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Canadian Politics and Public Policy

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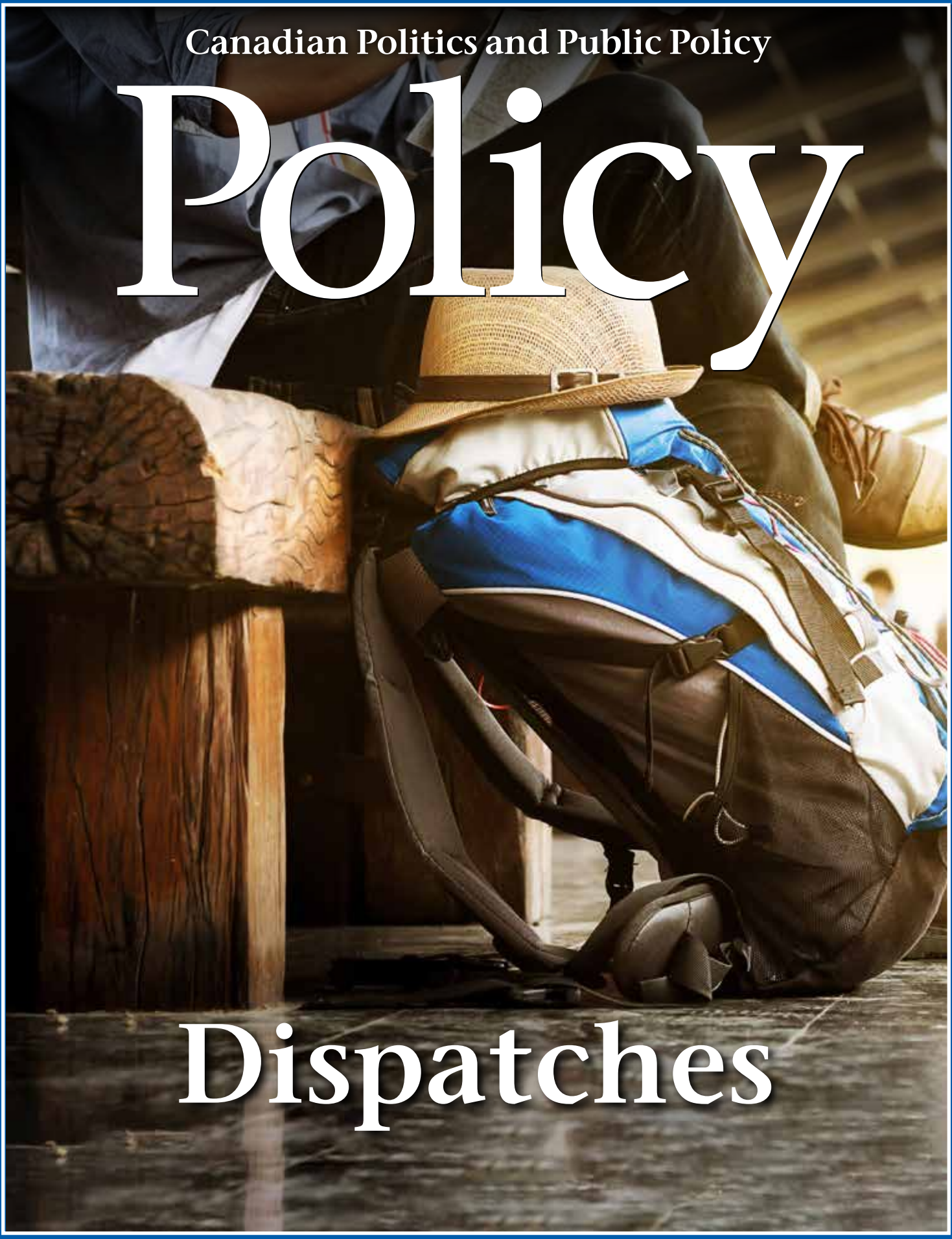

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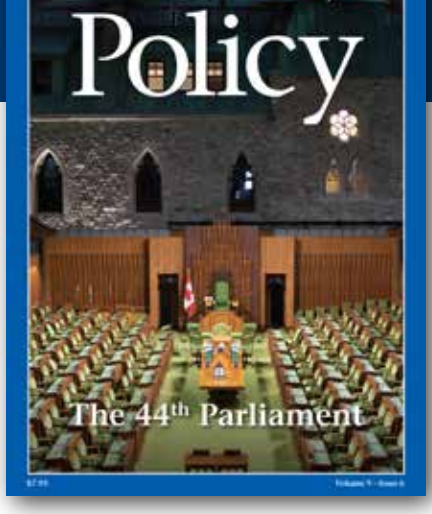

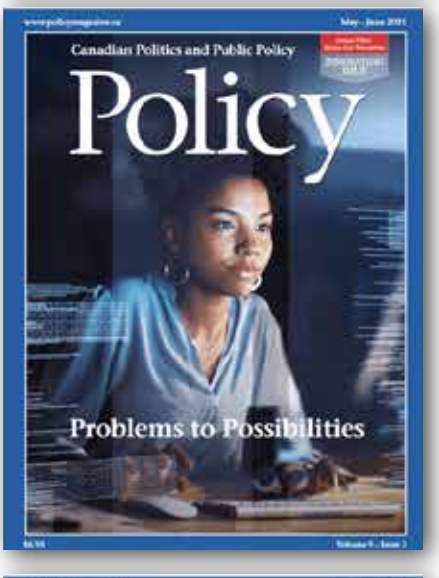

Canadian Politics and Public Policy

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Canadian Politics and Public Policy

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From the Editor / Lisa Van Dusen

Dispatches: Seeing the World

Policy Editor L. Ian MacDonald has graciously vacated the editor's chair for this special issue of *Policy Dispatches*.

We're extraordinarily fortunate to work with a community of outstanding contributors — politicians and former politicians, diplomats and former diplomats, journalists and former journalists, academics and retired academics, defence and security specialists, and people on the front lines of all the major policy and political issues of our time, from CEOs to social workers — who generously provide their insight, experience and knowledge for *Policy* readers.

Last November, we launched *Policy Dispatches*, which combine political and travel writing in a way that reflects the way *Policy* contributors and readers see the world, literally and figuratively — combining work, history, personal observations, political background, local colour and human connection. The response so far has been fantastic, and you can see all the pieces filed over the past seven months at policymagazine.ca/policy-dispatches/.

First in this special *Dispatches* issue, from United Nations Ambassador Bob Rae, *'Tell Them We're Human': With the Rohingya in Myanmar and Bangladesh*, a riveting account of Rae's experience as special envoy on Myanmar, and his encounters with both former human rights icon Aung San Suu Kyi and the Rohingya refugees of Cox's Bazar.

From the indomitable Kathy Gannon, the former Associated Press Afghanistan and Pakistan news director whom I first met while editing her work from the AP head office in New York, the gripping account of a life reporting from Kabul, from the end of the Soviet occupation to the Taliban's return in 2021.

From Canada's Viceregal Consort Whit Fraser, we have a must-read dispatch on climate change and Governor-General Mary Simon's visit to the Arctic with German President Frank Walter Steinmeier in April. It's also a love letter to Tuktoyaktuk, or "Tuk" as the locals call it.

For three days in May, Canada's Parliamentary Black Caucus held its first, historic bilateral meetings with the Congressional Black Caucus. From PBC Chair Senator Rosemary Moodie and her director of parliamentary affairs, Josh Dadjo, *Making Black History in Washington: Founding the Overground Railroad*.

Historica Canada President Anthony Wilson-Smith has the dream job of overseeing the iconic Heritage Minutes. Filed from the thriving Ogema, Saskatchewan — location for the upcoming Minute on Mary Bonnie Baker, the feisty baseball player portrayed by Geena Davis in *A League of Their Own — A Small Saskatchewan Town's Heritage Minute Close-Up* will have you wishing you were there.

Dispatches include pieces about life-changing journeys from the past, and only the intrepid Robin Sears could have filed *China In-Between: Ensconced in the Diaoyutai and Meeting an 'Immortal'*, about travelling to Beijing with former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in 1993.

From former US diplomat Sarah Goldfeder, the lyrical *Travel as Life: Cultivating Roots and Wings*, about going from life as an army brat to an equally peripatetic adulthood as a diplomat.

Policy senior foreign affairs writer Jeremy Kinsman has been holed up in the charming English market town of Marlborough, from whence he filed *Bucolic and a Little Less Barmy: Seeking Respite in Post-Brexit Wiltshire*.

Our *Policy* Online *Emerging Voices* section has been a great talent scouting space, including Max Bell School's Aftab Ahmed, with a dispatch from his home town of Dhaka, *Revisiting Bangladesh: The Political and Economic Transformations of Competitive Authoritarianism*.

Longtime *Maclean's* royal reporter and Write Royalty blogger Patricia Treble filed on London's wild weekend in May with *Pomp, Pubs and a Staggering Amount of Champagne: Covering the Coronation*.

Massey College Public Policy Chair Tom Axworthy's *War, Peace and a Canadian Knight: With the InterAction Council on Malt*a, captures the mood of Europe in wartime.

In our Canada and the World section, Senator Peter Boehm provides a status report — between the Hiroshima G7 and the Delhi G20: *Whither the Gs? Summitry in a Time of Disruption*.

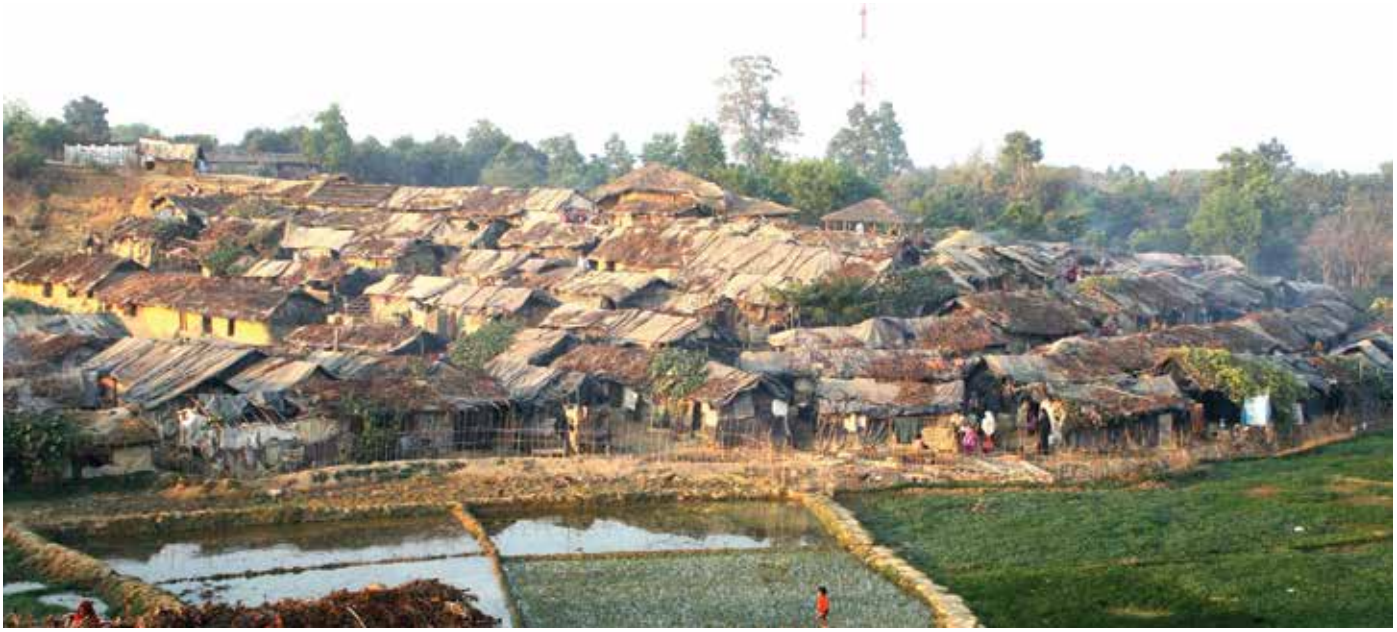
In his regular column, Don Newman has embraced the spirit of *Dispatches* with *Stockholm Syndrome: An Epiphany About Canada at a Faraway Dinner*.

In The Great Book Review Reunion, Bob Rae reviews Michael Ignatieff's updated Isaiah Berlin biography, *A Life*, and Michael Ignatieff reviews Bob Rae's 2020 Symons lecture in book form, *Learning from the Past, Imagining the Future: Reflections on a Life in Politics*.

And, finally, from sustainable power couple Elizabeth May and John Kidder, the double book review of Chris Turner's *How to be a Climate Optimist and John Vaillant's Fire Weather: A True Story from a Hotter World*.

Enjoy the issue!

Policy Magazine Associate Editor and Deputy Publisher Lisa Van Dusen was a senior writer at Maclean's, Washington columnist for the Ottawa Citizen and Sun Media, international writer for Peter Jennings at ABC News and an editor at AP National in New York and UPI in Washington.



Kutupalong refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, where almost one million Rohingya from Myanmar have sought shelter and workers in the camp are 'doing their best to create some order out of chaos,' writes Bob Rae. —*Maaz Hussain/VOA*

'Tell Them We're Human': With the Rohingya in Myanmar and Bangladesh

Bob Rae

My interest in Myanmar began about 20 years ago, when I was doing mediation work in Sri Lanka on behalf of the Forum of Federations. I was contacted by activists in the Burmese community about events in their country. Paul Copeland, a Toronto lawyer I knew well, kept me up to date through his own work, and I met with scholars and activists who opened my eyes to the way in which the Burmese population had lived with a civil war, and a brutal dictatorship, for decades. Aung San Suu Kyi, whose father had been the founder of the Burmese army that fought for independence from the British, had been living under house arrest for a total of 15 years over two decades, and had become a global symbol of the struggle of her people for freedom. She won the Nobel Peace Prize and was granted honorary Canadian citizenship.

Sri Lanka's story is about the conflict between its majority Buddhist Sinhalese community and its minority Tamils, who are mostly but not all Hindu, and smaller Muslim and Christian communities on the other. The majority in the country feels deeply its minority status in the wider region, and the expression of that is a Buddhist nationalism which runs deeply through the majority population. This has its parallels in Myanmar, where the military plays an additional critical role as "founder of the country" and "guardian of national unity".

I followed events in Myanmar and Sri Lanka closely as foreign affairs critic in parliament between 2008 and 2013, and resumed my role as Fellow of the Forum of Federations after that. After years of struggle and continual fighting, the military dictatorship in Myanmar showed signs of seeking a compromise with Aung San Suu Kyi, who was far and away the most popular political figure in the country. The Forum held a board meeting in Yangon in the spring of 2015, and invited me to attend. My wife Arlene and I decided to combine that meeting with a longer stay and tour in the country. As with Sri Lanka, we found our travel experiences deeply enriched our feelings for the people and the beauty of the country, and left us even more deeply affected by the terrible violence that has divided and decimated its people.

I did not meet Aung San Suu Kyi, who by then was political leader of the op-

Meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi. —*Courtesy Bob Rae*

position, on this first visit to the country, but Arlene and I did have a chance to travel to some amazing sites — notably the temples of Bhagan and Inle Lake, as well as the major temples in Yangon. We left hoping to return to a country at peace, but that was not to be. A couple of weeks after a conversation with the Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on the way to and from Allan MacEachen's funeral in September of 2017, I got a call from Ottawa asking me if I would serve as Special Envoy on the growing Rohingya refugee crisis in Myanmar and Bangladesh, and head as quickly as possible to both Myanmar and the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. After briefings in Ottawa, I was on my way, and was one of the first outside visitors to the camp in late October, 2017. I was accompanied by a young foreign service officer, officials from our Mission in Dhaka, and a reporter from CTV News, Daniele Hamamdjian (who, sadly, has just seen her bureau in London close).

What we saw was truly heartbreaking. The Kutupalong refugee camp was an instant city created in hilly, partly wooded terrain, with tents and shacks spread as far as the eye could see. Between that July and September, the month before our arrival, the camp's population had swollen from 34,000 to 77,000 because of ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya across the border in Rakhine state led by the Myanmar army (today the population is nearly one million). Workers in the camp were doing their best to create some order out of chaos, using skills and talents drawn from too many collective experiences of building instant shelters, organizing the distribution of food and responding to multiple medical crises. I visited the camp over three days, trying to get a handle on the extent of the catastrophe. Children showed me drawings of helicopters shooting and burning villages. Women shared horrifying accounts of systematic, sexual violence. Elders sat me down to describe the difficult lives their families had led in Rakhine State, and how there had been a steady erosion of their rights and freedoms over many years. This was not the first expulsion, and they feared returning. Their hope was for a resolution of their situation, and a recognition of their rights to citizenship and political participation in Myanmar. It was during these meetings that I first heard the word "genocide" to describe their fate at the hands of the Tatmadaw — the Myanmar military — and when I asked a spokesman for the group what message I should deliver to Canadians, he leaned in to say, "Tell them we're human". These words became the title of my report on the crisis in early 2018.

After meetings with the prime minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, and her officials, I made my way to Yangon and Naypyidaw, the newly built capital city of Myanmar. Naypyidaw is not on most tourists' wish list. It is a truly bizarre place, with vast government buildings scattered over a huge expanse, joined by six-lane highways that were almost entirely empty of traffic. My meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi, who was then state councillor, or prime minister, was difficult, because, now in power, she could not admit that the Tatmadaw could be blamed for what had happened in Rakhine. She insisted that radical groups among the Rohingya, notably the insurgent group the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, or ARSA — designated a terrorist group by Myanmar — were really responsible for the atrocities (reports of ARSA atrocities have been confirmed, but the vast majority of casualties, based on all the available evidence, were committed by the Myanmar army and local civilians). The purpose of my meeting was to tell her what I saw at Cox's Bazar, and that the terrible conditions in the camp needed to be improved. She replied that if that happened there was a risk it would serve as a "pull factor" for more refugees. I told her I genuinely doubted that, pointing out that "It's not a Holiday Inn". The purpose of that initial conversation was to hear her views and prepare for a direct meeting between her and Prime Minister Trudeau at the upcoming Asia summit in Danang, Vietnam.

I arrived just in time to brief the prime minister and his team, and then attend his meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi. As could be expected, it was a difficult encounter, with little eye contact between them as they each laid out their positions. When it ended, Trudeau asked me to say what I saw in Cox's Bazar, which I did, and I asked Aung San Suu Kyi if I could visit again to go to Rakhine State. She said, looking at me directly, "Come back to Naypyidaw and we can discuss". I immediately accepted her invitation for my next visit.

