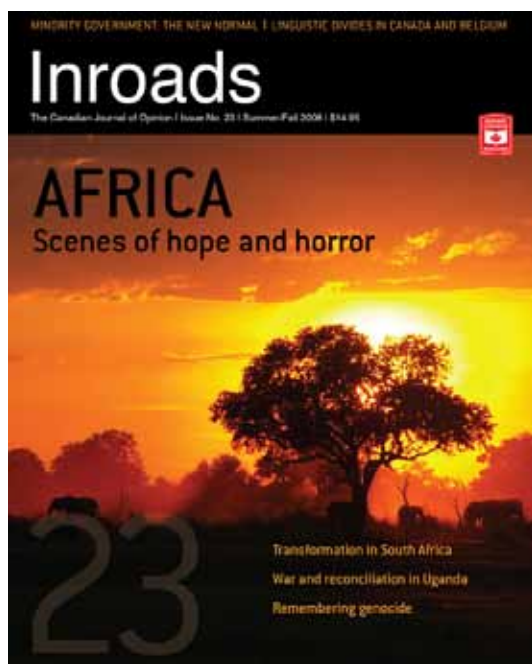


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A WORD ABOUT PRINTING THIS ARTICLE: These pages are intended to print on legal (8.5 x 14 inch) paper, two pages per sheet, in a horizontal landscape. Pages can also be printed onto letter sized paper, vertically, at a reduced size.

Introducing Inroads 30

The timing of last May's federal election, relative to Inroads' production schedule, allowed us to do a quick on-the-fly analysis of the results in the Summer/Fall issue, but not to reflect in a more considered way on what had changed in Canadian politics. With the passage of six months, and with Jack Layton's death in August having sent additional shock waves through the political system, this kind of reflection remains essential.

One dramatic outcome of the election was reduction of the once-dominant federal Liberals to minor-party status. Back in the 1970s, Reg Whitaker wrote a groundbreaking study of the Liberals called *The Government Party*. He has continued to follow Liberal fortunes, in Inroads and elsewhere. Here he places their poor 2011 showing in historical context and asks whether there is a way back for the party, concluding that there is a centre-left majority in Canada that requires cooperation between the Liberals and the NDP for effective political expression. Because of the length and depth of his analysis, Whitaker's regular column does not appear in this issue.

The flip side of the Liberals' decline was the rise of the New Democrats – a rise thrown into doubt by the death of the leader who had crafted their historic breakthrough in Quebec. In contrast to his fellow political scientist Reg Whitaker, Garth Stevenson argues that the current imperative of the NDP is not to cooperate with the Liberals but to displace them permanently as a viable alternative to the Conservatives. Dominic Cardy, Inroads editorial board member and – since last March – Leader of the provincial NDP in New Brunswick, looks to the way Tony Blair transformed the British Labour Party for a model of how the NDP needs to change. Both Stevenson and Cardy identify policy weaknesses in the federal NDP that need to be corrected if the party is to have a serious chance of forming a government.

Tom Flanagan's knowledge and understanding of the Conservative Party matches Reg Whitaker's mastery of what made the Liberals tick. He suggests that while the Conservatives are not about to abandon Quebec now that they have built a majority without it, Quebec will no longer drive the federal political agenda. And four members of the team at Vote Compass, which created a rich vein of data on what voters were thinking at the time of the election, draw on these data to pinpoint which issues mattered to voters and how those issues played out in different regions of the country.

Another major section looks at the problems and prospects of cities. We focus on two Canadian cities in particular: Ottawa-Gatineau and Vancouver. Gilles Paquet and David Gordon put forward proposals for how Ottawa-Gatineau could function more effectively as Canada's capital – Paquet from the point of view of governance, and Gordon from the perspective of urban design. Former Vancouver City Councillor Gordon Price looks at his city in the context of the phenomenon of car dependency that has prevailed in North American cities since the 1920s. Vancouver has done better than most in containing "Motordom," but the struggle is far from won. Vancouver also figures in Edward Glaeser's much-discussed book *The Triumph of the City* – and in Paul Delany's assessment of it in this issue. Delany is concerned that the "Vancouverism" model may rest on unsustainable foundations.

