abdelrazik's circumstances with the spare no expense, raise heaven and earth efforts by the GOC to return Lebanese-Canadians to safety in Canada during the fighting in summer 2006.

Without attempting to sort through the veracity of reports regarding who visited Mr Abdelrazik while imprisoned or what information the questioners were seeking (or his claims of abuse), there are many odd disconnects:

- issuing him a limited passport that he was then unable to use since he had no airline ticket;

- refusing to issue another passport until he had a ticket (with officials reportedly suggesting any individual contributing funds for a ticket could be prosecuted for supporting terrorism);

- having obtained a ticket through the contributions of over 150 Canadians, being denied a passport as a national security threat with that decision substantiated by reference to the UN "no fly" blacklist of terrorist suspects.

Meanwhile, Mr Abdelrazik camped out in the Canadian embassy—an odd circumstance worthy of a six-figure book deal—as one of the most curious embassy residents since the USG sheltered Hungarian Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty between 1956-71.

Moreover, there are intimations that attribute Mr Abdelrazik's problems to the USG. And, to be sure, the USG in July 2006 designated him as "posing a significant risk of committing acts of terrorism that threaten the security of U.S. nationals and the national security." The USG placed him on the UN "no fly" list for individuals connected with terrorism and presumably vetoed Canada's 2007 request to delist him.

Considerable pro-Abdelrazik argumentation rides on the assertion that CSIS and the RCMP have "cleared" him; however, the official statements circa November 2007 were hardly blanket "pure as the driven snow" endorsements. The RCMP, for example, says it, "has conducted a review of its files and was unable to locate any current and substantive information that indicates Mr Abdelrazik is involved in criminal activity." That statement simply says the RCMP has no information—not that such information doesn't exist. Nor can one assume that all terrorist-supportive activity is "criminal" under Canadian law.

Nevertheless, it was clear that the GOC didn't want Mr Abdelrazik back in Canada and pretzeled itself in judicial arguments to prevent his return. Finally pressured by Parliament's foreign affairs committee and increasingly preemptory demands from the courts, the government yielded. Assuming that Minister Nicholson's commitment means near term return, it will still be during the extended summer recess when media coverage is minimal by definition.

Still it is clear there is embarrassment ahead—in the end perhaps as expensive an embarrassment as the \$10 million compensation garnered by Mayer Arar.

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# SOS

## Save Our Suburbans!



### How the Obama Administration is going to change what and how you drive

Visitors to Havana marvel at the American automobiles of the 1950's that have survived five decades of revolutionary communist rule to continue to ply its streets. Some are still running due to modified Russian auto parts, while other have had their lives extended by craftsmen who lovingly reproduce each fallen piece of chrome so that the autos appear as pristine as they did on Batista's last day in the Presidential Palace.

Local Montreal drivers in 2030 may stretch their necks and gawk at the five meter, 3000Kg behemoth looming large in their view – the last of the full size, eight passenger, eight cylinder, four wheel drive family haulers that made even the largest minivans seem demure – the Suburban XL. Along with its brothers from GMC and cousins from Ford (Expedition) and Chrysler (Aspen), these giant vehicles were the kings of the family long haul, capable of loading up the kids and grandparents, their luggage and hauling a 2000Kg boat in tow. Full size GM SUVs sold as many as 700,000 units as recently as 2003, but now sales have collapsed to barely 200,000 as the recession and high gas prices moved drivers away from this class of vehicle. Still, there is no replacing these vehicles, and the Obama administration does not want you to; new CAFE (Corporate Average Fuel Economy) rules handed down dictate different fuel economy ratings for all classes of vehicles, but the standards set for full size SUVs mean that we will never again see vehicles of this size produced for non-military applications.

In the short run, these vehicles will see their resale prices fall as high gas prices, the recession and their poor environmental image incite casual users to drop them in favour of alternate transportation. The soccer mom who wanted one because it was “cool” in 2005 will trade down to a mid-size SUV hybrid or minivan for similar applications. Indeed, many of these vehicles performed regular urban/suburban duty to deposit one or two (perhaps 3 or four with carpool) poppet-sized children at school or extra-curricular activities. In the longer term, however, vehicle values will stabilize or even rise as hard-core users who require the durability and flexibility of these trucks search them out and preserve them for their extraordinary versatility.

Construction firms, oil-field service companies, security firms and similar users need these SUVs to transport personnel and their gear over long distances and often under off-road conditions. Locally, Hydro Quebec uses them to transport personnel and equipment from regional offices like the one in Baie-Comeau up to dams like Manic 5, a two hour drive north over a mostly unpaved, gravel road. The Suburban and its cousins have the long travel, heavy-duty suspensions to take this kind of punishment for hundred of thousands of kilometers and survive the experience. The next generation of vehicle will have lots of steel removed from its design to conserve weight and the suspension is likely to suffer some lightening as well. There is no obvious replacement for these workhorses as far as industrial users are concerned.

You and I will pay more for Obama's vision

When Obama unveiled the new CAFE objectives last month, he ventured that these stricter regulations will increase the cost of a typical car or truck by \$1,300 USD by 2016. Engineering firm Ricardo disagrees and has estimated the cost to meet these new requirements will add between \$5,000 and \$12,000 USD per vehicle.

Faced with these incredible price increases, will consumers embrace change or will they keep their current vehicles, especially those vehicles whose existence is endangered by the quest for better fuel economy? Imagine the American SUV driver who currently enjoys 15 MPG from his truck (combined city/highway driving) and travels 20,000 miles per year. The driver consumes 1,333 US gallons of gas per year at 2009's projected average price of \$2.70 per gallon, for a total expenditure of \$3,600 per year. We arrive in the year 2016 and the closest replacement design for that truck offers the consumer 23 MPG, but that vehicle now costs \$45,000, or about \$10,000 more than it did in 2009. Assume that the consumer can get \$5,000 as a trade in allowance – so will this buyer accept to pay \$40,000 for a truck that is likely smaller and more lightly built, for an 8 MPG improvement in economy, saving 463 gallons of gas per year? Even at a 2016 price of \$4.50 per gallon, this is only a \$2100 savings per year on a \$40,000 investment – and

that new truck depreciates, while the old one is paid for (we assume) and the value has already hit rock bottom. Faced with this math, consumers are likely to keep their beloved full-size rides.

