

# Failing to rise to the challenge

The Tories demonstrate they're not that bothered by the Liberal party's destruction of individual rights



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**Y**ou are in public life to give, not to take," Stephen Harper exclaimed in his speech at the Conservative convention, as if public lifers were, or should be, a special breed of altruistic busybodies. If Harper is so willing to give, he should stop focusing on being prime minister and be willing, if need be, to sacrifice the job to the ideal of defending our liberties.

In this speech, the Conservative leader ignored the real issue. The real issue is not the few million dollars that the Liberal party has diverted to its pet causes or apparatchiks' pockets, but the \$200 billion that the federal state spends every year buying electoral clientele and regulating our lives.

For sure, the Conservative party is better than the Liberal party. One night during the Montreal convention, hundreds of fun people, including young and beautiful women, attended the *Western Standard* reception, many committing the ultimate sin of smoking. Ezra Levant, the magazine's publisher, even distributed cigars bearing the Conservative party logo. (Can you imagine somebody offering condoms stamped with the party logo at a Liberal convention?) There, I met many convention participants genuinely concerned with individual liberty.

The main reason I find myself on the Conservative party's side is that I have become a single-issue elector, as more and more people must be in a politicized society. I am personally oppressed by the tyrannical gun controls that have been imposed since 1991, have transformed me into a criminal, and continuously threaten my lifestyle. I will support any party that promises to remove my shackles. In brief, I am a Conservative supporter because of Saskatchewan MP Garry Breitkreuz, and his able assistant Dennis Young (a former RCMP cop), who have been fighting these gun controls for more than a decade. To his credit, Harper has always supported Breitkreuz.

Yet, even on this issue, the official party position is not always clear. By saying that a Conservative government would repeal the "gun registry legislation," the original resolution did not target the whole Firearms Act of 1995,

which includes the licensing of all gun owners (instead of only the new acquirers, as was the case since 1991), but merely the registry of the physical things called guns (which is the less dangerous part of the whole liberticidal mess). Now, a potentially significant event occurred at the convention: the resolution was amended to drop "licensing" from the proposed gun control measures, and to suggest, albeit subliminally, its replacement by something like the old, pre-1991, Firearms Acquisition Certificate.

The Montreal convention sometimes looked like the business-as-usual capitulation before mounting tyranny. The cult of the chief was heavy, as if Canadians were just about to change one *leader maximo* for another. The party apparatchiks requested that freelancers wanting media accreditation "bring government-issue photo-identification." A party spokesman did not understand how this could be an issue: "This is silly," he said, talking aloud to himself. Apparatchiks are so used to walking

like tagged animals in the "City of Command"

—as Bertrand de Jouvenel described capitals of modern states—that they have forgotten something: this country used to be one where nobody needed government ID to move around.

Some decades ago, when the state was small and did not continually take sides for some citizens against others, political competition

between a government party and an opposition party could be based on marginal changes and rhetorical flourishes. But the world has changed, buddies! Today, the challenge is not switching from a marginally corrupt government to a new one also composed (of course) of self-interested individuals, and which will only become marginally corrupt after a couple of mandates. The challenge is to fight the monstrous state that has grown in our midst, is brainwashing us, regulating our lives, criminalizing former liberties, and gaining new powers with every session of Parliament.

I do realize that we have to work in the political world as it is, and I don't want to be nastier with my distant friends than with my close enemies. Yet, the truth must be told: a Conservative near-twin to the Liberal Party would be totally useless. **WS**

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