

C-FAR NEWSLETTER

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My Canada, Barbados

Over the weeks leading up to the election, Paul Martin repeated some variation of the phrase, "This is not my Canada," many times in many different contexts, presumably to emphasize whatever had outraged him on that day. But for tax purposes, this hasn't been Mr. Martin's Canada for some time: "In 1992, a year before he became Finance Minister, CSL [Canada Steamship Lines] set up five companies in Liberia, Africa, a tax haven of choice in the offshore shipping business. The companies had names like 'Atlasco Shipping' and 'CSL International Inc.' They had no employees and no offices, but they did help CSL avoid paying Canadian tax. ... Liberia wasn't simply a tax haven – foreign affiliates there were also allowed to bring their profits back into Canada, tax-free. And while CSL was setting up its shell companies in Liberia, Canada's Auditor General was trying to shut down those kinds of tax havens. Denis Desautels said they were costing the government hundreds of millions of dollars ... The very next year, a Commons committee urged the government to rethink its generous treatment of tax havens. In 1994, the new Finance Minister, Paul Martin, took action: 'Certain Canadian corporations are not paying an appropriate level of tax,' Martin said in his budget speech. 'Accordingly, we are taking measures to prevent companies from using foreign affiliates to avoid paying Canadian taxes which are otherwise due.' But Martin didn't shut down all the tax havens. ... He kept Barbados open, and that's exactly where CSL went next. ... Canada Steamship Lines now has nine shell companies in Barbados, eight of them at a lawyer's office near Bridgetown. They share the same mailbox and the same tax rate: about 2.5 percent. ... Like Liberia, the companies can bring their profits back into Canada without paying Canadian tax. [Former Federal Ethics Commissioner] Howard Wilson says he considered, but rejected, the idea of asking Martin to remove himself from any decisions involving foreign tax havens ... 'Why? Because he did not ever take decisions as Finance Minister that would be directly beneficial to his company.' ... Paul Martin refused all [CBC] phone and fax requests to sit down for an interview with Disclosure to discuss taxes and CSL. We wanted to ask him now he reconciles his use of tax havens and shell companies outside Canada ... so we asked professor Elizabeth DeSombre instead. She studies the effect of flags of convenience at Wellesley College near Boston:

DeSOMBRE: Canada has chosen to tax its industries, to tax its workers, to have a system of environmental safety and labour standards, to have a wage rate. And by essentially flagging ... ships somewhere else, you're opting out of that system that Canada chose to have.

CBC DISCLOSURE: And how does that strike you?

DeSOMBRE: [It's] an odd thing for a politician to do. Not at all a surprising thing for a businessperson to do, but an odd thing for a politician to do." (CBC Disclosure, April 1, 2003)

Gun Shy

There were 12 shooting deaths in Toronto in 1995. In 1998, when the Liberals imposed the \$2-billion gun fiasco, there were 13. There were 18 in 1999, 26 in 2000, 33 in 2001, 28 in 2002, 29 in 2003, 27 in 2004, and 52 in 2005 (up, 416 per cent in a decade). In terms of crisis, more people were shot to death in Toronto in 2005 than died during the SARS outbreak. But guns will remain "the real problem" for two reasons: Politicians would rather swallow their tongues than address Black violence, and the police can't really solve these crimes because nobody co-operates: "According to

preliminary figures, police have arrested or identified suspects in only 16 of the city's 52 shooting deaths, while charges have been laid in more than 90 per cent of the 'non-shooting categories' such as stabblings." (Toronto Star, December 31, 2005) So, police will agitate to get guns off the streets for the sake of their closure rate alone. Yet, handgun registration has been mandatory since 1934. Would more restrictions really help? Back in 1998, (June 15), Justice Department spokesman Jean Valin made some pretty stirring promises: "Gun registration will also reduce smuggling at our borders. Newly manufactured inventory will be automatically registered. Any firearm imported into Canada for sale will be traceable throughout its history!"

