

Till I met a fiddle-playing Acadian teacher in the Canadian North this past winter, I knew little about the Acadian people and the Great Upheaval commemorated (at least by Acadians) now every July 28.

Beginning in 1755, French-speaking Acadians, many integrated with Mi'kmaq families, were deported from Nova Scotia and outlying British colonial regions. As acknowledged formally in 2003 by the Government of Canada, by 1763 “the tragic consequences, including the deaths of many thousands of Acadians—from disease, in shipwrecks, in their places of refuge and in prison camps in Nova Scotia and England as well as in the British colonies in America” took a terrible toll on a hardy people, many of whom were never able to return to their homeland.

My friend may be forgiven if his enthusiasm for “reconciliation” and “setting things right with Indigenous peoples” with financial compensation is tempered by the comparative indifference shown towards his forebearers, very much still his “people.” Admonishing that the two do not equate seems like a powerplay.

Growing up in a rural Saskatchewan era of summer sports days, baseball and fastball, and picnics, we admired the Scots settled around their captivating stone Catholic church in the St. Andrews settlement South of Wapella, just off the CPR Mainline and, now, the Trans-Canada Highway.

Whatever we were too busy doing otherwise—like trying to get ahead in the unforgiving hardscrabble terms of farming given to us—we never bothered to inquire about the history of these hard-working Scots; we just tried our best to beat them at fastball, losing more often than not. But the St. Andrews Picnic was a treat.

Turns out they were first Gaelic-speaking refugees from the Highland Clearances, crofters driven off their Hebrides lands by aristocrats determined to replace them with sheep to be sheared for wool to feed the insatiable English textile mills clothing the Empire.

Coaxed or coerced onto ships in 1883 and 1884 by agents serving their “patron,” Lady Cathcart, saddled by loans from her to be paid back at 5% interest, they made it past North Atlantic icebergs to then be off-loaded from the railway onto the bare Northwest Territories prairie. They trekked to their lands over bare prairie blackened by prairie fires—housed in tents, then holes in hillsides, then “potato pit” root cellars, then log houses—somehow getting

some crops sown very late in season only to often watch hail and insects wipe them out. Then the winters ...

To this day, do not expect St. Andrews folk to show much, if any, “gratitude” to Lady Cathcart. Other than the “stout peasant in a sheepskin coat” who pioneered farming elsewhere that no one else could do, only a Hebridean Highlander could survive, and eventually, prosper, in such unforgiving terms.

Not 50 miles away to the West, Indigenous bands (“Indians” to the Scots) were at this time being herded—driven—onto reserves along the South shore of the Qu’Appelle River.

As told from her daughter’s point of view a century later in a local history book, an Isle of Skye settler on the top of the Valley sat toiling away one summer day when “an old Indian came and sat in her mother’s tent and watched her spin on her spinning wheel for an hour or more, then got up and went home. He shook his head as he got up to leave, as he had not seen anything like this before. He came back each day to do the same thing.”

Here is more than a “missed opportunity” (if either saw it as one). This illustrates tragedy. Both Highlanders and First Nations had had their ancestral lands taken from them, both were thrown mercilessly into a radically different, difficult and dangerous way of life. Do you think they recognized this in each other, joined in some “fellow feeling” as victims of a common oppressor? Not at all (or at most, marginally and ephemerally). Both knew they were heading in different directions into the Canadian future—at least the desperate Scots hoped they were—and this had been sold to them on divergent terms. But one served a purpose for the exploiter, the other did not.

As a recent Northwest Territories Government employee I was required to complete a lengthy, polished “cultural awareness” online training program to help me better understand and appreciate “Indigenous” ways and history in the North. One advocate and activist after another concentrated on making clear to one and all that Indigenous people had been grossly neglected, abused, and exploited by colonialism, by implication southerners, by implication, White people. Who can argue with that? It’s terribly true. The message was clear that from now on, Indigenous interests and ways would prevail in the Territories and its Government. The terms for determining what this means would be defined by Indigenous peoples as articulated by this leadership.

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Living Well Together 3: The History of Colonization

MENU SELF CARE & SUPPORT TIMELINE MODULE HELP

Reverse Racism

Reverse racism is the myth that stereotypes, bias and derogatory attitudes about white people are racism. While these are examples of racial prejudice, they are not racism.

Racism

Racism is backed by power and results in discrimination and oppression against groups or individuals. The systemic imbalance of power in Canada gives white people greater cultural power and privilege than it gives non-white people.

