

ONE DOLLAR PER MONTH ... LESS THAN THE COST OF A CUP OF COFFEE AT AN EXPENSIVE COFFEE SHOP WHERE YOU CANNOT FIND A PLACE TO SIT & ENJOY YOUR COFFEE

DEAR READER willing to read philosophy, it is not flattery to call you rare but a fact and the proper recognition due to all rare things. Dear reader, do you wonder what is happening today? Are you often made to **YAWWP**? There is plenty to make you do so. But the barbaric yawp must go; if it is pleasant for the barbarian the rest of us have had our fill.

Do you struggle, as I do, with disbelief at unfolding events? I find myself regularly bewildered by the news and repeatedly travelling the same path, from *How can this be?* to, in the end, *Everything is normal*: at first baffled, then wandering here and there in my thoughts, then arriving at an explanation that fits my general understanding but that for some inexplicable reason had been withheld from me. But at the end of the road my lost composure was recovered. I will compile **The YAWWP** as a record of that progression (that it is progress not regress I cannot guarantee) that I myself may use to get my bearings as I suspect I will soon be back, in disbelief about some entirely related phenomenon. Perhaps I might then look back to my chronicle and record and spare myself needless circling. Perhaps you, Reader, might now and then be spared the same.

So let us rake over the folly gently, examining with patience and a civil spirit the ways of ourselves and our fellows, so that we might keep distance from the mob fleeing reality on that clogged highway.

So that all who wish to expurgate their shrieks of horror – be rid, that is, of what does not belong – expurgate: equals *purge* plus *ex*, as in exit – might find some brotherly company in this driving-out of phantom horrors, so we may shake with fear about the real horrors, I offer **The Expurgated YAWWP Monthly**, published the First of Every Month.

THE EDITOR.

GOODBYE TO LIBERALISM (MAY IT RETURN!)

It is likely that you are puzzled: ‘Liberalism,’ you say, ‘is not going anywhere.’ If only. I wonder, did it ever really come.

When long ago we heard the announcement of *Liberty’s arrival*, those who truly loved her began to prepare her a place – but, alas, it was too few. Too many were feathering their own nests with the mention of her name, extorting support from gullible lovers of liberty. I believe she felt too little welcomed and remained in Heaven. Many who claim to love her either pretend to this love, or have no clue what she looks like and are loving a cheap facsimile!

Set aside for now the question *What is liberalism?* and look at the signs of our times. Would you say that **free speech**, the rejection of censorship, is a *liberal cause*? – No doubt about it. Did you ever wait, as I did, for the liberal critiques of the repeated censorship of speakers on university campuses? I am not ashamed to say that I did, being a former liberal and having hope in liberals. *But where were they?* I recall maybe one semi-public figure on the left (a Nietzschean) object to the shouting down of speech.

No; so-called liberals were swiftly moved to the tropes of ‘safe spaces’ and ‘triggering’ (concepts that not so long ago would have required explanations that a liberal such as my former self would have found quite dubious). That is, we were sold a new understanding of *safety* that, if bought, rendered null in a flash the entire legacy of liberal arguments for allowing in society things that some might find disagreeable. (*Fsssh!*: the torch of Liberty doused.)

Why, I ask myself, did I simply accept ‘safe spaces’ as new liberal lingo, not seeing that liberalism cannot absorb this concept without seriously undermining a key feature of its identity: namely Liberty. Where was that correcting article, I wonder now.

A smart explanation was provided very recently by **ROSS DOUTHAT** who noted that we are seeing the rise of a “**successor ideology**” – meaning that it represents a possible successor to liberalism.

Look for places where *progressive movements cease working toward some long-sought liberal goal and start to argue in terms that leave liberalism behind.*

Douthat very wisely postpones naming this outlook. He explains that liberalism has a successor that selectively rejects the thinking that holders of the new outlook were raised with. This makes sense, as it makes sense that **the Modern** (MILL’s *On Liberty* and the principle of that book) gives way to **the Postmodern** (RORTY’s notion of ‘Solidarity’ – “*First projects, then principles*”). But why is there a successor to liberalism? We will not really understand this until we see the defects of liberalism that become visible from the new standpoint.