One obstacle to Canadian cities' progress is their underrepresentation in provincial legislatures. This problem is especially acute in Quebec, examined here by Paul Cliche, and in British Columbia, where the situation is analyzed by five public policy students at Simon Fraser University. Finally, John Richards looks at South Asia's burgeoning megacities through the lens of the superb contemporary novels in which these cities are backdrops.

Also in this issue:

- Idrisa Pandit and Gautam Navlakha explore the causes, consequences and on-the-ground realities of one of the world's longest standing territorial disputes: Kashmir. They caution against seeing the dispute as purely an India-Pakistan diplomatic issue. The most important players are the Kashmiri people.
- John Brewin and Arthur Milner call for a "temporary, strategic coalition" between the Liberals and the NDP.
- Gary Caldwell questions whether Quebec's Quiet Revolution was as much a success as Pierre Fortin maintained (in the last issue), and Dominic Cardy fails to share Roberta Lexier's enthusiasm for the Ryan Meili and Naheed Nenshi campaigns as harbingers of change in Canadian politics.
- Jared Wesley looks at two books on declining youth political participation, while David McGrane reviews Jared Wesley's book about political culture on the prairies.

— Bob Chodos

Two friends who left us too soon

In memoriam: Peter Findlay and Martin Lubin

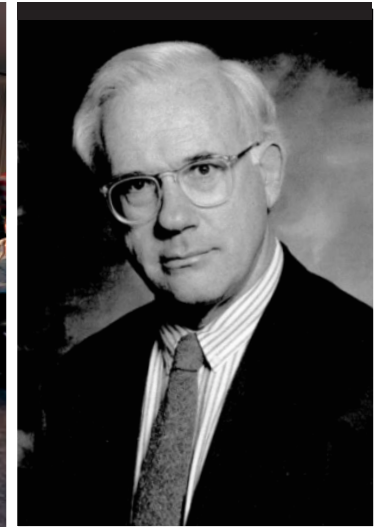
Since the Summer/Fall 2011 issue of *Inroads* appeared in May of this year, this journal, and this writer, lost two very good friends: Peter Findlay and Martin Lubin. Peter, in reality, left us several years ago as he was losing his battle – one that he waged with courage and dignity – with a form of Alzheimer's. Martin's departure, on the other hand, was sudden. He was preparing for his fall semester classes and taking his famous walks when struck down by an aneurism in late August from which he never recovered.

It was in the early days of *Inroads* that Peter Findlay's contribution was greatest and most valuable. Indeed, this project would never have gotten off the ground without his encouragement and contribution both intellectual and financial. During *Inroads*' first, rocky, years, his steady hand kept this craft from sinking on more than one occasion. Of course, this journal was only one of a number of good causes that Peter supported with time, effort and resources, offering wise counsel when asked or when he felt it appropriate, diffusing conflicts and, typically, keeping his own role in the background,

He was remembered by many friends at a moving gathering outside Ottawa in early August – from his childhood as a Findlay of Carleton Place to his work on the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission in the 1960s to his role as teacher and administrator at Carleton University, but mainly as friend and colleague, a large man



Martin Lubin



Peter Findlay

who lived life largely, generous with his friends and quietly passionate about social justice and equity, internationally and here at home.

Martin Lubin, who like Peter spent much of life in the confines of a university, was very much the opposite in personality. Where Peter was easygoing, Martin was anxious; where Peter was self-assured, Martin was hesitant. But they had some things in common. Martin Lubin was a supporter of good causes, not least this journal. He was reluctant to publish in his name, or even to post opinions on the listserv (though he was a very faithful lurker). But, a voracious reader on a wide range of subjects, he was a regular contributor of ideas for articles, authors and themes. He read each issue cover to cover, and was not shy about providing constructive criticism to this editor. And when it came to fundraising, he was always among those ready to take his place among our sponsors.

Martin's work as a teacher and scholar is being remembered by his colleagues at a special memorial event at the Plattsburgh campus of the State University of New York in late October, and at the conference of the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States (ACSUS) in Ottawa in mid-November. In launching this issue in Peter's home town of Ottawa, and at ACSUS where Martin played an important role for many years, we will be paying a special tribute to two generous friends who left us too soon.

— Henry Milner

To merge or not to merge

by John Brewin and Arthur Milner



John Brewin is a labour lawyer living in Toronto. He was an NDP member of Parliament for Victoria, B.C., from 1988 to 1993.