Early in 2018, I was back in the region, where I was able to meet with officials in Indonesia and Bangladesh as well as with Aung San Suu Kyi and two of the three Tatmadaw military members of the government. The meetings were all formal affairs, with many witnesses to the conversations. I realized that this was intended to ensure that there was no opportunity for private conversation or a candid aside. There were formal presentations intended to reinforce the message: according to her, the Rohingya have never been a "real" part of the country, poorly educated with large families, their Muslim faith was becom-

ing more "radical and dangerous". She insisted that Myanmar was in the front lines fighting terrorism.

The only concession was that I could go to Sittwe in Rakhine State, to see for myself "how beautiful and peaceful it was." What I found was indeed beautiful in parts but far from peaceful. After an overnight in the UN compound, I was taken on a tour of the old city, where the small Muslim community lived in lockdown conditions after an anti-Rohingya riot had forced them into a ghetto. The mosque was shut and overgrown by foliage. I was then spirited into a vast camp where over 100,000 internally displaced Rohingya had been herded. Just a few weeks before, the camp had been devastated by a cyclone, and relief supplies were still being blocked by the Tatmadaw. We still didn't know the extent of the devastation.

At a hastily arranged meeting, one of the young Rohingya men began talking in American slang. I asked him where he had learned his English. He showed me his cell phone, and told me he loved American Westerns. He watched them over and over. He wanted more education and a chance to work. He would find neither under the rules imposed by the Myanmar government. The next day, I was flown in a Russian helicopter to northern Rakhine. It was February 9, 2018. I remember the date because my twin granddaughters were born the same day in Toronto. We flew up near the coast, which was indeed beautiful, but then crossed over former Rohingya villages that had clearly been burned and bulldozed. No one objected when I took pictures of these villages. If the trip was intended to show me that all was well in Rakhine State that was hardly my conclusion.

My report, "Tell Them We're Human", was published in April of 2018. (It can still be found on the Global Affairs Canada website). It recommended that Canada work with other countries to ensure the safety and well-being of the refugees in Bangladesh, as well as continue engagement with the Myanmar government to resolve the country's bitter internal conflicts. The government agreed with most of my recommendations, and has now renewed its commitments to humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding assistance for another three years.

Destruction of Rohingya villages in Rakhine State. —*Courtesy Bob Rae*

My last encounter with Aung San Suu Kyi took place in The Hague in December of 2019, where in a preliminary hearing on the claim filed against her country under the Genocide Convention by The Gambia, she offered a fulsome and unapologetic defence of the conduct of the Myanmar army. It was a sad moment. Before leaving the court to meet the media, our eyes locked briefly. She looked away and walked out.

The conflict in the region has now become far more intense. Aung San Suu Kyi has been convicted on trumped-up charges of corruption, the Tatmadaw has seized power, cracked down on human rights and freedoms, producing a civil war. I have often been asked why the woman who was once a global human rights icon changed from being a spokesman for liberty and democracy to supporting the military's campaign against the Rohingya. My sense is that she was always the faithful daughter of her father, whom she saw as the modern founder of both the army and the country. Not for the first time, many in the West had projected on to her values and beliefs that were more about us than her. She was the leader of her party and movement, but did not actually "run" the government. It was controlled by the military's brutal force she thought she could charm and tame. She discovered that it's tough to defang a tiger tooth by tooth.

Defeated twice in elections, the army had had enough, and just as they turned on Aung San, they turned on his daughter Aung San Suu Kyi. And, as is their longstanding habit, they then turned on their own people, with thousands of casualties and millions living in hunger and poverty. Recurring cyclones and natural disasters have made life in Myanmar even more painfully difficult for everyone.

As Canada's ambassador to the United Nations, I now chair a group called The Friends of Myanmar. We do our best to keep pushing for more engagement from governments and the UN itself, to end the civil war, bring the military to justice, and allow the Rohingya to live freely in their country, Myanmar. Zoom calls with refugees, relief workers, and visits from democratic leaders give us the oxygen required to keep pushing the rock of freedom up the steep slope. P

Bob Rae is Canada's Ambassador to the United Nations.

Kathy Gannon at work in the fall of 2001, when the heavy, anti-Taliban coalition bombing of Kabul drove her into the basement of the Associated Press house in the Wazir Akbar Khan neighborhood of Kabul. —*Dimitri Messinis, AP*

Kabul, Capital of Afghanistan's Tragic Symmetry

Kathy Gannon

My relationship with Kabul evolved over more than three decades when Afghanistan was my regular work commute from my home, first in Peshawar and then in Islamabad, nearly 500 kilometres to the east. As correspondent and then news director for the Associated Press in Pakistan and Afghanistan, I watched Kabul change, grow and accommodate the cultural, political and social pendulum swings from regime to regime as its people adapted to a succession of new realities, often imposed from outside, with little to no understanding of Afghans or Afghanistan.

The Kabul of 2021 following the Taliban's return had a surreal feel about it. I had been in Kabul often when the Taliban last ruled Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001. And in August, 2021, as I sat in a government office once again occupied by Taliban officials — most of them wearing the traditional turban and all wearing the bushy beard — I was struck by the tragic symmetry of Afghanistan's history, one closely linked to mine.

The Kabul of 2021 bore only a passing resemblance to the sleepy city the Taliban had fled two decades earlier. Back then, barely a few hundred thousand people lived in the Afghan capital and the traffic was mostly bicycles and beat-up, old yellow taxis. Vast swaths of the city were in ruins, destroyed by warring mujahedeen groups, who had turned their guns on each other after taking power from the Moscow-backed communist government in 1992. They were ousted by the Taliban in 1996.

Back then, there were no traffic lights. Deh Mazang circle was in shambles, its buildings reduced to piles of rubble; the grand Darul Aman Palace was pockmarked by mujahedeen rocket holes, its magnificent dome ravaged and ruined, and the Kabul Zoo was a series of tumble-down enclosures, most of the animals shot and killed by warring mujahedeen groups. There were no high-rise buildings to speak of and most of the government office buildings, with the exception of the brick foreign ministry building, were badly damaged and only a few of the government offices had unbroken windows.

Kabul's western Afshar neighborhood was a graveyard. Fighters loyal to mujahedeen leader Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, had killed hundreds of Hazaras there.

History tells us it was Sayyaf who had arranged for Osama bin Laden to be brought to Afghanistan from Sudan in May 1996. True to Afghanistan's tragic symmetry, Sayyaf would be among the mujahedeen-cum-warlords embraced by the US-led coalition in 2001.

By August 2021, much had transpired in the two decades following the coalition takeover. I wondered at what the Taliban might be thinking that day. Many seemed to be just hanging about, taking in the surroundings. Had they always imagined themselves back in the Afghan capital or had they seen their war to reclaim it as a never-ending one? As I scanned the faces of those Taliban who wandered the ministry buildings, many looked like they were barely out of their teens. I realized most were probably too young to remember the first time the Taliban ruled.

Back then, the Taliban had thrown out the mujahedeen, or freedom fighters, as US. President Ronald Reagan had anointed them during their 1980s American-backed battle against the invading Soviet Union. When the Soviets withdrew in 1989, many thought we were witnessing the last battle of a dying Cold War — after all, within just months the Berlin Wall came crashing down. Yet, as I write this, a new Cold War is brewing and I can't help but think that, like Afghanistan, our world, too, has its own tragic symmetry.

This latest chapter of Afghanistan's fraught history really does begin in 1992, when the mujahedeen took power from the Moscow-backed government of President Najibullah. A collection of eight mujahedeen groups made up Afghanistan's new government. Each group took a different ministry, but they soon turned their guns on each other in brutal battles for more power. Kabul was reduced to a series of frontlines manned by fighters belonging to the various mujahedeen groups. Moving among the many frontlines was a treacherous gambit and one I made often with my AP colleague Amir Shah, who would weave his old Toyota Corolla at breakneck speeds from one neighborhood to another.

Kathy Gannon with AP colleague Riaz Khan arguing with the chief of Taliban security over her Taliban permission to cover the US coalition invasion. —*AP*

In their four years in power, which came to an end when the Taliban drove them out, the fractured regime leaders had regressed from mujahedeen to warlords. In their wake, they left Kabul in ruins, with as many as 50,000 civilians dead and a war-battered country further ravaged by their runaway corruption.

In a testament to Afghanistan's tragic symmetry, they were returned to power five years later, in 2001, with the help of the US.-led coalition that drove the Taliban from Kabul.

This time, they would rule for 20 years. But as if fate, too, was hostage to the same symmetry, their unbridled corruption, revenge killings and relentless feuding would once again contribute to their fall from power and to the Taliban's return.

As my own fate, and career choices, would have it, I've accompanied Afghanistan on its tragic journey. Like so many Afghans, I too suffered from the violence that has haunted this extraordinary country of amazing people. In 2014, a day before the national elections, an Afghan police commander unloaded his AK 47 into me and my colleague and close friend AP Photographer Anja Niedringhaus. We were in Khost, in eastern Afghanistan. I was hit with seven bullets and Anja as many. Two were fatal and Anja died immediately. I survived, with life-changing injuries.

For me the kind, reassuring words of the Afghan doctor who saved my life at the small hospital in Khost reflects the soul of the Afghan nation. As he wheeled me into the operating room he whispered: "Please know your life is as important to me as it is to you."

As a journalist, when the Soviet Red Army ended its 10-year invasion on Feb. 15, 1989, I was in Afghanistan having walked through rugged mountain passes to reach the outskirts of Kabul. When the Taliban rumbled into Kabul that morning of Sept. 27, 1996, ending the brutal mujahedeen war, I was there. I recall interviewing Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, who was spokesman for mujahedeen leader Ahmed Shah Masood (later killed, two days before 9/11, in a local Al Qaeda suicide bombing), just hours before they fled Kabul. He vowed they would fight the Taliban until their "last drop of blood." It should be noted President Ashraf Ghani made a similar vow just days before fleeing Kabul in August 2021.

When the US.-led coalition marched into Kabul on Nov. 13, 2001, I had arrived in the Afghan capital three

weeks earlier, the only western journalist to return to Taliban-controlled Afghanistan during the coalition's assault on the country.

Twenty years later, on Aug. 31, 2021, when the last US aircraft took off from Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport, ending America's longest war, I was again in Kabul. I was awakened that night by celebratory gunfire of the victorious Taliban, who had returned to the city two weeks earlier.

The Kabul of 2021 was light years ahead of the city the Taliban fled two decades earlier. For the thousands of younger Taliban, Kabul mesmerized them. Some of the younger ones, many of whom came from Afghanistan's rugged countryside, likened Kabul to a dream. Looming glass high-rise office buildings flanked the wide paved roads. There were shopping malls and neon-lit stores, multi-storied apartment buildings and wedding halls, with a bling and glamour to rival Las Vegas. One even had a brightly lit Eiffel Tower as decoration. The traffic was a snarl of flashy new four-wheel drive vehicles and late-model cars. Inside the government ministries, the furniture was plush. Some of the young Taliban interviewed quietly, away from their commanders, dreamed of staying in the capital, hoping they would not be returned to the countryside.

Kathy Gannon (L) and Anja Niedringhaus with Pakistani soldiers, circa 2011. —*AP*

It's now nearly two years since the Taliban arrived in Kabul. They are leaving their mark. There is security in Afghanistan that wasn't there before and travel to most places in the country is possible, in some areas for the first time in two decades. But the worst of their imprint has been the relentlessness with which the leadership has sought to restrict women to their homes, denying them education and the right to work.

And with each new edict, another dream dies.

Kathy Gannon greeting President Hamid Karzai at an Eid event. —*AP*

I was in Kabul again in March 2022 when girls' schools were to re-open. The Taliban's education ministry had spent weeks preparing. Teachers were sent back to the classroom. To avoid confrontation with the unwilling in Afghanistan's most rural and conservative regions, the ministry left it to the local elders to decide whether a girls' school would re-open in their area. The Taliban leader's eleventh-hour decision to renege on that promise to let girls return to school was met with outrage by the international community, but it was also met with surprise and disappointment by the Taliban's own education ministry. The Taliban were not the monolith of global perception. In Taliban offices and among the rank-and-file, there was no evident support for the education ban. They scrambled to find excuses, promised the future would see girls in schools.

I think some of them even believed it.

Said one official caught off-guard and visibly disappointed at the decision: "It won't be forever."

Sadly, for Afghanistan's girls and women, it certainly feels that way. P

Kathy Gannon was a Fall '22 Joan Shorenstein Fellow at the Shorenstein Center at Harvard's Kennedy School. She served as news director for Pakistan and Afghanistan for The Associated Press for 30 years, until May, 2022.

Governor-General Mary Simon, Whit Fraser, German President Frank Walter Steinmeier and First Lady Elke Büdenbender with local leaders.
—MCpl Anis Assari, Rideau Hall © OSGG

This One's for Tuk: With the German President on the Front Line of Climate Change

Whit Fraser

In the Arctic, it's always been the survival of the fittest, the fastest, or the smartest. In this new world, add the most politically astute, media savvy, connected and engaged. Consider the words of welcome to the President of Germany, Frank Walter Steinmeier from the mayor of Tuktoyaktuk — known locally as Tuk — an Inuvialuit community of just under a thousand on a barren gravel strip of disappearing land at the edge of the Beaufort Sea, during our visit in April.

"We want to welcome you, Mr. President," said Mayor Erwin Elias, surrounded by his all-Inuit town council. Then, looking to the side of the crowded community hall, towards two dozen or more German and Canadian journalists and photographers, he added words the media throng rarely hear. "We especially welcome the press," he said, explaining that the world needs to see the daily destruction of climate change, from rising temperatures to melting permafrost to coastal erosion. Then Mayor Elias set out the hard facts: Through windstorm after windstorm, crashing wave after crashing wave, Tuktoyaktuk is disappearing.

The German President's Canadian visit was to develop and solidify Canadian-German partnerships in the changing energy-conscious econo-

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Gov. Gen. Mary Simon with their spouses, Elke Budenbender and Whit Fraser, at a town hall in Tuktoyaktuk, April 26, 2023. —*MCpl Anis Assari, Rideau Hall © OSGG*

my. He brought with him a large delegation of German business leaders who were negotiating major investments in Canada's green economy. Only a year earlier, when my better half, Canadian Governor-General Mary Simon, had visited Germany, President Steinmeier had expressed his lifelong wish to see Canada's Arctic. The Steinmeiers' smiles while standing on the frozen shore of the Beaufort Sea with the huge blue and white "Arctic Ocean" sign over their shoulders left no doubt this was an enormous thrill for both the president and his wife, First Lady Elke Büdenbender.

I would venture that of all the expertly crafted briefings the German President or other world leaders may have heard in recent years about the threat of climate change and the need to transition away from fossil fuels, few would make the point more effectively than Mayor Elias and his community. Using colorful maps and aerial photos projected on the wall and 8x12 handout photos for President Steinmeier, his host the Governor-General and every member of the approximately 50 heavyweights in the German delegation, the young mayor pointed to red lines on a blue background documenting, year over year, metre over metre, the disappearing shoreline. The mayor described the unique geography that comprises much of the Beaufort coast. It is not built on bedrock but rather permafrost. And the reality – what seemed so far-fetched seventy-five years ago, when people began moving here — is that the permafrost is melting rapidly, and as it melts, the surface sinks into the sea and oblivion.

> ***"Tuktoyaktuk is adapting but the sea ice is no longer predictable; currents are changing and so is ice thickness. Travelling across the ice has never been more dangerous."***

There's another reality. For the Inuvialuit, moving or relocating Tuk is not an option. A century and a half of transformation through imposed colonization, or "civilization", has changed people. Inuit or Inuvialuit, as they are known in Canada's western Arctic, are no longer nomads. Their nomadic existence started to disappear in the 1950s, when they began locating here, mostly from an ancient fishing and whaling camp called Kittigazuit, about 16 miles west at the mouth of the Mackenzie River.

The Tuk harbor area was and remains bountiful, with fish, beluga whales, and caribou. In the summer months, the coast is alive with waterfowl. Subsistence hunting remains a vital part of the local economy. In the 1950s, Tuk became a major component of the distant early warning radar system, or DEW line, that Canada and the United States built in locations from Baffin Island to Alaska to warn against a Soviet invasion. There were jobs in construction and maintaining the station, and for airport staff. In time, Tuk earned a character and personality as a community built upon the pillars of pride and perseverance. Today, it's the 138-kilometre, two-lane gravel road connection with Inuvik and southern Canada that cements that character.

In the spirit of its good nature, a few were quick to remind me that Tuk is not the end of the Canadian road system, but rather the beginning. The new Arctic superhighway as some call it, also fulfilled a national Canadian dream since the 1960s; to have the nation connected by highway from sea to sea to sea. The old political dream gives new clout to the determined community. With three oceans finally connected, can we, as Canadians, sit back and watch a village of nearly one thousand people wash away with the melting permafrost?

I wrote before in this magazine that the joy of this new life as the Governor-General's husband and tag-along is discovering how frequently my experience as a reporter finds relevance and connections with my new role. In Tuk, the old and the new are connected again. I never kept track of how many times I was here in the past. Maybe a dozen? Certainly, I have not had the opportunity to drive the new highway, but I'd like to. What I do remember is, more than once, the tremendous thrill of travelling along the old ice road out of Inuvik, down the east channel of the Mackenzie River, swinging right or east as the land began disappearing near Kittigazuit, where suddenly rather than a road over a frozen river, I was

travelling at 90 km an hour over a frozen ocean road — a link that's only good for about three months each year. I remember stopping once, where the wind had swept the snow away, leaving the ice polished smooth and so clear I could see down to the bottom but never knew how deep, 20 feet, 30 or more?

I was certainly in Tuk in the mid-seventies for many days when the community faced another threat, this one from the world's major oil companies, which wanted to build what at that point was the world's biggest and longest pipeline. Dozens of people, young and old, echoed the call that rang across the North during the now historic Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry chaired by Justice Thomas Berger : "Mr. Berger — there will be no pipeline until that land claims are settled." I remember sitting late into the night in an older, even more crowded hall, with dense cigarette smoke, watching and listening to Inuvialuit hunters who knew the winds, waters, and ice of the Beaufort Sea, matching their knowledge against the highly educated oil company engineers. Those hunters and elders, now long deceased, pointed to places on their maps where historically huge ice jams gouged and tore at the shallow Beaufort Seabed and also indicated other places where the icepack was so powerful, it pushed massive icefields miles inland.

The inquiry is now a footnote in history, but Justice Berger did make unprecedented recommendations to protect the ocean environment against blowouts and oil spills and also called for a ten-year moratorium on a pipelines until the land claims were settled. Comforted in part by Berger's recommendations, the community worked with the drilling companies for another decade, drilling and capping offshore oil and gas wells that have yet to be brought into production.

