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### Crime, Justice, and Inequality: Oh Canada, Where Art Thou?<sup>1</sup>

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#### **Abstract**

Since Canada's colonial beginnings, it has become increasingly riddled with classism, racism, sexism, and other damaging outcomes of structured social inequality. In 2006, however, many types of social injustice were turbo-charged under the federal leadership of the Harper government. For example, a recent southern Ontario study shows that less than half of working people between the ages of 25 and 65 have full-time jobs with benefits. The main objective of this paper is to critique the dominant Canadian political economic order and the pain and suffering it has caused for millions of people. Informed by left realism and other progressive ways of knowing, I also suggest some ways of turning the tide.

#### **Keywords**

Canada, neoliberalism, corporatization, penal state, left realism

#### **Introduction**

Perhaps this statement is the best way to start this article: 'The Tories have changed Canada in no time at all' (Harper 2013a). Since Canada's colonial beginnings, it has become increasingly riddled with classism, racism, sexism, and other highly injurious symptoms of structured social inequality. In 2006, however, many types of social injustice in 'the true north strong and free' went into over-drive under the leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservatives. Seven years later, and after two years of holding the majority of seats in the House of Commons, the Harper government's neoliberal agenda is turbo-charged. True, neoliberal policies have not totally abolished social democracy and welfare policies in Canada and in other Western nations (Garland 2013) but Canada is now, like its neighbour south of the border, an 'exclusive society' characterized by an ever widening gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' (Young 1999). The main objective of this article is twofold: (1) to provide salient examples of how the current Canadian political economic state of affairs has rapidly eroded social democracy in Canada; and (2) to suggest several progressive ways of resistance and turning the tide.

#### **The new Canada and its relationship to the US**

Of all the countries in the world, the United States (US) has the greatest effect on Canada. This is not surprising for numerous reasons, including that most Canadians reside near the US border. The late Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau continues to remind us that, 'Living

next to the United States is like a mouse sharing a bed with an elephant. No matter how friendly and even-tempered the beast ... one is affected by every twitch and grunt ...' (cited in Brooks 2008: 25). Consequently, frequent comparisons with the US constitute a 'fact of life' in Canada (Grabb and Curtis 2005). Furthermore, many such comparisons are simply 'shallow generalizations at the macro-level that are not borne out either in current practice or in terms of what our actual histories have been' (Thomas and Torrey 2008: 10). For example, Simpson's (2000: 95) observation is still correct:

Canadians prefer to think of their country as virtue incarnate, its cup of tolerance running over. They endlessly recycle the cliché about Canada the 'peaceable kingdom' in large part because it makes them feel good about themselves. Canadians are peacekeepers abroad, peaceful citizens at home.

At first glance, Canada appears to be a 'kinder, gentler nation' but not to the extent assumed by many, if not most, inside and outside observers. In fact, right-wing policies and practices recently transferred from the US under the leadership of the Harper government are negatively impacting thousands of Canadians, and the US has significantly shaped modes of governance in the United Kingdom and Australia (DeKeseredy 2009). Consider that former Australian Prime Minister John Howard was one of President George W. Bush's strongest supporters after September 11, 2001. Plus, in 2004, the Bush government speedily crafted a free trade agreement with Australia. Be that as it may, the US influence on Canada is much stronger due to proximity and other determinants, including being Canada's largest trading partner. The new Canada described in this paper, though, should not be viewed as entirely a product of US neoliberal authority or pressure. Actually, the federal Tories and some provincial governments, such those in Ontario and Alberta, warmly embrace the neoliberal doctrine and do not require much, if any, nudging from US politicians and business elites to create laws and policies that solely benefit the prosperous.

### **The corporatization of the ivory tower**

Throughout the Western world, institutions of higher learning devoted mainly to promoting critical thinking and to offering a traditional liberal arts education are dwindling and those in Canada are following suit. As urbanist Jane Jacobs (2005: 49) put it:

[R]ejoicing that university education has become a growth industry, administrators and legislators seek increasingly to control problems of scale by applying lessons from profit-making enterprises that turn expanded markets to advantage by cutting costs. Increased output of product can be measured more easily as numbers of credentialed graduates than as numbers of educated graduates. Quantity trumps quality.