Arthur Milner is an Inroads' columnist, a playwright and John Brewin's son-in-law.

The possibility of a merger between the federal Liberals and the NDP has been much in the news since Jack Layton's death. Jean Chrétien and Ed Broadbent are said to be amenable. Bob Rae and Stephen Lewis, as well as the Globe and Mail's editorial board, have dismissed merger out of hand. What no one seems to be talking about – out loud – is some form of cooperation other than merger.

The NDP has already been through a merger of sorts. Its founding in 1961 is often described a merger between the CCF and the union movement.

A CCF convention had voted, on the recommendation of its national council and executive, to participate in the formation of a new political party. It was entitled to send delegates to the founding convention, along with affiliated unions of the Canadian Labour Congress. Once the founding convention adopted a constitution, policies and principles and chose officers and an executive – and Tommy Douglas as leader – the federal CCF passed into history. This was followed by similar processes in the provinces. The whole effort was carried on with a high degree of grassroots participation and was managed in a way that headed off the establishment of other successors to the CCF by those who opposed the change.

The change was, however, not a formal merger, but rather the reorganization of an existing party. Properly understood, merger is the legal amalgamation of two (or more) organizations into one of the existing organizations or into a new organization. This is precisely what happened when, in 2003, the Canadian Alliance (previously the Reform Party) and the Progressive Conservatives merged to form the Conservative Party of Canada.

The Reform Party elected its first MP in 1989. In the 1993 federal election, Reform elected 52 MPs, and in 1997 it formed the official opposition. But if that was good news for Reform/Alliance, it was better news for the Liberals: with conservatives split in two, the Liberals won three consecutive majority governments. In 2003, the Alliance and the PCs merged. In the election one year later, the Liberals were reduced to minority government status. Since then the new party, the Conservative Party of Canada, has won three elections in a row, the most recent with a majority government.

The conservatives learned their lesson. Is there a similar lesson for the Liberals and the NDP?

There seem to be two. The first is: "Why wait? Merge now." The second is: It takes a long time and many defeats for the parties to a proposed merger to abandon hope of individual success. Liberals, humiliated by defeat, are unlikely to swallow the further humiliation merger implies, and will continue to believe that resurrection of "the natural governing party" is imminent. For their part, NDPers, ecstatic at their breakthrough, will believe that momentum will carry them just a little further, not just to government but to their natural place as *the* party of the centre-left, like the Labour Party in Britain. (This is the position of Garth Stevenson in this issue of Inroads.)

Our conclusion is that no merger is on the horizon. But even if it were, we have a preferred option – a temporary, strategic coalition (TSC). The TSC would have two objectives: the defeat of the Conservative Party and the preservation – rather than dissolution – of the Liberals and NDP.

This second is of particular concern. In the September 2 issue of Maclean's, John Geddes wrote that, at McGill University, Jack Layton "came under the thrall of philosophy professor Charles Taylor, whose argument that productive clashes could result from ideological polarization strongly influenced Layton's view of politics. 'Back in the day, they used to talk about brokerage politics – smooth over all the differences all the time,' Layton said. '[Taylor's] concept was that you want to bring out the different perspectives and have them stand in stark relief. Then what will emerge are the real solutions.'"

We agree. Real solutions are more likely to emerge from a variety of perspectives: NDP and Liberal voices

We have a preferred option – a temporary, strategic coalition (TSC). The TSC would have two objectives: the defeat of the Conservative Party and the preservation – rather than dissolution – of the Liberals and NDP.

Real solutions are more likely to emerge from a variety of perspectives: NDP and Liberal voices – as well as Green and Bloc voices – representing real constituencies.

– as well as Green and Bloc voices – representing real constituencies. Indeed, we see the merger of the Alliance and the Progressive Conservatives, and the resultant predominance of neoliberal conservatism at the expense of Red Tory conservatism, as a real loss to Canadian political discussion. For this reason, we prefer a solution that is capable of defeating the Conservatives while preserving the Liberal Party and the NDP.

What would a Liberal-NDP temporary, strategic coalition look like?

There are three potential elements to a TSC, associated with the periods before, during and after an election. We'll start with what a coalition might look like during an election.