Racial Discrimination

Racial prejudice against white people is offensive and cannot be condoned. However, it is not racism because it does not have the power to negatively affect white people's social or economic opportunities.

Systemic Racism

Reverse Racism

Reinforcement of Racism

PREV NEXT

According to this model, “racial prejudice” against White people (though regrettable) is not “racism” because there is no systemic role or fallout from it. But if I took issue with this, and refused to accept this facile circumlocution, jeopardizing my ability to succeed with, even work for, the NT Government, would I not thereby suffer "systemically" in this latest configuration of power?

Further, some very Black newcomers to the Northwest Territories, even offspring of FN members, can emphatically tell you how “racist” Dene and other Indigenous people can be, perhaps more there than White people are. Do Chipewyan, Cree, and Slavey folk get off the hook for this given the record of historical abuse they have suffered? Or because they were here first? (Were the Cree? Ask the Dene.) I have witnessed the antipathy across the North between Dene and Cree, and in the South between Blackfoot and Cree, Blackfoot and Stoney. We are all fallible human beings, to be considered equally so in any honest calculation. Such comparisons, in fact, are pointless, more trouble than they are worth, open to bias and powerplays of “legitimacy.”

The North includes a host of displaced peoples—Newfoundlanders, Acadians, Ethiopians, Sikhs, all of whom have a “homeland” they feel “indigenous” to and would still be resident in if they could. Another friend, an engineer by training, relegated to teaching French Immersion in the North, speaking exquisite French with refined French sensibilities, is in fact Algerian. But his Frenchness is not *pied-noir* Algerian at all: more than that, before all that, he is Berber.

Berbers are the people “indigenous” to North Africa, and—beyond the fact that the French shot his father during the Algerian War of Independence—my friend rightfully carries the grievances Berbers feel toward all the invaders who have taken over their homeland through the centuries, even millennia. If only the successors to the French had not exasperated talented, progressive people like him to the point where they had to leave to find opportunities elsewhere. Berbers are still suppressed and discriminated against; they know as much as anyone about being “Indigenous” and perhaps more about such experience in the modern world, including finding ways through it and places in it.

We have reached an impasse or, at best, I hope, a(nother) tipping point into a better public arena playing field, in the history of the Canadian nation.

Not just resistant, willfully-obtuse White Settler and (unsure of their role) Brown/Black Immigrant Canadians need to make further strides in contributing to Reconciliation in this country. Indigenous leadership has to step up—and out of some self- and well-dug cosy elitist foxholes—and meet other Canadians in a better place of deep but broader realism if we are to not settle into the likes of the abysmal divides and adversarial roles that keep trying to burn down France. Inclusion is our challenge—for, at times, our leaders promoting it, too.

The ethical, intellectual fortresses from which Indigenous advocates snipe need to be abandoned, because otherwise they will be rendered “Maginot Line forts” ignored by the targeted domineering partisan interests moving onwards without them.

I live and move amongst White conservative folk continually, and I can assure you they are going to move on politically tuning out such criticism.

This (voting) public is confounded by “All the money!” that Governments have given out in Reconciliation and related settlements, and is about to say “No more! That’s it! Get on with living with what you’ve got!” Perhaps First Nations can wangle more out through the courts, but this will be surrendered grudgingly at best by a mainstream electorate that has little or no confidence in the integrity of Indigenous political systems or motives. Parliamentary politicians will claw back those legal gains through other channels.

They have little, if any, faith in their own leaders and politics, and in debt up to their chins, are understandably self-centred, suspicious, and cynical. The predatory self-styled “defenders of freedom” amongst us, intent on forming “anti-government governments,” have both obscured the essential rationale for Government and undermined its ability to effectively carry through on its legitimate responsibilities.

The people who actually vote will only vote for someone promising to damp down taxes, feeling that with their exposed paycheques, they are the ones stuck with all the bills for all these “good/progressive ideas” when the wealthy—the shareholders served by their employers—have the system rigged to avoid paying their fair share.

The unfortunate truth—one I have rammed my now-flat nose into the world over for a lifetime—is that we ask too much of people, White, Brown, Black, and Red; rightly or wrongly, they just can’t be cajoled or shamed into making the grand sweeping ethical commitments to change required to begin to bracingly pull us out of the abysmal ditch we have long been trapped in. The reasons they have been given to trust any masters have not proven convincing.