Today, when we were there in April, the mayor pointed to one body of water in the middle of the settlement, dangerously close to a series of small, ever-advancing inlets. "This is our water reservoir," he said, "built

Governor General Mary Simon and Whit Fraser. —*MCpl Anis Assari, Rideau Hall © OSGG*

and given to us by the oil companies." He said if the beaches collapse in any number of locations, seawater will destroy the drinking water. Out in the harbor, an island that served as a natural breakwater is rapidly disappearing. The community has received federal government money

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to try and protect it. Missing is a detailed adaptation plan, which leaves Tuk in a critical situation. From a school bus, Mayor Elias showed the German president and others houses that had already been relocated, and more that looked as though they were almost sitting on the shore ice. Tuktoyaktuk is adapting but the sea ice is no longer predictable; currents are changing and so is ice thickness. Travelling across the ice has never been more dangerous.

The President and Governor General were given a demonstration of how new technology has become part of Arctic hunting gear.

The laptop fastened to the big qamutik (sled) looks remarkably out of place, until the hunter explains sonar sensors display ice thickness, water depth, currents and temperature. The hunter's name was familiar to me: Nooksana, the grandson of Mark Nooksana, one of the wise elders who made such a convincing case all those years ago to protect against unregulated oil development. We all witnessed a magical moment with science and tradition in harmony — Mr. Nooksana's thick, bare fingers seemed oblivious to the minus 15-degree cold and wind as he gently disconnected the laptop, put it in a case, casually picked up his walrus hide dog whip, and to the giddy joy of the media — particularly the Germans — mushed his team of a half-dozen huskies across the frozen ice, around the nearest point and out of sight.

Tuk always had a way of putting on a show and this – dear southern friends — is not the final act. P

Whit Fraser, who spent years covering the North for the CBC, is an author and the husband of Canada's Governor General.

Members of Canada's Parliamentary Black Caucus hold their first bilateral meeting with the Congressional Black Caucus on Capitol Hill, May 23, 2023. —*Congressional Black Caucus*

Making Black History in Washington: Founding the Overground Railroad

Rosemary Moodie and Josh Dadjo

For Black Canadian leaders, any visit to Washington, D.C., engages both the head and the heart. Washington is the city of Rev. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech and the imposing monument to Dr. King standing watch over the National Mall. It is home to a White House built by Black slaves and lived in by a Black president and his family for eight years. It is also D.C.; a center for Black excellence, the Black cultural and intellectual home of Duke Ellington, Marvin Gaye and Howard University.

Crucially, it finds itself today as a hotbed of political debate and unrest and at its core is the United States Congress, the legislative body that is a center of gravity for both the city and the political universe at large. The frontline troops in that battle have, for more than half a century, been the members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), consistently stepping up to make this theatre work for African-Americans.

Known as the "conscience of the Congress", the Congressional Black Caucus was founded in 1971 by 13 members of the United States House of Representatives. The Caucus would go on to have significant impacts, from allying with the civil rights movement to advocating for the end of apartheid in South Africa, and much more. Today, the CBC includes 54 representatives, two non-voting delegates and two senators. Its members have gone on to hold the presidency and vice-presidency of the United States and lead the Democratic party in the House of Representatives. They currently hold senior positions in the Congressional leadership.

The fight for civil rights by Black Americans has been an inspiration for Black people throughout the world and has influenced how so many approach politics within their own domestic context. Canada is no different. In 2015, the Canadian Parliamentary Black Caucus (PBC) was founded with a similar goal to that of its Congressional counterpart — to advocate for Black Canadians, amplify their voices and elevate their pri-

orities in the public sphere. Today, the caucus is led by an executive of 14 senators and Members of Parliament, including two ministers, a parliamentary secretary and members of the leadership of various groups and committees in both chambers of Parliament.

It was so inevitable and natural that the PBC would meet with the CBC — a well-established, sophisticated and accomplished caucus — that when it finally happened in May, it felt both overdue and preordained.

And historic.

After months of planning, we arrived in Washington D.C. with a delegation of eight members and an ambitious agenda. The members of the delegation were: Senator Rosemary Moodie (ON) and MP Michael Coteau (Don-Valley East), co-chairs of the caucus as well as; Senator Sharon Burey (ON), Senator Bernadette Clement (ON), MP Greg Fergus (Hull-Aylmer), Senator Amina Gerba (QC), MP Matthew Green (Hamilton-Centre) and Senator Marie-Françoise Mégie (QC).

On arrival in Washington, we were hosted at the Canadian Embassy for a morning briefing. The Embassy's landmark Arthur Erickson-designed chancery and prime, Pennsylvania Ave. location are well-known to Canadians, especially *Policy* readers, many of whom have served as diplomats in the building. We were all struck by the beautiful, imposing structure that stakes out Canada's presence at the centre of American democracy.

Deputy Head of Mission Arun Alexander and his team were great hosts and provided us with key insights on the dynamics of the Canada-US relationship. We were especially intrigued by data that outlined the deep economic ties between Canada and the United States at a state-by-state, district-by-district level.

We then headed over to the US Capitol, where we were ushered into the congressional dining rooms. We were greeted by Representative Barbara Lee, currently a candidate for the Democratic nomination for Senate in California. Rep. Lee, who emerged out of the civil rights movement as a Black Panther before going into politics, has been a member of Congress for over twenty years. She chaired the CBC from 2005-2009 (the chair changes every session of Congress) and was the lone vote against the authorization of the use of force in Iraq following the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks. Rep. Lee embodies the legacy and stature of the CBC. It was truly an honour to meet her.

The delegation from the Canadian Parliamentary Black Caucus on the roof of the Canadian Embassy in Washington: (L to R) MP Michael Coteau, Senator Sharon Burey, Senator Amina Gerba, Senator Rosemary Moodie, Senator Marie-Françoise Mégie, MP Matthew Green, Senator Bernadette Clement, MP Greg Fergus, on May 24th. —*Office of Senator Moodie*

The luncheon was a memorable event. We were joined by current CBC chair, Rep. Steven Horsford, Vice Chair Yvette Clarke and Rep. Meeks, who is the ranking member on the House Foreign Affairs committee, among many other new and longstanding members of the CBC. Their caucus is diverse in its experience and backgrounds, but one could not help but note the warm collegiality and almost family-like dynamic of the group. Both chairs addressed the assembled parliamentarians, and all members had the opportunity to introduce themselves.

Two members of our delegation, Greg Fergus, MP from Hull-Aylmer, and Bernadette Clement, Senator for Ontario, presented to our American counterparts about Black Canada. They eloquently walked us through the long-standing history of Black Canadians in Canada, highlighting our historical contributions, and the dynamic diversity of our population.

In the middle of his remarks, MP Fergus pulled a crisp $10 bill featuring the face of Viola Desmond from his pocket as an example of the impact our Canadian caucus has had, which excited our American counterparts, who've been trying for many years to replace slave owner Andrew Jackson with Harriet Tubman on the US $20 bill.

Outside on the iconic Capitol steps, CBC members took selfies with the $10 bill as onlookers stopped to ask what the occasion was. One older Black woman stopped and asked a member of our delegation about the commotion and was moved to hear of this historic meeting taking place.

We were then treated to a tour of the Capitol. In a city of grand monuments, the Capitol stands above and beyond them all. Our tour guide brought us through from the Old Supreme Court Chamber and Senate rooms to the majestic Rotunda and Statuary Hall, with a focus on Black history. Our guide spoke passionately about the building he loves and about the horrifying events of January 6th that defaced it. We truly appreciated this experience.

That evening, we were hosted by the Deputy Head of Mission for a reception at the Canadian Embassy. We were joined by members of Congress and their staffs, civil rights leaders and

Sense of history at Howard University: Howard Provost Dr. Anthony Wutoh, Senator Moodie, MP Coteau, Janai S. Nelson of the NAACP, Marc Morial of the NUL, Derrick Johnson of the NAACP, Melanie Campbell of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, Damon Hewitt of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Senator Clement and Joe Leonard of Howard University. — *Courtesy of Senator Moodie*

community leaders. Following his remarks, Chairman Horsford provided the proverbial exclamation mark: a certificate of Congressional Recognition to mark the visit of the Parliamentary Black Caucus to the United States.

Day two of our trip began with a private tour of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. We arrived early, before the spectacular, David Ajaye-designed building on the National Mall was opened to the public. Our tour guide was Jennifer Moore, the museum's collections manager, and she told us about the stories behind the exhibits and displays. Walking through the beginning of slavery to the modern-day struggle for justice and equality by Black Americans was an incredibly moving experience, one from which no one could leave indifferent or unchanged. Washington D.C. is a city of museums, but we can't imagine a space more beautiful and profound in this city then that museum.

Later that day, delegates would engage a total of nearly a dozen times with CBC members in smaller meetings, comparing notes on our policy and political contexts, successes and failures, and sowing the seeds for future collaboration. We have no doubt that this was the beginning of a warm and rich friendship.

On Day three, we made our pilgrimage to Howard University, America's most prominent Historically Black College or University (HBCU), born in 1867 — as old as Canada — and alma mater to, among others, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, writers Zora Neale Hurston, Ta-Nehisi Coates and Nobel laureate Toni Morrison, and Vice President Kamala Harris. We were welcomed in the Founder's Library, where Marshall prepared his winning arguments for Brown v. Board of Education (1954) and where Harris prepared for her 2020 debate with then Vice President Mike Pence. We had a great discussion with university leaders about historically Black colleges and universities, and some of Howard's international programs. We felt the history of the space and the passion of our interlocutors as they spoke about the "mecca" of Black education in the United States.

We were given a tour of the campus, with a stop at the Chadwick A. Boseman College of Fine Arts, named for the beloved late Black Panther actor, where our delegation was treated to a surprise meeting with Dean Phylicia Rashad and Assistant Dean Denise Saunders Thompson.

Over lunch, the delegation met with Marc H. Morial, president and CEO of the National Urban League; NAACP President Derrick Johnson; Melanie Campbell, President and CEO of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation and convener of the Black Women's Roundtable; Damon Hewitt, President and Executive Director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law; Dr. Shavon Arline-Bradley, President and CEO of the National Council of Negro Women; and Janai Nelson, President and Director-Counsel of NAACP Legal Defense Fund.

The meeting included a moment of silence to mark the third anniversary of the murder of George Floyd and a thorough discussion on the status of civil rights on both sides of the border. It was evident that there are many shared challenges and areas for collaboration, and we hope this is the first step toward bringing together leaders from both sides of the border. The leaders concluded by making statements to the press in a historic joint media availability on Howard's campus.

The resounding feeling after this trip was the deep sense that this was only the beginning. There is so much more to do and, we believe, a willingness to do it. Meeting counterparts in and beyond Congress has opened our eyes, not only to their willingness and interest to work with Canadians, but their perception of us as strong and reliable partners in the fight for equality. It is fitting to conclude with Senator Moodie's words to her American colleagues:

"We all know that one of the most important historic links between Canada and the United States is the underground railroad. When I look around this room, and see the power, influence and passion of both of our caucuses, if I may be so bold, I see that this railroad is no longer underground.

This link now flows both ways, providing opportunities for freedom and advancement if we work together." P

The Hon. Rosemary Moodie is a senator from Ontario, representing Toronto since 2018. She is the co-chair of the Parliamentary Black Caucus.

Josh Dadjo is Director of Parliamentary Affairs to the Hon. Rosemary Moodie. He is also a PhD student in Public Policy at Carleton University

A Small Saskatchewan Town's Heritage Minute Close-up

A league of their own: Re-enacting history. —*Anthony Wilson-Smith*

Anthony Wilson-Smith

With the exception of two sharp right-hand turns, the drive from the Saskatchewan provincial capital of Regina to Ogema, (pop. 403, pronounced oh-gi-MAH) is notable mostly for its sameness: 116 km of dead-straight travel across flat Prairie fields, punctuated only by the occasional grain mill and a few isolated homesteads. The farther you get from the city, the more likely that those homesteads are abandoned — the owners often simply walked away. By night, the darkness is so complete, that the flashing red lights marking the two stop signs on the trip are visible from more than five km away as the only illumination in land or sky.

All of which makes the bustling community of Ogema all the more remarkable as it stands in sharp contrast to the dozens of similar communities across the province that withered and died in recent decades. I was there recently in my role as CEO of Historica Canada, the non-profit organization that produces the Heritage Minutes. Along with several colleagues and a film production team, we were there to shoot a Minute about Mary Bonnie Baker, the feisty, iconic 1940s and 50s professional baseball catcher. (Among other things, she was the inspiration for the character played by Geena Davis in the 1993 Tom Hanks/Madonna picture, *A League of Their Own*.)

Although Baker was from Regina, we shot in Ogema because the town, in the description of our advance location scout, has it all. That includes a century-old baseball field with manicured infield and original grandstand (currently being restored), a perfectly preserved and fully functional 1930s train station – and train; a Sports Hall of Fame stocked with all manner of memorabilia; and a Main St. collection of vintage buildings, each with a history of its own, including a non-functioning but otherwise fully-equipped time-warp BA gas station (the brand was bought out by Gulf and ceased to exist in 1965).

For an organization like ours, looking to shoot a period piece, this is the stuff on which dreams are made – the best one-stop location shooting I've experienced in my involvement in more than 20 years' worth of Minutes. Add in a highly-skilled film production team, drawn largely from Saskatchewan and Alberta, and a provincial government that now provides financial subsidies for shoots, and Ogema seems ripe for liftoff as a regular destination for future productions by companies coming from far and wide.

There are many reasons why Ogema not only survives, but thrives, despite the same challenges that put an end to similar towns. Those include a spirit of collective innovation, determination, and a willingness to use every means at the town's disposal to attract newcomers and reverse the age-old trend of losing youth to bigger communities at the first opportunity. Says Kyle Leonard, a town councillor and insurance broker who lived in Regina for years before returning home: "It became possible for people like me to come back to the place we love and make a living here."

In 112 years of existence, Ogema has seen its share of formidable challenges. The original intent was to call it 'Omega', the Greek word for 'end,' marking its status as the last stop on the Canadian Pacific line. But the name was already taken by another town, so locals settled on Ogema, an Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe) word meaning "chief". At inception, a local census showed 540 residents – as big as the town would ever get. Over time, two world wars, the 1919 Spanish flu, and a series of recessions chipped away. By the late years of the last century, the population had dropped to the low-300s. Then Sask Power, the provincial agency that was a big employer, shuttered its office at about the same time as the wheat elevator near town also closed. Young families wanting to stay faced the loss of two major sources of jobs. "We realized that the future of the local school was at stake – and if we lost the school, we would lose the community," says Carol Peterson, the town's mayor.

Members of the town council and remaining business community began searching for a big-ticket employer to

fill the void. They found their savior in Big Sky Farms, based in Humboldt, SK – one of the country's largest hog farm operations. The type of jobs the company brought with it were nothing like those that had left, so the exodus of young families continued. But newcomers arrived – many of them new Canadians. Today, the local school has 125 students and roughly half are of Filipino origin, the children of those new Canadian arrivals. That is a modern take on an old tradition in a province founded and populated by people from 'away' who came to take advantage of the homesteads offered.

That rebirth of sorts encouraged others to come – or come home. One was Marco di Michele, from Naples, Italy, who married a local woman (Tracey) and moved to Canada. In 2013, they opened Solo Italia Fine Pasta Inc. Today, in addition to serving locals at their Main St. restaurant, Marco makes hundreds of his Napoli-style pizzas every Thursday and Friday, flash-freezes them, and ships them to communities across the province for sale in trucks he acquired for that purpose. The couple employ a dozen people. In 2020, Adam Maizer, who grew up in the community before going to culinary school and working at restaurants in Regina, felt the pull of his hometown. He came back with his wife, Kaitlyn – an accomplished baker – and their children. They opened Bud's BBQ, which now pulls in visitors from other communities including Regina, who make the trip specifically to bring home Adam's BBQ products, beans and Kaitlyn's pastry. They employ four people.

The next big step is to further leverage the heritage buildings, rail station and train that were so immaculately maintained over the years, more out of love than any specific design. The train, running on a limited length of track, does service on weekends as a tourist attraction, offering everything from wine and micro-brewery tastings to Harry Potter-themed trips. The ball field, still the site of games between Ogema teams and neighbouring communities, sits alongside a modern community centre that includes a hockey/curling rink, swimming pool, golf course, community rooms and snack bar. In the upcoming Heritage Minute, the train station will double for the one that took Baker on her first leg to the United States to play ball, and the park, with locals serving as spectators, will become one of the mid-sized town fields in the US where the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) played from its start in 1943 till its 1954 demise.

Ogema, Saskatchewan's perfectly preserved train station. —*Anthony Wilson-Smith*

Challenges remain. A big one is medical care: the nearest doctor is in Weyburn, 81 km away – or Regina. The best 'advice' for locals on the medical front, says Mayor Peterson, is: 'don't get sick.' There is also the continuing need for upkeep of the same aging structures that are the town's stock-in-trade: the grandstand needs about $1 million in repairs to prevent its decaying base from collapse while keeping its appearance. While the community is united in support, the non-profit Ogema Grandstand Restoration Project (which can be found on Facebook) will depend heavily on outside donations to achieve its goal.

Even more than its buildings, Ogema is characterized by the pride locals take in their community and achievements. We arrived at the community centre to begin our shoot and were greeted by a choice of dozens of baked goods prepared by locals. Several hundred locals showed up to serve as extras in crowd scenes. That process can become much less interesting after as many as a dozen takes of the same scene – especially in the 30-degree weather that prevailed throughout the shoot – but everyone stayed in place. When the first day's shoot ended, and the cast and production team gathered for a photo to mark the occasion, there was the same level of applause as would greet a walk-off, game-winning home run.

For a visitor from a big city, at a time when there can seem more wrong than right in Canada and beyond, it was a reminder that the qualities that built this country remain in evidence today – and the most interesting stories aren't always the ones that draw the biggest headlines, or most online clicks. The Minute will salute Baker, a woman who was told all the things she couldn't do, and just went ahead and did them. Ogema, stand-in for key moments in her life, is the same: against formidable odds, it makes a brighter future by turning to its past. We were there to shoot Baker's story, and are excited about how it will be received when we launch it in October. As it turned out, the backdrop is every bit as wonderful. P

Contributing Writer Anthony Wilson-Smith is President and CEO of Historica Canada and former editor-in-chief of Maclean's.

The Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, where Mao and his spymaster, Kang Sheng, both lived. —*Wikipedia*

China In-Between: Ensconced in the Diaoyutai and Meeting an 'Immortal'

Robin V. Sears

It's rare to be able to pinpoint the moment when historic change first strikes. After a few years, and much guesswork, we can see roughly when it became obvious that penicillin or mobile phones were going to change the world. In some cases, that retrospective search for clues is helped by the indelible moments engraved on our brains from eventful travels.

I will never forget the midnight, hours-long private meeting in Havana with Fidel Castro in 1981 as part of a mission to Cuba led by Ed Broadbent. Or the meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985 — his first with foreign leaders since becoming general secretary of the Communist Party — with former German Chancellor Willy Brandt, then president of Socialist International, leading the delegation.