At its most basic, the parties would agree not to run candidates in constituencies in which the other party is incumbent. They might also agree that whichever party's candidate came second to the Conservatives in the last election would not be opposed by the other party. The parties would likely agree to temper attacks on each other. The authors disagree on whether this arrangement should be made available to the Bloc Québécois (which the Bloc would be unlikely to accept), but we agree that the offer should be extended to the Green Party. In any case, all this would be subject to negotiation between Liberal and NDP (and Green and Bloc) representatives.

For the post-election period, Canadian political parties have some experience operating in coalition government, and we would limit our input here, with one exception: a pre-election agreement would include a commitment that, should the parties form a government, they would implement some form of proportional representation (PR). The authors' preference is for a mixed-member type of PR, as practised in Germany and New Zealand. (We are talking about implementation, not just holding a referendum as in B.C., Ontario and P.E.I.).

We believe that there are a great many reasons to prefer PR to Canada's current first-past-the-post electoral system. For our purposes here, PR has two salient benefits. First, it would make a centre-left government more likely. (The Conservatives formed minority governments with 36.3 per cent of the vote in 2006 and 37.6 per cent in 2008, and a majority government with 39.6 per cent of the vote in 2011.) Second, once adopted, PR would eliminate the need for strategic alliances in subsequent elections.

In the pre-election period – i.e. now – the parties would of course negotiate the nature of the electoral alliance and an approach to electoral reform. There might also be informal or formal cooperation in opposing the Harper government. There might be a protocol setting out regular joint strategy meetings; agreements on speaking order beyond that set out in the rules of Parliament; agreement on issues to be raised; and extraparliamentary work such as discussions to



PHOTO COURTESY MEDMOISELLET VIA FLICKR

explore matters the two parties have in common, rather than a focus on where they differ. Local or regional “workshops” that borrow from nonconfrontational labour-management processes might prove interesting. All of this would run up against the reality that the two parties are in competition for the same electorate and for the same human, political and financial resources. It would take creativity and commitment to succeed in the face of decades of distrust.

All told, we believe a temporary, strategic coalition offers the greatest hope of defeating the Conservatives. There are, of course, no guarantees. There is no reason to believe that all NDP votes will go to the coalition's “Liberal” candidate, and vice versa (just as there is no reason to believe that all NDP and Liberal voters would vote for a merged party). There will be those who regard this pre-election strategy as antidemocratic in that it reduces the electorate's choices. There will be those who prefer a merger, and those who regard any cooperation with the other party as a sellout. There will be others steadfastly opposed to PR.

There will be resentment and resistance, and Stephen Harper can be counted on to accuse the coalition partners of everything from communism to treason. The process must be open and transparent, and Canadians will need to be won over. The Liberals and the NDP should get started now.

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Short-term success, long-term failure?

Quebec's Quiet Revolution came at a heavy cost

By Gary Caldwell

Gary Caldwell is the author of several books on Quebec and a frequent contributor to Inroads. He lives in Ste-Edwidge-de-Clifton, Quebec.

In the last issue of Inroads, Pierre Fortin advanced the argument that, in light of the objectives set out in 1960, Quebec's Quiet Revolution can be judged a success.¹ These

objectives, now achieved, were to:

- raise the general level of schooling;
- accelerate economic development;
- see to it that increased income is more widely distributed;
- raise the living standard to a level comparable with Ontario;
- improve the economic position of francophones relative to that of anglophones.

Here I argue that although the Quiet Revolution was a success in his terms, it was a short-term success that could lead to long-term failure.



1950's Montreal PHOTO COURTESY DUBYDUB2009 VIA FLICKR

In a nutshell, in the immediate postwar period, Quebec enjoyed substantial advantages: public financial credit (almost no public debt); an economy growing as fast as Ontario's (although admittedly from a smaller base); an extensive nonstate network of public health and educational institutions; a vibrant, dense civil society (stable families and large extended kin networks, local schools, municipalities, cooperatives, parishes and unions); and an annual population growth rate of 2 per cent. It exploited these advantages to meet short-term objectives: social-democratic reforms, an increased living standard and ethnic (francophone) advancement – precisely those laid out by Fortin.

However, the consequence of doing so was the dilapidation of existing human, social structural, cultural and economic capital – in other words, “the chickens are coming home to roost” a half century later. Physical infrastructure is failing as a result of lack of long-term investment, institutional development is curtailed, the quality of education is suffering, civil society has atrophied, demographic growth has stalled and the engines of economic growth – research and development and entrepreneurship – are lagging.

