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Thèmes canadiens est publié par**



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THÈMES CANADIENS**

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Bang! Marketing (514) 849-2264 – 1-888-942-BANG

info@bang-marketing.com

COVER ART / ILLUSTRATION DE LA COUVERTURE

Alfredo Garcia

ADVERTISING / PUBLICITÉ

allison.anderson@acs-aec.ca

(514) 925-3094

DISTRIBUTION

Gordon and Gotch Periodicals Inc.

110 Jardin Drive, Unit 11

Concord Ontario L4K 4R4

CITC/ACS STREET ADDRESS / ADRESSE CIVIQUE CITC/AEC

1822A, rue Sherbrooke Ouest, Montréal (Québec) H3H 1E4

Tel / Tél.: (514) 925-3094 – Fax / Téléc.: (514) 925-3095

E-mail / Courriel: general@acs-aec.ca

RUN OF 1,000 COPIES / TIRAGE DE 1 000 EXEMPLAIRES

CANADIAN ISSUES / THÈMES CANADIENS (CITC) – ISSN 0318-8442

CONVENTION POSTE PUBLICATION, 41006541

“Canadian Issues” is published with financial support from:

«Thèmes canadiens» est publié avec un appui financier de:



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CITC is a quarterly publication of the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS). It is distributed free of charge to individual and institutional members of the Association.

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CITC est une publication trimestrielle de l'Association d'études canadiennes (AEC). Il est distribué gratuitement aux membres de l'Association. CITC est une publication bilingue. Tous les textes émanant de l'Association sont publiés en français et en anglais. Tous les autres textes sont publiés dans la langue d'origine. Les collaborateurs et collaboratrices de CITC sont entièrement responsables des idées et opinions exprimées dans leurs articles. L'Association d'études canadiennes est un organisme pan-canadien à but non lucratif dont l'objectif est de promouvoir l'enseignement, la recherche et les publications sur le Canada. L'AEC est une société savante, membre de la Fédération canadienne des sciences humaines et sociales. Elle est également membre fondateur du Conseil international d'études canadiennes.

CITC acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canadian Studies Programme of the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canada Magazine Fund for this project.

CITC bénéficie de l'appui financier du Gouvernement du Canada par le biais du Programme d'études canadiennes du ministère du Patrimoine canadien et Le Fonds du Canada pour les magazines pour ce projet.

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THE NORTH ATLANTIC TRIANGLE IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

ABSTRACT

This article is based on an address delivered to the London Conference on Canadian Studies at Canterbury Christ Church University College, Canterbury, Kent, on Friday, 22 October 2004. It explores the post-Second World War triangular partnership involving Canada, Britain and the United States. The author discusses the significance of John Bartlett Brebner's *North Atlantic Triangle*.

Next year will mark the sixtieth anniversary not only of the end of the Second War, but also of the publication of John Bartlett Brebner's magisterial survey of "the interplay of Canada, the United States and Great Britain," *North Atlantic Triangle*. Wartime developments, notably in the field of external economic policy, undoubtedly influenced Brebner's analysis. A glance at what happened during the global conflict, however, also demonstrates the limitations of this perspective, both as a contemporary assessment of the policies and interactions of the three countries and as a basis for considering later events.

Born in Toronto, Brebner personified the interconnections about which he wrote, as he was educated at St. John's College, Oxford, and the University of Toronto. However, he is most closely identified with Columbia University in New York City, where he taught for many years. Even before *North Atlantic Triangle* was written, Brebner had examined various subjects within its ambit and he had inspired the great academic project of which his book would be the capstone.

North Atlantic Triangle was the culminating volume in a remarkable series of twenty-five monographs published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace on "The Relations of Canada and the United States." The director of the project, James Shotwell, was another Canadian who had taught history at Columbia University. Shotwell had taken Brebner's original proposal for a multi-disciplinary study of "Canadian and North American History" and transformed it into an extraordinary testament to the continental linkages. Thus, it was appropriate that the series should conclude with a book by Brebner. As Shotwell observed somewhat grandly, Brebner's *North Atlantic Triangle*, when it appeared in 1945, surveyed "the greatest single chapter in the history of international intercourse anywhere in the world."

That triumphant note was sounded at the end of the war in Europe, as the representatives of the victorious wartime allies gathered in San Francisco for an ill-fated attempt to translate that effective combination against common foes into a meaningful basis for continuing cooperation and collective security in the post-war world. For Shotwell and Brebner, whatever the uncertainty about the United Nations, there was considerably less doubt about the past and current performance of these three members of the "Anglo-Saxon polity," as well as the future prospects for partnership involving Canada, Britain and the United States. Even a cursory glance at wartime developments and pronouncements demonstrates how that perspective was justified.

Some of the best illustrations of the triangular relationship and its significance come in the area of Canadian external economic policy. That is hardly surprising. For some time, Canada had relied on a surplus in trade with Britain to offset a persistent deficit in trade with the United States. The final report of the Rowell-Sirois Royal Commission on dominion-provincial relations aptly described Canada's vulnerability. "Canada's position is similar to that of a small man sitting in a big poker game. He must play for the full stakes, but with only a fraction of the capital resources of his two substantial opponents: if he wins, his profits in relation to his capital are very large, and if he loses, he may be cleaned out."

What makes the wartime and post-war ledger even more remarkable, therefore, is the fact that wholehearted and comprehensive efforts at trilateral economic co-operation were undertaken in spite of chronic and daunting exchange difficulties. The war began with an end to sterling-dollar convertibility and it concluded with an abrupt termination of North American financial aid to Britain and other nations. Meanwhile, Canadian policy-makers anxiously watched their fluctuating reserves of gold and American dollars. Post-war measures in all three countries endeavoured to

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repair if not restore the pre-war situation and to provide a sound basis for recovery and reconstruction in Britain and Europe. Although negotiations were often fraught and the outcomes were not always seen as fair or reasonable by all parties, the overall effect of these policies and actions was an extraordinary demonstration of enlightened (and mutual) self-interest.

Canada's wartime financial assistance to Britain illustrates this theme – and the trilateral relationship – very well. Canadian aid to Britain went through various stages. Before the fall of France, it was limited and not especially generous. As the German threat increased and the British situation deteriorated, the mood and action shifted considerably. Canada effectively removed the dollar sign from transactions with Britain. Later, there was a magnificent gesture with the unprecedented and unmatched Billion Dollar Gift. Finally, Canadian supplies to allies, including Britain, were funded largely from successive appropriations for Mutual Aid. These measures underlined how vital was the United Kingdom to Canada, not only as an ally but also as an economic partner.

Canada's relationship with the United States was a critical factor in the reckoning throughout this process. The Billion Dollar Gift was granted in large part as a dramatic move to counteract the mistaken impression south of the border that, unlike the United States, Canada demanded cash for allied needs. It was also designed to avoid diversion of British purchases to American sources. Mutual Aid was enacted as a Canadian version of Lend-Lease for much the same reasons. Both arrangements – as well as the renewal of Mutual Aid – were preceded by accords with the United States that safeguarded or regulated Canada's precarious reserves of gold and American dollars. Without such protection of its own position, Canada would not have been able to treat Britain as generously as it did. The triangular relationship in the North Atlantic was especially obvious in the financial realm.

As the Canadian government looked forward to the post-war world, Canadian trade policy, and the financial means to underwrite it, was largely governed by concerns about the prospects for continuation of the triangular trading arrangement. Although there was a determined effort to diversify Canada's exports, with significant credits to potential customers to ease the transition, the British market was consistently identified as the key to Canada's post-war prosperity. However, Canadian ministers and officials were always mindful of American policy, whether in bilateral, trilateral or multilateral contexts, as they shifted their attention to peacetime possibilities. Even as they prepared to up their own ante as the game of poker resumed, the Canadians nervously eyed the American stack of chips and the British markers. As before, the outcome would depend on how each country responded to the change in circumstances. Canadian participants and observers

worried almost equally about the implications of British retreat and American predominance.

External economic policy may provide the best illustrations of the operation of the “North Atlantic Triangle,” but evidence from other domains may be cited in passing as well. For example, in the field of atomic energy, Canada's uranium and its scientific expertise enabled it to claim a seat, albeit as a junior partner, on the Combined Policy Committee. That engagement in this field was reflected after the war as well in its permanent membership on the Atomic Energy Commission. Thus, Canada participated in tripartite discussion of wartime and post-war policy in this vital area. Eventually, of course, American unilateralism scuttled that collaborative approach, but for a while it appeared to confirm the existence of a “special relationship” among three, rather than two, countries of the North Atlantic. In other words, there is no shortage of evidence of “the interplay of Canada, the United States and Great Britain.”

In spite of this commonality of background and attitudes, however, we should be careful not to generalize too readily about this glorious phenomenon of tripartite harmony. There were discordant notes in this period as well, especially as heard in Ottawa. In many instances, traditional or situational tendencies to exclude others from bilateral dealings manifest themselves.

Canadian scholars often emphasize the theory of “functionalism” (national representation on international organizations on the basis of actual or potential contributions) and how it was employed to justify a greater Canadian say in wartime and post-war decision-making. However, Canada was excluded from most of the combined boards established by the United States and Britain, with neither of the major powers especially anxious to concede authority to a lesser one such as Canada. Limited concessions were made on minor committees which did not undermine Anglo-American direction of the war. A similar story could be told about the wartime meetings at Dumbarton Oaks and the elaboration of the United Nations predominantly by the great powers, with countries such as Canada on the outside looking in.

Other aspects of wartime cooperation often involved incomplete or absent consultation beyond bilateral partners. Thus, Winston Churchill was miffed to learn afterward about the establishment of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence of Canada and the United States. For his part, King did not realize that the Anglo-American “destroyer-bases” deal would cover Newfoundland until it was too late to assert a Canadian interest there. Within the Commonwealth, of course, the United States was not directly involved, though its attitudes and influence sometimes hovered over the proceedings.

Even in the realm of external economic policy, there were numerous exceptions to the anticipated pattern of

As the Canadian government looked forward to the post-war world, Canadian trade policy, and the financial means to underwrite it, was largely governed by concerns about the prospects for continuation of the triangular trading arrangement.

trilateral dealings. The talks arising from Article VII of the Mutual Aid Agreement between the United States and the United Kingdom provide a case in point. These bilateral discussions were especially important to the development of commercial policy. The deputy minister of finance, Clifford Clark, was vexed that Canada should be relegated to the sidelines in these vital talks. As Clark put it, Canada was “the extreme case of the effects of the repercussions of UK and US relations.” Yet Canada had to rely on intermittent consultation with each of its allies rather than full participation. Perhaps from habits developed within the Commonwealth, the British were more likely to keep Canada informed. Still, those briefings usually took place after the talks, with no opportunity for direct engagement in negotiations. The situation was much better with respect to the development of key financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. However, that distinction may be explained by the complexity of those questions and the opportunity which arose for Canadian technical experts to overcome significant differences between the British and American approaches in the interests of all concerned.

For their part, the Canadians were prepared to use bilateral means to their ends in international trade. When it tabled its preliminary offer to the United Kingdom during the war and in the run-up to the loan negotiations in early 1946, the Canadian government attempted to wrest specific concessions on trade from the British government, with only limited success. In that endeavour, their actions were not unlike those of their southern neighbours, who attempted to link non-financial concessions to their own economic settlement with the United Kingdom in late 1945. In neither instance were the interests of any third party taken into account.

There are further examples as well of economic measures that contradict the presumed logic of the North Atlantic Triangle. Each member of the triangle attempted to reach discriminatory or exclusive financial and commercial arrangements with other countries. That is, they acted much as one might expect, with due regard for their own interests first and foremost. The United States, the United Kingdom and Canada collaborated, whether bilaterally, trilaterally or multilaterally, as circumstances and perceptions of their respective self-interests required. As the smallest and least powerful of these countries, Canada was more keenly aware of its vulnerability and of the reality of interdependence. Hence the immediate, and apparently persistent, appeal to *Canadians* of the image of the North Atlantic Triangle and its implications.

However, as I have written elsewhere, the North Atlantic Triangle was “a peculiar geometric form apparently visible from only one of its vertices.” I do not doubt or challenge the importance of Canada’s relationships with Britain and the United States, whether in this period or at any other time in Canadian history. In my view, the key to understanding and explaining what diplomat and author Escott Reid has called the “golden decade” in Canada’s international relations is the wide-ranging and effective collaboration involving Canada with its oldest and closest allies, Britain and the United States, in wartime and in the early years of the cold war.

Nor would I suggest for a moment that Canada, its policies and especially its actual or potential contributions did not matter to its principal allies. On the contrary, what Canada said and especially what Canadians did was taken into account by American and British policy-makers. Canada’s positions and actions as an ally were often vital factors in the reckoning and in the outcome on a wide range of issues and initiatives. Unquestionably, the longstanding similarity, sometimes identity, of national values and interests among the three countries reinforced this tendency to tripartite collaboration. Differences were frequently about means rather than ends. For that reason, the image of the North Atlantic Triangle corresponded to the reality, *particularly as seen from Canada*.

But that is the nub of the matter. The triangular relationship was especially important to Canada as the third power among unequals. Consequently, it was more relevant, or visible, from a Canadian perspective. In his preface to a later edition of *North Atlantic Triangle*, historian Donald Creighton noted aptly how *Canadian* was the book. “A full and satisfactory account of the interplay of the countries would inevitably have given Canada a very minor, and even a marginal, position,” Creighton wrote. “But in Brebner’s thought Canada was not marginal. She was still central.” For that reason, the geometric image is rarely employed in British or American scholarship, where the notion of the “special relationship” predominates. In those accounts, Canada is often absent or marginal.

In a similar sense, Canadian policy-makers could not overlook what their American and British counterparts said and did, though the reverse was not always so. Not surprisingly, the trend toward trilateral consultation and collaboration, which was evident in various fields of external policy, was most welcome from a Canadian perspective. For Canada, the confluence of British and American policies in world affairs during and after the Second World War was especially advantageous, given its ties to both countries.

As it was in 1945, the “North Atlantic Triangle” remains a particularly Canadian image, one with less relevance or meaning when seen from the United Kingdom, the United States or elsewhere. Simply because those of us who study Canadian foreign policy see it, that does not mean that the triangle is equally visible and meaningful from all vantage points and at all times. As Creighton observed, the “real purpose” of Brebner’s volume “was to place Canada in the external circumstances which he believed had influenced her most.” In that objective, the book was highly successful. In my view, whatever its limitations with respect to later years, the image of the “North Atlantic Triangle” is most apt in describing the circumstances that prevailed when J.B. Brebner’s remarkable book was published.

NATIONALISM AND CIVIC DUTY IN WARTIME:

Comparing World Wars in Canada and America

ABSTRACT

The author considers what it meant to be Canadian or American during the First and Second World Wars. According to the former, “did citizenship mean loyalty to the Empire or to the new nation of Canada, itself barely 50 years old?” Anglophones and francophones felt differently about their allegiances to be sure, whereas wartime Americanization programs guaranteed that language and religion in the United States played little to no part. Dr. Jensen compares our political leadership from one Great War to the next and describes lessons learned on the homefront, showing that Mackenzie King and Roosevelt were determined not to repeat the mistakes of their predecessors.

Wartime forces nations to make hard choices and to re-examine their basic political values. The war imposes an urgency of its own, heightened by the demands of battlefields commanders and frontline soldiers, and the urgent requests of allies. The window of opportunity for debating, negotiating and compromising is short; the demands of national pride, of national independence, even of national existence can overwhelm old partisan loyalties and cause the realignment of political forces. The people themselves discover that they have multiple loyalties – to their nation (as they see it) as well as to locality, ethno-religious group, party, and to their ideal notions of the public good. These multiple loyalties can be reinforcing or they can be divisive. It is the business of politicians to help the people sort out and prioritize their loyalties. Two clusters of issues are of concern here. The first cluster relates to nationalism – what did it mean to be a Canadian or an American, what duties and responsibilities were involved in citizenship?¹ How did citizenship reinforce or conflict with ethnic/racial/religious/language loyalties? Secondly, how did warfare and death bring to the fore issues of sacrifice, equality, identification of the evils of the Enemy, and duty to nation (and Empire)? An advantage of the comparative approach is that historians can see more possibilities and limitations and perhaps be somewhat more objective when they are outsiders. Mackenzie King and Franklin Roosevelt knew full well what had happened in the First World War, and were determined they would not repeat the mistakes and misjudgments of Sir Robert Borden and Woodrow Wilson. It was easier for King because he had refused to support Borden in the first place. More intriguing is Roosevelt’s case because he was a senior official in the Wilson regime and the Democratic party’s vice presidential nominee in 1920, yet it seems he made the opposite decision from Wilson on many critical issues.