Congress knows that it is going to be hard to get these older vehicles off the road, so they introduced the cash for clunkers legislation designed to give consumers up to \$4500 in vouchers to get a vehicle that only gets 18 MPG off the road. Consumers may decide that this is not enough of an enticement to change vehicles; John Wolkonowicz of HIS Global Insight suggests that the only way to get the program to work is to give consumers the voucher PLUS whatever the true trade in value is worth, otherwise the cash benefit is too small. Thankfully, the program is going to be capped at a \$4 billion USD payout and will be available until the cash is all spent.

Don't bet on it. The nanny state wants you out of your big ride and is likely to pursue both incentives and penalties to get you to move into something smaller. Europeans used to tax vehicles based on engine displacement – for example, engines over 3 litres were heavily taxed in Europe, so manufacturers developed smaller engines using multiple valves per cylinder and turbo-charging to achieve high power from small displacements. This legislation is coming to America – in 2008, Washington State considered a bill to tax vehicles based on engine displacement and it is back on the legislative agenda for 2009.

Canada will likely follow suit with some kind of program to discourage large-car use, and Quebec is probably going to be first, since on a per-capita basis Quebec is already the best small-car market in North America. Watch for this measure as part of a progressively-oriented environmental package from one of the major parties. Who knows, it may even appear as a Montreal tax-grab as the city desperately seeks new sources of revenue and concurrently entices citizens to drive less, drive smaller vehicles or give it up entirely. Those who resist will be chastised and cast as socially backward – someone better organize an “SOS” bumper sticker campaign straight away to resist this impending restriction on our 4-wheel mobility rights!



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UN MALAISE ROYAL

# Will you get your money's worth from "green" food?

There are three basic types of "green" farming. On June 30th, one of them will receive the golden stamp of approval from the federal government. Will this have a positive impact for farmers, consumers and the planet? Sadly, no.

The three types are:

**Organic:** Synthetic-chemical free, grown in naturally-fortified soil within as natural an environment as possible.

**Biodynamic:** All of the above, plus some additional strict and esoteric farming practices espoused by the father of biodynamics: Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925).

**Sustainable:** Some of the above, perhaps, but not necessarily so. Any practice that reduces energy consumption, synthetic chemical usage, water usage, or the clearing of natural habitat for farm land, qualifies as "sustainable."

The category which generates the most economic activity is certified organic. It's a multi-billion dollar industry with many organic companies now being publicly traded on the stock market. Biodynamics remains restricted to a very small market, while the amorphous and as yet undefined category of sustainable is barely making an impact.

Common sense dictates that any definition of what qualifies as organic should include a field test. Sadly, organic crops are not tested and the organic industry shows no interest in changing that. In spite of this glaring omission, the government of Canada will, as mentioned above, give the organic industry its

stamp of approval in a few weeks.

Even if you never buy organic, millions of your tax dollars have already been spent on this grand, "green" experiment, including new offices in Ottawa, numerous staff positions replete with full government benefits, and of course marketing and promotional expenses to try to convince you how great this all is.

And even though organic food, wine, clothing and cosmetics are marketed as being produced without synthetic herbicides, pesticides or fertilizers, no money will be spent on the science to prove it. Instead, an honor system and nothing more will continue to be relied upon, recognized, approved and promoted by your government. Try to contain your enthusiasm.

Imagine if athletes competing in the 2010 Olympics merely signed affidavits declaring they were performance-enhancing drug free. Imagine how many world records would be broken if they quit testing athletes. This is how the Canadian Food Inspection Agency plans to "enforce" what it means to be certified organic.

If you think this will leave the door wide open to fraud, you're right. I worked for five years as an advanced organic inspector in the United States and Canada and saw many disturbing cases, none of which were investigated because there is no way for an inspector to test a suspect field. Only the American organic standard even bothers to stipulate what would be unacceptable in terms of chemical residue levels in an

organic crop IF a test was done. But the clause is not enforced.

The Canadian standard meanwhile makes no reference to chemical residue levels whatsoever. This means that any amount of synthetic herbicides, pesticides and fertilizer that an opportunist might use will, by federal law, go undetected.

I was a panelist at the Green Wine Symposium at the 2009 Vancouver International Wine Festival earlier this year. My message to "green" wine makers was simple: Everything important is measurable, otherwise it's just hype. So either prove you're green scientifically, or don't make any claim.

As more wine makers, market gardeners, dairymen, ranchers and cereal farmers look at ways to market their products as "green," they'll have to go above and beyond the mere bureaucracy of federal standards. Some are pursuing biodynamic or sustainable production methods instead. Whatever claims they make in the marketplace, they MUST back it up with objective, provable analysis; with a lab test whenever possible.

Clearly we can't count on government to act as a "green" policing or enforcement agent. They have quite literally let the fox watch the hen house when it comes to organic

certification. That's not to detract one iota from the many honest organic farmers, processors and retailers who conduct truly green business every day. It's merely a statement of fact: the federal government doesn't care whether or not these business people are honest. They simply can't be bothered.

Canada's new organic certification standard is nothing less than a license to print money. It befalls to every honest producer and purveyor of green food to prove his or her worth directly to consumers. Otherwise consumers will very well wonder just what the heck they're paying for.

Common sense dictates that any definition of what qualifies as organic should include a field test. Sadly, organic crops are not tested and the organic industry shows no interest in changing that.