Furthermore, of Fortin's Quiet Revolution objectives all but one – the more even distribution of income – are essentially materialistic: more economic development and more schooling to pave the way for a higher living standard. The New Testament teaches that “man does not live by bread alone,” and the corollary is that without a sense of purpose and a societal ethics long-term well-being may suffer.

Such nonmaterial aspects of societal experience can also be captured by indicators, albeit negative ones: suicide rates, alcohol consumption, mental illness, family instability and isolation or anomie. It remains to be seen what the long-term – two or three generations – consequences of the Quiet Revolution are in those terms. At this point, the consequences of the short-term dilapidation of collective capital can be seen more clearly.

Having attained the limit of public sector growth, Quebec is now increasingly dependent for balancing the books on resource exploitation such as hydroelectricity, mining and forestry and services such as tourism, liquor distribution, lotteries and casinos.

Let us begin with economic development. From the last quarter of the 19th century to 1967, Quebec maintained a rate of economic growth equal to Ontario's.² After 1967, the year of Expo 67 in Montreal and only seven years into the Quiet Revolution, Quebec's deindustrialization relative to Ontario began.³ For a quarter century, as Fortin indirectly acknowledges, a growing government contribution to Quebec's GDP compensated for this reality. Quebec's superior performance, again relative to the past and to Ontario, was financed by taking on increasing public debt and by nationalization of existing industrial assets (such as the hydroelectric companies) and social assets (hospitals and schools).

However, the debt-financed expansion of the public sector could not go on forever, particularly in a context of slowing population growth. The Bouchard government's drastic civil service cutbacks in the mid-nineties, resulting from pressure emanating from North American capital markets, clearly demonstrated the limits of such public-driven growth in a deindustrializing economy. Having attained the limit of public sector growth, Quebec is now increasingly dependent for balancing the books on resource exploitation such as hydroelectricity, mining and forestry and services such as tourism, liquor distribution, lotteries and casinos. Of course, Quebec is not alone, and similar situations exist to a lesser degree in Ontario (Fortin's point of reference) and to a greater degree in the United Kingdom.

How has such a relative economic decline, an invalidation of Fortin's second achievement, come to be? There are many reasons and this is not the place to adequately address the issue. Suffice it to say that weak indigenous capital formation, flagging entrepreneurship, suffocation by overcentralization, regulation and eccentric corporatism, not to mention the climbing down of the cultural level of the economic elite, have all contributed to dampened economic vitality.

For instance, it is difficult to cite economic initiatives comparable to the 1920s creation of a world-class pulp and paper industry resulting from a Quebec government ban on the export of pulpwood. Moreover, almost all of the government-sponsored economic agencies cited by Fortin (SGF, Sidbec, SOQUEM, REXFOR, SOQUIP, SOQUIA, National Asbestos Corporation, Madelipêche, Nouveler and Québecair) have failed, been liquidated or been merged into other agencies.

In all fairness, Fortin recognizes some (but only a few) of these problems, and efforts are being made to address some of the factors contributing to Quebec's relative economic decline.



The Casino de Montréal on the former Expo 67 site

Nevertheless the reality remains, as does the fact that this reality is equally a part of the heritage of the Quiet Revolution. Most importantly, our ability to sustain the gains of the Quiet Revolution Fortin evokes – to be able to pay for them as he mentions – is very much compromised in the long term by these economic realities.

Essentially, short-term gains have been achieved at the expense of the dilapidation of existing social, cultural, financial and economic capital. The implacable consequence, short of action to rebuild or restore this capital, is that the gains are not sustainable in the long term. Whether the medium- or long-term consequences of the changes implemented at the expense of the dilapidation of existing collective capital will be negative remains to be seen.

What is striking, however, is the extent to which the social-class consciousness of the new technocratic class, whose material base is the expanded public and parapublic apparatuses, has resulted in a failure to appreciate the cost of the dilapidation not only of existing collective economic capital but also of the social capital on which long-term economic development rests. Fortin is not oblivious to this: he speaks of the “reach of government into every corner of Quebec life.” But he fails to appreciate the consequences.

Notes

¹ Pierre Fortin, “Quebec's Quiet Revolution, 50 years later,” *Inroads*, Summer/Fall 2011, pp. 90–99.