For progressive scholars, teachers, and activists, corporatization has additional negative consequences. Note that in Canada, as elsewhere, part-time faculty greatly outnumber tenured professors (DeKeseredy 2012; Finder 2007; Fordyce 2011). This is not only because of economic factors. It is also a stealth means of eliminating tenure because it cannot be legally terminated according to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.<sup>2</sup> Increasing part-time teachers serves another political purpose by deterring insecure instructors earning menial paychecks from speaking out against corporatization. Hence, they are coerced by the fear of losing their courses to become 'team players'.

Not all faculties or academic departments are at equal risk of being targets of aggressive corporatization. Engineering, computer science, and other academic disciplines that benefit the private sector continue to flourish, while numerous arts and humanities programs are gutted or downsized. Keep in mind this recent statement made by Member of Provincial Parliament John

Milloy, Ontario's former Minister of Training, Colleges, and Universities, in his announcement about funding 6,000 more MA and PhD students over the next six years:

We're not saying 'no' to any more master's programs in history or the humanities, but we want to look at high-demand programs that make sense – engineering, health, environmental studies are examples – and programs that mesh with our research priorities (cited in Brown 2011: A10).

Ironically, arts and humanities courses are in higher demand than those listed by Milloy, with classes in psychology, sociology, political science, and so on generating much larger enrolments than classes in the 'hard sciences'. So, what is the rationale for the assault on the arts and humanities? Most Canadian conservative politicians will not admit this but it is likely due to the fact that classes that promote critical thinking and that motivate students to critique the political economic status quo are viewed as dangerous. Of course, the disdain for the liberal arts in Canada did not start with Harper. Rather, it is long-standing. For example, after a 25% budget cut to Ontario universities in the 1990s, Conservative Premier Mike Harris referred to sociology as a useless discipline that universities should cut. Harper and his colleagues also dislike sociology but they have a bigger problem with criminologists, many of whom are trained in sociology (DeKeseredy 2012). Harper labels them 'ivory tower experts' who are part of society's crime problem. He also said criminologists 'are not criminals themselves, but who are always making excuses for them, and when they aren't making excuses, they are denying that crime is even a problem' (cited in Heath 2013: 1).

Conservative politicians' disdain for the arts and humanities is not only channelled through assaults on universities' ability to maintain their infrastructure and to hire full-time faculty. Additionally, research funding and government support for scholarly journals are slashed. For example, a few years after Harper was first elected Prime Minister, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), which is the main funder of social scientific research, prioritized business-related doctoral research (DeKeseredy and Schwartz 2010; Fenwick 2009). This helps Harper win his war against criminologists and hence, as is the case in other nations, 'academic criminology appears to becoming more marginalized and irrelevant' (Matthews 2009: 341).

Women's issues were never priorities for the Harper Conservatives and some of their initiatives are shaped by anti-feminist fathers' rights groups (Dragiewicz and DeKeseredy 2012). A long list of laws and policies could easily be provided here but only a few of the most salient are required to exemplify this point. One of the most significant attacks on women's rights was the October 3, 2006 declaration by the federal Minister for the Status of Women Canada (SWC) that women's organizations would no longer be eligible for funding for advocacy, government lobbying or research projects. As well, SWC removed the word *equality* from its list of goals (DeKeseredy 2013). Scholarly outlets that publish progressive social scientific work on women's issues are also subjected to the Harper government's 'slash-and-burn approach' (Sev'er 2013). For instance, as of 2010, SSHRC stopped funding research and journals that address 'health'. One devastating outcome of this decision was the termination of the Canadian feminist journal *Women's Health and Urban Life* (WH&UL).