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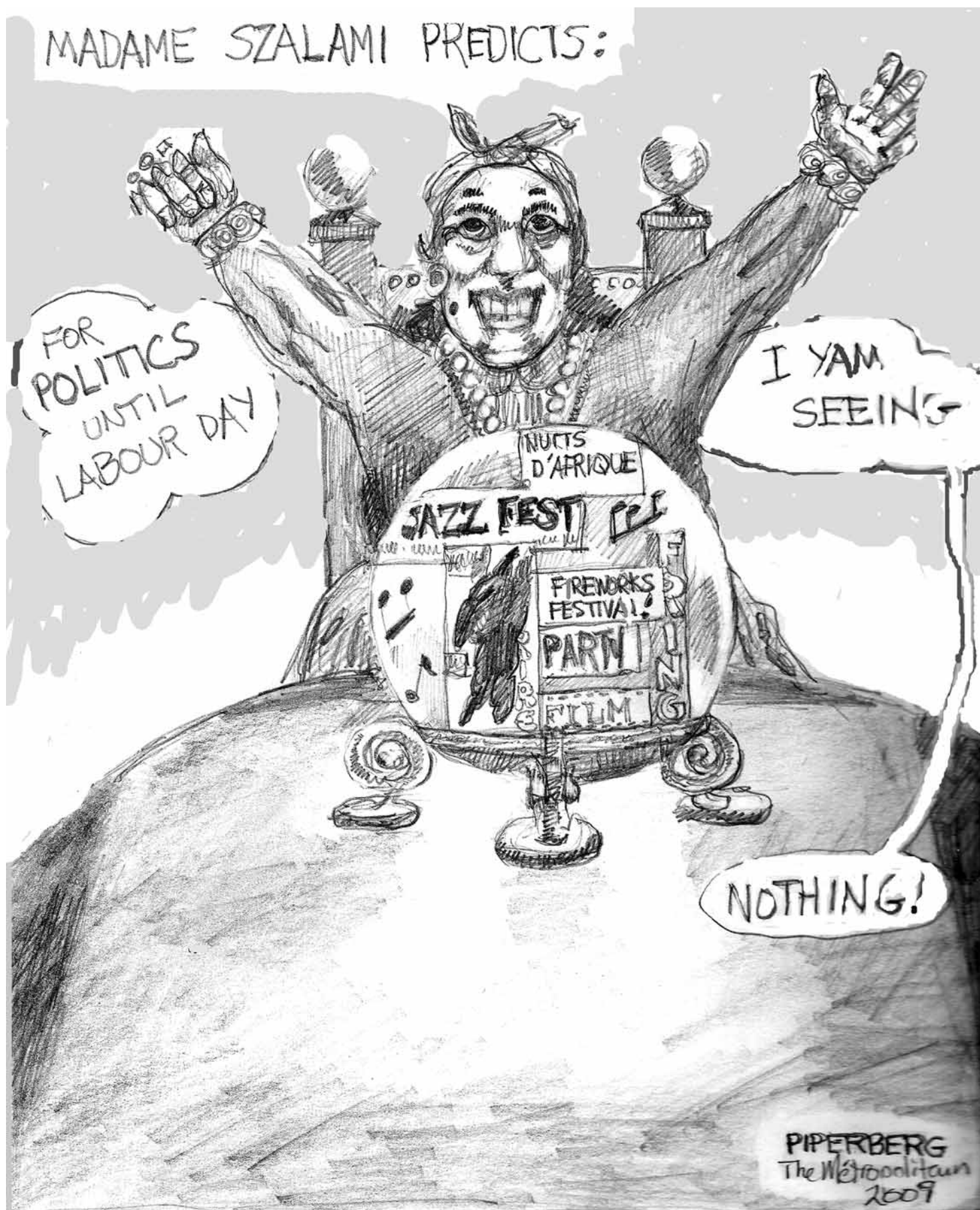
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RENEWAL OR FACADISM?

# “Montreal needs the main”

Surrounding Cabaret Café Cleopatre is a sex store and a nightclub, a vacant lot and sagging, boarded-up buildings with decades of grime ground deep into concrete and stone. On cloudy days the corner looks squalid. Sunny days don't suit it.

To get inside, you push through a gaggle of tough-talking strippers on a smoke break and through the music and black lights filtering from their ground floor establishment.

Up a flight of stairs with one wall covered in framed posters for fetish shows and into a room with gold flourishes, mirrors and a picture of Marilyn on the wall.

It's got that look of a bar in the daylight hours, like an aging actress caught with no makeup.

This room, filled with cheap round tables and a low-lying stage, has been Johnny Zoumboulakis' second home since he walked in there a month after the close of the 1976 Olympics.

Now Zoumboulakis, along with fetish event producer Eric Paradis, neo-Burlesque performers from Dead Dolls Cabaret and sundry other people with a bent for slightly saucy art forms have formed a coalition to save the infamous

transvestite show-bar from redevelopment plans that will maintain the building's 114-year-old façade but none of its past.

“We can't turn our backs on over 100 years of history,” Zoumboulakis said slowly, in an English still coloured by his Greek accent. “Montreal needs the Main, even with its imperfections.”

The coalition's argument isn't over whether the corner needs redevelopment - it's over who's allowed to take part.

“We don't want to stop progress,” the barman-turned-owner said. “We want to promote it and if possible, be part of it.”

The neo-Roman building, built in 1895, gained notoriety in the 50s and 60s as Cafe Canasta - a hotbed of violence, crime and sleaze with a wild cabaret nightlife.

Now, the Societe de development Angus wants to tear down the building - along with the neighbouring Montreal Pool Room and a dismal cut-rate electronics store - for the Quadrilatere St-Laurent project, a 12-storey, 300,000 square-foot Hydro Quebec tower that would extend between Clark Street and St-Laurent Boulevard and from Ste-Catherine Street to the Monument

National.

