



Government by Greed

By Silver Donald Cameron

The story that the police got caught “rock-handed” at Montebello overshadowed the message the peaceful demonstrators were trying to get out. This article is a reminder. Ed.

Not long ago an old friend e-mailed me, wondering “why there is so little media attention to the SPP?”

“SPP?” I responded. “Whuzzat?”

“Security and Prosperity Partnership, with the US and Mexico,” came the response.

That got me to digging around. The SPP turned out to be a familiar old beast from the black lagoon, hydra-headed and slimy. SPP is the new name for the old American project of Manifest Destiny—absolute control over the whole continent.

The project has plenty of other names: NAFTA-Plus, Deep Integration, the North American Union. “North American Union” sounds groovy, sort of like the European Union. But the EU is an assembly of 27 mid-sized animals, while the NAU would be a union of two mice and an elephant.

The Security and Prosperity Partnership is largely the child of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, which is about as “Canadian” as the National Hockey League. CCCE members include such maple-draped beavers as General Electric, General Motors, Fedex, Microsoft, Mitsubishi, Pratt & Whitney and Shell—all with the word “Canada” appended.

The Canadian Council of Collaborators might be a better name. The CCCE is the local chapter of the international capitalist conspiracy, and—like the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, et al—its mission is to eliminate any impediments to the ability of international capital to make money whenever and wherever it likes. National boundaries are just another impediment, along with labour unions, minimum wages, environmental regulations and consumer protections.

The Security and Prosperity Partnership has its roots in 9/11, which closed the US/Canadian border. Former US Ambassador Paul Cellucci later commented that the new US attitude towards its borders was that “security trumps trade.” To keep the border open for trade, CCCE President Tom D’Aquino proposed “more fundamental harmonization and integration” with the US.

Fifteen months later, the CCCE announced a “North American Security and Prosperity Initiative.” It wanted a “new deal”—shared defence and security, and a comprehensive agreement on agriculture, metal, minerals and energy. Soon afterwards, the

CCCE created a 30-member “CEO Action Group” to advance that agenda.

Next, the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations set up a tri-national “Independent Task Force on the Future of North America,” co-chaired by former finance minister John Manley and vice-chaired by Tom d’Aquino. In March 2005, the Task Force reported, calling for a continental security perimeter, a common external tariff, a common border pass, and a North American energy and natural resources strategy. Same agenda. And it wanted this done by 2010.

A group of people inside a common border, with a common tariff and a common passport, protected by a common defence force and sharing the natural wealth of the continent—that’s effectively one country, not three.

Is that what Canadians (or Americans) actually want? Not according to the polls—but the governments instantly fell in line. On March 23, 2005, just nine days after the Task Force report, Paul Martin and Vicente Fox joined George Bush in Waco, Texas to create the tri-national Security and Prosperity Partnership which would pursue that same agenda.

Since then, the governments of Canada and Mexico have changed, but the SPP rolls right along. The SPP now includes a North American Competitiveness Council, composed of at least 10 CEOs from each country, who are charged with directing the SPP process and ensuring that “governments look to the private sector to tell them what needs to be done.” Among the firms represented are Lockheed Martin, Wal-Mart, General Motors, Home Depot Canada, Canfor and Suncor. Nobody represents you and me.

And what does it mean, for instance, to adopt “a wide-ranging plan to streamline regulatory and security protocols across North America?” In May, CanWest News Service clarified that. A fast-tracked initiative under the SPP, said CanWest, would lead Canada to raise its limits on pesticide residues on fruit and vegetables as “part of an effort to harmonize Canadian pesticide rules with

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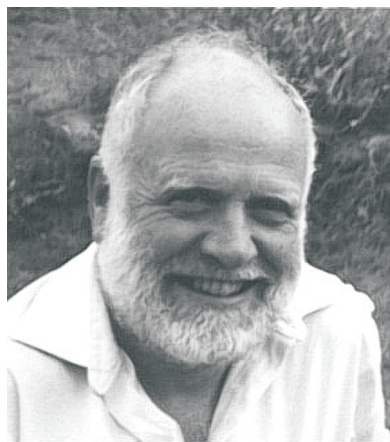
... and much more

From the Editor

In Gear Again

By Philip Symons

Once again apologies and an explanation are owed readers for the long gap since the last issue of *JUSTnews* appeared in the Winter of 2006 (which should have read 2006-07). As before, this gap arose for want of a layout person. The last layout expert resigned after preparing only one issue, and her resignation came at a bad time. I was on the point of leaving for Europe to visit family, then returned for the CUSJ annual general meeting, followed by two months sailing vacation, and another visit by family. All this meant I couldn't pull another issue of *JUSTnews* together until the last week of August. The good news: we did, in the meantime, find another person to do the layout, Gerry Hayle of the Vancouver Unitarian Church.



PHILIP SYMONS

I cannot overstate how welcome she is!

Because of the long gap, the priority for this issue has been to get it quickly to press. There is therefore a dearth of pictures in this issue, because they take time to find. "News from the Trenches", which also requires time to assemble, is truncated. The President's Report is dated "March", but the material is still relevant, and rather than ask our busy President for an updated report, I have used it.

His comments on SPP fit a CUSJ theme and the lead article of this issue. We'll get an updated President's report in the next issue, together with a review of the CUSJ AGM, and brief biographies and photos of the old and new CUSJ Board of Directors.

A welcome aspect of the current issue is the inclusion of articles by CUSJ members Barbara Taylor and Sharon Flatt. By now they may have forgotten what they contributed, but their articles are timely.

The Editorial Committee of *JUSTnews* (members are listed on the back page), met last February, and one item we discussed was how to identify articles written by the editor, he being a little bashful at having his name appear often in print, yet at the same time recognizing that readers want to know whom to blame for inadequacies or inaccuracies. The solution we lit upon was to append the editor's initials to pieces he wrote. When you see "PEKS" at the end of an article, therefore, you know where to aim your brickbats (or bouquets, should there be any).

