

# **FIX CANADA**

**21<sup>st</sup> Edition**

Jeff Willerton

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# Prologue

There is a right/left paradigm in the political universe, and there are assuredly crackpots aplenty in both camps. On the far right is 0% government or anarchy, and it's more than a tad nutty. On the far left, on the other hand, is 100% government or communism, and that stuff is just plain evil. (It's also on the march, and to paraphrase Bonhoeffer, indifference, when evil is afoot, is itself evil.) The space to the left of center is shared by liberals and socialists (and not a few Conservatives) who insofar as they contribute to society's leftward drift were once referred to by radicals like V.I. Lenin as communism's "useful idiots."

This book is a collection of columns about a variety of political issues and personalities, many of whom could safely be described as such. These are followed by updates on the issues contained therein, and there's just enough history in the mix to make things make sense. As one reader put it, "It's like Willerton has taken historical facts and current events, connected them together like pieces of a puzzle and presented it in a way that anyone can understand."

*Common Sense*, a series of pamphlets written by Thomas Paine in 1775-76 advocating American independence from Great Britain, is said to have inspired the American Revolution. Willerton has been described as the Tom Paine of our generation, but unlike his, Willerton's vitriol is reserved, not for our mother country, but for the liberalism that afflicts it, us and almost all western nations, against which a revolution of sorts is long overdue.

So be advised: like the fabled beanstalk that, having climbed it, gave young Jack a different perspective on this world, so too the plain words of *FIX CANADA* might change the way you view the socio-political events of our day.

# Introduction

This book comes about as the result of the death of a very fine man. John Moerman was a teenager in WWII Holland where he worked with the Dutch underground protecting downed Allied airmen. One day he had coffee with an SS officer at his kitchen table while hiding one such airman directly underneath. It's the stuff movies are made of!

After the war, John married his sweetheart Corrie before the happy couple immigrated to the country of their liberators where they pastored churches in the Edmonton area for forty years. Retiring to a small acreage, John would there go on to become a prolific writer, not of books, but of letters to the editor in which he would articulately take on the left-leaning establishment and defend those who could not do so themselves, a cause to which he would often return. As son Jack eulogized, his father fearlessly took on both Nazis and Canadian politicians alike!

His work was sent regularly to over 200 publications across Canada. And thus it happened that when the publisher of our local weekly needed a conservative columnist to complete his revised editorial page, the retired pastor heard the call. That is to say he heard the phone ring, accepted the offered promotion and became a very fine weekly columnist. Sadly, it would be his last paying gig. Six months later, without so much as a hint of either physical or mental decline, he was gone.

To understand how John affected the lives of the people he touched, one need only consider the example of the receptionist at the doctor's office where he had been taking his beloved Corrie before his passing. The two had been there about a dozen times. When informed of why a forthcoming appointment had to be canceled (his passing) she—the receptionist—simply exploded into tears right there in the office. Such was the effect he had on people who knew him even casually. I know because I count myself among them.

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It had been my privilege to meet John on three occasions. The first was in my role as a salesman in 1997. I introduced myself. He interjected: "Would that be the same Jeff Willerton who ran for Social Credit down in Calgary two weeks ago?" Note there were probably 300 candidates across the province in that election, Alberta is three times the size of a unified Germany and I was a long way from home. Obviously this gentleman had a mind for details. He and Corrie and I coffeed away the balance of a very enjoyable afternoon in their quaint abode, about a stone's throw north of Mayerthorpe, Alberta.

The second time we met was at their 50th wedding anniversary into which I almost accidentally stumbled. Cornered by an acquaintance into competing in a karaoke contest at the local hotel, I once again found myself in Mayerthorpe. Trophy in hand, on the way out of town I stopped to coffee with yet another acquaintance. He informed me of the then ongoing festivities to which an open invitation had been extended, and to which I informed him we simply had to go. Again, a good time was had with the Moermans.

The third, two days later, was a brief but meaningful encounter in which I gave John some literature he'd requested. He concluded it by looking me in the eye and saying, with a little twinkle in his own, "I think we think alike on a lot of issues." That it would be our last exchange made the encounter that much more meaningful yet.

And John's passing left more than an ache in the hearts of all who knew him. It also left a column-sized void on the editorial page of our local paper, and I wanted that space. I'd been writing letters to the editor for some time, as had John before being elevated to the status of weekly columnist. His last words to me were, in effect, that we were of the same mind on many issues – *a veritable passing of the mantle if you will!*

In the beginning, the space he had occupied became a guest column. Your humble scribe filled it every week but three in the ensuing six months, at which point the powers that be finally succumbed to mounting public pressure (I'm public!) and gave it to me as my own byline.

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Much of what you hold in your hand is a compilation of those columns written over the year and a half following John's passing. Or more accurately, close approximations thereof.

When a column or article is republished with a date included, it is implied that what follows was originally published, verbatim, on that date, but that's not the case here. I've edited and re-edited this book six ways from Sunday over the years, columns included. I calculated that if Brian Mulroney can pocket a quarter mill and forget to pay taxes on it for six years<sup>1</sup>, and Justin Trudeau can spend the weekend at the cottage with the fam after telling the rest of us not to<sup>2</sup>, I can bend the rules a little and give you a better finished product... so I did.