To be sure, the demise of this scholarly periodical is part of the rabid movement to corporatize the academy but it also serves the interests of powerful profit-minded elites seeking shelter from critical scrutiny. What Asyan Sev'er (2013), the founding Editor of this 'uncompromisingly feminist journal', claims in the final issue of WH&UL (Vol XII May 2013: ix) may seem painfully obvious to critical scholars but is worth stating nonetheless:

[S]ocial sciences have an extremely important responsibility to serve as a watchdog over medical and pharmaceutical establishments whose goals may or

may not coincide with the physical or the emotional well-being of the masses. Especially when the health of women is concerned, the divergence in the vested interests might get more serious. Social scientists have shown over and over the over-medicalization of women, especially in the areas of sexual or reproductive health. The overuse of tranquilizers and estrogen-type hormones, the indiscriminate use of caesarean sections or mastectomies are just a few example of the heavy-handed interventionism in women's health.

Violence against women, too, is obviously a women's health issue and Canadian academics once depended on federal funds to conduct research on the extent, distribution, causes, consequences and societal reactions to male-to-female abuse in private places. Certainly, the Canadian woman abuse in university/college dating survey would not have been done in 1992 without the much needed assistance of Health Canada,<sup>3</sup> which is now called the Public Health Agency of Canada. Today, university-based researchers would be hard pressed to get similar financial support. The Public Health Agency of Canada no longer funds feminist academic research and publicly supports the anti-feminist claim that women are as violent as men in intimate heterosexual relationships (DeKeseredy 2013).

For the above and other reasons, the Canadian academy is 'a more conservative place' (Bove 2013) and 'hostility to expertise in all of its forms is the closest thing that Canadian conservatives have to a unifying ideology' (Heath 2013: 1). The Harper government's assaults on the academy, like its relentless attacks on labor unions, public sector workers and any other group, for that matter, that embraces progressive or left-wing thought, follows the right-wing thinking of conservative German political and legal theorist Carl Schmitt (1996). For him, politics are primitive and include a tribal consciousness that views any group of people with different ideas that might alter the dominant political economic landscape as enemies (Strong 1996). It should be noted in passing that Carl Schmitt's writings are 'making a comeback' today in many neoliberal and neoconservative circles around the world (Luban 2011). What makes this reincarnation even more disturbing is that Schmitt was an enthusiastic member of the German Nazi Party (Ruthers 1990).

### **A more insidious wave of cultural genocide**

Canada is well known among United Nations and Amnesty International officials for its ongoing brutal treatment of Indigenous people (Harper 2013b). The Harper Conservatives do not send Aboriginal children to residential schools, as was done by federal governments in the past, but they conduct more insidious attacks on Aboriginal culture that contributed to the recent emergence of 'Idle No More',<sup>4</sup> which is a nation-wide, grass-roots, Indigenous protest movement (Donnermeyer and DeKeseredy 2014). On top of passing recent legislation that threatens Aboriginal sovereignty and resources, the Harper government deliberately altered Statistics Canada's census data collection process to exclude information from large numbers of recent immigrants, a rapidly growing group that includes many undocumented workers, temporary foreign workers, and other newcomers with low-incomes (Black 2013). The mandatory long-form census has been replaced with the first voluntary National Household Survey and leading Canadian scientific experts on race/ethnic relations and demography warn that these vulnerable populations are less likely to complete voluntary surveys. Therefore, many racial/ethnic groups will be grossly underrepresented, which, in turn, will result in fewer services for them.

According to Yogendra Shakya, Senior Research Scientist at Toronto's Access Alliance, a multi-service community health centre:

The elimination of the long-form census and replacement with the voluntary National Household Survey appears to be a deliberate attempt by the current

Harper Conservative government to hide and suppress valuable evidence about the growing diversity of Canada, as well as the rising levels of poverty and inequality in Canada (cited in Black 2013: A10).