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those of the United States, which allow higher residue levels."

Ah. The SPP doesn't mean that the US will adopt good Canadian ideas. It means that Canadian regulations will be weakened to match the US ones. The elephant will have his way.

The three governments now annually discuss progress in closed meetings. Participants like Stockwell Day won't even say what has been discussed. The next meeting is in Montebello, Quebec, August 18-19. The leaders will meet inside a 25-km "security perimeter."

God forbid that mere citizens should get anywhere near the corporate elite which is deciding their future. God forbid that matters like health, culture, education and environment should be considered as important as corporate greed.

Get this. In 2005, the leaders declared that the SPP reflected the three nations' shared belief in "strong democratic values and institutions."

They said it with a straight face, too.

From the *Sunday Herald* column, July 29, 2007 by Silver Donald Cameron, Halifax. www.silverdonaldcameron.ca
<http://sailingawayfromwinter.blogspot.com/>

Euro-English: Simplifid Ofishl Speling

The European Commission has just announced an agreement whereby English will be the official language of the European Union rather than German which was the other possibility.

As part of the negotiations, Her Majesty's Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a 5-year phase-in plan that would become known as "Euro-English".

In the first year, "s"; will replace the soft "c". Certainly, this will make the sivil servants jump with joy. The hard "c" will be dropped in favour of the "k". This should klear up konfusion, and keyboards can have one less letter.

There will be growing publik enthusiasm in the sekond year when the troublesome "ph" will be replaced with the "f". This will make words like fotograf 20% shorter.

In the 3rd year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling can be expekted to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible. Governments will enkourage the removal of double letters which have always ben a deterrent to akurate speling. Also, al wil agre that the horibl mes of the silent "e" in the languag is disgrasful and it should go away.

By the 4th yer peopl wil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing "th" with "z" and "w" with "v"

During ze fifz yer, ze unesesary "o" can be dropd from vords kontaining "ou" and after ziz fifz yer, ve vil hav a reil sensibl riten styl. Zer vil be no mor trubl or difikultis and evrivun vil find it ezi tu understand ech oza. Ze drem of a united urop vil finali kum tru.

If zis mad yu smil, pleas pas it on to oza pepl.

Ontario Votes on MMP

(Mixed Member Proportional)

People are overwhelmingly upset with politics and politicians.

As Ontario voters, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make it better—to change our electoral system. On October 10, 2007, every Ontario voter will get to vote in an electoral reform referendum to adopt a better voting system. Never since confederation in 1867 have we all had such a chance.

The Ontario Citizens' Assembly, a group of 103 randomly selected voters—people like you and me—studied our electoral system for seven months and rejected the current First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system. These people were not politicians or party insiders, and didn't have any axe to grind.

These average citizens overwhelmingly—by 92%—voted to recommend to their fellow citizens an alternative electoral system called **Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)** representation.

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)

**will give Ontario voters
the best of both worlds.**

Party insiders may not like this recommendation, but it doesn't matter this time, we voters will be making the decision. However, at the moment, awareness about this historic referendum is low, so becoming informed is very important.

The New System Will Be Simple and Sensible.

You still vote for your preferred local candidate just as you do now. In addition, you also cast a vote for your preferred political party. The share of these votes that each party wins will determine its overall share of seats in the legislature.

The provincial legislature will have 90 riding MPPs (Members of the Provincial Parliament) and 39 at-large MPPs. If after the 90 riding seats are filled, a party has fewer seats than its portion of the party vote, that party wins some of the additional 39 provincial (or at-large) seats to ensure it has its fair share of the total seats. These at-large representatives are elected from provincial lists of candidates nominated by each party in advance of the election. Voters can judge these at-large candidates, as well as local candidates, and vote accordingly.

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) will give Ontario voters the best of both worlds. You get strong local representation *plus* fair results, with parties gaining no more, and no fewer seats than they really deserve.

Here's an election example: Party X gets 30 per cent of the party votes, but when riding results are tallied, they have a share of seats that is 10 short of the 30 per cent of the seats they deserve. In that case, Party X will also gain 10 at-large seats, with their top ten at-large candidates winning those seats.

From Vote for MMP. The MMP system was recommended by the independent Ontario Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform, after eight months of intensive study, consultation and deliberation. To learn more, go to <http://www.voteformmp.ca>

Ed's note: British Columbians will be voting on the adoption of BC STV in May, 2009—more on that in another issue.

LETTERS

JUSTnews welcomes brief letters—brickbats as well as kudos. They help the Editor and Editorial Board adjust the content of the newsletter the better to reflect what CUSJ members want.

January 11, 2007

Always so good to get **JUSTnews**—WOW! Full of goodies—and baddies! The UN and Canada in Haiti was most informative and moving. I phoned my MP's office (can never speak directly to him). Wrote to Minister McKay about Pakistan and Haiti, with copies to four other MPs.

Your newsletter is dated "Winter 2006" which could mean Jan 2006. Another newsletter I got at about the same time is correctly dated "Winter 06-07." PLEASE next winter date **JUSTnews** properly. Every winter starts at the end of one year and continues into the next—in short, every year has 2 winters—at the beginning and at the end.

Do you have a website? I'm referring my MP and others to minesactioncanada.org. Mines Action says that "over 73 countries, including Canada, stockpile cluster munitions..."

—Helen Hansen,
Toronto

What an example Helen sets! We will, in future, date winter editions of JUSTnews correctly.

The website for Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice is www.cusj.org and you will find some back issues of JUSTnews archived there. Ed.

City of Yellowknife Votes against TILMA

With only one councillor opposing, the Yellowknife city council sent a clear message in April that it was opposed to the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA). The council urged the territorial government not to sign on to any such trade deal.

The Yellowknife vote reflects the growing concern that some municipalities are having with the negative impact TILMA would have on communities in Canada.

The motion passed in Yellowknife charged that the TILMA already signed by the Alberta and B.C. governments had been signed "without appropriate consultation with local governments or the public [and will] expose to challenge all government measures that are alleged to restrict or impair trade, investment, or labour mobility."

