

Bimonthly  
Oct./Nov. 1995

# ViceVersa



50

Toronto

Montréal

New York

## Taxes & Taxis

interviews with three Mayors:

P. Bourque

R. Giuliani

B. Hall

**Unabomber De-fused**

**Slovakia and the Doubtful Blessings  
of Independence**

**Hands Off! The Internet**

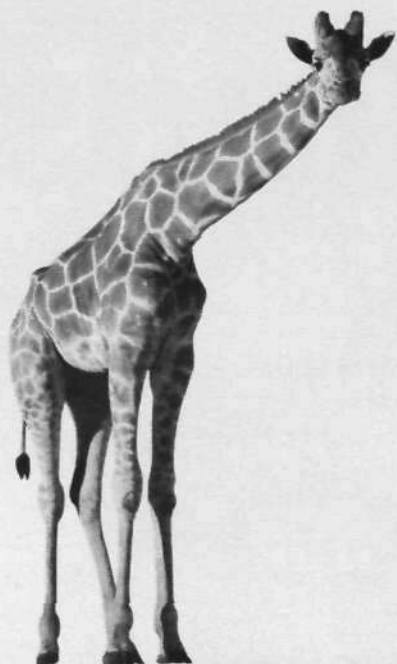
**Référendum: Leçon de Démocratie 3**

US \$ 3 / FF 10





# ***Le regard rivé sur la scène***



**Hydro-Québec  
fait briller les feux  
de la rampe.**

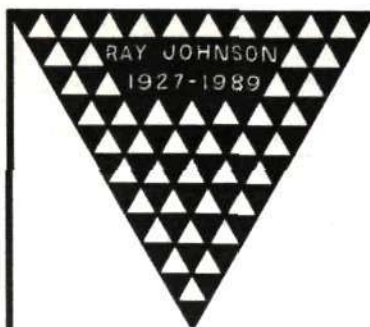
À l'orée du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'importance de l'énergie créatrice n'est plus à discuter. Elle fait partie de nos vies autant que toute autre forme d'énergie. Ce n'est donc pas un

hasard si Hydro-Québec est aujourd'hui associée à la vie culturelle d'ici. Nous déployons tout notre enthousiasme québécois afin que nos artistes puissent défendre leur dynamisme créateur. L'art et l'énergie: deux richesses, une même vision.



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***L'énergie qui voit loin***



Ray Johnson  
1927-1989

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# WHY NOT CANADA AS A LAND OF TOLERANCE?

A new Montréal subscriber sent us this letter. We find his ideas so convivial to our own that (unlike *Le Devoir* which did not publish another letter of his) not only are we publishing his letter, but using it as our editorial. From reader to editor: a small example of transcultural democracy in action!

It's with pleasure that I am becoming a subscriber of *Vice Versa*. Find here enclosed a cheque for \$15. I especially appreciate the multicultural aspect of your magazine, exactly for what it is - a call to open up to the world - but also, I like it for what it is not. In fact, your position in the triangle of Montréal-Toronto-New York takes us away from the endlessly sterile and draining debate ravishing Québec presently.

I am royally fed up of these puerile and costly babblings which are unending. On the one hand, the separation debate is fuelled without any plan for the society it is intended and which reveals itself simply as ugly nationalism. And that is serious. On the other hand, there is the non-plan by federalists which rivals the other camp in its deceit and is as ridiculous. I cannot identify myself with these people. Why not simply present Canada as a land of tolerance? Why must we talk with illusions and out of fear?

I miss the summer of 1994 when we were able to read in *Le Devoir* the articles of Fulvio Caccia - your Paris correspondent and Naïm Kattan. These two writers brought us the world. What a pleasure it was to be able to breathe again. I wrote a letter to *Le Devoir* protesting the departure of Fulvio Caccia which they didn't even bother to publish.

This event in 1994 has brought me to subscribe to *Vice Versa*. I am strongly attracted by Europe but I am ready to play the game, to contemplate my undeniable Americanism. In fact, I do not know all that much. As a good Quebecker I confess I have never been to Toronto but at least you publish the train schedules!

In friendship,  
Jacques Brisson

En s'abonnant, un lecteur de Montréal nous a adressé cette lettre. Nous partageons ses idées au point que nous avons immédiatement décidé - à la différence du journal *Le Devoir* qui n'a pas publié une autre de ses lettres - non seulement de la publier, mais aussi de lui accorder le rôle d'éditorial. De lecteur à éditorialiste: un petit exemple de la démocratie transculturelle!

## Pourquoi pas le Canada terre de tolérance?

C'est avec plaisir que je m'abonne à *Vice Versa*. Vous trouverez donc ci-joint un chèque de 15\$. J'apprécie plus particulièrement la dimension pluriculturelle de votre revue, précisément pour ce qu'elle est - un appel à l'ouverture sur le monde - et peut-être surtout pour ce qu'elle n'est pas. En effet, votre jonction triangulaire Montréal-Toronto-New York ne nous ramène pas au sempiternel débat stérile et lassant qui sévit actuellement au Québec.

J'en ai souverainement marre de ces babillages puérils et coûteux qui n'en finissent plus. D'un côté, il y a la séparation qui, sans projet de société qui l'irrigue, relève bêtement et tout simplement du nationalisme. Et ça c'est grave. Et de l'autre côté, il y a le non-projet des tenants du fédéralisme qui semblent rivaliser d'astuces pour paraître ridicules. Je ne peux me reconnaître chez ces gens là. Pourquoi ne pas simplement présenter le Canada comme une terre de tolérance? Pourquoi faut-il donc faire parler les mirages et la peur?

Je m'ennuie de ce fameux été 1994 où nous pouvions lire dans *Le Devoir* les papiers de Fulvio Caccia - votre chroniqueur à Paris - et de Naïm Kattan. Ces deux écrivains nous montraient le monde. Quel bonheur que de respirer! J'ai écrit une lettre au *Devoir* pour protester contre le départ de Fulvio Caccia. Ils ne l'ont même pas publiée.

C'est donc cet élan de 1994 qui m'amène à m'abonner à *Vice Versa*. Je me sens davantage attiré par l'Europe mais je suis prêt à jouer le jeu, à contempler mon américanité indéniable. Je n'en connais pas grand chose en fait. En «bon Québécois», j'avoue n'être jamais allé à Toronto. Mais bon, puisque désormais, vous publiez l'horaire des trains!

Amicalement,  
Jacques Brisson

Al momento di abbonarsi, un lettore di Montréal, ci ha inviato questa lettera. Condividiamo le sue idee al tal punto che non solo abbiamo immediatamente deciso - a differenza del giornale *Le Devoir* che non ha voluto pubblicare un'altra sua lettera - di pubblicarla ma addirittura di assegnarle il ruolo di editoriale. Da lettore a editorialista: un piccolo esempio della democrazia transculturale!

## Perché non fare del Canada una terra di tolleranza?

E' con piacere che mi abbono a *Vice Versa*. Troverete qui allegato un assegno di 15\$. Se apprezzo particolarmente la dimensione pluriculturale della vostra rivista è certo perché rappresenta un invito all'apertura al mondo ma anche, e forse soprattutto, per quello che la rivista non è. Infatti il legame triangolare Montréal-Toronto-New York che proponete, non ci riconduce all'eterno, sterile e estenuante dibattito che infuria in questo momento nel Québec.

Sono sovranamente stufo di queste chiacchiere senza fine, puerili e costose. Da una parte c'è la separazione che, senza un progetto di società che la alimenti, si riduce a una banale e piatta affermazione nazionalistica. Il che è grave. Dall'altra, c'è il non-progetto dei sostenitori del federalismo, impegnati fino al ridicolo nella ricerca di astutissime tattiche elettorali. Non posso proprio riconoscermi in questa gente. Perché, semplicemente, non fare del Canada una terra di tolleranza? Perché si deve sempre ricorrere ai miraggi e allo spettro della paura?

Ho nostalgia della famosa estate del 1994, quando si potevano leggere sul giornale *Le Devoir* gli articoli di Fulvio Caccia - il vostro corrispondente a Parigi - e di Naïm Kattan. Questi due scrittori ci portavano il mondo. Che bella cosa poter respirare! Ho scritto una lettera al *Devoir* protestando per l'allontanamento di Fulvio Caccia.

Non l'hanno nemmeno pubblicata.

E' sullo slancio del '94 che mi accingo a abbonarmi a *Vice Versa*. Mi sento più attratto dall'Europa ma sono pronto a stare al gioco e contemplare la mia innegabile americanità. Ne so molto poco in effetti. Da «buon Québécois», confesso di non essere mai stato a Toronto.

Ma visto che ormai pubblicate l'orario dei treni!

Con amicizia,  
Jacques Brisson



# "Even the Snake used an Apple"

## Reading the UNABOMBER Manifesto...

Louis Project

illustration: Daniel Sylvestre



"The system does not and cannot exist to satisfy human needs. Instead, it is human behavior that has to be modified to fit the needs of the system. This has nothing to do with the political or social ideology that may pretend to guide the technological system. It is not the fault of capitalism and it is not the fault of socialism. It is the fault of technology, because the system is guided not by ideology but by technical necessity."

These are words from the Unabomber's manifesto that appeared in the September 19th Washington Post. The Unabomber has killed three people and injured twenty three others. Police suspect that he lives in Oakland, California.

## Letters Lettres Lettere Cartas

*Oraison funèbre à un ami ou comment se débarrasser d'un présumé désaxé*

Dans une espèce de quartier-dortoir du nord de l'île de Montréal, Rivière-des-Prairies qu'on désigne ironiquement ici comme étant la Rivière-des-Pourris, c'est dans mon quartier, dis-je, que s'est joué un été meurtrier. Un citoyen du nom de Philippe Ferraro, résidant dans ce quartier depuis plusieurs années, est frappé mortellement le 26 juin dernier par une balle de caoutchouc qu'utilise la police de Montréal dans les situations qui restent toujours très mystérieuses... ou disons obscures pour des profanes comme monsieur et madame tout le monde. Sans vouloir faire état des vertus du défunt, on peut affirmer que Philippe Ferraro était une personne pacifique, connaissant à ses heures des troubles de l'humeur mais toujours généreuse de son temps. Prêt à répondre de sa présence "benemollement",

il aimait sans cesse répéter combien il avait de chats à fouetter.

Une tragédie s'est jouée ce lundi 26 juin lorsque l'escouade tactique de la Communauté Urbaine de Montréal était demandée en renfort pour un appel de violence familiale qui tourna en violence estivale. Violence policière musclée, d'autres personnes l'ont déjà dit, qui s'apparente étrangement à celle de l'affaire Paolo Romanelli similaire à Saint-Léonard. J'aimerais rendre ce court témoignage pour interroger, non pas l'utilisation policière des balles de caoutchouc, mais l'utilisation policière de la violence armée dans des causes de violence familiale. La banalisation quotidienne de la violence est-elle à ce point généralisée que de nouveaux standards, de nouvelles "performances", font insidieusement surface dans la gestion policière de notre cité? Pour mater la détestable malice de ses habitants n'y a-t-il pas, lors d'épisodes de violence

conjugale et familiale, escalade de la violence qui conduit à une multiplication d'interventions policières armées et, subséquemment, un rapide nettoyage médiatique? Qui donne l'ordre de faire feu sur un vieillard de soixante et quelques années, barricadé derrière sa propre peur, armé de surcroît d'un pic à glace et lui-même guère plus lourd qu'un chien Labrador? Quelles pensées criminelles traversent vos cervelles pour qu'à un appel de conflit familial vous deviez recourir à un escadron de la mort? À qui doit-elle rendre des comptes cette escouade de la mortalité? Dans tous les cas, pour dire comme Charles Beaudelaire, "y a rien de plus respectable qu'un ancien abus?". Pourquoi, en définitive, l'affaire Philippe Ferraro ne fait-elle pas l'objet d'une enquête publique?

Pierre Boucher



The section of the left the author identifies with has a different analysis: The problem is not industrialization in itself, but an economic system that either expands or dies. It is the drive for profit that is destroying rain forests, polluting rivers, and making air unbreathable.

Green anarchists - of which the Unabomber is an extreme example - love regionalism. One has said that each community should exist as a "...totally separate geographical and social entity. If there is much social mixing between the groups, if people work outside the group, it will weaken the community bond... xenophobia is the key to the community's success." Some welcome the break-up of Eastern "communism" as an expression of bioregionalism, and embrace Yugoslavia's dissolution into Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia.

Capitalism can flirt with environmental responsibility, but the tendency for capitalism to expand and devour non-capitalist sectors means that "green" capitalism will be an anomaly, like rain in the Sahara desert (which actually does occur every so often).

For every concession to clean air in an advanced capitalist country like the United States or Germany, we get the displacement of environmental destruction into places like Mexico and Hungary. The imperialist bourgeoisie does not lose sleep over increased cancer rates in the maquiladora zone.

Capitalism is not a static system. It defies rational planning and rational growth. Its growth is the growth of metastasizing tumors. Desire for consumption is created through advertising. Production heats up to accommodate consumption. This is a treadmill, not a rational system. We end up with whatever Madison Avenue and Wall Street can profit from. We get 20 brands of cigarettes, \$125 running shoes and soft drink wars while the conditions of social living continue to degrade. Public transportation, health and education suffer while the alienated population looks for its next consumer fix at the shopping mall.

Neo-Malthusians, who are endemic to the green movement, misunderstand the cause of urban squalor and misery. They blame it on there being "too many people". This surplus of people is in reality an ever increasing reserve army of the unemployed, which is now globally depressing wages. This is an inevitable consequence of the replacement of human labor by machinery that accompanies the capitalist drive for profit. The global market destroys local markets and throws additional people into destitution.

### Faux conflits, vrais conflits

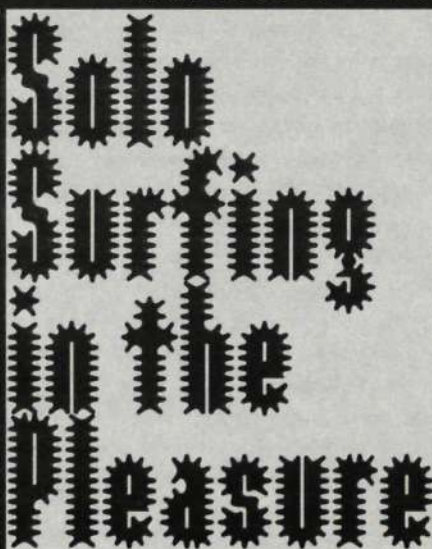
Nous avons exprimé, dans les douze ans de notre activité éditoriale, une vision de la société et de la politique qui est transculturelle et radicale. Ce qui nous préoccupe, c'est la prise de conscience de la spécificité de la crise actuelle ainsi que l'engagement pour l'effective réalisation de la démocratie, ici comme ailleurs. Le conflit qui oppose le Canada au Québec nous semble se fonder sur un pénible malentendu. C'est une opposition politiquement insignifiante, quand les deux parties ne s'affrontent que sur les thèmes de la langue et de l'identité ethnique; quand l'appel à la différence se fonde sur le désir d'une réparation-vendetta et que l'appel à l'unité renvoie aux vertus de l'économisme et au plaisir d'écraser l'ennemi. Depuis longtemps nous avons cherché et trouvé nos raisons et nos passions à un autre niveau. Aujourd'hui nous les retrouvons concentrées dans un texte publié dans la revue française Transversales Science-Culture, texte que nous tenons à vous faire connaître et qui apparaîtra dans notre prochain numéro 51. [L.T.]

## **GREEN ANARCHISTS TEND TO ROMANTICIZE INDIGENOUS SOCIETIES IN A MANNER REMINISCENT OF ROUSSEAU. THE EXPLANATION OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VARIOUS STAGES OF SOCIETIES HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH A CHANGE IN VALUES; IT HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH COLONIALISM, IMPERIALISM AND THE INTRODUCTION OF MONEY INTO A PRIMITIVE COMMUNIST SOCIETY**

A reserve army permits capitalism to increase the surplus value produced by labor and also allows for expansion in boom times. This is the real cause of the civil wars in Yugoslavia, Ruanda, and everywhere across the former Soviet Union, and threatens to ignite internecine wars anywhere.

When people have jobs, homes, savings, etc., there is no discussion of an overpopulation problem. When millions, driven off the land, crowd into the urban slums of West Africa or India looking for work, we discover that there is an overpopulation problem. As Marxist David Harvey says, "There are too many people in the world because the particular ends we have in view (together with the form of social organization we have), and the materials available in nature that we have the will and the way to use, are not sufficient to provide us with those things to which we are accustomed." (Economic Geography, 1974) Was there ever a golden age when society lived in balance with nature? Green anarchists tend to romanticize indigenous societies in a manner reminiscent of Rousseau. The explanation of the difference between various stages of societies has nothing to do with a change in values; it has everything to do with colonialism, imperialism and the introduction of money into a primitive communist society. P. Keleman cites the difference between descriptions of the Tigre province in Ethiopia in 1901 and 1985 as recounted by two travellers. In 1901, the first observes "The environs of Adowa are most fertile, and in the heights of its commercial prosperity the whole of the valleys and the lower slopes of the mountains were one vast grain field, and not only Adowa, but the surrounding villages carried a very large, contented

### *Spinning the Italian Web*



*William Anselmi*

**I** You, Reader, never with Time content, who feels the Flux of History behind you, looking for pleasure in your mother tongue and not finding it, stop an instant and listen to a wanderer's voice.

**I.1** Take your Electronic Brain, wire it via modem to your preferred phone network. Perform the preliminary rituals, get in the World Wide Web.

At last captured, you cannot but travel. Virtual Ulysses, you'll never reach your goal, but innumerable stations to rest, to hesitate, to explore before going over, again and again beyond Hercules' Columns.

**I.2** Tell your communication device the following address <http://www.melink.it>. Then you'll see - whether your program is able to visualize graphics or read texts - the site MC-link. Here, Wandering Reader, you'll find, as the Poet did "l'anello che non tiene, / il filo da disbrogliare che finalmente ci metta/ nel mezzo



and prosperous population. The neighboring mountains are still well wooded. The numerous springs, brooks, and small rivers give an ample support of good water for domestic and irrigation purposes, and the water meadows always produce an inexhaustible supply of good grass the whole year round."

Then in 1985, another traveller says "Shortly before I left Ethiopia I flew over large tracts of the dessicated provinces of Tigre and Wollo. For hours the picture below was unchanging: plains which formerly were described as the breadbasket of the north were covered in rolling mist of what was once fertile top soil; eddies of spiraling dust rose in the whirlwinds hundreds of feet into the air, stony river beds at the bottom of gorges a thousand feet deep showed not a sign of water or new vegetation; and the grazing land at the top of the plateau which the dried-out rivers dissected were as bald and brown as I felt."


What changed in Ethiopia? Did they have too many babies?

No, Ethiopia was brought into the colonial orbit. Land began to be used for the export of cash crops. The peasantry was driven off the land and communal property relations were abolished. Instead of being in trust for future generations, the land was viewed as just one more resource to be exploited. The Unabomber addresses spiritual poverty as well as material poverty. However, the reason we are alienated from each other and nature is because we are surrounded by the cash nexus in a market economy, and not because we are living in industrialized society. Everything, including people and nature, are seen from the point of view of their exchange value. This colors everything. The way we speak reflects this alienated existence. We speak of the "investment" we have in an intimate relationship. We are worried whether our "assets" are to be found in our appearance, like Richard Gere's, or Cindy Crawford's, or in our intelligence or wit, like Woody Allen's (well, from 15 years ago anyhow).

The relationship between society and nature is dialectical. It is a mistake to think, as the greens do, that nature subsumes everything. Nature has been and will be determined to some extent by this peculiar animal, homo sapiens, which uses tools to control its environment. There was never a pure state of nature when we had the same relationship to nature that a bumblebee or kangaroo has.

In *The German Ideology* Marx says: "The nature that preceded human history...today no longer exists anywhere" - closer to the truth than the Unabomber's belief that it is possible to return to "wild nature." This statement of Marx is not mechanistic or anthropocentric,

but dialectical. He understands that nature determines society while simultaneously being determined by society. Under capitalism this contradiction is of course tilted in the direction of society. The only way some kind of balance can be restored is through socialism. Homo sapiens, tool-user, has become estranged from nature over centuries of social development under private property. The only way we can overcome this alienation is through the intelligent use of tools that allows us to reconcile society and nature.

The genie is already out of the bottle. As much as some of us would like to go live in the woods, or better yet, the Garden of Eden, that is not a possibility in the world we live in today. What we have to do instead is take control over our lives and our economics and transform the world into a liveable place for the first time in human history. 



**Louis Proyect** is a New York activist and computer programmer. He has been involved with socialist politics since 1967. During the 1980's he was East Coast coordinator of TechNica, a group of skilled technical workers who trained people in Nicaragua, and in Africa for the ANC.

di una verità."

Three buttons to press, to click. Choosing the second one you'll find: Magazine.

At this point, no return is possible: information, culture, science, environment, associations, leisure time, shopping, Italian webs.

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information: newspapers, weekly papers, magazines, agencies, video clubs, weather forecasts, Duemila, Italian Politics, the Italian civil Networks, etc. Yes, at last, a good coffee and a paper.

While waiting, your feet, like hands, are rubbing in deep pleasure.

What, Italian Newspapers? Well: *il manifesto*, *l'Unità*, *il Corriere della Sera*, *la Gazzetta dello sport* and many others are waiting, you'll see, you'll see...

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<http://www.agora.stm.it/internaz/giornali.html>.

You could surf from Australia (*The Age*, *The Pelican*, *Sidney Morning Herald*, etc.) to Norway (*Bronnoysunds Avis*).


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**I.6** There is more for you Italian Reader, insatiate reader... Jump on

<http://www.mi.cnr.it:80/IGST/> and all human knowledge will be given to you by the Italian General Subject Tree, from Archeologia to Giochi, from Moda to Solidarietà!

**I.7** You, Brother Reader, you Solicitous Sister, Companions wandering in solitude from site to site, do not despair, "la paura immensa e vera, dentro il corpo, nella testa, tra le mani, la paura calda immensa e vera della rivoluzione" can be virtually found at

<http://www.xs4all.nl/tank/ecn>. Under the asphalt, the sand, and waves of other worlds to be. Have a Safe Journey. 