Norway-Niger -- All Cultures Are Equal

"In 1950, when the world's population was 2.5 billion, two-thirds of all people lived in developing countries. ... The Population Reference Bureau put the global population at 6.5 billion in 2005 [with] 2 billion people in more developed countries (including all of Europe), 18 percent, and 5.3 billion in developing countries, 82 percent. [So, the concrete result of 50-odd years of foreign aid is galloping population imbalance] Population growth continues at 76 million a year, with India accounting for 20 percent of annual population growth, China 10 percent, and Pakistan, Nigeria, Indonesia and Bangladesh, four percent each. [Globally, the PRB] projected eight billion in 2025 and 9.3 billion in 2050. ... There is a debate over how to cope with continued population growth. Malthusians, who are often biologists, worry that there will be catastrophe if and when global carrying capacity is exceeded. Cornucopians, often economists, believe that scarcity leads to invention, so that rising prices will send appropriate signals, causing solutions to keep pace with the problems caused by population growth. A third view, exemplified by political scientist Thomas Homer-Dixon, says that the economists are usually right, but that not all countries will be able to respond to scarcity with new technologies and other innovations. As a result, there are likely to be local rather than global catastrophes, as with the famines in Niger and West Africa in summer 2005, where locusts and drought destroyed crops and the government was unable to help. Homer-Dixon says that countries such as Niger suffer from an 'ingenuity gap' that could lead to mass migration, as people leave areas that cannot cope. ... The UNDP's annual Human Development Report, released in September 2005, said ... Norway topped the list of 177 countries ranked by their 'human development,' and Niger was at the bottom. ... Niger, a country of 12 million that made slavery a criminal offence in April 2004, is often accused of not enforcing its anti-slavery laws. By some estimates, a tenth of the members of parliament keep slaves or are from slave-owning families. Niger's slave caste, known as the bellah, are bound by fear and tradition to masters and do domestic and farm work. NGOs estimate there are at least 50,000 slaves in Niger. The government says that the 'slaves' are poor people who volunteer to work for richer people in exchange for shelter and food." (Migration News, October 2005)

Marry In Hijab, Repent In Leisure Suit

Although there appear to be a high number of marriages between Quebecois women and Moslem men, the Italian Church has issued an unprecedented caution: "A number of Catholic cardinals are warning Italian women against marrying Muslims. Cardinal Ruini, the head of the Italian bishops, said last month that in addition to the problems any couple faces setting up a family, Catholics marrying Muslims have to reckon with extra difficulties arising from deep cultural differences. Church officials say some 20,000 mixed marriages took place this year alone, the BBC reported. The Catholic Church's

official position is to encourage dialogue between Rome and other religions, including Islam. But two documents published in Rome have called for extreme caution by Catholic women contemplating marriage to a Muslim, the BBC said. **Vatican Cardinal Stephen Hamao** wrote last year about what he called the 'bitter experiences' European women have had in marrying Muslims. The difficulties are compounded if the couple then goes to live in a Muslim country, the cardinal warned." (United Press International, December 26, 2005)

Hongcouver

Out on the left coast, **Sam Sullivan** won by about 3,700 votes over local activist **Jim Green** in the race to replace [Vancouver] mayor **Larry Campbell**. "Tonight is truly a humbling experience," said Mr. Sullivan, who also spoke Chinese in his victory speech." (Globe and Mail, November 20, 2005) Not humbling enough

Intermarriage Key To Peace & Order?

"In a democratic age, you can't buck demography -- except through civil war. The Yugoslavs figured that out. In the 30 years before the meltdown, Bosnian Serbs had declined from 43 per cent to 31 per cent of the population, while Bosnian Muslims had increased from 26 per cent to 44 per cent." (London Telegraph, November 15, 2005)

Surprising news on the demographic front from **Niall Ferguson**, professor of history at **Harvard** and Senior Research Fellow of **Jesus College Oxford**: "A century ago, hundreds of thousands of Jews migrated westwards from Russian-occupied Poland and Ukraine to escape from discrimination and pogroms. Many settled in Western Europe. There they thrived, quickly leaving behind the slums where they had first settled. By the early 20th century, the sons and grandsons of immigrants were prosperous businessmen, professionals and academics. Another indicator of integration: more and more Jews married non-Jews -- by the early 1930s, for example, one in every two marriages in Hamburg involving a Jew was to a Gentile. So total was the assimilation of German Jewry that religious leaders feared their community was simply going to dissolve itself. Yet, within a decade, dissolution had given way to the '**Final Solution**,' as first Germany then all of continental Europe was gripped by an extraordinary anti-Semitic backlash. The Holocaust was, of course, a unique historical crime. Yet, its underlying cause -- a violent reaction against the apparently successful integration of an ethnic minority -- was far from unique. Bosnia, too, seemed like a stable multi-cultural society in the days when **Tito** ruled Yugoslavia. As late as 1989, one in every six Bosnian Croats who married took a non-Croatian wife, and one in every eight Bosnian Serbs took a non-Serbian wife. Yet, within just a few years, the country was torn apart in the worst inter-ethnic violence Europe had since 1945. This is not to predict either Nazism or Balkanisation in Britain. But it is to point to the dangers of a comparable kind of backlash *against* integration." (London Telegraph, November 20, 2005) Note to Canada's taste makers, **Blaise Pascal** said "The more intelligence one has the more people one finds original. Commonplace people see no difference between men." Or women.