The motion also noted that TILMA will give "extensive new grounds to the private sector to sue local governments for trade 'infractions' such as municipal construction regulations, zoning, quality standards, etc."

The motion also criticized the pro-TILMA "political pressure" being exerted on provincial governments by the federal Conservative government and business organizations.

—CCPA Monitor, June 2007

CUSJ AGM-WORKSHOP—GUARANTEED LIVEABLE INCOME

With Cindy l'Hirondelle

Our Annual General Meeting on May 18, 2007, was preceded, as usual, by an informative and thought-provoking workshop, this time on the subject, "A Guaranteed Liveable Income". The workshop was given by Cindy l'Hirondelle, coordinator of the Women's Economic Justice Project of the Victoria Status of Women Action Group (SWAG).

Cindy began by noting how we used to do many things without money, but now almost everything has been "co-modified", that is, it has been turned into a commodity by putting a price on it. Our grandparents used to raise food in their own backyards: everyone had a vegetable garden, and many people kept chickens. Cindy suggested that if all the money were taken away, we would still have had what we need to live.

In our topsy-turvy world, oil spills, addictions, clear-cuts, and wars all contribute to the Gross National Product (GDP), and therefore are considered "productive". The work of women in the home and raising children adds nothing to the GDP, and therefore is unproductive and valueless.

An antidote to this insanity would be a Guaranteed Liveable Income (GLI). This would be paid to everyone, regardless of means, but clawed back, of course, from individuals who had significant income from other sources. "If we pay people not to work, it will be good for the environment," said Cindy. "People will write poetry, and plant gardens..." Poverty would be eliminated. Women who remain at home to care for their children would receive at least some compensation for their work. Social justice would be served. "People always ask how much it would cost," said Cindy.

No published estimate for Canada seems to exist, but rough calculations suggest a ballpark figure would be about \$100 billion per year, and that's taking into account savings from our current welfare and old-age security programs that would no longer be needed. That's a sizeable chunk of change—approximately 20% of the federal government's annual revenue.

Cindy suggested the costs could be covered simply by printing the necessary money. Most people at the workshop thought this would be highly inflationary, and dismissed it. However, some literature on a workshop table suggests we should give this idea a second glance.

Richard Cook, one-time US civil servant at NASA and then at the Food and Drug Administration, notes there are potential tax sources, such as rolling back tax cuts for the rich, shutting down offshore tax-havens, implementation of a universal land tax as advocated by Henry George in the 19th century that could at least partially pay for a GLI. But Cook also suggests that we begin to think about establishing a GLI "without charging any cost at all to the federal budget through what has been called a National Dividend.

"This is not a frivolous suggestion," he continues. "This would be money creation at its simplest and most direct, similar to the Greenback legislated by Congress during the Civil War. Then, Congress authorized expenditures in the amount of \$450 million, and the government simply spent the money into existence.

"It was a system that worked remarkably well, one which the bankers have propagandized against ever since. ... It was money supposedly created out of thin air, a true fiat currency, and if people tell you that the Greenbacks caused inflation, they are wrong.



Cindy l'Hirondelle at the Workshop

"Simpler, more direct, and less prone to inflation [than deficit spending] would be to issue what [C. H.] Douglas called a National Dividend to everyone at the start of each year, without means test, without distinction as to whether you work or not."

The niceties distinguishing "deficit spending" from "spending money into existence" may be subtle, if they exist at all, but we can probably all agree that where there's a will there's a way, and in a world awash with money, the will to bring GLI into existence is more critical than the means.

Cindy mentioned that there was a conference coming up in Ottawa in July on GLI that she would like to attend, if only she had the resources. As she continued her talk, there was a rustling in the audience, and in a few minutes Marya Nijland announced that Cindy could go, as people present had donated \$400 towards her travel costs. Talk about "where there's a will..." Cindy was first speechless, and then broke into tears.

Cindy did attend the conference, and reported on it in a local Victoria alternative newspaper in August, ending her article with "A huge thank you to the Unitarians, who made my trip possible." One can be proud to be a Unitarian.

— PEKS

President's Report March 2007

By Bob Stevenson

My wife Linda and I had the good fortune to visit Victoria, BC during this past February. We were able to renew friendships with many Unitarians from our last eight years with CUSJ and we were warmly welcomed at two services at the Capital Congregation and two services at the First Unitarian Congregation of Victoria. At the latter I was happy to acknowledge the contribution made by several individuals who formed the executive of CUSJ during the past seven years.

Philip Symons and his wife, Marya Nijland, hosted a memorable dinner. Present were four of the five past and current presidents of CUSJ. Along with Philip there was Mel Johnston, Bob VanAlstyne and myself as well as Bert MacBain, Christine Johnston and Linda Stevenson. Unfortunately, our first president, Doug Rutherford of Toronto, was unable to attend, but he



was remembered and toasted at the dinner. We knew about Philip's interests in biology and sailing, but his skills in Indonesian cooking and writing children's books were a surprise.

The week of February was noteworthy for two major advances of our civil liberties. They were (i) the decision of the Supreme Court on "Security Certificates" and (ii) the failure of the federal government to renew the two restrictive sections of the Anti-Terrorist Act. Our organization has been one of many working to achieve these goals. We can be proud of this result and our first twelve years. However, our list-serve keeps reminding us of new issues that require our attention.

For example, recently I attended the book launch of Maureen Webb's book, *Illusions of Security*. It contains many topics for our attention. At the end of March, six Unitarians of our Ottawa Global Justice Committee, along with 700 citizens, attended the teach-in called "Integrate-This", organized by the Council of Canadians and seven other organizations. Several panels and workshops examined the Security and Prosperity Partnership. The SPP, also known as Deep Integration, is another step in the loss of our sovereignty by stealth. These issues must be examined by all of us. One speaker from CUPE said it well: (i) educate ourselves (ii) connect the dots of this plan for "Fortress America" and (iii) organize coalitions to challenge this strategy devised by the corporate elites of Canada, the United States and Mexico without any participation of our elected representatives.