With Castro we saw a slower, weakened but still charismatic leader who, like his revolution, was on a downward slope. By contrast, we could see that Gorbachev was at his peak, but not quite yet that the reforms he would soon launch would ultimately topple the Soviet Union.

But it was a visit to Beijing in the fall of 1993 — as a staffer on a delegation led by Paul Desmarais Sr. that included former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, who had retired just months earlier — that truly taught me the value of travel as a means of understanding and anticipating world events. That trip exposed me to the vast changes being wrought in China, but only looking back did I grasp the magnitude of the changes that Deng Xiaoping had set in motion.

It was an in-between time; the post-Tiananmen global freeze China had endured for the previous four years was nearing its end and the prospect of a thaw based on economic interests seemed reasonable, before the first two decades of this century recalibrated Beijing's power calculations.

The first sign of changing times on that trip, which happened even before we took off for Beijing, startled me. A Power Corp. aide who was handling logistics for the tour called about a month before the mission's departure. He said with the calm assurance of someone used to power: "Please call the following Chinese official and give him our plane's details and our draft flight plans." I responded rather anxiously: "I don't think the Chinese permit overflights, let alone landing by private non-Chinese aircraft..." He said with a certain edge to his voice, "Just make the call,

please. And you understand none of this is to be shared with the embassy or anyone else, right?" I swore myself to secrecy and hung up with mounting anxiety. I decided I had to do some homework before calling a senior Chinese bureaucrat. Messing this up would not soon be forgotten in Montreal or Beijing.

I called a former US diplomat I had become friends with during my years in Tokyo, asking him not to mention to anyone that I'd called. I described the request without naming any names, and expressed by doubts about the mission. He chuckled and said, "Well, you're right, of course, but things are changing so quickly right now, your client probably knows more than you do about what's possible." He was right, they did. I made the call and dutifully reported back that I had conveyed the information and that there would be no problems. For a country that had lived in total isolation for the first decades of the revolution, still furious about the territories seized by foreign powers, and deeply sensitive to any foreign trespass today, this change was significant indeed.

I had been travelling to China for more than a decade by then. I had watched armies of cyclists replaced by small, dirty cars; stodgy Soviet-era limousines by Mercedes. Flashy Western-style hotels replacing the smoky, smelly, rundown 50s-era establishments. But this time was different in so many ways: the beginning of the explosion of affluence that shook China and the world over the next decade.

The Desmarais are Canada's most China-connected business family. They had been visiting, then making investments in China, for more than a decade at that time. Nonetheless, when the Communist Party gave the go-ahead for their delegation to reserve the most prestigious villas in the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse compound and its surrounding parkland in Beijing, and to host a final thank-you dinner for the Chinese leadership, it raised eyebrows in Canada.

The magnificent houses and halls, the bubbling ponds overlooked by centuries-old stone bridges, and the immaculate grounds made a lasting impression. Built to house emperors more than 800 years ago, it was also used by Mao Zedong as well as his spymaster and enforcer, Kang Sheng, as his home and office, and centres of 'interrogation' after the revolution. Mao had also lived there.

The Diaoyutai was often used by Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders to welcome or say good-bye to foreign dignitaries. No one I asked could remember ever allowing foreigners to host events at this level themselves. It was evidence of the respect the Desmarais' had acquired.

Only years later did I experience the epiphany as to what a powerful signal of change that event — and who had attended it — was. Walking from a conference hall to the dining room for the final dinner in the late afternoon, I caught up with Mr. Mulroney deep in discussion with a senior party leader. After a few minutes, approaching us came a small group of aged Chinese guests. Running alongside us, chasing each other, were two young boys, children of delegation members.

> ***"Suddenly, the former PM stopped in his tracks, and shouted 'Boys, come here!' Mulroney's deep baritone at full volume would stop an elephant. Gesturing in front of him, he said, 'Boys, I am going to introduce you to one of the most important men in this century in China, and i n the world. Stand still!'"***

Suddenly, the former PM stopped in his tracks, and shouted "Boys, come here!" Mulroney's deep baritone at full volume would stop an elephant. Gesturing in front of him, he said,

Former Chinese Deputy Premier Bo Yibo, one of Mao's 'Eight Immortals'. —*Reuters*

"Boys, I am going to introduce you to one of the most important men in this century in China, and in the world. Stand still!" The obvious leader of the Chinese group approached us slowly. He was stooped with age, but his eyes were sparkling and intense, as he chatted with the boys. Former Vice Premier Bo Yibo was one of the "Eight Immortals"— Mao's key lieutenants, veterans of the Long March, of the Yan'an caves, and of the first CCP government. He suffered badly in the Cultural Revolution, but returned to hold most of the senior positions in government in the 70's and 80's. He died as the oldest Party member at 98.

That Mulroney recognized him, that Bo was even attending this dinner at 85, and that he knew that the former prime minister was someone of sufficient importance that he went out of his way to treat the stunned young boys so respectfully, was all very surprising to me.

As I got to know Mr. Mulroney better — I've worked for him as an advisor during his post-prime ministerial years — I came to understand that he was an 'old China hand' himself. As PM, he had pushed then-External Affairs to develop a transformational strategic plan on Canada/China relations. He had had the savvy

to know that post-Tiananmen bullhorn diplomacy was futile, instead sending in secrecy high-level personal representatives to Beijing. He had studied the revolution and its leaders for years.

That explained his great deference to an aging revolutionary. But I suspect he knew something I only puzzled out years later. Bo was a party conservative in many areas, but a determined economic moderate, fighting to improve China's development through more open trade and investment. He was a key player behind the scenes in a battle Deng Xiaoping was waging with more rigid and isolationist leaders. He had praised Deng's 'Southern Tour', which had taken place the previous year. Deng openly praised the booming Shenzhen private entrepreneurs on a surprise visit. That explained why Bo was greeting Brian Mulroney. The party, now led by Jiang Zemin, had rolled out this very old man to send a signal about which side the leadership was on.

Four years later, Paul Desmarais Sr. was granted a rare privilege: a long private meeting with Bo Yibo. Bo's children ensure the family's continuing influence in China. Each has paid leading a role in the economy, academe and foreign affairs. Sadly, his most famous son, Bo Xilai, a provincial governor, was jailed for life on corruption charges amid widespread rumours that he had also been caught plotting against Xi, working with a former security chief and a Politburo member from Chongqing. Bo Yibo's son Bo Guagua, an Oxford PPE and Columbia Law School grad, was employed for several years by Power Corp.

So, the fall of 1993 was near the beginning of a period of innovation, experimentation and global networking for Chinese business, academics, bureaucrats and the state itself. That period came to a sudden end with President Xi's arrival in office almost two decades later, which ushered in China's latest relationship with the rest of the world.

Back in China recently, reminiscing over lunch at the famous Hong Kong Foreign Correspondents' Club, with another veteran of those years. We shook our heads over how dramatically Deng had launched the most successful economic revolution in history. And how sad it is that now, much of the product of those efforts lay smashed on the ground, like debris from another era. The carefully nurtured international networks, the strong support for the private sector in China, and the more open dialogue permitted then, forbidden now. After a few seconds of silence my friend said, "The new China that we had the privilege to witness up close is now dead. I wonder if another will ever arrive?"

Watching Putin's apparent lunacy unfold so tragically, China's rising obsession over Taiwan, and the rebirth of the North Atlantic alliance, I wonder what private, high-level visits today would reveal about China's road ahead, and ours. P

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Sarah Goldfeder, belonging everywhere. —*L. Schmidt*

Travel as Life: Cultivating Roots and Wings

Sarah Goldfeder

I have never lived in the places my parents grew up. My mom grew up outside Chicago, and we would go see my grandmother, but not in the town my mother grew up in. My father grew up in Brooklyn, but everyone pretty much left before I was born. I came along while my father was pursuing his Ph.D. at Louisiana State University (Geaux Tigers). I went to high school in Alaska and university in Oregon and Colorado. My children were born in Colorado, Germany, and Maine. The frequent question, "Where are you from?" creates all sorts of anxiety for someone like me. Everywhere? Nowhere in particular? America?

What can you say when you were born in a place you have no other connection to, grew up in places no one in your family had ever been to before, and then did it all over again until well into your adult life. Then you emigrate — as I did to Canada following a diplomatic posting — and finally settle down somewhere you have no familial connection to at all. In the military, we called it the third culture kid or TCK for short (because of course, in the military, we need an acronym if we're serious about an issue) — someone whose very identity is centered on not belonging anywhere.

As a third culture kid you take on an exaggerated ownership of the place that you're from. Your identity is constructed on imaginings or nostalgia for a place that you visit but never quite get to feel at home in. Your ability to blend in, reflect mannerisms and accents, makes you a chameleon of sorts, and you learn to leave judgments aside. You eat whatever you're served, watch for cues on when to take your shoes off, cover your shoulders or bow your head. This daily posture doesn't leave you when you come "home" — one of the most challenging exercises of any return to North America was my first run through a drive-thru, the cadence, the pace and the wording of the order and the response being something my contemporaries didn't think twice about, but was just a bit unfamiliar at first. There's a haze of not-belonging that clings to you, wherever you are. I used to describe it as knowing there's a secret handshake but not knowing what it is.

The constant moving keeps you rooted in your family and what you can carry. Connections to bedrooms, houses, neighborhoods, schools, are all transitory. Your favorite talismans and the people that moved with you are what define home. To this day, for me, objects carry more weight than property. Nothing has survived the many moves without intention.

Summers were one of two things — either a pick-up-and-move summer, where we would spend May and June doing all our favorite things in wherever we lived one last time (one last time on our favorite walk, to the best ice cream shop, to see these people or those people, etc.) and then suffer through 2-3 days of packers and movers before either loading up a car or flying off to see Gramma before heading to the new place and finding all those best spots all over again. The other summers were all about going wherever the locals went — the favorite spots, because while everyone else thought they were ordinary, it was all new and exciting to us.

At Gramma's house, there was a bandstand in a park where we listened to the concert band play John Philip Souza

A new generation of nomads: the author's daughter in Burma. —*Sarah Goldfeder*

and a convent next door to the Catholic church that reminded me of the yellow-hatted girls of Madeline. There was one excursion to Marshall Field's on State Street in Chicago each visit. At Gramma's house, there was a big red barn and a vegetable garden. Next to the garden were huge fold-up double doors that led to the storm cellar, where there was a massive freezer. I remember at some point thinking that an inside stairway to a basement was a thing of luxury. There were bowls of home-grown strawberries and each time, one dinner out for Gramma's favourite, liver and onions. A meal that only a grown-up would eat.

The summers we didn't go to Illinois we stayed close to "home" – in Spain that meant road trips around the Iberian Peninsula. Sitting in the back of what seemed like the only Toyota Corolla station wagon on the continent (at least at that point), we stuck out, with our Lafourche "Eat Louisiana Oysters" bumper sticker receiving the odd cheer. We mostly camped, with local food cooked up by my mother on a camp stove set up on a card table. The Toyota required many repairs and replacement parts, all brought to us when family came to visit. There was a long discussion I only vaguely remember regarding how to get an exhaust system from the US. to Spain via Air Iberia checked- luggage policies.

We moved that tradition, complete with the car, when we moved to Spokane. Staying close meant frequent trips to Lake Pend Oreille and Coeur d'Alene, an early introduction to the legacy of the Canadian fur trade and the adventures of Lewis and Clark. Camping in Idaho was more rustic, less urban, than in Spain. The campgrounds I had been used to were in parks either surrounded by the town or just outside, with pools, full bathrooms, convenience stores, discos, and restaurants. From that world we moved to the National Forest Campgrounds which were ranked by access to toilets and existence of showers (pit toilets, no showers and sometimes even no toilets, no showers).

The transition from the one world to the other occurred without a missed step. My parents instilled in me an acceptance of whatever the day might bring. We may end up in a campground with a disco or a campground with pit toilets, we may end up in a converted castle or a roadside motel. None of it was better than the rest, each experience was rich and memorable, and we belonged in each and every place.

Being a military "brat" eventually led to employment in the US. government. We moved my oldest daughter to Germany when she was barely a year and a half, after a summer of road trips back and forth from the Western Slope to the Front Range of Colorado, to Wyoming, to New Mexico, and eventually out to Seattle and through Wisconsin and Illinois before finally getting on a plane. We spent five years staying close to "home" again, exploring towns within an hour or so of the town where we lived. A second kid came along and then a third and then we moved around the world some more, this time as part of the diplomatic corps.

I've passed this legacy of being the third culture kid on to my own. They now have their own summer stories of going to grandparents' houses – in Colorado, New Mexico, and Washington. They have also learned how to see the richness in what is in front of them, see the beauty in everything from a truck stop in Wyoming to a beach town in Southeast Asia. The power in those experiences epitomizes what is best about those of us who don't belong anywhere in particular — in the end it isn't a sense of unbelonging, it is a belief that goes beyond belonging. The understanding that none of us has any more or less claim to the space we inhabit, we are only experiencing it all.

Travel was never a distinct activity that we did in my family – neither as a child nor an adult. Travel is something we lived. There was never a choice in the matter, it was simply what happened next. It wasn't removed from our routine, and while sometimes it was an excursion, often it was coming home. There's a quote attributed to many, "There are two lasting bequests we can give our children: Roots and wings." I always joked that I did really well at the wings, not so good on the roots. But the truth is more complicated. Roots, it turns out, tend to wander, but never forget what they are. P

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St. Mary's Church in Marlborough, Wiltshire —*Creative Commons*

Bucolic and a Little Less Barmy: Seeking Respite in Post-Brexit Wiltshire

Jeremy Kinsman

French provides a foundational expression, *se changer les idées*, to escape to somewhere else when recharging is needed.

I needed a time-out from Canada's inward-facing parochial scene, in which the wider world is unexamined beyond the Ukraine war and US scandals, gun vio-lence, and the latest on Trump. A respite to *faire changer les idées* in a smallish town of 10,000 in rural South West England served its therapeutic purpose admi-rably. Herewith my dispatch from Marlborough.

I had always taken references by older, long-ago immigrant Canadians to the "old country" as put-downs of the places people had quit for a better life in their new home of choice. But being back in the UK, and NOT in London, I now get the more rewarding meaning of England being "olde." It's about built and natural physique and the shared intuitive memory of countless generations of prior inhab-itants.

Physical reminders of "oldness" in such venerable towns as this are oddly com-forting. Just twenty feet beyond the high and clear windows of our subdivided late Georgian manor house looms a very large copper beech tree. It is almost grand-motherly in the comfort it gives, assuring us it has seen it all in its more than two centuries presiding over what has always been the busy "London road." Behind it, I see the tower of St. Mary's Church, founded in the 12th century. Their comfort to the soul is reinforced by the timeless, big-sky landscape of rolling farmland, hedgerows, and pasture we explore daily in every direction. But the most perspec-tive-providing sight in this market town between London and Bath is the Marlborough Mound, a 19-metre tall neolithic earth monument that dates back 4,400 years. The mound's original purpose remains lost to the mists of time, but local legend

pegs it as the burial ground of Merlin, the great Arthurian éminence grise.

That sense of timeless continuity is helping people settle down from its wild Brexit ride of the last several years, that was itself largely about sovereignty in today's interdependent world. It became roiled to breaking point by unusually inept political leadership. As that chapter ends, and as Britain prepares for a probable change of government in a year or so, the political chaos has all-but subsided, Boris Johnson's exit from political life, one can only hope, being the last chaotic shudder.

Looking back now at the divisive Brexit vote campaign, the disinformation the Leave camp weaponized through well-funded advocacy media, and powerful new social networks with their potential for mass propaganda seems otherworldly. It's chastening to ponder that someone cynically wrote and paid for the lie that was posted on the sides of red double-decker buses Boris Johnson rode all-round the country, promising that leaving the European Union would release 350 million pounds a week to fix the under-funded National Health Service. Totally untrue.

In polling, fixing the NHS rivals the high cost of living at the top of the public's priorities, followed by long-term economic prospects, and defence against climate change. Despite surgical wait times that rival Canada's, 90 percent of people still rate the NHS as Britain's most cherished national treasure (higher even than the monarchy — that is at least emphatically their own).

Immigration, which so animated the Leave campaign, remains a priority complaint on a Conservative right that obsesses over refugees who try to cross the Channel on rafts. But Britain was never overrun by immigrants, and especially not refugees. Clogged roads do attest to it being over-crowded by 67 million Brits who love their cars. Brexit chased out almost a million excellent EU workers, decimating staffing everywhere from the NHS to pubs. But now immigration is at new highs, essentially replacing EU citizens with people from everywhere else. If there is good news, it is that Britain's labour market needs them, and even greater diversity blends well.

The Marlborough Mound, also known as Merlin's Mound. —*Marlborough College*

There is common agreement among participants, commentators and analysts – as well as everyday voters whom I have consulted over the last years, and intensively during my stay these last months — that Brexit was always about identity, driven by Tory nativist Euroscepticism, for the vast majority of people. Multiple polls during and after the campaign confirm that Leave voters voted on 1) Identity, twice as many as "English" nativists than as Brits, generally also anti-German, anti-French, 2) "Freedom" and sovereignty, unhindered by EU common policy and laws, 3) Opposition to rising immigration, which they associated with the free movement of EU labour, 4) A more conservative economic agenda as opposed to the European social contract, (the UK had opted out of) and in contradiction in the working-class North, for more protection of local manufacturing, 5) A global independent Britain — polling then showed 60% of Leave voters judged the UK's economic future lay with the US, not the EU — today that is down to 20%, 6), Romantic nativism (Wordsworth and Turner), ex-imperialism (Elgar and Kipling), and culturalism, (Fawlty Towers), 7) To stick it to the British establishment, which was largely Remain, and, finally, 8) Defiance of the forces of change.

The tangential benefits of more "freedom" may be psychological but the economic hit is real and, ultimately and ironically, will redound on identity for that reason. Almost everyone — not the "rentiers" — is somewhat poorer in the only industrialized economy to continue to shrink post-COVID. Inflation still hovers around 10 percent, keeping interest rates up. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other agencies put Brexit's long-term cost per capita between 4 percent and 7 percent of income. The loss of tax revenues is about 40 billion pounds annually. Adding insult to injury from the exodus of "Polish plumbers," a comparison this week indicated that Poland's poorest quartile is now better off than British counterparts.

It isn't all due to Brexit. Loyal Brexiteers urge patience, but the Conservative Government has lost public trust. The hard-core Tory wing's single-minded pursuit under Boris Johnson of the "hard-Brexit" option, of hubristically ditching the single European market — that is Britain's largest at 43 percent of exports — was more than the population bargained for. Only 27 percent of UK voters now believe Brexit is beneficial, with most declaring it "a mistake." Fifty-eight to 60 percent would support rejoining the EU.