The non-profit organization, which is also developing the 2-22 project next door, is backed by, among others, the municipal and provincial governments, fellow non-profit developers Faubourg St-Laurent, the directors of the Monument National, the Montreal Chamber of Commerce, Equipe Spectra and Tourisme Montreal. The building, designed by architect Paul Andreu, who's resume includes the Beijing Opera House and the Institut de tourisme et d'hotellerie du Quebec on St-Denis Street, is a large curving glass office tower rising above the three-storey facades of the historic buildings being preserved as entranceways to stores and restaurants that will occupy street level.

“We knew from the beginning we were on a symbolic corner,” said SDA president, Christian Yaccarini. But “Hydro-Quebec is giving us an extraordinary opportunity. At some point you have to compromise. It's too bad, but you have to.”

His backers say the Quadrilatere would be the boost the intersection needs to lift it from its current state of squalor where only skeletons of its previous vitality remain.

Critics decry a “banalisation” of the area and “facadism.”

Université de Montreal architecture professor Jacques Lachapelle fears the project will kill a certain kind of urban life that the boulevard's buildings once fostered. He's wary of the proposed project's scale and its chances of promoting the development of small-scale and intimate restaurants, bars and businesses that define the length of the Main.

“I'm not the only one who says it's an important boulevard,” he said. “The federal government recognizes it as an historical site in itself. It's part of the history not only of Montreal, but the nation.”

For Paradis, whose Club Sin fetish weekends attract international models, performers and aficionados, it's not about design, it's about art and respect. He compares the disregard with which they've been treated by the city, and to a lesser extent, the developer, to a slap in the face.

“They never inquired: ‘Is there still life behind the facade?’” he said, citing the hundreds of fashion, theatre and drag performances held at the Cabaret each year.

Neo-burlesque performers Felicity Fuckhardt and Velma Candyass from the Dead Dolls Cabaret are examples of a counterculture art movement that still remain part of the city's cultural fabric. Decked out in red and black corsets, killer knee-high bondage heels and abundant eye-glitter sparkling under the fluorescent lights of the hotel board room, the performers argued their case at one of Montreal's public consultation hearings on the project.

In a presentation that ranged from the history and politics of vaudeville and burlesque to the stage requirements specific to cabaret performances that require direct interaction with the audience, they laid out a host of reasons

Montreal's oldest show-bar should be spared.

Despite the Dead Dolls' racy performance (it requires an establishment with adult entertainment zoning), the performers say burlesque is a celebration of joyful female sexuality that may be erotic but is never cheap.

In fact, burlesque has seen a resurgence in the past decade, including Montreal's Blue Light Burlesque troop, who cut their teeth at Café Cleopatre and have been featured in Chatelaine, Elle Quebec and the Ottawa Citizen.

“It's not just the shimmy shake,” Fuckhardt, née Amy Hudston, said of the vaudeville art. “But a little glitz and glam.”

Zoumboulakis offers artists affordable rates and lets performers rehearse for free, she added.

“Most of our budget goes into rhinestones,” Hudston quipped. “We don't have the money to be able to plop down \$500 a night.”

Theatre du Nouveau Monde director Lorraine Pintal, who is a cheerleader for the SDA project, doesn't disagree with the Dead Dolls or Paradis. She lauds the talent and art being produced by some at Cafe Cleopatre and hopes the city and the SDA will find them a new place to perform.

But she's unequivocal about the corner's need of a facelift.

“It's too bad (Paradis') art is tied to an area that's slated for redevelopment,” she said, adding that she would like to see the city relax its current moratorium on zoning for adult entertainment - the main stumbling block in any relocation plans for the performers at the cabaret - to allow for the creation of a similar space.

Yaccarini claims he's willing to help find a place for the artists nearby, something the SDA has done for other organizations including co-op alternative art space Katacombes.

He says Zoumboulakis has shown savvy by using emerging artists as the face of the fight against expropriation.

He estimates the revenue they bring Zoumboulakis, who's been offered \$2.5 million from the SDA, is only a small percentage of the profit made on VLTs and the ground floor strip club.

“Will we stop a project for a strip club?” he asked. “I hope that's not where Montreal is at.” Yaccarini fears the project has become a political hot potato smack in the centre of a heated municipal election, something that could jeopardize the project that counts on a tight schedule. (Hydro Quebec's current lease ends in 2012 and so ground needs to be broken by this coming January.) Delays, he said, would kill the project.

Montreal's public consultation office will table its report in mid-July and by early fall, the city's executive committee will hand down the final decision.

When asked whether Zoumboulakis thought Café Cleopatre would still be there in five years, he smiled.

“Only the city of Montreal - and God - can tell us,” he said.

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# City taxi bureau's RCG 08-022

As the poorest of the city's working poor, Montreal's cab drivers are caught between a rock and a hard place. Once a cab driver gets behind the wheel and puts the key into the ignition, city by-law RCG08-022 will define the next 12 hours of his working life. In section 1 of the city by-law, article #59 defines a working taxi as any vehicle on the road with a dome, a working meter, a working radio and a visible pocket number. As article #59 draws the line between the city's working taxis and everybody else on the road, city cab drivers are warning city authorities there could be serious trouble if police don't stop their discrimination against them and their business. While everybody is supposed to be equal under the law, several city cab drivers say the city's by-law turns them into second class citizens subject to a series of rules and regulations which is ruining their business and their means to make a living.

"Why can't a taxi driver park his car and go have a coffee like everybody else," said taxi driver activist Gilbert St. Jean. "...and why can't Montreal taxi drivers stop their car and go to the bathroom like everyone else without risking a ticket?"

While he may not like it, St Jean already knows the answer. Taxi drivers cannot park their cars because of Article #126 in chapter 3, section 3 of city by-law RCG 08-022. Roughly translated, article #126 reads as follows: A driver cannot park a taxi on the streets of Montreal to wait for a fare. While it's up to the police or the SPVM's (Service de la Police de la Ville de Montreal) taxi bureau inspectors to decide what a cab driver is up to when he's not parked on private property or at a taxi stand, the case often ends up in front of a judge in municipal court where it's the cabby's word against those of the police.