If you have a particular issue that requires our lobbying effort, write a letter, circulate it on the list-serve and, when you have done the editing, send it to me. It will be circulated to the Board of Directors for comment. If it falls within our mandate, it will be sent by CUSJ.

Needed: a Spiritual Re-Awakening

By Barb Taylor

Earth Day at the Unitarian Church of Vancouver was celebrated on April 22, 2007 with a service by Rex Weyler, one of the founders of Greenpeace and author of its history, *Greenpeace: How a Group of Journalists, Ecologists and Visionaries Changed the World* (Raincoast Books, 2004). The Environment and Social Justice Committees cosponsored the event, which included a Forum with the journalist/activist after the service.

Social Justice Committee co-chairs Juergen Dankwort and Wilson Muñoz commemorated the 1970 founding of Greenpeace and the coining of its name by placing a plaque in the church hall and giving a matching certificate to Rex Weyler. In an inspiring speech, Rex Weyler drew on myth and his own experience in honouring the earth and nature, of which we are a part. Here are some excerpts:

* We do not control nature. We *are* nature.

* Unitarians point out that the concept of Worship derives from the old English *weorthschippen*, to ascribe worth to something. So, to what do we ascribe worth? Perhaps it is time not just to respect the earth, but to worship it, to ascribe worth to nature.

* Nature is the first teacher of humanity. Nature provoked our ancestors' first sense of awe, the first inspirations for human songs, stories, and for our sense of the divine.

Optimism and realism

In my high school biology class, I recall putting two fruit flies—a male and a female—into a jar with a tomato. The flies multiplied day after day: four, eight, a dozen, and soon hundreds of fruit flies were feeding on the tomato. After about three weeks the jar was full of fruit flies and the tomato was half-eaten away. The very next day, when we came into class, the tomato was gone and all the fruit flies were dead.

This was an experiment about exponential growth in nature. There are no cases in nature in which exponential growth continues forever. None.

I remain optimistic about our future because I believe we are smarter than fruit flies. But realistically, I know: we are halfway through the tomato. Forget quibbling about peak oil. We are way past peak everything (including the world's forests and fresh water resources). We're halfway through the tomato. The question is, will we wake up and will we be able to adjust? Are we smarter than the fruit flies?

I believe we are smart enough. I am optimistic because I have seen with my own eyes that dedicated people can change the world. In my lifetime I have witnessed the civil rights movement, the women's movement, the end of apartheid in South Africa, and the rise of the environmental movement. Private citizens initiated all of these changes; individuals were willing to take a stand.

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News from the Trenches

Lakehead Unitarian Fellowship

What started in a classroom in Michigan in 1990 has become an international event. Empty Bowls dinners are held by many Unitarian churches.

A simple meal of soup and bread has never been more filling. Empty Bowls Dinners are inclusive, maintain a high level of integrity, include an aspect of hunger-education, and all money raised goes toward fighting hunger.

Thunder Bay held its seventh Annual Dinner in October, 2006 (which corresponds with World Food Day) for about 250+ people. Over the years we have made some adaptations. Although the venue has changed three times, the Dinners have remained true to the Empty Bowls Project. In Thunder Bay, local potters donate handcrafted ceramic bowls that participants are allowed to keep as a reminder that there is hunger in the world.

We added another aspect several years ago: the local quilters' guild donated handcrafted placemats that, like the bowls, are taken home as a reminder of the hunger in the world.

By incorporating a raffle with a food theme, we raised additional funds.

The last couple of years we added a silent auction of ceramic bowls signed by celebrities. The list is impressive—this year the highest priced bowls were from Stephen Lewis, Stanley cup champion Eric Staal and Jack Layton, which join other top-priced bowls from David Suzuki, figure skaters, sports stars and musicians.

This year we expect to raise in excess of \$10,000 from the Dinner, which is equally divided between the Shelter House and The Food Bank. For pictures of our event see Lakehead Unitarian Fellowship's website.

For further information go to The Empty Bowls Project website.

*—Submitted to JUSTnews by Bob Manson
For Empty Bowls Committee, Thunder Bay*

Who is this well-known social justice obstructionist?



This well-known social justice obstructionist is **Thomas d'Aquino**, Chief Executive of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, a powerful lobbyist for privatization and less government; arch enemy of social justice, he was once heard to say "There's too much democracy in Canada."



Framing to Win

By Murray Dobbin

A strange disconnect tells the story of the last 20 years of Canadian politics. It's the disconnect between Canadian values (those who object to this term have my permission to run screaming from the room) and the governments they end up with.

The old saw that people deserve the governments they get does not apply here. Many in-depth surveys suggest that Canadians still hold firmly to their views that governments have an activist role to play in their lives and the lives of communities. These are decidedly progressive values. Yet we now have as Prime Minister one of the most reactionary and radically right-wing politicians ever to hold office.

This profound contradiction is between values and expectations. Canadians still believe in the principle that government is a force for good. It's just that they no longer believe that it can be, or will be.

This is a huge victory for those like Stephen Harper who believe in the motto of his former employer, the National Citizens Coalition: "More freedom through less government." The right did not have to change people's values. They just had to change people's expectations. And they did it through a stunningly successful seizure of the language of public discourse.

In other words, they framed the issues.

And their opponents fought the battle of ideas on a field designed by and for their adversaries.

There are many examples but some of the most powerful phrases will evoke memories of past battles: there is no alternative; we are going to hit the debt wall; government is inefficient; public employees are "bureaucrats"—privileged, over-paid, under-worked and lazy.

The art and science of strategic frame analysis—issue framing—is relatively new in Canada, though the concept of framing is not. The right has been framing its issues carefully for years while the left has been oddly complacent about reframing issues from their perspective.

That complacency has cost civil society groups dearly. And it has cost Canadians even more in eroded social programs, and the growing gap between rich and poor.