Still, what occurs to me is this. Liberty is a *high ideal* and thus a *demanding spirit*, since she is in fact an image of God Himself. By all means, love liberty, as the ‘60s generation claimed it did. But what if Blue-Jeans Joe had chiefly wanted freedom to do what was then socially forbidden? Freedom of that sort would preoccupy him for a time (thus the Disco Era and the Me Generation that followed it) but leave him unfed, and should he awaken from his stupor to consider the troubles of others he would find that they are *in the world* (where else?) and having a hard time. And if there are too few concepts in his kit bag he might see this as follows: *others* whom he has little feeling for are *obstructing* those who are suffering; those others have ‘too much freedom!’ (What, after all, does privilege do for you but divest you of burdens?)

Liberty, then, for Joe Blue-Jeans might ever have been love of a specific happiness (his and that of those he cares about). But limited in this way to *less than it is about* and *fewer than it is for*, Freedom does not reign but steps aside for a properly big project like ‘**The Country We Need**’

What is disturbing about this recent theme of the *New York Times* is that the means our nations have for making progress is the life, associations, and politics of the people (*by* which you get progress as fast as you can make it). But if enough people say ‘*Not good enough*’ because of the pressing ‘*Need*’, this signals, as much as anything, a call to *reject our way* of changing things for something more direct. Thus the anarchic-sounding *Times*:

What the Courage to Change History looks like: We can’t tinker around the edges. We need to dismantle systems.

Consider the list below, of traditional liberal concerns (at left) and what we are seeing replace them, among people whom we have been calling ‘liberals’ (a habit that, this shows, we really ought to drop).

LIBERAL	‘SUCCESSOR’
FREE SPEECH	CONTROLLED SPEECH speech granted or denied by moral guardians of the underprivileged
EQUALITY	HIERARCHY power+privilege go to the powerless (rectifying injustice)
EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW	EXEMPTIONS ACC. TO MOTIVE damage to property of the wealthy, obstruction of rail lines, etc., is tolerated if motivated by solidarity/moral outrage
REASON as basis of decision (in firings, etc.)	LABELLING as basis, using pivotal loosely defined terms (‘racist’, ‘transphobe’, ‘hate’, ‘violence’, ‘safety’)

To those who wonder, *Where does this leave the liberals*, consider what faces them: the old Enemy-of-My-Enemy conundrum. If you on the left are opposed to the right and discover a third group

attacking your enemy, but that is very much not you, you are faced with a dilemma. Do you **(A) welcome the help and join in with your new ally** (seeing this as fighting your traditional fight, not advancing a new order), or **(B) pay principled attention to the fact that your ally openly rejects much of what you believe in** (thus disturbing your alliance)? ‘The genie can always be put back in the bottle’ have in history proved famous last words many times over. My wish that *liberalism would return* is a wish for the person of principle whose choice is **(B)**.

But all of this raises the question of whether the Culture War of the past sixty years has ever really been a conflict of principle. *Involving* principle, Yes, but the ease with which liberalism is being abandoned on the left suggests that the battle has been the old one: **ME & MY VALUES dominating YOU & YOURS**. Liberty came via the Hand of God to say *We will move beyond that* – and (everything is sadly normal) the people were unfaithful.

THE BELOVED COUNTRY

You might love your country as a way of loving yourself; this it seems to me is an available possibility and an entirely sham *love of country*. That might make sense in some monocultural countries but it rather spoils our love of country if we are Canadians or Americans (citizens of modern federations) and love that country ‘*made in our own image*’, if I might put it that way.

This being the **Canada Day** issue (1 July), only a few days away from the **Fourth of July**, let us consider the issue of **love of country**. Why love a country?

You cannot love a country like Canada or the United States of America with all of it reduced to the way of life of *your own particular culture* (conservative traditionalism or liberal progressivism). Nor can you love it for the *other cultures in it*, as there are many and you know very little about them.

Why love Canada for its **cultural diversity**: that is a *fact* about cultures; shouldn’t you love the *cultures* not the fact? Well you cannot love the other cultures, unless you are somehow involved in them; it is fake love to love what you do not even know. (Is it not the case that love is a form of knowledge?)

I am very suspicious, then, of claims to love Canada for its ‘tapestry’ – a fake-sounding reason to love a country. Moreover, I have no fondness whatsoever – not the slightest – for the ugly shambles generated by progressivism, the culture of so-called liberalism. *I contributed to* that chaos when I was a part of it and I look back with penitence on those I wronged, and wronged deeply, doing what is *normal in that culture*. I reject that culture for its chaos and street map of dead ends. Chaos simply cannot be loved.