[wanselmi@ccs.carleton.ca](mailto:wanselmi@ccs.carleton.ca)



# The Temple of the San Juan Chamula Chiapas, Mexico August 1995



San Juan Chamula Temple  
[photo: V. Kramsky]

Joan Arcari

Why am I going out to the temple at San Juan Chamula again? Satisfied that they don't sacrifice virgins in the basement, and never have, I have picked up a flowery Maya cross—painted green and still tacky. *Yo soy católica. Indígena Católica?*

I am sitting in the Volkswagen bus *colectivo* eating mango slices from a cup I bought while wending my way through the market toward the San Juan Chamula stop. Turns out the man sitting next to me is English, a quasi authority on the Maya. I offer him a mango slice.

"I don't know whether I keep coming back to Mexico for the culture or the food. It's the *indígena* influence." I was enthusiastic about both.

"The Maya never developed a cuisine, just corn and beans, beans and corn," he says. "But, of course, developing a cuisine has nothing to do with level of civilization."

Of course an Englishman would say that.

When the *colectivo* is full we can leave for San Juan Chamula, the Maya city-state half an hour out of San Cristobal de las Casas.

A couple from Heidelberg are the last to squeeze in. They are on their six week holiday, "doing a bit here, a bit there, ending in Guatemala—not the tourist routes of course". He is upset, in English as well as in German, that there are other tourists, preferring, of course, that he and his wife be the only ones.

Tourism is down since the Zapatista uprising. It hurts. The Spanish language school has few students; hotels are almost empty; the restaurants are feeding mostly Mexicans; sales are down at the artisan market.

"They need some sustainable development", a gringo says.

In Chamula, the Englishman disappears and the German man grabs Manuel, an amiable *indígena* guide, and asks him to tell us the rules.

Manuel looks puzzled.

"So we don't offend, and act like ugly gringos. Isn't that simple?" the German asks, towering over Manuel.

"Just don't take pictures. None inside the church." Manuel does not whip out a long list of exotic rules.

"Well of course, we know *that*." The tall man, apparently finding his guide too simple, takes his wife's arm and steers her toward the temple.

Catholic or not, *extranjeros* have to pay three pesos at the *oficio municipal* for a ticket to go into the temple. We are easily recognized.

Men from Chamula in black hats and wool ponchos cinched at the waist with wide leather belts, and white pants cut just above very strong looking calves, stand guard at the church door with polished clubs—about the size and shape of rifles—strapped to their shoulders. You don't try to sneak past the collection plate here.

Inside the white adobe church, there are no pews, no seats, no aisles. Pine needles are strewn over the floor tiles. The scent is wonderful. Pagan, hedonic. Manuel says the pine tree is sacred. There are clusters of burning candles amid the pine needles—no wonder the temples often burn down.

Small groups of supplicants sit or kneel among the candles. They chant, they light candles—each slender taper signifying a life—and they drink from Coca-Cola bottles. Some, laced with posh, the local drink distilled from sugar cane, are left as an offering to one of the saints lined up in glass cabinets around the perimeter of the temple, their names painted on the doors: San Antonin de Padua; San Pedro; San Pascualito. San Juan il Bautiste is patron saint of the temple. Each saint has a caretaker in the community, a majordomo. They are always men.

A priest comes up from Tuxtla, the capital, once a month or so, to perform baptisms—there are many—but otherwise the temple has its own officiating body. That's what I find so fascinating. I am impressed with just how catholic the Catholic Church can be. Endurance through adaptation and compromise. Like the Maya. Their beliefs subsume and incorporate the Roman Church. It's called Mexican Orthodox.

An old woman, a healer, presides over a small group. She chants, and waves a squawking chicken over the candles and over a reclining body, probably a child. The squawking stops. I hear only the woman chanting and the child moaning. The healer stops to take a swig from the soda bottle sitting next to her. Then she offers it around.

From habit, I cross myself, thinking I shouldn't be watching her, I should be doing my own prayer thing. I'm afraid she has snapped the neck of the chicken she's still waving around. The chicken's task is to absorb the devil that makes the person ill. Eventually the old woman lays the chicken down next to her, patting it affectionately. Alive, but hypnotized? I doubt it.

I hear a belch from this group and then from another group swigging Coke up near the front. And then another. Each belch releases an evil spirit.

A fine featured Chamula, one you might see if the Maya made commercials—and I'm sure that time will be soon—is hovering around the limp chicken group. He is dressed in the black poncho, more rakish



# Living Maya

without a belt, and brown pantaloones, haircut right from Vidal Sassoon. He brings over a small narrow cylinder of posh. It's unadulterated *aguardiente*. I think it could run a car and would rather it did.

"You must take some or offend the community," Manuel whispers, helpfully.

Not for twelve step programmers, this temple.

The angst-ridden man from Heidelberg storms out of the church.

"We are trespassing," he is saying to Manuel, when I see him outside. "It's like Disneyland," he expostulates.

Manuel sways back and forth, looking very uncomfortable. He says nothing.


"And what is Notre Dame?" I ask. "For true believers?"

I board a *colectivo* headed back to San Cristobal. In it are two Italian men, a Basque couple, three *indígenas*, the driver and me. We stop midway and back several hundred bumpy yards down an unpaved driveway to pick up eight body-size sacks of beets which are stacked to the roof behind me, and six crates of potatoes covered with green leafy stalks. The potatoes displace the Italian men who try to decide whether the stalks are broccoli rabe.

Following the potatoes into the van, comes a tired-looking barefoot Maya woman with a baby and a little boy. The women go barefoot to insure their fertility which comes directly from the earth. The men wear shoes, of course, usually sandals.

"There is difference between the Maya men and the women," Manuel had acknowledged, "but not because of Latin machismo. Maya don't have machismo. It's because of respect."

And so it goes.

One of the Italians squeezes in the back with me, the other in the front and we proceed to the market in San Cristobal where our trip began. 

Joan Arcari is a writer living in New York City.

The market at San Juan Chamula  
[photo: Joan Arcari]





photos: Josef Geranio



# Vice Versa VisioConference

**O**n September 6th *Vice Versa* took off along the electronic highway. The three cities of the Triangle came alive on the screen as a lively one hour debate about urban issues linked them together at the Librairie Champigny in Montréal (Michael Century, host), McLuhan Program in Toronto (co-hosted by William Anselmi and Derrick de Kerckhove) and The Kitchen in New York (Phelonise Willie, hostess). Many voices and a new direction! This event was made possible due to the assistance of the Service de la Culture de la Ville de Montréal whom we thank.

**L**e 6 septembre le magazine *Vice Versa* est sorti du papier habituel pour se lancer dans l'espace. Les trois villes du Triangle ont été reliées par une visioconférence publique. Présence simultanée à Montréal, Toronto et New York de trois groupes qui ont échangé sur des thèmes urbains et sur les nouvelles technologies. Les animateurs du dialogue étaient: à la librairie Champigny de Montréal, Michael Century; au Programme McLuhan de Toronto, William Anselmi et Derrick de Kerckhove; à la discothèque virtuelle The Kitchen de New York, Phelonise Willie. Nos remerciements au Service de la Culture de la Ville de Montréal qui a rendu possible cet événement.



# Message de solidarité

## avec la Déclaration d'Avignon du Groupe d'artistes et intellectuels français pour la Bosnie

Depuis plusieurs mois, nous fêtons un peu partout à travers le monde (surtout en Occident), la fin de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, la plus meurtrière de l'histoire. Jamais plus de Munich! Jamais plus d'Holocauste! Mais non, depuis quatre ans nous avons créé, dans cette mer de technologie qui se veut libératrice, un nouveau Munich, un nouvel Holocauste, une nouvelle barbarie.

Avec l'inertie (il n'y a pas de pétrole dans cette région) de nos institutions politiques devant la crise de l'ex-Yougoslavie, nous déclarons notre ignorance de l'Histoire. Nos préoccupations en dépit de l'interdépendance planétaire, si souvent chantée par nos leaders politiques et économiques, demeurent encore localistes et nationalistes et nos institutions politiques et notre façon de concevoir la politique sont révolues. La barbarie qui se perpétue quotidiennement dans les Balkans demeure le symbole de la crise (SIDA, suicides des jeunes, chômage, sans abri, intolérance, etc...) que traverse, en cette fin de siècle, la civilisation occidentale. Or nos hommes et femmes politiques et les populations, en général, ferment les yeux, en espérant que le cauchemar va s'arrêter tout seul.

Depuis douze ans déjà, le magazine transculturel Vice Versa (Montréal, Toronto, New York) travaille modestement pour construire et répandre l'idée de la transculturalité. Un métissage culturel (où nous nous retrouvons dans l'autre) qui ferait de nous des citoyens de la planète et non des partisans de la sacro-sainte Nation.

Il y a, de l'autre côté de l'Atlantique, des concitoyens qui sont solidaires de votre cause qui est aussi la nôtre.

Vice Versa consacrera son numéro 51 (décembre-janvier) à la crise qui sévit en ex-Yougoslavie.

Suggestion: sans doute sera-t-il temps en 1996 de tenir une conférence (sans institutions officielles : ONU, etc...) sur la question de l'ex-Yougoslavie et sur la crise que traverse la civilisation en général.

L'équipe de Vice Versa





## TAXES & TAXIS

WE WANTED TO USE THE TRIANGLE AS A LABORATORY TO TRANSPORT YOU INTO THE URBAN SPACE IN WHICH WE LIVE. WITH PIERRE-PAUL PARISEAU'S FUSION OF THE THREE CITIES WE HOPE YOU CAN SENSE NEW ATMOSPHERES, EMOTIONS... LOSE YOURSELVES IN THIS MEGALOPOLIS AND BURROW INTO CITY-MATTER. THE CITY OF MAYORS AND TAXI DRIVERS. FROM THE TOP TO THE BOTTOM OF REALITY'S TOTEM POLE. AT THESE INTERSECTIONS WE UNVEIL MONTRÉAL, TORONTO AND NEW YORK.

NOUS AVONS VOULU TENTER UN THÉORÈME AVEC LE NOUVEAU TRIANGLE POUR ESSAYER DE SAISIR L'ÉTRANGE AIRE URBAINE DANS LAQUELLE NOUS VIVONS. PIERRE-PAUL PARISEAU A FUSIONNÉ LES TROIS MÉTROPOLES NOUS DONNANT AINSI DES ÉMOTIONS, NOUS FAISANT IMAGINER DES ATMOSPHÈRES, PERDANT NOTRE REGARD DANS LES PERSPECTIVES INÉDITES DE LA MÉGALOPOLIS. PAR LA SUITE, NOUS AVONS PÉNÉTRÉ LA VILLE. LA CITÉ DU MAIRE ET CELLE DU CHAUFFEUR DE TAXI. DEUX REGARDS DIFFÉRENTS, DU SOMMET À LA BASE DE LA PYRAMIDE. À LEUR CROISEMENT, NOUS PARTONS À LA DÉCOUVERTE DE MONTRÉAL, TORONTO ET NEW YORK.

ABBIAMO TENTATO UN TEOREMA CON IL NUOVO TRIANGOLO PER CERCARE DI COGLIERE QUALCOSA DELLA STRANA AREA URBANA IN CUI VIVIAMO. PIERRE-PAUL PARISEAU HA FUSO IN COPERTINA LE TRE METROPOLI PER DARCI UN' EMOZIONE, FARCI IMMAGINARE ATMOSFERE E PERDERE LO SGUARDO NELLE PROSPETTIVE INEDITE DELLA MEGALOPOLI. POI SIAMO ENTRATI NELLA CITTÀ: LA CITTÀ DEL SINDACO E QUELLA DEL TASSISTA. DUE SGUARDI DIVERSI, DAL VERTICE ALLA BASE DELLA PIRAMIDE: AL LORO PUNTO D' INCONTRO COMINCIAMO A SCOPRIRE UN PO' DELLA VITA DI MONTRÉAL, DI TORONTO E DI NEW YORK.

ALL THE ILLUSTRATIONS OF THIS SECTION ARE BY PIERRE-PAUL PARISEAU

# Toronto, the

DOMENICO D'ALESSANDRO & WILLIAM ANSELM

V.V.: Why did you run for Mayor? What was the motivation?

B.H.: I love the city, I've lived in this city since 1967. I've seen the city evolve into a very vibrant, urban core through the commitment of people and the involvement of people who understand cities and who took responsibility for issues and changes within the city. In the last few years I've seen a decline in that, a lack of leadership that focused on the positive and encouraged, recognized the involvement of citizens in building and enhancing and maintaining a city. So I was concerned about this city that I love which was drifting and I looked around for someone I could support to be mayor and through that process there were a lot of fingers pointing at me as the person who could motivate, bring that kind of leadership.

V.V.: What positive aspects were you looking for?

B.H.: First of all, feeling positive about the city. People, partially because of leadership or the lack of leadership, had become focused on the negatives in the city... constantly being told that we're in financial trouble, or, you don't know how serious problems are and I think that becomes quite overwhelming. The whole issue of safety in the city: I believe this is a very safe city but a focus on the negative can become a self-fulfilling prophecy if you don't believe it's safe.

V.V.: What is the greatest challenge facing your city during your term as mayor?

B.H.: Developing a belief in the city's values and then committing to working on them, that's the greatest challenge. Another... is reforming the



October 15, 1995

Dear Friends,

As Torontonians, we applaud the multicultural make-up of our city. We welcome innovative methods for exploring and sharing one another's culture and heritage.

For a dozen years now, Vice Versa has given Montrealers such an outlet. This quarterly transcends the boundaries of our official national identity, to reflect some of the many languages, the social, cultural and political diversity of our country.

Vice Versa is entering new territory and broadening its scope beyond provincial and national boundaries. Increasing the languages to include English and Spanish, as well as French and Italian, will better reflect the ethnic diversity of its new circulation area.

On behalf of my colleagues on City Council, it is a pleasure to welcome Vice Versa to the newsstands of Toronto and to wish the publication every success.

Yours truly,

Barbara Hall

Barbara Hall  
Mayor



# THE MOST ETHNICALLY DIVERSE CITY IN THE WORLD

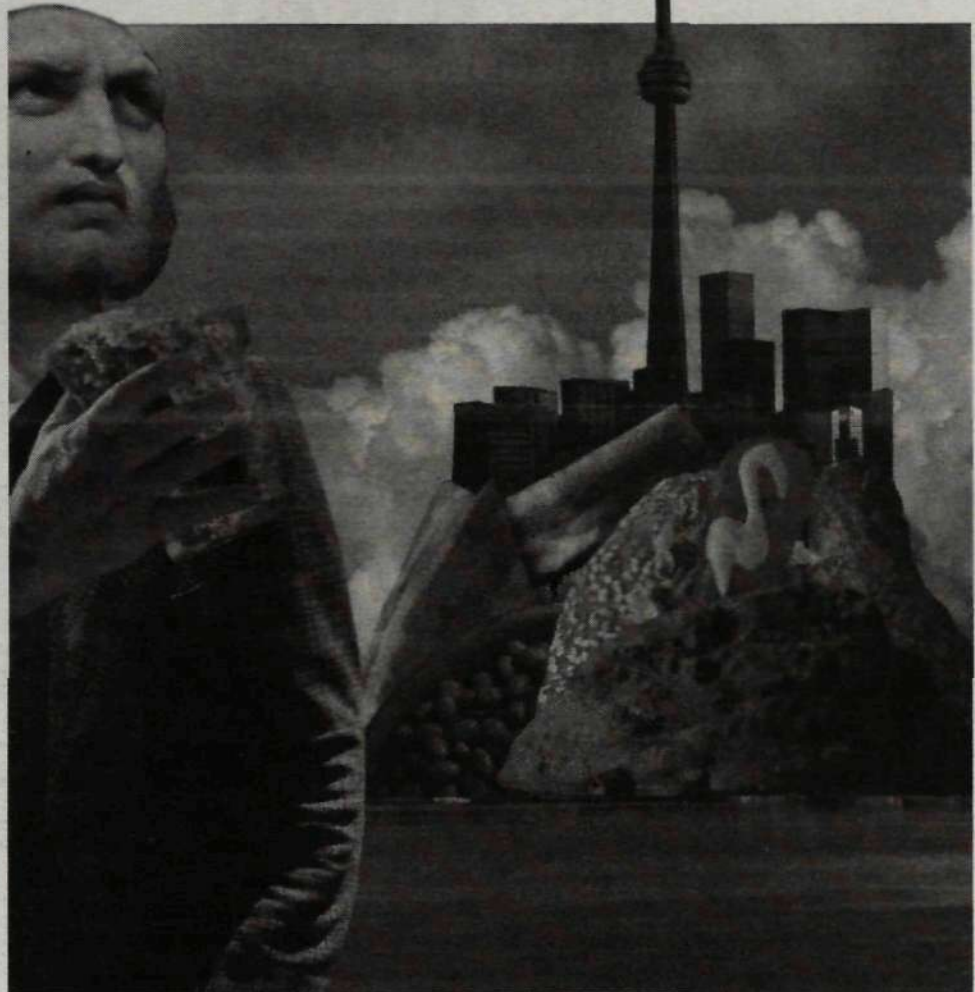
# Trance-Cultural

*An interview with Barbara Hall, Mayor of Toronto*

tax system because the current imbalance in the property tax system in the core of the city and the surrounding areas is something that operates against finding solutions.

**V.V.:** *In the last few years mayors from other municipalities were trying to find an equitable balance. It seems that taxation was a big issue because if we were to tax the value of the property as they would claim, then the downtown core would have been wiped out given the real estate value that is not really equitable to the cultural value.*

**B.H.:** There are problems in how we're taxed. There are some different costs of doing things in an older urban core as opposed to new suburban areas... differences in provincial grants that come to the city as opposed to those that come to areas surrounding. In education for example, the city of Toronto doesn't get a single penny, in fact we raise money, more money than we spend so the city property tax payers are subsidizing the education system in surrounding suburban areas. The property tax is not an equitable way to be transferring payments: not only are we paying for other areas, but those other areas in



*We have what the United Nations calls the most diverse city in the world, in terms of ethnicity and people do, for the most part, get along well together*

addition to our funds are also getting provincial grants towards education. So it looks like our taxes are higher in the city proper because we're spending like crazy. The taxes in some of the surrounding areas are kept artificially low because of provincial grants, that's just one example.

**V.V.:** *What works in Toronto, why? What doesn't, why?*

**B.H.:** There are no absolutes. In terms of what works, I think we have been very lucky, in increasing the number of people downtown. Over the past decade there's been a significant increase in the amount of residential units in the city core. There are luxury condos as well as low income housing so we have been very successful in maintaining a real mix of people of all income levels within the city. We have many neighborhoods that, although quite urban, have the atmosphere of small towns. We have what the United Nations calls the most diverse city in the world, in terms of ethnicity and people do, for the most part, get along well together.

What doesn't work is that we're situated on a

lake. We have beaches in which people can't swim in the summer. So this becomes the whole question of how we deal with our waste and polluted waters. We're starting to address those issues so that's one area where a lot of work is required.

The transit system - we have still not been as successful as I would like to see in reducing peoples' dependence on cars. For municipal politicians, the issue of parking and traffic remains the biggest headache. Finally, there is the whole issue of governments... to change how we're governed locally. The city of Toronto has taken a position that the regional level should be abolished, that we have too much government at the local level, that there's duplication, a lack of clarity to the populace as to who's responsible for what. There's a lot of anger and frustration, people get shoved back and forth. I think the government has worked quite well in the past but that like many things it needs to change to respond to changing conditions.

**V.V.:** *You're referring to the metro.*

**B.H.:** Yes, the whole metro. Look also at GTA



governments.

**V.V.:** I agree with that. As a landscape architect I'm also concerned with not only getting the ecology on that, I'm really concerned with what's going on at the waterfront. I must say personally I don't like what's happening in terms of giving the people a focus to identify with and it seems that the projects that are done, are done without a concept of culture. I agree Toronto is a very diversified city but at the same time, it's a city without a heart really because we have great neighborhoods, wonderful neighborhoods but if we were to ask where do you gather to be there we have difficulty. Nathan Phillips square doesn't quite do it, it doesn't have what people like to do in the square, it's basically a business community here. So there isn't that attachment and we find little enclaves here and there but it's not quite aggregated.

**B.H.:** Except, I would in some sense disagree with you, it's interesting that in the eight months since I've been sitting in this office looking out at the square, I would see the square as something we do very well.

**V.V.:** It has to be programmed though.

**B.H.:** Well, it's programmed a bit but people also come here to do things. We get many requests from people to use the square. I'm surprised at how many people come through here. Many spontaneous things bring people to the square. Clearly there are some other things that could happen here but it's a very busy place and I think through our programming, for example on Wednesday's in the summer, we have a farmer's market and that's brought a whole different bunch of people here.

**V.V.:** That's true but it's still a stage and I guess what I'm questioning is the everyday life, if you come here after work hours, in the evening there are very few people around because there isn't that city life attached to it, you go on Queen, you go on the sites, it's just that perimeter question.

**B.H.:** Another thing that we do well, and are getting better at, is supporting our cultural and artistic community. I have been to more things celebrating new parks, or new public art installations than I have to anything else.

We still don't have the places that draw people in a natural way... we're looking at Yonge Street now and doing some real work on improving that. Queen St. is a street where people would go in the evening for a stroll, look in windows, stop in a cafe, you'd have a sense that there'd be something there, a promenade. Another place that's sort of interesting that I think is developing a little bit of is the Cumberland Park, in that people in that area, now talk about - I'll meet you at the rock - it's sort of amusing given the controversy surrounding the rock, but and I know some people like it and some people dislike that park but it's become a place with a lot of activity and a destination.

**V.V.:** Do you feel that you can make a change with long-term

# WHAT HAPPENED TO TORONTO "THE CLEAN"?

**Antonino Mazza**

**H**oria Albu came to Toronto through Istanbul, after fleeing Rumania in 1976. He was 26 years of age, spoke no English, had completed three years of a five-year university degree in Metallurgy. In Toronto, he first went into business but with the dissolution of the partnership, Horia drove his own cab, which he recently lost. He aptly blames the setback on the '90s recession.

**V.V.:** Primary reason for choosing Canada?

**H.A.:** One night my friend Benjamin and I were walking down a street planning our escape, when a maple leaf fell on our shoulders like a divine sign to us, at that time. We more or less knew that Canada had a program for language training, and we also knew that you had a public health system which was pretty appealing to us. So, for all those reasons we said, O.K., let's go for Canada.

**V.V.:** Can you recall your feelings when you first arrived here?

**H.A.:** At the beginning, in '77, I had a lot of hope.

**V.V.:** So, it was a positive step?

**H.A.:** The fact that Canada was a democratic country, which supposedly offered the same possibilities to everybody, was very

encouraging. Lately, I would say that that feeling, that optimism diminished. I think it's harder to accomplish something now.