Framing refers to the strategic construction of messages in order that they connect with people's deeply held world views and assumptions. It starts from the point we all know from experience—that people are rarely persuaded by just facts and numbers, no matter how compelling they might be. Framing theory suggests the construction of a message involves a complex combination of words, numbers, stories, metaphors and messengers that support the message, and take account of the particular context within which the message is delivered.

A strong frame will actually reject facts that don't fit the frame. The way that budget deficits have been framed is a good example. There are many very sound arguments suggesting that deficits can play a very positive role in managing an economy and smoothing out ups and downs in economic growth. But the notion that deficits are totally unacceptable with respect to government spending is so entrenched that it is the equivalent of the Teflon frame: all competing facts and arguments just bounce off it.

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Elephant power

American linguist George Lakoff is the best-known framing expert on the left. His now famous book *Don't Think of an Elephant* coaches progressives on how to reframe issues captured by the right.

The title refers to what Lakoff suggests is the key to understanding framing: that you cannot negate an operating frame. In fact, each time you negate the frame, you actually evoke it. If you tell people not to think of an elephant it is virtually impossible for them *not* to think of one.

The classic example of failing to negate a frame was provided by Richard Nixon when he famously declared "I am not a crook." From that instant on, this is precisely how the vast majority of Americans viewed their president. A short time later he resigned.

Never, ever say

'Free Trade Agreement'.

Instead, say

'Investors' Rights Agreement'.

Issue framing has taken on such importance in American politics that the *New York Times* referred to its as "framing wars" between the Democrats and the Republicans. Lakoff works closely with the Democrats, and the Republicans have their own brilliant language guru, Frank Luntz.

In 1997 Luntz distributed a 160-page report titled "The Language of the 21st Century," which he said was his "most serious effort to put together an effective, comprehensive national communications strategy."

It quickly became the Republican play-book bible.

Harper's Favourite Frames

Luntz's ideas started showing up more obviously in Canada just weeks after Stephen Harper won the 2006 election—and just after, Luntz came to Canada and visited the new Prime Minister. That's when we started hearing the key Harper Ministers' repetition of the term "tax relief," a staple of Luntz's framing. Why this phrase? Because it automatically evokes the image of an affliction that needs relief. Those who offer to help with the affliction are the good guys, and those who deny that relief are cast as people who don't care about ordinary folk.

You can't negate the "tax relief" frame any more than you can command people not to think of an elephant. So, instead of trying to talk against tax relief, Lakoff would argue that you need to reframe the issue with your values in mind—and talk about "fair tax reform." That new frame evokes a whole different set of attitudes, and doesn't reinforce the notion that taxes are a burden. It implies that taxes are needed and also connects with people's existing conviction that the wealthy don't pay their fair share.

Other reframing ideas include talking about taxes as the price we pay for a civilized society, taxes as an investment in our children's future, or the price of admission to a desirable club—one of the best countries in the world to live in.

"Sometimes," says Frank Luntz, "it's not what you say that matters but what you don't say."

His advice to Republicans: never say "government."

Say "Washington." Why? Because people actually like their local government but they don't trust Washington. Never say "globalization." Say "the free market economy," because globalization is scary, too big and beyond people's control. Never say "drilling for oil." Say "exploring for energy." Never say "undocumented workers." Say "illegal aliens."

Reframing to win

The right in Canada, Harper in particular, will be honing this communications methodology as we come up to the next election. Indeed the Clean Air Act is just one example. So, can we turn the tables on the right and begin to frame and reframe issues so that they connect with Canadians' values?

Absolutely. Here's a start:

Never say "Medicare crisis." Say the "corporate threat to Medicare." Why? Because the privateers want people to think there's a crisis so they will acquiesce to a radical solution: privatization.

Never say "private care". Instead, say "for-profit care".

Never say "defense spending." Say "war spending." Because the huge increases in that department are exclusively for making war.

Don't say "child care." Instead say "early childhood learning." Because the right tries to frame daycare as undermining the family, and warehousing children.

Never refer to the Clean Air Act. Call it what it is, the Dirty Oil Act.

Never, ever say "free trade agreement." Instead, say "investors' rights agreement."

Never say Tories. Say "the Harper Conservatives." Because the former reminds people of the politically moderate Red Tories who are long gone.

Similarly, never say "the Conservative government." Say "the Harper government."

Never say "decentralization." Instead, say "the erosion of universal social programs."

Two can play the framing game. It's about time those who care about the country got serious about winning.

Originally published in TheTyee.ca, February 6, 2007, under the title, "How the Left Should Frame Issues." Murray Dobbin is an investigative reporter, and gave the keynote address at the May, 2007 CUSJAGM.

Government is designed to protect the opulent minority from the majority

"It's important to remember that the constitutional system was not designed in the first place to defend the rights of people. Rather, the rights of people had to be balanced, as Madison put it, against what he called, 'the rights of property.' Well of course property has no rights, my pen has no rights. Maybe I have a right to it, but the pen has no rights. So, this is just a code phrase for the rights of people with property. The constitutional system was founded on the principle that the rights of people with property have to be privileged; they have rights because they're people, but they also have special rights because they have property. As Madison put it in the constitutional debates, the goal of government must be 'to protect the minority of the opulent against the majority.' That's the way the system was set up."

—Noam Chomsky, *CorpWatch* interview, May 6, 1998; as quoted by Richard Moore in *Escaping the Matrix*, p. 97.