"They lie, you know," said St. Jean. "They say any damn thing and the judge believes them."

As most of Montreal's cab drivers consider themselves to be among the poorest of the city's working poor, few understand why the city administration continues to tolerate a

## "Why can't a taxi driver park his car and go have a coffee like everybody else," said taxi driver activist Gilbert St. Jean.

double standard between them and the rest of the city's driving public. After several interviews at taxi stands all over the city, The Suburban learned several drivers owe the city thousands of dollars worth of assorted fines all because of alleged offenses against the city's infamous taxi by-law. As many are poor men, they must rent their cars on a daily basis after which they

must pay for their gas like everybody else. When all is paid for, it's a good day if they have \$100 in their pocket after a 12 hour shift. For poor men, the mounting fines are an onerous burden and many drivers are leaving the business to go on welfare.

"It's crazy," said St. Jean as he pointed to a man discreetly having a pee on private property in the heart of the city. "Even if they're legally

parked at a stand, these men can't leave their cars to go to the washroom without risking a big ticket."

St. Jean is right. Roughly translated, article #131, (section 3, chapter 3) clearly states how 'none can leave a car parked at a taxi stand without supervision'. St. Jean said it's pathetic to see how the city police and taxi inspectors humiliate and

harass honest men who are only trying to make a living by working long hours for very little money.

As an executive of Montreal's Haitian taxi drivers' association, St. Jean said several Montreal drivers have gone to see well known Montreal lawyer and human rights activist Julius Grey.

"I'm looking at the case," said Grey. While the busy lawyer said the case was still in its preparatory stages, he is concerned about how the police seem to be focusing on some groups as opposed to others.

"The law always has to be applied in a reasonable and sensible manner," he said. "As of now, the evidence suggests the police and their inspectors don't appear to be too reasonable or sensible when it comes to dealing with Montreal's taxi drivers."

## The System is the Scandal!

"The ability of powerful corporations to influence politicians is one of the ongoing challenges to democracy. And organizations such as Democracy Watch play a critical role as monitors and whistle blowers, especially when all of the major Canadian media organizations are enmeshed with government." — Hugh Winsor, Columnist, *The Globe and Mail*

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# The Unintended Consequences of Buy American

## US stimulus package imperiled by self-destructive trade protectionism

Last October this column reviewed the possibility of a trade war between the US and Canada if Obama were to take the White House. While the exact form of the dispute was not known at the time, some form of economic nationalism was inevitable as the US rustbelt demanded payback for delivering the electoral votes required to secure a decisive victory in the Electoral College. Congress crafted a stimulus package designed to create US jobs related to infrastructure and manufacturing, and in their expedient haste to curry political favour with their constituents they created the Buy American (BA) provision that related to municipal investment projects. This provision skirts the open procurement provisions of NAFTA since municipal and local procurement are exempt from the agreement. What started out as a politically savvy move will result in delays in rolling out stimulus spending as municipalities will discover that truly American-made goods are hard to come by, especially in the water and wastewater treatment industry.

The Water Industry: poster child for North American integration

Water and wastewater treatment (WWT) used to be an industry composed of some larger players interspersed with thousands of small businesses supplying components to independent contracting firms who created complete treatment systems for municipalities. All that began to change about 15 years ago as water and wastewater quality was pushed to the forefront of environmental and political consciousness and spending on replacing our dilapidated water infrastructure increased substantially. Large industrial holding companies recognized that water would represent a recession-proof sector and began a huge merger and acquisitions push to buy up the mom and pop small businesses and contractors to create vertically-integrated powerhouses that now dominate WWT. The names are familiar ones; GE Water, a division of General Electric, Siemens Water Technologies, Severn Trent Services, Veolia Water, even our own Groupe Laperriere and Verreault, who split off their paper and other industrial activities and now focus on the water industry.

The water treatment industry expects worldwide annual sales to grow to \$40 billion USD by 2011, according to the Cleveland, Ohio-based Freedonia Group, a market research firm. This is a rather narrow definition that merely looks at municipal water treatment – a broader survey would show that this market would be worth \$100 billion if industrial water treatment was included in the calculations. While the highest growth rates are expected to

be found in the developing world, the \$787 billion infrastructure legislation will compress the time period for expanding, restoring or upgrading municipal water treatment facilities across the US. The problem for even US-based suppliers of such equipment now becomes, what is an American-made product?

As one example, an automatic filtration device used in wastewater pre-treatment may have a pressure vessel welded in Quebec using metal purchased in the United States that was rolled or cast in mills in India or China, a German-engineered motor assembled in New Jersey with a Chinese frame and a motor from the US, an internal screen rolled in Ontario from wire produced in Texas, a motorized ball valve cast in Spain with an actuator from Ohio, and instrumentation and controls assembled in the US from multinational components. This product may be sold by a US-based manufacturer's representative to one of the large US contractors supplying a packaged system to the municipality, and their mark-up and added-value counts as US content, so – the product may qualify as 70% American – but is that enough? Even if the pressure vessel were welded in New York instead of Quebec, in many cases the specialized metals like Monel 400 and Duplex 2205 are not available from US mills – and US-sourced steel is a pre-requisite for admissibility under the Buy American provisions. Therefore, it is conceivable that the pressure vessel of a US-made filtration product may be disqualified from and ripped-out of a US municipal wastewater facility if an overzealous inspector sees “made in India” stamped on one of the flanges – and does not bother to check if this item was even available from a US forging mill. Essentially, the US Congress failed to recognize the internationalization of the specialized equipment market, especially in water treatment, and the legislation is almost impossible to comply with in the short term period that coincides with the stimulus package.

What about other industries? What constitutes an American product?