Last December, a 50th anniversary session in London of the Canada-UK Colloquium exposed Canadian participants to the bitter lament of the "Remain" establishment, to the point that we, who had urged the Cameron Government in 2016 not to risk a binary "in-or-out" existential referendum just to placate a rebellion in the party, consoled them it couldn't be that bad. They insist it is.

A copper beech tree, unfazed by Brexit. —*Jeremy Kinsman*

But the impressive Labour Shadow Foreign Minister David Lammy told us that a Labour government would have no interest in re-opening Brexit "arguments of the past." An election must be called by January 2025, but is more likely in about a year. Labour's lead in the polls, as wide as 30 percent last fall, has stabilized at about 15 percent. It is an amazing turn-around from the landslide majority won by Boris Johnson in 2019. People at first welcomed his entertaining and optimistic style, particularly compared to the dour Labour leader from the doctrinal left, Jeremy Corbyn. But Johnson's shambolic and discrediting performance during the pandemic cost him his job.

It is hard to believe a successor could do worse, but Liz Truss managed to do so, in her 43 days pushing a loony libertarian agenda of tone-deaf unfunded tax-cuts and de-regulation. Rishi Sunak, a decent, if nerdy, economist and young adult successor stabilized the collapse. But he is now contested in turn by the self-important but out-of-touch right-wing of the party for his efforts to reach out for broader support. A divided government loses elections, particularly in a harsh economy.

After its 2019 election debacle, Labour turned to the no-nonsense, frankly uncharismatic but competent ex-head of criminal prosecutions, Sir Keir Starmer. When Labour last ended a longtime Conservative regime (18 years), it was under Tony Blair in 1997. His "New Labour" positioned government closer to the centre, which, according to Blair's "theory of the median voter," is where majorities form and compromise is possible, making democracy work. Aiming to do the same, Starmer estimates that he has the numbers (including in Scotland, where the SNP has imploded, as parties long in power often do). Most of the traditional Labour voters who formed "the red wall" in the North of England but who migrated to Brexit and Johnson, have returned to the fold. So, as Lammy said, Starmer is not going to try to relitigate Brexit and stir up all the drama again, just to vindicate remainers.

Every day, no-drama Starmer tries to project competent stability. That is normally the re-election message from governments in power, but after the goon show that followed David Cameron's departure in 2016, it isn't credible, even for Sunak's more stable Tory team.

The UK public is pretty much waiting for Labour. Starmer is doing everything to show the country will be in his safe, increasingly centrist hands. He has purged the Corbynistas from party ranks, and has dropped some early policy planks such as free university tuition, higher taxes on the rich, and selective nationalizations. Starmer would inherit a wobbly economy but would enjoy the public's relief and initial good will. The Conservative Party will likely tack farther right, marginalizing it further, suggesting Labour might be in for a decade or more (though remembering that was said about Johnson after his 2019 landslide).

On foreign policy, the Brexit playbook vaunted a "global Britain" theme of wide-ranging mercantilist partnerships to replace the EU. But it was mostly a dream from imperial muscle memory. The remnant reality is that Britain is now a middle-sized global striver among several, more at home but more alone. Donald Trump's misleading cheerleading for Brexit was part of his disruption agenda. Biden's America has politely dissuaded London on a bilateral FTA that was to be a cornerstone for "global Britain." Starmer (and probably Sunak as well) gets how much Washington had valued its tight relationship with a UK that had a lead role inside the EU — a powerful UK influence multiplier. But Starmer hopes to recover it in part by moving Britain closer to the EU in joint action where possible.

Britain's internationalist vocation draws from almost unrivalled soft power from the BBC, culture, and much else, including its educational assets and business acumen. Robust UK commitment to Ukraine, and its high-grade defence kit, may even win its defence minister, Ben Wallace, appointment as NATO's next secretary general (though the Canadian deputy prime minister may in the end be seen as what NATO needs).

In the end, living here in *Angleterre profonde* encourages sympathy for the notion of British uniqueness that was the positive side of the Brexit case — that this isn't just another European country. (Nor, though, are any of the others.) Younger Brits did feel as European as British or English, per today's multi-identity custom. They can hopefully retrieve that belief from a new non-member positive partnership with the now self-confident EU that viscerally Eurosceptic Tories can't abide. But a reframed positive partnership is essential for Britain's development, and provides a compatible European family setting for Britain's enduring "old country" soul and self. P

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Dhaka's iconic Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, or Bangladesh Parliament, designed by Louis Kahn. —*Fabian Roudra Baroi*

Revisiting Bangladesh: Politics, Economics and Competitive Authoritarianism

Aftab Ahmed

As I arrived in my cherished hometown, Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, in December 2021, I felt deeply connected to the rich history of this remarkable country of 170 million people. I was there to reunite with my family after the lifting of pandemic travel restrictions and to re-evaluate the nation from a new perspective.

While political posters and placards are a common sight in Dhaka, the journey from the airport to my childhood home revealed an extraordinary scene: towering posters, festoons and statues paying homage to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh's revered founding father, who served as the country's first president in the 1970s, adorned the landscape. Mujib, with his captivating persona and lasting legacy, commands profound respect throughout the nation.

His gruesome assassination, along with most of his family, in 1975, irreversibly altered Bangladesh for the worse. The tragic death of the country's principal political architect left an indelible mark on the collective consciousness of the people, triggering a cascade of coups, countercoups, and constitutional aberrations. Fast forward to 2021, my visit coincided with two celebrations etched in the public psyche: Mujib's birth centenary and the country's 50th anniversary of independence.

This veneration, at times, feels imposed upon the electorate by the ruling party, rather than emerging from democratic processes. Billboards that prominently feature Sheikh Hasina, the current prime minister and one of Mujib's surviving daughters, serve to magnify the influence wielded by the Sheikh family. While this practice

The author with the statue of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Military Museum in Dhaka. *— Courtesy of Aftab Ahmed*

may seem unconventional to foreigners, it has become an indispensable component of daily life in Dhaka.

Just a brief stroll away from my childhood home stood the residence of Begum Khaleda Zia, the widow of the slain military dictator General Ziaur Rahman. In 1991, she achieved the distinction of being elected the world's second Muslim female prime minister. Since her arrest and imprisonment in 2018 on corruption charges — the latest episode in a bitter rivalry between Mrs. Zia and Sheikh Hasina, the leaders of Bangladesh's Zia and Sheikh political dynasties and commonly referred to as "the battle of the two ladies" — Mrs. Zia's residence looked a shadow of its former self. With her electoral participation restricted, her party, the BNP, facing decline, and Sheikh Hasina's Awami League firmly in the driver's seat, Bangladesh seems to be treading towards a de-facto one-party state via competitive authoritarianism, whereby the institutions of democracy remain but are undermined by corruption to produce elections that are neither free nor fair, but are taken at face value.

Adding to the complexity is the advantage gained by leaders in societies where power is consolidated through the tacit endorsement of a vision for a post-democratic world order, characterized by unhindered suppression of political adversaries, and devoid of adherence to the rule of law. Both the Prime Minister and Mrs. Zia, bear a shared responsibility in this intricate web of circumstances. The underlying moral of this story is that Bangladesh inadvertently finds itself drifting towards authoritarianism – a paradox considering that the very Awami League that led the struggle for independence and resisted against military governments now monopolizes power.

Beyond politics, my exploration of various sites in Dhaka included restaurants, museums, and opulent December weddings, providing me with a firsthand experience of the city's remarkable growth. Towering skyscrapers, upscale dining establishments, and luxurious vehicles adorned this bustling cosmopolitan hub, exhibiting the grandeur that has come to define one of the world's most vibrant metropolises. Bangladesh is perceived as a poor nation by outsiders, and there remains a degree of truth to this. Nevertheless, in recent years, the country has witnessed the world's fastest growing ultra-wealthy population, which highlights a contrasting reality. Nowhere is this more evident than in the affluence carved within the capital's infrastructural and social fabric.

It is true that poverty persists, with lower and middle class families grappling to meet their daily needs. Yet, alongside these difficulties, there is a flourishing and influential minority that wields considerable control over the nation's wealth. Since 2008, Bangladesh has experienced rapid economic progress, propelled by substantial investments in ambitious mega-projects, including those selectively financed under China's Belt and Road Initiative. Large scale investment ventures often involve businessmen closely aligned with the ruling elite or those holding influential positions within the Awami League.

A striking manifestation of the interplay between business and politics is represented in parliament. The 2018 general elections, tarnished by allegations of irregularities, electoral manipulation and coercion, yielded a staggering outcome wherein more than 60 percent of MPs hailed from the business sector. Aptly labeled the parliament of millionaires, an astonishing 82 percent of MPs boast wealth exceeding a million Bangladeshi Takas. A mere 0.6 percent of the population commands a similar financial status.

In attending events where some of these individuals were present, what struck me most was their nonchalant

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her constituency of Gopalganj Kotalipara in February. *—Delwar Hossain*

attitude and apparent lack of concern. It seemed that owning secondary residences in destinations like Dubai and Malaysia was viewed as ordinary, without any scrutiny into the origin of the funds invested from the domestic economy. Although I humbly acknowledge the privilege that graced my upbringing, the ostentatious lavishness on display left me astounded.

Regrettably, it became evident that the fervent Bengali spirit, once dedicated to liberation struggles, grassroot movements, and the ousting of dictators, had been relinquished or abdicated, especially by the ruling class. This stemmed to an extent, from the country's failure to organize free, fair, credible, and inclusive elections in the past decade, coupled with the ruling party's abandonment of its own democratic principles.

Ottawa's foreign policy story with Dhaka has been a colourful one. In 1971, in a display of political acumen and moral fortitude, Pierre Elliott Trudeau demonstrated unequivocal support for Bangladesh's liberation struggle. Whereas his western allies, including the duo of Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, backed the Pakistani military junta's brutal campaign to suppress burgeoning Bengali nationalist sentiments. The rest, as they say, is history.

Trudeau's stance earned him Dhaka's esteemed Liberation War Honour in 2016, in appreciation of Canada's steadfast commitment to Bangladesh's journey towards independence. Fast forward to 2023, what is the rationale behind Canada's vested interest in Bangladesh, and why should Canadians pay attention to this country? First, since the 1980s, Bangladesh has made remarkable strides in its socioeconomic journey, primarily through investments in health care, female empowerment schemes, and textiles. This approach has positioned the country as one of the world's fastest-growing economies, attracting interest from global powers.

Second, the persistent struggles of Bangladesh to establish and consolidate democratic institutions raise major concerns for liberal democracies.

Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau visiting Bangladesh in 1983, with his son, Justin. —*Canada in Bangladesh Twitter.*

Beijing's relentless drive to exert its influence on Dhaka became evident through the dissemination of its digital authoritarian tools and high levels of foreign direct investment. China's exportation of governance frameworks toward the country is vividly exemplified by Bangladesh's Digital Security Act, whose draconian nature has stifled dissent, curtailed freedom of thought, and suppressed independent media – an alarming manifestation of the consequences that can befall an underdeveloped democracy when subjected to the political influence of Beijing's networked authoritarianism.

Third, within the context of Europe's ongoing debates on immigration, Bangladesh has provided refuge to over one million Rohingyas displaced from neighboring Myanmar, establishing the largest refugee population worldwide. On one level, this gesture underscores Bangladesh's pledge to upholding human rights and fostering global solidarity. On a deeper level, it also highlights Sheikh Hasina's astute navigation of international political dynamics, skillfully averting scrutiny from Western powers that may have otherwise questioned her adherence to democratic principles and human rights.

Upon returning to Canada, I could not ignore the philosophical predicament clouding Bangladesh's developmental trajectory. The Awami League and Bangladesh have become inseparable, with this narrative progressively institutionalized via public policy. Whatever they say must be taken as truth. And there is limited room for discourse on whether their version of the truth is actually true or not.

Dissent, regarded as an undesirable negative externality, is suppressed via policy tools, giving rise to a marginalization of human rights. Not surprisingly, given the costs associated with civic engagement, apathy towards politics has taken hold amongst citizens. As voters gear up for upcoming elections at the end of this year, it will serve as a litmus test to determine whether Bangladesh can sustain its democratic aspirations.

Let there be no doubt that Sheikh Hasina's opponents share responsibility for democratic erosion, having made ruthless efforts to undermine the Awami League's very existence from 1975 to 2008. Inspired by her father's overarching vision for a people's republic, I, as a son of Bangladesh who cares deeply about its future, urge Sheikh Hasina to uphold democratic principles, promote inclusive growth, and prioritize the well-being of the people who have acclaimed her as one of the world's most celebrated female leaders. P

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Coronation revellers on The Mall in London, May 5th, 2023. —*Shutterstock*

Pomp, Pubs and a Staggering Amount of Champagne: Covering the Coronation

Patricia Treble

The esoteric world of royalty has filled my life for more than four decades. It started as an interest, became a passion, and finally, a journalistic career. Covering the royals from Canada allows for a more detached, analytical study of the changes in the House of Windsor than the perspective of those who track the ins and outs of daily engagements and the trivialities that seem to increasingly dominate social media.

The pandemic ended my annual journeys to the United Kingdom, so, after covering the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II from network studios and my office in Toronto, I knew that I had to be in London for the coronation of King Charles III, the first in 70 years and the only coronation ceremony among European monarchies. In addition, he's our head of state, the King of Canada, as well as head of the Commonwealth. I knew I'd never get inside Westminster Abbey to report on the coronation on May 6, but having spent months researching arcane details such as the difference between the Robes of State and the Robes of Estate, I wanted to be in the United Kingdom to absorb the atmosphere and immerse myself in all things coronation.

What interests me the most is how coronations have evolved since the first was held at Westminster Abbey in 1066. The format of this coronation promised to be much different than the last, in 1953, which hewed closely to those of Queen Elizabeth II's father, grandfather and great-grandfather. For one, organizers trimmed an hour of fusty protocol so, unlike 1953, when all the royal dukes and senior peers individually pledged their allegiance to the young Queen, this time only the monarch's heir, Prince William, knelt to swear to be his "liege man of life and limb." In addition, this eco-King deliberately recycled precious thrones and garments, including the fabulously-named gold silk Supertunica and the more humble, linen Colombium Sindonis.

The world of Crown research is small and remarkably collegial. When David Torrance, a clerk in the House of Commons library in London, got his hands on a book listing the 8,000 guests of 1953 coronation, he kindly sent me photos of the pages devoted to Canadian guests – more than 360 took ships across the Atlantic. In return, I sent him details of the Canadian delegation, led by Governor General Mary Simon and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, our coronation cypher and other tidbits,

The Crown pub in Oxford. —*Patricia Treble*

which he incorporated in his exhaustive, continuously updated research briefing paper, "The Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla."

By the time I boarded my flight to London in late April, my carry-on bag was groaning with essentials, including technology for video interviews and essential coronation research, including original programs from the four coronations of the 20th century.

The entire two-week trip – which went from Windsor to London, then to Oxford, before going back to London for one last day – was centered around the coronation and the Crown. Though my travel companion isn't a monarchist, her love of history overcame any qualms about taking part in such a House of Windsor-centric vacation, including only drinking in pubs with royal names, among them the historic Princess Louise in Holborn, London, and a local watering hole hidden down an alley in Oxford named the Crown. "You came over from Canada for this?" asked a bemused bartender at the Crown. We also met Brits who planned their own vacations around the coronation, including Jen and Scott Maslin, who took a week from their jobs in Liverpool to watch the coverage with thousands in Hyde Park. "We might not get another chance," Jen explained. "When William is on the throne, we'll be too old to sit in a field."

As a freelancer, I'd spent months lining up writing and interview opportunities for the trip, including writing four stories on different coronation topics for four separate publications as well regular updates to my own Write Royalty newsletter on Substack. An increasingly important part of that work involves thinking about what to put in social media posts or future stories. So, after dining with a royal editor at the eclectic Bill's restaurant in the Victoria area of London, we ambled down to Parliament to capture the coronation-themed light show projected onto the Elizabeth Tower.

Our itinerary was laden with coronation-themed events, such as a small show at Canada House put on by Library and Archives Canada that included an encrypted telegram dated Nov. 17, 1948, from King George VI, who thanks his Canadian PM Louis St. Laurent for "your kind message on [the] birth of [my] grandson," now King Charles III. In addition, a researcher has gone through the records of the King's 19 visits to Canada since 1970 and created a map showing Charles's extensive travels, with Manitoba as the standout, with 17 stops.

As well, I ventured into the rarified world of Sotheby's auction house for its exhibition tied to an upcoming auction of royal-related memorabilia, including a tiny diamond "ER" pin given by Queen Elizabeth II to her maids of honour at her coronation in 1953, which sold for nearly 70,000 pounds. I'd never seen such the brooch before, yet, on this trip, I'd see two in a week, including one worn by Lady Rosemary Spencer-Churchill, daughter of the 10th Duke of Marlborough, which was part of yet another coronation-themed exhibition at her family home of Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire.

After years of such work trips, I've found that following local historical and cultural organizations is a way to discover smaller offerings that fly under the tourist radar, such as the tiny King's Chapel of the Savoy, hidden behind the eponymous hotel and on ancient lands of the Duchy of Lancaster that belong to the monarch, or a lecture by Dr. Alice Hunt of Southampton University that was held at Gresham College in a medieval hall that somehow survived the Great Fire of 1666 (like the Crown pub, it was hidden in the middle of a block). As Dr. Hunt delved into the reasoning behind the pomp and ceremony of previous coronations, she touched on a subject of interest to me – royal fashion recycling. Dr. Hunt explained how Queen Elizabeth I reused the coronation dress worn by her half-sister, Queen Mary I (Bloody Mary) six years earlier. I'd never heard of that early example of royal recycling, so I went down a research rabbit hole to find that, yes, a costume historian by the name of Janet Arnold identified the recycling by noticing the similarities in their fashion inventories, including a "mantle and kirtle of white cloth of silver, the mantle of estate with a long train, furred through all with powdered ermines and a mantellace of white silk and gold, a kirtle of the same." Google away.

The day of the coronation itself was spent liveblogging the spectacle for the *Toronto Star* from my vantage point at one of the four massive viewing sites set up in Hyde Park. The weather did not cooperate, though that didn't deter thousands from bringing chairs and blankets, novelty hats, lots of homemade baking and a staggering amount of champagne. Yes, everyone got soaked, but it was worth it for the communal experience — hearing the crowd loudly singing "God Save the King" and applauding when Charles III and Camilla were crowned are memories I won't soon forget.

I try to end trips with a bang, not a whimper, so we went to where the King and Queen had been crowned six days before, the "coronation theatre" of Westminster Abbey, which still had the thrones and Coronation Chair in their May 6 locations in front of the high altar. Then we treated ourselves to a luxurious lunch at Ottolenghi in Marylebone and a stroll through the eclectic Wallace Collection, one of my favourite museums in the world. As we left the next morning, I was exhausted but content. And my luggage was filled with even more research and memorabilia. P

Patricia Treble has been writing about the royal family and the Crown for more than two decades, including her Write Royalty newsletter on Substack. She lives in Toronto.