Citizenship in Wartime

In America, citizenship has always been defined in terms of civic duty. The United States comprises a voluntary community committed to the same ideals, which historians call republicanism. In the 19th century, however, nationalism was a powerful force that united people based on culture, especially language, religion and ethnicity. The nations of Italy and Germany were created in mid-century as the lands of the Italians and Germans. The Civil War proved the power of republicanism as the buttress of nationalism. In its aftermath there was a strong demand for a cultural component of citizenship that would build upon – but never replace – republicanism. The American nation had to comprise an American people.² From the time of the Revolution down to the 1880s much attention had been given to the very early origins of Britain and America. In terms of legal and constitutional history, the Ancient Constitution was seen by the Revolutionary generation as the bedrock of republicanism. Scholars argued that the genius of British and American democracy could be found in the folk practices of the Anglo-Saxons or even older Germanic tribes. Some Canadian scholars, searching for an ethnic basis of national unity, argued that genealogy demonstrated that French Canadians had originated in Normandy and Brittany, making them brothers, racially, to the English. The French would have none of that and emphasized their separate ethnic status.

A radical new viewpoint emerged in America in the early 1890s, developed by highly influential men of letters Theodore Roosevelt, Frederick Jackson Turner, and Woodrow Wilson. Their argument,

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influenced by new theories of evolution, was that the American people had only recently emerged – in the last century or so.³ Turner argued that the frontier process stripped away European institutions and characteristics because they did not function well in the raw new environment. The established church, the aristocracy, the standing army, and intrusive governmental control faltered and vanished. Free land created an independent yeomanry that contrasted sharply with the serfs or tenants bound to their landlords. To survive on the frontier called for initiative, energy, independence, and a refusal to bow to authority. The frontier brought to the fore democratic ideas and potentials that existed in Europe but were largely repressed by the standing order. Turner presented a dynamic model, in which each movement westward altered the character of the people, and each generation's successes in dealing with the environment were passed along, because the Americans were not bound by the hoary traditions that characterized Europe. The further west, the more American. Decade by decade a new culture and a new people had emerged. Overnight older interpretations of American history were swept away by the Turnerian model and it dominated American thought in the eras of the world wars.

What made America a young nation was not the date that its Constitution was written, but how recently its inhabitants had evolved into a distinct people. Contrast this with Canada. Did citizenship mean loyalty to the Empire or to the new nation of Canada, itself barely 50 years old? For the Conservatives the war offered an opportunity to become more independent within the Empire – having a separate army on the Western Front would bring a separate seat at the treaty table, and control of Canada's destiny. The assumption of being and staying part of the British Empire was so powerful that no one in 1914 considered staying out of the war. Armed rebellion of the sort that occurred in South Africa in 1914 and Ireland in 1916 was inconceivable, as was the possibility Ottawa could have opened separate peace talks with Germany. Once committed to war, the Canadian Expeditionary Force was hostage to London if it remained in Europe, and could have threatened a coup if brought home in disgrace.

The Americans of course had secured independence by fighting against the British army, but Canadians who wanted independence never proposed a revolutionary war; they wanted London to grant it voluntarily.⁴ Nominally that happened in 1931, and to prove it, King, in September 1939 did not allow London to declare war on Canada's behalf. By contrast in 1917 the United States refused to become an official member of the Allies. Wilson did not consult with London and Paris before entering the war. The US declared war for multiple reasons, both nationalistic and universalistic, but support for the British Empire was not on the list. Wilson operated as an independent political force and was remarkably successful, so that by late 1918, he controlled war and peace. Wilson's refusal to contemplate any sort of coalition government alienated the Republicans and guaranteed the Senate would never ratify the Versailles Treaty or join the League of Nations. Roosevelt saw the mistake and reversed Wilson's go-it-alone policy, bringing senior Republicans into his cabinet to

head the War and Navy departments, and securing bipartisan support for a United Nations. FDR worked closely with his military allies and had all major military decisions made by a powerful British-American Joint Chiefs of Staff. Even though Canada was a major supporter of Britain after 1939, both militarily and economically, it was treated as a junior partner and was denied a seat at the highest levels.

For Canada's Francophones in the 1910s, the duty of citizenship meant loyalty not to the Empire but to Canada. By that they meant upholding the perpetual legitimacy of the two founding nations – to their own ancient constitution, so to speak. It was a defensive effort to reclaim the old guarantee of an equal share in all of Canada, as well as an appeal to historic tradition. Thus Henri Bourassa, in his famous reply to Captain Talbot Papineau, legitimized the Canadianness of the French Quebecers in terms of old historical roots, the "hereditary instincts, social and economic conditions, [and] a national tradition of three centuries." Bourassa and the nationalists in Quebec were willing to tolerate foreign war in 1914, when it seemed cheap and easy, but soon rejected it as basically unnecessary for the Canada they idealized. Their Canada ought not respond to appeals for solidarity with France (which was seen as anticlerical), nor to universalistic aspirations for peace on earth and an end to militarism as represented by Berlin. High enlistment rates, they argued, characterized recent arrivals from Britain who had not yet internalized Canadian values. Their own low enlistment rates, they explained, reflected a devotion to the "true" Canada. (Critics replied that it reflected a narrow-minded village-based traditionalism controlled by reactionary priests.)

Furthermore, the French Canadians argued, the Borden government was corrupt and operated the war for the benefit of the English-speaking bankers and industrialists who were selfish, unpatriotic, and committed to an alien (American) system of money-grubbing. The recent record of attacks on Francophone Catholic schools, especially in Manitoba two decades before and Ontario at the very moment, alarmed fears that Franco-Canadian culture was doomed outside Quebec. If so, then the Francophones would be degraded into a second-class citizenship and the Canadian constitution would be destroyed.⁵ When conscription meant their young men would be taken from the farms and villages and socialized into an Anglophone army at gunpoint, then slaughtered in the trenches, duty became clear. The news that the Irish Catholics and the Orange Irish Protestants had joined together in unholy coalition to impose English-language schools further demonstrated the dangers; it was no help that both the British Privy Council and the Pope seemed to be against them too. If neither London nor Rome would protect them, they had to act alone. Rejecting the imperial theme of a world war for European civilization, they opposed a foreign war that strengthened their domestic enemy and threatened their own civilization.

Wilfrid Laurier, the aging Liberal leader, searched in vain for a compromise, promising on the one hand to protect Quebec's autonomy and block conscription, and on the other to fight the war with volunteers who, he

claimed, he could rally in sufficient numbers. Few people believed Laurier. Even Mackenzie King, who stayed loyal, privately thought conscription was necessary. In 1917, when Borden offered a plan for a coalition government based on conscription, most Liberals outside Quebec and practically all the newspaper editors, bolted the party.

In America there was no war over religion or language. The success in 1896-1900 of William McKinley's pluralistic policies meant that Catholic-Protestant differences were off-limits for politics. Indeed, with rare exceptions (like Tom Watson in Georgia) religion was not even mentioned in political discourse during the war, and it never became a component of Americanism. The question was open whether the English language was a component. German language schools had been a major issue in 1890, and had been saved by the Democrats; however, by 1917 few foreign language schools were left, and it was uncommon to find American-born youth who did not know English. Wartime Americanization programs strongly emphasized the importance of speaking English for more recent immigrants, and they proved popular and successful. Worried by the possibility of sedition, Washington forced foreign language newspapers to provide English translations. Many closed and others switched to English or went bilingual for the benefit of elderly subscribers. America enforced formal and informal bans on dissent. No speech or press against conscription or the war effort was tolerated. Vigilant citizens groups moved against suspected pro-German elements. A well-enforced Sedition Law shut down Socialist and IWW newspapers, broke up their local operations, arrested their speakers, and silenced the opposition.⁶ In addition, the war bond campaigns in the cities were full-scale experiments in the invention and use of new advertising techniques to massively influence people. Posters were everywhere; Four-Minute-Men were scheduled for patriotic pep-talks at public meetings of all sorts. The war marked the coming of Age of Madison Avenue, and in this regard Canada was lagging.

Deeper forces than mere advertising tactics were at work in Canada. Supporters of the war portrayed combat as necessary to achieve an independent voice in world affairs and to rid the nation and the world of evil. Borden's success in obtaining a voice at Versailles validated the first point; woman suffrage, prohibition and the League of Nations helped validate the second. The sacrifices of the soldiers in the field became sacralizing events that purified and validated the emerging nation. Admitting there was far too much corruption at home, supporters held up the soldiers as exemplars of sacrifice, manhood, nationalism, and civic duty. The soldiers themselves strongly supported the war, as did their families. Borden recognized this in the Wartime Elections Act of 1917, which not only facilitated

voting by the soldiers (and sent their ballots to ridings where they could be most decisive), but also enfranchised the soldiers' womenfolk too, for their giving a man represented the epitome of sacrifice, patriotism and citizenship. Afterwards the war memorials continued the quasi-religious theme, with statues resembling saints, solemn use of religious glass, and annual commemorations that approximated holy days. Exaltation of sacrifice on the battlefield became a powerful weapon that blackened antiwar rhetoric as sacrilege and treason. As Major John McCrae warned in 1915:

"If ye break faith with us who die

We shall not sleep

Though poppies grow in Flanders fields"

Supporters of the war portrayed combat as necessary to achieve an independent voice in world affairs and to rid the nation and the world of evil. Borden's success in obtaining a voice at Versailles validated the first point; woman suffrage, prohibition and the League of Nations helped validate the second.

Anglophones experienced the emergence of a new Canadian race, its frontier on the Western Front, its baptism by fire at Vimy Ridge. They tried vehemently to cajole or shame or force the Francophones to join them, and recoiled in disgust at their refusal.

In the United States casualty rates were far lower; death on Civil War battlefields had already been used as a healing device to reunite North and South, and was not needed again. Nevertheless, the war helped realize purification in terms of woman suffrage and prohibition, in the suppression of un-American dissent and the German language, and in the successful Americanization of recent immigrants, who whole-heartedly did their civic duty.

In the Second World War, both nations avoided serious debates or attacks on national war policy. In the United States the fierce debates of 1940-41 suddenly ceased after Pearl Harbor. Although sorely tempted by the *Chicago Tribune*,

Roosevelt did not try to censor the press. Early on, before the military reverses of summer 1940, King and his Liberals isolated and defeated the antiwar Quebec premier Maurice Duplessis on his home ground. Francophone Canada continued to see conscription as primarily a weapon against their culture, but King assuaged their fears. He instituted conscription, but kept the conscripts at home, sending only volunteers to Europe. In 1941 he won a nationwide referendum that allowed using the conscripts overseas, but he did not send them until very late in the war. He successfully relied on volunteers, most motivated by a strengthened Canadian patriotism, and made more available by the large pool of unemployed in 1939. The anger of 1917 was not repeated – but it was not forgotten, either.

Ethnicity and Citizenship

The Turnerian model of an American race solved the problem of how civic culture and ethnic nationalism could be combined.⁷ The synthesis of civic virtue and

American nationalism solved the problem of handling massive emigration. The economic benefits of immigration were obvious, as millions settled onto western farms and even larger numbers moved to mining camps, mill towns and industrial cities, making possible remarkably high levels of economic growth.⁸ New arrivals were of two types. So-called “birds of passage” worked temporarily in America with the explicit intention of returning to Europe.⁹ The fact that they stayed away when times were hard meant that they could be tolerated when times were good and companies were hiring. The second group comprised permanent settlers who did not plan to return or move on, and who systematically brought over their extended families. The expectation was that they would become full-fledged citizens. Unlike America, the status of being part of a huge Empire made for free movement to and from Canada with Britain, Australia and many other outposts, without need to declare a new political loyalty. The fact that these imperial migrants were much more likely to volunteer for military service buttressed the argument that this war was for the benefit of the Empire, not Canada. Indeed, the same phenomenon was visible in America, with prominent rich immigrants such as Samuel Insull leading the fight for intervention and supporting recruitment and bond sales by Britain and Canada.¹⁰ The Borden government, projecting the duty-to-empire theme they believed in themselves to enemy aliens, decided that recent immigrants from Germany and even the Austro-Hungarian Empire were a threat. Most of the suspects were Ukrainians; many were rounded up, and all were deprived of the vote and kept out of the army.

The ethnocultural-ethnoreligious situation in America was much more complex than in Canada. A massive Americanization program proved highly successful, as all the recent immigrants shifted toward use of English and showed every sign of patriotism from buying war bonds to enlistment in the army. It was not just a show; the recent immigrants gave up plans to return home, settled down, kept their savings in America, and built up labor force skills that would be valuable in an industrial economy. When Europe reopened again after the war they did not return to their old villages, but stayed in their adopted nation as proud new Americans. Politically the most interesting groups were the Irish Catholics and the German Lutherans and Catholics. They did not favor Germany but they wanted the US to stay neutral. The Irish hated the British Empire, but they had full control of the Catholic Church and were gaining control of the Democratic Party in major cities. They wanted to support the Democratic president, Wilson, and also support independence for Ireland. Wilson, who had long feuded with Irish bosses

seemingly offered a deal: support this war and he would force the British to grant independence. The Irish Americans came around and were dumbfounded when Wilson made no effort to delivery on his promise at Versailles. All the Irish Democratic leaders broke with Wilson over this betrayal, leaving his party in utter disarray in the cities as the Republicans swept to a massive landslide in 1920.

The German Americans were political novices; in stark contrast with the Irish they had few office holders and hardly any voice in politics, despite their status as the largest ethnic group in America. By 1916 they had been totally isolated; no one listened to their pleas for neutrality in 1917, and many suspected their loyalty to Germanic customs – especially language and beer – indicated they had not been fully Americanized. Overnight the German American community switched to English in its churches and parochial schools. The older folks were bitter, and showed it in their votes for Harding in 1920 and LaFollette in 1924, but there was no turning back. The younger generation had in fact been thoroughly Americanized; they bought war bonds, waved red-white-and-blue flags, and served in large numbers in the army. In the 1940 presidential election Germanism was again an issue. The Republicans nominated Wendell Willkie, the son of German immigrants, and Roosevelt supporters warned darkly that the isolationism so popular in the Midwest was a cover for secret support for Hitler. After Pearl Harbor Roosevelt reassured the German-Americans that there would be no repeat of the anti-Hun hysteria of the Wilson years, and indeed there was scant popular or official demand for reprisals against immigrants from Germany and Italy the way there was against the Japanese.¹¹ Roosevelt collaborated in highly visible fashion with

Willkie and selected German Americans as the top commanders of the army and navy (Dwight Eisenhower and Chester Nimitz).¹²

In conclusion, we can see the leaders of World War Two systematically avoid the domestic confrontations of World War One, while making new mistakes of their own like the handling of Japanese immigrants. After another generation of development, Canada was much more confident of its sovereign status, and old loyalties to the Empire had weakened. The view from south of the 49th might be that the northern neighbors certainly succeeded in being orderly and non-violent. The “racial” divide had not been resolved, however, and the Second War had not healed Canada’s internal rift. Inside America the many European ethnic groups had finally been assimilated and united, but as the war years started to reveal (Myrdal, 1944), an even more serious crisis of racial integration was at hand.

The ethnocultural-ethnoreligious situation in America was much more complex than in Canada. A massive Americanization program proved highly successful, as all the recent immigrants shifted toward use of English and showed every sign of patriotism from buying war bonds to enlistment in the army.

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Endnotes

- 1 In the 21st century we focus more on rights than responsibilities; the reverse was true in the World Wars in both countries.
- 2 The usual terminology at the time was “race” – as in the French race or the American race. The word has so changed meaning in the 20th century that historians prefer terms like “ethnic,” “ethnocultural,” or, for this essay, just “people.”
- 3 A comparable Lamarckian-evolutionary model of a newly emerging “Canadian race” was explored in discussions of the Northern character of Canada, but it never caught on.
- 4 Likewise Australia and New Zealand, which felt the need for the Royal Navy to protect them from invasion.
- 5 The argument resembled that of the Southern states in 1860: they had “States Rights,” which meant a Constitutional right to take their peculiar institution (slavery) into the western territories. Yankee efforts to deny that right were grounds for secession and creation of a separate nation.
- 6 The Wilson administration dared not shut down Theodore Roosevelt’s attacks on the war effort as ineffective, but they did suppress Tom Watson’s diatribes.
- 7 In the 1880-1890 period the citizenship status of four controversial groups was more-or-less settled. The Chinese were excluded from citizenship (except by birth). African-Americans were segregated into a restricted second-class status. The Mormons gave up repugnant practices and were integrated. Most important, the white South was fully accepted again. After 1898 the status of residents of outlying possessions became an issue. Full citizenship went to Hawaiians in 1898 and Puerto Ricans in 1917, but the decision was made that the Philippines would become an independent country with its own citizenship
- 8 Old stock Americans were reluctant to enter factory work and mining. They did dominate all white collar jobs, such as clerks, businessmen and professionals.
- 9 In 1900-1914 some 30-60 percent of some groups were transients, including Italians, Greeks, and Poles. Other groups, such as Jews, Irish and Scandinavians, had much lower return rates.
- 10 An even more curious case is J. P. Morgan, Jr., whose bank was critical to financing the Allies. The Morgans had a dual base in London and New York.
- 11 Before Pearl Harbor the FBI had closely monitored the Japanese communities and immediately arrested thousands of leaders known to be sympathetic to Tokyo. That was not enough to assuage popular fears of a Fifth Column, however. Those fears forced both nations into removing the Japanese from the west coast war zones. That was impossible in Hawaii, so it was put under martial law, with only the Japanese leadership kept in protective custody, without trial.
- 12 Curiously Roosevelt had more trouble keeping the Irish Catholics in line, even though the status of Eire was no longer under debate.