**V.V.:** What's changed?

**H.A.:** The people are different now, more impatient, less courteous, busier than before, much more pressured. The future appears more uncertain. Personal finances have become more important than the other values, like knowledge.

**V.V.:** What's the biggest change you've seen in Toronto in the past eighteen years?

**H.A.:** You see hookers everywhere, and getting younger.

**V.V.:** When did the increase become evident?

**H.A.:** I would say that by '86 you could really sense it. New areas, such as Queen Street and Lansdowne, Queen Street as far as Shaw. Then Jarvis Street, then it was Parkdale. Soon, there weren't enough street corners.

**V.V.:** What brought this change?

**H.A.:** Remember '82, it was a pretty bad recession, '87 was pretty similar, again the economy shrunk, and after the recession of the '90s, prostitution is taking place on the Lakeshore, as far as Etobicoke, and malls in



Scarborough. Well, this would support the fact that prostitution is very much linked to the economic life of the city. When jobs disappear some of the women will support themselves by practising this trade. It's an economic reality and ignoring it is stupid.

**V.V.:** So, you sense a direct link between the recession and the recent increase in prostitution?

**H.A.:** There have been a lot of public and private jobs lost in ten years. Prostitution is the only industry that has been having a real boom for a long time.

**V.V.:** There was a motion passed by City Council in June, asking the Federal Minister of Justice to decriminalize prostitution. Do you believe Toronto will really go through with licensing this trade?

**H.A.:** Well, the city is for sure looking into prostitution as a source of money. The province, too, has begun to depend on casinos to raise funds. The provincial government's revenues are diminishing. We saw the opening of the casino in Windsor. Why? Because these are the only industries which can provide new revenues.

**V.V.:** What about morality, diseases? The very idea of licences to practise prostitution would have been unthinkable in Toronto "THE CLEAN" just a few years ago.

**H.A.:** Because revenues are down, whatever was considered immoral at that point has become very moral at the present time. Moreover, the provincial government is making good profits running the gambling business. I would think that Toronto, and other municipalities, will get into the prostitution business with pretty similar results.

**V.V.:** Isn't there a new push now to eliminate lap dancing right now?

**H.A.:** To me, as far as the risk is concerned, lap dancing is prostitution. But, I see another problem. The majority of these girls who need the high income will have to switch from lap dancing to prostitution. I would think that the municipalities should be very eager to find a way of regulating lap dancing. It will be safer, too, if the whole industry is regulated. You don't eliminate the spreading of diseases just by eliminating lap dancing. And it could produce even more street prostitution.

**V.V.:** Where can we expect to see the red light district in Toronto?

**H.A.:** It could be very, very well, a non-residential part of Yonge Street, maybe some parts of Queen, even somewhere on King Street.

**V.V.:** It's a fundamental change, would you agree?

**H.A.:** It would appear to me that since the Communist system collapsed the life of the ordinary people, in this country, is being badly affected.

**Prostitution is very much linked to the economic life of the city. When jobs disappear some of the women will support themselves by practising this trade. It's an economic reality and ignoring it is stupid**

**V.V.:** So, really, we could say that both systems have collapsed.

**H.A.:** I think so. When the other system used to have this so-called free health system, you got a health system, too, even a better one than there. Now that the other system disappeared, what is happening with your health system? It's being cut down. And education, too. When Eastern Europe used to have free education. Your fees were reasonably low, it was easy to finance education through special student loans. It would seem to me that since the Communist system disappeared, your fees are going sky high.

**V.V.:** The lobbyists that seem to get all the government's attention lately are those representing financial institutions.

**H.A.:** Sure! But also, because there is no alternative system any more, we can do whatever we want. We can deal with society as we want, not because we have to keep up a certain image. We don't have any pressure from the outside any more to modify decisions, to find better solutions.

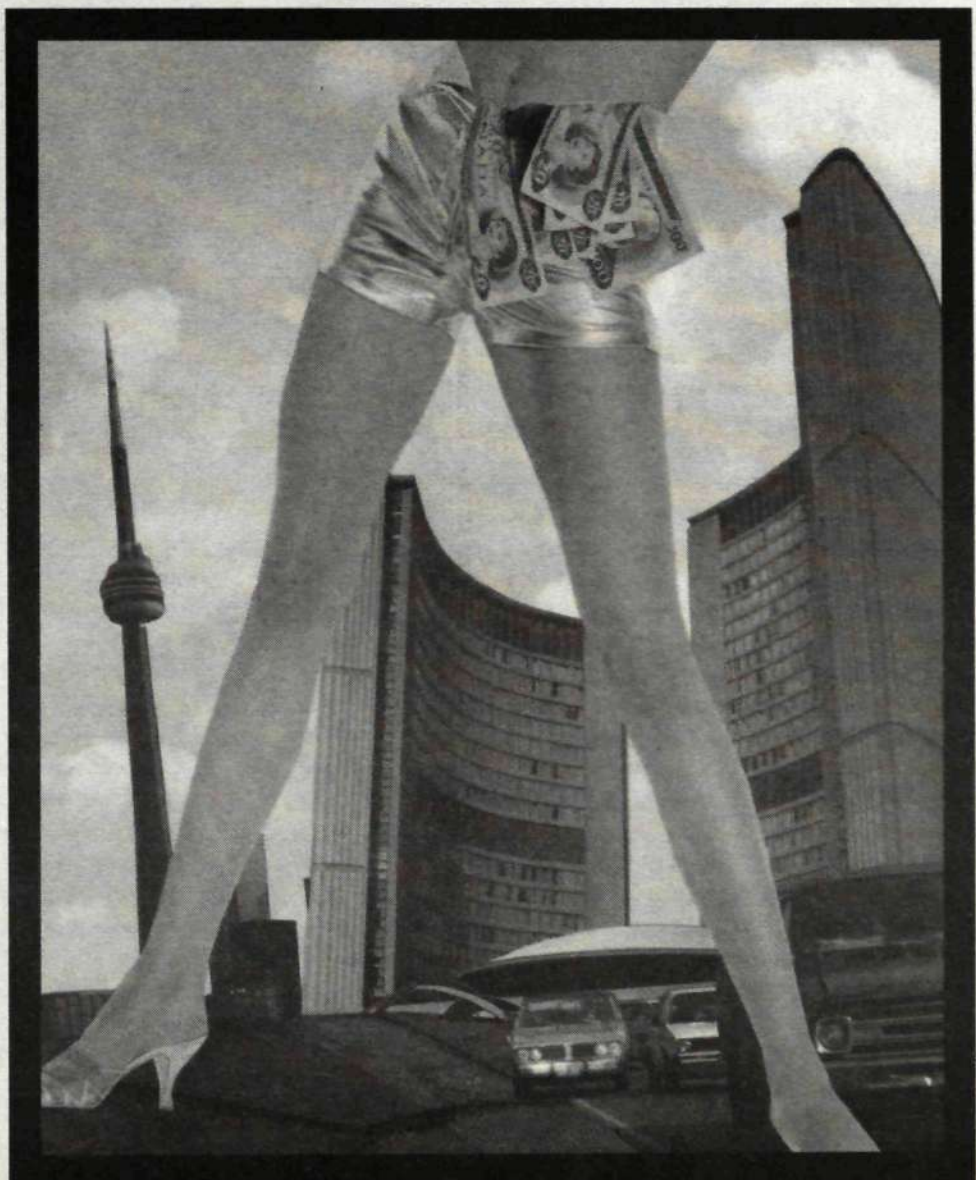
**V.V.:** You're saying that our system will finally be itself, the way it wants to be.

**H.A.:** Ya!

**V.V.:** So, you believe that the way it was did not necessarily reflect its true nature.

**H.A.:** Right! It didn't. Now its actual character is finally going to come out. ♀

**Antonino Mazza** is a poet and translator recipient of the Brutium "Calabria" Gold Medal (Rome, 1994) and the Italo Calvino Translation Prize (Columbia University, 1992).





# Montréal, la locomotive fleurie

Elle va entraîner le  
Québec, l'inverse  
est impossible



Entrevue avec  
**Pierre Bourque,**  
maire de Montréal  
réalisée par  
**Lamberto Tassinari et**  
**Donald Cuccioletta**

**V.V.:** Justement au niveau de l'économie. On sait que de plus en plus, un peu partout dans le monde, on commence à associer qualité de vie avec nouvelle économie. Comment votre administration se situe vis-à-vis de cette idée? Comment Montréal s'engage-t-elle dans cette voie et que comptez-vous faire de l'ancienne infrastructure industrielle?

**P.B.:** J'ai misé sur trois thèmes: le premier, c'est le savoir, notre ville doit aller vers l'économie du savoir. À cause des universités, à cause des centres de recherche, à cause des entreprises en télécommunication, l'industrie pharmaceutique, l'industrie de pointe à valeur ajoutée. Un projet que j'avais annoncé et qui est en train de se faire, c'est de multiplier les lieux où se ferait l'apprentissage des multimédias et de l'informatique. Premièrement donc, le savoir, deuxièmement la culture. Montréal est une ville extraordinaire, à ce niveau. Dans tous les domaines: musique, théâtre, les grands festivals. L'activité culturelle draine l'activité touristique. Montréal est une ville vivante, qui s'exprime en français, en anglais. Qui a aussi une richesse culturelle extraordinaire, on y parle quatre-vingt-cinq langues. La culture s'exporte aussi sur le plan international: que ce soit le Cirque du Soleil, l'orchestre symphonique ou le théâtre, Montréal crée beaucoup. Le 80% de la créativité québécoise se fait à Montréal.

Donc la culture, et troisièmement, l'environnement. Concernant l'environnement, nous avons lancé le projet du Montréal bleu pour découvrir la richesse du fleuve. De la Rivière-des-Prairies, nous avons commencé à aménager les berges, à mettre en place des navettes pour que les gens aient accès à l'eau plus facilement, aux îles... Quand on réussira à marier ces trois éléments là, nous aurons les sociétés de demain. Les villes de demain, pour moi, devront répondre à ça.

**V.V.:** Comment voyez-vous notre ville dans le triangle Montréal-Toronto-New York? Comment pense-t-on que Montréal puisse s'insérer dans ce triangle, le triangle du pouvoir?

**P.B.:** Ce lien se fait beaucoup par nos entreprises, par les entrepreneurs, par la créativité... Que ce soit Télé-Globe, Bell, Vidéotron, Bose, Softimage ou les petites entreprises qui investissent beaucoup à Montréal. Elles ont créé des réseaux assez extraordinaires. Ici on a le premier café virtuel, situé dans le Vieux Montréal. La Ville supporte ces activités là par les liens officiels que nous avons avec l'entrepreneurship.

**V.V.:** Quand nous avons parlé avec la mairesse de Toronto, Mme Barbara Hall, nous avons compris que Toronto était perçue comme le centre de l'Ontario. L'Ontario fonctionne par rapport à Toronto. New York, c'est évident, ce n'est pas que l'état, c'est toute la côte Est des États-Unis. Mais Montréal, on a de la misère à

**V.V.:** Quel est votre plus grand défi comme maire de Montréal?

**P.B.:** Premièrement faire de Montréal une ville internationale où il fait bon vivre, deuxièmement améliorer la qualité de vie des montréalais. Donc par tous les moyens, l'habitation, la qualité, la propreté, la beauté de la ville pour faire en sorte que la personnalité s'exprime. Alors ça c'est mon grand défi.

**V.V.:** Dans les onze mois depuis votre élection comment pensez-vous que votre vision écologique, est en train de se réaliser dans vos politiques?

**P.B.:** Nous avons fait beaucoup de travaux, cette année, d'infrastructure, de trottoirs, de rues, etc. Nous avons mis en place un service de la propreté qui a fait en sorte que notre ville s'est améliorée. D'autre part, nous avons lancé des projets d'implication des citoyens, parce qu'on ne peut pas faire ça seul. La force de Montréal, c'est l'implication des montréalais.

Nous n'avons pas de ghetto, nous n'avons pas de problèmes graves au niveau de la sécurité, mis à part les motards...

On veut que les gens s'intéressent aussi à l'embellissement, à la collecte sélective, à la participation... Nous avons lancé aussi des projets sur l'habitation, pour la rénovation urbaine.

Et tout ça, dans un développement qui a pour but de baisser les taxes des citoyens, des commerçants. Pour que l'économie reprenne.



# Montréal... fare thee well

MURRAY SHUGAR,  
TAXI DRIVER AND  
CD-ROM ADDICT  
INTERVIEWED BY  
Sybille Della Pergola

**V.V.:** In ten words or less what's your opinion of Montreal as a taxi driver.

**M.S.:** Great metropolitan city... lots of things happening... that's less than ten words. Do I have to go on?

**V.V.:** The worst feature of Montreal as a city?

**M.S.:** Less than ten words? As a taxi driver the pot holes. The construction on the highways. The political status, the uncertainty of Quebec. I don't want to go on.

**V.V.:** If you picked up the Mayor of Montreal and you were driving him around the city what kind of questions would you ask to him?

**M.S.:** I'd ask him a few questions about his pulse... how he's "feeling" How he likes the job... does he have a vision? Is he succeeding for the people who voted for him? Is he going to keep some green in the city or turn it into a parking lot?

**V.V.:** Does poverty play a big part in your business?

**M.S.:** Yeah, sure. I'm often called a 'nickel-grubbing asshole'. Usually I don't see the poor in my taxi but surprisingly enough a lot of people who take cabs can ill afford to but they need to get around to hospitals.

**V.V.:** Do you have any strong feelings about Toronto or New York?

**M.S.:** A lot of the usual rivalry between Toronto and Montreal. Toronto's not as cold as I was lead to believe. New York either love or hate, I've always liked it.

**V.V.:** The size of the tip, does it indicate anything about the person you're dealing with?

**M.S.:** Coming back to the poor people again, the proverb goes: the poorer the people the bigger the tip.

**V.V.:** How has Montreal changed for you in the last 10 years?

**M.S.:** Early 80's were dreadful. I was making \$10 a day on a 12-hour shift and I was pulling my hair out. Surprisingly the 90's were good for me I don't know why.

**V.V.:** If you could remove one building from Montreal because you find it distasteful and ugly which would it be?

**M.S.:** My apartment building. Seriously, Mirabel airport.

**V.V.:** Are the fortunes of the city reflected by how well or badly the Montréal Canadiens play?

**M.S.:** (Laughing) No.

**V.V.:** What about hookers in Montreal?

**M.S.:** What about them? They're there. There are plenty of them.

**V.V.:** You ever pick any of them up?

**M.S.:** It's part of the trade. I wouldn't say they're bread and butter. Like anything else you've got a wide variety of hookers, you've got the ones who are gonna pay you later... pay for the fare in trade... do a run around to pick up their crack for the night. They're not good tipppers...

they figure you're just street people like them.

**V.V.:** The drug business. Is that a problem in Montreal?

**M.S.:** Yes. Some of the worst adventures in the cab business are related to guys who are strung out... chasing down their drugs.

**V.V.:** Have you ever delivered hash?

**M.S.:** Not knowingly.

**V.V.:** Is there an anti-Semitism problem in Montreal or racism in general?

**M.S.:** Yes, it's subdued at the moment but it raises its ugly head. I see swastikas on my window on occasions. Political uncertainty is never good for racism.

**V.V.:** Do you think Montreal could ever have a black mayor?

**M.S.:** It'd be nice if it could. Or an oriental or a woman.

**V.V.:** Do you think the young can have a strong and prosperous future here?

**M.S.:** I think the young, enterprising French-Canadian has a real good shot with or without separation.

**V.V.:** Do you think Montreal has affinities with Toronto or New York or is it an island unto itself?

**M.S.:** All big cities have a common identity but I've experienced Montreal as being more like Boston. My own chauvinism says Montreal is not like Toronto because it's smaller, more intimate.

**V.V.:** Would you ever recommend a young person to become a taxi driver?

**M.S.:** Yes, as a punishment. One weekend in a taxi.. Very good penance. That includes mayors as well.

**V.V.:** What do you think of our justice system?

**M.S.:** Oh, man... too big a topic.

**V.V.:** Homolka?

**M.S.:** Oh, you mean across the country? You're talking about media involvement, perversity. She used the gender card for a lighter sentence. I wonder if capital punishment isn't in order for crimes like this where truth is unimpeachable. The O.J. trial brought in a lot of social and cultural issues.

**V.V.:** If a bomb or bombs fell on Montreal would this city fall apart or pull itself together?

**M.S.:** If you've driven through winter storms in a car or taxi and you've seen how people cooperate pushing people out of snowdrifts... strange comparison but I think Montreal would pull together. It's a very soulful city. ☺

Sybille Della Pergola was born in Gibraltar of a Venetian father and Lithuanian mother. She is a specialist in visual arts and has collaborated with many European and American periodicals.





An interview with **Rudolph Giuliani**, Mayor of New York

**Marco Chironi**

Since he became the Mayor, two years ago, Rudolph Giuliani has shown a strong determination in pursuing his pragmatic strategy against the huge problems of New York's administration facing a \$2,6 billion deficit. The former federal prosecutor has been faithful to his reputation, applying draconian solutions to those problems and in a predominantly Democratic city, apparently freeing himself from any political ties to the Republican party. Loyalty to his persona seems to be above all else the quality he most values in friends and appointees. Enemy of the "status quo" by definition, Giuliani is, with his unique style mixing prosecutorial pragmatism and political savvy, actually waging a personal war for control of the New York City Public School Board, an area in which he intends to leave his own mark of managerial efficiency and bureaucracy slashing.

A few weeks ago, in an outburst of anti-New York sentiments, Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich blasted at New York's "culture of waste". And he was not talking only in financial terms. It was easy for the mayor to rebut the revealing provincialism and lingering anti-city prejudice coming from within his own party, another sign of mainstream and conservative America's uneasiness with any vibrant "culture of cities", in Lewis Mumford's words. He had to reply that New York contributes to the federal treasure vastly more than Georgia, Gingrich's state. Indeed New York may be an excessive, exciting, floating human balloon situated right in between Europe and America: "New York is not America". Geographically speaking, New York is in fact a floating entity, since four out of its five boroughs are islands. Unfortunately for speaker Gingrich, these floating islands also represent the most culturally progressive place, and the most visually pervasive and ubiquitous icon in North America.

In early May we met with Mr. Giuliani and discussed briefly with him the economical, social and crime-related problems of the Big Apple.

**V.V.: Mr. Giuliani your very drastic decision to cut social programs**

**for the poor people to \$1,6 billion and dramatically reduce the number of municipal employees, down 34,000 from 1988, has been received in the city with some fierce criticism. What's your position about that?**

**R.G.:** The solution we have proposed, in effect, is less drastic than you say. First of all, we shall point out that if is true that in New York City there are many poor and sick people which cannot work, there is also a great number of people declaring themselves poor, but being physically and mentally able to function without any public assistance. Our objective in cutting certain social expenditures is not to balance the budget at the expense of the weaker citizens, but rather to force into work the individuals belonging to the second category.

What I am doing here is a war to a passive welfare state policy.

Even if they are really indigent, many of the actual recipients of such programs are not only completely capable of working but also have no children...

According to our policy these people should go back to win their life and stop receiving money each month from two or three different sources, thanks to social assistance programs of other States or Counties.

**V.V.: Since you are reducing so sharply the deficit, don't you think you should, on the other hand, increase the investments and subsequently the efficiency of the municipal services?**

**R.G.:** One of our most important priorities is the increase of the management in various branches of the administration. We are aiming at a tight control of the programs in any service and also their very possibility of realisation. In order to save citizens's money, the number of public servants has been reduced and we are also very active in privatizing programs on quite a large scale, a project that is an absolute novelty for our city.

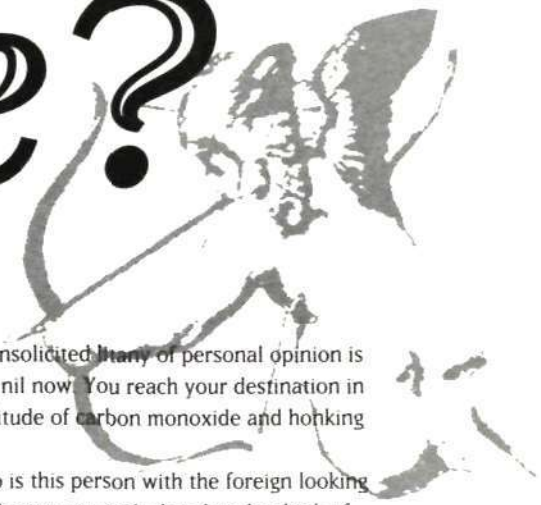
Our goal is to increase efficiency, transferring to the private sector the full or partial responsibility in many service areas, ► pag. 36



# THE

Phelonise  
Willie

# Tender Loving Care?



A nice young man from the New York Taxi and Limousine Commission told me driving a Taxi has always been an immigrant occupation. Over the years it changed from Irish to Italian to Jewish to Puerto Rican to Cuban to Haitian, and in the last five years, to sub-Saharan, Indian and Pakistani. Approximately fifty percent or so, is divided amongst the rest of the immigrant population (Africa, Europe, China, South America etc.). Fewer than ten percent are American. You don't have to be a citizen to drive a Taxi and when you apply for your license you won't be asked for a green card. You will, however, be fingerprinted and checked for a criminal arrest record.

If you drive one of the 11,787 medallion cabs in New York and you own its medallion, you will have paid \$164,000 for it, assuming you bought it at today's price. If you were a corporate owner, you wouldn't even have to drive your cab, you could make money just renting it out. If you charged \$75 per 12 hour shift, fourteen shifts a week, you could gross over a thousand dollars a week for each medallion you owned sitting at home. At the moment, a corporate medallion costs \$220,000. Most of the people driving taxis in New York don't own a medallion, they work out of a garage. A company or corporation owns the garage and its fleet of taxis and rents them out to licensed drivers. If you drive a cab you don't own, renting it could cost you upwards of \$74 a day, in addition to the gasoline bill. If a garage is greedy it might make you pay as much as \$2000 as a deposit on the cab; and if you quit the job you might not get that money back. The average driver nets about \$77 a day which comes out to less than \$6.50 an hour. On a slow day he could actually lose money.