And if they are skeptical of related progressive, expensive-now initiatives to reduce global warming, when the major global players show no signs of doing what it will take to truly make a difference, are they wrong? They see being “stupid suckers” as “unethical” and they have a point: In a competitive global economy, do we sacrifice ourselves pointlessly? (Subtleties are lost: global warming might not be stopped, but it can be reduced with beneficent outcomes.) The “I Love Oil and Gas” crowd exploit this sentiment to block worthy efforts to curb subsidization of the Fossil Fuel industry and to shift towards renewable energy, where legitimate and, actually, long overdue.

But will we set to changing our way of life and restructuring society to reduce our dependence on energy (petrol or electric or jet fuel) to travel and live as we do? In rural Saskatchewan, to access many professional services or shop in person where the selection and “savings” really are, we have to drive at least two hours one-way. We are lucky if our children and grandchildren are not further away. It never used to be this way. As well, we could peruse the Eatons and Sears catalogues that came in the mail for greater selection; maybe we just needed more catalogues instead of box stores and online websites.

For those who set to fitting into adult roles responsibly, their unhappily-truncated “ethics” struggle to do right just by their kids and partners, parents and siblings, let alone (it seems) themselves, the Planet, and all good things Indigenous and otherwise that have been sacrificed to the lifestyles of those driving the capitalist hegemony. Avowals of morality are defensive and, therefore, easily ugly and aggressive. As a rule, as working people settle down, they come to hate their jobs, feeling trapped serving a public or boss or employees acting out their “stuff” on them. Keeping a retirement plan on track seems their only way to escape it all. (Work as a worthy, healthy, enjoyable lifetime pursuit, adjusted for ageing, has been destroyed.) They feel their lives are stuck in a rut in a low gear; only binge-sprees on “all inclusive” holidays and “big kid” toys, and maybe a vice or two, allow some occasional shifting up into overdrive. Some version of “snowbird” Florida or Arizona is the aim.

[I know an excellent Dene cultural leader whose dream is to spend his winters in Arizona when he can retire. Perhaps his distant Dine/Navajo relatives (who migrated there from the North centuries ago) have trailer parks for “snowbird” Indigenous Canadians too (who might get called Indians there).]

Far from feeling “privileged” most working class Canadians feel one step away from ending up one more “loser” in a merciless (token communal care, see the sorry state of Long Term Care) system with no “rights” that really matter.

Treaty rights have become a flashpoint. It is understandably hard for First Nations people to see how much of mainstream Canadians’ opposition to treaty rights arises from the creeping feeling that they themselves don’t have enough, if any, real rights left. Rather than feeling secure in “social safety nets” and economic stability, people, by design, have been left feeling ever more insecure and vulnerable, on their own.

The Crowsnest Agreement is a small, dated, example. This guaranteed that prairie grain was carried to port at cheap rates that required federal subsidy and constrained the CPR. “The Crow” was in a sense a “treaty right” for prairie communities—it helped keep the iconic wooden elevators in place that served a central communal purpose—with commitments from the CPR to the Canadian nation that set it up, and from government to farmers. It is long gone.

I am not *at all* saying that the plights of First Nations and Non-Aboriginal people come close to balancing out. But there are commonalities, more than most people see. These must be seen by all sides, scapegoats not wrongly

targeted, and the real common “enemy” named. Then the racism still left in public spaces, and in human hearts and minds, can be truly dealt with.

Any honest interpretation of the treaty-making process has to admit the terrible ruse that was played out on Indigenous peoples. The Canadian government, run by a miserly clique of cranky Lowland Scots, had one goal: the removal of the Indians from the Plains as cheaply and quickly as possible, and no more “honestly” than necessary. If treaties didn’t work, then the Army would have been used to slaughter them till they capitulated or none were left. But Canada did not have the Army Americans had built up during the Civil War ready to turn from the Confederacy onto the Indians, with many Southerners amenable to joining the Blue Coats—an act of “national reconciliation”—to hunt down and “put in their place” the Sioux and Comanche. So rather than shoot all the Indians in their way in the Canadian Northwest—a very expensive proposition made all the more difficult by the guerrilla warfare the enemy could wage in huge expanses they knew well—Sir John A’s government used deceitful treaty-making to get rid of them instead.