TEACHING CANADA'S MILITARY HISTORY AND THE MEANING OF REMEMBRANCE

ABSTRACT

Canada's military history and heritage form a large part of Canadian Studies. This text provides excerpts from a final report on recent consultations with Canada's foremost history teachers. Based on 76 completed questionnaires it was concluded that while current knowledge/understanding of military history is only moderate, there is a strong interest among educators and students to learn more. Individual comments on the part of the teachers are particularly insightful.

Earlier this year, the Association for Canadian Studies completed an examination of the receptivity of educators to assessing and increasing the knowledge of youth about Canada's military history. This project contributes directly to the work of the ACS by furthering its efforts to promote and advance the military history aspect of Canadian Studies. The ACS shares a common objective of encouraging a greater understanding of our country's history and heritage with the Department of Veterans Affairs Canada. The project has allowed the ACS to engage Canada's foremost teachers in a dialogue about the future teaching of Canada's participation in 20th century conflicts, and how best to approach the teaching of the contributions of those who served and the impact of those contributions on the nation today in their classrooms.

The ACS has gathered quantitative and qualitative input from leading educators across the country. With its vast network of educators across Canada, the ACS has contacted 300 educators from every corner of the country to encourage dialogue and meaningful discussion about teaching aspects of Canada's military history. Among the educators targeted were recent recipients of the Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence, the Governor General's Award for Teaching, other leaders in the educational field and those within the vast ACS network of top-notch historians. This report has helped to identify trends, barriers and perceived barriers to educators related to the teaching of Canada's military history in the country's K-12 classrooms.

Quantitative questionnaire / Questions quantitatives

The following 12 questions were evaluated by teachers according to the following scale:

1) Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Somewhat agree, 4) Strongly agree

Les 12 questions suivantes étaient évaluées selon l'échelle de valeur appropriée :

1) Totalement en désaccord, 2) Plutôt en désaccord, 3) Plutôt d'accord, 4) Tout à fait d'accord

Q: The study of Canada's military history is a significant part of the curriculum that I teach.

L'étude de l'histoire militaire du Canada représente une partie importante de mon programme d'enseignement.

CANADA	EAST/EST	QUÉBEC	ONTARIO	WEST/OUEST
3.0	3.2	1.7	3.5	2.7

Comment: Though it must be remembered throughout any analysis of these results that the sample from Quebec is small, these numbers demonstrate the beginning of a trend of a greater importance placed on the study of Canada's military history in the all other regions of Canada as compared with Quebec.

Q: Learning materials which supplement the provincial curriculum are valuable in helping me teach students about Canada's military history.

Le matériel d'apprentissage supplémentaire au programme provincial m'aident de façon significative à enseigner l'histoire militaire du Canada à mes étudiants.

CANADA	EAST/EST	QUÉBEC	ONTARIO	WEST/OUEST
3.3	3.5	3.0	3.6	3.0

Comment: Strong responses across the country for the value of learning materials in support of teaching students about Canada's military history. One grade 10-12 teacher from Manitoba remarked that he finds his own materials such as news magazines and book excerpts for classroom use.

Q: My students currently have a good understanding of Canada's military history.

Mes étudiants possèdent présentement une bonne compréhension de l'histoire militaire du Canada.

CANADA	EAST/EST	QUÉBEC	ONTARIO	WEST/OUEST
2.5	2.5	1.7	2.9	2.2

Comment: One of the lowest results. Understanding of Canada's military history is soft among students in much of the country. However, the questionnaires demonstrate clearly that the level of understanding increases with older students. As will be explored further with the qualitative answers, teachers generally view the study of Canada's military history as more relevant and appropriate for senior high school students. Some teachers were mindful of the breadth of material to cover in Canadian history.

Q: My students are receptive to learning more about Canada's military history.

Mes étudiants se montrent intéressés à en apprendre davantage à propos de l'histoire militaire du Canada.

CANADA	EAST/EST	QUÉBEC	ONTARIO	WEST/OUEST
3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.5

Comment: One of the highest results. Despite concerns about existing levels of understanding, teachers everywhere notice a strong receptivity among students to learn more about Canada's military history.

Q: Any learning materials on Canada's military history should include background historical information on Canada's participation in the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War and global peacekeeping operations. Tout matériel d'apprentissage sur l'histoire militaire du Canada devrait comprendre de l'information historique sur la participation du Canada à la Première Guerre mondiale, à la Seconde Guerre mondiale, à la guerre de Corée et aux opérations globales de paix.

CANADA	EAST/EST	QUÉBEC	ONTARIO	WEST/OUEST
3.8	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.8

Comment: The highest positive response. Teachers want comprehensive learning materials that are broad in their historic scope. One teacher from Quebec noted that the study of global peacekeeping operations is especially appreciated by teenagers. A francophone teacher from Manitoba suggested that the curriculum include the study of today's wars as well. A teacher from Alberta pointed out that peacekeeping is being added to the Alberta curriculum in 2006.

Q: The study of Canada's military history will raise the social conscience of students by connecting the contributions

of veterans to the lives of Canadians today.

L'étude de l'histoire militaire du Canada augmentera la conscience sociale des étudiants en créant un lien entre la contribution des anciens combattants d'hier à la vie des Canadiens d'aujourd'hui.

CANADA	EAST/EST	QUÉBEC	ONTARIO	WEST/OUEST
3.7	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.7

Comment: Across Canada, teachers see an extremely positive correlation between study of Canada's military history and the raising of a social conscience among students. This is part of a clear trend where teachers see the value in making connections between the past and the present and giving contemporary meaning to the stories of the past.

Qualitative questionnaire / Questions qualitatives

Teachers were asked for written comments on six general questions. General comments and selected representative responses are provided below.

Q: Do you already teach your students about the contributions of Canada's veterans? If so, how would additional tools related to Canada's military history complement your learning modality? Enseignez-vous actuellement à vos étudiants la contribution des anciens combattants du Canada ? Si oui, de quelles façons des outils d'apprentissage supplémentaires viendraient-ils compléter votre programme d'enseignement ?

General comment: Overall the questionnaires demonstrate that students are indeed being taught about the contributions of Canada's veterans. This is being conducted to varying degrees, with significant focus on remembrance and Remembrance Day, particularly with younger students. Some teachers mentioned that they try, but that there are so many other important topics to cover. Quebec teachers report lower levels of teaching in this area. Additional tools would be very helpful if they hit the right approach. Students need to 'touch' or 'see' history come alive before them. They need to be able to connect the past with their lives, with current events, and with the future. In short, learning modalities need to make the past relevant. Visual, tangible stories need to be told. More contact with veterans and current peacekeepers, including guest speakers and letter-writing campaigns might be effective. E-mail correspondence with current peacekeepers was suggested. Missing stories, such as those of women's contributions and aboriginal veterans, might reach students otherwise disconnected from Canada's military history.

Quotes from teachers:

- «Oui, mais parce que je le veux bien. Car ce n'est pas au programme.» (Québec)
- "Approved curriculum has very little on Canada in WWI, a bit on WWII, nothing on the Korean War. Any tools (additional or otherwise) would have to include a significant amount of material on Quebec's role in Canadian military history." (Quebec)
- "As my school is a multicultural, ethnically diverse one, would like more material on contribution of all races to the war effort. Your videos tend to show only white students – would not fit in well in our school." (Ontario)

- “We do teach the contributions of Canada’s veterans during Remembrance week but I feel we do not stress very much more how important they are. The difficult thing is that it is not that Canadian history teachers do not want to teach more of this, it’s time allocated in the grade 10 program is too heavy to include much more. Maybe at a grade 11 in world history more could be done.” (Quebec)

Q: Are pedagogical tools that connect the past with the present the best way to engage youth to learn about the contributions of Canada’s veterans? What other approaches would you propose?

Est-ce que les outils pédagogiques qui relient le passé et le présent représentent le meilleur moyen d’impliquer les étudiants à en apprendre davantage sur les contributions des anciens combattants du Canada ? Auriez-vous d’autres approches ?

General comment: Though textbooks must not be discounted in their classroom importance, especially as they lend validity as to what subjects are historically important, the modern student benefits from additional pedagogical tools that add dimensions to learning. Again, contact with veterans was stressed. Personal experiences and stories/testimonials count heavily. Other tools worth considering include interactive computer materials, interesting Internet materials, online Q&A with current military personnel, visual aids such as 3-D overviews of battlefields, documentaries, quizzes, thematic debates, role-play situations in the classroom, the presentation of artefacts, photos, crosswords, songs, poems, puzzles and posters. Though they expanded on this in later questions, teachers began to suggest that a contextual approach could succeed, where students would learn about the contributions of veterans for the purpose of learning about immigration in Canada or problem-solving for the future to avoid the ravages of war.

Quotes from teachers:

- “A fair amount of secondary source materials on our military history is readily available. There is need for more interesting primary sources. Take a look at the Beglie Canadian History Contest essay question. There are 10 interesting primary sources dealing with one topic. If there were collections of primary sources like this dealing with military topics teachers would use them.” (British Columbia)
- “I suspect they are, but if I were to teach military history I wouldn’t do it for this reason. I would use it to develop analogies; as a way to look at antecedents to current issues, or with a historiographic approach. The cultural literacy approach you seem to be suggesting doesn’t engage students.” (Alberta)
- “We use a lot of videos and classroom discussions. It is then summarized in a written presentation by each group of students.” (Quebec)

Q: Please provide any other comments on the importance of today’s students learning about Canada’s military history and remembering the contribution of Canada’s veterans. Veuillez s’il vous plaît émettre tout commentaire pertinent

sur l’importance pour les étudiants actuels d’apprendre l’histoire militaire du Canada et se souvenir des contributions des anciens combattants du Canada.

General comment: Answers to this request ran from the specific to the general. Teachers repeated the importance of studying Canada’s military history and the meaning of remembrance and of the openness of students to learning about them. Responses here often stepped back to assess how best to approach classroom study of these topics. Several suggested linking them with broader educational goals such as engaging students with the study of general Canadian history, with current foreign affairs, with the UN and other organizations dedicated to avoiding and dealing with future conflicts, with domestic and personal issues such as the values of citizenship, freedom, sacrifice and democracy. Closer ties with local legions and the contributions of local communities to military conflicts were stressed. The “Canada Remembers the Korean War 1950-1953” kit is a positive example of the kind of tool which could be helpful to teachers. Generally, students need to be able to touch history. If travel to foreign land where Canadians fought is not possible, efforts should be made to personally connect students to that history in the classroom setting.

Quotes from teachers:

- “My son was a peacekeeper in Bosnia and he provided my class with booklets/information on his job, as well as what the children in Bosnia experienced and learned at school. I found this to be a valuable tool in my classroom as they could relate in a personal way to other children of the same age.” (British Columbia)
- “You can’t blame teenagers for not knowing the importance of remembrance if they don’t know what is being remembered. If they don’t know about the contributions made by Canada and its soldiers, how can they be asked to make their own sacrifices and contributions to Canadian society?” (Manitoba)
- “At a time when the idea of individuals contributing to a public good is diminishing, it’s very important to show our veterans as role models for breaking the emptiness of ‘Me! Me! Me!’ values. Also, with ageism, it’s important for our teens to have a sense of what many of our elderly endured and contributed, and hearing veterans’ stories is very good for this.” (Manitoba)
- “My favourite projects involve meeting veterans or active soldiers, or those that involve [the students] investigating their family’s history from the respective time periods.” (Ontario)
- “It is important that Canadian History teachers connect with past conflicts. It should trigger explanations on current events and conflicts. Students today are very aware of the effects of world conflicts because of media coverage. Many of my students have relatives in those parts of the worlds and those students are keenly aware of the role of peace keepers. Many students also lost grand parents during WWII and are also very aware of the role of allied forces delivering Europe, so for them studying the contribution of Canadian veterans holds a special place in their learning about Canadian history.” (Quebec)

KNOWING WAR:

Canadians Reflect on WWII and the Possibility of another Global Conflict

ABSTRACT

A series of surveys conducted by the firm Environics for the Association for Canadian Studies provide some valuable insight into how thinking about war has evolved amongst the Canadian population. Some 2 100 Canadians were polled between May 13th and May 15th and again between September 13th and 15th 2004 around what we know about the Second World War and the extent to which we fear that another such global conflict will emerge in the years ahead.

June 2004 marked the beginning of what will be a series of commemorative events coinciding with the sixtieth anniversary of the end of World War II. On the sixth of the month, Canadians gathered in Normandy, France to pay tribute to veterans in conjunction with D-Day. These events and others highlighting the role that Canada played in the Second World War offer an opportunity to reflect on both the knowledge about the history of that period and the lessons that arise therefrom.

Knowledge about World War II

When asked in May 2004 whether they had learned about the Second World War while in school, some 30% of respondents said they learned a great deal, 38% some, 21% not very much and 7% nothing at all. Males were more inclined to learn a great deal (35%) than females (27%), as did more immigrants (44%) than non-immigrants (28%). On the basis of age, the 18-29 cohorts was more inclined to have learned a great deal about World War II than those between the ages of 30 and 59.

Thinking back to when you were young and in school, how much did you learn about the Second World War?

Table 1

	Age			
	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
A great deal	32	22	28	43
Some	39	45	43	24
Not very much	29	23	21	16
Nothing at all	4	9	8	8
DK/NA	–	1	–	9

There is evidence of a gap in the degree to which Canadians assess their knowledge of the Second World War and what their actual awareness is. If, however, 71% of Canadians between the ages of 18 and 29 believe that they learned a great deal or something about the Second World War when asked, only 30% were able to identify the Prime Minister of Canada during that time (Environics, September 2004).

Who was Prime Minister of Canada during the Second World War?

Table 2

	Age			
	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Mackenzie King	30	25	40	55
Lester B. Pearson	23	35	20	16
Wilfrid Laurier	17	9	10	4
Louis St-Laurent	4	3	10	13
Other	–	1	–	–
DK/NA	26	26	20	12

JACK JEDWAB
 Jack Jedwab is Executive Director of
 the Association for Canadian Studies

On the basis of gender 44% of men had the correct answer while 31% of women properly identified Mackenzie King. More women (26%) were inclined to admit that they did not know the answer than did men (16%). On a regional basis, residents of the Atlantic provinces (41%) gave the correct response more often than those surveyed in other regions, though the gap was not substantial as Quebec fared worst with 35% identifying King.

Back to the Future:

Evaluating Our Role in the War today

During the WWII there was a substantial difference in opinion amongst English and French Canadians over whether the country should make military service obligatory. The issue of conscription had similarly divided Canada during the First World War. In the case of WWII, Prime Minister King held a referendum in order to release him from a pledge made not to force military conscription on the population. It gave rise to an outcome that profoundly divided Canadians along language lines with the overwhelming majority of Quebecers voting to have King respect his commitment and English Canadians to release him from it. When asked to look back on the issue, the majority of Canadians feel the approach that Canada took to the War was just right, including 58% of Quebecers. Still, one out of four Quebecers maintains that there was too much support for the war effort – a view shared by 7% of other Canadians.

During the first years of the Second World War, Canada had VOLUNTARY military service to support the Allies. Towards the end of the war, there was conscription and military service become MANDATORY. Overall, do you think that Canada's approach showed...

Table 3

	Region				
	Atlantic provinces	Québec	Ontario	Prairies	British Columbia
Too much support for the war effort	12	24	7	9	5
Just the right amount of support	72	58	80	79	85
Not enough support for the war effort	11	10	9	7	4
DK/NA	5	7	5	5	6

On the basis of age cohort the younger segment tends to think that Canada did too much, as compared to the older group. Such sentiment can be attributed to either lack of knowledge about the Second World War or a general aversion to participating in the War whatever the issues at stake.

Table 4

	Age			
	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Too much support for the war effort	18	10	12	7
Just the right amount of support	68	76	72	82
Not enough support for the war effort	7	9	9	7
DK/NA	7	5	6	4

Conflict in our Future?

When asked by the polling firm Gallup, 73% of Americans maintain that war is sometimes necessary to settle differences between nations. It is a view that is not shared by Canadians as in May 2004 when some 57% said that war is an outdated way of settling differences between nations, versus 40% who believe it is sometimes necessary. Still there is a significant gap in opinion on the necessity of war between francophones and anglophones and by consequence between Quebecers and other Canadians. Amongst francophones, some 74% think that war is an outdated way of settling differences versus 52% of anglophone Canadians. Along regional lines it is in Alberta and Manitoba that more respondents thought war was sometimes necessary. For their part, a mere 24% of Quebecers believe that war is sometimes necessary. And whereas a slight majority of men believe that it is sometimes necessary, 67% of women believe that it is an outdated way of settling differences between nations.