Fort St. Angelo, bastion of the Knights of Malta, in Valletta's Grand Harbour. —*Courtesy of Tom Axworthy*

War, Peace and a Canadian Knight: With the InterAction Council on Malta

Thomas S. Axworthy

The InterAction Council of Former Heads of State and Government was founded in 1983 to mobilize the energy, experience and networks of former world leaders to help solve the political, economic and social problems confronting humanity.

The Council is currently co-chaired by former Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern and former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo. Former Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien is honorary co-chair. I have been Secretary-General since 2011. Meeting annually, this year the Council accepted the invitation of former Maltese Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi to hold the May plenary on the tiny archipelago (Malta's islands have a population of half a million, less than my hometown of Winnipeg).

My father rarely discussed his service in the Canadian army but he was in the first Allied wave that liberated Sicily from the Fascists in 1943, and I do remember him telling me about the importance of Malta to the war effort in the Mediterranean. Malta endured over 3000 bombing raids by Hitler's Luftwaffe and Mussolini's Regia Aeronautica, making Malta a symbol of never giving up, however long the odds. In 1942, King George VI awarded the George Cross to the nation as a whole for their heroism (a replica of the cross is part of the design for the modern flag of Malta). Upon arriving in Malta, the first thing I did was to tour the Roman catacombs, where the Maltese sheltered from Hitler's bombs, to see how they survived, and ultimately triumphed over tyranny. It is a lesson worth remembering as Ukraine today is now suffering the same kind of brutality for standing up to a dictator.

So, Malta was an appropriate setting for the InterAction Council to take up the themes of war, security, and humanitarian assistance. Dr. Samuel Johnson once told his friend and biographer, James Boswell, that "the grand object of travelling is to see the shores of the Mediterranean." And Malta is at the center of that Sea.

Malta is an ancient place with preserved megalithic temples built 5,000 years ago, making them the oldest freestanding structures on earth; older than the pyramids or

With former prime ministers Jean Chrétien and Bertie Ahern in Valletta. —*Courtesy of Tom Axworthy*

Stonehenge. It has been at the centre of Mediterranean trade and geopolitics since recorded history began, with the Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Vandals, Arabs, Normans, Spanish and British all ruling the island (it finally became independent in 1964 and remains a Commonwealth country). It is steeped in myth and history: Odysseus spent seven years with the nymph Calypso on the island of Gozo; St. Paul was shipwrecked on its shores in 60 A.D. (and used the opportunity to convert the Roman governor); and the Ottomans were repulsed in the Great Siege of 1565. After its valiant resistance in World War Two, Malta became more widely known as the home of the future Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip, where they spent what the Queen later recalled as the most "normal" years of their marriage, living as a young naval couple from 1949-51. In popular culture, Dashiell Hammett's 1930 novel *The Maltese Falcon* and the 1941 film noir classic starring Humphrey Bogart are based on the true story of the annual duty paid of one live falcon by the Knights of Malta to the monarchs of Sicily for their granting of the island.

But the most well-known legacy of Maltese history is the Catholic order of the Knights of St John, more commonly known as the Knights of Malta, the oldest humanitarian organization in the world.

During the InterAction Council meetings, which opened in San Anton Palace, the 17th-century Order of St. John villa that now serves as the official residence of the president of Malta, we were hosted by current Maltese President George Vella. President Vella not only delivered an excellent address on the contemporary problems of the Mediterranean region, but also told us about the history of different palaces and lodges of the Grand Masters of the Knights of Malta. Established nearly 1,000 years ago, in 1048, to provide hospitals and protection for pilgrims to the Holy Land, (it was known then as the Knights Hospitallers) the Order has been headquartered in Malta since 1530. Today, its membership includes 13,500 knights and dames, it employs more than 50,000 professional staff and is served by 100,000 volunteers who manage hospitals and give care around the world. One of its most active missions is in Ukraine. Of special interest to both the Canadians at our meetings and to *Policy* readers; On May 3, the Knights of Malta elected their 81st Grand Master and first from the Americas, Canadian lawyer John Dunlap.

Whatever the specific issue before the InterAction Council in Malta this year — energy supply, food security, the role of diplomacy — the topics inevitably linked back to what was happening in Ukraine. Roberta Metsola — the Maltese-born president of the European Parliament, also emphasized Ukraine in her keynote address to the Council. Canadians live in a state of blessed and blissful security where no one really fears invasion or war. Not so in Europe today: it was a revelation to hear from leaders from Bulgaria, Latvia and a host of other European countries about their deep and ur-

With Viktor Yushchenko, right, and, left, his wife Kateryna. —*Courtesy of Tom Axworthy*

gent fear that war might soon be on their doorsteps.

The nexus of security, nuclear weapons and international guarantees was the first issue discussed at the plenary, and here the experience of Ukraine is instructive. At the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, as a residue of Soviet weapons installations, Ukraine had the third largest nuclear arsenal in the world, with more than 1700 nuclear warheads — more than China, France and the United Kingdom. The world's focus then was on how to dispose of these terrible weapons, and in 1994, Ukraine voluntarily denuclearized and joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This relinquishment of its arsenal was made in exchange for security guarantees by the United States, Russia and the United Kingdom in the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, which states, "The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States reaffirmed their commitment ... to respect the independence and sovereignty of the existing borders of Ukraine." Today, those existing borders have been invaded by one of the states that signed that guarantee.

Putin's failure to respect international agreements led to much soul-searching by the leaders gathered in Malta about how to reform our international institutions, especially the United Nations. The InterAction Council issued the Malta Declaration on 10 actions to rebuild trust in multilateralism.

One of the areas was the safety of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in Ukraine, where civilians were evacuated in early May following the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) warning of a possible "severe nuclear accident". The Council called on the UN Security Council (UNSC) to deploy a UN/IAEA observer corps around the plant to prevent interference with its proper management. The call by the InterAction Council for the UNSC to take action on nuclear safety raises the issue of the operation of the Security Council, perhaps the most conspicuous example of an institution no longer fit for purpose.

San Anton Palace, built for the Knights of Malta, now the official presidential residence. —*Continentaleurope*

> ***"Among all the words and resolutions about war and peace, the moment seared in my memory from this meeting was the eloquent warning of former Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko, still bearing the scars from the dioxin poisoning that failed to pre-empt his victory in the 2004 election, that if Ukraine does not stop Russia now, other countries will be at risk."***

If the UNSC cannot or will not take up an issue, the Malta Declaration recommends that the issue be immediately placed before the General Assembly for action. Grand corruption and money laundering is another issue that our current governance institutions have been slow to take action on. The InterAction Council strongly urges the creation of a new Anti- Corruption World Court and the use of Russia's more than $700 billion in frozen assets held in Western banks to be repurposed in the rebuilding of Ukraine.

But among all the words and resolutions about war and peace, the moment seared in my memory from this meeting was the eloquent warning of former Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko, still bearing the scars from the dioxin poisoning that failed to pre-empt his victory in the 2004 election, that if Ukraine does not stop Russia now, other countries will be at risk. His speech reminded me of Emperor Haile Selassie's plea to the League of Nations in 1936 after the Fascist invasion of Ethiopia: "It is us today. It will be you tomorrow".

The motto of the Knights of Malta, as a longstanding order of the Roman Catholic church, is "Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum" — Defence of the Faith and Assistance to the Poor. While keeping the faith in multilateralism to better serve humankind applies equally to the leaders of the InterAction Council, this war in Europe is certainly testing that faith. P

Thomas S Axworthy is Secretary General of the InterAction Council and Public Policy Chair at Massey College, University of Toronto.

Column / Don Newman

Stockholm Syndrome: An Epiphany About Canada at a Faraway Dinner

There is a truism that if you want to understand your country, you should go abroad and look back at it from a distance. On trips abroad, I have sometimes had that experience, perhaps no more vividly than a trip to Stockholm for the Nobel Prize awards ceremony.

The Canadian ambassador to Sweden lives in a beautiful house outside the centre of Stockholm, on one of the waterways linking the archipelago on which the Swedish Capital is built. Ships from St. Petersburg or points in Finland cruise by the beautiful terrace at the back of the House. It was here that I had an epiphany about my country, Canada.

That epiphany came to mind earlier this year, as the coronation of King Charles III flooded the airwaves in May. The pomp and pageantry of the occasion attracted viewers around the world. It was a timeless ceremony that reaches back centuries. The few more modern pieces that had been added seemed to pass unnoticed. It was a ceremony that only the British still do, And they do it well.

But in Canada, the coronation was also held against a simmering debate about whether the new King should be "our" King. This is not an entirely new debate. But there had been a general consensus that as long as the new King's mother, Queen Elizabeth, was on the throne, her popularity and longevity were sufficient to maintain the British monarch as the Canadian head of state. However, as the years rolled by and the demographics of Canada began to change, speculation increased as to what would happen when the Queen was no longer here.

Then suddenly, she no longer was here. Last September, with only two days' warning that she was gravely ill, she was gone, replaced by her eldest son, a seventy-four year old senior citizen who seemed to have been standing by to assume the throne forever. After the initial period of mourning, the debate began among republicans and then in the wider media sphere: Should Charles III be King of Canada, or should the ties that have bound us together all these years be severed?

Opinions on that question are shaped by age, experience and nostalgia. Many of us remember the replacement of the Red Ensign as the flag of Canada by the current Maple Leaf in 1965, and the bitterness and hard feelings that surrounded that change. Replacement of the monarchy would not create the same splits, but there would be anger, hard feelings, and national unity questions raised just the same.

In my own career I was presented to the Queen on three different occasions. I have met all the other royals with the exception of Prince Edward. I was comfortable with the role they played in Canada. Until I went to Sweden. The Canadian ambassador was hosting a lunch at his residence to which my wife and I had been invited. Most the the other guests were Swedes. As we were waiting to go into lunch, one of the Swedish guests noticed a picture of Queen Elizabeth featured prominently on a wall in the foyer.

"What is she doing there?" he asked.

I started the usual explanation that the Queen was Canada's head of state, but that she didn't live in the country, and was represented by a Canadian Governor General. I also pointed out that the Queen had no authority or power, and the Governor General only rarely did if there was a Parliamentary deadlock.

"If the Queen of England is your head of state, you are still a colony," my Swedish questioner insisted.

I let the matter drop. But I began to look at the monarchy in a different way. If the British monarch is our head of state, citizens elsewhere will always be inclined to see an asterisk next to Canada as a global power.

Over the years, the ties have loosened between Canada and Britain. Full control of foreign policy was obtained in the Statute of Westminster in 1931. Appeals to the British Privy Council as the final legal arbiter ended in 1949, two years after Canadians became citizens of Canada and not just British subjects. The first Canadian-born Governor General, Vincent Massey, was appointed in 1953, ending the long line of minor British aristocrats that had filled the job.

And now, with the death of Queen Elizabeth, it is time to take the final step. Canada has been an independent country for over one-hundred and fifty years. Now is the time for a Canadian head of state, a conclusion I first reached outside of Canada, on trip to Stockholm. P

Contributing Writer and columnist Don Newman, an Officer of the Order of Canada and lifetime member of the Parliamentary Press Gallery, is Executive Vice President of Rubicon Strategy, based in Ottawa.

The G7 leaders meeting in Hiroshima, Japan, on may 20, 2023. Both the G7 and G20 "appear to be in fine shape," writes veteran summit sherpa Peter Boehm. --*Adam Scotti*

Whither the Gs? Summitry in a Time of Disruption

With our Policy summer reading issue falling between the Hiroshima G7 in May and the Delhi G20 in September, we've asked Senator Peter Boehm, who chairs the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade and served as sherpa for six G7s, for a status report on both groups.

Peter M. Boehm

With all the talk about the commitment — or lack thereof — of various countries to "the rules-based international order" as defined in the United Nations Charter as well as those of the postwar International Financial Institutions (IFIs), the persistence and activities of less formal international political groupings in shaping the global agenda deserves continued attention. I refer, of course, to international summitry, and in particular as it is practised through the G7 and G20 groupings. Unlike the UN or the IFIs, neither association has a permanent secretariat or a governance charter, nor do they feature member voting. Decisions are taken by consensus, albeit with some exceptions. Instead, the country that holds the "presidency" organizes and chairs policy, planning and ministerial meetings that set a path toward a leaders' summit. These entities have evolved in different ways, yet despite — or because of — pandemics, global economic crises and wars, they continue to bring leaders and decision makers together. In fact, in 2025 Canada will have the G7 presidency and host the 50th summit.

Notwithstanding recent geopolitical ructions involving China and Russia's stated designs on replacing that rules-based international order via both covert and kinetic aggression, both groups appear to be in fine shape. To make a generational reference, assessing the G20 and the G7 is not a Beatles vs Stones comparison. While both groups have their individual (and overlapping) memberships, styles, functions and fans, their issue sets and approaches to global problems have tended to be different. Of interest too, especially outside our country, is the perception that Canada has been an engaged, committed member of both in functional terms, regardless of who our prime minister was at the time. Within Canada, our punditry often succumbs to the "we are not worthy" perspective, arguably a Canadian trait. The bottom line is that summits, related ministerial meetings, working groups and related structures would simply fall into desuetude were government leaders to question their usefulness. So, they persist.

The G7 was born out of the OPEC oil crisis of the early 1970s, with Canada joining the group in its second year, 1976, and the European Union the following year. The G20, in part an initiative of former Prime Minister Paul Martin, who worked hard to establish a finance ministers' group of 20 in 1999 to facilitate better North/South global economic coordination including through the IFIs, has been around in summit form since 2008 and had its early baptism with the sovereign debt crisis of that year. Canada has chaired the G7 process six times and has hosted as many summits. Of course, the G7 was also the G8 from 1997 to 2014 until Russia's seizure of Ukraine's Crimea and incursion into the Donbas changed the arithmetic. Former Prime Minister Stephen Harper chaired both the G8 and G20 summits in 2010, with the latter in Toronto garnering more attention for violent demonstrations on the streets rather than the content of leaders' discussions.

Its consensus- and values-based approach has allowed the G7 to influence formal international institutions and to establish related initiatives. Examples include the Financial Action Task Force (1989), the Chernobyl Shelter Fund (1997), active endorsement of the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria (2001), an anti-terrorism working group following 9/11, the L'Aquila Global Food Security Initiative (2009), active support for the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (2015) and the Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility (2016; originally designed to deal with the devastating Ebola outbreak in West Africa). This served as a precursor to the work on the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator. Host leaders have pursued their own initiatives as chairs of the G7 process, the Canadians being no exception. Jean Chrétien placed a great emphasis on Africa at the Kananaskis Summit in 2002, Stephen Harper on maternal, newborn and child health at Muskoka in 2010, and Justin Trudeau on gender equality, ocean plastics and economies of the future at Charlevoix in 2018. Such initiatives invariably required funding and this is where both the G7 countries as donors and the IFIs came into the picture.

His political longevity as prime minister allowed Jean Chrétien to host two G7 summits, the first in Halifax in 1995. I recall very well travelling to Moscow early that year with then deputy minister of foreign affairs and G7 sherpa", Gordon Smith, to assess Russian interest in our process; the result was the participation of President Boris Yeltsin in a foreign policy dinner discussion with leaders at the summit itself. Within two years the G7 would become the G8. The collective G7 view was that by bringing Russia into the club there would be more dialogue, better economic development for Russia and reduced geopolitical security tension in Europe. As Prime Minister Harper's sherpa, I attended a meeting in Moscow in early 2014 that was meant to prepare for the G8 summit in Sochi in June. That all ended when Russia invaded Ukraine shortly afterwards, with all of us deciding to boycott the process, not attend the summit and Russia declaring the G20 a better forum in which to further its interests. Even in retrospect, I continue to believe that our intentions over those years were noble, but were thwarted by the rapacity of the Russian oligarchs (and the West's willingness to embrace that style of capitalism) that only added to Vladimir Putin's cynical, and brutally revisionist objectives.

> ***"Assessing the G20 and the G7 is not a Beatles vs Stones comparison. While both groups have their individual (and overlapping) memberships, styles, functions and fans, their issue sets and approaches to global problems have tended to be different."***

What distinguishes the G7 from the G20 is its informality, both at the round table and when leaders meet bilaterally. While sherpas and others undoubtedly prepare the agenda in consultation with their leaders, invariably the participants can put down their notes and engage in an informal discussion, away from the pressures of having to deliver speeches to large audiences in whichever forum they are participating. Leaders relish this, and this is in itself another reason why the group is not about to fade away any time soon. Having served as sherpa at three G7 summits each, for both prime ministers Harper and Trudeau, I know that both leaders appreciated this type of engagement. Two occasions that stood out for me in very different ways were the discussion on Asian security at the 2016 Ise Shima summit in Japan (Trudeau's first, he has now gone full circle and is the only leader left standing from that group) and the discussion on climate change at the Taormina summit in Italy the following year. The first G7 summit for President Donald Trump, that session reminded me of an episode of "The Apprentice" where Trump, in listening and judging mode, encouraged leaders to convince him of the virtues of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. It was wide-ranging with Angela Merkel, Emmanuel Macron and Justin Trudeau all making persuasive arguments. But to no avail. They were all fired. The president pulled the United States out of the agreement after the summit.

The G20 culminates in a larger summit with many more participants, including foreign and finance ministers as well as central bank governors and heads of international organizations, the latter also usually attending a portion of the G7 summit. The table is large, the leaders' speeches pro forma and there is much emphasis on bilateral meetings, planned —sometimes unplanned— "bump-intos" and "brush-bys" (you don't have to be a practitioner to appreciate these esoteric terms of diplomatic art). The focus is on the global economy, on international development financing and trade. But important decisions can be taken. Examples include the establishment of the "Montreal Consensus on Globalization", where finance ministers and central bankers agreed to link global economic issues with social policy issues, the International Monetary Fund quota reforms of 2008 and the creation of the Financial Stability Board in 2009

Peter Boehm preparing for the June, 2018, Charlevoix G7 with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, in the last sherpa meeting before arrivals in Baie St. Paul. --*John Zerucelli.*

to ward off extreme global economic downturns. More recently, the G20 agreed to inject $5 trillion of liquidity into the global economy at the height of the COVID pandemic in 2020. Last year, at its summit in Bali, the G20 moved into the geopolitical arena with a leaders' declaration that admonished Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, citing some of the language of UN General Assembly resolutions.

The clear advantage of the G20 is the presence of China and Russia, who are also involved in the ministerial and sherpa tracks where they can make their own contributions, by either supporting, attempting to create or diluting consensus. But unless there is a clear decision on a global economic initiative to respond to a crisis, G20 documents often represent a very low common denominator in collective will. Nonetheless, preparations for this September's G20 summit in New Delhi feature work on anti-corruption, the digital economy, disaster risk reduction, environment and climate and interestingly, NFTs, artificial intelligence and the metaverse. Discussions on AI, more in the context of the impact on workers, were first featured at Charlevoix in 2018.