Media reports have focused on cases of Canadian-made fiberglass pipe being ripped out of the ground in California and the difficulties of Ontario-based Hayward Gordon pumps, which may be forced to move production to their US plants to stay alive. However, the BA provisions apply to a whole range of products purchased with stimulus money that contain steel – so what about cars? How many US-produced automobiles can really qualify as made in the USA?

A Chevrolet Aveo, a compact car manufactured for GM in Korea, would not qualify as an

American product even though it is sold by a Detroit-based corporation and its local dealer. Comparatively speaking, a US-produced Honda Accord from the Marysville, Ohio plant has over 70% US content though the use of local tier-two and tier-three subassembly components, local labour and management. Take note that BMW and Mercedes import engines to their plants in the southern-US but otherwise these vehicles have similar US-procured content as the Japanese manufacturers. For all manufacturers, the source of their rolled steel is trickier to ascertain – they all have Canadian, US and overseas suppliers that would have to be traced in order to determine a vehicle's eligibility under the BA statute in the stimulus package. This is an important consideration because vehicles could be purchased as part of a renewal package put forward by a municipality looking for funding from the bill.

Services are a more important component than goods in the modern US economy and software is a major economic driver of wealth creation and government spending. If a municipality wants to purchase asset management software from an American supplier, does the supplier have to demonstrate that they did not outsource the code development to India, China or another offshore software developer? Does software purchased with stimulus money have to comply with BA, or are they going to get a free pass? Would new personal computers purchased for a firehall renovation in Framingham, MA have to replace the Windows XP operating software that is pre-installed because Microsoft does software development across the globe? Lawmakers would probably scoff at the notion that much of Microsoft's software offering would not meet the BA statute, and even if they did concede that point they would probably insist that there is no practical alternative. Really? Maybe the Linux operating system has a higher US development content level than Windows XP.

This analysis could be repeated for a whole range of goods and services that will be purchased with stimulus package money. The result would probably show is that the modern world lives in shades of grey when it come to the origins of goods and services and that few could really be termed to be 100% made in the USA, Canada, Europe (CE) or otherwise.

The ultimate effect of BA, should it go forward, will be to slow to a crawl the procurement at the local level where the job creation is most needed. Consulting engineers will be unable to specify products; contractors will have to hold back bidding on jobs; workers will be told to stay home as work schedules begin to slip; and manufacturers in the US and Canada

will both shed jobs as the workload dries up. What started up as program to protect jobs in America will ultimately delay the infusion of stimulus money into the economy, prolong the recession and cost jobs on both sides of the border.

Political pressure: little effect so far

The Association of Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME) and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce held a joint press conference in Washington DC last week to detail the destructive nature of the Buy American legislation. Lobbyists representing the big American integrated water and wastewater contractors as well as our own diplomats like Ambassador Michael Wilson are plying the hallways of Congress to push for elimination of the BA statute. Stephen Harper took the unprecedented step of giving an interview to Fox News detailing the damage the BA statute represents and its potential to unleash a broader trade war with the US. International Trade Minister Stockwell Day is trying to broker a deal to open up Canadian municipal contracts to US bidders in an effort to diffuse the resolution adopted by the Canadian Federation of Municipalities, which proposed to cut off US goods after a “grace period” of 120 days to allow the Canadian government time to negotiate.

So far, the Obama administration is playing hard to get. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stood with Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon on June 12th and when asked about the dispute over BA, she had the following to say: “The provision is not being enforced in any way that is inconsistent with our international trade obligations and we take that very seriously. I deeply respect the minister's comments and his concerns, but as President (Barack) Obama said, nothing in our legislation will interfere with our international trade obligations, including with Canada.” This quote is a disaster for Canada – since municipal procurement is not covered by NAFTA, the fact is that all the stimulus money spent at the local level can shut out Canadian suppliers and the US will still be in compliance with their “international trade obligations.” This means that despite the best efforts of industry organizations on both sides of the border, our Prime Minister, Trade Minister and our US Ambassador, the Obama administration is sticking with the BA policy. If Obama is willing to stand firm on such a damaging position in the face of organized, diligent opposition that is armed with incontrovertible facts, then what other compelling information is his administration willing to ignore in the pursuit of his agenda? I am afraid that we are only beginning to find out.

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# Wasserman's Yiddish festival a North American first

It was touch and go whether the troupe from Poland would make it; translating two dozen Yiddish plays into French and English proved to be a bit of a headache and the logistics of meeting the specific requirements of eight theatre companies and 200 actors, artists, musicians and scholars from around the world was an enormous challenge. Still, in spite of a few last minute glitches, and some anxious moments, all of the world's major Yiddish players came together under one roof in Montreal for last week's opening of the International Yiddish Theatre Festival which wrapped up Friday June 25. "We've learned a lot, and I think we're going to put that knowledge to use," said Bryna Wasserman, artistic director of the Segal Centre for the Performing Arts who came up with the audacious idea. There have been other Yiddish festivals before, but none in North America, and none on this scale. Delegates to a Yiddish symposium at Oxford ten years ago agreed to meet again, but never did.

Montreal's festival originally was envisioned nine years ago as a

Millenium project and as a tribute to Wasserman's mother, Dora, the Russian émigré who founded North America's first Yiddish Theatre Company in Montreal in 1958. "There was a delay in the federal funding, and when the money finally

Recent renovations to the Segal Centre meant there were now two stages instead of one available for participants. Wasserman thought the time was again ripe to celebrate "not just the 50th anniversary of the Wasserman Yiddish Theatre, but to

Latin alphabet, but it is not Hebrew. It was the language that unified the Jewish diaspora."

Invitations went out two years ago, but was only in January that everyone agreed to take part. Participants represent a cross-

a scholarly symposium on Yiddish culture, a film festival, readings and concerts. Zumerfest, a large, free outdoor event featuring everything from jazz music to puppet workshops, in partnership with KlezKanada was also part of the program.