Some people feel that war is an outdated way of settling differences between nations. Others feel that war is sometimes necessary to settle differences. Which point of view is closer to your own?

Table 5

	Outdated way	Sometimes necessary	DK/NA
Atlantic	55	41	4
Québec	73	24	3
Ontario	54	44	2
Manitoba	48	49	4
Saskatchewan	56	43	1
Alberta	41	55	4
British Columbia	52	45	3

When asked in September 2004 whether they believe another World War will occur in the next ten years approximately 45% of Canadians indicated that it was either very or somewhat likely. Nearly half of Quebecers and residents of the Atlantic Provinces were likely to believe in the prospect of another World War over the next ten years, while British Columbians seem least inclined towards such an opinion.

How likely is it that another World War will occur within the next ten years?

Table 6

	Region				
	Atlantic provinces	Québec	Ontario	Prairies	British Columbia
Very likely	19	20	16	16	14
Somewhat likely	29	29	29	27	25
Not very likely	31	33	34	39	38
Not at all likely	19	17	18	16	21
DK/NA	1	1	2	2	2

On the basis of age, some 56% of those between 18 and 29 years believe that a World War is likely, while 41% of those over the age of 60 hold a similar view. Yet another significant difference in opinion on war is gender-based.

Causes of Future Conflicts

In the event of another World War, Quebecers were more likely to contend that American foreign policy would be the catalyst as opposed to the rest of Canada that would assign blame for such conflict to Middle Eastern terrorism. Underlying the difference between Quebec and the rest of Canada, however, are varying perspectives on the roots of global conflict that are reflected in views based on voter preference. As observed, British Columbians are more divided than other Canadians over whether US foreign policy or Middle East terrorism would be to blame for another World War.

In the event that another World War breaks out, which of the following do you believe will be the main cause?

Table 7

	Region				
	Atlantic provinces	Québec	Ontario	Prairies	British Columbia
Middle Eastern terrorism	50	36	44	48	40
American foreign policy	25	42	29	29	33
The growth of an Asian Superpower	14	10	13	12	17
Third World poverty	7	7	7	6	4
Combination of American foreign policy and Middle Eastern terrorism	–	1	1	1	1

The regional differences likely intersect with these electoral choices; as observed below those favoring the Bloc Québécois and the New Democratic Party are more likely to confer on responsibility for a future international conflict, while those favoring the Conservatives and the Liberals are far more inclined to see Middle Eastern terrorism as the chief protagonist.

In the event that another World War breaks out, which of the following do you believe will be the main cause?

Table 8

	Federal Vote				
	Liberal Party	Conservative Party	New Democratic Party	Bloc Québécois	Undecided
Middle Eastern terrorism	42	54	32	32	47
American foreign policy	32	19	44	47	26
The growth of an Asian Superpower	13	16	13	9	10
Third World poverty	6	5	7	7	7
Combination of American foreign policy and Middle Eastern terrorism	1	1	2	–	1

If persons of English and French linguistic backgrounds hold different views over who might be responsible for the outbreak of another World War, there are also somewhat similar divisions between immigrants of European and non-European backgrounds with the former more likely to attribute another such conflict to Middle Eastern terrorism and the latter to American foreign policy.

In the event that another World War breaks out, which of the following do you believe will be the main cause?

Table 9

	Language at home and Immigrant Origins			
	English	French	Immigrant Europe	Immigrant Other
Middle Eastern terrorism	45	37	42	32
American foreign policy	29	40	33	40
The growth of an Asian Superpower	14	10	11	10
Third World poverty	6	8	10	10
Combination of American foreign policy and Middle Eastern terrorism	1	1	1	1

On the basis of age the younger segment of the Canadian population is more likely to believe that the US would be responsible for another World War (44%) as opposed to Middle Eastern terrorism. This view reflects a definite generation gap as 46% of those between the age of 30 and 44 tend to believe that Middle Eastern Terrorism and not US foreign policy (33%) is more likely to be the culprit. In the case of respondents over the age of 60 some 23% believe that the United States would ultimately be to blame should another World War break out.

Finally, on the basis of gender, it is worth noting that women (46%) were more likely than men to assign responsibility for an eventual such outbreak to Middle Eastern terrorism (46%) than to American foreign policy (32%) while men were less likely to assign blame to Middle Eastern Terrorism (39%) and were slightly more concerned than females (10%) with the growth of an Asian Superpower (16%). For their part men tended to project the same rate of response as women over the predominant influence of US foreign policy in the event of such occurrence.

LA MÉMOIRE DES GUERRES AU QUÉBEC :

Un espace de résistance ?

ABSTRACT

Les guerres du XX^e siècle ont laissé une empreinte particulière dans la mémoire collective des Franco-québécois. Qu'il soit littéraire, historique ou médiatique, leur récit s'organise généralement autour du même paradigme : les Canadiens français ont refusé d'aller au front lors des deux conflits mondiaux. Si d'aventure ils s'exécutèrent, ce ne fut que sous la contrainte ou encore pour fuir la misère ou leurs responsabilités, une situation qui résultait de leur oppression coloniale. À cet égard, les deux crises de la conscription représentent de puissants symboles des antagonismes nationaux entourant les questions militaires au Canada. L'auteure voudrais montrer ici que ces événements, traumatisants en soi, ont été le creuset des identités nationales respectives des deux « peuples fondateurs ». Les Canadiens français en particulier ont marqué leur différence à cet égard en construisant autour de leurs souvenirs de guerre un espace symbolique de résistance politique qui leur est propre.

Si l'on admet que la mémoire relève principalement du registre de l'émotion par opposition à la raison¹, il devient clair que les événements traumatisants comme les guerres, les révolutions, les insurrections ou les rebellions, tout ce qui en somme se décline sous le signe de la violence collective, constituent des relais mémoriels clés dans le grand récit collectif des sociétés. Être confrontée à la guerre met la communauté à nu, la révèle à elle-même : ce qui la sous-tend en terme de valeurs et de croyances, se retrouve soudain libéré pour le meilleur et pour le pire. Des liens de solidarité insoupçonnés peuvent alors surgir soudant la nation contre un ennemi commun, amenant ainsi les individus à se dépasser. Mais l'effet inverse est aussi observable. L'état de guerre enraie les mécanismes de défense que la communauté avait plus ou moins patiemment mis en place pour assurer la paix sociale et surmonter les contentieux collectifs : l'urgence du moment risque de faire éclater à tout moment les compromis, les *modus vivendi* et les discours convenus que l'on avait intériorisés en ce sens. Les non-dits, les frustrations et les ressentiments collectifs peuvent alors ressurgir et se prolonger presque indéfiniment dans la mémoire collective, comme a pu le démontrer la littérature produite sur le sujet à partir des années quatre-vingt dix². Ces principes universels et observables dans les pays touchés par les deux conflits mondiaux s'appliquent aussi à la société canadienne. La façon dont ses membres ont « digéré » ces événements reflète cependant des enjeux qui leur sont spécifiques : au Canada, coexistent au moins deux mémoires collectives distinctes des guerres mondiales. Ce n'est en effet un secret pour personne : Canadiens français et Canadiens anglais ont eu des lectures différentes de leur participation aux épisodes de 1914-1918 et de 1939-1945³. Comment ces différences se sont-elles exprimées, que peuvent-elles nous apprendre sur les enjeux du présent et quelles leçons pouvons-nous, à titre d'historien et de citoyen, en tirer pour l'avenir ? Telles sont les grandes questions que pose ce court article.

Pour les Anglo-canadiens le moins cultivés, la bataille de Vimy qui se conclut le lundi de Pâques du 9 avril 1917 constitue l'acte de naissance symbolique de la nation canadienne. Dans la mémoire des Canadiens français, c'est plutôt la crise de la conscription, avec l'émeute sanglante du dimanche de Pâques 1918 qui constitue un épisode unificateur. Ces événements historiques sont investis d'une forte puissance symbolique dans les communautés concernées. Leur récit s'est transmis dans la mémoire populaire en suivant un processus de reconstruction complexe, jusqu'à ce qu'ils acquièrent un sceau de légitimité en passant par le filtre de l'historiographie professionnelle. C'est ainsi qu'à la fin des années soixante, C. P. Stacey consacre Vimy comme une étape marquante de la marche du pays vers « la maturité nationale », une perception que l'on retrouve dans l'ouvrage que consacre Pierre Berton à ce sujet en 1986⁴. D'ailleurs, la littérature anglo-canadienne tend à présenter la Grande Guerre comme celle de l'indépendance du Canada⁵. Faut-il préciser que, inversement, les défenses victorieuses menées par les Canadiens dans les Flandres sont presque totalement absentes du récit franco-québécois de la Grande Guerre ? À cet effet, on comparera deux manuels d'histoire nationale, populaires dans leurs milieux de diffusion respectifs : *Challenge and Survival: the History of Canada* (1970)⁶ et *Canada-Québec; Synthèse historique* (1978)⁷. Le premier souligne amplement les actions canadiennes sur le front européen ainsi que la participation militaire du Canada en général au conflit⁸ et établit un lien clair entre cet engagement et l'autonomie politique accrue du

pays à la fin de la guerre⁹. Le manuel francophone traite pour sa part de ces sujets de façon plutôt laconique¹⁰ et insiste plus sur la question de la conscription¹¹. Pour ce qui est des deux seules opérations militaires citées, Ypres et Vimy, elles sont résumées en cinq lignes et demie¹². Pour les Canadiens français, le front est ailleurs : en pleine crise d'octobre 1970, l'historien Jean Provencher écrit *Québec sous la loi des mesures de guerre; 1918*¹³. Ni le titre de l'ouvrage, ni la collection dans laquelle celui-ci paraît (collection 1760) et encore moins la date de sa sortie ne laissent de doute sur le sens de cette étude par ailleurs fouillée et rigoureuse. Dans la préface, Fernand Dumont donne le ton en interprétant les manifestations anticonscriptionnistes comme une « [p]rotestation qui venait du fond d'une pénible vie quotidienne, d'une rancœur entretenue au fil des ans mais jamais vraiment dites, d'une servitude qu'il était impossible de traduire dans un mouvement proprement politique¹⁴ ».

Il apparaît dès lors évident que les cinq morts du dimanche de Pâques 1918 à Québec, pèsent plus lourd dans la mémoire des Canadiens français que les 2967 Canadiens tombés sous les balles ennemies un an plus tôt presque jour pour jour sur la Crête de Vimy¹⁵. Mais la réciproque est vraie... Dans la littérature anglo-canadienne, cet impôt du sang est présenté plus ou moins ouvertement comme le prix de l'émancipation nationale – rappelons qu'en tout plus de 60 000 Canadiens ont laissé leur vie en Europe. À chaque communauté nationale son champ d'honneur ! On s'aperçoit ainsi que les deux peuples fondateurs, par leurs mémoires collectives interposées, n'ont jamais cessé de s'affronter sur cette question éthique fondamentale : le sacrifice humain est-il le rite de passage obligé pour obtenir la pleine indépendance nationale ? Ce principe semble avoir fait horreur aux Canadiens français, au point que ceux-ci ont généralement glorifié les insoumis, déserteurs et autres rebelles affichés à l'enrôlement obligatoire et relégué les combattants aux oubliettes lorsqu'ils ne les tournaient pas en ridicule. J'ai pu constater ce phénomène en étudiant la littérature québécoise francophone produite à partir de la Révolution tranquille. On y retrouve sous diverses variantes les thèmes du conscrit réfractaire ou de l'enrôlé volontaire, ce dernier étant généralement présenté comme un être stupide ou déphasé, tandis que le premier fait figure de héros. Quelques exemples...

Dans *La Guerre? Yes Sir!*, un conte satirique qui met en scène un village québécois pendant la Deuxième Guerre, Roch Carrier présente les enrôlés comme de pauvres types. Prétexte de l'intrigue, le fils Corriveau, dont le corps est rapatrié en héros par sept soldats anglais, est mort au front en se soulageant sur une mine. Un autre enrôlé, Henri, devient cocu pendant son absence. Mais les habitants du village l'érigeront en héros lorsque, après avoir déserté, il tuera un Anglais par inadvertance¹⁶. Écrit presque dix ans plus tard, *L'Emmitouflé* raconte les histoires parallèles de Nazaire, un déserteur canadien-français de 1917 réfugié depuis au Vermont, et de son neveu, Jean-François qui, à presque soixante ans d'intervalle, fuit la conscription pour la guerre du Viêt-Nam. C'est l'occasion pour l'auteur de rappeler et de justifier le refus des Québécois d'aller combattre outremer : « Je ne suis pas allé à la guerre, [explique l'un des protagonistes de l'intrigue

en faisant référence à la Deuxième Guerre mondiale] parce que je savais qu'il y aurait suffisamment d'hommes comme vous [son interlocuteur est un Américain qui s'est battu en Europe] qui auraient envie de se battre. Nous autres, les Canadiens français, on n'avait rien à voir là-dedans. C'était la guerre des Anglais, des Français et des Allemands¹⁷. » *L'Ombre de l'épervier*, un roman des années quatre-vingt, met en scène Noum Guitté, dont deux de ses fils s'enrôlent sur les champs de bataille européens de la Deuxième Guerre : l'un est un fanfaron en quête d'aventure ; l'autre, un être un peu simplet. Son benjamin se terre quant à lui dans une grotte pour échapper à la conscription : c'est aussi le seul des trois garçons qui parviendra à s'établir après la guerre en devenant un commerçant prospère¹⁸. Dans cette œuvre, comme dans d'autres, le héros de guerre est donc celui qui résiste à la conscription, non le combattant.

Si j'ai tant insisté sur la mémoire de la Première Guerre mondiale, c'est que celle-ci semble avoir « contaminé » les perceptions de la Deuxième, du moins chez les Canadiens français. Leur mémoire des deux guerres pourrait se résumer en deux mots clés très chargés émotionnellement : « conscription » et « désertion », le second étant presque inmanquablement la réponse au premier. Ironiquement, et ce jusqu'à tout récemment, aucune étude historique francophone ne s'était penchée sur cette question. Il a fallu la récente publication du mémoire de maîtrise de Patrick Bouvier pour que le mythe du Canadien déserteur soit ramené à sa juste mesure¹⁹. On y apprend notamment que les Québécois francophones furent certes proportionnellement plus nombreux que leurs compatriotes anglophones à se présenter devant les tribunaux d'exemptions prévus par la *Loi concernant le service militaire de 1917*, mais que les autorités sévirent relativement peu contre les réfractaires²⁰. Quant aux désertions – s'absenter de son unité sans autorisation –, seulement 61 Canadiens français semblent s'être rendus coupables cette offense, sept d'entre eux passant par le peloton d'exécution²¹. Or le nombre de ces sentences, toutes proportions gardées, semblent inférieures à celles enregistrées en la matière dans d'autres pays alliés. Selon l'auteur, rien ne prouve par ailleurs que les Canadiens français aient subi des discriminations devant les cours martiales, exception faite des problèmes posés par les différences linguistiques²².

Rappelons que cette recomposition du récit n'a rien d'exceptionnel et s'avère constitutive du registre de la mémoire, cette dernière relevant plus souvent de la foi, du sacré, que de la raison critique. Ainsi naissent les grands mythes fondateurs des sociétés. Si l'on se reporte à la Deuxième Guerre, l'un des exemples frappants en ce sens reste sans conteste le traitement réservé au raid de Dieppe dans la mémoire collective québécoise. On remarquera à juste titre que les Québécois partagent la mémoire douloureuse de ce coup de force avec les autres Canadiens, les deux communautés ayant tendance à considérer cette entreprise comme un piège tendu par un commandement impérial machiavélique à des troupes « coloniales » de bonne volonté. Mais au-delà de ce schéma commun, on observe des différences de sensibilité manifestes. C'est que les enjeux diffèrent selon les appartenances.

Ainsi, pour les Anglo-canadiens qui, on l'a vu, lient l'indépendance de leur pays à leurs exploits militaires, le

désastre de Dieppe porte un coup au cœur même de leur grand récit national. Cela explique peut-être le caractère *a priori* disproportionné de la littérature produite sur le sujet : on peut répertorier pas moins de dix-neuf monographies de langue anglaise, sans compter les témoignages, articles et publications commémoratives pour un épisode somme toute secondaire à l'échelle de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale²³. En outre, la question fait toujours l'objet d'un débat d'experts. En témoigne la controverse qui opposait récemment encore l'historien canadien Brian Loring Villa, auteur d'un ouvrage retentissant sur le sujet²⁴ à l'historien britannique Peter Henshaw sur les responsabilités respectives de l'Angleterre et du Canada dans la prise de décision du raid²⁵. Tout académique et poli qu'il soit, l'échange reste vif et touche une corde sensible : la question de la compétence militaire des Canadiens dans cette affaire. Henshaw notamment, torpille le général canadien Andrew McNaughton, l'accusant d'incompétence et d'irresponsabilité pour avoir précipité ses troupes dans une opération dangereuse et bâclée, et ce au nom de l'autonomie militaire du Canada. L'auteur soutient même que le raid n'aurait peut-être pas eu lieu si les divisions canadiennes étaient restées des unités coloniales sous commandement impérial²⁶.