There are crossovers between the G7 and G20. The G7 summits invariably begin with a discussion of the global economy, usually led off by the US president, and, as reflected in the summit communiqué, the G7 leaders go forward into the G20 discussions with a fairly united position.

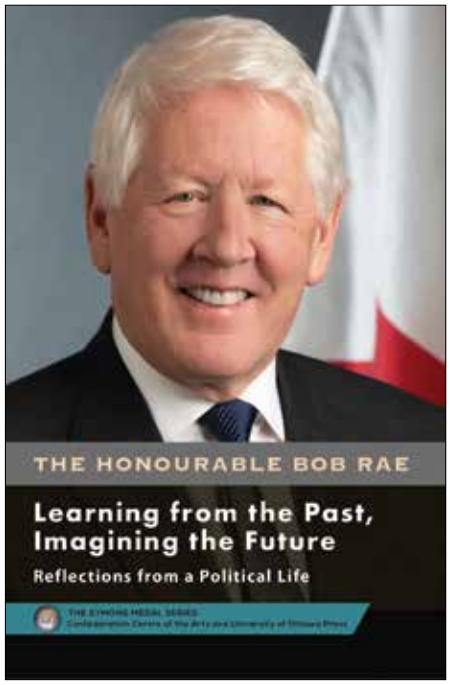
In what is known as the outreach component of summits, other leaders and the heads of international institutions are often invited to participate on the second day of the summit to discuss particular issues. For example, a dozen additional leaders were invited to Charlevoix in 2018 for a discussion on climate change and oceans, which led to further work in the UN and beyond on this pertinent issue. Japan followed suit at Hiroshima this year in inviting a number of other leaders, including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who will chair the G20 summit in September. Civil society engagement groups, including those representing the private sector, organized labour, women, scientists and youth feed into both the G7 and G20 preparatory processes. A plethora of government working groups feed the agendas of both bodies and are usually populated by the same experts. Innovation of format can take place: during its G7 presidency in 2018, Canada chose to have overlapping ministerial meetings of foreign/defence, innovation/labour, environment/energy, finance/development ministers to reflect intersecting policy interests. There is a verisimilitude in legacy of summit presidencies and agendas, with continuity and adjustments being made to respond to events or crises, as was the case with the war in Ukraine for both Germany and Japan during their presidencies over the past two years.

Brinksmanship and disruption can also be factors. I recall Vladimir Putin monopolizing the foreign policy discussion at the last G8 summit at Lough Erne in Northern Ireland in 2013 by extolling the virtues of Bashar al-Assad of Syria, which prompted Barack Obama to say that this was a waste of time. At Charlevoix, a clearly unprepared Donald Trump told the other leaders that he strongly believed Putin should be at the table, countenanced an absurd debate by his team on "the rules-based international order" (captured in the famous photo) and in a moment of pique seemingly directed at his host, attempted to disassociate himself and his government from the final communique which had already been issued. The fallout continued into the French G7 presidency following ours in 2019 (imposing steel and aluminum tariffs on US allies didn't help) and into the American presidency in 2020 where the pandemic and political turmoil in Washington obviated having a summit at all. But by and large, differences are smoothed over in both the G7 and G20 contexts.

Having been at the G7 summit in Hiroshima, hosting the G20 summit in September, with his participation at the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) summit in South Africa in between, Modi will have an opportunity to play the role of conciliator/mediator whether or not Putin attends either event. At the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Samarkand last year, Modi told Putin publicly that "today's era must not be one of war". Perhaps he can press him some more. So too, the newly re-elected Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Türkiye can continue to promote food security for the global south with guaranteed movement of grains through the Black Sea. Erdoğan could also proffer the gift of dropping his opposition to Swedish membership in NATO at the organization's summit in Vilnius in July. As with all the global turbulence over the past two years, the next few months should keep summit aficionados and foreign policy wonks very engaged. P

Senator Peter M. Boehm, a regular contributor to Policy *magazine, is a former senior diplomat and current chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade. He served as Canada's Sherpa for six G7 summits.*

BOOK REVIEWS



True Believer: Bob Rae's *'Learning From the Past, Imagining the Future'*

Learning from the Past, Imagining the Future: Reflections from a Political Life
The 2020 Symons Medal Lecture
By Bob Rae
University of Ottawa Press, April 2023

Reviewed by
Michael Ignatieff

Bob Rae's Symons lecture, delivered at the Charlottetown Confederation Centre in 2020, and now published by Ottawa University Press, is an eloquent reflection on a life in public service that began with Rae's election to Parliament in 1977, at the age of 29, and culminated in his appointment as Canada's Ambassador to the UN in 2020, at the age of 72.

His lecture honours another Canadian public servant, Tom Symons, who founded Trent University in the early 1960s, and who died last year. When Bob met Tom before the lecture to seek advice about what to say, Tom told Bob to make the lecture personal and visionary. It is both.

The lecture offers revealing insights into the history of Canadian progressivism in the late 20th century. It illuminates the links that have braided together the competing strands of our progressive traditions. Longtime Conservative Premier of Ontario, Bill Davis, liked to tease Rae that he was really a Red Tory in disguise, and the friendly dig takes me back to a vanishing political landscape where a cautious, incremental progressivism was a creed that crossed party lines.

> *"In hindsight, Bob's move back and forth across party lines reflected his conviction that there was a single progressive tradition, with left and centre wings, and he could serve progressive ends by joining up with different wings of the same family."*

This common creed was non-sectarian and broad-church. The right end of the spectrum was occupied by Red Tories such as the philosopher George Grant and Progressive Conservative politicians, including Bob Stanfield, Bill Davis, Peter Lougheed and Brian Mulroney. In the centre of the progressive formation were the Liberals. Mike Pearson's memorable minority government of the 1960s defined the progressive agenda for the generation — mine and Bob's — who came of age in that era. That teetering, tottering government, widely derided at the time, left behind the most impressive legislative achievement of the 20th century: the flag, the Canada Pension Plan, Expo 67, health care, the opening to Quebec, and, largely unnoticed at the time, the opening of our border to immigrants from Africa and Asia.

Liberals, being the arrogant and entitled folk we are, like to think we're the ones who built a compassionate Canada, but truth be told, the achievement, such as it was, was the work of three traditions, conservative, social democratic and liberal, co-operating together. Bob Rae came to maturity in this overlapping competition for the centre of Canadian political life. He joined Pierre Trudeau's Liberal leadership campaign in 1968 and then graduated towards David Lewis and Ed Broadbent's NDP after time at Oxford as a Rhodes scholar, coming under the influence of the British left, and then shifting farther left thanks to his work with the union movement as a labour lawyer.

Moving from the Liberals to the NDP in his twenties, and back from the NDP to the Liberals in his fifties, may have looked like crass expediency at the time, and I was one of those who thought so then. In hindsight, Bob's move back and forth across party lines reflected his conviction that there was a single progressive tradition, with left and centre wings, and he could serve progressive ends by joining up with different wings of the same family. He always argued,

when he left the NDP, that he hadn't left the party, the party had left him. Inside that fractious family, he remained in the party's centre, and when he came back to the Liberals, his worldview didn't change much. The lecture shows that he remains what he always was; a moderate progressive, socially compassionate, fiscally responsible internationalist, with a commitment to Canada as a pivotal multilateralist, devoted to keeping the world at peace.

In the 21st century, this centrist progressivism is still holding together, at least sufficiently to enable the NDP to stay in a confidence and supply agreement with the Trudeau government. But Canada has lost, and perhaps forever, the progressive conservative element that kept the whole political system from drifting too far left. Progressive conservatism still has its avatars. A Michael Chong or an Erin O'Toole would still fit that description, but their party has deserted them. Canadian conservatism risks becoming a strange brew of imported American bile, populist trash talk and aggrieved Western ressentiment. It isn't even distinctively Canadian. It's 'suiviste', as the French would say, with Pierre Poilievre following the rightward, populist march of global conservatism elsewhere, in France with Marine Le Pen, in Hungary with Viktor Orban, in Poland with Jaroslaw Kaczynski, and leading the pack, Donald Trump. Whether Canadian voters, fundamentally conservative and cautious by nature, recognize themselves in this alien politics of resentment is less than clear. What is certain is that the old alliance among Red Tories, Liberals and social democrats is dead and gone.

The consensual progressivism of the 50s and 60s rested on a vanished equilibrium of relative equality and high taxation, left over, as Thomas Piketty reminds us, from the heroic years of World War II. Inequality has surged since the 1970s, and it has broken apart the electoral consensus that supported high taxation in return for high-quality public services. So, it's unsurprising that the liberal elites who rode to power on the back of this consensus are fighting for their political lives. Rae's Ontario government in the 1990s went down to defeat when a global recession destroyed the viability of his progressive policies.

Rae, like me, is a charter member of that old liberal elite. Roommates while at the University of Toronto, we both enjoyed prestigious educations at Oxford and Harvard, and we benefited from the incalculable advantage of fathers who ended up as ambassadors. So, we both know elites from the inside, but Bob's career shows that he also knew something about the responsibilities of privilege. He has given back to his country throughout his life.

> ***"The lecture shows that Bob Rae remains what he always was; a moderate progressive, socially compassionate, fiscally responsible internationalist, with a commitment to Canada as a pivotal multilateralist, devoted to keeping the world at peace."***

Still, no matter how public-spirited liberal elites claim to be, a critique from the right of their entitlement, privilege, and yes, their arrogance, was bound to come sooner or later. The problem with the conservative populists de nos jours is they have no solutions to propose to our discontents, except to replace the liberals with a new elite composed of themselves. Instead of working to stabilize and reverse inequality, their economic ideas — tax cuts and more tax cuts — are bound to increase it. Instead of trying to bring a fragmented and fractured political culture together, they cultivate the culture wars, promoting divisive wedge issues largely irrelevant to the real problems the country faces. In his Symons lecture, Bob adopts a tone of statesmanlike detachment and avoids political shots at the current batch of Canadian conservatives, but their rightward populist turn is an unwelcome new development, likely to destabilize Canadian politics for some time to come.

The nastiness of 21st-century politics makes it easy to wax nostalgic about the vanished comity of the century now past. We should remember that the pipeline debate of the 1950s was as nasty a squabble as Parliament has ever seen, and the mutual hatred of Pearson and Diefenbaker, especially during the Munsinger scandal, was palpable. Parties and politicians fought each other with as little respect for the parliamentary proprieties as they do today.

What was different then was that tactical political combat hid a degree of strategic agreement on the Canadian fundamentals. As a young parliamentarian, Rae himself tabled the motion that brought the Clark government down in 1979, leading to the return of Pierre Trudeau. Rae, Trudeau and Clark may have been political antagonists, but their overall vision of Canada, and what government ought to be doing to realize our promise, shared a lot in common. Today, it's an open question whether that common ground remains.

Here, too, we need to avoid overdoing the nostalgia. That would ignore the divisive constitutional debates of the 1980s that Bob returns to in the lecture. Even within a political culture that in retrospect seems consensual, there were important differences of principle that became more evident as the euphoria of 1960s was followed by the darker and more difficult 1970s and 1980s. Rae's lecture makes it clear that he dissented from the centralizing ambitions at the heart of Trudeau's vision of Canada. His time as premier of Ontario seems to have deepened this conviction:

"The notion that power must be unitary, and that sovereignty is the be-all-and-end-all, was not natural then, and is not natural now. Government insti¬tutions that are over-centralized do not work well — at their best they are sclerotic and hierarchical — at their worst they are corrupt, authoritarian, and dictatorial. Canada's working idea is pluralism, which accepts the limits of sovereignty and nationalism, and stresses the need for cooperation between governments."

The drift of Canadian politics since Pierre Trudeau's time confirms that Rae had a sound political instinct about the country's limited taste for centralized government. Instead of a country bound together by a common Charter and a repatriated constitution, as Pierre Trudeau imagined, even his son has taken a different road. The country, when it works at all, works when Ottawa proposes, but the provinces dispose, Ottawa providing the tax resources and the provinces implementing programs in their own fashion. Such common purpose as we ever achieve comes as the result of protracted negotiation between the centre and the provincial capitals.

Rae was one of those in the NDP caucus in the constitution debates of the 1980s who campaigned in favour of two constitutional changes that drove the federation towards a more decentralized model: the entrenchment of Aboriginal rights and provincial title to natural resources. The benefits of this kind of decentralized federalism are clear. After hundreds of years of exclusion, Aboriginal Canadians are at the table. Rae has been a consistent and courageous believer in Aboriginal rights and Aboriginal inclusion. The downsides of our constitutional compromise are also evident: it takes a long time to get anything done. We have a lot of veto points, and Aboriginal Canadians now have vetoes too. We have chosen justice and inclusion at the price of forward motion: whatever the issue, whether climate change and other pressing issues, like improving our competitiveness, dismantling our internal trade barriers, our professional licensing monopolies that hold back entry of newcomers to our professions, we're moving slowly, but that has been our collective choice. What price we will pay when other countries move faster, only time will tell.

"The drift of Canadian politics since Pierre Trudeau's time confirms that Rae had a sound political instinct about the country's limited taste for centralized government."

In foreign affairs, Rae has stayed true to the mid-century multilateralism and internationalism of Canada's progressive high noon. He's been special envoy to Myanmar and wrote a scathing report denouncing the Burmese military regime's treatment of the Rohingya people, and now he's our ambassador at the United Nations, reprising a role once performed by his father, and by mine.

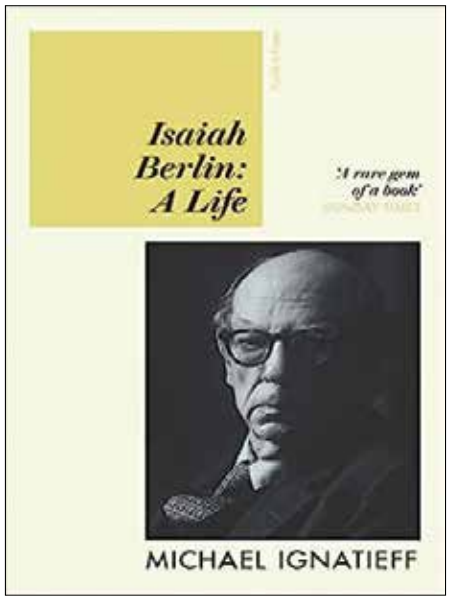
Our fathers, who were rivalrous friends throughout their careers, rose within the fabled Department of External Affairs in the Pearson era. This was a time when, once a decade, Canada could get the votes for a seat on the UN Security Council. Those days are gone. Other countries, such as Ireland and Portugal, have more friends in Europe and the developing world, and in the so-called Global South, Canada is seen as too NATO, too close to the US, to be voted onto the UN's top body. Rae does not mention our country's declining stature at the UN and other multilateral bodies. Some of this decline is the inevitable result of the rise to power of China and its allies, especially Russia, Brazil, India and South Africa, and the shift of global wealth eastward. The mid 20th-century world in which we counted—the world whose axis was the North Atlantic—is gone.

The axis of global economic and political power has shifted eastward, and in this new world, Canada is not a middle power, but a marginal one. It also made a bet on 'soft power' as a lever of influence, and this has turned out to be a poor choice in a world where power comes from the barrel of gun. Rae's lecture stays irenic, hopeful and rhetorical, but I'm sure he is as impatient as I am with a Canada that thinks foreign policy is the art of virtue signalling, accompanied by photo ops.

His father and mine knew better. They had been through a world war. Foreign policy is the defence of national interests, with all the sinews of national power, joined to a commitment to uphold an international order that keeps the peace. In recent decades, we've had a foreign policy — across Conservative and Liberal governments alike — that expounds values without resources and expresses solidarity without staying power. These are the symptoms of a comfortable country unwilling to face international decline. Ukraine is a wake-up call. They don't need our speeches. They need money and they need weapons, and we've had to deplete our military stockpiles and capability even further to equip them in their fight.

As anybody who has read this far surely knows, Bob and I were friends before we became rivals for the leadership of the Liberal Party. We both wanted the same thing, and in the end neither of us won the ultimate prize. That's politics. Reading this lecture enabled me to look back on all that rivalry with fresh eyes and to realize how similar our views of the world were, how we came out of the same formative times, and how, in his case certainly, he stayed true to what he believed when I first met him, all those many years ago. P

Michael Ignatieff is Rector Emeritus of Central European University and a professor of history, based in Vienna.



Ignatieff Returns to the Great Intellectual Love of His Life: Big Ideas

Isaiah Berlin: A Life
By Michael Ignatieff
Revised, updated edition from Pushkin Press, May 2023

Reviewed by Bob Rae

Early one Monday morning in the fall of 1969, two young Oxford graduate students, Joe Femia and I, made our way to Sir Isaiah Berlin's office in Wolfson College. We were starting our two-year B Phil degree, which included preparing for exams and writing a thesis. We had both decided to work on Hegel and Marx for the exams to be held in the late spring of 1971. Our Balliol tutor had told us that it was best to throw us into the deep end of the pool "and see who can swim". That process included regular meetings with Berlin, the renowned liberal philosopher, who was then also president of Wolfson.

Joe, who went on to become a leading political theory scholar, wrote a doctorate (and later a book) on the Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci, for which Berlin would be his supervisor. My own path in life was far more circuitous, as many readers of this magazine will know. I have learned how to swim, thanks in part to times when my head was underwater. Joe and I did pass our exams.

In the late 1960s, there was no central heating at Oxford, and the fall term (known in Oxford parlance as Michaelmas) grew colder and damper as the months proceeded. But a constant source of both light and warmth was our two-hour session with Isaiah. He was welcoming, funny, and, we soon realized, one of the great conversationalists of our time. His breadth of knowledge and his anecdotal recall never ceased to astonish (although we would occasionally hear a story in December that we had first heard in October), and those two hours would keep us going as we struggled our way through Marx and Hegel.

Berlin got us both to write papers every week, and used these as a basis for discussion. It must be said that the virtuoso behind the landmark essay and intellectual party game The Hedgehog and the Fox was not a morning person.

After the introductory niceties were concluded, we sat in comfy old chairs near the electric heater. Joe and I were taken aback when Berlin started talking and realized that we had no idea what he was saying. His early-morning voice was like an old car getting warmed up. He spoke quickly, and the words would have flown around the room like bullets had he not swallowed them all. But eventually, the ear adjusted, and I think he slowed down to accommodate the blank faces staring at him. "Ah yes, you want North American speed, I shall do my best to adjust…" He then turned to me.

"Mr. Rae, what is that on the floor between us?"

Long pause as I look down.

"Well, sir that would be a carpet."