"Not only do you have to believe you can have a festival, everything surrounding the festival has to be in the proper order as well," said Wasserman. "You need people to support the venture financially, then all the governments involved had to agree. You not only have to make a financial commitment, but you have to make a commitment to resources. You have to cultivate a loyal, devoted, committed, incredible team."

Wasserman says the festival helped introduce a new generation to the language.

"I won't say the Yiddish language is dying," said Wasserman, "Perhaps the people who speak it are dying. Who better and where better than in Quebec can we understand how important language is to culture?"

## Wasserman says the festival helped introduce a new generation to the language.

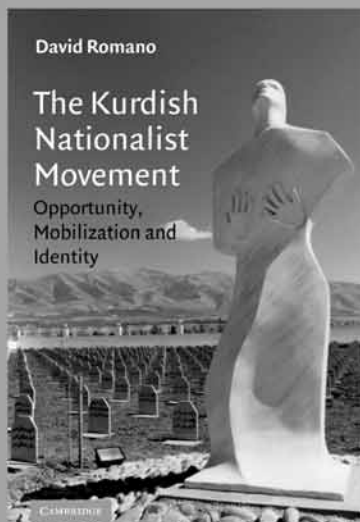
came through, the timing made it impossible for us to actually go through with it in 2000," explained Bryna. "After Dora died in 2003, I put the file to bed, never thinking I would open it again."

Last year, however, marked the 50th anniversary of the Montreal Yiddish Theatre, and Bryna Wasserman revived the original idea.

celebrate our survival as a people, the survival of the language and of the culture. Within that culture is what we call the Yid in Yiddish. Yiddish never had a country, but it has always been a language of unity. It originated with Ashkenazi Jews in Prussia and uses the Hebrew alphabet in the same way that English and French use the same

section of the Yiddish experience in miniature; Israel's Yiddishspiel, DerLuftheater from France, The State Jewish Theatre from Bucharest, Poland's Esther Rokhal and Ida Kaminiski National Jewish Theatre of Warsaw, the New Yiddish Rep from New York, as well as artists from Austria and Australia are included in the festival. There is also

## 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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Sébastien Dhavernas est né à Montréal de parents immigrants Français. Il est comédien, metteur en scène, producteur et entrepreneur artistique de renom. Il a également été président de l'Association des producteurs de théâtre privé du Québec, président de la Commission du Doublage de la Sodec, membre du conseil d'administration de l'Union des artistes, et président et chef de la direction du Tribunal Canadien des Relations Professionnelles Artistes Producteurs. Sébastien Dhavernas a fait son entrée en politique active lors de l'élection fédérale de 2008, où il a été candidat libéral dans la circonscription d'Outremont. Il est présentement membre de la commission politique de l'aile québécoise du parti libéral du Canada.

Sébastien Dhavernas

info@themetropolitain.ca



# Un éléphant dans un magasin de porcelaine

**R**adio Canada-CBC et ses artisans traversent en ce moment des jours sombres et qui doivent susciter une réflexion et un débat de fond au sein de la société civile québécoise et canadienne.

Monsieur Bernard Derome honoré pour sa grande contribution au métier de journaliste à l'antenne de Radio Canada a lancé un appel en ce sens et je tiens à l'en remercier et à répondre présent à ce cri du cœur d'un homme réputé pour sa réserve, sa rigueur et sa crédibilité.

J'ai grandi en regardant et en écoutant la SRC, et plus tard j'y ai travaillé à titre de comédien dans de nombreuses télé séries. À chaque fois que je veux avoir une informa-

tion crédible et complète face aux grands événements c'est principalement vers la SRC que je me tourne. C'est le meilleur moyen d'apprendre, de comprendre et de me forger une opinion sur les grands débats nationaux et internationaux. Il est donc regrettable, par exemple qu'une émission comme « Une heure sur terre » subisse l'an prochain des coupures dans son budget.

Monsieur Derome a bien identifié les deux piliers du bilan de la SRC : culture et information de qualité, et j'ajouterais toutes origines et classes sociales confondues, car elle a toujours été et continue d'être, le seul réseau

francophone accessible partout sur le territoire canadien sans abonnement à un quelconque service de câblodistribution ou satellite.

Radio Canada a été accusé tour à tour d'être un « nid de séparatistes » ou un « instrument de propagande du complot fédéraliste » voir un « repaire de libéraux ».

Plusieurs politiciens et groupes de pression ont, au cours de son histoire, souhaité sa disparition, et son budget a déjà fait l'objet de sérieuses coupures mais jamais une attaque aussi sournoise et un travail de sape aussi systématique n'ont été lancés à son égard. Monsieur Soudas, porte-parole du Premier

ministre Harper a déclaré aux médias que le Premier ministre et son gouvernement voulaient travailler : « la main dans la main avec Radio Canada-CBC ». Serait-ce pour mieux leur tordre le bras?

Rappelons quelques faits.

La SRC doit actuellement investir des sommes considérables pour faire passer son réseau d'antennes pancanadien de l'analogique au numérique. Une grande part de son budget y est consacrée.

De plus, Radio Canada subit actuellement une baisse marquée de ses revenus publicitaires, comme toutes les télévisions généralistes, sans bénéficier de redevances des câblodistributeurs.

Certes, elle est par contre subventionnée, mais le coût réel en est de 9 cents par jour par contribuable soit 37\$ par année. Est-ce trop cher payé pour un réseau de correspondants à travers le monde dont le nombre et la qualité sont inégaux par aucun autre réseau pancanadien ou québécois?

(À titre de comparaison la BBC reçoit par année 177\$ par contribuable.)

Les critères de financement établis par le nouveau Fond des Médias privilégient la cote d'écoute comme première mesure d'évaluation et place la SRC sur un pied d'égalité avec tous les autres joueurs de la télévision. Mais récemment, des séries diffusées à la SRC (Un gars une fille, les Invincibles, Minuit le Soir) ont ensuite intéressé des diffuseurs étrangers prouvant que la rentabilité et le rayonnement prévisibles ne se limitent pas qu'à une première diffusion sur notre marché et qu'en création, il y a toujours une part de risque non mesurable.