But I most reject *mosaic love* because we are talking about a *country* not *cultures*: it is not My Culture Day but My Country Day, *Canada Day*.

Why love a country? I wish to confess that for most of my life I have had no answer to this (further sign of my fathomless ignorance). While I have always been happy to be Canadian I never *loved this country* or thought it much merited loving, as there was so much official nonsense. I am quite puzzled, in fact, as to how I actually emerged from this condition.

I do know one factor. In 2017 we were living in Ottawa, the capital of Canada, on the 150th anniversary of the founding of this country; I felt profoundly let down that year by the absence of meaningful celebration. I read what I could find in the papers but, if it happened, I missed it. I did not want fireworks (which you can purchase); I wanted to hear what was worth lighting up the sky about, and share in it. I was by then, late in life, aware that a good political system is a profound human achievement and I began to look into what Canada’s was.

WELL, WELL, WELL,
IT'S **THE TWENTIES** AGAIN!

WHADDAYA MEAN, POP?

I'M JUST SAYIN' WE'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE:
SICKNESS LURKING OUTSIDE YOUR DOOR;
DAZED & FRAZZLED FROM PLENTY OF WAR! ... & THEN, ...



DOOP DOOP DOOPIDY DO:

THE TWENTIES!



UPSIDE-DOWN TIME.

SHAKE-IT-UP &
DO-IT-DIFFERENT TIME.



ALL NEW DAY,
ALL NEW RULES!

REALLY, NEW RULES?



ARE YOU IN SCHOOL?

NOPE.

AM I AT WORK?

NOPE.

ANY CHURCH YOU KNOW OF?

NO CHURCH!



YESSIR, THE TWENTIES.
YOU HEAR THAT MUSIC SON?



MUSIC?



MUSIC!

MASCULINE WOMEN FEMININE MEN,
WHICH IS THE ROOSTER WHICH IS THE HEN?

I CAN HEAR IT!



SISTER IS BUSY LEARNING TO SHAVE.

WHAAAT?!

BROTHER JUST LOVES HIS PERMANENT WAVE!
GIRLS WERE GIRLS & BOYS WERE BOYS WHEN I WAS A TOT,
NOW IT'S HARD TO TELL WHO IS WHO OR EVEN WHAT'S WHAT

A SPECIAL TIME.
PEOPLE ENJOY THAT, YOU KNOW, TO BE
IN A TIME LIKE NO OTHER TIME EVER BEFORE. —
EXCEPT THAT, **IT'S THE TWENTIES AGAIN.**

AN ALL NEW DAY.
ALL OVER AGAIN.

SPECIAL PEOPLE IN A SPECIAL TIME!



We presume, by the way, that we know, when we tick off, mentally, *democracy, representative government, parliamentary system*, etc., but one hour of what passes for debate in the House of Commons is mortally disillusioning. You accept parliament but it is hard to see anything to love in it. What I did not see was that *Canada cannot be confused with its leaders*, who so commonly appear frankly unacquainted with what Canada is. What is strange is that you can say this without smugly claiming to possess gnostic wisdom; the point of Canada was made clear at her creation.

To serve the people in the country, of course, but this is the usual swap that absolves leaders of any need to remember, or notice, the words that they are singing. Yes, the point of the country that was imagined by the Fathers of Confederation is, actually, spelled out in our national anthem ... which is something like what you want an anthem to do, actually.

Canada's anthem is addressed to the reigning spirit: **"O Canada"**. Who is she? Twice (the whole thing is only sixty-three words long) we sing the word **"free"**. **"With glowing hearts we see thee rise"** means the *emergence* of a *free country*, full of different cultures (First Nations, colonists and their descendants, immigrants from every part of the world), *free* in that these people may seek a *meaningful life* as their cultures understand it, this being the *basis of human living*. The very fact that *there is such a place in the world* (we are not the only one but the plots are limited) that *makes itself the home of a human being seeking his/her own fulfilment governed by their own conscience*, ... the **"rise"** of such a place causes your **"heart"** to **"glow"**.

"We stand on guard for thee" is repeated several times. People may think this is national defense but we are not guarding ourselves; **"We stand on guard for thee,"** Canada. The idea is that we shall protect and preserve the gift that has been given us in such a country, keeping the land **"free"**.