Au Québec, le souvenir de *Jubilee* s'est essentiellement transmis sur la base de la tradition orale, et n'a inspiré aucune étude savante ni aucun débat d'un niveau comparable à ce que l'on trouve au Canada anglais. On peut certes invoquer à juste titre l'absence, jusqu'aux années soixante-dix de structures favorisant le développement d'une historiographie militaire francophone²⁷. Mais le phénomène peut aussi s'expliquer par le fait que la journée fatale du 19 août 1942 donne raison aux Canadiens français : l'événement ne fait que confirmer ce qu'ils savaient déjà, soit leur état de servitude dans une guerre qu'on leur a imposée. Le type de littérature qui circule sous le manteau à l'époque témoigne de cette attitude :

J'ai connu un pauvre diable qui s'est engagé « volontairement » parce qu'il n'avait pas d'ouvrage et parce que ses parents lui demandaient de l'argent. Il s'est fait tuer à Dieppe. Ayant commis l'erreur de ne pas revenir, l'Empire britannique, par négligence, ne l'a pas décoré. La gloire du parti Libéral, c'est que ce n'est pas une victime de la conscription [référence au printemps 1918]²⁸.

Dès lors, s'interroger sur le bien-fondé de l'opération ou essayer d'en tirer des leçons tactiques devient superfétatoire.

Le récit de Dieppe au Québec s'est donc essentiellement construit sur le registre du mythe²⁹, au point que les Canadiens français en sont venus à croire qu'ils étaient les seuls protagonistes de l'infortunée opération³⁰. La propagande de guerre semble avoir elle-même largement alimenté cette conviction en braquant les projecteurs, du moins au Québec, sur la seule unité francophone impliquée dans l'opération, les Fusiliers Mont-Royal³¹. L'élite nationaliste canadienne-française de l'époque semble elle-même s'y être laissé prendre. Par exemple, les fondateurs du collège Stanislas, Jeannette et Guy Boulizon, notent en 1988 que « le malheureux raid de Dieppe [...] fera, en quelques heures, plus de 2 000 victimes, surtout canadiennes-françaises³² ». Plus surprenant encore, on

retrouve des propos similaires dans un manuel d'histoire des années quatre-vingt :

[L'expédition] avait pour but, dans la perspective d'un éventuel débarquement allié en France, de tester les défenses allemandes sur les côtes de la Manche. Le régiment des Fusiliers Mont-Royal, commandé par le lieutenant-colonel Dollard Ménard, est chargé de ce débarquement [sic] qui a lieu le 19 août 1942. Mais l'opération a été mal préparée par le haut commandement, on a sous-estimé les forces ennemies. Les troupes canadiennes-françaises subissent un retentissant échec; elles perdent 2 753 hommes, tués, blessés ou faits prisonniers [resic]³³.

Il y a seulement quatre ans, Carl Leblanc, le co-réalisateur d'un documentaire remarqué sur Jubilee, *Mourir en France* (1999), m'a expliqué avoir choisi ce sujet parce qu'à son avis l'épisode de Dieppe résumait toute la guerre et illustrait la place des Canadiens français dans l'armée de l'époque : « En tout Canadien français à qui l'on dit "Dieppe", il y a quelque chose qui résonne, m'a-t-il souligné. Et, la plupart du temps, cela signifie un massacre de Canadiens français³⁴. » Bref, le mythe du sacrifice canadien-français sur l'autel de l'impérialisme britannique a traversé intact le dernier demi-siècle.

Analyser la façon dont les peuples se racontent nous renseigne moins sur les changements auxquels ceux-ci sont confrontés que sur les atavismes qui les accablent. À cet égard le Canada offre un beau cas d'école. Sa double mémoire des Guerres mondiales révèle une ligne de fracture profonde entre ses deux communautés linguistiques. Ce constat ne surprendra personne. Mais il montre à quel point les contentieux persistants et les questions non réglées influencent notre façon d'écrire l'histoire, laquelle en retour nourrit les aspirations et les revendications collectives de l'heure. En ce sens, la représentation du passé des Canadiens français apparaît indissociable de la conjoncture politique particulière du Québec des dernières décennies, largement dominée par un projet d'affirmation nationale. Plus précisément, leur récit des guerres trace le périmètre d'un espace de résistance à l'assimilation dans le « grand tout » canadien car ces événements illustrent à différents égards les limites de leurs droits, sinon leur servitude, au sein de la Confédération. Leur insistance sur les deux conscriptions au détriment des grandes batailles dans lesquelles se sont illustrés les Canadiens pendant les deux guerres mondiales en témoigne. Comment pourraient-ils se reconnaître, par exemple, dans une armée anglophone qu'ils perçoivent comme un appendice de l'Empire britannique et non comme l'émanation de leur réalité nationale ? Ne serait-ce que regarder dans cette direction les expose au risque de diluer leur identité nationale. Par ailleurs, ils n'éprouvent aucun besoin d'analyser ou d'étudier des aspects qui leur échappent à peu près complètement : pourquoi analyser la stratégie, les tactiques, tout ce qui concerne la conduite de la guerre lorsque pendant longtemps, à de rares exceptions près, ils n'ont pu s'identifier à des chefs militaires ni avoir, de toute façon, voix au chapitre ? En revanche, la résistance à la conscription permet de marquer leur différence tout en resserrant les rangs : « tous unis contre l'enrôlement

obligatoire », signifie aussi pour eux « non à l'assimilation ». Ce récit ne peut qu'entrer en conflit avec celui de leurs compatriotes du reste du Canada lesquels, on l'a vu, considèrent que leur nation a été « forgée dans le feu » des deux guerres³⁵.

Le cercle vicieux de la mémoire (qui nourrit les revendications identitaires et politiques, lesquelles inspirent en retour la mémoire), auquel les historiens eux-mêmes n'échappent guère, gêne-t-il notre étude du passé en charriant continuellement des mythes et des tabous inhibiteurs ? Personnellement, je ne le crois pas. On peut certes se demander s'il est possible, voire souhaitable, de chercher à écrire une histoire aseptisée et débarrassée des scories du temps présent. Dans une telle éventualité, aurait-on pu écrire une histoire des femmes ? Les travailleurs, les Noirs, les Autochtones, et tous les damnés de la Terre auraient-ils pu s'écrire un passé garant de leur avenir ? En même temps, l'on se doit de rester vigilant : je pense avoir montré dans cet article l'intérêt de faire « dialoguer » les mémoires nationales. Comprendre comment l'« autre » perçoit le passé permet d'ouvrir de nouvelles pistes de réflexion et de recherche, d'élargir notre vision, cela sans toutefois renier la culture qui nous porte. Comme l'a parfaitement résumé Fernand Dumont :

*L'histoire ne doit pas ressusciter des haines mortes ; un peuple adulte ne ressasse pas sans cesse, dans les eaux saumâtres du ressentiment, les injustices du passé. Mais l'historien est voué à la mémoire collective : ce qui n'en fait pas fatalement un fabriquant de lindeuls. Les peuples non plus ne doivent pas accepter que l'on relègue dans l'oubli les témoignages anciens de leur servitude*³⁶.

Notes

Pour lire toutes les notes de Béatrice Richard, visitez le www.acs-aec.ca.

- 1 Henry Rouso, *Le Syndrome de Vichy de 1944 à nos jours* (Paris, le Seuil, coll. Points-Histoire, 1990), p. 10.
- 2 Consulter à ce sujet le chapitre 1 et la bibliographie de Béatrice Richard, « La Deuxième Guerre mondiale dans la mémoire collective canadienne-française/québécoise à travers le mythe de Dieppe, 1942-1995 », Thèse de doctorat, Montréal, UQAM 2000, 390 p.
- 3 Jonathan Vance montre notamment que la mémoire de la Grande Guerre exclut totalement les différentes minorités nationales du Canada : le héros des champs de bataille est plus ou moins explicitement un anglo-saxon blanc protestant. Jonathan Vance, *Death So Noble. Memory, meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver : UBC Press, 1997). Lire aussi à ce sujet Mourad Djebabla-Brun, *Se souvenir de la Grande Guerre* (Montréal : VLB éditeur, 2004).
- 4 C.P. Stacey. "Nationality: the Experience of Canada", *Canadian Historical Papers*, 1967, p. 16. Pierre Berton, *Vimy*, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1986, 336 p.
- 5 Desmond Morton et Jack L. Granatstein, *Marching to Armageddon: Canadians and the Great War, 1914-1919* (Toronto: Lester and Orphen Dennys, 1989)
- 6 H. H. Herstein, L. J. Hughes, R. C. Kirbyson, *Challenge and Survival: the History of Canada* (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall of Canada Ltd., 1970)
- 7 J. Lacoursière, J. Provencher, D. Vaugeois, *Canada-Québec; Synthèse historique* (Montréal, éditions du Renouveau Pédagogique, 1978). Il s'agit en fait d'une réédition enrichie d'un autre manuel, *Histoire 1534/1968*, publiée en 1968.

- 8 H. H. Herstein et al., *ibid.*, section "Canadian on the Battlefields", p. 321-323
- 9 H. H. Herstein et al., *ibid.*, p. 318.
- 10 J. Lacoursière et al., *op. cit.* p. 481.
- 11 J. Lacoursière et al., *ibid.*, p. 481-485.
- 12 J. Lacoursière et al., *ibid.*, p. 480.
- 13 Jean Provencher, *Québec sous la loi des mesures de guerre; 1918* (Montréal: les Éditions du Boréal Express, 1971)
- 14 Jean Provencher, *ibid.*, p.9.
- 15 G. W. L. Nicholson, *Le Corps expéditionnaire canadien : 1914-1919* (Ottawa, Imprimeur de la Reine, 19163), p. 285.
- 16 Roch Carrier, *La Guerre, Yes Sir!* (Montréal: Éditions du Jour, Montréal, 1968).
- 17 Louis Caron, *L'Emmitouflé* (Montréal: Boréal Compact, 1991, 1994), p. 54-55.
- 18 Noël Audet, *L'Ombre de l'épervier* (Montréal: Québec-Amérique, 1988), 539 p. Les références données ici sont tirées de l'édition du Club Québec Loisir, p. 238.
- 19 Patrick Bouvier, *Déserteurs et insoumis : les Canadiens français et la justice militaire ; 1914-1918* (Montréal: Athéna, 2003).
- 20 Patrick Bouvier, *ibid.*, p. 61-86.
- 21 Patrick Bouvier, *ibid.*, p. 116.
- 22 Patrick Bouvier, *ibid.*, p. 115-120.
- 23 Voir à ce sujet la bibliographie de ma thèse de doctorat, Béatrice Richard, *op. cit.*
- 24 Brian Loring Villa, *Unauthorized Action: Mountbatten and the Dieppe Raid* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1989)
- 25 Peter Henshaw, "The Dieppe raid: A Product of Misplaced Nationalism?", *The Canadian Historical Review*, 77, 2 (juin 1996): 250-266. Brian Loring Villa et Peter Henshaw, "The Dieppe Raid Debate: Brian Villa Continues the Debate", *The Canadian Historical Review*, 79, 2 (juin 1998) : 304-315.
- 26 Peter Henshaw, *ibid.*, p. 266.
- 27 Béatrice Richard, *La Mémoire de Dieppe* (Montréal: VLB éditeur, 2002). p. 37-39. On trouvera également une mise à jour de l'historiographie militaire francophone dans Sébastien Vincent, *Laissés dans l'ombre; les Québécois engagés volontaires de 39-45* (Montréal: VLB éditeur, 2004), p. 21-32.
- 28 Dominique Beaudin, dans la « Chronique du conscrit » du journal *Le Bloc*, cité par André Laurendeau, *La Crise de la conscription* (Montréal: Éditions du Jour, 1962), p. 141.
- 29 « Mythe » ne doit pas être compris ici dans le sens d'« illusion » ou de « mensonge », mais plutôt comme une « réserve instantanée d'histoire » investie d'un sens symbolique par une communauté donnée. Le point de départ du mythe peut être un événement bien réel mais qui sera rapidement dépassé par le sens dont la communauté choisit de l'investir. À travers celui-ci, la société « se raconte », projette ses aspirations comme ses frustrations, élabore une identité collective. Lire à ce sujet : Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (Londres : Jonathan Capes, 1991), p. xiv.
- 30 Béatrice Richard, *La mémoire de Dieppe.*, p. 41-74.
- 31 Depuis le début de la guerre, le Bureau de l'information publique, supervisé par le ministère des services nationaux de guerre, alimente la presse québécoise d'une littérature résolument « héroïque » spécifiquement destinée aux Québécois où Dollard-des-Ormeaux et Montcalm côtoient les héros de Courcellette et de Vimy, ceci dans l'espoir d'éveiller la fibre patriotique des francophones. William R. Young, « Le Canada français et l'information publique pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale », *Bulletin d'histoire politique*, 3/4, printemps/été 1995, p. 227-241.

ALL QUIET ON THE CURRICULUM FRONT

ABSTRACT

The lack of history textbooks and other useful resources about World Wars I and II is of serious concern to the teaching community in Canada. “How do we explain that so much about the two great historical turning points of the 20th century is missing from Canadian education?” asks the author. In this article, Sam Allison compares our education system to that of the United States and Britain. He explores Canada’s educational structure, as well as issues surrounding the student-teacher relationship and the role played by schools in supporting external programs and organizations.

There are so few Canadian high school history textbooks that it is relatively easy to summarize their coverage of World Wars I and II. The First and Second World Wars are taught only from a Canadian national point of view; there is no holistic approach that illustrates the international course of these conflicts. At the other end of the spectrum, local history and local people are not included in our war stories for schools. Conspicuous by their absence is the placing of Canada’s important role within the world context of these conflicts, as well as that of local history within the Canadian context. In total war, everyone – even young people – played a role and every region contributed. What were these roles? Canadian textbooks don’t tell us.

In addition, these Wars are confined, by in large, to the history courses. Other courses, such as literature and art, seldom acknowledge the existence of Canada in the World Wars. Canadian society has so few common memories about the World Wars, perhaps because the complete story of these wars is not told to children. Why is this? How do we explain that so much about the two great historical turning points of the 20th century is missing from Canadian education?

Ken Osborne once pointed out in this same magazine¹ that for over a century, Canadians have tried to create a common Canadian history curriculum and textbook. Section 91 of the old BNA Act, a hangover from the 19th century, centralizes educational power at the provincial level of authority. Indeed, Canada and Switzerland are the only western countries with no national Ministries of Education. Arguably, we have constitutionally killed off national Canadian history textbooks and curriculum. What are the consequences of this situation for historical memory? We can use a war metaphor to place the Canadian textbook and historical memory situation within the wider educational context.

In World War I, Newfoundlanders were not part of the Canadian Expeditionary Force and fought in an entirely independent regiment. Canada’s present day Educational Forces are divided into different Provincial Units every bit as independent of each other as was the Newfoundland Regiment of World War I. Canadian schools cannot adopt curriculum and textbooks independent of provincial authority.

Provincial Education Forces are characterized by a centralized, top-down, organizational structure². Teachers, like soldiers in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, are at the bottom of a long chain of command. In the Canadian Education Forces, teachers are regimented according to their province. In Quebec, the paid, permanent heads of school boards are called “Directors-General,” as remote from their teachers as were Generals from their foot soldiers on the Western Front. We do have our equivalents to the great General, Arthur Currie, within the system; sadly though, the spirit of the notorious Sir Sam Hughes, Minister of Militia and Defense in World War I, haunts the posts of Ministers of Education. Perhaps 35 years in the classroom has made this writer biased, but the term “lions led by donkeys,” used to describe the British Army from the Crimean War onwards, seems to be equally applicable to the Canadian education scene.

Teaching of history in the United States is not nearly so rigid, nor centralized, at the state level. Individual school boards, schools, and even teachers may choose a textbook and fashion a curriculum that cuts across state boundaries. The huge variety of textbooks in the United States reflects demographics and the freedom of publishers and teachers to cut across state lines in a way that publishers and teachers may not cut across provincial lines in Canada. Canadian teachers may no more “desert” to another curriculum or unapproved textbook than a Canadian soldier in World War I could discard

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his regiment and fight for a different allied force. Teachers who are “conscientious objectors” to the history curriculum of Provincial Educational Regiments are regarded in much the same light as were conscientious objectors in World War I. We may no more blame classroom teachers for deficiencies in the Canadian Educational system than we may blame Joe Canuck for creating the system of trench warfare.

The British textbook situation, like the American one, shows Canada in an unfavourable light. History is not a popular subject in British schools and is not compulsory after 14 years of age. In addition, Scotland, England, Northern Ireland, and Wales all have different curriculum, books and examinations. Contrary to popular Canadian wisdom, the British market for history books is every bit as fragmented as the Canadian market, and is often smaller than some provincial markets. Yet, the British have a huge number of textbooks, including some devoted solely to the World Wars. The British situation is not a consequence of demographics or of a standard curriculum. The British standardize only the age students take examinations – 16 and 18 years of age – and the length of time students study the subject – two years. In contrast, there is no standard age or standard course length for the study of Canadian history. Even within a province, schools may often study Canadian history in any of the three or four years of the secondary school experience.