Not only is the elimination of the long-form census an attempt to minimize the extent of Canadian multiculturalism but it is also part of a broader attack on science in general. It was already made explicit that the Harper Conservatives dislike social scientists but they also want to control 'hard science' research. Consider this May 7, 2013 announcement made by Canada's chief scientist, National Research Council (NRC) President John MacDougall: 'Scientific discovery is not valuable unless it has a commercial value'. His superior, Science and Technology Minister Gary Goodyear, added an exclamation point to MacDougall's words by stating that the NRC is 'open for business' and it will shift its focus away from basic science to 'large-scale research projects that are directed by and for Canadian business'. The consequences of this decision are dire for universities and scientists based in them. Society in general, too, will suffer without solidly funded basic research. After all, in the words of the *Toronto Star's* Editor (2013: A10):

There would be no computers without Kurt Godel's recondite math, no televisions without Albert Einstein's theoretical physics. When the late NRC scientist John Hopps was doing esoteric research on the effects of radio frequency heating on hypothermia, he never imagined it would lead to his invention of the pacemaker. Science is a serendipitous pursuit; it can be only so targeted.

### **No alternatives: The New Democratic Party and progressive retreatism**

Canada's New Democratic Party (NDP) was born in 1961. Until 2013, it publicly embraced the word 'socialism' and mainly championed the interests of labor unions, feminist women's groups, and other progressive movements. The NDP exists at the federal and provincial levels and, as a result of the May 2011 federal election, the federal faction jumped from third-party status to the role of the Official Opposition. What caused this dramatic transition? Part of the answer lies in its progressive retreatist approach. This involves embracing parts of conservative policies to win elections (Currie 1992). In mid-April 2013, the federal NDP intensified this strategy by removing socialist language from its constitution, and its leader, Thomas Mulcair, said this move is necessary to reach outside the Party's traditional base to have a chance to win the next federal election in 2015. Will it work? The May 14, 2013 provincial election in British Columbia strongly suggests that it will not. Despite trying to assure voters that his party was 'thoroughly defanged' and even with ceasing to be a truly socialist political party many years ago, the provincial NDP led by Adrian Dix did not attract enough right-wing votes to win the election (Salutin 2013; Walkom 2013a). One of the main reasons for Dix's defeat is that, as is the case in other Western countries, the working-class is increasingly supporting right-wing political parties, even those that aggressively dismantle the traditional welfare state. Unfortunately, as Houtman, Achterberg and Derks put it in their analysis of the declining leftist working-class (2008: 124), 'capitalism is more vibrant than ever today'.

Progressive retreatism helped get Bill Clinton and Barak Obama elected as Presidents of the United States and Tony Blair elected as British Prime Minister. Canada's traditional left-wing party has emulated their strategies and it still cannot garner enough votes to govern the nation. Chances are it will swing even further to the right. Thus, socialism is now little more than 'a boutique item' for the NDP and many people 'genuinely wonder if there could be an alternative to the vile dog's breakfast of (ever increasingly) maldistributed wealth we now have' (Salutin 2013: A23). To make matters worse for the left, research strongly suggests that the Conservative Party will be the 'naturally governing party' for much, if not most, of this century. This is a direct outcome of the Harper government's ability to join forces between conservative

Western Canada and suburban conservative Ontarians, especially those belonging to the immigrant middle-class. Harper has also managed to create a powerful conservative coalition formed around low taxes, a harsh law and order agenda, and the suppression of environmentalists (Bricker and Ibbitson 2013; Greenspon 2013).

### **The death of progressive foreign policy**

Arguably, some of the most radical changes that have occurred since the Harper Conservatives gained a majority government fall under the category of foreign policy (Harper 2013a). For example, Canada was a founder of the United Nations (UN) and a world leader in international peacekeeping (Doucet 2013). In this current era, the Harper government strongly sides with Israel's attempt to undermine Palestinian observer status at the UN, has severed its ties with Iran, pulled out of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, and moved the Canadian International Development Agency into the Department of Foreign Affairs for the purpose of tying foreign aid to corporate interests. At the end of May 2013, Harper visited Peru and announced \$53 million worth of aid in exchange for allowing Canadian mining companies to invest there and to hire cheap Peruvian labor (Walkom 2013b). Meanwhile, unemployed Canadian miners continue to suffer in silence.