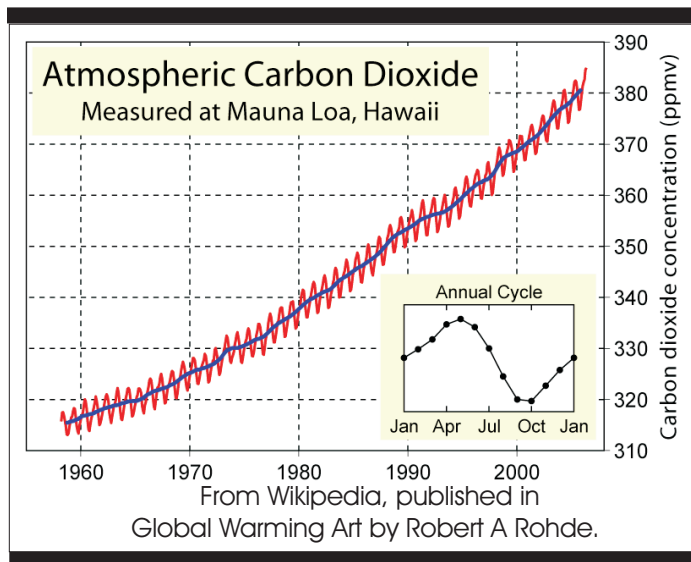
Solutions to Global Warming/Climate Change

George Monbiot is one of today's best investigative journalists, and he has brought his considerable talents to bear on the problem of global warming and climate change in his book *Heat* (Doubleday Canada, 2006, \$29.95).

"The purpose of this book," writes Monbiot, "is to find the most politically effective means both of cutting our energy use and of reducing its carbon content."

When Monbiot speaks of "cutting our energy use" he is not speaking of a timid Kyoto-protocol target of a 5.2% reduction in carbon emissions by signatories by 2012, but a 90% average reduction in rich countries by 2030 (94% in Canada, Australia and the USA).

Ninety-percent cuts by 2030 are needed if atmospheric CO₂ levels are not to exceed 440 parts per million (ppm) of air, the point at which some scientists believe critical positive feedback mechanisms will kick in, meaning there would be little we could then do "to stop the planet from burning." Atmospheric CO₂ concentrations currently stand at 380 ppm, up from 338 ppm in 1980. Monbiot suggests "there is perhaps a 30 percent chance that we have already blown it... But I am writing this book in a spirit of optimism, so I refuse to believe it."



Monbiot then sets about explaining how we can meet that 90% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 through a number of ingenious, sometimes surprising, but technically and economically feasible innovations. He believes it can be done without drastically changing our life-style or quality of life—though it will certainly cost us financially—in every field except air travel. Readers interested in those innovations should read his excellent and readable book.

Monbiot dismisses carbon taxes right away, which will probably upset some environmentalists who have been putting their faith in that idea. "If we attempted to suppress climate change entirely by means of energy taxes, two things would happen," writes Monbiot, "The poor would be hit much harder than the rich, as the costs took up a higher proportion of their income. And the rich would be able to carry on burning as much fuel as they could afford..."

"An alternative approach is to draft new laws governing...when we could turn the lights on or how far we were allowed to travel," in fact "governing every move we make." "I don't believe that many people would see that as

an attractive option either," he continues. "As the allied powers' economic planners found in the Second World War, there is a less coercive system, whose fairness is immediately apparent. It is rationing..."

"Rationing begins with a decision about the amount of carbon the world can emit every year. If, for example, it is correct to say that our 7 billion tonnes of current carbon emissions must be reduced to 2.7 by 2030, and if we want to make the biggest cuts sooner rather than later, we might decide that in 2012 the world should be producing no more than 5.5 billion tonnes. We divide that figure by the number of people we will expect to find on earth in 2012, and discover how much carbon everyone would be entitled to emit: it would be around 0.8 tonnes [per year]. Every nation would then multiply that figure by the number of people it contained, and this would be its national allocation...."

Data-keeping of CO₂ levels at Mauna Loa is the longest-running and most detailed in the world

"Once a country has its allocation, it can then decide how its emissions should be parcelled out. In theory you could simply hand everyone his or her global share: 0.8 tonnes of carbon, for example. But this, though at first it seems straight forward, would create an incredibly complex system. Everything you bought would need both a cash price and a carbon price. If, for example, you stopped beside the road to buy a punnet of strawberries, you would need to pay, say, £1 for it, plus 0.01588 per cent of your carbon entitlement—assuming that someone had worked out that the growing, transport and packaging of the strawberries had caused 127 grams of carbon to be released. It's not going to work."

"A much simpler system was devised by Mayar Hillman and refined by another independent thinker, a man called David Fleming. Both companies and people would need to use their carbon accounts when buying just two commodities: fuel and electricity. If, for example, the fuel and electricity that people consumed directly added up to 40 per cent of a country's carbon emissions, then the citizens of that country would be given 40 per cent of its carbon budget. Everyone would get the same amount, and no one would have to pay. We would need to use our carbon allowance [ration card] only when paying our electricity or gas bills or filling up our cars. (Fleming's scheme could be extended a little to cover aeroplane and train journeys as well.)"

The remaining 60 per cent of the country's carbon budget would belong to the government. It keeps some for itself and auctions the rest either directly to companies wanting to buy fuel or electricity, or to carbon brokers who would then sell their entitlements to other corporations or to people who cannot stay within their budgets. The price, like that of any other commodity, would depend on the competition for the resource, which in turn would depend on its scarcity. So by the time you stop to buy your punnet of strawberries, the carbon required to produce it would already have been incorporated into its price, and you need to pay only in pounds. The more carbon-intensive a product is, the more expensive it will be...

Continued on p. 9

Continued from p. 8 (Global Warming)

"The market created by carbon rationing will automatically stimulate demand for low-carbon technologies, such as public transport and renewable energy..."

"It's not quite as simple as this, however... In the United Kingdom, for example, 30 per cent of the very poor...use more energy than the national average... The poor might also be living in places which are badly served by public transport: they need taxis or old bangers in order to get to work or to the shops. ...[H]elp is needed—a better public transport system, for example—if the poorest people are not to be faced with a choice between food and energy." "A carbon rationing scheme, in other words, cannot be just unless it is accompanied by a massively accelerated programme to improve the condition of the poorest people..."

The market created by carbon rationing will automatically stimulate demand for low-carbon technologies, such as public transport and renewable energy...