Canada is free and freedom is its nationality.
WILFRID LAURIER
Jubilee speech, London, 1897

We desire ... to defend the general interests of a great country ... by means of a central power. On the other hand we do not wish to do away with our different customs, manners, and laws; on the contrary those are *precisely what we are desirous of protecting* in the most complete manner by means of Confederation.

HECTOR-LOUIS LANGEVIN
Legislative Assembly, 21 February 1865

We sing, **"God keep our land glorious and free!"**

Such a miracle is **"glorious"** and indeed God must keep it because we cannot.

THE SMARTEST THING I HAVE READ THIS MONTH

An article by BRUCE PARDY, professor of law at Queen's University in Kingston, which I found in last year's *National Post* (20 Dec 2019; *semper* behind), claims this title in our first issue. You will see how it connects with the page-1 item about a successor to liberalism and also with what I have just said about the failure to stand on guard for the sublime gift Canadians were given by its founders (in the liberty to seek God, live as Christians, etc.).

Liberals are not liberal but progressive, which is quite a different thing. In fact, Liberals have no idea what a liberal really is....

Real liberals believe that *people should largely control their own lives* — that they should be free to say what they think, to have sex with and marry whom they please, to worship as they wish, to buy and sell what they want,... *The modern version of liberalism means essentially the opposite.* It embraces an expansive welfare state, extensive regulation of individual behaviour and speech, redistribution of wealth, unequal application of the law in pursuit of equality of outcome, and myriad other managerial policies.

In light of this we might pick up that question we set aside, *What is Liberalism?* A suggested answer (to be clear, not from Prof. Parody) comes to mind.

The truth may be not that a "successor ideology" with non-liberal commitments is arising to fight alongside liberals or usurp their place but that liberals have, largely, **never been true liberals but rather liberals of circumstance.** Progressives who fell into the role of fighting for freedoms that they were sure were good — that women might vote, citizens might read, write, and say what they want, the races might mix, gays might live without fear of being fired and jailed — naturally *supposed* that they were liberals, that Lincoln's talk of "Liberty for all" was their talk. But it was not; that may not have been the case at all.

Once what they were seeking was obtained (specific goods, not liberty for all) they began to seek other goods that had nothing to do with freeing, liberating.

Those who now call themselves Liberals in the political realm are now *illiberal in their sensibilities and aspirations.* Governments supervise, subsidize, and control virtually every aspect of modern life: markets and financial

systems, public schools and universities, health care, media, food production, energy production, telecom services, the professions, and even speech. Our courts do not believe in equal application of the law.

Shall we reflect on this? The possibility arises that **the objective was never liberty but, in fact, a certain kind of culture.** All that would prevent a segue into illiberalism is the principle of Liberty, but this principle was and is not theirs. That we look at that p. 1 column on the right and think, *this behaviour must be coming from another ideology*, is owing to the fact that we have credulously accepted the notion that progressives love freedom (and we have played along by calling them liberals). They love 'progress'.

The opinion I am reaching is that liberals are very hard to find — and on that point:

Conservatives have shown no serious objection to any of it and indeed have pitched in to make Canada not a liberal country.... The Conservative election platform was merely a pale version of full-on Liberal illiberalism....

Disenfranchised Canadians are fed up with identity politics, authoritarian victimhood, and scolding from righteous elites telling them what to think and how to behave. They are liberals in the true sense of the word — ... people who believe in freedom of speech and in the idea that the same rules should apply to everyone. Large swaths of Canadians have no political home and are wondering where their country went. Conservatives should help them get it back. Perhaps liberals, not Liberals, are the natural governing party of Canada....

Such as it is, that is this month's offering. I have conceived this in the paucity of my imagination to deliver something to you, most valued supporters, my ambition being to offer you something not found elsewhere. Future issues will contain writing on

ART | LITERATURE | MUSIC | POETRY | PHILOSOPHY
POLITICS | THE BIBLE | LIFE IN GENERAL.

Plus always a **CARTOON.** (Whatever happened to the cartoon?) There is no presumption to deep knowledge here; we think about these things and need to discuss them as that is how we *get right with things.*

I encourage you to send this .pdf to anyone who might enjoy it (no sensitivity as it is not a work in progress like the books I am continuing with). Indebted to you, I am, etc.