If I Can't Have You, No One Can

Vlado Maljkovich, a prisoner "convicted of killing his wife and daughter has been awarded \$5,000 in damages after suing **Correctional Service Canada** for being exposed to second-hand smoke while serving time in a Gravenhurst Ont. jail. [A] prisoner in the **Fraser Valley Institution** who '*self-harmed*' and then bled on a blanket asked for and received \$72. The blanket was trashed by staff who viewed it as a bio-hazard, but **CSC** reviewed the incident and agreed with the inmate who complained: 'I was not given an option' to have it laundered. [Other malcontents include the] inmate who demanded compensation for lost items during a failed prison escape by raft, and another who made a claim for the loss of two cans of **Chef Boyardee** pasta and a can of foot powder. [The detailed refusal

he was sent by the warden stated in part:] 'It should be noted that you are claiming for two cans of **Chef Boyardee** pasta; you threw these particular cans at officers and the cans were destroyed. ... Also, the foot powder containers you are claiming were found to be full of marijuana.' [Other federal inmates while away time] using the **Access to Information Act** in a bid to obtain information on prison security systems, the names and work hours of corrections employees, and details on drug testing." (National Post, October 15, 2005) In other prison news: Late afternoon on October 25, a pure white gyrfalcon magically landed in the yard of the **William Head Institution**, "a minimum-security facility with 120 inmates on 32 hectares that jut into the Pacific Ocean. ... The prisoners appeared to be excited by their visitor, ... but, by the next morning, the majestic raptor had been chopped to pieces, its wings and talons removed, its body parts scattered around the prison. ... With a transmitter, leather strap and bell tied to its talons, the gyrfalcon ... was clearly a tame raptor bred in captivity [traced through the transmitter, owner **John Hitchmough** said:] 'I cannot even fathom anyone killing a bird like that.' ... He has heard the raptor was dismembered after prisoners were told they could not keep it." (Globe and Mail, November 5, 2005)

Shell-Shocked Canadians

"An astonishing number of Canadians suffer from **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**, according to a large, national survey by **McMaster University** researchers. Their results show a lifetime **PTSD** prevalence of 9.2% in Canada -- on par with the rate found in Detroit, Mich. They found an additional 2.2% of Canadians have experienced partial **PTSD**, for an overall rate of more than 11%. Previous studies suggested the lifetime **PTSD** prevalence rate in the U.S. is 7.8%. In comparison, rates in other countries range from 1.3% in Germany to 37% in Algeria. 'We thought our numbers would be half the United States'. For (Canadian figures) to even be really very close to the United States' is very surprising. Canada doesn't see itself to have the same kind of society,' said lead researcher Dr. **Michael Van Ameringen**, who presented the study here at the recent **American Psychiatric Association** meeting. The findings suggested **PTSD** is a significant health problem in Canada, he said. 'I think next time we give this talk it should be titled, *Canada, the not so kind and gentler place.*' ... The team surveyed more than 3,000 Canadians by telephone using random-digit dialling. Respondents were more than 18 years old ... predominantly White ... and ages were representative of the population. ... The trained interviewers administered modified versions of the **Composite International Diagnostic Interview PTSD Module** and the **Mini International Neuro Psychiatric Interview** to determine **PTSD** prevalence rates. ... Subjects had to meet **DSM-IV** [Literally, the fourth edition of the **Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders** -- providing empirically-based, clear definitions of all recognized mental disorders] criteria to be considered to have **PTSD**. Subjects considered to have partial **PTSD** had experienced trauma similar to full **PTSD** and had symptoms for a similar duration, but were one or two symptoms short of meeting full criteria, said Dr. Van Ameringen. ... The prevalence of **PTSD** ranged across regions of the country. It was highest in Western Canada, at 11.6%, followed by Ontario at 9.7%, Quebec at 6.7% and Atlantic Canada at 6.4%." (Medical Post, June 3, 2003) Compare Alberta's 11.6% rate with a follow-up study of Kosovar refugees: Two years after their arrival in Canada, the overall **PTSD** rate was just 20%. (Medical Post, December 18, 2001) Perhaps, what we really have here is a useful demographic map of civic powerlessness: How many Maritimers/Quebecers fear *their* country and communities are being altered beyond recognition by a cabal of venom-spitting thieves and bullies extracting (their) money with menaces? Is **PTSD** an imperfect coping mechanism for those who sense a deliberate plan to wipe out their kind?