Ten or fifteen years ago the typical, or stereotypical, New York City Taxi driver was of

white European extraction and prone to making idle conversation, expressing his unsolicited opinion of the news, political or cultural. Most were rude, a few polite. It was usually a he, and he knew how to get you to any place in Manhattan. Once I hailed a cab to a restaurant whose name and address I didn't remember. I knew it was in the fifties, knew it was French and had a violin player who serenaded the tables. I told the driver this and he took me there. Once I hailed a cab that didn't look at all like a Taxi. It wasn't a gypsy cab, like the ones up in Harlem where most medallion cabs refuse to go, it was a converted Rolls. The driver owned it and talked philosophy like a college professor. Everyone old enough to have hailed a Taxi fifteen years ago has stories like these. Today's drivers are much more exotic. They could be white but they're more likely to be persons of color. Almost none are female. Most have accents and may not be able to get you to the Public Theatre or Carnegie Hall if you don't give them an address. The chances of listening

to an unsolicited ~~harm~~ of personal opinion is almost nil now. You reach your destination in the solitude of carbon monoxide and honking horns.

Who is this person with the foreign looking name driving you and what does he think of New York City? He doesn't fit any stereotypical mold. He may have owned his own business in India or Pakistan, he may be a young actor down on his luck, or somebody who fled the oppression of a Duvalier in Haiti. As always he or she could be anybody needing the cash. The Taxi driver I interviewed was forty and from India.

His family is still there and he doesn't own the cab he drives. His accent is heavy, he sounded intelligent and was savvy enough to use me to try to get his complaints to Mayor Giuliani. The day after I interviewed him I had the occasion to take a cab to and from the airport. The first Taxi was manned by an Egyptian whose skin was white. I mentioned the Indian's complaints and he said he knew they were accurate but he himself had been lucky enough to escape most of this harassment. The Taxi driver on the way home said the same. He was a white man who had been driving for some time. His cab was new and modern and his garage only charged him a small deposit. As for the cops, he said he knew how to manipulate them. He grinned and joked and agreed with everything they said, "Yes, you're right. I'm stupid. You're smart. Thanks for letting me get away this time." Listening to his good English I remembered the musical English of the brown skinned Indian man I interviewed the day before.

He had been standing by a tree smiling and listening as I attempted unsuccessfully to interview two other Indian drivers at a Taxi stand in Houston Street. They were polite but their answers were getting more and more

*Today's drivers are much more exotic. They could be white but they're more likely to be persons of color. Almost none are female. Most have accents and may not be able to get you to the Public Theatre or Carnegie Hall if you don't give them an address.*



monosyllabic. It was obvious they were reluctant to say anything critical of New York or Giuliani into a tape recorder, even anonymously. So I approached the tall smiling man leaning on the tree. He was happy to speak his mind.

"Is New York City a good place to live these days and do you like the way the city is being run?" "The Taxi cab driver can't talk to such things... I can't say anything about those things. Come five o'clock early morning out... go back to home five o'clock... twelve hour shifts... no have time to go somewhere else and see... I can't tell you about those things..."

"Those two drivers just said the crime rate against Taxi drivers has gone down?"

"Yes... we've gotten relief from that. No have any crime for the Taxi driver like before these past two years."

"Then are you as happy with the City and its Mayor as they are now?"

"Well whatever was going on before... same way it's going on now. Past... present... there's no difference whether Giuliani or somebody else... Nothing changed... we have more problems than two years ago because before we have only TLC's (Taxi & Limousine Commission Agents) to check us up... now every corner, police... no reason they stop us and give us hard time. Last week... my back seat belt... I got summons for that. You know we cannot go every time and check whether seat belt out or in. I got out of my seat and said to cop 'Let me check up my vehicle and then you can inspect me.' She said 'No' and gave me summons because somebody forgot to snap seat belt back. Yes and I had to pay. Before we had only TLC's check once and a while... but not for silly things... One day a Pakistani guy on 34th and B'way... he got six summons... at one time... the traffic was so bad he got stuck in the middle of the intersection and turned into 6th Avenue. What could he do? It was only direction he

could move. He got one summons for that...one for obstructing traffic... one for disobeying traffic sign... like that... six summons... 900 dollars... because for one summons, 150 dollars."

"So Giuliani has been good for crime but not for cabbies?" He nods.

"So if you could elect anybody in the world to be the Mayor of New York City who would it be?"

"Nobody. I hate politicians... because that politician who is good is somebody who can tell good lie... Any corner of the world is same. Best politician is who a thousand lies invent."

"Would you want Mother Theresa to be Mayor?"


"Yes. She's nice. But she's in India, she will not come here. Another thing... write this please... politicians and police are not helping... one day I picked up passenger... he fell asleep on way to Brooklyn... then I wake him up he give me different address... three times different address... I was two hours with him. Finally I see police I got out from my cab ask... 'please can you help... even if he's not going to pay me... at least he should leave me alone'. The police said, 'What do you want us to do? Why did you pick him up?' But if I refuse someone I am getting a summons. Please print that."

"The cops who told you that, were they white?"

"Yes. White."

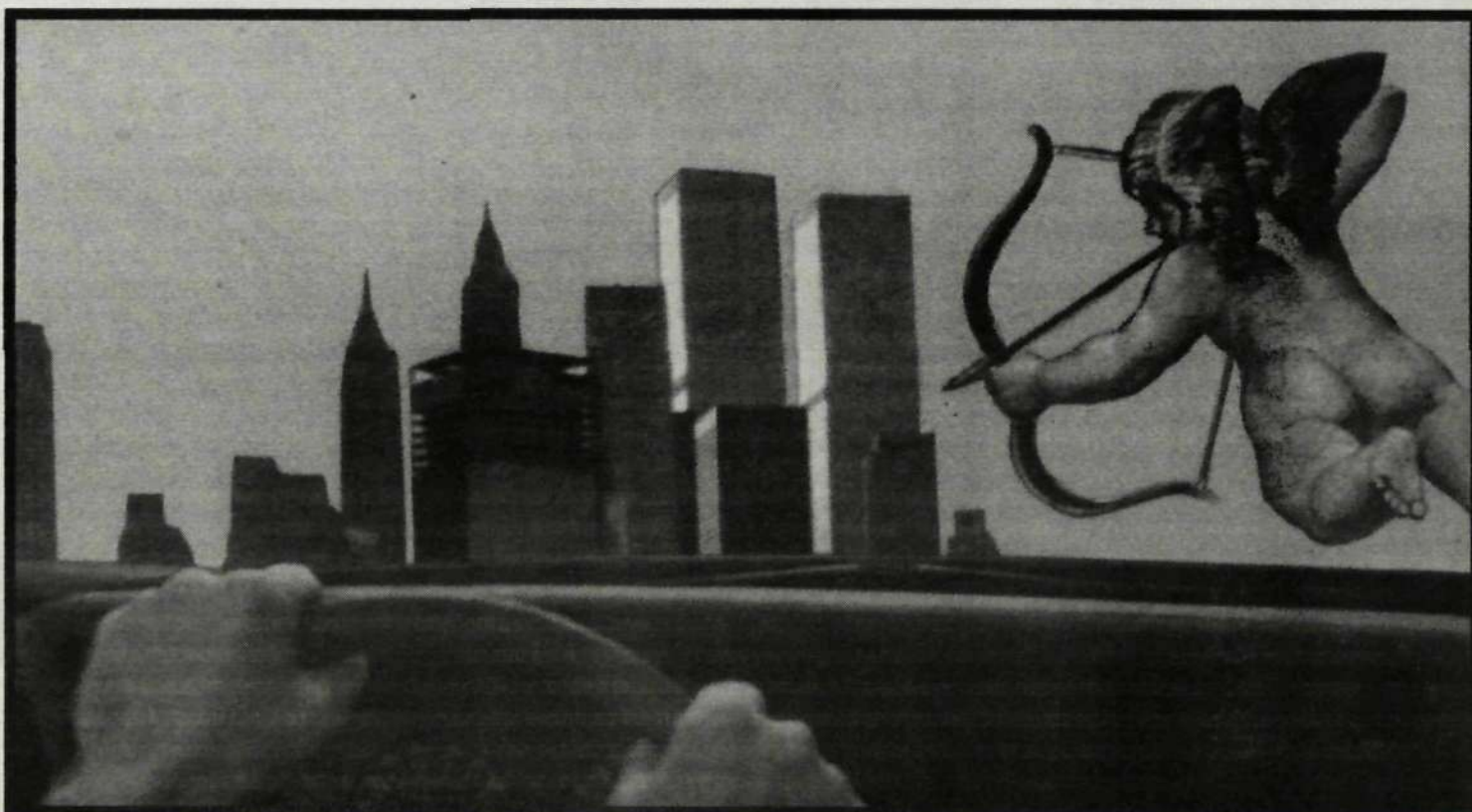
"And the passenger, was he black?" He looked away embarrassed.

"Are you happy with the money you're making?"

"We are not for the money we have some problems over there... we are Sheiks... Singh. We want separate from India. I'm a farmer. Before in India I was looking after my farm. Then I was happy and with my family. Now I am alone driving a Taxi in New York." 



**Phetorice Willis** is a writer and poet. She is the editor of Vice Versa in New York.





# SLOVAKIA

## and The Doubtful Blessings of Independence

**NATIONALIST RULE IN THE POST-COMMUNIST CONTEXT HAS DELIVERED SHODDY RESULTS: BRATISLAVA SEEMS TO BASK IN A PROLONGED TRANSITION TWILIGHT**

**TEXT AND PHOTOS: ANDREW SELEANU**

*Last October, while living in Prague and working as a lecturer in communications at Prague's Charles University, I met Dr. Jana Patoprsta, a charming Slovak tour guide with a Ph. D. in Art History. She was shepherding a group of Israeli architects on the Prague leg of a central European tour that included Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech republic. One pleasant evening, amidst the good vibrations of an ancient old town beer cellar, Jana and I became friends and a little while later she invited me to visit her family in Bratislava, sometime in November.*

Compared to Prague's free wheeling, cosmopolitan atmosphere, Bratislava appeared unexpectedly lethargic when, at the end of November, I arrived there by long-distance bus. In the late afternoon all shops were closed for the day. The business centre was rather drab, with little traffic going through it; restaurants and coffee shops were rare.

Soon Bratislava charmed me with a peculiarly central European provincial presence. I was immediately awed by the dark, brooding mass of Bratislava Castle, ensconced on a high hill overlooking the Danube river and surrounded by a stately park.

Built by Hungarian nobles in the twelfth century, it appears surreal and unapproachable, an image of absolute foreign rule. A narrow, winding road negotiates a steep slope towards the massive castle gate. At the bottom of the hill, the old town with low, yellow-washed, gabled houses, and a few graceful if not too lavish baroque churches bear the indelible marks of Austrian and Hungarian provincial architecture.

This weary traveller got a heartwarming welcome in the Patoprsta apartment, located in a vast, residential neighbourhood. The elderly couple spoke Slovak, but their daughter was fluent in several languages.

The coop apartment was on the fourth floor of a row house unit, surrounded by slightly unkempt green spaces and shrubs. The wall and the inside staircase of the building were somewhat decaying; in contrast, the flat was spacious, agreeably lit and comfortably furnished.

Mrs Patoprsta plied me with kettle's full of coffee and large amounts of black bread, cheese and salami sandwiches laced with slices of

green peppers. As behooves residents of far-away lands we spoke of many things: travel, culture, family: when some mutual confidence was established we also touched on politics.

A professional woman in her early thirties, Jana was more outspoken than her parents, who had spent a large part of their lives under various forms of post-Stalinist rule. With time, Mr. and Mrs Patoprsta also came to express their views.

Jana interestingly mentioned the crucial influence of North American Slovak organizations in keeping alive and fuelling Slovak nationalism and in helping to create a Slovak state. When I visited, Slovakia had been independent for two and a half years, and the Slovak political scene was still unsettled.

Behind a dubious appearance of democracy the nationalist leader Vladimir Meciar, surrounded by a coterie of friends (many with service records in the Czechoslovak version of the KGB), was given to murky maneuvers of no clear benefit to the republic's needs. In late November 1994, the populist Meciar was unexpectedly elected new prime minister of Slovakia, with the crucial support coming from rural and mountain regions.

### **Meciar and the media**

The Slovak prime minister has an intriguing relationship with mass media. He is annoyed by reporting not toeing the simple nationalism of his party, the movement for a Democratic Slovakia (MDS). In 1992, six months after the "velvet divorce", Meciar created the "Club of Journalists for a Truthful Picture of Slovakia", whose members he appointed to key jobs in Slovak television. A special committee was named in 1993 to crack down on "anti-Slovak" media. Disliked newspapers, such as SME, have been periodically subjected to punitive taxes and arbitrary fines. The independent supervisory board of Slovak television was purged by Meciar, who named his own men to it. His coterie of friends, whom some foresee as still being in power between fifteen and twenty-five years from now, is well-established. Jana explained to me that in such an ambience many professionals have emigrated to Western countries. The Slovak atmosphere appears oppressive, economic opportunities questionable. Then what made her stay?

"The country needs people of culture and knowledge to stay here



and to maintain certain standards and a livable atmosphere. I think this country needs to be nurtured and developed," she said. I inquired how her parents felt about Slovak independence.

"We are happy to be independent, but we're worried about the Slovak economy," was their reply which still rings in my mind.

#### The money pipeline

The Slovak economy has performed rather poorly to date. With its antiquated arms plants, once geared to the needs of the Warsaw pact, Slovakia is quite unadapted to the new European economic circuits. Meanwhile, the Czechs knew how to modernize their old-fashioned yet diversified economy based on the production of consumer goods. They export cars, machinery, crystal products, porcelain, bicycles. While foreign investment in Slovakia has so far been quite negligible, foreign investors in the Czech republic have been buying up "the family jewels". Now in 1995, for the first time, some indigenous small business creation has started in Slovakia, along with increased Austrian and German investment. Foreign analysts grant Slovakia fair economic prospects for the future.

However, at the moment, Slovakia continues to be plagued by high unemployment, with fifteen per cent of the labour force out-of-work. By contrast, in the Czech republic, unemployment only stands at three and a half percent.

When Czech transfer payments stopped after the "velvet divorce",

Slovak living standards dropped sensibly. In the former Czechoslovakia, Bratislava had at all times been a net recipient of transfer payments, which made Czechs angrily and mockingly speak of the "money pipeline" to the east. Some were happy when it was cut off.

#### A better self-image

In spite of a stumbling economy Mr. and Mrs. Patopsa and many other Slovaks feel that the independent state does wonders for their

The Slovak economy has performed rather poorly to date. With its antiquated arms plants, once geared to the needs of the Warsaw pact, Slovakia is quite unadapted to the new European economic circuits.

collective self-image.

In the days of the Habsburg empire, Slovaks held the menial jobs: they were on the bottom rung of a multiethnic ladder. They were particularly subservient to the Hungarians who had the monopoly of administrative jobs, for until 1918 Slovakia belonged to the Hungarian part of the Austro-Hungarian empire.

Its successor state (one of several), the Czechoslovak republic, while in theory a bi-national federation, was ruled in practice from Prague ministries, where the technical and economic expertise lay. Slovaks often felt like second-class citizens despite symbolic personal achievements. For example, Alexander Dubcek, the father of the "Prague spring" of 1968, as well as his hard-line nemesis Gustav Husak, the post 1968 "normalizer" of Czechoslovakia, were both Bratislava natives.

The Czechoslovak neurosis is reflected in the images Czechs and Slovaks hold of each other. While Slovaks view Czechs as cold, businesslike, and hypocritical; Czechs, in turn, see Slovaks as simple country people yet bon vivants. According to their popular image or reputation, Slovaks aren't too canny. "No wonder these farmers vote

WHAT AM I DOING HERE

# cchia Poggallo

Giuseppe A. Samonà fotografie: Isabelle Diguer



Mensujornu a Marzamemi

Per parlare della Sicilia, raccontarla, per poterla avvicinare e amare, o anche detestare, per poterla comunque conoscere, capire, o almeno accettare, occorre, io credo, una cosa sola. Bisogna far pratica di minchia... In altri termini bisogna esercitarsi, con questa minchia, per maneggiarla a fondo: tenerla fra le labbra non è cosa da poco e forse, per possederla interamente, occorre averla nel sangue. La minchia, appunto, o anche, se si preferisce, la sicilianità. "Sono siciliano", mi diceva un amico: e non per un qualche orgoglio di appartenenza etnica (di cui aveva orrore), ma semplicemente per significare che lui, quando attraversava lo stretto di Messina, si ricordava sempre di quando a Palermo le carrozzelle tirate dai cavalli costavano meno dei taxi.

Minchia, dunque. Ma cosa sarà mai? Gli stupidi, les prudes, quelli che appunto mancano di pratica, ammiccano sorridendo: "merid., triv., organo genitale maschile" si legge sui dizionari. Ma questo è solo il messaggio essoterico: perché la minchia, minchia, è questo e anche altro, diversa e di più. E proprio a cominciare da



for Meciar"; I often heard this remark in Prague. In a Slovak joke, a cunning Czech entreats God in his prayers "for money", but the sturdy, naive Slovak barely asks "for work."

### The mystery of the "velvet divorce"

Despite some friction, opinion poll after opinion poll consistently showed that a majority of Slovaks never supported the breakup of Czechoslovakia. This vital matter was never subjected to a public referendum. The "divorce" in late 1992 followed a vote by delegates at the federal parliament in Prague, whereby the parliament also dissolved itself.

The "velvet divorce" was an *undemocratic fraud*, no matter how peaceful. It was in my view made possible by postcommunist civic apathy and an inability on the part of the Czechoslovak public opinion to express its real desires. The deal was pushed through by Vladimir Meciar and the Czech premier Vaclav Klaus, both consummate political manipulators.

In June 1994, Focus, a respected opinion poll still showed that 57 per cent of Slovaks would have rejected independence, had they been consulted in a referendum.

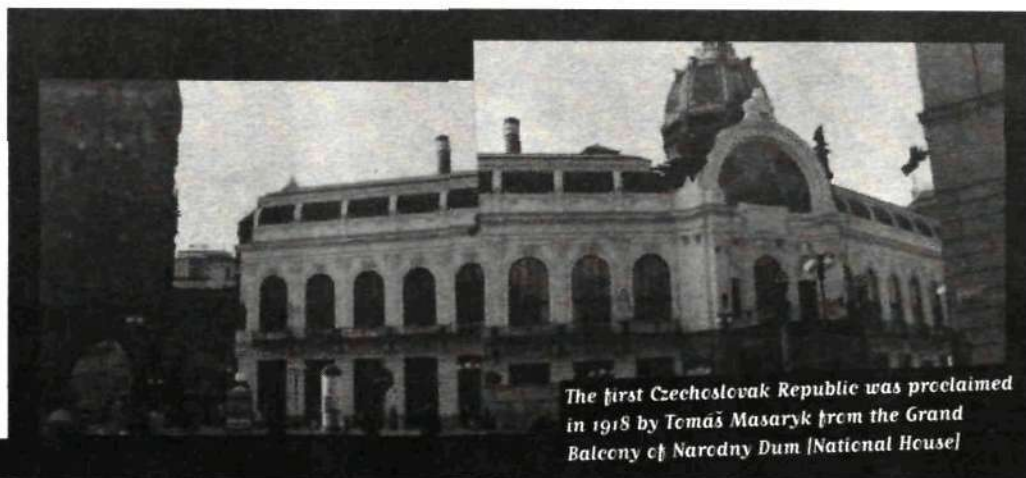
Following two years of intense political agitation and the passing of a Slovak-only official language law in June 1992, Slovak nationalists led by Vladimir Meciar began loudly demanding vastly increased powers for Slovakia within the Czechoslovak framework. They were also banking on a strong Slovak undercurrent of popular fear regarding Czech premier Klaus' quick and decisive neo-liberal "coupon" privatization arrangement with the Czech republic: sharing passports, currency, citizenship and a customs

union. Their proposal resembled "sovereignty-association" offers periodically floated by the Quebec nationalist camp as well as the opt-out "asymmetrical federalism" proposals made to Serbia by Slovenia and Croatia in 1991, before the Yugoslav federation went up in flames.

Meciar, who thought he had a strong hand made stronger by his intransigence- was taken aback by Klaus' answer. The best Klaus would offer Meciar was a fairly centralized American-style federation; but he absolutely rejected a loose confederative arrangement- i.e. he opposed any union without a shared elected parliament with substantial powers. Klaus explained in his trademark acid style: "Slovakia can have its independence but without a Czech insurance company. What we definitely want to avoid is to create some unknown, never-tried artificial combination of countries in some crazy forms."

Vaclav Klaus' and Czech president Vaclav Havel grounded their stand on a variety of reasons. They were mindful of mayhem between Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia in the imploding Yugoslav federation.

Havel's philosophical pacifism precluded any forcible attempt to keep Slovakia in the federation. Klaus needed a large measure of central control for his resolute privatization plans for the Czechoslovak economy, whereas Slovak nationalists with a more statist outlook



quell"organo genitale maschile" che qui si trova rappresentato da un sostantivo femminile (la minchia): a dimostrazione forse di quell'aspirazione a una sorta di metafisica completezza di cui la Sicilia sembra essere impregnata (il senso del Gattopardo dice di una tragica, immobile perfezione...).

Anche per questo, orgogliosamente taciturna e perfetta come la terra che l'ha creata, minchia rifiuta di lasciarsi ridurre agli accidenti sanguigni della sessualità. Minchia è una parola magica, un suono, un mantra: è il grimaldello della Sicilia. Minchia è l'espressione del genio di un popolo, del suo desiderio di dire tutto con poco. Minchia è lo "shit", l'"ostie" del Mediterraneo: ma, come cercherò di dimostrare in queste poche righe, è anche di più, molto di più. Vedo il treno che si allontana, l'ho appena perso: minchia. Vedo il treno che si avvicina, e vi dovrò montare: minchia. Mi chiudo il dito nella porta: minchia. Evito la porta di un pelo: minchia. Insomma: imprecazione, stupore, attesa, speranza, rassegnazione. Minchia gridati (la minchia verbale, circolando, ridiventa maschile), o anche aspirati, sussurrati con struggente dolcezza. Ricordo un amico (sempre lo stesso) che partecipava a discussioni infuocate accompagnandosi solo di mitissimi e ben piazzati: minchia. O un altro, che si nutriva solo di patate alternative e che commentava il mondo intero con dei: minchia allucinante. Minchia is everywhere. Ma non basta.