Monbiot has brilliantly proposed a just and equitable scheme for countries to reduce their carbon emissions by the 90% by 2030 that is needed to make run-away global warming less likely. The rationing scheme will drive the whole system at any speed set. Canadians need to start calculating what our individual carbon rations should be by 2030, and begin working our way towards it. There is no need to wait for other countries to come on side—those countries who procrastinate will only have a more difficult time later when moral, political and perhaps even economic pressures bring them in line. Let's make Canada the leader it once was, instead of the hypocritical laggard it has become under successive Liberal and Conservative governments.

—PEKS

Spell Chequer

Eye halve a spelling chequer
It came with my pea sea
It plainly marquees four my revue
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea

Eye strike a key and type a word
And weight four it two say
Weather eye am wrong oar write
It shows me straight a weigh

As soon as a mist ache is maid
It nose bee fore two long
And eye can put the error rite
Its rare lea ever wrong

Eye have run this poem threw it
I am shore your pleased two no
Its letter perfect awl the weigh
My chequer tolled me sew.

Continued from p. 5 (Spiritual Re-awakening)

I believe what we need is a spiritual re-awakening. At its roots, Greenpeace was a spiritual movement. Supporters believed that nature was sacred. If we fail to ascribe worth to nature—to worship nature—I don't think we can make the changes fast enough.

You've heard the expression: Whatever will be will be? It should be: Whatever we *do* will be. Whatever we create will be. History is not on autopilot. History is the result of what people choose to do. When you stand up against injustice of ecological insanity you give courage to others. A simple act of courage can start a movement and change the world.

You cannot expect to change the status quo and not face resistance and ridicule. Ridicule is the weapon that the powerful use to bully the weak. Do not be intimidated by the consequences of having a conscience. This is the example set by Jesus, by Gandhi, or by Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma.

But here today, each one of us possesses this same power: the power of common decency, the power of compassion, and the power of an ordinary citizen to make the world right. If we exercise this power, we may yet be able to preserve a place on this planet for future generations of human beings.

Barbara Taylor is a member of the Unitarian Church of Vancouver, a long-time member of CUSJ, and former secretary and member of CUSJ's Board of Directors.

How We Act
By Jeremy Smith

"The world won't be destroyed by a nuclear bomb or saved by a solar panel. It will be because of how we choose to act as human beings.

"Climate change is perceived as the greatest threat there is. It's also given us the greatest opportunity we've ever had. An opportunity for a new way of being—built not only on the distances allowed by cheap oil, but on the proximity that its soaring economic and ecological price will increasingly demand, and on the real values that 'living closer' produces.

"Respect for and understanding of our environment; concern for our communities' wellbeing; technologies in the service of humanity and nature, not the other way round; an expectation of less manufactured choice, but more real variety and local distinctiveness; and a knowledge that these are all connected.

"Nature doesn't forget about its past, its fallen leaves and dead wood. It uses them to renew itself, to provide food and shelter about the beauty of the new flowers, but we have the old leaves to thank."

Jeremy Smith is Editor of the Ecologist.

Citizens Go Solar in Toronto

By Tyler Hamilton

There's a community movement emerging in Toronto, one that's poised to spread across the country as more citizens take control of their own electricity needs and do their part to tackle urban smog.

In the Riverdale, Leslieville, and Beaches communities, about 75 homeowners have banded together to make a bulk purchase of rooftop solar photovoltaic panels that will meet a portion of each home's power demands. Solera Sustainable Energies Co. won the contract with installation beginning in June, 2006.

Cooperative Ownership of Solar Power Systems Is Proving to be More Cost Effective

Across the city, in an area encompassing Parkdale, High Park, the Annex, and Seaton Village, a group of more than 150 homeowners has been similarly inspired, and will soon invite interested solar companies to bid for their business. This grassroots project has caught the attention of the Harbord Village Residents Association, which is now considering its own bulk-purchase initiative.

"What we're hoping to do is replicate this in communities right across the country," says Jed Goldberg, president of environmental group Earth Day Canada and organizer of the west Toronto initiative. "We're getting two or three hundred up and going in Toronto, so why can't we get thousands of installations across the country?"

The idea stretches back to 1999 when the late Tooker Gomberg, a Greenpeace activist who ran for mayor against Mel Lastman in 2000, spearheaded a project called SolarPioneers that aimed to bring together a critical mass of homeowners from the greater Toronto area to purchase solar panels. It was modelled after a similar project in the Netherlands.

Gomberg, who managed to cobble together 37 people for the project, also wanted then-finance minister Paul Martin to support the idea of a "100,000 Solar Roofs" program in Canada. The Liberals didn't bite. But seven years later, Gomberg's dream remains alive. Ron McKay, a local curator who worked with Gomberg as a Greenpeace volunteer and was one of his 37 pioneers, decided last year to mobilize his own

community around solar. He created RISE, or the Riverdale Initiative for Solar Energy, and held a public meeting in March that attracted more than 170 interested local residents.

"At a time when we are so desperate for power in Ontario, at the height of the summer when the sun is beating down and air conditioners are going nuts, that's when solar photovoltaic is most efficient," says Goldberg.

The affordability of solar photovoltaic is also improving, albeit not as fast as some would like. It's estimated that the cost of solar panels falls 20 per cent every time production volume doubles. Tom Astle, an analyst with National Bank Financial in Toronto, wrote in a recent report that if the market continues to grow at more than 20 per cent a year the cost of the technology could drop below \$1 per watt within the next 20 years, making it cost-competitive with conventional power generation.

Even today, there is a payback if purchasers have a lot of patience and can handle the upfront payment—anywhere from \$13,000 for a 1-kilowatt system providing 20 per cent of a home's electricity needs over a year, to more than \$30,000 for a larger 3-kilowatt system.

Leonard Allen, president and founder of Solera, says homeowners tend to feel more comfortable making purchases as part of a larger group where

options are thoroughly researched and bulk buying can lower price and risk.

Allen says homeowners must understand that it could take 20 years for a payback. After that, the system will provide free, clean power for another 15 or so years. This takes into account the Ontario government's new standard offer program, which promises to pay 42 cents for every kilowatt hour of solar electricity sold into the grid.