One way or another, the Indians were going to be gone. Given the relentless of Eastern expansion, as recognized by Red Cloud, put with the bloody-mindedness of the likes of Custer and Sherman, Indigenous peoples South of the Medicine Line—Tasunke Witco (“Crazy Horse”) notwithstanding—recognized that stopping the American behemoth was impossible. Canadian Indians, watching, concluded that signing treaties was their only hope of survival with some measure of autonomy.

Law is letter and spirit. We can choose to interpret treaties in the miserly dishonest-in-translation “letter” of them, or we can do so in the “spirit” in which they should have been conceived, what and how we now “know better.” What this means is what we have to work out; nevertheless, even here, power and politics, “rights” of different persuasions, will still be at play, limiting how much the country can be remade.

A truth Indigenous activism needs to acknowledge that these same recalcitrant adversaries have actually come a remarkable distance into “reconciliation” territory much farther than their parents and grandparents were ever willing to go. That we are in this current ethical imbroglio in public forums and policy at all is in part because mainstream European Canadians have made this much progress, come at least this far, stunted and unsatisfactory as the situation might still be.

If they don't easily trust their interlocutors, this is understandable: the reasons for resistance (perceptions of unequal resolve to submit to the ruthless market/investor-driven economic order, leaving mainstream taxpayers to carry the load, everyone else continuing to claim all they can), are there to be cherry-picked, easily, by the unscrupulous amongst them, and seen baldly, if selectively and warily, on the street every day on the way to work, in the Crime Reports that make easy and cheap TV News, and in our jails and prisons.

This leaves people convinced their Indigenous critics only care to see the flaws and sins of White people, skating over their own contributions to the grievous problems (gangs, drugs, prostitution, crime, the angst, apathy, and delinquency of youth) plaguing First Nations communities. Whites are complicit in this too—without the “John” the sex trade would shrink—but as the only, even primary, culprit to be singled out? Is the addict as guilty as the dealer as the cartel as the socioeconomic-cultural order that produces all of them?

That First Nations people do not want the focus to be here, but rather the (undeniable) historical roots of these pernicious evils, and on efforts to rejuvenate and celebrate Indigenous culture, is understandable. But this is a route too easily taken—the alternative is really hard to take and sell politically—and it leaves White Canadians feeling that Indigenous leadership does not play honest and fair. You can imagine the outrage this accusation would produce, so no one, at least outside online social media silos, dares state it in mainstream public forums. “Dog whistles” are used instead.

As John Vaillant has noted in his brilliant (2023) “Fireweather: The Making of a Beast” (2023) chronicling the corporate pillaging of the Boreal North, the curse that was the fur trade exposed all parties to it, from the Dene trapper to the Cree middleman to the Metis voyageur to the Orkney Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) trading post manager, all were susceptible to consumerism, however rudimentary, serving profiteering aristocratic HBC interests. (“If we don't trap and trade those beaver, someone else will—and they will have the guns and knives, cooking pots and beads, not us.” “If I don't submit to this economic workplace model, there will be no place for me.”) Maybe if we all came to see, first, our common entrapments, and then our common failings in our unthinking, blinkered participation in the consumerist, capitalist, corporate, “investor rights” (not “free trade”: Jim Stanford), spiritually-unmoored (when not misguided fundamentalist), pop-culture way of life that is ravaging this planet, the weakest amongst us, and ultimately everyone else (in perverse denial), we could begin to set things right. Predators with impregnable outside

powerbases and global reach have too long exploited differences to divide and conquer one “locale” (from creek in size to country) after another ad nauseum.

When everyone climbs up on some high moral horse, asks too much of others, vilifying many (however generically), refuses to risk seeing them as fellow immured human beings, and sets to making a secure and comfortable living perpetuating this ruse, we just get more of the same in perpetuity. Controlling debates by setting self-serving terms and limiting who is allowed to participate both alienates those who need to be part of them and discredits the initiative in the first place. The simplistic adolescent “ethical correctness” tactics running rampant in educational, political, and cultural circles need to be leashed: some idealism comes too easily and harms innocent people caught up in unrelenting historical processes.

The Indigenous cause in public forums would be best kept separate from Diversity, Climate Change, and all other “progressive” initiatives. They are different things, though sexual/gender and environmental objectives cut across all constituencies. But linking them makes it harder for any to gain particular broad traction; many people within each camp do not share the activists’ claimed all-encompassing “high ground.” If this is recognized, but activists persist in ignoring or soft-peddalling it, then they are in the fray more to act out their contentions than to make maximum, lasting progress. All who are part of “Canada” will ultimately only be better if “all” Canadians are included in “every” Canadian leader’s heart and mind.