Minchia, con un'arditezza grammaticale da fare invidia alle lingue degli Amerindiani

(agglutinando, agglutinando), si fa prefisso. Minchia ragazza (confesso che di fronte alla bellezza femminile è la prima frase che mi sale al cervello), minchia salita (arrancando), minchia bastardo (da distinguere da: minchia, bastardo), minchia mangiata (quelle indimenticabili paste con le sarde e il finocchietto), minchia brioscia (con la panna), minchia arancino (con la carne, al burro). E poi, finalmente, minchia si concentra, si contrae, quasi prendesse la



rincorsa per potere esplodere. Ancora una volta si potrebbe pensare allo "stie" del Québec ("shit" invece si è perso per la strada, vittima della sua stessa monosillabica e irriducibile perfezione): ancora una volta, tuttavia, la somiglianza è solamente formale. Ostie, diventando "stie", resta pur sempre un'attonita, magari ammirata imprecazione e va pronunciata d'un soffio, come vuotandosi di un rigurgito intestinale (non posso non sentire, mentre scrivo, i sonori "stie" del fratello di mia moglie). Minchia di contro apre, evoca e introduce, lasciando intravedere la sublime e tremenda potenza del divino: "cchia

tramonto", e la vallata tibetana di Gibilmanna si tuffa nell'infuocato mare di Cefalù. Un mio amico (un altro) lo ha reso esplicito, ricorrendo a una commistione linguistica che la dice lunga sulla *souplesse* di questo popolo austero: "cchia Paradise", mormorava di fronte all'indescrivibile spettacolo degli anfratti panteschi. Ed io, assentendo in silenzio, sentivo commosso che in lui parlava la voce di Dio.

Sono partito dalla mia Sicilia prima ancora di nascere, ma vi sono sempre ritornato, ciclicamente, per dialogare con un'altra mia vita e misurarne i confini, tiepide ferite di un sogno impossibile. Così è successo quest'estate, dopo dieci anni di silenzio, di assenza, di fuga. Ho ritrovato tutto, e forse anche qualcosa di più. Ho ritrovato gli scempi dovuti alla mafia e al malgoverno, ma anche un filo di speranza, un originale profumo di primavera che sembra a volte poter suggerire vie d'uscita all'Italia dei Berlusconi col cellulare (vero, Chevalley?). Ho ritrovato una città, Palermo, dove un mare già splendido ti può bussare alla porta di casa. Ho ritrovato gli agrumeti della conca di Capo d'Orlando e gli asinelli di Gratteri. Ho ritrovato il silenzio fatato di Presti. Ho ritrovato gli affetti di sempre, con qualche figlio in più. Ma con lo stesso gusto di giocare a pallone (nonostante l'età non più verde), o di sfidarsi in interminabili e accesissime partite a scopa; e soprattutto di discutere, discutere, discutere... E ho, di nuovo, sentito il calore struggente delle impossibili utopie. Nostalgia? No, non direi, o almeno non nel senso usuale: il luogo che cerco, nel voltarmi



could have thwarted his projects. Some sources say that the Czech liberals feared a possible coup by Slovak secret-police apparatus people, including perhaps Meciar himself.

And many Czechs were fed up with feeding the "money pipeline" to the east.

The Slovaks did not expect the Czechs to slam the door on them as hard as they did. But by the end of 1992, the Slovak legislature had voted a proclamation of Slovak independence and had put in the books a brand-new Slovak constitution.

#### Dubcek dies in a car accident

In October 1992, the popular president of the Czechoslovak parliament, the world-famous would-be reformer of communism, Alexander Dubcek was killed in a car-crash in Prague.

This beloved man, a symbol of the bond between the Czechs and Slovaks, had perished and many saw a bloody secret service hand behind the death which occurred shortly before the federal parliament voted to dissolve itself.

"Slovakia is yours" Meciar proclaimed on January 1st, 1993 to the Bratislava population on the first day of Slovak independence, achieved after whirlwind negotiations.

Yet many Czechs and Slovaks have continued to see the breakup as a Kafkaesque, bureaucratic, backstage maneuver, imposed from the top, with real motives they still can't fathom. In 1992, one million Czechs and Slovaks had signed a petition calling for a referendum; it was rejected by the leaders.

The original separation accords provided for a border without customs, but under German pressure to stem the flow of illegal East European immigrants towards Germany, the Czech side installed border controls in April 1993. Commercial exchanges between the Slovak and the Czech republic dropped to half of what they were before 1993, as the Czechs turned towards the western hard-currency export markets.

#### The German Advantage

In general, the breakup of Czechoslovakia met with little understanding abroad. It was a shock to learn that the second most economically advanced of the countries of the former Soviet block (after East Germany) was critically undermined by a powerful yet little known nationalist movement in Slovakia. The Soviet system kept nationalist impulses covered over with an ideology stressing uniformity and equality. When nationalism "came out of the closet" after 1989 and entered the national and international arena, it had a tremendous appeal to people whose history had been deliberately erased and rewritten.

But in an age of communication, travel, political and economic links, one may have hoped for more tolerance, even in Eastern Europe, for a willingness to live with one's neighbor's culture. The Czechoslovak union, with seemingly much going for it, broke up. This served some powerful politicians' assorted interests as well.

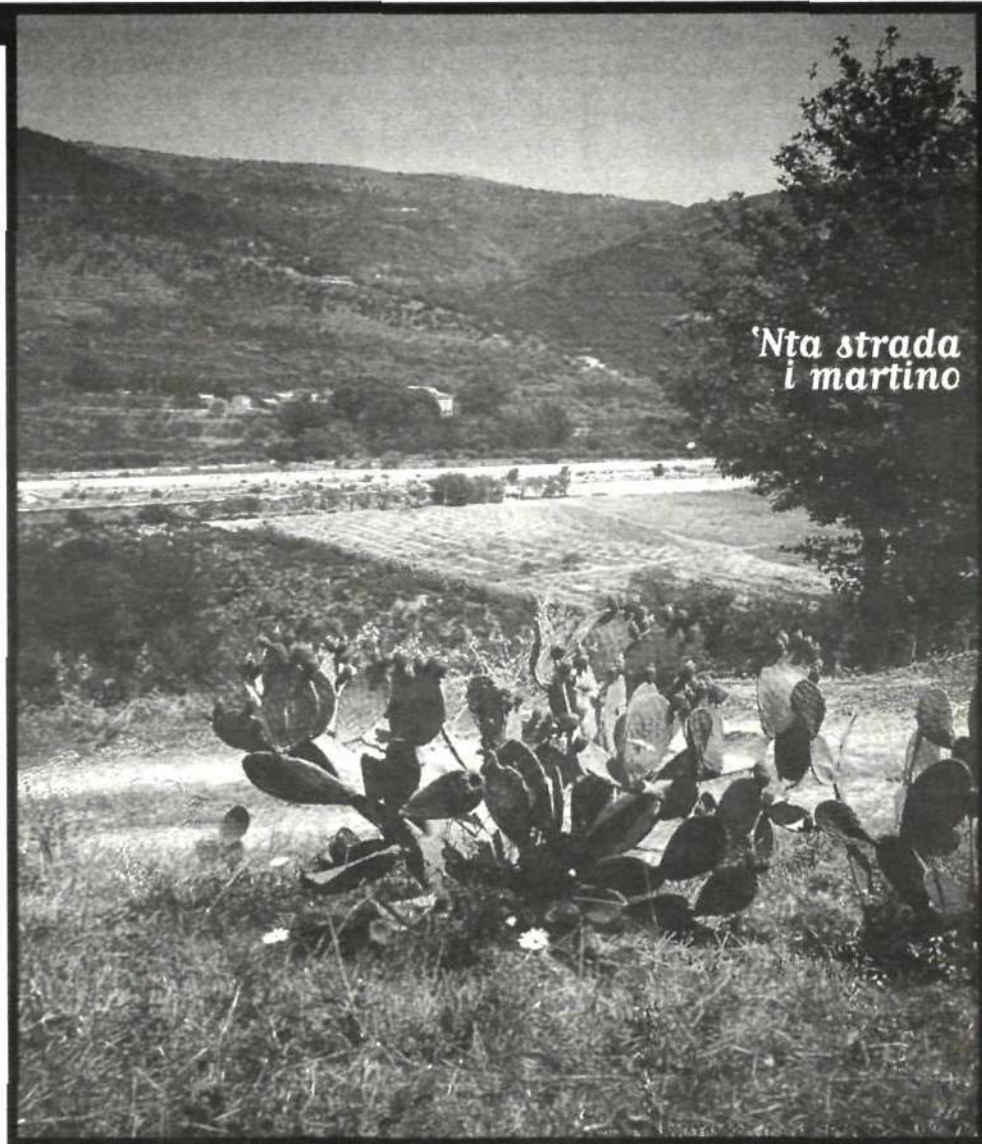
Geopolitically, one may observe many small, new Slavic countries: the Czech republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia and the Baltic countries. Alas, the German neighbour to the west is united at last. The Slavs have rejected the phony unity of "real socialism" but they may have rendered their countries individually more vulnerable to pressures from a united Germany. ♦♦

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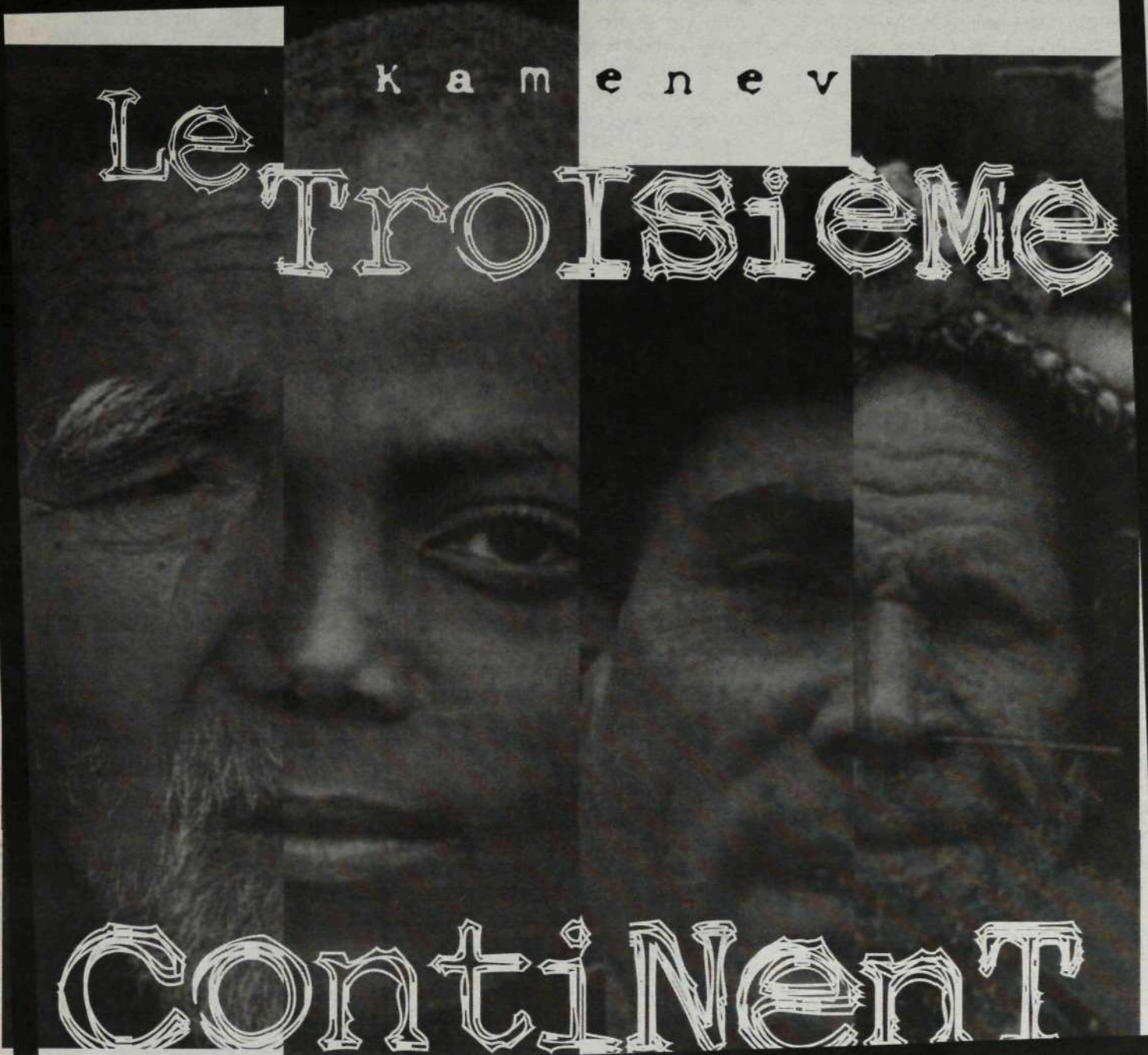
indietro, non esiste. È il luogo mitico che ricuce spazi e tempi differenti. Tuttavia, concreto, esiste il luogo dove vivo adesso: Montréal. E per la prima volta mi accorgo, con lacerata sofferenza, di essere un emigrato. Oggi, aspettando l'inverno, mi mancano le parole. E penso a una serata del luglio passato. Con gli amici eravamo approdati, non saprei dire come, in un paesino chiamato Pozzallo, sulla bellissima e poco esplorata costa che fronteggia l'Africa. Questo paesino non è indicato su nessuna guida turistica, perché in effetti non c'è nulla da vedere, apparentemente. Ma il mare che, entrando dentro, spezza l'abitato in due, crea, possedendo un po' di fantasia, una specie di illusione veneziana. Quella sera, appunto, eravamo seduti su una delle due rive del "Canal Grande" di Pozzallo. Tiravamo sassi nel mare, lentamente, svogliatamente, lasciando passare il tempo. "Sembra la Costa Azzurra", ha detto qualcuno.

Rapito, un altro gli ha fatto eco, anticipando la sensazione di tutti: "cchia Pozzallo". Come dire: appagamento. Ed io già sapevo che questa Pozzallo mi sarebbe mancata. ♦♦♦

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K a m e n e v

# Le Troisième

# Continent

Collage Michel Rakiro

Après le soleil à l'année et les *flics sur le dos*, le temps nuageux en tranches de douze, vint le temps de la neige infinie et de l'immensité. Le temps de la méditation et du regard perdu de la désillusion.

De l'Afrique, à l'Europe, à l'Amérique du Nord.

Celui qui navigue sur ces terres, s'aperçoit que l'humanité a bien des ressemblances.

Les êtres humains ont le même cœur, la même intelligence, les mêmes souffrances mais aussi la même bêtise.

S'il y a une Internationale qu'il serait facile de constituer, ce serait celle de la Connerie universelle.

Dans chaque recoin de la terre, la *gang* qui y vit se prend pour le Centre du monde.

Celui qui séjourne sur trois continents, qui est gourmand, mange à tous les râteliers. Le bonhomme à l'arrivée est une personne au palais façonné de toutes ces expériences. Même

s'il est né quelque part et que n'importe quelle *gang* (dans chaque recoin) veut faire porter à son rejeton, marqué au fer, l'hérédité génétique et culturelle, c'est un leurre.

Je suis né dans l'irrationnel, trempé au pragmatisme et arrosé de coke. Ça, c'est la vérité.

L'autre vérité, qui n'en est pas une, consiste à me faire croire que toute cette navigation sur la planète terre ne m'a pas altéré, que je suis indemne de toute contamination autre que celle du départ.

Par exemple, je me suis retrouvé entre juifs, chrétiens et musulmans.

Je les ai tous aimés. Mon histoire est païenne, juive, chrétienne, musulmane puis athée. La dernière à ma façon. Mais j'ai aussi rencontré d'autres confessions, d'autres philosophies que j'ai appris à connaître et à respecter.

Ça, c'est ce que mon bon sens très terre à

terre m'a fait constater.

L'appartenance me limitait dans mon aventure humaine, je ne voulais plus qualifier l'autre du regard d'une quelconque *gang*.

J'ai fini par troquer l'appartenance contre l'amour de mon prochain.

Quand on rencontre quelqu'un, l'important n'est pas de savoir d'où il vient, où il va. L'important est l'existence ou l'absence d'atomes crochus. Le réel intérêt est la jonction du monde, à travers les liens qui peuvent se créer.

Ce n'est pas parce qu'on est de la même *gang* que des affinités naissent automatiquement. Au contraire, quelques fois, il faut supporter l'insupportable au nom de l'appartenance.

En dehors de cette *maudite* appartenance, je choisis le monde au gré des sympathies et je voyage, parfois même, sans me déplacer.

Si j'avais toujours vécu avec ceux qui se disent miens, la vie aurait été *ben plate*,



passer-moi l'expression.

Si j'avais toujours vécu avec ceux qui se disent miens, je n'aurais jamais fait la connaissance de toutes celles et ceux que j'ai connus et je n'aurais jamais pu entamer l'immensité du globe sur lequel les bipèdes, mes semblables, vivent.

Ça aussi, ça aurait été *ben plate*.

Mais, pour ce faire, il a fallu que je me rende compte que je n'étais ni meilleur, ni pire que quiconque a un cœur et une intelligence. Par la même occasion, je me suis rendu compte que je n'étais pas né au Centre du monde.

Et ça, c'est pas pire comme leçon d'humilité.

Stop. Rewind. Stop. Juste avant le Troisième Continent. Et maintenant: Play...

Nanti d'une certaine expérience, je me suis dit: "Il est temps d'aller voir ce qui se passe dans les grandes démocraties, juste à côté de la Première d'entre elles!"

J'ai pris mon baluchon, j'ai traversé l'Atlantique pour débarquer en Amérique du Nord. Comme un pionnier.

Les premiers formulaires administratifs que j'ai eu à remplir m'ont appris la drôle de façon dont la *gang* locale, elle-même divisée en deux sous-gangs qui en ignorent une troisième, considèrent le reste du monde.

Des territoires immenses, amalgames géographiques et culturels hâtifs, se réduisaient à des petites cases qu'il fallait cocher. Des êtres étaient visibles, d'autres ne l'étaient pas.

Là, j'ai pensé: "Les sacrés farceurs, ils font dans la blague surréaliste, y ont de l'humour en cibore!". Cependant, j'ai eu un doute et avant de cocher la case, j'ai voulu m'informer. Au premier être humain qui est passé, j'ai demandé: "D'après vous, je suis visible ou invisible?"

Manifestement, il me prit pour un *capoté*. Lui, faisait partie des invisibles et il fallait que je fasse la déduction moi-même. Surréaliste? Complètement.

En fait, j'étais en train de me faire *re-looker*. Mes structures mentales passaient en révision, et à l'autre bout de la chaîne, je devais ressortir "ethnique-communauté culturelle-minorité visible-ethno-culturel-non de race blanche caucasienne". God!

Bien entendu, personne ne m'a consulté pour vérifier l'authenticité de ces appellations contrôlées. Et quelle volonté farouche à me refaire le portrait selon une grille qui, dans le fond, me semblait tout simplement délirante.

En d'autres temps, en d'autres contrées, on aurait parlé de racisme primaire.

En fait, l'Amérique du Nord a puisé ses appellations chez des spécialistes européens de la question, zèles praticiens de la théorie, pour y ajouter un zeste d'humanisme, la dimension socio-culturelle.

Ce qui continue de me surprendre, c'est que la fabrique nord-américaine de cette terminologie, à Chicago notamment, a regroupé beaucoup de gens venant d'Europe, fuyant l'intolérance et la violence de ces mêmes classifications de l'humanité. Ces crânes d'œufs ne se sont pas servis de leur histoire

pour éclairer l'avenir qu'ils étaient en train de pondre. Bien au contraire, probablement leur position sociale aidant, ils ont oublié...

Ainsi, même si l'Amérique du Nord, dans tous ses états, a signé aux Nations Unies un paquet d'accords fondés sur l'acceptation de la notion de nation (aucun juriste n'est capable d'en donner une définition objective, mais bon... n'ajoutons pas à la confusion ambiante), les ressortissants étrangers débarquant sur ce territoire, se voient dépouillés de leur nationalité et affublés de l'intitulé *ethnique*.

Pour faire bonne mesure et ajouter du *fun* à la mêlée, les deux grosses gangs dont je parlais plus tôt, se font appeler ainsi, de temps à autre. Bizarre de monde.

Si je prends la portion de territoire dans laquelle je vis, c'est, en théorie, une démocratie égalitaire. En pratique, entre deux solitudes, s'insère une troisième, cosmopolite et fragmentée en plusieurs cases et, au bord des villes ou plus loin dans les terres, la survivance d'espèces en voie de disparition.


Un ami m'a envoyé un scénario de film, pour sensibiliser les Canadiens à l'Apartheid en Afrique du Sud, juste avant l'élection de Mandela, de l'autre bout, de la Californie canadienne. Je l'ai rappelé en lui conseillant de faire un film sur les réserves amérindiennes d'Amérique du Nord, pour commencer. Très terre à terre, encore une fois, je lui ai dit qu'il ferait l'économie d'une expédition lointaine. Il m'a rétorqué: "Pour l'apartheid *soft*, je n'aurais jamais de financement".

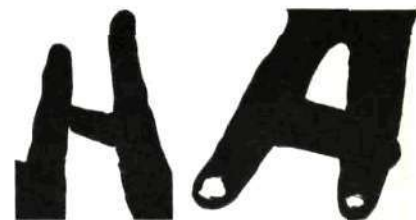
J'ai alors pensé à un proverbe bédouin qui me revient souvent à l'esprit quand je médite sur mes semblables: "À force de relâcher la bosse de ses congénères, le dromadaire en oublie qu'il en a une".

Du coq à l'âne, je me suis dit, dans un raisonnement très simpliste: "Un jour, Ex-Yougoslavie-Amérique du Nord, même combat".

Puis, mon esprit s'est égaré, pour trébucher plus loin sur un Kerouac s'adressant silencieusement à un Allemand, qu'il préjugait nazi (décidément personne n'est protégé): "Comment lui expliquer que si je m'en balance de ce qu'il dit, c'est parce que je suis un démocrato-cornoualo-bretono-aristo-américano-iroquo-canadien-français!"

Il avait un sacré sens de l'humour le père Kerouac!

J'ai regardé le cadran, il était tard. J'ai éteint la lampe de chevet et dans le noir de la nuit j'ai cherché à mourir pour un temps... 



Donald  
Cuccioletta

illustration:  
Daniel  
Sylvestre

Little did we (we in this case representing 99.99% of the population of our planet) know back in 1956, which for some is ancient history, that the prophetic phrase of "The Global Village", coined by the communications guru and media soothsayer Marshall McLuhan would have such an explosive impact and reverberate within the innermost consciousness of our daily lives. Our present governments and their telecommunication allies, playing the role of wired visionaries are orgasmic about the super information highway when in actual fact their focus is more directed toward the rise and fall of the stock market. This super expressway of knowledge will certainly have the spillover effect of the super bucks, for the people in the know (i.e. Turner and Time-Warner) Meanwhile all this drummed up media circus is directed to make us believe that they have our true interests at heart and that governments and their economic partners are in the vanguard of this new Gutenberg revolution.