Canada abandoned peacekeeping operations when it participated in the Afghan war and has now become a 'warrior nation' (McKay and Swift 2012). Actually, the Harper Conservatives have militarized Canada to a state not witnessed since World War II (O'Mara 2012). Will all of these changes result in Canada becoming a new target of international terrorists like its neighbor south of the border? This is an empirical question that can only be answered empirically.

### **A new war on unions**

Not only did the Harper government actively participate in a recent international war, it also declared war at home and its domestic enemies include unions and workers with full-time jobs and benefits. This is not to say that there were no anti-union government actions taken by federal Liberal governments; however, they are now more severe. For instance, legislation was recently created that helped flood Canada with thousands of inexpensive temporary workers which, in turn, suppresses Canadian wages to support the interests of the private sector. As well, unions are portrayed as totalitarian organizations run by 'union bosses'. Unions, too, now have to publicly reveal how they spend their funds and a law was passed enabling the federal government to intervene in Crown corporations' (for example, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) collective bargaining. Note that professional associations and businesses are not required to do comparable financial reporting (McQuaig 2013; Walkom 2013b).

Much, if not most, of Harper's anti-union venom is directed at the public sector because it is much more unionized (71% versus 16% of the private sector) and public sector employees earn more than private sector workers (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada 2013). Harper's strategy is to create conflicts between private and public sector workers, with the ultimate goal of destroying unions altogether. To say the least, the economic consequences will be devastating. Journalist Linda McQuaig (2013: A15) predicts:

The problem is that once the powerful public sector unions are gutted, there won't be much left of the Canadian labor movement, leaving workers not much better protected than their predecessors in the early industrial era who risked their lives battling for the right to unionize.

Many Canadian parents now fear that their children will not fare better economically than they did (Goar 2013). Such dread is well-founded, not only because of assaults on unions but also because 'degree inflation' has infiltrated the North American job market. In other words,

university degrees are today equivalent to yesterday's high school diploma due to a massive surplus of labor. Sadly, thousands of university students and their parents pay ever increasing tuition fees only to discover that having some type of undergraduate degree does not result in meaningful employment. Moreover, many companies with jobs that, in reality, do not require university-level skills (for example, file clerks) will only hire university graduates to fill them. This increases the unemployment rate for workers with no more than a high school diploma (Rampell 2013).

### **A more punitive state**

In tune with the US, under the Harper government's watch, Canada shifted from a 'welfare state' to a 'penal state' (Wacquant 2001). This swing is another example of 'learning from Uncle Sam' (Jones and Newburn 2002: 72) about how to deal with what Marxist sociologist Stephen Spitzer (2008: 72) refers to as 'social junk' or people who fail to, are unable to, or who refuse to 'participate in the roles supportive of capitalist society'. Canada's incarceration rate increased for the first time in more than a decade when Harper was first elected in 2006 and it continues to grow. Ironically, this new form of Canadian penalism is occurring when the official overall crime rate is at its lowest point since the early 1970s (DeKeseredy 2011). What is more, Canadian taxpayers are spending \$5 billion more a year on the criminal justice system since Harper was first elected. For progressives, needless to say, this money could be better spent on creating quality jobs, improving access to higher education, strengthening the health care system, and so on.

On March 12, 2012, the Harper's government passed Bill C-10, also known as the 'omnibus crime bill'. It is beyond the scope of this paper to describe all that it entails<sup>5</sup> but parts of it 'mimic failed US methods' (Travers 2007), including mandatory prison sentences for some crimes such as drug trafficking. It is likely that a sizeable portion of Canada's poor will soon end up in prison in response to their use of drugs to cope with the daily life-events stress spawned by being socially and economically excluded. Furthermore, Aboriginal people will likely continue to be overrepresented in prisons and jails.