The great Standing Rock Sioux writer (“For This Land: Writings on Religion in America”) and activist, Vine Deloria Jr., made clear that any valid religion must give a central place of reverence to Land, what sustains us. The Creator created this Creation for creatures; *Wakan Tanka* threads through all the six other “grandfathers” and we violate everything holy when we abuse our Earth.

As a “farm boy” from a much less technologically violent agricultural era, I feel this in my bones. More than Indigenous peoples understand “land”: many First Nations leaders, humble and less so, who claim to, I fear, do not, as is the case with many nonaboriginal “environmentalists.”

As the “ecological” movement increasingly became urban intent on preserving “Nature” to be camped in, hiked and mountain-biked in, on weekends, while fall-out tolls on the environment from all that produces urbanization were not meaningfully mitigated by recycling and biking to work, the divide between

liberal urban and conservative rural (including both White farmer and reserve) residents (forced to contend as well as work with Nature) widened into disrespect and mistrust.

Perhaps, if we overcome agri-corp actors and “cheap food” policymakers in this discussion, we can find more realistic meeting ground between worldviews, between hunters and vegetarians—herbivores need carnivores, and cattle would not exist on the Plains without economic value; as Indigenous people understood (and livestock industries do not), it is all about how you treat your prey and honour your dinner—between growth and sustainability imperatives. “Green” will not just be “wash” on a concrete wall. A better, upgraded, and inclusive—excluding what essentially is not—view of Indigeneity might result. If being “Indigenous” is to be sufficient, even holy, in itself, it has to be rooted and defined in true reverence for Land and Creation, *islam* surrender, and thereby a “Creator” whom monotheists can learn is actually “God” as well. Will *fatwas* be issued from all directions?

Only when we meet in common ground (“no man’s land” perhaps) all without arms or armour, can we find ways and reasons to live peaceably and trustingly with one another. We could use a new, upgraded, consensual conception of, and definition of, “Indigenous,” too, but leave the outraged ire this suggestion will provoke till when we get out of the present gridlock we are mired in.

Think of how this presents to our young people, our children and grandchildren. It is a big scary world (to make their way in) that kids face from all corners of Canada. Immigration frightens many in the rural places I know; competing—not just with those “big city snobs”—but with motivated and prepared immigrant “International School” undergraduate competitors for placement in professional programs, worries—it should—even our brightest students, and not at all just Aboriginals (given their inherited disadvantages).

Immigrants have always had a vigor, determination/ desperation, and single-mindedness—the dull do not leave hearth and home to cross oceans—that challenges the comfort and security of “nativist” constructions put in place to serve those who came before the latest cohort of newcomers. Creating new kinds of privilege—“only someone Indigenous can understand and speak to this”—and new insular elites does not empower minority youth. Even for the rich who feel vulnerable, everyone (White, Black, Brown and Red) now feels like—is—a threatened “minority” looking for havens with refuge and opportunity where they can be with others like them (or like-minded) in a world

that says all the right things but balks at doing them. It is hard to be noble when you think your interlocutor isn't, to be honest when you sense your competitor is not. In a culture of (cynical) "winners" and (cynical) "losers,"—however sanguine many are, and naïve or disingenuous the rest—it is hard to believe your accuser is not just intent on "evening the score."

Trust is understandably limited. If "your people" are accused of sustaining self-serving institutions founded on prejudice designed to further the interests of your own children, why would you not suspect your vengeful accusers of only intending to turn the tables and do the same to you? This dynamic is the same in the struggles between men and women in the workplace and politics. "Isms" are bad enough, but one hierarchy—any "archy"—replacing another might be worse, a legitimate fear and no progress.

No wonder many young people considering adult life are reluctant, afraid, to submit to a process that will propel-compel them to venture out into vacuous urban/global—not "local" in any way—locales. As an educator too "educated" in what all schooling means, I feel kids, in their often tepid or erratic responses to the academic demands put upon them, are showing us how lukewarm and uncertain, even discouraged, they feel about the future lives being "forced" upon them. Doing that boring assignment, submitting to our latest demand, is a statement about choosing to live, in other words, about hope (or the lack of it), even depression with suicidal elements. This is what we have all worked for, hoped for, died for, for our children? Whatever our culture, creed, or colour?