Nothing could be further from the truth. It is actually the governments and their allies who are in the back seat and it is the people (albeit the under 30 crowd) who are in the driver's seat. We are already into cyberspace. Hackers (actually not a bad movie), cyberpunks and cyberjockies are flooding the lines. The home computer is the tool of this revolution, not linguistics or buzz words about the future highway. The highway is now. It is already upon us. We are already surfing the air waves. We have gone beyond the linguistics of government and the phony communications' gurus and are practising and exploring McLuhan's world. The Global Village is here and now and it is the people who are in control.

Despite their rhetoric, the powers that be know very well that they are not at the forefront of this revolution and are actually trailing far behind. People are actually interconnected with each other without going through governments and corporations who, since the advent of modernism (nation-state) and the industrial revolution, served as intermediaries and thereby controlled through various agencies and workplace intimidations the free flow of human interaction. Well, with



# NDS OFF!

## The Internet

### Power to the People



the Internet and the WWW (World Wide Web) they have been circumvented. They have become the victims of the high school end run. The people can now once again become the principle players in the game of democracy. Even Ross Perot, has felt the necessity to jump into the game for fear of being left behind.

However this new development has left our politicians asking the question: "what about us? Are we still needed. Have we become obsolete? Hasn't our rhetoric about the future satisfied the masses?" Well, it seems it hasn't. In this new turn about in North American democracy, governments, politicians, and business leaders should be rethinking their roles and realizing that democracy has gone beyond the one man, one woman vote every four years. Maybe now we can toy with the idea of daily and direct democracy for the 21st century. But instead of focusing their gurus on these vital questions and truly playing their role as visionaries, on the contrary, the message we are getting is: how can we circumscribe this democratic communication, which has developed beyond our traditional control? Instead of applauding the voice of cyberspace we are looking for ways to curtail and even ban certain practises.

In Canada, the government is looking into ways of limiting access for certain servers, according to the service they offer. The RCMP (the Royal Canadian Mounted Police) claims that the Internet has become a lawless


territory (Canada did not have the gunfighter west as the U.S.), where the "Police are always one step behind the criminals" (Allan Swift, The Montreal Gazette). No one wishes to support the illegal activities of individuals who use the Internet, but nor does anyone wish to support across the board policy-making. What are the parameters of this policy, how will the honest citizen, which make up 99% of the Internet be protected against abuse. Where is the public debate? Where is the government on these issues?

Similarly in the United States with the election campaign rolling around everyone wishes to be on the right position. With the question of cultural scrutiny being at the center of the election debate, we can see certain politicians (some presidential candidates) on both sides of the political spectrum screaming for some form of censorship against this new evil empire that has entered our homes (heaven forbid if the Russians are behind the Internet). Even moderate politicians such as Arlen Specter (R-Pennsylvania) and Diane Feinstein (D-California) are willing to forgo First Amendment rights to lead an all out assault against misuse (Porn) on the Internet. The cry has gone out to limit what can be shown.

No one should condone pornography, yet the question here is about free speech. Free speech exercised by the people on the Internet, without the traditional intermediaries (nation-state and the workplace). These

constraints have been dislodged by the Internet. In the United States we are using the old bugaboo of porn, in order to rein in this out of control democracy. Think what Henry David Thoreau could have done with the Internet. Similarly in Canada, given the question of lawlessness in a country where the motto is Peace, Order and Good Government, we cannot have these things continue.

Pornography cannot be placed in the category of progressive advancement for society, yet it should not be controlled by destroying freedom of speech. More education, more opportunities for women, a more enlightened approach to prostitution, a true educational policy towards drug usage and more access to the Internet versus restraints could at the very least minimize the effect of porn on society in general and children in particular. Similarly policy-making on the Internet (the solution in Canada) should above all take into account that criminality is a product of society in general.

Therefore, any incursion by the RCMP onto the Internet should not be an occasion for governments to impose restraints on this new democratic tool for the people. 

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# The Spiral

*Interview with  
Paul Hogan  
and Jan Mackie*

**Text and photos:  
Domenico D'Alessandro**

**S**ince 1982, the Spiral Garden has been pioneering innovative practices in children's rehabilitation at Hugh MacMillan Rehabilitation Centre. The Spiral Garden articulates a new paradigm which extends the notion of rehabilitation beyond the physical to the emotional and ecological. It accomplishes this by joining the practice of gardening with the cultivation of the arts: visual, linguistic and musical.

In this context, rehabilitation is defined as rehabilitation of one's body, one's mind/imagination and one's place on the earth in equal balance and in interconnection. The client group of the garden is comprised of children with physical disabilities, their siblings, friends and parents. In all its phases, interdependence, community and the self-generation of culture are regarded as central to the Spiral Garden experience.

**V.V. : How did the concept of the Spiral Garden originate ?**

**P.H. :** How it originally happened was that there was a woman here teaching in the art department, Nancy Brown, she is an art educator and early childhood educator. She got sick and asked me to fill in for her. I looked for a way to orchestrate the different disabilities of these kids in a painting project, the object of which was to make Nancy better. With the children we wrote the story "The Intravenous Rainbow". We found this rainbow somewhere in the universe and brought it into the hospital and set it up on Nancy's bed. I was later invited to do a project with Nancy and this is what we chose to do. We were artists involved in what we called "apparition ritual", it was a kind of street theater that we had done for twenty years. We brought that tradition to the Creative Arts Department here and then outside and married it to the concept of earth keeping, earth work.

**V.V. : Are you concerned with the teaching of ecological principles?**



This woven boat was made by the children of the Spiral Garden as a gift to the children of the war torn areas of Sri Lanka. The contents are small gifts made of recycled materials such as seashells from restaurants tied with ornate ribbons containing little surprises. Each one is a seed for possible stories, messages and directions to be explored by the child receiving the gift.

**Or is the garden more of a mirror for the children ?**

**P.H. :** It is more of a mirror than anything else. A learning tool. We do try to teach in our story making about the web of creation and the interconnectedness of different phenomena. Animal, plant, celestial, mineral, one wanders into it, but it's metaphorical, we're not scientists, so it is in the love of play that learning takes place.

**V.V. : What are the reactions from the scientific, medical community associated with the centre ?**

**P.H. :** They have always been tolerant, inasmuch as this is a children's hospital. We have done projects in more acute care places and they are not tolerant at all of our kind of approach. In this centre from being just tolerant, they have warmed up through the years. Different kinds of medical people, including those that we work with in the war zones project with children, look at health care as a peace initiative. Healthy situations among people in places create harmony. So that what we are doing is seen as a context for more specific medical interventions, that these interventions are gracefully introduced; they hold better when there is a cultural connection and a heart connection with the community, the playfulness of the connection. The medical community has co-opted the word spiritual, it is used quite often, whereas before you couldn't say that. They recognize that it is transformative.

**V.V. : What is this connection you mentioned to the war zones children's program ?**

**P.H. :** There is a project at MacMaster University called "Health Reach", it is a joint project between the Centre for International Health and the Centre for Peace Studies, both at MacMaster. They received a large grant from the Canadian government and the Partners for Children Fund, which was part of the United Nations' Year of the Children Fund; several countries participated and Canada gave 16 million dollars. That project grew out of the concerns physicians had on what is happening more frequently to children and women in zones of conflict. Fewer casualties among the military and more among civilian population. The kids of course are highly traumatized in these situations. But there is usually a lot of official as well as community denial of what is happening, it is just too atrocious. The Health Reach group didn't just want to do research, because you know, everybody does their research, and as soon as it is done, the situation changes and it doesn't apply. We all know that kids have specific needs and they like this approach, the model of the health initiative as a peace initiative.





# Garden



Many of us here have lived in and learned from other cultures, have a very soft orientation to learning as much as teaching, we matched these different inclinations medically, culturally, artistically. I'm going to Sri Lanka in December. We have a site there, we have a concept called the butterfly garden. The idea suggests that all butterflies are different but that they are all one butterfly in expressing the hope of transformation, of beauty.

**V.V. :** *Do you find any difficulty in dealing with the mythology of place, the difference in culture? Is there a difference in the story telling?*

**P.H. :** I think we have a kind of Rousseauistic view here, the learning process of the child is connected. We have ways as adults of defining everything into separate entities and it becomes disconnected in a lot of places where it was connected. I think that is true of any culture, that is true around the world. So for the children the storying process, learning through metaphor, seems to be intact. They are highly traumatized as well, that is true, but it's a workable situation. We got a lot of our way of working from traveling in these places. It is war torn and, of course, it is disconnected from a lot of its cultural root. The open society, the World Bank, everything is happening like everywhere else. A lot of things are broken, but our hope is to reconnect. We are using ritualists from different cultures, using Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, and Christian traditions; a Jesuit college has donated land. It is a deeply ecumenical and ecological process and I think if you go at that level through the children, if you are not too crazy and if you manage to look normal, which I do occasionally, people are very interested.

**V.V. :** *Have you included our Native People in the project ? Their mythologies, their story telling ?*


**P.H. :** We have different people that have come, Shirley Bear, a Maliseet Elder from the Tobique Reserve in New Brunswick, has given us the "dream lodge", given us a song we sing. She has taught us how to do meaningful consensual work in circles and rituals. We also had Peter Migwans participate, he is a Nishnaube story teller, painter and spiritual elder from Ontario. Their ceremonies are rooted in the Earth and so mindful of the gifts of the earth and the connectedness of people to the earth. They have given us willingly the things that they scream about others taking. So it's a question of whether it's given or taken. I think they are willing to give if you are willing to really follow through. They see that what we are doing is not a job, it is a way of life

with us. They know we are trying to live more simply, walk more gently on the Earth. Our values reflect the importance of perception, the qualities of perception and consciousness over acquisition, greed. Things that are sympathetic with their spiritual direction, so they have been very helpful. I think their gifts are extremely helpful to other cultures, people can enter at that level somehow. People from other places are always fascinated by our native people.

**V.V. :** *How do you account for yourselves to the medical profession? What type of reports do you hand in ? Do they ask to see specific results?*

**J.M. :** It is not something that is readily measured. As soon as you try to measure, you interfere with the whole process, so it is a difficult position because people want to see what the results are. You could come up with a whole ledger full of statistics. The third year that the garden happened there were statistics taken, but in the end they didn't mean much. We tell people that if they want to see the results to come and be present, experience it, because it is completely experiential. It's a process. It's not goal-oriented, it is not trying to get the child to move their right arm a number of degrees more. We are trying to set up a situation in a context in which the children can accomplish some of those goals but it isn't the only purpose for doing the activity. It is to engage them in the process of being.

**V.V. :** *Are there plans to create more such centres ?*

**P.H. :** Because it is so much of a process-oriented phenomenon, we have a lot of people who are really interested and we are not at all reluctant to share. It is individuals, in the end, who just resonate with the idea, they probably have everything that's necessary inside to do it. We have developed some unique methods. It is wonderful to watch it all unfold and then fold in again like a flower, everyday opening and closing. There is a real rhythm and I think that over thirteen years we have learned to focus ourselves and give energy to the collective creativity. The children have taught us a lot. We like to think that children are the experts at play, not to deify this process, the question is of balancing all these energies, or realizing the balance, being aware of the balance, being there for it. The process has to involve both an inner and an outer sense of things. We just try to make those connections where we can. 

**Domenico D'Alessandro** is a landscape architect and the Toronto editor of Vice Versa.



Festivals  
[Venezia, Montréal]

## L'estate di Bobby Charlton

**E**doardo, interpretato da Giulio Scarpati, scappa in macchina con i due suoi figli, dal nord al sud.

Mentre con il mitico *maggiolino* bianco, attraversa il paesaggio italiano degli anni sessanta, ricorda le liti con la moglie, Agnese Nano.

L'avventura di un padre che, tra pannolini e biberon, cerca di conoscere i propri figli.

Ma saranno i figli a capire di più, che con la loro voce di adulti, di ora, parlano tra di loro, del padre.

Film girato con velocità e precisione, senza fronzoli retorici che ormai stanno dilagando tra i giovani e non. Senza musiche pesanti e "americanone", anzi bellissime canzoni di Mina, e un bell'arrangiamento di *Estate* di Bruno Martino.

L'Italia degli anni sessanta, non ancora cementificata, raccontata con i luoghi di allora e con gli attori dimenticati di oggi.

Cosa sa fare un bravissimo Francesco Carneluti! Giulio Scarpati, Agnese Nano, Francesco Carneluti, Anna Prandi, Roberto De Francesco, i bambini Enrico e Francesco Guglielmi, in una bella fotografia in bianco e nero a schermo panoramico di Gianni Fiore.

Massimo Guglielmi ha diretto un film pieno di leggerezza, alla Truffaut.

O questo, oppure continuiamo a portare i soldi agli scandalismi che ci vengono dall'altra parte dell'oceano.

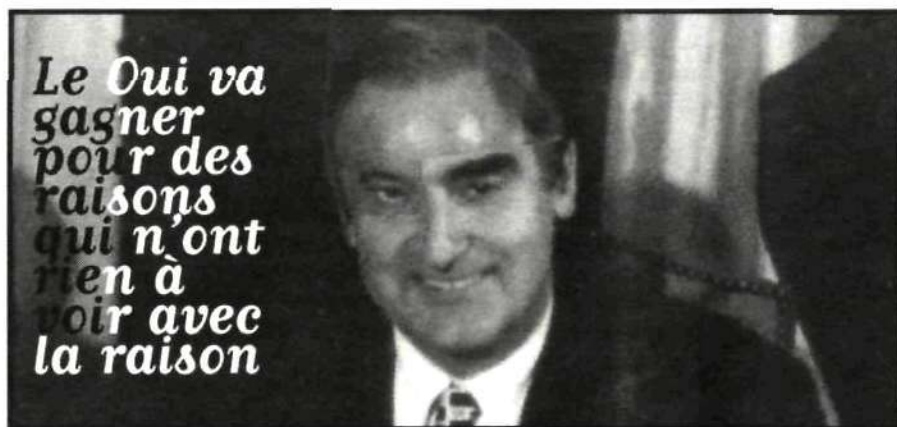
O questo oppure continuiamo a portare i soldi ai nostri cugini americani. ■■■

Sergio Fontana

L E Ç O N d E

# LA DU

Collages: Mario Tremblay





# d é m o c r a t i e VICTOIRE «OUI»

Baruch LEVINSJEIN

**L**e «Oui» va gagner proclament les affiches collées sur les murs de Montréal et sur les poteaux des routes de campagne. Le «Oui» va gagner, je le pense, moi aussi, en ce mois d'octobre à la sérénité trompeuse. Je ne souhaite pourtant pas la victoire du «Oui».

Je vais voter «Non» pour de banales raisons. En voici deux: je n'aimerais pas négocier avec des partenaires récalcitrants et puis, je ne crois pas aux lendemains qui chantent. J'admets sans trop de réticences qu'un Québec indépendant est viable. Je veux dire que les six à sept millions de personnes qui, en vertu du Préambule du projet de loi No 1 composent le peuple d'ici géographiquement établi de l'Abitibi aux Iles-de-la-Madeleine, de l'Ungava aux frontières américaines, vont continuer à vivre en toute civilité. Certes leurs conditions sociales et économiques y seront sans doute plus difficiles puisqu'elles seront appauvries de la pauvreté soudaine des Canadiens amputés du Québec et de la pauvreté du Québec coupé de son interaction avec le Canada. Les négociations qui fatalement finiront par avoir lieu placeront les partenaires bon gré mal gré devant leur appauvrissement réciproque. C'est ce qu'exprime très bien le professeur Gilles Vigneault quand il énonce: «...l'être précède l'avoir. Nous faisons de ce principe le coeur de notre projet.»

## Retour à la terre

Le Oui va gagner pour des raisons qui n'ont rien à voir avec la raison. Le Préambule du projet de loi No 1 ou *Déclaration de souveraineté* frappe juste: au-dessous de la ceinture; il remue les tripes, pas la tête. «Voici venu le temps de la moisson...» Retour à la terre, retour à la terre des ancêtres dont il nous incombe de poursuivre la besogne, à nous de nous approprier le sol: l'avoir soudain précéderait-il l'être? Retour aux racines: le Québec est une patrie. Voici offertes des

racines non seulement à ceux qui douteraient en posséder mais également à ceux qui n'en ont plus: les nostalgiques de la patrie perdue. Le sol est bien le lieu le plus commun de la culture judéo-chrétienne: sortis du limon divin, n'y retournerons-nous pas tous? Un oui, un simple oui et le pays est à vous. Le pays, gage d'une promesse non tenue, par le pouvoir d'un mot, vous (nous) sera restitué sans plus d'effort que le dépôt d'un bulletin dans une urne. La peine viendra après. À cet égard, les sacrifices des ancêtres constituent d'excellents modèles. Le passé, toujours le passé: notre maître.

Il est question de souveraineté, pas d'indépendance (nuance) même si les termes sont équivalents. Être souverain, c'est être roi ou reine. Ainsi, se sépare-t-on d'un état (le Canada) dont un monarque — en l'occurrence la reine d'Angleterre — demeure toujours au-dessus des institutions (certes symboliquement) pour établir un état (le Québec) dont la nation est souveraine. M. Parizeau, premier ministre du Québec, en posant la question «Acceptez-vous que le Québec devienne souverain...» joue sur un double registre sémantique (Le Québec-peuple et le Québec-pays); il assure ainsi en souplesse un simple transfert de monarchie. Transition douce nécessaire à une collectivité qui a horreur des ruptures.

## Faute de reprise des discussions constitutionnelles...

Le Oui va gagner en raison des échecs répétés des tentatives d'accords constitutionnels entre le Québec et le Canada. L'échec de l'accord du Lac Meech, en 1990, puis le fiasco de l'accord de Charlottetown, en 1992, témoignent de l'impossibilité d'une entente satisfaisante.

Toute perspective d'accommodement relève donc de l'utopie. D'ailleurs, le gouvernement fédéral n'envisage même pas l'ouverture de nouveaux pourparlers. Si bien que le triumvirat Bouchard-Dumont-Parizeau a beau jeu de décrire la situation non seulement comme

injuste et bloquée mais encore comme insultante: Ah! la fierté! Elle exige réparation. (À une lettre près ce serait le mot séparation: mot que, pour le moment, le camp du Oui se garde de prononcer.)

Au fond, répondre «Oui» revient à relancer une activité qui s'apparente à un sport aussi national que le hockey: des négociations. Contrairement à ce que croit Jean Chrétien, premier ministre du Canada, les Québécois reprendraient avec plaisir le jeu des querelles constitutionnelles. Or c'est précisément ce que leur offrent MM. Bouchard, Dumont et Parizeau. Car la souveraineté ne sera pas proclamée avant une offre formelle de partenariat. Au bout d'un an, y aura-t-il un accord? Quel type d'accord: partiel, conditionnel? Les discussions se prolongeront-elles?

## Le partenariat

Quoi qu'il en soit, après un Oui, émergeront des contrats commerciaux ponctuels entre entreprises, d'une province à l'autre. Quel qu'en sera le contenu, tout projet qui se conclura par une poignée de main sera salué comme une grande victoire. Ce n'est pas le projet que, chaque fois, les Québécois applaudiront, mais le traité ou le pacte même s'il n'est pas aussi avantageux qu'au temps du bon vieux fédéralisme. Il faudra bien conforter l'idée que la majorité aura eu raison de voter Oui puisqu'elle aura gagné des partenaires.

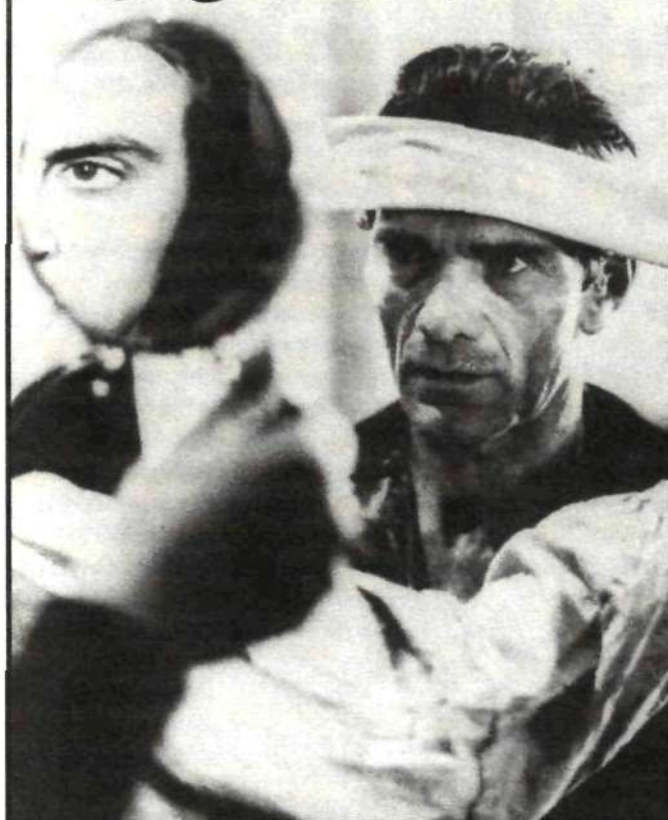
Voici comment une collectivité aura su passer d'une confédération à un partenariat. Restera encore à approuver la Constitution du Québec. Et si la population la rejetait? Rien de plus logique: la contradiction se dresse comme dernier recours de la démocratie. Il y aurait une thèse à écrire là-dessus sinon une leçon à tirer. (À suivre) ■■

Baruch Levinsjein est théologien, philosophe et diamantaire. Il vit entre Amsterdam, New York et Montréal.



Montréal rend hommage à Pier Paolo Pasolini en la vingtième année de sa mort

# Pasolini...avec les armes de la poésie



Pasolini sur le plateau de tournage de *Il Decameron*  
photo: Angelo Pennoni

Elio Traina

Une nuit romaine d'il y a vingt ans. Entre le 1er et le 2 novembre 1975. Une Alfa Romeo grise laisse derrière elle les faubourgs de la ville et se dirige vers la mer. Au volant «le plus grand poète italien du siècle», à ses côtés, le destin, «la commare secca» (la mort) a le visage d'un jeune garçon, d'un «ragazzo di vita». Le poète et son double pénètrent dans l'aire du plus impressionnant plan/séquence que Pasolini cinéaste ait jamais tourné: celui de sa propre mort. Entré, cette nuit même et à tout jamais, dans le cercle des *poètes disparus* et dans la légende des *grands maudits*, Pier Paolo Pasolini, inquiétant témoin de notre siècle, ne cesse d'habiter nos consciences et d'y semer le scandale.