² André Raynaud, *Croissance et structure économique de la province de Québec* (Quebec City: Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce, 1961).

³ Dan Czarnocki and Gary Caldwell, “Un rattrapage raté: Le changement social dans le Québec d'après-guerre, 1950–1974: Une comparaison Québec/Ontario,” *Recherches sociographiques*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1977).

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Without policies and programs, a movement is meaningless

by Dominic Cardy

Dominic Cardy is the Leader of the New Brunswick New Democratic Party and a member of the Inroads editorial board.

With the angry but proudly directionless Occupy Wall Street movement making headlines, it is ironic that Canadian leftists, often united by anti-Americanism, base their political analysis and actions on American realities. Roberta Lexier's article in Inroads, contrasting Ryan Meili's bid for leader of the Saskatchewan NDP and Naheed Nenshi's campaign for mayor of Calgary with the "old style" politics she disdains, draws our attention to this dichotomy.¹

Lexier is not commenting on Canadian politics; she and many others on the Canadian left are orbiting a bright and distracting American sun, using American reference points and ignoring the differences between the two countries. Because of this Canadians are deprived of a richer progressive response to today's political problems. Further, by exalting campaigns that appear game-changing, Lexier contributes to the myth that public protests and campaigns decide political outcomes, not hard work toward a common goal.

Canada shares many problems with the United States: rural and urban poverty, deprivation on First Nations reserves, diminishing economic vigour, confusion over how to deal with a globalized world, declining levels of political participation. But Canada is not the United States, where politics is elite-driven and controlled by multimillionaires. The American system is presidential, ours parliamentary; theirs is corrupted by massive interference from lobbyists while ours, thanks to reforms enacted by Liberal and Conservative governments, severely restricts third-party lobbying and depends on small donors and inexpensive campaigns.

Meili, a young doctor who lost an insurgent campaign against the Saskatchewan NDP establishment, and Nenshi, who emerged from nowhere to win as an unabashed progressive in the Conservative heartland, were influenced by Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, a heritage Lexier never acknowledges. From the "money bomb" fundraisers to self-directing groups of volunteers to YouTube videos and the fetishizing of new media, Meili and Nenshi sang from the Democrat's campaign playbook and the Canadian media joined the chorus, eager for some Obama magic.

All three campaigns were fundamentally conventional. The candidates were professional men who used lofty rhetoric to win volunteers, raise money and get out the vote. Charisma, hardly a recent addition to politicians' arsenal, allowed people to get swept up in a narrative of change often divorced from policy specifics.

Lexier offers unfavourable comparisons between the Meili and Nenshi races and the 2011 Canadian federal election. While she rightly criticizes the obsession with public opinion polls, arguments over the format of debates and focus on personal scandal in the election campaign, she praises process stories about campaign tools, fundraising techniques and new technology, imbuing them with ideological and transformative powers without any justification.

Facebook cannot change the world. People using Facebook certainly can, but the fetishizing of shiny political tools has led to a decline in citizen engagement in the United States that we should note with caution. Voter contact technology, direct mail strategies and other campaign tools, freed from the campaign finance restrictions that make Canadian politics less exciting but much more affordable, make elections inaccessible to all but the best connected and best funded. This disconnect, as much as any other single cause, has caused the sense of alienation that led to the Occupy Wall Street movement.

The American system is presidential, ours parliamentary; theirs is corrupted by massive interference from lobbyists while ours severely restricts third-party lobbying and depends on small donors and inexpensive campaigns.

Lexier should look around: while rightly praised for helping Tunisians coordinate the Facebook Revolution that overthrew Ben Ali's dictatorship, Facebook has been used by governments in Iran, China and Syria to investigate and disrupt dissident groups. To reinforce the fact that tools have no ideology in themselves, it is worth noting that just as Meili and Nenshi's campaigns owed a debt to Obama, so did Obama owe one to George W. Bush's 2004 campaign, which used then-revolutionary databases to empower Republican activists in the defeat of the hapless John Kerry. Democrats, in Canada as in Tunisia, have to listen to more than the siren call of organizing techniques and think about the ideas that drive people to want to use those new and potentially exciting tools.

Lexier is looking for transformation in all the wrong places. Campaigns that rely on process instead of ideas give a misleading plasma-screen excitement to the often dull reality of democratic government: reading reports, debating legislation, compromising with bureaucrats, arguing with people within your political party over policies and presentation.