That all has been quiet on the common Canadian History Front for over a century reflects a lack of co-ordination, and a flexibility and rigidity in all the wrong places. The absence of textbooks and deficiencies in teaching both World Wars is a consequence of the Canadian Educational Forces, nothing else. Standardizing both the age and course length of secondary school history would transform the learning of Canadian memories. However, there are more subtle consequences for generating historical memory that arise from the organizational structure of Canada’s Educational Forces.

Firstly, our educational structure itself – small armies of provincial and school board “brass” – is arguably much more expensive than its American and British counterparts. Costs are surprisingly unexplored in Canada. While it is twenty five years since this author compared them in detail, the sheer cost of the structure itself is probably still far greater in Canada than in the other two countries. Per capita, Canada spends much the same on education overall as does the United States and Britain. However, it is probable that textbook spending is far lower. In turn, the lack of spending on Canadian textbooks partly explains their scarcity compared to the United States and Britain. How is it possible to have a school system without history textbooks? This is rather as though the Canadian Expeditionary Force fought without their Ross rifles. We can understand this situation when we turn to the second point, the relationships within the educational system.

The critical educational relationship in Canada is the province and the student, not the teacher and the student³. As with the Newfoundland Regiment of World War I, schools are centralized under provincial not local or national authority. Why is this relevant to history teaching? One consequence is that textbooks, important to the student-

teacher relationship, are under funded. In addition, non-educational organizations, such as the CBC, NFB, and museums, co-ordinate their history programs with the various Provincial Education Commands, not with schools and teachers collectively.

The third point to consider is that Canadian schools assist and support Provincial Command, the CBC, NFB, museums and so on, with their programs. Canadian schools have to fit outside organizations every bit as much as they have to fit the central Provincial Educational organization. For example, it costs approximately \$2,250 if schools want to use the much touted *Canada: a People’s History* by the CBC. There is no way the BBC or PBS could do that with similarly important resources. Schools even had to pay for Statistics Canada material online until recently. The Canadian Educational Forces have to pay for their supplies from Crown corporations such as the CBC and NFB in much the same way the Canadian Expeditionary Force paid for their supplies from private corporations.

The reverse is true in Britain and the United States where many organizations such as the BBC, PBS, the Smithsonian, and the British Museum are expected to devote resources to schools. Obviously, national government spending plays a major role in every country. The point is, however, that the BBC, PBS and so on reinforce what goes on in actual classrooms, whereas Canadian classrooms are expected to reinforce what goes on in museums, the media, crown corporations and so on. While schools appear to be fairly uniform in Canada, the United States and Britain, they march to very different drummers within each society. School history in Canada is defined and shaped by organizations outside and above schools, whereas in the United States and Britain, school history defines and shapes what is done by external organizations.

Much of this is difficult to prove. There are endless resources for schools about the World Wars within Canadian organizations. However, resources meant for schools often do not “fit” the school curriculum. For example, no Canadian school can possibly devote the time available to watching the endless hours of CBC and NFB films on the wars available “for schools.” The result is, teachers cannot possibly preview them, let alone actually buy them all, and so schools tend to omit them.

There are several other indicators of the different roles played by schools themselves within the national scheme of things. For instance, a Canadian Teacher’s Conference displays a very different curriculum situation to its British and American equivalents. Canadian conference exhibits include very few actual history textbooks, but there are usually endless history materials issued by the federal and provincial governments, by school boards, by crown corporations and by private corporations. The reverse is true at American and British conferences. They have endless varieties of textbooks and no material whatsoever from national or state levels of government, and very little from their equivalents to our crown corporations.

The Internet further illustrates this point. Some sites, such as the Library and Archives Canada World War I site, Veterans Affairs Canada “Youth and Educators” section, and the Canadian War Museum’s “Educational Services” are excellent⁴. However, many official web sites, such as the

one for Canada's largest province, Ontario, have absolutely no actual lessons about the World Wars. There are endless Canadian sites claiming to have lessons, but these are usually links to links. In addition, searches of teaching resources often result in Pearl Harbor not Vimy appearing as an example of a Canadian battle. Many Canadian and school board web sites are password protected and not available to teachers in other jurisdictions.

For quantity and quality of authentic history lessons online, School Britannia rules the e-waves every bit as decisively as Britannia ruled the sea waves of World War I. While there are many fine British sites, the Victoria Cross would probably go to "The Learning Curve," "Spartacus Educational," and "The Schools History Project." At a British history conference, this writer spoke to Mr. Tom O'Leary, an ex-history teacher who runs The Learning Curve for the British National Archives and Library. I asked him why there were so many good lessons on British sites. He gave a simple answer: We hire good teachers to write our web sites. Unlike Canadian sites "for schools" that are often written by consultants, academics, archivists, librarians, broadcasters, museumologists, and university students, British web sites are written by classroom teachers.

As a result, British web sites for schools often transmit a child's, rather than an adult's, view of war. For instance, on British web sites, the role of children in both wars is a prominent "hook" to generate interest in the wars. To illustrate this point, especially with younger high school students, teachers should not debate conscription of Farmer Brown in World War I. Rather, debate the right to conscript Farmer Brown's Clydesdale horse, Dobbin. After many years of debating this issue, no class run by this writer ever voted to allow the state to conscript horses for World War I. If one wishes to arouse emotion and emphasize the needless slaughter of WWI to children, one shows colour paintings of Dobbin, not Farmer Brown, dead on the battlefield.

As stated there are many differences between Canadian, British and American tactics to generate students' memories of war. Those other societies have child-centered strategies emanating from several types of organizations but centered upon school curriculum. Canada's education starts outside and above the classroom rather than with the child/teacher relationship. We have no overall curriculum and very little support in lesson form for our provincial curriculums. Canada, unlike the other two countries, has a very fragmented series of organizations outside schools, as well as a fragmented structure of education itself.

Lest readers doubt the enormous difference between Britain and Canada online, simply compare the BBC and CBC war web sites. The CBC site does not have an actual lesson about World War I, though it does have a section about the 22nd (Van Doos) Regiment in WWI online. The BBC has, of course, a massive number of lessons, and more importantly, very high quality lessons linked directly to school curriculums. Readers should realize though, that the CBC is one of the better Canadian sites, and that while the BBC site is a very good British site, there are several other superb British sites.

My point is, rather in the same way that no World War I private ever planned a battle, the actual classroom teachers in Canada usually have little to do with curriculum,

textbooks and web sites, let alone films, exhibitions, or ceremonies involving the World Wars. It is not an accident that teachers are often omitted from critical educational decisions, but rather a consequence of the administrative structure of Canadian education⁵. Arguably, Canadian Provincial Education is as rigidly divided within each Regimental organization as they are divided from each other. The divorce between Educational Officers and teachers is very real but seldom discussed in Canada. While this essay has focused on wars, the divorce between provincially centralized schools and local neighbourhood history is also considerable.

Our Educational Force is remarkably old and retains curriculum equivalents to the Ross rifle, disliked by those in the Educational trenches. Much of the success of the Canadian Expeditionary Force was that it was remarkably young and exchanged its Canadian equipment for superior equipment such as the Lee Enfield rifle. In brief, Canada's Educational Forces have all of the vices but few of the virtues of the Expeditionary Force. This writer suggests that organizational relationships explain this situation. Sir Sam Hughes rules. General Currie and Joe Canuck in the Educational Trenches have little to say in the matter.

Changing times, but not metaphors, we can say that present day history teaching in Canada, the United States, and Britain bear much the same relationship to each other as do the present day armies of each country. While Canadian teachers, like Canadian soldiers, are characterized by a dogged loyalty to their society, this should not blind us to the poor equipment and support they actually have. Teachers do attack ignorance and try to promote memory of the World Wars as best they can. Canadian children may study the battle of Vimy Ridge, but the battle of Beaumont-Hamel characterizes the educational situation today. It is July 1st 1916 to the Newfoundland-like regiments of teachers and students in the Canadian Educational Forces who are trying to capture Historical Memory.

Endnotes

- 1 Osborne, Ken. "Teaching History in Canadian Schools: A Century of Debate." *Canadian Issues*. Oct/Nov 2001. p. 4-7
- 2 Frank MacKinnon. *The Politics of Education*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968. p. 10
- 3 MacKinnon. p. 80
- 4 Veterans Affairs Canada, "Youth and Educators" section www.vac-acc.gc.ca & The Canadian War Museum www.warmuseum.ca "Educational Services"
- 5 MacKinnon. p. 29

S.O.S. HISTOIRE ET ÉTUDES SOCIALES !

ABSTRACT

L'auteur réfute l'idée que « n'importe qui » puisse enseigner l'histoire et les sciences sociales. Selon lui, afin d'inspirer les jeunes étudiants, les professeurs devraient connaître la matière en profondeur. Il ajoute également que ces derniers devraient également enseigner l'ensemble de l'histoire canadienne, et non celle d'une seule époque, province ou région.

Durant un récent congrès d'éducateurs, nous avons eu l'occasion d'aborder avec certains de nos collègues la question de l'enseignement de l'histoire canadienne. À cette occasion, notre Conseil scolaire d'Edmonton y était joint par le Calgary Museum of the Regiments pour la promotion de l'histoire canadienne et surtout de son histoire militaire. Notre conversation au sujet de la participation canadienne dans la Première Guerre mondiale se tourna assez naturellement à la contribution de nos forces dans la bataille pour la Crête de Vimy, une bataille que de nombreux historiens considèrent encore comme l'une des plus déterminantes de notre « nationalité canadienne ».

Cet échange d'opinions nous a vite indiqué la présence de quelques sérieuses omissions et inconsistances dans l'interprétation de l'histoire canadienne de deux Guerres mondiales et de la Guerre de Corée. Certains des participants à la discussion crurent que la Deuxième Guerre mondiale ne commença pour le Canada qu'en 1941. Encore d'autres se trouvaient surpris d'apprendre que les Canadiens ont participé dans la défense de Hong Kong, et même si la majorité d'enseignants étaient familiers avec le débarquement à Dieppe, peu d'entre eux se jugeaient être au courant du rôle du Canada dans les campagnes pour la Sicile et l'Italie. Tout le monde a entendu parler de la plage Juno, mais il est vite devenu apparent que l'histoire subséquente des Canadiens dans la guerre n'y figurait plus aussi clairement à leur mémoire. Ces hésitations ne se montrèrent qu'en plus amplifiées quand il s'agissait du rôle de la Marine Royale du Canada et des ses Forces aériennes.

Les nombreuses autres rencontres et conversations de ce congrès nous laissèrent l'impression qu'un grand nombre des personnes responsables pour l'éducation de nos enfants semblaient être sérieusement appauvri dans leurs connaissances de l'histoire canadienne. Bien sûr, il y avait aussi des enseignants qui se montraient à la hauteur avec des connaissances historiques plus qu'approfondies, mais malheureusement ils ne formaient qu'une petite minorité. Depuis ce temps-là, nous avons eu la chance de participer à de nombreux autres congrès et conférences tout aussi bien en Alberta qu'au Manitoba ou même dans la région atlantique du Canada. Apparemment, ce problème est loin d'être régional et se montre néanmoins fermement établi à travers le reste du pays. La question se pose, pourquoi ?

En général, la présente philosophie de l'éducation nous indiquerait que l'enseignement au secondaire dépend de l'expertise de son personnel enseignant. Ainsi, en guise d'exemple, les mathématiques ne sont inculquées que par les meilleurs des mathématiciens, les sciences se voient enseignées par ceux qui possèdent de bases solides en chimie, physique et biologie, et ainsi de suite. La logique semble bonne sauf qu'elle ne se montre plus quand on commence à parler de l'enseignement de l'histoire et de sciences sociales. Là, rien n'est plus le même et on tombe dans l'opinion que « n'importe qui » peut s'adonner à l'enseignement de l'histoire. Cette situation devient encore plus exacerbée aux niveaux supérieurs de l'éducation, où les facultés d'éducation visent plus à souligner la pédagogie de l'enseignement que son contenu. En d'autres mots, ces facultés se spécialisent simplement à éduquer les « techniques » d'enseignement plutôt que ses « connaissances ».

Dans la majorité des universités, et plus vraisemblablement dans tous les établissements d'éducation supérieure, les étudiants de licence en éducation sont obligés de suivre un minimum de cours dans la Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines pour pouvoir approfondir les connaissances de leurs sujets de spécialisation. Quant aux études sociales et à l'histoire, les universités se contentent en général d'offrir des cours d'histoire et de géographie. Pourtant, la prolifération à travers le pays de divers programmes d'études sociales et d'histoire, indiquerait que les cours qui sont présentement requis des candidats aux facultés d'éducation manquent d'adresser les nouvelles demandes de nouveaux

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programmes d'études. Ces faiblesses sont surtout visibles au sein d'écoles moins favorisées où l'enseignant des études sociales et de l'histoire se voit obliger d'enseigner, de la septième à la douzième année, un nombre varié des cours dont il ne possède pas nécessairement la maîtrise.

Le nouveau programme d'études sociales de l'Alberta offre un autre exemple. L'idéal serait pour un enseignant d'études sociales du premier et du deuxième cycle de l'école secondaire d'être compétent à la fois en histoire canadienne, américaine, asiatique, européenne, ainsi qu'en histoire mésoaméricaine et amérindienne. Mais, la maîtrise de ces sujets ne pourrait être achevée dans les meilleures des circonstances qu'en suivant le plus exigeant des programmes d'études, et ce même pour un candidat de licence d'honneur en histoire à la Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines.

Un autre sujet de grande inquiétude peut être attribué aux programmes qui suivent l'obtention du diplôme en éducation. Tandis qu'un étudiant diplômé en histoire ou en anglais serait un excellent candidat pour enseigner les études sociales ou la langue anglaise, le cas serait très différent pour ceux qui ont reçu leurs diplômes en psychologie ou en sociologie. En faulant les demandes d'un bachelier d'éducation, ces candidats ne prennent que des cours exclusivement dédiés à la pédagogie. Puisque ces candidats ne pourraient jamais être sérieusement considérés comme enseignants des mathématiques ou des sciences, les facultés d'éducation et les départements de l'éducation provinciale les classent tout simplement comme enseignants d'études sociales. Par conséquent, certains de ces enseignants d'études sociales en Alberta ne possèdent en résultat aucune ou très peu de formation en histoire ou en géographie.

Les programmes d'études en études sociales et en histoire sont très variés d'une région à l'autre du Canada. Alors que c'est tout à fait logique d'enseigner aux étudiants du Nouveau-Brunswick l'histoire des régions maritimes, on devrait sûrement se garder de le faire aux dépens du reste du pays. Le cas n'est pas différent à l'ouest du pays où on passe très peu de temps à rechercher l'histoire de la Nouvelle-France. D'autre part, l'histoire de l'ouest canadien n'est pas non plus considérée importante au Québec ou en Ontario. Mais tout n'est pas encore perdu. La Nouvelle-Écosse offre présentement un excellent programme d'histoire canadienne pour le niveau secondaire qui tente de présenter l'histoire du Canada dans sa totalité.

La date par laquelle on commence l'histoire canadienne varie aussi d'une province à l'autre. Doit-on commencer notre histoire en 1867 ou en 1604? Peut-être elle devrait faire retour plus loin à l'étude des nations amérindiennes avant l'arrivée de colons européens? Est-ce que la guerre de 1812 ou les rébellions de 1837 sont importants à étudier seulement en Ontario ou Québec? Doit-on croire que Louis Riel et la Police montée du Nord-Ouest ne font parti que de l'Ouest du Canada? Si une identité canadienne est vraiment chose établie et unique, ne devrait-elle pas, pour lui rendre justice, être représentée par la somme de toutes ces parties?

Durant ma dernière visite à St. John au Nouveau-Brunswick, un enseignant se demandait si on pouvait définir ce qu'est un Canadien sans avoir à considérer notre rapport aux américains. Selon lui, les Canadiens se définissent souvent par ce qu'ils n'étaient pas, plutôt que

par ce qu'ils sont ou pourraient être. Sa juste observation nous ramène de nouveau à notre question de départ: pourquoi?

Le domaine de la psychiatrie et de la psychologie souligne l'importance que joue dans la vie l'histoire personnelle d'un individu. Un état d'amnésie est plus que dévastateur à un individu qui n'est plus capable de se souvenir de son passé, de son histoire qui, une fois effacée et perdue, le laisse égaré du monde et sans identité. Ces mêmes symptômes ne sont pas moins évidents d'une nation.