Sa voix (cette voix apparemment ordinaire, apparemment soumise mais où, cependant, la rage se mêle toujours à la tendresse, et le désespoir à la vitalité) nous avons eu l'occasion de l'entendre au cours du bel hommage que l'Institut Culturel Italien de Montréal en association avec le Festival des Films du Monde et la librairie Gallimard viennent de rendre à celui dont la passion, voire la rage, d'écrire, de filmer, de vivre et d'aimer enflamme encore le débat sur la modernité. Au cours de la rétrospective pasolinienne, de film en film, depuis *Accattone* (1961) jusqu'à *Salò ou les 120 journées de Sodome* (1974), de livre en livre, depuis *Ragazzi di vita* (1955) à *Petrolio*, l'oeuvre posthume publiée en 1992, d'entrevue en entrevue, le public montréalais

René Akstinas

# MONTRÉAL

A brilliant day and along Sherbrooke Street a parade is ribboning its way. The date: Monday, April 29. The year: 2995.

Flags are waving. People are lined along the parade route and children are running wild all over the place. Trumpets and drums and hundreds of floats. Colourful balloons fly up towards the clouds. To us the reason for this parade is strange. It is the parade of KNOWLEDGE. All knowledge is now known. The headlines in the morning papers all scream out the same thing: ALL KNOWLEDGE IS KNOWABLE. There is nothing new to discover, all that's left are permutations and combinations of the Known. And yet, on the street is the feverish excitement of the Stanley Cup parade. Floats bearing huge replicas of viruses are cheered as they pass by. The heads of great scientists bob with friendly smiles at the cheering spectators. But there is something disturbing about this shining excitement. Read this passage from page 43 of the diary of someone called Uncle Albert 301 Percival who lived in those times. The date is: May 13, 2995. It says:

"...saw the Knowledge Parade a few weeks ago. Most disturbing. Our greatest minds have been disappearing at an alarming rate. I

too am ready to commit suicide. We, the scientists, did only too well. There are other galaxies to be explored which would keep us busy for millenniums. But a sinister fact emerged. We were in a deep coal mine all the time and when our greatest minds turned on the miner's lamp they saw that all knowledge, all wisdom was infected, permeated by the nature of the human mind exploring it. The mass suicides began when it was clear there was no impartial or objective knowledge. Everything known bore the distinct and imperfect seal of HUMANS. The same universe, if inspected by another conscious life-force, would yield a substantially different reality. Therefore, we had reached a threshold. And that threshold demanded total forbearance and acceptance of our condition as never before. We had triumphed in discovering the exact and inviolate contours of psyche, soul, mind, spirit or whatever we choose to call it. In an illimitable world, man was finite. The more we knew the more finite we had become. So, great minds weep while other minds commiserate and cattle still roam the fields and birds sing loudly and with less concern than ever before, for knowledge has no triumph or perhaps you have a parade instead..."



a redécouvert une littérature et un cinéma étonnamment actuels nourris d'une idéologie se remettant sans cesse en question.

Militant Pier Paolo? Certes et violemment engagé dans toutes les batailles des années soixante. Toujours du mauvais côté de la barricade, celui des laissés pour compte, qu'ils soient de fringants loulous de barrière romains, des Jésus révolutionnaires, des tiers-mondistes tendres et paumés, Pasolini, véritable signe de contradiction en but aux contradictions du monde, n'est scandaleux que par le fait qu'il traque et met à jour le sacré au cœur du profane, c'est-à-dire de la réalité. À l'instar de Terence Stamp, l'énigmatique Visiteur de *Teorema* qui sème le désarroi d'une foi primordiale parmi les membres d'une famille hautement bourgeoise, Pier Paolo Pasolini est un véritable terroriste de l'âme humaine, un terroriste angélique ne brandissant que la plus terrible et la plus inoffensive des armes: celle du Verbe, celle de la Poésie.

De Rimbaud à Gide et à Pound, de Dante à Gadda, de Penna à Bertolucci pour la littérature. De Masaccio à Guttuso pour la peinture. De Vivaldi à Bach à la *Missa Luba* pour la musique, de Eisenstein à Mizoguchi et Godard pour le cinéma, de Chomski à Roland Barthes et à Christian Metz pour la critique, il est impossible, tant elles sont nombreuses, de faire l'inventaire des sources de l'inspiration pasolinienne. Épigone des grands humanistes de la Renaissance, doué d'une intuition incomparable et d'une

surprenante capacité de synthétiser, en les harmonisant dans son oeuvre, les apports tant de la grande tradition que ceux des pères du modernisme, Pasolini nous a légué une oeuvre immense, sublime et imparfaite comme la vie. Une oeuvre qui force tous les critiques et historiens de la littérature et du cinéma à sortir constamment des normes pour essayer de la cerner dans les spires d'un discours idéologiquement correct. Ennemi juré de la bienséance et de l'académisme, terrorisé par le péril que l'universel et incontournable processus d'homologation puisse un jour englober jusqu'à son oeuvre dans cette sorte de magma indifférencié qu'il appelait «l'entropie bourgeoise», toujours plus convaincu que le triomphe du néo-capitalisme aurait fini par se solder, en Italie et ailleurs, par un génocide culturel d'une ampleur sans précédent, Pasolini, cette première nuit de novembre 1975 meurt désespéré: «mais oui, mais oui, c'en est fini pour moi, soyez tranquilles, j'entre dans l'ombre, je vous laisse le monde...». Depuis lors, car, en réalité, jamais ne meurent les poètes, son oeuvre a marqué la conscience intellectuelle du monde entier. Auteur parmi les plus traduits et étudiés de notre époque, de très nombreux ouvrages lui ont été consacrés, depuis *Pasolini on Pasolini* de Jon Halliday (1969) au tout dernier *Pasolini, un delitto italiano* dont l'auteur Marco Tullio Giordana vient de sortir un film qui a fait l'unanimité des critiques tant à Venise qu'à Toronto. Et tandis que

Montréal célébrait le plus hérétique des empiristes de notre siècle, nous parvenait la nouvelle que le procès Pasolini rouvrirait ses battants en Italie, qu'encore une fois cette nuit romaine serait interrogée et sommée de nous livrer ses ultimes secrets. Sa mort, encore une fois, nous ne pourrions la situer, tout comme l'oeuvre de Pasolini selon Marc Gervais - le jésuite québécois, historien du cinéma qui en 1968 fut à l'origine de l'affaire *Teorema* - qu'aux « confins du politique, de l'esthétique, de la religion et de la sexualité...»

De l'inéluctabilité de ce rendez-vous avec la mort, Pier Paolo Pasolini était du reste, parfaitement conscient. N'avait-il pas écrit en effet dès 1967: « Il est donc absolument nécessaire de mourir, parce que, tant qu'on est vivant, nous manquons de sens, et le langage de notre vie (celui à travers lequel nous nous exprimons et auquel nous attribuons la plus haute importance) demeure intraduisible: un chaos de possibilités, une recherche de relations et de significations sans aucune solution de continuité. La mort accomplit un foudroyant montage de notre vie». ☹☹

**Elio Traina** est le directeur de l'Institut Culturel Italien de Montréal.

# A NOSTALGIC LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

Despite the pessimism of his diary, there is dancing on Sherbrooke street near Peel. Let me state precisely and *sans prejudice* what I see: Mount Royal is still there, a battered, extinct volcano. Craggy and vegetated but crowded. The city has climbed up the mountain, the rich abandoning the squalor of the poor, fleeing the violence and living like eagles nestled in aeries of granite. They hide in fortresses, bunkers, closer to God and farther from evil, danger, the vulgar striates of our fair city. Their colony ideal for Spiderman to leap down from crags to save another day from harm. And the harbour is still, the waters silvery and sparkling with the warmth of a quiet Buddha.

But in the jubilation below it is true there is resentment. There is turmoil in what used to be called the east-end of the city. An impromptu scaffold has been erected and a mock hanging is taking place. A young girl is being hung but the significance of this ritual is a mystery. The crowd echoes her skinny screams then bursts into wild applause. And on what used to be called Jacques Cartier bridge is stranger still: a green Volkswagen, in mint condition after a thousand years, is being pushed along by young children and blessed by a priest-like figure.

But on page 89 dated June 4th, 2995 in the diary of Uncle Albert 301







[Photomontage: Michel Rakirol]

Percival is this entry:

"...it's four o'clock in the morning and I can't sleep. Everything torments me and my mind is a cannibal. It eats its way to the past, to a thousand years ago when there was a place called Quebec. After separation there was great joy or shame. But in Montreal things were quite different: the distinct society concept had invaded the imagination of the city which in turn wanted to be distinct from the rest of the province. The political visionaries of Montreal clamored to be recognized as a city-state and dependent privileged community. After much heated debate and bloodshed Montreal was granted its wish and, in keeping with its fiercely independent streak, promptly inverted its name to Realmont. When I read about how the laws were changed it makes me sick. Even the weekdays were changed: Monday became Wash Day, Tuesday was Repentance Day, Wednesday was now Liberation Day and both Thursday and Friday were to be called Big Days and so on. A great writer of the time proclaimed: "Anarchy leads to Discipline." But such were those times and now perhaps I can sleep...BUT it took us a thousand years to separate ourselves from those troubles! Now I must go..."

My own observation, as bonfires throughout the city lit up the black sky, is that once Realmont (or Montreal) drew up a flag, printed its own laws and currency, there was relative stability for a few generations. Quebec and Montreal traded easily though Montreal came to be regarded as a selfish, spoiled and snobbish aristocrat. There were still major skirmishes from time to time but no openly declared war.

About five hundred years after separation, the City of Realmont had evolved a distinct insular ethos, a unique character in being cut off from the rest of the world. Like Australia, many unusual and rare species of flowers and animals evolved not to mention bizarre customs. But ideas too became inbred and then the inevitable happened: the Premier of Quebec openly declared, "Never trust a city built around a mountain", and the two sides went to war. Of this event I know little but in Percival's diary (though in a fuming tone uncharacteristic of him) there is mention of Realmont around that time.

Citing page 104, undated:

"...God I hate the shit of history that fertilizes our land and brains for hundreds of years. It is history and the acts of butchery that causes trees to grow crooked and gives us children who lie. The

foolishness of politicians is itself a virus that haunts us from time immemorial. They are the worst pernicious pestilence that even the genius of science cannot eradicate. My daughter is the illness of politicians and my son the bastard of their honesty. But I have no children, really, just the spores of these parasites..."

Later, on the next page:

"Ah, Realmont was a city of dreams! There, many strange things and the unexpected were invented: No McDonalds but places were they sold Pity Burgers instead to remind us of the poor.

And also, JUNIOR BANKS so that children under the age of twelve learned how to count, to invest, to spend, to hoard. The young were introduced to the Charity Account (a blue booklet with a crushed fleur-de-lis cover) which gave a certain percentage of their money to the State.

Even their SHIRTS had built-in sensors to monitor heart activity, sweat glands, endocrine glands and a NECK BAND worn as a barometer to measure changes in political climate. In Realmont, each citizen was a constant health bulletin with past, present and future illnesses clearly visible on clothing.

There was progress in many ways. The futile battle for equality was lost. Neo-Reality crept in: accepting the inevitable differences and distinctions of people but that also meant endorsing the unfairness, connivances of people against those of goodwill and magnanimity.

Then a gene was discovered dubbed the 'green gene' that in the carrier lead to riches and more riches. While the so-called 'P' gene (even when eradicated or altered) reappeared in offspring bringing with it chronic poverty.

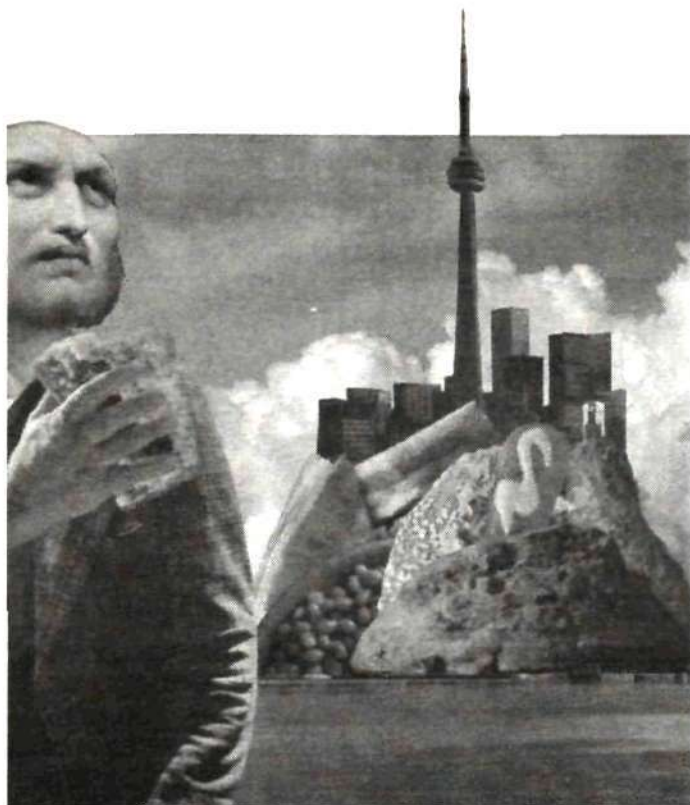
It was now clear to the Neo-Realists that all woes were manifestly unjust but this injustice, called a 'shooting star' gene must necessarily flicker its malaise in human form. Just as we need night to see the stars so we needed humans to be able to trace illness. The writer of this diary too is ill. A great character flaw..."

I walk around the parks where late night festivities are still going strong. The bonfires are orange burning ghouls reflecting the quiet smiles and happy faces of the Realmonts. They stand arm in arm singing songs. To me they are like ordinary people just as in our time. I don't understand the language: it's neither French or English, perhaps a computer-enhanced voice box makes them speak so rapidly and their singing sound like whistling sounds. They are friendly even if somewhat distant. I see signs of drugs, tiny green capsules and an alcoholic beverage called Pariz'eau which is imported from an unknown well near Paris. There is a quiet uniformity about them that is pleasant, dream-like. Such serenity makes me restless. I open Percival's diary to page 39: understand

It says: "...I hate what we have done to the calendar. In the ancient past the Chinese, Romans, Hebrews and Mohammedans all had lunar calendars. We have a sun and moon but calendars are outlawed. I am in an anxious state of restlessness. No doubt my illness is because I don't what time it really is or how old I am therefore I don't know if I should rush or not. I live so much for the past because my present is idle and formless. I wished I lived in the year 1995 so I could read all the calendars I wanted, to have an astrology chart, to live in an imperfect society. My illness is called P.17, it used to be called the common cold. I don't wish to cure it because I am following the fashion of my time in the year 2995. I am one of many who has been charmed by Dr. August 04 Smith's book: **Nostalgic Illnesses**. In his book he lists 748 diseases that due to our advanced treatments are considered extinct. It is almost impossible to die of anything natural these days. Being nostalgic I am allowing myself to suffer and I am drinking a Pariz'eau mixed with the finely intoxicating Trud'eau brandy bottled in the year 2001, its bouquet unmistakably full of despair and false promises. The ruination of the soul another illness that makes me nostalgic tonight..."

**Percival Rakirol** is a Montréal writer and painter. He is a member of the editorial board of Vice Versa.





*by many as a boring, quiet, clean town?*

**B.H.:** When there was the debate about this at council I heard from a whole pile of people sitting in the cafe in Paris or London reading the Herald Tribune and the only reference to Canada was Toronto's debate on that sort of thing. Just even talking about is something that seemed to titillate the world. But street prostitution is something that I've spent a fair amount of time on before I got into politics as a lawyer.

I don't believe the status quo is satisfactory for anyone. I've looked at what other places have done, I've

been to Amsterdam and talked to city officials and the police and some prostitutes in various organized groups. I have had series of meetings with residents in neighbourhoods where there's a fair amount of street prostitution... looking at options and I guess that experience, all of those things have led me to believe that it would be impossible to have a red light district in Toronto and that we would never be able to find a location.

I know Vancouver attempted to create some zones of tolerance. It was a commercial industrial area. It did not want its area used as a zone of tolerance.

Even in Amsterdam, where it's in an area which has historically been a red light district (close to the port), I met a fellow who said: "we're having some experience with a bit of a movement here. I don't know if you know what I mean, we sort of call it - not in my... backyard".

So what I have supported is exploring decriminalization so that we can regulate it in some way. The criminal courts don't view it as an issue, it's a nuisance for them. I always find it a bit ironic that you can't sell an ice-cream cone or a bag of popcorn or a hot dog in the city without a license but in the streets prostitution goes on in a totally uncontrolled way. As a feminist I am extremely bothered by prostitution: it is a very negative thing for the prostitutes be they primarily female, but also male. A large amount of the response should be assisting people involved in it to have other ways of supporting themselves.

**V.V.:** *Can you as a mayor, help eliminate the underclass? Do you think your city belongs to the new economy or the old economy?*

**B.H.:** I think that the city is in a transition period between the old and the new. Clearly the city was very successful in the old economy. Over the last decade we have seen many of those manufacturing industries leave. That has had a real negative impact on the number of jobs in the city. We are working to change our focus and our expectations.

I mentioned the design exchange earlier. I was on the Board of Management that worked to develop that project and I have always felt

that it's very appropriate and also symbolic to have a design exchange, in 1995, in what was the former stock exchange. As one goes into the physical building, one can look at the panels, the pictures that have been restored and that focus on the natural resources on which this country was built and on which the wealth in this city was built: the trees and the mines and transportation and water, the natural resources. That's our past. Our future is in things like the design exchange and I think we need to recognize that design, good design, is good business, and is big business and we need to do a whole education in the manufacturing field for example. Good design, industrial design, is very successful and we can look at other countries that have a real tradition, a very long tradition in this, so we think of Italy or even Scandinavia. Why does IKEA do so well in comparison to other similarly priced things, it's that design. Increasingly we are recognizing this.

**V.V.:** *How will the conservative government cut backs apply to the municipalities?*

**B.H.:** It creates another level of challenges. I think that the challenge for this government but also for us as a community, is how we are able to continue to ensure that the essential infrastructure that's necessary for a safe and healthy city is there... that the necessary infrastructure is there and that's very related to the underclass.

**V.V.:** *It will not though change our given reality. We might want to change the names by which we call certain objects but those objects will always remain as such.*

**B.H.:** There are lots of people in this country, in this city living below the poverty line. Today, September 8 is International Literacy Day. We know the statistics say that there are 38% of the people in this community who are functionally illiterate, literacy is access, these are issues that we have to deal with.

I view the solution to homelessness as requiring involving the homeless in determining what's the solution to their situation. Do we say that because the government programs have been cut we can't address this issue anymore? I refuse to accept that. I got into municipal politics because of my concern about the housing situation and about the real crisis in the city in the mid-eighties and I think we need to look at the situation again and find some different ways. In parts of the developing world where they may have millions of people who require housing, they do some things where they work with people to build essentially a room or a structure. They teach people the skills in the building of that structure that may be a large room, the room is built in such a way that it can be expanded, additions can be added on.

**V.V.:** *In this context, are you concerned with the increase in illegal immigration, because this morning I read in the newspaper that Sergio Marchi has been asked to step down because of these problems in the immigration policy, especially from the Third World or Eastern Europe.*

**B.H.:** I'm not familiar with the

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## Toronto the Trance-Cultural

*effects in your city? Should a mayor for our times be a generalist or a specialist?*

**B.H.:** The biggest impact I could have would be to have many residents of the city start to see the quality of life in their city as something that requires them taking ownership and responsibility for what happens. If I can do that, that will have long term effects.

**V.V.:** *Of course there's always a bit of danger because in terms of giving responsibility back to the people, if the right tools are not given, for example in the case you mentioned, you could have the creation of vigilante groups that would be totally against what you're trying to put across.*

**B.H.:** Absolutely, what government becomes is the resource that provides those tools or some of those tools. I have just had council approve a community safety strategy that identifies the kinds of partnerships that are necessary and most of those things are driven by groups of residents working in partnership with the city staff and the police and the people most effected. Before I got into law I was a youth worker and in my experience, often if you're experiencing problems with groups of teenagers hanging out on the corner, the first people you should go and talk to are those teenagers as opposed to calling the police.

I've gone and talked to street prostitutes who had been working beside schools about the impact of their activity on the children going to school. Most of them, if you approach them in a way that on some level is respectful of them as human beings, often will respond and agree to stay out of certain areas.

**V.V.:** *That leads into another question. There's been talk about having a red light district in Toronto. I just want to get your general feeling on that and whether that's going to improve the situation for the people that have been used in this trade. Also, what kind of an impact would it have on the image of Toronto, since Toronto is perceived*



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statistics around illegal immigration, I know that there is illegal immigration. So there is an appeal for people to come to this country and that's one of the things that built this country in the first place and I suspect will always exist. I think that it's a challenge when people come here, even legally, to ensure that they have the settlement services necessary to allow them to become contributing, full members of this society. I believe the future of this city, of this country is, as its past, based on immigration.

But clearly we have to give people the tools once they arrive to become contributing members of the society.

**V.V.:** *Is there anything you think you can learn from the experience of this triangle that Vice Versa is trying to achieve - New York - Montreal - Toronto?*

**B.H.:** I think that we have as a city learnt from both positive and negative experiences in other cities. Some people would say that one of the most important people in maintaining the city that we have here today is Jane Jacobs and her arrival in the city in the 60's. And we, partially through the things that she told us, taught us, discussed with us, learned from some of the negative experience in New York City. The life and death of great American cities became a sort of bible for people, so in that case we went from some of the negative things; but in other areas, in terms of cultural activity, in terms of the real advantage to people having pride in their city and in believing in their city and getting involved, I think we ought to learn from a city like Montreal.