We should not pretend that politics is more accessible or exciting than it is. The left has to learn how to win, then learn how to manage the complexities of the existing system, and then undertake the far more complex task of reforming that system. Simplifying the appearance of governance isn't engagement: it is manipulation. On the right we have seen this play out through the illusions of control offered by referendums and the populism of the Tea Party. On the left the Occupy Wall Street movement, which sums up what Lexier is looking for, also offers plenty of noise but as little hope of changing the world in favour of the majority.

The self-obsessed Occupy movement, caught up with its ability to inform people about itself, is a lazy alternative to real change, disdaining tools previous generations of progressives fought hard for the right to use. The events themselves are meaningless, if meaning in politics comes from actually changing the world. Sure, we can get a thousand, ten thousand or even a million people out to a town square, but why are we there? Without an ideological framework these protests are harmless releases of political hot air, the energy they could have channelled dissipating like a thousand recycled slogans.

Evidence of the protests' harmlessness was confirmed on October 10 when Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream, owned by the massive multinational Unilever, endorsed the Occupy movement. If the movement has one point of policy consensus it is the evils of massive multinationals. Ben and Jerry's board know they can sell more ice cream by appealing to progressive consumers, and do it without any danger to their corporate interests.

Public protest has always been a last resort. When successful it is a literal demonstration of public force, reminding governments that they must listen to a clearly articulated set of demands. Such protests are a reminder that the group making speeches today will tomorrow knock down the doors of parliament. Muammar Gaddafi fell victim to this lesson; Syria's Assad is still trying to resist it. In both cases the demand from the public was clear: your regime must go.

The Occupy movement enjoys no such clarity or resolve. Here the street protests are the first and last step; the protesters have no demands, and will neither organize politically nor arm themselves

to overthrow their governments if ignored. Politicians know this so-called insurrection will, at worst, continue to be loud but ineffectual, or soon disintegrate into squabbling factions. This has already started, as trade unions that want to turn the Occupy movement into a voice for progressive taxation are angrily rebuffed by others who see any message as co-option.

Conservative columnist David Brooks, in a recent column called "The Limits of Empathy," compared the anorexia of empathy with the transformative power of what he calls a code, which he might as well have referred to by its old-fashioned name: ideology. Empathy, the morally relative position of feeling the pain of everyone while simultaneously recusing yourself from any responsibility to address it, defines the core of the Occupy movement. The absence of an ideological focus is why it is doomed to fail.

The left must remember that our goal is action in the service of change, not discussion in the service of more discussion. Policies and programs are more important than fancy new technology: if we get the ideas right we will recruit the volunteers and raise the money to get the job done. Without the unifying ideas we are wasting time and energy. I do not underestimate how hard it will be to develop those new ideas: people are rightfully suspicious of politicians offering answers and we are at a period when what it means to be conservative or progressive is changing rapidly. Elsewhere in this issue of Inroads I have written some ideas on that score, and I hope others will follow suit.

Lexier is cynical; I am not. I became Leader of New Brunswick's New Democrats earlier in 2011 with a campaign team led by young people, dominated by women and supported by volunteers who sacrificed their time – in some cases quitting their jobs – to make our shared dream for a better province real. We fought entrenched interests, brought in new volunteers and made it clear that politics is a battle and that no group with power gives it up voluntarily. We studied and used new campaign tools, but didn't fetishize them – our province, like our country, needs courage and application, not iPhone apps.

Sacrifice and organization in service to a clear set of policies: this was the spartan approach of Tommy Douglas and other successful reformers. They made Canada one of the richest and fairest countries in the history of this planet. The system Lexier decries for its dullness has shown it can be harnessed by the people: we leap ahead as a country when we seize the tools already at our disposal. The saddest truth brought to light by the Occupy movement is our collective failure to realize that we, the public, the 99 per cent the movement talks about, already occupy this country. We just need to move in and make the renovations. We'll need building supplies and tools to finish the rebuilding but most of all what we need, and what we're missing, is an architect's design. When that's finished, and if our plans are rejected by that one per cent, then let's go to the streets. Until then, let's get to work.

Note

¹ Roberta Lexier, "Politics, new style," Inroads, Summer/Fall 2011, pp. 100–107.