Les Canadiens, si on se permet de le dire, souffrent d'une forme d'amnésie historique, et malheureusement, cette affliction semble être plus que volontaire. Il n'est pas toujours facile de comprendre ses causes. Beaucoup de nos nouveaux immigrants sont plus qu'étonnés par la façon que nous choisissons d'ignorer notre patrimoine historique. Pour eux l'histoire est plus qu'un sujet académique, c'est une façon de vivre et de trouver leur place au monde. Ils ne sont pas moins enthousiastes d'apprendre l'histoire du pays où ils ont choisi de vivre, mais se trouvent déçu par le peu d'importance qu'on attache en général à l'histoire du Canada. Considérant le fait que le Canada est toujours classé parmi les meilleurs pays du monde, ne serait-il pas important, sinon essentiel, d'en connaître les raisons de ses succès?

Mais, en fait, pourquoi les Canadiens, en général, accordent-ils si peu d'importance à l'histoire de leur pays? Sans doute, la proximité du Léviathan américain des médias exerce sa propre influence. Notre télévision, nos films et multiples autres formes de média ne sont que dominés par les États-Unis. La plupart des Canadiens sont constamment bombardés par la perspective et l'interprétation américaine de l'histoire, les toutes récentes séries documentaires sur la Guerre de 1812 présentées par la chaîne américaine PBS (et chose étonnante, conjointement avec le Canadian History Channel) en seraient un parfait exemple. Bien que dans le programme la lutte fut décrite comme une « Deuxième Guerre d'indépendance », pour beaucoup de ceux qui habitent au nord de la frontière et qui se connaissent dans l'histoire ce conflit fut vite reconnu pour ce qu'il était en réalité, une guerre d'agression. Ce n'étaient pas les États-Unis, mais le Canada, qui fut envahi par un voisin avide de nouveaux territoires.

Le Canada d'aujourd'hui est rempli d'étudiants qui considèrent les deux guerres mondiales comme exclusivement une expérience américaine. En effet, beaucoup d'entre eux ne savent même pas que le Canada s'y était engagé. Sans doute, les célébrations annuelles du Jour de souvenir ne seraient pas suffisantes pour en laisser une marque.

Pour terminer j'aimerais vous rappeler une autre fois l'assomption encore populaire que « n'importe qui » peut enseigner l'histoire et les études sociales.

Comme un étudiant d'école secondaire, je me considérais chanceux d'avoir eu trois enseignants d'histoire remplis de profondes connaissances historiques et d'un amour irréprouvable de leur sujet. M. Williams, Mme Constable (bien avant l'ère de Mlle) et M. Foster (devenu plus tard le célèbre historien canadien Dr. John Foster) possédaient tous une telle passion de l'histoire qu'elle nous était facilement contagieuse. Comme leurs étudiants, nous étions complètement absorbés par ces maîtres qui ne connaissaient pas seulement l'histoire mais qui nous

lissaient dans l'attente toujours trop prolongée de leurs prochains récits. Je soupçonne que l'efficacité de leurs styles d'enseignement et la facilité avec laquelle ils transmettaient leur passion pour l'histoire étaient attribuables, en grande mesure, à leur profonde connaissance de l'histoire. En langage courant c'étaient des « experts en matière ». Rétrospectivement, il est peu surprenant que beaucoup d'entre nous aient fini par se lancer dans l'étude de l'histoire ou se soient décidés à poursuivre par la suite une carrière dans l'enseignement.

L'étude de l'histoire canadienne est aussi tombée victime d'une surabondance d'intentions cachées. Ceux qui étaient résolus d'avancer leur propre perspective ou interprétation se sont souvent montrés responsables de multiples révisions pas moins judicieuses de l'histoire canadienne, choisissant même d'omettre certains faits et événements qui ne correspondaient pas à leur « vision » unique du monde. Comme résultat on souffre d'une « régionalisation » de l'histoire canadienne qui mène inévitablement à l'approbation générale des mythes comme des faits, sans la moindre volonté de les soumettre à l'examen. Inutile de dire que moins les Canadiens connaissent leur histoire, plus ils seront ouverts aux autres interprétations et perspectives sans voir le besoin de les questionner.

Combien de fois on entend dire des bouches de nos étudiants que l'histoire canadienne est plus qu'« ennuyeuse ». On s'aperçoit aussitôt que la plupart de ces étudiants ne se souviennent de classes d'histoires que pour l'abominable « travail de lecture, de recherche et d'examen » qu'ils devaient y effectuer. La petite minorité qui trouva l'histoire fascinante, et même passionnante, l'attribua surtout à des enseignants bien informés et dévoués à leur matière. Si on accepte le principe qu'on ne peut devenir passionné d'un sujet qu'en le découvrant, il devient évident que cette découverte ne peut être possible qu'à l'aide de profondes connaissances de l'histoire canadienne.

La question se pose de nouveau : comment peut-on s'assurer que les enseignants de l'histoire et des études sociales soient bien au courant de l'histoire canadienne ? Il n'y a pas longtemps, la Faculté des lettres et des sciences humaines de l'université de l'Alberta proposa de donner deux ans des cours préparatoires à tout candidat en éducation pour lui permettre d'étudier les sujets de sa spécialité avant de compléter les cours prescrits dans la troisième et quatrième année de son programme de bachelier en éducation. Cette proposition ne se trouva que rejetée par la faculté d'éducation. Cependant, même si elle avait été acceptée, elle n'aurait seulement bénéficié que ceux qui se préparaient à devenir enseignants, et non ceux qui travaillaient déjà dans le système éducatif. Évidemment, cette situation n'irait qu'à l'encontre du but recherché. Pour cette raison même, le Conseil scolaire d'Edmonton a décidé de prendre le défi et la relève.

En coopération avec le Department of History and Classics, le Conseil scolaire d'Edmonton propose d'offrir deux cours d'histoire qui s'adressent spécifiquement au programme d'études de l'école secondaire du premier et du deuxième cycle. Ces cours permettront aux enseignants de s'informer et d'acquérir les connaissances de base nécessaires à l'enseignement des programmes d'études de l'Alberta. Il va de soi que les cours d'histoire canadienne

en constitueront aussi une importante partie. Dès le mois de septembre 2005, ces cours seront offerts le soir, et le Conseil scolaire d'Edmonton propose d'assumer tous les frais associés à l'inscription pour les enseignants intéressés à les suivre. De cette façon, l'université de l'Alberta en collaboration avec le Conseil scolaire d'Edmonton seront tout probablement les premiers à adresser les déficiences qui se manifestent dans l'enseignement de l'histoire et des études sociales. Du même coup et avec d'autant plus d'importance pour nous, les enseignants recevront la base de connaissances indispensable à la bonne transmission du programme d'études.

Cette collaboration représente une des premières initiatives de ce genre au Canada et il nous reste à espérer que les autres provinces y trouveront leur propre valeur. Quant à nous, nous restons persuadés que cette forme de développement professionnel assistera non seulement l'étudiant et l'enseignant mais tout aussi bien la cause de l'histoire en général et tout en particulier celle de l'histoire du Canada.

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GIVING VOICE TO THE PAST:

Canada's Heroes Remember

ABSTRACT

This article highlights the efforts of Veterans Affairs Canada to commemorate the past and to make accessible to all Canadians the stories of our many service men and women. With a special emphasis on oral history, the Heroes Remember web site offers a collection of interviews with Veterans on-line. These audio and video clips help young people in particular to connect with past events of which they have no first-hand knowledge. VAC continues to search for untapped holdings of previous Veteran interviews and asks anyone with information to contact the Department.

His voice is faint; his eyes glisten with tears as his memory drifts back. "The trench was a dirty place; it was filthy and full of rats. You could grab a piece of somebody that got killed" he says, fingers worrying at the soggy tissue in his hand. "A man dying was nothing you know, it's not like we look at it here. If you were shot or killed, you might be pulling somebody's leg over to get out of the mud. This was rough, rough warfare."

That was the real Vimy. It is the story of Donald Sutherland – one that cannot be told the same way in any textbook. To see his face, hear his voice, experience his memories is to bring history alive... and this is exactly what the Heroes Remember web site has done. Heroes Remember provides Canadians of all ages with a unique opportunity to experience history through the eyes of those who lived it. Through the site, Veterans Affairs Canada will provide unprecedented access to the more than 1,600 hours of video and audio conversations it has recorded with hundreds of Canadian veterans. These interviews offer the rare and personal memories of veterans from all regions of Canada as well as each of the 20th century's wars and missions of the Canadian Forces.

In addition to streaming video, which allows visitors to see edited portions of the actual interviews, the site also includes a variety of biographical information and educational tools. Life-long learners and academics will appreciate the photos, biographical information and links to related historical information provided. Transcripts of each interview segment have also been provided to facilitate research.

Why is oral history important? It has been said that these stories are the 'ringside seats' of history, providing an intimacy that cannot be found in any history book. They provide insight into the thoughts and feelings of ordinary Canadians in extraordinary circumstances – times we can only imagine. Our native ancestors recognized the value of the spoken word. Their culture cherished the stories and legends, told not only for entertainment, but also as a means of connecting the past to the future.

Not surprisingly, one of the site's primary target audiences is Canadian youth. Today's youth have indicated that they prefer to see and hear Veterans' stories as opposed to more static learning. But, as the soldiers of past conflicts quietly fade into the past, this becomes increasingly difficult.

The needs of youth at a variety of ages were carefully considered in designing the site. Interviews have been segmented to allow for easy access regardless of grade-level and each interview has been carefully selected and edited to provide a balance of personal and historical information. Teachers will also find a variety of lesson plans and activity ideas designed to highlight the human element of war. As the site continues to evolve, more interactive learning elements will be incorporated, specifically targeting youth in grades 7-12. With content relevant to all regions of Canada and available in both official languages, Heroes Remember is a useful and engaging tool for all educators.



"I wouldn't have missed the army for anything else I've done in my life. Just to be with those boys, and some of them were just boys. You know, kids and I was just a kid myself." – World War II Nursing Sister Georgina Seeley.

STEPHEN OGDEN AND AMANDA KELLY
Stephen Ogden is Director of the Heroes Remember Project for Veterans Affairs Canada's Canada Remembers Program. Amanda Kelly is a Co-operative Education Public Relations student from Mount Saint Vincent University.



"They had no radio communication, they had bugles... There was this one time one of our guys, I guess he learned to play a bugle in his younger days. He learned how to blow retreat in Chinese. The Chinese are blowing attack and he's blowing retreat. I thought that was great." – Korean War veteran William Chrysler.

VAC first began videotaping veteran stories in the early 1990s. The department then received a Head of the Public Service Award for what was known as the "Oral Histories Project." Now, after nearly 15 years, the project represents the cooperative effort of several organizations. Funding was provided in 2003 by the Canadian Culture Online Program's *Canadian Memory Fund* which provides funding to federal institutions for the digitization of Canada's key cultural heritage collections. The program was designed as part of Canadian Heritage's ongoing effort to connect all Canadians, but particularly youth, with authentic sources of Canadian experience by making Canada's cultural collections available online in both official languages.

Heroes Remember is also an integral part of the Canadian Military History Gateway, a government web portal providing access to Web sites and digitized resources about Canada's military history. In cooperation with other federal partners (including the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Parks Canada, the National Film Board of Canada, etc.), the Canadian Military History Gateway was spearheaded by the Department of National Defence and provides several ways to discover, access and exploit online military history resources including everything from an interactive timeline to a concise military history of Canada.

Veterans Affairs Canada is also pursuing access to other Veteran oral history collections. The University of New Brunswick's Dr. Marc Milner, for example, donated 16 interviews completed in the 1970s by students in the Military and Strategic Studies graduate program. Through a partnership agreement, the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick will digitize this contribution before they are added to the Heroes Remember web site. The Testaments of Honour Foundation, a non-profit charity dedicated to preserving the personal histories of Canada's veterans, will also make a significant contribution in the form of approximately 400 interviews. Contributions like these allow Veterans Affairs to broaden the depth and texture of its oral history collection and begin consolidating scattered collections.



"My mother took it pretty hard... she couldn't say goodbye so she gave it to me in a letter which I have in that bible yet. It was her farewell words to me and one of them was, 'Try and find someone that doesn't drink as a pal.' Well, that was quite a hard job to do!" – Canadian seaman Lorne Stevens.

The challenge of telling the stories of war has always been to move beyond the facts and figures that dominate our historical landscape. More than 116,000 Canadian graves scattered across six continents are a testament to Canada's sacrifice in 20th century conflicts, however they do little to explain the terrible loss of these young men and women to their families, friends and communities. Neither is it enough to say that more than one million young

Canadians fought during the Second World War when we know that each of these men and women was somebody's sister, daughter, father, husband or son.

This is why the search for compelling stories to tell continues. The 32 English and 31 French interviews currently found on the site are only the beginning for this new and exciting project. As Heroes Remember unfolds over the next year, as many as 600 additional interviews and more than 5000 historical photographs will be digitized and added to the collection. The site will include oral histories from veterans of the South African War, the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War as well as peacekeeping and modern military operations. Additional interviews will be collected to reflect the diverse demographics of Canadian culture. The team continues to seek out untapped holdings of previous Veteran interviews and asks anyone with knowledge of such sources to contact the Department.

In the end, our veterans are ordinary men and women who became heroes under extraordinary conditions. Their actions profoundly affected the course of history and the shaping of all of our futures. The Heroes Remember web site allows all Canadians to celebrate their achievements and learn from our past.

As Heroes Remember unfolds over the next year, as many as 600 additional interviews and more than 5000 historical photographs will be digitized and added to the collection.

TOPIQUE DU CONFLIT GUERRIER DANS L'IMAGINAIRE ET L'IDENTITAIRE FRANCO-QUÉBÉCOIS :

Argumentation exploratoire

ABSTRACT

Dans ce bref article prenant prétexte de l'extraordinaire mobilisation des Québécois contre la guerre menée en Irak, l'auteur propose une réflexion en mode exploratoire sur la réticence apparente des Québécois d'héritage canadien-français à intégrer, à leur identitaire collectif, ce qui ressortit au conflit guerrier. En quelques pages, nous sommes conviés à une incursion au cœur du processus historique de construction du « Nous-Autres les (Franco)-Québécois », lieu profond de formation d'un imaginaire particulier de la guerre et du rapport à la guerre chez les Québécois.

Je ne me rappelle plus où j'étais, mais il faisait doux et je pouvais déambuler dans les rues en veston. À cette époque de l'année – février – c'était nécessairement à l'étranger. Au téléjournal de Radio-Canada, sur les ondes de TV5, on rapportait une extraordinaire mobilisation des Québécois contre les frappes anglo-américaines en Irak. La guerre venait en effet de débiter au pays de Saddam Hussein et, partout dans le monde, en Europe surtout, les réactions étaient fortes contre la décision des États-Unis et du Royaume-Uni d'envahir l'Irak avec ou contre l'assentiment de la communauté internationale. C'est toutefois au Québec, notamment à Montréal, que les réactions intempestives semblaient, toute proportion gardée, les plus étendues. Au dire des rapports de police, ils étaient en effet, dans l'hiver polaire du Québec, entre cent cinquante et deux cent mille personnes à défilé dans les rues de la métropole pour protester, fermement mais pacifiquement, contre la guerre menée sur les rives du Tigre. Si j'avais été à Montréal, baptisée pour l'occasion « capitale mondiale de la paix »¹, je me serais joint aux marcheurs. Mais là n'est pas la question qui m'intéresse. J'aimerais plutôt m'interroger sur les raisons à l'origine du fait que c'est à Montréal plutôt qu'à Londres, Washington, Paris ou Toronto, grandes capitales du monde, que l'opposition à la guerre contre l'Irak et les Irakiens s'est révélée, relativement parlant, la plus énergique et la plus massive. Cette question est prenante, car elle nous permet, sinon nous oblige, à réfléchir sur la place occupée par l'idée ou la perspective du conflit guerrier dans l'imaginaire et l'identitaire de ceux que j'appelle les Québécois d'héritage canadien-français.

Avant toute chose, il importe d'établir quelques garde-fous à mon argumentation. Bien que ce texte soit de nature exploratoire avec tout ce que cela suppose de spéculatif au regard des hypothèses émises, il demeure primordial de ne pas prendre des vessies pour des lanternes. Si je m'en tiens par exemple au cas des Québécois d'héritage canadien-français, ce n'est surtout pas pour laisser croire que, au Québec ou à Montréal, seuls les francophones ont participé aux marches contre la guerre en Irak, car cela est faux. En fait, les protestataires formaient un ensemble assez hétéroclite de personnes de toutes origines ethniques, conditions ou allégeances. De même, il faut se garder d'expliquer l'ampleur des démonstrations populaires à Montréal à partir d'hypothèses hyperboliques. Il se pourrait bien que les manifestations aient été importantes dans la métropole parce qu'elles ont été organisées avec doigté. On sait par ailleurs que la population originaire du Moyen-Orient est nombreuse et croissante à Montréal. De nouveau, il s'agit d'un facteur qui, solidarité culturelle, religieuse ou nationale aidant, a pu influencer sur la participation des gens aux marches contre la guerre. Dernier point mais non le moindre, je ne crois pas un seul instant que les Québécois, et parmi eux les francophones, soient dotés d'une disposition naturelle au pacifisme qui excède celle que possèdent les membres d'autres cultures, nations ou collectivités. Soutenir pareille hypothèse reviendrait en effet à prétendre qu'il existe une « essence québécoise » dont l'une des composantes serait l'anti-militarisme. À mes yeux, rien n'est plus risible que d'essayer de définir l'« âme des peuples », car la présence d'un tel souffle est affaire d'affabulation.