"Very good. Is there anything special about the carpet"?

"Well, it's very nice, red, and a beautiful design."

"Anything strike you about the design?"

"I don't know, kinda symmetrical."

"Yes, very good, but you're missing the big point," he said. "It's not 'kinda' or 'sorta' symmetrical. It is perfectly symmetrical. Everything fits. And that's the big thing you need to know about both Hegel and Marx. They were not men with doubts, or quibbles, or questions. They were men with answers, and they believed in theories that they were convinced explained everything. And as you go through life, you will have to decide whether everything fits, or whether you agree with Kant that 'from this crooked timber of humanity nothing straight was ever made'."

That dialogue stayed with me the rest of my life.

> ***"It must be said that the virtuoso behind the landmark essay and intellectual party game The Hedgehog and the Fox was not a morning person. After the introductory niceties were concluded, we sat in comfy old chairs near the electric heater."***

Berlin would regale us with the story of writing his own book on Marx (still in print), discovering that Marx had an illegitimate son. At that time, Isaiah was teaching a term at City College of New York, and shared his love of the United States, where he would soon be going to deliver a lecture to the New York Police Department. He was, in short, a phenomenon, but also a gentle, sweet man.

Arlene and I met Berlin again soon after we were married, and I had chosen the path of politics. He was far more interested in talking with her than with me, and he opened up a lot about his family in Latvia and Russia. He asked about our family histories, and gave us a superbly gossipy review of the current political scene. The

pace of the flow was just as it had been twelve years before.

My last meeting with Isaiah Berlin was in Toronto, where, in 1994, he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Toronto. I was premier at the time, and he was most generous with his time and sense of the future. He had suffered a stroke in his voice box, and could only talk in the huskiest of whispers. I treasure a photo of the two of us together, which has pride of place in my office.

For the many of you familiar with Isaiah Berlin, it's likely you know about him at least in part from reading Michael Ignatieff's excellent biography, *Isaiah Berlin: A Life*. Ignatieff's revised and updated Berlin book, recently published by Pushkin Press, is at once thoughtful and personal; more comprehensive than the first edition, which appeared in 1998, a year after Berlin's death. If you have read the first edition, you will still need this version in your library, since it gives such a complete assessment of the man, his thought, and his times.

As many readers know, Michael Ignatieff and I have a long history. We met very briefly as kids when the careers of our diplomat fathers overlapped for a short time in Ottawa. My father Saul and Michael's father George were students together at Toronto's Jarvis Collegiate (my dad, an ambassador by way of vaudeville, remembered putting makeup on George for a school show he was directing) and then at the University of Toronto. Michael's mother Alison was a very close friend of my mother's, and emotionally close to all of us. When I came to U of T in 1966, Michael and I became classmates and friends, sharing an apartment above a Bloor St. shoe store. We worked together on Teach-Ins and the Varsity Review, and shared many good times together. I later slept on his couch when he was at Harvard studying for his doctorate and I was struggling to figure out my next steps. He was kindness itself during a difficult time in my life. I began law school in Toronto in 1974, and we did not live in the same place again until Michael came back to Canada to run for parliament in 2006. We corresponded, e-mailed, shared meals and jokes, and remained friends. We parted ways over the invasion of Iraq — he was for it, I was against — but visited Kurdish Iraq together in the years afterward.

> ***"A nuanced description of the private man, with his love of music and literature, rich friendships and complex romantic life, Ignatieff's book is also a compelling review of why Berlin mattered, and why he still matters."***

Michael's father had followed Berlin at St Paul's School and studied with him as a young Rhodes Scholar at Oxford. Their paths had crossed many times, and when Michael became a figure on the London intellectual and literary scene in the 1970s, Berlin and Michael were re-introduced. At Berlin's request, Michael began interviewing the great man for the book that would eventually become his biography. Over the last twenty years, the Berlin archive at the Bodleian Library has been significantly increased, with masses of personal correspondence gathered, as well as manuscripts republished. Berlin was notorious for his difficulty in putting pen (or typewriter) to paper for publication, and often mumbled that he had never produced a "great book". He once quipped of a fellow professor, "His every thought is in print."

Following Michael's shift to electoral politics in Canada, and then a challenging time as the Rector of Central European University in both Budapest and (thanks to Victor Orban's personal loathing of George Soros) Vienna, he has now turned his attention back to the great intellectual love of his life; engaging with big ideas, making them intelligible to the general reader, and writing with a vigorous and eloquent style worthy of his subjects.

Michael gives us a picture of Isaiah Berlin different than many of Berlin's students would ever have known. His father was a Jewish timber merchant in Riga, Latvia, and he maintained a deep love of Russian literature and followed Soviet politics closely. He detested Stalinism. He struggled with feeling an outsider in the English world that he joined as a young teenager after his family fled Russia. This part of Berlin's life is explored with great depth and sympathy as Michael's own family — as recounted in his family history The Russian Album — fled Russia after the Revolution (his grandfather was the Minister of Education under the Tsars). While their backgrounds were very different, subject and biographer shared enough to allow Berlin to confide his own turmoil and conflicts. Berlin, as famous for his quotable aphorisms as for his deep thinking, once observed that, "The Jews have too much history and too little geography."

Berlin did everything he could to fit in to the Oxford of his time, and jousted with linguistic philosophers like Freddy Ayer and J.L. Austin in his role as a don at New College. But it was the war that allowed him to share in the world's great struggles. He worked for the British Foreign Office in both New York and Washington, and it was there that his passion for people and politics, the feeling of working for a great common project, was put to great use.

Berlin made many friends in Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal administration, and also provided invaluable information on a weekly basis to Churchill and his government. All of us who knew him were lucky to have a tutor who saw there was a wider, consequential world outside political theory, and that leaving the academic life was not always a sign of failure. His own words to me on this subject meant a lot, although it was some time before they sank in.

A nuanced description of the private man, with his love of music and literature, rich friendships and complex romantic life, Ignatieff's book is also a compelling review of why Berlin mattered, and why he still matters. Isaiah Berlin believed deeply in freedom, pri-

vacy, pluralism, history, ideas, learning, and laughter. He despised tyranny, totalitarianism, loose and lazy thinking, and regimentation. He was never boring, and his love of gossip and indiscreet jokes and stories endeared him to all those who were not their subject.

Michael defends Berlin's actions and thinking at every turn. Berlin used to say that he could not bring himself to deplore the French Revolution, despite its excesses. "In that sense I guess I'm a man of the left." I used to joke with him that equality and solidarity featured prominently in the revolutionary idea, and I didn't get the feeling they were as close to him as liberty. He replied, "Sometimes a good quip is terrible politics." At our last meeting in Toronto, Berlin whispered to me hoarsely that what Britain needed was another "moderate Labour government." He passed away six months after the election of the Blair government.

In embracing "freedom from", or what he called "negative liberty" in his famous inaugural Oxford lecture "The Two Concepts of Liberty" in 1958, Berlin insisted that political tyranny started when those governing in the name of a theory imposed the ways in which people would be allowed to realize their true nature. But short of this, the entire world of modern liberal politics since the mid-nineteenth century has been based on the valid concern that for freedom to be meaningful, it must be more widely shared. Otherwise, we are left in a world where the rich and poor are both free to sleep under bridges — an option that, for some reason, only the poor and destitute avail themselves of. Hence, liberalism requires a strong dose of social democracy. At least that is how I have come to see it in my own intellectual and political journey.

As part of that journey, Michael and I were rivals for the leadership of the Liberal Party in both 2006 and 2008/9, and those contests, predictably enough, did not serve our friendship well. I never felt that the world of electoral and parliamentary politics, which had been my chosen field of battle since 1978, would be one where Michael would feel comfortable, or where his multiple talents and abilities would be treated fairly. Rivalries and competing ambitions within parties take a much heavier toll on friendships than do the battles between political platoons.

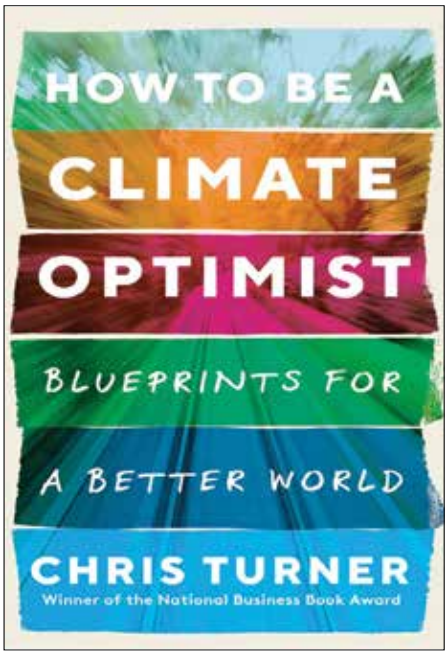
But what I know now is that Michael Ignatieff's continuing contribution to the world of ideas and policy deserves our thanks and respect. He has returned to the world of The Russian Album and Isaiah Berlin, to the ideas of Turgenev and Tolstoy, John Rawls and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Michael has the ability to bring the past to life, and to make intellectual choices clear. He writes and speaks with eloquence, and cuts through difficult material in a way that few other people can. He has fought hard for liberty in difficult circumstances, and has faced political defeat with grace. I am proud to be his friend. P

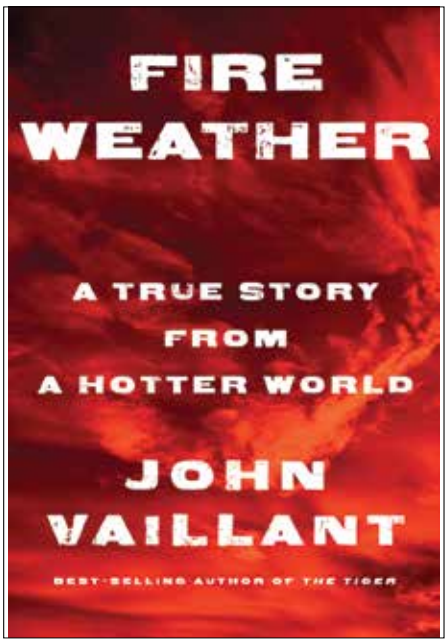
Bob Rae is Canada's ambassador to the United Nations.

Summer Reading: On Hope and Fire

How to be a Climate Optimist: Blueprints for a Better World
By Chris Turner
Penguin Random House, May 2022

Fire Weather: A True Story From a Hotter World
By John Vaillant
Penguin Random House, May 2023





Reviewed by
Elizabeth May and John Kidder

Two recent books illuminate the climate debate with contrasting and complementary lights.

Chris Turner's 2022 book, How to Be a Climate Optimist, won the 2023 Shaughnessy Cohen prize for political writing. That alone establishes its place of pride on any Canadian shelf. More recently released, John Vaillant's Fire Weather: A True Story From a Hotter World is beyond timely, as Canada experiences massive fires from British Columbia to Nova Scotia – eight provinces and one Territory in crisis.

Both writers are skilled, knowledgeable and eloquent. The Albertan, claims to be a "plausible optimist"; the British Columbian is profoundly a pessimist. Both create challenges for a new understanding of the word "optimist".

Here is how optimist Turner sees our future:

"The world will develop and implement better systems and technologies to meet our daily needs and reduce our global greenhouse gas emissions to somewhere very near zero in this century. It likely won't happen in time to halt the permanent alteration of many of the planet's ecosystems and prevent significant dislocation and suffering for millions of people."

"Permanent alteration of many of the planet's ecosystems"? "Significant dislocation and suffering for millions of people?" That's how the optimist sees things.

Turner believes that fossil fuels will soon cease to be humanity's primary source of energy, thus averting the worst outcomes of climate change. Living in Calgary, he has observed the rise of the fossil business and its government support. He understands the harm being done to ecosystems and to humanity by burning coal, oil and gas. He sees how fast technology and markets are moving to renewable power. He has experienced governments in other parts of the world that have affected business and citizen behaviour to speed the transition. He thinks governments and some companies are sincerely trying to solve the problem, and are moving as fast as is politically possible.

Turner draws hope from past willingness of Big Oil to adopt climate goals: recent events undermine even that. Since the price hikes allowed by the war in Ukraine, Shell, BP and others have disavowed their "commitments" to reduced emissions, fossil revenue is 14 percent of Canada's exports and rising, the Liberal government continues to support billions for pipelines and fossil infrastructure, provincial governments love their hoped-for LNG exports, and various ministers continue to accept new fossil development. The oil and gas business is being disrupted worldwide by the plummeting costs and increasing efficiencies of renewable energy. So far, the commercial and political drive in Canada to burn even more, to get it while the getting's still good, seems unaffected. The companies and governments that Turner hopes are allies seem, at best, fair-weather friends.

Turner's call for a "plausible optimism" starts with a chilling acknowledgement of the damage already done and the unavoidable harm to come. He allows no room for vain hopes that everything will turn out all right. There will be no "win", but we can optimistically hope for a possible avoidance of the worst case. The best possible outcome is a stop-loss scenario. Turner should be thanked for putting it so plainly – there's no avoidance here.

Vaillant's Fire Weather describes a world increasingly on fire. Humans' use of fire has grown exponentially over the last hundred years or so, thanks to coal, oil and gas. Vaillant calls our age the "Petrocene", a "historically brief experiment with fossil fuel-driven civilization." The addiction to fossils has super-charged the climate and sparked increased frequency and severity of wildfires around the world. Seeing little sign that such disasters will cause a meaningful change in

direction, he blames the industry itself. The misinformation of fossil companies shows that they will keep on pushing for short-term profit. And governments love the revenues.

Vaillant has less patience than Turner for governments and none for oil companies. His exquisite and terrifying reportage on the fires that destroyed Fort MacMurray, his contempt for writing "unprecedented" to describe events anticipated for decades, his disdain for our apparent inability to learn, his unequivocal statements that "fire weather" is now baked in to the future – none of this is optimistic. He likes a suggestion from Cristian Proistosescu at the University of Illinois: Rather than calling June 2023 the hottest June in the last hundred years, call it the coolest June for the next few hundred.

And Vaillant's "bright side" optimism statement outdoes even Turner's.

"On the bright side, life — in one form or another — has always won out against the unregulated, uber-consuming impulses of fire and its most durable by-products ash, methane and carbon dioxide. That there will be life at the end of the Petrocene is a certainty, but whose, how much and where is less clear."

Writing in 2021/22, Turner cited psychologist Daniel Gilbert that climate change had not engaged the four primary triggers of humanity's threat response: 1) it is not a direct personal threat; 2) it's not happening right now; 3) it's not abrupt; 4) it is not, in most people's estimation, immoral.

Perhaps 2023 will change that. Fires and smoke are a direct personal threat to people in New York City, Washington and, Philadelphia, as well as Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto and Halifax. They are happening right now. They seem abrupt to people who have not been watching. That's three of the four triggers. The fourth, the moral argument, seems increasingly obvious — UN Secretary-General António Guterres says "the truly dangerous radicals are the countries that are increasing the production of fossil fuels. Investing in new fossil fuel infrastructure is moral and economic madness."

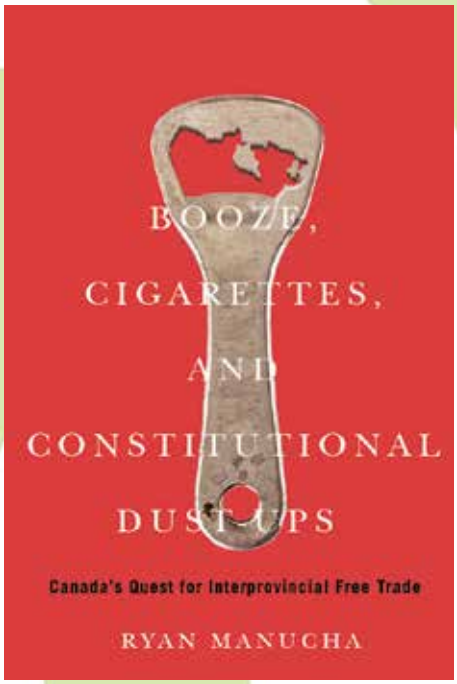
Each book makes climate change personal, immediate and abrupt. They differ on the moral element. Vaillant is unequivocal – with full knowledge, companies are doing enormous harm to the common weal of this and future generations, and loving the near-term profits. Turner thinks some companies and some governments are doing the best they can. Readers will make their own determinations.

Both writers are genuinely concerned for the future of the planet. Both foresee the ultimate demise of fossil fuels as the world's primary source of power. Each acknowledges that, despite full awareness of the outcomes we observe today, companies and governments continue to support and believe in growing the fossil industry. Turner believes that is changing, Vaillant not so much.

Both books are valuable reading and excellent contributions to the literature. Both are full of savage prognostication of damages to ecosystems and people. Each sees the transition from oil and gas as inevitable. Each calls for governments to quit that business in the knowledge that its products are increasingly unviable. Both should be required reading for policy makers and voters. P

Elizabeth May is the Leader of the Green Party of Canada and MP for Saanich-Gulf Islands. John Kidder is a former range ecologist and technology entrepreneur who writes about climate change and energy policy. They co-authored Climate Change for Dummies *(Toronto, John Wiley and Sons, 2020).*

Congratulations to Ryan Manucha
on winning the 2023 Donner Prize



Booze, Cigarettes, and Constitutional Dust-Ups
Canada's Quest for Interprovincial Free Trade
Ryan Manucha
2022 | $37.95 | 312pp

The Donner Prize Jury praised Ryan's book for "making internal free trade lively with clear explanations and relevant anecdotes, an excellent review of the development of internal trade policy, as well as guidance on future policy developments in the years to come. And, as importantly, a compelling and enjoyable read!"

Enduring Work
Experiences with Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program
Catherine E. Connelly
2023 | $32.95 | 200pp

"*Enduring Work* is clearly written, and engaging, [It] enhances our understanding of the program and workers' experiences with it."
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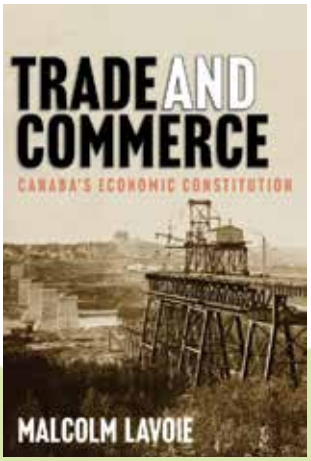

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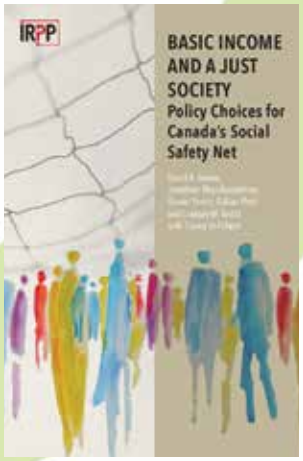

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