Harper's 'new penalism' (Chesney-Lind 2007), however, views certain violent crimes as more serious than others. For example, shortly after his government eliminated funding for the National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL),<sup>6</sup> the office of federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty sent a flyer to his Whitby, Ontario constituents' homes that included this statement: 'Canada's New Government is standing up for safe communities by tackling violent crime and keeping criminals off the streets'. The flyer also announced 'Serious Crime = Serious Time'. Since most violence against women occurs in private places and not on the streets, many Canadian researchers, practitioners, and policy analysts contend that the Harper government does not view date or acquaintance rape, woman battering in marital/cohabiting relationships, and male-to-female separation/divorce assault as 'serious crimes', which may also explain why the NAWL lost its meagre annual funding of \$30,000 (DeKeseredy 2009).

More examples of the Harper Tories' dismissal or trivialization of violence against women could easily be offered here.<sup>7</sup> The most important point to note, though, is that the Harper 'get tough on crime' agenda is gender-blind and is doomed for failure. Chances are that, on top of causing the aforementioned damage, taking a more punitive approach will lead to higher levels of violence (Currie 2009).

### **Conclusion**

All countries and their histories have a dark side. Canada's recent history, however, until shortly after the federal 2011 election, was, for the most part 'bent towards justice' (Doucet 2013: A11). Still, Canada was always a class-based society but what sociologist Dennis Forcese (1997: ix) said 16 years ago still holds true today: 'It is becoming more extreme and less gentle'. The

transitions described in the paper and elsewhere (for example, Harper 2013a) are part of a much longer list of negative changes that happened in a relatively short period of time,<sup>8</sup> but the seeds for such dramatic transformations were planted a long time ago and the garden in which they were placed was routinely cared for by a strong cadre of right-wing corporate and political elites. As O'Mara (2012: 6) puts it, 'It is a slow and insidious poison infecting Canada ...'.

What is to be done? Progressive retreatism is not the answer and radical progressive change is not right around the corner. A new type of left realism is thus required, one not restricted to suggesting short-term socialist feminist solutions to only the crime problems facing people on the streets and in their homes.<sup>9</sup> A new multi-pronged approach is necessary, one that involves mobilizing what Currie (2013: 11) refers to as a 'broad set of post-industrial constituencies', including women's groups, labor unions, civil liberties associations, LGBT groups, and a host of other progressive collectives. New electronic technologies must play a major role in this mobilization. Whether we like it or not and whether we are computer savvy, communicating via social media is a vital political initiative for two reasons. First, youth tend to vote for more progressive political parties and they need to be contacted electronically since they spend more time on their computers than they do in face-to-face relationships (DeKeseredy and Schwartz 2013a; Klein 2012). Hence, using Facebook, Twitter and so on will enable more people to become aware of various types of harmful neoliberal practices and discourses and thus help motivate them to voice their discontent with the prevailing inequitable status quo by electing politicians committed to eliminating the brutal policies created by the Harper government and its corporate supporters (DeKeseredy 2011).

The other major reason for using new technologies is that social networking sites are key arenas of political struggle and resistance. It is also much easier to get people to join a Facebook group than it is to get them to march in the streets and they might get more media attention (Rettberg 2009). In many cases this is true but the recent Occupy movement, which first started as the Occupy Wall Street movement on September 17, 2011 in New York City's Zuccotti Park, generated substantial mainstream media coverage around the world. Similarly, the 2012 Quebec university student protests that started in February 13, 2012 garnered much newspaper and television attention in Canada. Even the popular news channel CNN covered some student demonstrations against the Quebec provincial government increasing university tuition. Guided by these and other progressive movements (for example, Idle No More),<sup>10</sup> progressive Canadians should organize large marches and protests against the erosion of social democracy in their country.

The 'knee jerk' response of many critics is that organizing a large protest is easier said than done and that police surveillance and brutal crowd control tactics are powerful deterrents. Further, it is often said that people will quickly join a protest on Facebook, feel good about themselves for doing so, and then never follow up on protest organizers' subsequent political activities. These points are well-taken but, as Wolman (2013: 1) correctly points out, 'the Arab Spring has shown the world what is possible when you combine social unrest with brave citizenry and powerful digital tools'.