Cela dit, il est clair qu'au sein de la constellation des références qui forment la culture historique des Québécois d'héritage canadien-français, la référence de la guerre, d'une part, et celle de la participation

à la guerre, d'autre part, sont connotées négativement. À l'encontre de ce qui semble être le cas pour la culture anglo-canadienne d'héritage britannique,² l'épopée militaire du Canada n'est, au Québec, ni un facteur de cohésion nationale, ni un paramètre d'identité collective, ni un élément d'auto-représentation positive. On en veut pour preuve les livres offerts à la consommation populaire au sein des mondes anglophone et francophone du pays. Il s'agit d'entrer dans une librairie à grande surface du Canada anglais et se diriger vers la section « Canadiana » pour constater la place importante, parfois prééminente, qu'occupent les livres d'histoire militaire. Dans les librairies comparables du Canada français, et notamment au Québec, cette place centrale appartient à plusieurs genres parmi lesquels figurent rarement les ouvrages d'histoire militaire. Certes, depuis une dizaine d'années, l'histoire militaire faite en français a connu un développement considérable grâce aux efforts de plusieurs chercheurs de grande qualité.³ Ceux-ci ont fait ressortir à quel point la participation des Canadiens français aux deux Grandes Guerres, par exemple, avait été significative. À côté des figures de l'Insoumis et du Déserteur, deux types identitaires particulièrement valorisés dans la mémoire collective des Québécois d'héritage canadien-français, la figure du Combattant a désormais acquis ses lettres de noblesse. On pourrait dire en fait que la restauration du Soldat missionnaire comme figure d'identification sympathique est chose avalisée dans l'imaginaire québécois contemporain, grâce notamment à l'impact favorable qu'a eu, sur les mentalités populaires, la présence de soldats francophones œuvrant dans des zones difficiles sous la houlette des Nations unies. Malgré cela, la figure du Militaire, encore associée dans la mémoire collective aux idées de soumission, de discipline, d'esprit de géométrie et surtout d'embrigadement, reste une référence négative, tout au moins problématique, chez les Québécois d'héritage canadien-français. La chose ne surprendra pas l'analyste attentif aux réalités franco-québécoises. Depuis fort longtemps en effet, l'insoumission, l'indiscipline et l'ambivalence — qui a bien peu à voir avec l'idée de symétrie ou de régularité — sont centrales dans l'imaginaire et l'identitaire canadien-français, si ce n'est dans la pratique politique et la tradition culturelle de ce groupement par référence. Le refus d'être embrigadé dans une cause monovalente ou un projet strictement focalisé est peut-être d'ailleurs ce qui caractérise principalement les Québécois d'héritage canadien-français. À travers l'histoire, ils sont nombreux — Français de la métropole et autorités ecclésiastiques, Britanniques et Patriotes, conservateurs et libéraux, fédéralistes et souverainistes — à avoir éprouvé l'aversion des Canadiens français et des Franco-Québécois pour s'enrôler dans un destin univoque.⁴ On peut bien maudire cette façon d'être et de faire, comme le

Certes, depuis une dizaine d'années, l'histoire militaire faite en français a connu un développement considérable grâce aux efforts de plusieurs chercheurs de grande qualité.³ Ceux-ci ont fait ressortir à quel point la participation des Canadiens français aux deux Grandes Guerres, par exemple, avait été significative.

font aujourd'hui bien des politiciens et des académiciens qui s'impatientent de voir les Québécois se brancher une fois pour toute, le refus d'être enrégimenté dans un devenir univalent demeure prégnant chez les intéressés, comme une donnée incontournable de leur espace d'expérience et de leur horizon d'attente.

Que la guerre, qui réduit la liberté de (ne pas) choisir et suppose l'embrigadement inconditionnel des Conscrits à la cause d'un protagoniste au détriment de celle de son opposant, n'apparaisse pas comme une option séduisante pour les Québécois qui ne se reconnaissent surtout pas dans la figure de l'Engagé, ni d'ailleurs dans celle de l'Enragé, voilà qui n'étonnera pas. Mais là ne peut s'arrêter notre

quête de sens pour comprendre l'opposition des Québécois à l'endroit des conflits armés en général et de la guerre d'Irak en particulier. Il faut encore saisir le mimétisme qui, dans cet identitaire et cet imaginaire, existe entre la représentation de Soi et la figure du Petit.

Historiquement, les Québécois d'héritage canadien-français ont eu tendance à se voir comme de Petits acteurs dans un monde orchestré par des Géants. Attention au mot « petit » ici, car il n'est pas synonyme d'insignifiant ou de sans importance. L'idée de Petit renvoie plutôt à l'image de celui qui, n'ayant pas par sa taille les mêmes attributs que ses voisins, peut compenser son manque de volume physique par un esprit d'ingéniosité et de débrouillardise sans pareil. On sait à quel point la qualité d'astucieux est associée — de manière abusive parfois, certains l'ont appris à leurs dépens!⁵ — au type canadien-français devenu franco-québécois. Cela dit, la condition de Petit n'a pas que des avantages. Le Petit vit en effet le risque continu d'être tassé, compressé ou reclus, à moins que ce soit celui d'être incorporé, enchâssé ou assimilé. Dans les deux cas, le résultat est le même : il est marqué par la possibilité de disparaître ou d'être écrasé, sinon de

s'écraser lui-même.⁶

L'identification des Québécois d'héritage canadien-français à la figure du Petit les rend particulièrement disposés à se rallier, par solidarité de condition, à la cause des Écartés du monde, soit ces Sujets collectifs qui, pris dans le collimateur des Puissants de la terre, risquent la relégation ou l'anéantissement. Or, on sait à quel point la guerre d'Irak a impliqué un pays dont il était évident qu'il ne pouvait faire long feu devant la force extraordinaire de son opposant, la coalition anglo-américaine. Pour nombre de Québécois observant la scène irakienne, la pièce politique en train de se jouer était on ne peut plus claire, classique et inégale : d'un côté Bush et Blair personnifiant une espèce de Goliath à deux têtes, de l'autre le peuple irakien incarnant David. Évidemment, ce n'était pas Sadam et ses sbires qui, aux yeux des Québécois, faisaient pitié et méritaient grâce. C'étaient les Irakiens qui, pris sous le feu des uns ou des

autres et déjà victimes d'une longue liste de tourments économiques et politiques, *un peu à la manière* des Québécois,⁷ risquaient d'être les pauvres petits perdants d'une lutte entre mécréants — impérialistes d'un côté et fascistes de l'autre. Le choix des termes et des images descriptives est ici important. La triade sémantique des trois P : Pauvres Petits Perdants, est en effet l'un des plus puissants topiques à structurer l'imaginaire et l'identitaire des Québécois d'héritage canadien-français. Elle s'oppose à une autre triade sémantique, celle des trois G : Gros Grands Gagnants, qui est son envers exact et qui constitue en quelque sorte le miroir négatif de ce que le Québécois type est réputé être. Voilà pourquoi la représentation du « Nous-Autres les Québécois » a tendance à s'élever sur l'association syntagmatique suivante :

Nous	=	Pauvre Petit Perdant
Autres		Gros Grand Gagnant

On pourrait évidemment complexifier l'« équation identitaire », pour s'inspirer de la méthode pédagogique d'Yvan Lamonde, et ajouter d'autres variables à la formule qui pourrait s'écrire ainsi :

		Agneau Innocent				
		▼				
Pauvre Petit Perdant	+	Victime	=	Nous	+	Progressistes
Gros Grand Gagnant		Oppresseur		Autres		Réactionnaires
		▲				
		Guerrier Agresseur				

Selon cette formule, le Québécois « archétypé » et archétypal (auquel s'oppose un Autre tout aussi « archétypé » et archétypal) est celui qui, puisqu'il appartient au clan des Pauvres Petits Perdants, est aussi celui qui est une Victime dans l'ordre du monde, ce qui fait de lui un Progressiste par condition et par obligation, car le Québécois est pour le changement au profit des damnés de tous les systèmes dont il est solidaire par appariement symbolique. Et, de fait, il existe une représentation idéale-typique du Québécois qui veut qu'il soit un être de gauche (au moins de centre-gauche ou social-démocrate), rebelle aux pouvoirs (à celui du Capital surtout), avant-gardiste dans ses visions du monde, contestataire, altruiste, soucieux du sort de la veuve et de l'orphelin (aujourd'hui remplacés par la monoparentale et le décrocheur) et, bien sûr, anti-impérialiste. Dans l'identitaire et l'imaginaire collectif, le Québécois est celui qui épouse la cause de tous les Éplorés et Empêchés de la planète, car il se reconnaît dans cette condition misérable, témoignage d'une situation de Souffrance séculaire — *soft* ou *hard*, c'est selon chacun — qui définit son historicité particulière. Voilà une deuxième raison possible au fait que les Québécois soient descendus aussi nombreux dans la rue en février 2003, manière de protester contre une guerre jugée injuste et, par la même occasion, de se rappeler à Eux-Mêmes dans leur condition de Progressistes tous azimuts, de Solidaires de la cause des Opprimés et de Résistants à la bêtise des Puissants.

Sans prétendre épuiser le sujet, avançons une troisième cause éventuelle pour expliquer la réticence apparente des Québécois, au chapitre de leur rhétorique identitaire tout au moins, à souscrire à l'engagement militaire et à faire du conflit guerrier une référence positive, voire seulement intégrable, à leur mémoire collective.

En tant que groupement minoritaire au Canada et joueur mineur dans l'ordre nord-américain, dans le système atlantique, dans le pan-américanisme en construction ou dans la mondialisation contemporaine, les Québécois n'ont jamais eu — et n'ont toujours pas — intérêt à ce que les rapports entre groupements, nations ou collectivités se radicalisent au point de déboucher sur le conflit tranché ou la guerre. On peut comprendre pourquoi. Le propre des petites collectivités est en effet (d'essayer) de se tailler un espace d'évolution dans les lieux qui leur sont laissés par les grands joueurs. Plus la dynamique politique est à la collaboration ou à la négociation, plus les petites collectivités ont une chance de se faire valoir et de poser les conditions favorables à leur existence. Cela ne veut évidemment pas dire que les petites collectivités se représentent comme des actrices passives de leur destin. Dans le cas du Québec, c'est le contraire qui est vrai. On sait à quel point la figure du Rebelle — depuis le coureur de bois jusqu'à Gilles Duceppe,

sorte de *Trickster* au sein du système fédéral — est centrale dans l'imaginaire et l'identitaire des Québécois d'héritage canadien-français. Mais le Rebelle, précisément, se distingue du Révolutionnaire. Alors

que le Révolutionnaire va jusqu'au bout de son programme ou de ses utopies, au point de jouer sa vie dans une opération quitte ou double, le Rebelle se donne pour mandat de porter un rapport de force à ses limites, sans toutefois outrepasser le point de non-retour. En fait, le Rebelle est celui qui sait qu'il n'aura d'avenir que dans le cadre d'une délibération continue avec l'Autre, délibération qu'il veut exploiter à son avantage en maintenant une tension optimale avec son interlocuteur. Or, le conflit ouvert et la guerre marquent précisément la fin du dialogue et la rupture du rapport de force. En pareil contexte, non seulement le point de vue du Petit ou du Minoritaire n'est plus entendu, mais l'ambivalence n'est pas davantage possible. La situation tranchée oblige en effet à choisir son camp unique. Être d'un bord signifie ne pas pouvoir être de l'autre bord. Or, cette attitude est contraire à la tradition politique des Québécois d'héritage canadien-français qui ont toujours recherché une position mitoyenne entre les extrêmes. Pour ces derniers, l'univocité, qui est une forme de radicalité, est en effet une position dangereuse, car elle n'offre aucune porte de sortie ni garantie d'échappatoire. Voilà pourquoi la guerre ne peut être vue par eux comme une solution aux tensions inéluctables de l'histoire. La voie militaire est en effet un moyen radical et univoque d'imposer aux plus faibles la loi des plus forts. La guerre est une option démissionnaire devant la complexité des choses alors même que, pour les Québécois d'héritage canadien-français, voire pour les Québécois tout court

maintenant, la seule fonction acceptable du Soldat est de se faire missionnaire pour la cause humanitaire. Résister à la guerre, pour les Québécois (d'héritage canadien-français), c'est non seulement revêtir la toge honorable du Désobéissant juste ou du Rebelle progressiste, c'est également lutter contre l'embrigadement du monde dans un dessein unique et univoque — celui de la Pax Americana et la USrule dans le cas de la guerre d'Irak.

On dira du propos de cet article qu'il ne correspond pas à la réalité vécue des Québécois; que ces derniers, y compris les francophones d'héritage canadien-français en leur sein, ne forment pas un bloc monolithique sur le plan idéologique; et que le fait militaire, sans être dominant, fut et reste présent dans l'histoire québécoise. On aura raison. Mon intention n'était pas de décrire l'agir effectif des Québécois, qui est évidemment irréductible au Même ou à l'Unique, mais de pénétrer au cœur de leur imaginaire et de leur identitaire collectifs. Or, s'ils s'enracinent dans certains faits du passé, il est rare qu'un imaginaire et qu'un identitaire collectif correspondent à la réalité vécue des acteurs dans l'histoire. L'identitaire et l'imaginaire collectifs consistent plutôt en des autoreprésentations à l'intérieur desquelles bien des contradictions et paradoxes sont effacés ou sublimés aux fins d'assurer la cohérence d'un groupement et d'accoler un sens spécifique à sa destinée. Les hypothèses exploratoires ici formulées pour expliquer la distance qu'aiment bien prendre les Québécois à l'égard du conflit guerrier appellent encore validation. Mon intuition est toutefois de dire que cette distance ne tient pas du hasard. Au-delà des facteurs conjoncturels et des causes ponctuelles qui, dans le cas de l'Irak, ont pu nourrir la mobilisation des Québécois, la résistance à l'idée de la guerre se comprend chez eux à l'aune d'une culture politique dont j'ai essayé d'identifier quelques topiques importants. Cerner tous les éléments et référents de cette culture politique, et par la suite établir leur dynamique relationnelle, serait se donner les moyens de saisir l'identité d'un groupement dans ce qu'elle a d'historique et de fictif tout à la fois, c'est-à-dire de mythohistorique.

Endnotes

¹ L'expression est de Svend Robinson. Je remercie Antoine Robitaille, journaliste au quotidien *Le Devoir*, de m'avoir transmis un dossier de presse relatif à la mobilisation des Québécois contre la guerre en Irak. On lira l'article fort intéressant du collègue: « Les Québécois, pacifistes ou pacifiques », dans *L'Annuaire du Québec 2004*, sous la dir. de Michel Venne, Montréal, Fides, 2003, p. 53-64.

² Bien mise en récit par Pierre Berton qui a consacré plusieurs de ses ouvrages sur la saga canadienne à des événements de type militaire. Voir Mathieu Roy, « Pierre Berton, grand parolier de l'identité canadienne », mémoire de maîtrise, département d'histoire, Université Laval, 2004.

³ Pensons aux Serge Bernier, Jean Lamarre, Jean-Pierre Gagnon, Roch Legault, Béatrice Richard et à tous ceux qui, impulsés par l'infatigable Robert Comeau, ont produit des monographies fort intéressantes. Dans la tradition historiographique du Canada français, le Québec y compris, l'histoire militaire reste néanmoins mineure par rapport à la place qu'occupe cette histoire dans l'historiographie du Canada anglais.

⁴ Voir à ce sujet notre brève synthèse intitulée *Le Québec, les Québécois. Un parcours historique*, Montréal/Québec, Fides/Musée de la civilisation, 2004.

⁵ Je pense ici à Jacques Parizeau qui, voulant faire preuve d'« astuce » pour amener les Québécois à voter OUI au dernier référendum sur la souveraineté-partenariat, a suscité beaucoup de réprobation chez les souverainistes comme chez les fédéralistes.

⁶ Ces deux termes: « disparaître » et « s'écraser », sonnent très fort dans l'imaginaire collectif des Québécois d'héritage canadien-français. Utilisé comme titre d'un documentaire auquel Lise Payette fut associée en 1989, le premier avait provoqué une véritable commotion dans l'espace public québécois. Le second, utilisé pour qualifier l'attitude de Robert Bourassa au moment des négociations entourant les accords du lac Meech (1990), avait irrité l'opinion publique contre le Premier ministre du Québec.

⁷ « À la manière de » signifie ici parenté générique de situation et non pas proximité empirique de condition. En effet, personne ne soutiendrait sérieusement que la condition vécue par la population irakienne se rapproche de celle que connaît la population québécoise.

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