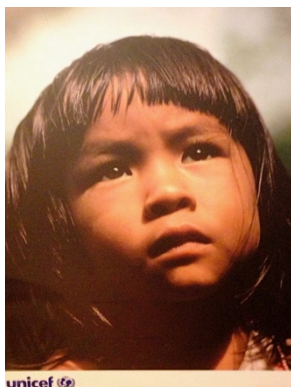
Throwing more money at First Nations education, building schools and refashioning curricula, laudable as this has been, will not be enough. Having worked in areas/arenas "marginal" in all ways in Canada (the North, reserves "isolated" even if southern) it has been heartbreaking to witness so many kids who just don't believe in what schooling insists it is offering, who don't think such opportunities are "real" for them, and maybe don't want them anyway. When the terrible toll intergenerational trauma continues to take on families and children is added in, along with the addictive vacuousness of what is on their phones, and the accelerating deterioration of schooling in general in the wake of COVID, TikTok, social media, and online learning, we end up with more kids going nowhere and, falling behind, sinking deeper into delinquency and despair. If they do come to school, they don't come to learn, they come to have fun. For many, school is the social highlight of their day; returning home is no fun, boredom or worse. They find no shortage of allies in subverting the

academic program their teachers are paid to deliver; the more kids fall behind, the more inclined they are to undermine every curriculum, explicit and hidden.

That some students—even many in privileged places prepared to compete—seize these opportunities does not justify this carnage. We need to give all kids lives that are immediately sustaining with futures that are, and seem, achievable and personally meaningful, however cosmopolitan or mundane.

We must ask ourselves, as Acadian-Highlander-British-Immigrant-Indigenous-Red-Brown-Black-White-European Canadians, what we want this strange and—all things considered—wonderful, unique country to both remain and become. (Re)write a better “history,” but make sure it is truly as “inclusive,” balanced and “just,” as it needs to be. Do not ask anyone to abandon their culture—like it or not, it has its virtues too—or their heritage; let them feel pride in their forebearers and where they come from, whatever injustices or failures of response committed by (many of) their kind, when not victims themselves. They will do so anyway, and demand that you start there with them, if you want reciprocal cooperation from them. Elders of all colours, cultures, and creeds deserve credit and respect; and, being human, may well require considerable forgiveness too. Just like us.

Start Now, please. All of us must leave our ethical foxholes, Maginot forts, when we do. Right now, as it is currently imagined and carried out, this “war” cannot be won on these terms by anyone; along with the innocent casualties, all adherents to these opposing “battle plans” (feeding off extremists) will be left behind. Whatever our personal axes to grind, others need better from us. Some “haters” perhaps must be jettisoned, but far more of the “resistant” can be brought along with us if we truly liberate ourselves (from ourselves and our bondages) first, and listen to them, hear them, and give them—and our country, and our children—a chance. Does anyone have the courage to do it?



Having approached a prominent Indigenous “Reconciliation” advocate or two— I never am given any idea who might be reading these missives on my website/blog—without any reciprocal response, I can only assume that no one in such circles is willing for a “conversation” that could cut hard both ways. When it is the White mainstream guy who must face up to “unpleasant” truths, Indigenous folk are prepared for the “rolling up of sleeves” required to drive points home. But when the table might be turned in any significant measure, asking them to look hard and critically at themselves and their own people, they are not so willing. For one thing, they would risk their standing amongst their own kind happy to keep up the crusade on the terms they have hammered out. Who wants to be cancelled by their friends and allies?

Therefore, it would seem, the Reconciliation “conversation” and debate, however its proponents might adjust and refine their methods, will never truly progress to the qualitatively different level needed to accomplish more than the advancement of Indigenous elites and claims on the public purse. They may be “leaders,” but are not “Canadian” leaders, and maybe just for their pals and peers in First Nations circles. (Wab Kinew, in his portion of Canada, will test out if better is possible. Nothing but best wishes to him.) Which raises the question, however hackneyed it may seem: “Does Canada have any leaders?” Can a country so broad, diverse, and divided produce leaders who truly keep the entire country and population in consideration beyond “what’s good for me and my kind will be good for you. Trust me.” Disappointing and denying as necessary “your own people” is something no politician or partisan dares do.

Of course, those I question would only reply that I am over-estimating my own importance, the premises of my argument, and the worthiness of response. TJB