Streetscape monitoring programs, such as closed-circuit television (CCTV), are institutionalized throughout Canada as they are in other countries (Hier 2010). Furthermore, people's behaviours and conversations are easily monitored and recorded with smart phones, iPads and other devices that people routinely use to communicate with each other. These means of surveillance have strengths and limitations and progressively more people are using them in their struggles to oust politicians who oppose their political, social, and economic views. For example, in late May 2013, a secret video of right-wing Toronto Mayor Rob Ford allegedly smoking a crack cocaine pipe and making homophobic and racist remarks was shown by an unknown man to two *Toronto Star* journalists. They wrote a front-page story in this liberal newspaper about what they saw and at the time of writing this article in June 2013, their



revelations continued to receive international coverage. Ford's political career was in jeopardy and the Canadian media relentlessly covered his daily activities and constantly question him about his alleged drug use and comments. Further, among progressives, there is much hope that Ford will be compelled to resign and that Toronto's political pendulum will swing back to the left.

Many people find the scrutiny and public revelation of people's 'private' activities to be, on the one hand, repulsive and immoral. On the other hand, numerous people find the aggressive dismantling of the welfare state to be repulsive and immoral. Furthermore, many right-wing people have no qualms about publicly tarnishing their opponents' characters and the recent Conservative Party television 'attack ads' about Liberal Party Leader Justin Trudeau's leadership abilities are prime examples. Hence, some radicals assert it is time for Canadian progressives to stop taking the moral high ground and challenge the Harper government 'by any means necessary',<sup>11</sup> except for the use of violence and other illegal activities. Surely there are more civil means of advancing social democracy but new technologies have helped change the rules of the political game and whether the bulk of the Canadian left will uniformly play by them is an empirical question that can only be answered empirically.

There are many more initiatives that could be suggested here, but the first step to be taken by Canadians is to collectively decide that radical change is warranted. In this global economic crisis, Canadians need a strong state. Not one that ruthlessly mimics the failures of other neoliberal governments, but rather a state that recognizes 'basic services need to be taken care of' (Halonen 2008: 1). Oh Canada, where art thou?

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<sup>2</sup> The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is one part of the Canadian Constitution and is bill of rights.

<sup>3</sup> See DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1998) for more information on this study, including the data generated by it.

<sup>4</sup> Go to <http://idelnomore.ca/> for more information on the 'Idle No More' movement.

<sup>5</sup> See DeKeseredy (2009, 2011) for more a more in-depth description and critique of this legislation.

<sup>6</sup> NAWL is a non-profit women's group that struggles to help end violence against women and other forms of female victimization.

<sup>7</sup> See DeKeseredy (2013) and Dragiewicz and DeKeseredy (2012) for more detailed accounts of the Harper government's approach to dealing with violence against and for its involvement in the anti-feminist backlash.

<sup>8</sup> See Harper (2013a) for additional neoliberal changes made by the Harper government since 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Left realism emerged in the mid-1980s in the United Kingdom and in the United States. The roots of left realism are found in the writings of Jock Young (1975, 1979), Tony Platt (1978), and Ian Taylor (1981) but this school of thought was not expressed formally until the publication of John Lea and Jock Young's (1984) *What is to Be Done about Law and Order?* Shortly after this seminal work came Elliott Currie's (1985) *Confronting Crime: An American Challenge* which, arguably, marked the official birth of North American left realism. See DeKeseredy and Schwartz (2012, 2013b) for reviews of left realists' theoretical, empirical, and policy contributions.

<sup>10</sup> Idle No More is a nation-wide, grass-roots, Indigenous protest movement that is also heavily fueled by recent Canadian federal legislation that threatens Aboriginal sovereignty and resources.

<sup>11</sup> This term is a translation of a phrase in Jean Paul Sartre's 1948 play *Dirty Hands* and it was popularized in a 1965 speech given by Malcom X.

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