So what's the next step? McKay has set up a Web site at <http://www.ourpower.ca> and

plans to use it as a forum for sharing information and experiences and offering advice to other communities that want to follow the same path.

"We envision this Web site as a community database where people can go and look at information about renewable power and download templates," says McKay.



*Abridged from Clean Break, June 5, 2006.
Tyler Hamilton reports on energy technologies,
and can be reached at thamilt@thestar.ca*

RAWA—Hope for Afghanistan?

By Sharon Flatt

The CUSJ in New Brunswick is a member of two coalitions for peace in Fredericton and Saint John: People for Peace, and the Fredericton Peace Coalition. Last month, the Fredericton Peace Coalition, and this month, People for Peace, held fundraisers for a women's organization in Afghanistan called the **Revolutionary Association of Women in Afghanistan or RAWA**. RAWA is the oldest political/social organization of Afghan women struggling for peace, freedom, democracy and women's rights in fundamentalism-blighted Afghanistan since 1977. Formed originally to deal with the inequities between city and country women in Afghanistan, they went into "emergency" mode during the Russian invasion of their country and haven't had a rest since.

'Intellectual' Afghani Women Are the Backbone of RAWA, Working in Education, Medicine, Culture, Welfare of Women and Children and Public Relations

The Fredericton Peace Coalition organized two events for RAWA: a "variety" show with performers and speakers, and a showing of the RAWA produced film, *View from a Grain of Sand*. The Saint John People for Peace also showed the film. If you haven't had a chance to view this film yourself, I would suggest that you do. It certainly changed my opinion of what is going on over there. It is a good example of the old adage that nothing is truly black and white but shades of grey. From the point of view of these women, neither full troop withdrawal nor fighting a war with the Taliban is the way we should go. Working with the United Nations to protect the citizens from the fundamentalists while working to solve the money/military game that the west is playing with their world would be more on the mark....perhaps. These are certainly complicated times.

I would like to invite you to visit RAWA's website at RAWA.org. It is a fascinating and troubling compilation of real life desperation, anger and empowerment. The RAWA women do not mince words. Indeed, from this New Brunswick woman's point of view, the troubles faced by my peers in Afghanistan

seem surreal and otherworldly. It is hard to view the pictures and harder to read about their pain. This is real stuff, not media savvy or spun for the west. Here is an example of what you might find on the website. Below the link "Afghan Women Commit Suicide by Fire" I found an untitled link to an article telling me "Post-Taliban Kabul Blossoms for the rich" followed by "They'd rather die: brief lives of the Afghan slave wives."

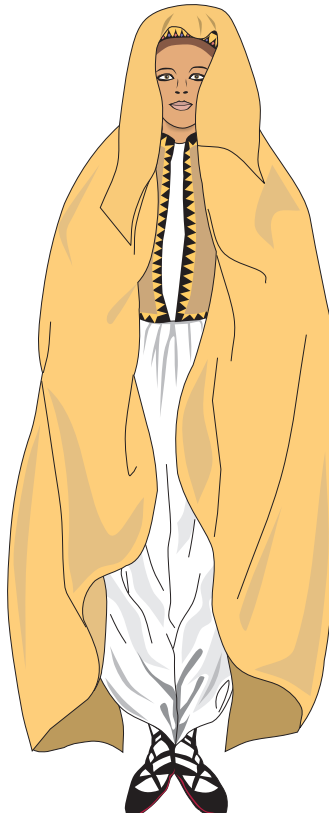
So, who are these women? Well, they describe themselves as Afghan women intellectuals. The film introduces us to women teachers, doctors, social workers, mothers and grandmothers. What exactly do they do? This is the insane part! You thought you were busy? These women work in Pakistan and Afghanistan with Afghan women, children and families. They try to solicit help from aid organizations but they are not very successful. They run 15 schools for refugee children and many literacy courses for women. They run nine orphanages. They run mobile health teams in refugee camps as well as a hospital and a clinic in two refugee camps. They act as a media-relations depot for the real Afghanistan, writing and reporting to the world the horrible situations they must deal with. They produce music, theatre and periodicals to nurture what is left of their culture and educate people as to what has happened to Afghanistan. They organize social action, protest and political activities. They work in circles with local women to help them understand the nature of their suffering, fundamentalism and RAWA itself. They help

women who have been imprisoned or tortured. They work to find shelter and housing for Afghan families. They run farms and local factories. This work is done in peril most of the time inside Afghanistan. In their own words, "...our activities inside Afghanistan are underground and restricted due to the prejudiced and brutal behaviour of the fundamentalists... Our work under the fundamentalists is difficult and dangerous."

What can we possibly do? Well, the CUSJ board voted to donate money to RAWA and I was asked to write this article. The local CUSJ in New Brunswick teamed up to raise over \$700 for RAWA. Showing the film as a fundraiser is an excellent way of raising consciousness as well. Whatever we choose to do, doing nothing would be typical of our Western culture, but not typical of UU's and CUSJ'ers! I trust that we can and will do so much more for RAWA.

Thanks for all that you do!

Sharon Flatt is a Board Member of CUSJ living in Fredericton, New Brunswick



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The CUSJ purposes are:

- to develop and maintain a vibrant network of Unitarian social action in Canada and elsewhere and to proactively represent Unitarian principles and values in matters of social justice, and in particular
- to provide opportunities, including through publication of newsletters, for Unitarians and friends to apply their religious, humanistic and spiritual values to social action aimed at the relief of (1) poverty and economic injustice, (2) discrimination based on religious, racial or other grounds, (3) abuses of human rights whether of individuals or peoples, (4) abuses of democratic process, and
- to promote peace and security, environmental protection, education, and literacy in keeping with the spirit of Unitarian values.

These purposes are an integral part of the Constitution of CUSJ, adopted at the CUSJ Annual Meeting in Mississauga, ON, May 19, 1999, and amended at the 2003 AGM.

I agree with the above Statement of Purpose, and wish to:

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