**V.V.:** *What in the experience of your city can be applied to other cities?*

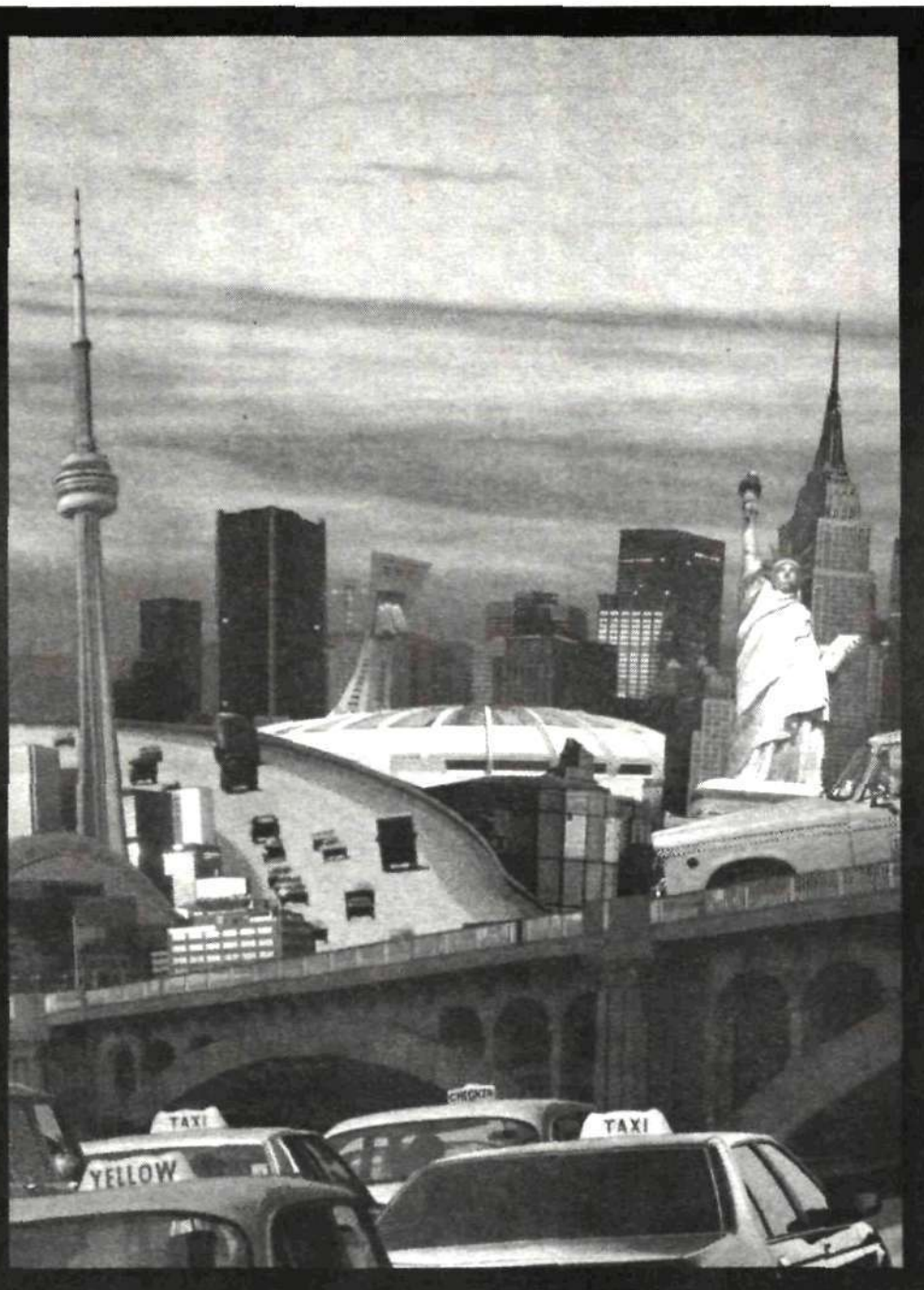
**B.H.:** I think that one of the things we have been quite good at is allowing and supporting, encouraging citizen involvement like the Citizen Group, the task force to bring back the Don River. People come from all over the world to see what we're doing there and learn from that. Another thing is mixed use communities and those successes that flow from having people living in the down town core.

**V.V.:** *Are you interested in spirituality and in what ways?*

**B.H.:** When I saw that question I thought, Oh God, what does spirituality mean, I guess the quick answer is yes. I believe in the spirit of people to care about things, to be introspective, to believe in something beyond themselves, something that brings them to other people, that ties them to other people, it's not something that I have a lot of time to focus on but I believe in the spirit of people, the soul of people and the soul of the city as being something that's important.

**V.V.:** *So you don't have to consult your horoscope to make decisions?*

**B.H.:** Every now and then I read my horoscope if it's a particularly horrendous day and I'm flipping through the paper, I sort of think maybe there'll be hope, the sort of hope that in the time of trouble one reaches out for. ☺



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New York

in order to create a positive competition with the public administration.

I think two examples will make our strategy clear to you.

In the assistance to the homeless, we have signed contracts with private non-profit organisations which are taking care of part of the services, leaving some others to the municipal offices which will be obliged to offer better prices.

The city is also faced with the enormous cost and poor management of the city's garbage collection. We are negotiating contracts with the garbage collectors' union and we are also dealing with private operators through precise production parameters.

**V.V.:** *Delinquency is still one of New York's major problem even though the crime rate has been reduced by 14% since the onset of your administration. Is the Mafia still as powerful as it once was or has your determination to combat it acted as an effective deterrent?*

**R.G.:** The Mafia certainly doesn't hold the same power it wielded a few decades ago. It has taken forty years to inflict a serious blow to the Italo-American bosses and to eliminate the Mafia at high institutional levels. We've succeeded but when I began my mandate two years ago, organized crime still hadn't started to let go of its hold. One important case which I became involved in as a federal prosecutor was the Fulton Fish Market (one of the biggest fish markets on the oriental coast) which was the scene of extortion attempts, clandestine games and usury. Upon a recommendation of the Federal Court, I oversaw a new law which allowed the police to carry out in depth investigations within the market. It also gave the administration more power in releasing sale licences to concessionaries and in regulating severely the rules of business. The Mafia however isn't our only concern; there are at least 25 or 30 criminal organizations in the city which originate in South America and the Far East and are without any doubt richer and more powerful than the Cosa Nostra. ☺

**Marco Chironi** is an Italian journalist living in New York and Milan.



## Montréal, la locomotive fleurie

### comprendre...

**P.B.:** La force de Montréal, est d'être une société hétérogène. Ce n'est pas comme le reste du Québec. Elle a été nourrie dans ses sources, dans sa personnalité, par toutes sortes de cultures. C'est ce qui a créé, façonné cette culture dynamique. Sa force est de communiquer. Les économies de demain, c'est justement la communication. C'est l'exportation de notre expertise, notre savoir, la connaissance des langues. Il faut que Québec comprenne ça. Montréal va entraîner le Québec, l'inverse est impossible.

**V.V.:** Québec a compris. C'est qu'il n'est pas d'accord...

**P.B.:** Je ne sais pas s'ils l'ont compris... parce que quand vous vivez dans la ville de Québec, ou à Rimouski ou ailleurs, je ne veux rien dire contre ces gens-là, sauf qu'eux autres pensent que tout part de Québec. Leur vision du Québec est un peu biaisée parce qu'il n'y a pas le vécu montréalais. Le vécu montréalais, c'est 3,5 millions qui sont à la fois Arabes, Juifs, Libanais... C'est ça Montréal: à la fois Grec, Arménien, Italien et tout... ça c'est Montréal...

**V.V.:** Mais que les gens voient peut-être Québec comme le centre, mais les décideurs de Québec connaissent très bien la réalité. Ils savent très bien que Montréal est un moteur incontournable, mais ils essaient peut-être de tempérer...

**P.B.:** Les décideurs sont beaucoup influencés par une bureaucratie qui est très lourde. Moi je le sais, je vais là des fois. J'ai jamais trouvé Québec aussi loin...

Mais je pense que c'est du à notre réalité, nous avons accepté, nous nous sommes intégré. Pour nous l'apprentissage des langues, c'est un plus.... Moi je parle français, anglais, espagnol, j'espère que demain nous parlerons tous quatre langues et cinq langues. C'est ça qui est notre force....

La semaine passée, je suis allé à Winnipeg faire une conférence sur les Downtowns of North America. Ça m'a beaucoup impressionné que la mairesse de Winnipeg insiste pour que je fasse ma conférence en français. Aujourd'hui, ils s'aperçoivent que le français est devenu pour eux un atout de développement. Parce qu'il veulent faire de leur ville, une ville internationale.

**V.V.:** Justement, pourquoi avec toute cette beauté, cette richesse de Montréal on assiste, depuis quelques années, à une crise dramatique du centre-ville?

**P.B.:** Quand j'ai présenté le centre-ville là-bas, avec des images de Montréal, je l'ai présenté beaucoup avec des piétons. C'est une ville humaine, avec des cyclistes, avec de la vie. Les autres centre-villes se vident. Par contre, il y a 50.000 personnes qui vivent dans le centre-ville de Montréal.

Ce qui n'est pas le cas dans beaucoup de centre-villes en Amérique. Les gens partent, après cinq heures il n'y a plus personne. Il y a 800.000 personnes le jour qui viennent travailler, mais il y en a 500.000 qui viennent le soir pour s'amuser. Et c'est pour ça que tout ce qui pourrait entraver cette perception là, cette image là est nuisible au centre-ville. Je me bats justement contre ça. Que ce soit les barricades, les graffitis, la malpropreté, l'insécurité... Maintenant, il y a une crise financière dans l'immobilier énorme, et il y a aussi tout ce combat entre la banlieue et la ville. L'exode des classes moyennes a fait très mal à Montréal... Montréal, c'est comme une mère au fond, c'est la seule que nous avons au Québec. Les gens qui sont desinstitutionnalisés viennent à Montréal, les gens qui souffrent par exemple du SIDA viennent à Montréal, les gens qui sont seuls viennent à Montréal, les femmes seules etc... Montréal prend tous ses enfants, elle ne fait pas de discrimination. Les immigrants s'établissent à 80% dans la région de Montréal...

**V.V.:** Est-ce que vous avez des interventions immédiates, concrètes pour le centre-ville?

**P.B.:** Nous signons une entente de 42 millions avec le gouvernement pour tout le Vieux Montréal. Nous allons refaire la marché Bonsecours, la place Jacques Cartier. Nous aiderons l'habitation dans le centre-ville. Nous lancerons un programme très important sur la rue Sainte-Catherine. L'ancien Forum, qui va être démoli, sera converti en une place avec toute

la mémoire des Canadiens. Nous avons lancé l'opération Commerce, il y a déjà 4 millions d'investis en trois mois. Nous avons d'autres beaux projets, j'espère que ça va marcher: la Bibliothèque Nationale, qui pourrait s'installer dans la bâtisse Simpson.

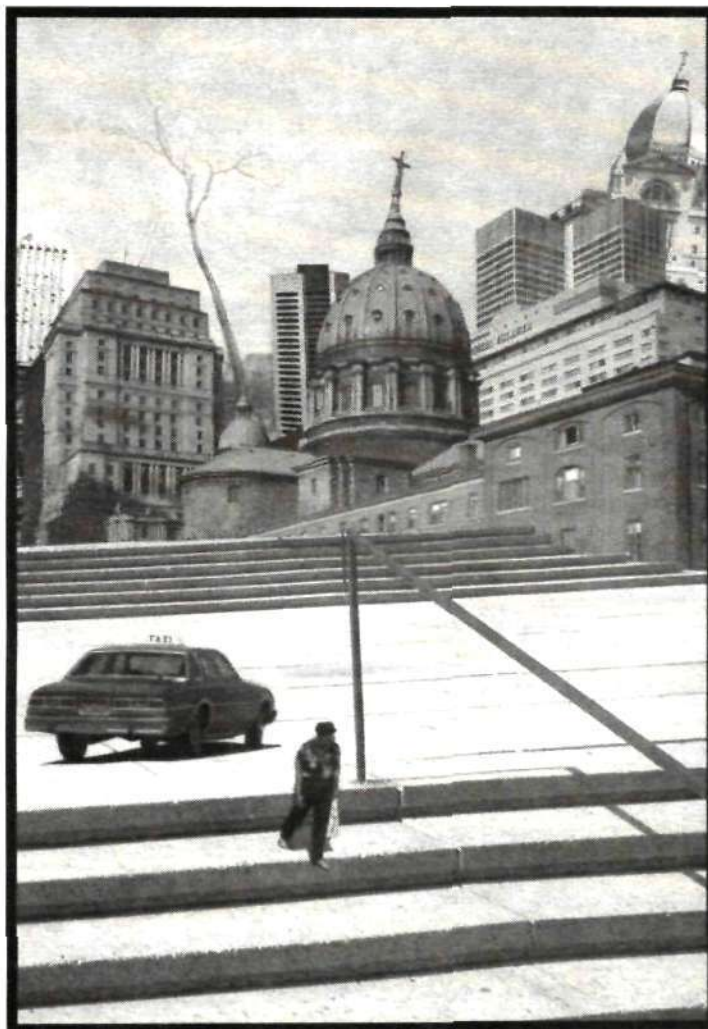
**V.V.:** Une question sur cet aspect esthétique mais qui n'est pas superficiel. Quelle serait la façon de réglementer l'utilisation de certains matériaux, ou l'affichage de néons, ce type de choses ahurissant. On ne le retrouve pas à ce niveau là dans d'autres villes d'Amérique. C'est mieux conservé. Est-ce qu'on peut intervenir ou non?

**P.B.:** Oui, on peut intervenir. Moi je demande toujours deux choses aux gens avant de donner un permis. Je dis à mes gens vérifier deux choses: l'esthétique et l'environnement. Si c'est correct, donnez le permis. Vous avez parfaitement raison, mais allez dans les banlieues, c'est tellement affreux. Nous n'avons pas beaucoup le sens de l'esthétique, ici. D'ailleurs c'est un peu à cause d'une carence de culture. Mais si vous regardez d'autres villes, aux États-Unis, nous avons quand même une avance. Nous ne sommes pas si malade que ça, mais il ne faut pas que ça continue.

**V.V.:** Comme maire, ou comme officier du maire, sentez-vous que pour une ville comme Montréal, vous avez les pouvoirs nécessaires pour agir vraiment sur l'ensemble du patrimoine montréalais?

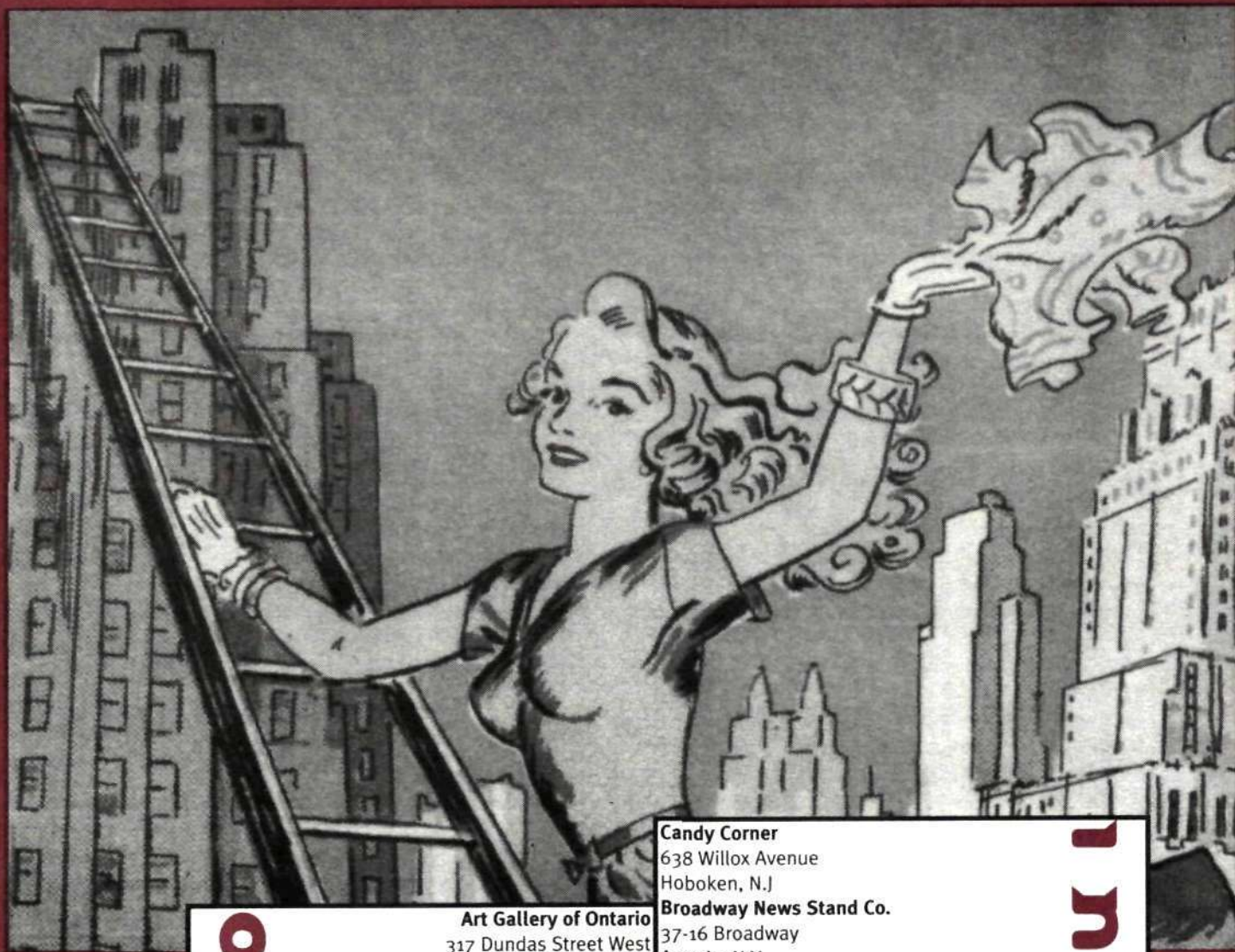
**P.B.:** Dans d'autres villes, les maires ont beaucoup plus de pouvoirs... J'étais récemment avec le maire de Boston. Oui, aux États-Unis, le maire c'est un peu comme un président. Tout l'ancien personnel doit s'en aller et lui, nomme sa gang. Ils s'occupent aussi de santé, des hôpitaux, ils s'occupent d'éducation. Ils ont beaucoup plus de pouvoir. Nous avons une charte qui est tributaire du Parlement du Québec, et chaque fois qu'on doit changer un iota, il faut aller se promener à Québec. Et là, on ne réalise pas la problématique, il y a 1.500 villes au Québec. On pense que Montréal, c'est une des 1.500. C'est complètement absurde, parce que Montréal est une ville, toute seule, unique, qui demande un statut spécial. Et moi, je demande ça depuis que je suis là: un statut particulier pour Montréal. Pas pour être contre les autres, mais pour propulser les autres dans le monde, dans le XXIème siècle.

C'est la chance du Québec et il faut se battre pour ça. ❧





# Pick up the Vice... here are a few locations...



**in Toronto**

**in New York**

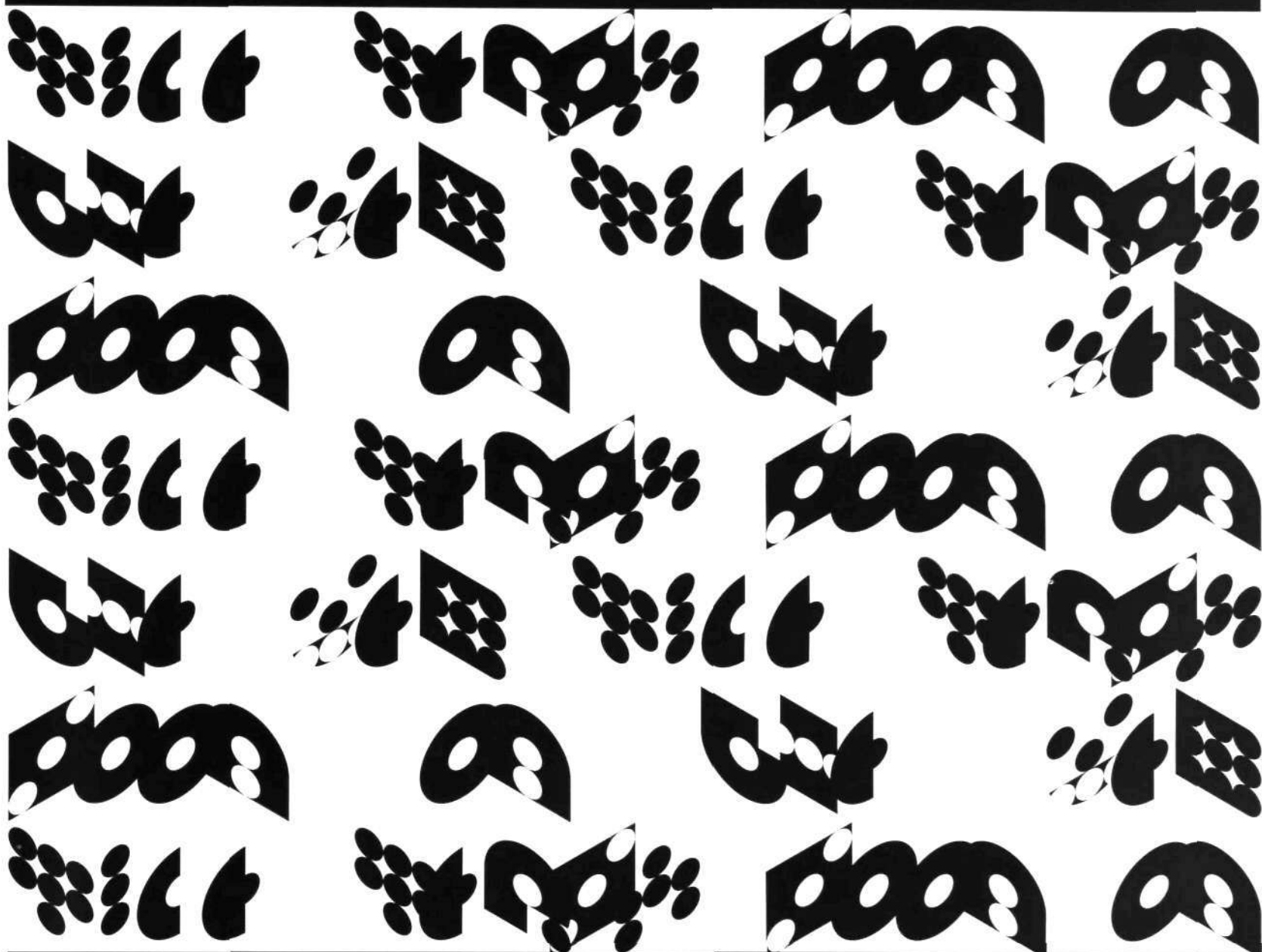
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| <b>Art Gallery of Ontario</b><br>317 Dundas Street West               | <b>Candy Corner</b><br>638 Willox Avenue<br>Hoboken, N.J.                              |
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