Par ailleurs, la radio de Radio Canada est la seule radio accessible à tous qui soit exempte de publicité et dont la programmation soit d'une qualité internationale qui en fait un ambassadeur de notre identité et de notre culture à travers la francophonie et le monde entiers.

Certes, les temps changent et l'économie est en eaux troubles, et Radio Canada doit donc s'adapter et faire preuve d'imagination et se renouveler sans cesse, mais est-ce une raison pour liquider un contributeur unique à l'édification du Québec et du Canada moderne?

Le profit à tout prix et la facilité nous ont conduits à une des pires crises économiques depuis des lunes. Et pour des raisons purement idéologiques, l'actuel gouvernement fait tout pour appliquer la même médecine dépassée à Radio Canada-CBC avec la subtilité d'un éléphant dans un magasin de porcelaine, dans l'espoir de les voir marginalisés sinon disparaître. Et tout cela pour favoriser qui?

Radio Canada et la CBC n'ont que faire des idéologies. Elles font partie de nos valeurs.

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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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# The Lure of Victorian Landscapes, the MMFA goes Green.

Who would have imagined that so many fusty, gilt-edged landscapes that have been out of fashion for so long could be so resonant to our times? Expanding Horizons, a terrific summer exhibition at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts combines painting and photographs of the North American wilderness done, for the most part, in the last half of the 19th century. Taken together, these bucolic, dreamlike vistas have been restored to their rightful position as potent masterworks. Such an exhibition could hardly be more appropriate. While the show is rooted in the past, it is also alive to the lessons that nature teaches. “The early explorers sense of nature as gigantic, monumental and beyond measure, has now given way to an alarm about an endangered planet,” says Nathalie Bondil, the museum’s director. “The exhibition offers a forthright look at current attitudes about the natural world and its value through an environmentally conscious prism.”

Hilliard T. Goldfarb, the museum’s ebullient associate curator, who holds dual citizenship as a Canadian and an American citizen, came up with the idea for the show four years ago when he was surprised to discover that no similar exhibition of late 19th century and early 20th century American and Canadian landscape art had ever been mounted. The exhibition is divided into six sections, beginning with Nature Transcendent, a gallery of romantic landscapes influenced by the Hudson River School after the American civil war. The Theatre of Myth shows how artists at the time viewed aboriginal people, and Man Versus Nature illustrates how the destruction of the wilderness was regarded as progress by turn of the 20th century artists. Nature Domesticated, The Urban Landscape and Return to Nature explore the spiritual facets of the natural landscapes. The more than 200 pictures on view are a bonanza that portray a disappearing wilderness in all its majesty. Thomas Moran’s iconic and inspirational 1875 canvas, Mountain of the

Holy Cross in central Colorado ideally sets the tone for the ecological themes being explored. Like Moran’s painting, many of the works of American artists such as Albert Bierstadt’s Passing Storm over the Sierra Nevada, William Morris Hunt’s American Falls, Niagara, and John Singer Sargent’s Tent at Lake O’Hara have never been shown in Canada before.

Chief among the many pleasures in the show, however, are three Tom Thomson’s, especially his dazzling Pageant of the North, and sublime works by Georgia O’Keefe, and Winslow Homer. There are few anticlimactic pieces, like Frederick Verner’s Buffaloes, and more images of Niagara than need be, the paintings stir viewers today as they did when they were new, but

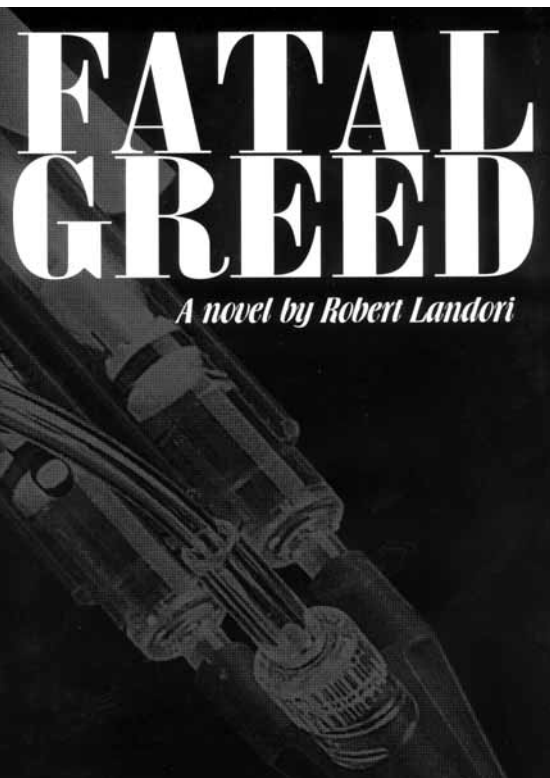
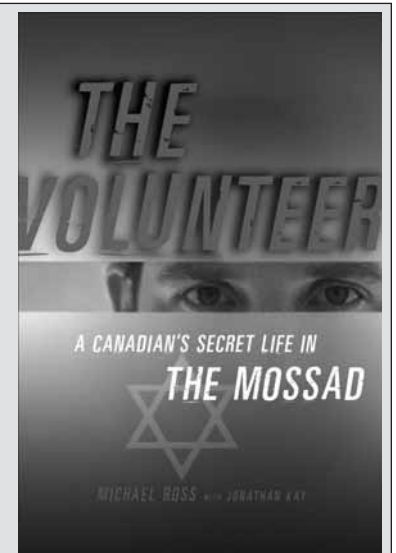
for different reasons. As a bonus, the MMFA has also mounted a small but charming retrospective in homage to visionary Montreal conservationist, environmental artist and Oscar winning film maker, Frédéric Back. The exhibitions are at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts until Sept. 27, then move to the Vancouver Art Gallery in October.

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



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