With that little housekeeping detail out of the way, I will conclude this portion of the introduction by repeating that the book you're presently reading came about in no small part as the result of the passing of a very fine man, and truer words would be hard to find. His name was John Moerman, I flatter myself when I refer to him as a kindred spirit, and I hope in these opening pages to have in some small way honoured his memory.

The column was largely a critique of the liberal policies imposed on us by various levels of government. Left-leaning federates, for instance, have done more than their share of damage to this country, and the provinces have unfortunately marched lock step with them to the edge of the abyss.

Ralph Klein, for instance, arguably the country's then most conservative premier, led a government that spent money more liberally per capita than even our most profligate (pre-Trudeau the Lesser) federal government. He had it to spend you might argue, but so did Peter Lougheed, the province's first in a long line of Conservative premiers, and it was clearly the latter's unbridled spending that landed Alberta in the soup in the first place. (On the day Lougheed left office, the Alberta government was spending *eighteen times* the inflation adjusted dollars it was spending the day he took office.) Both men's enduring reputations as conservative hawks testify to the efficacy of double-speak and smoke-and-mirror politics, as you will see.

Ralph Klein has shuffled off the mortal coil, and Jean Chrétien, another prominent figure in the book, has long since departed the political stage. So why read about them? Why did your humble scribe read a book about Lougheed twenty years after he left office? Or why would anyone ever read about Trudeau Sr., or Napoleon? Because it's history, of course, and we all know what happens when people don't learn from it....

The columns were written as issues arose, so to read them chronologically would be to bounce from one issue and jurisdiction to another and back again. To simplify, the book has been divided into two sections. The first deals primarily with provincial issues in Alberta, issues largely shared by other provinces. The author might have written a similar column in P.E.I., for instance, but it's probably a good thing this unfolded in Alberta as Ralph Klein cut a somewhat more national and obviously more colourful figure than Pat Binns. Who? Exactly! The second section deals with federal and international issues. An attempt was also made to gather issues together, whenever possible, without violating the above divisions.

Being somewhat controversial, obviously the column was not without its detractors. One memorable day a reader tore a strip off me for a) spilling too much ink on the then governing provincial Tories [understandably, as he was a member of their local constituency association] and b) being overly negative.

To respond to the second accusation first, I confess my guilt: I was negative. One must add, though, that it would be a poor columnist indeed who put a positive spin on events while being governed into the proverbial toilet. The author is no defender of socialist governments (perish the thought!) but the New Democratic Party didn't create the mess that was Alberta in 2015, except insofar as they promoted the province's leftward drift from the opposition benches. So the NDP might not have created the mess exactly, but like every socialist government ever, once in office they proceeded to take a bad thing and make it demonstrably worse by growing government, raising taxes, shutting down an entire industry (in this case, coal) and

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generally turning what was an ailing economy into a veritable briar patch. The United Conservative Party (UCP) would soon one-up them by shutting down the whole province (twice even) but I'm getting a little ahead of myself.

In response to the accusation of spilling too much ink on the provincial Tories, a) it was a political column, b) they were in power, and c) as another reader aptly put it, "They deserved every drop!" And so they did. They're far from alone, of course, but if what was reputed to be the most conservative government in Canada was as liberal as revealed in these pages, we obviously have a lot of rooting out to do. And not only provincially.

The federal Liberals and what was the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada have not only been almost equally culpable for our nation's decline, they've been virtually indistinguishable. As such, they've been aptly compared to two vehicles splashing each other with mud, traveling on the same road, in the same direction, to the exact same destination. And sadly, what is now the Conservative Party of Canada is becoming more 'progressive' by the day, but I'll come back to that.

Aware of the over-arching similarities between the parties, the players seemed entirely comfortable under either banner. Tory cabinet minister and one-time party leader Jean Charest, for instance, served as the Liberal premier of Québec for three terms; admitted (Pierre) Trudeau fan and long-time Liberal Ralph Klein likewise served as the Conservative premier of Alberta for almost fourteen years; and one-time Conservative Prime Minister Joe Clark was seen campaigning for our very own Benedict Arnold (aka Scott Brison) in Nova Scotia in 2004.

If you can't quite place the name, Benedict Arnold was BFF with George Washington and a general in the revolutionary army before defecting to the British, making him pretty much the ultimate floor-crosser. If you're over seventy and unfamiliar with the acronym, BFF stands for 'best friends forever', the closeness of their relationship making the defection that much more egregious.

North of the 49th, many Canadians seem determined to vote as they and their families have for the last hundred years, apparently more concerned with maintaining tradition than seeking good governance. I'm referring now to those who persist in voting Liberal no matter how totalitarian they become; Tory no matter how liberal they become; or NDP regardless of the carnage that party leaves behind every time they manage to grasp the levers of power.

Many Albertans, for instance, will vote for the United Conservative Party come hell or high water, a) because they always vote for the party with 'Conservative' in its name [which is better than voting for the party with 'Liberal' in its name, but that's not saying much] b) because they liked its first silver-tongued leaders, both of whom you will learn more about in these pages, or c) to keep the NDP at bay. That last reason is entirely laudable by the way, but my objective in publishing this collection of words is to help all Canadians make better, more informed choices going forward. In the voting booth. And maybe elsewhere, too. You'll see.

And without question it was a privilege to write the column that got this ball rolling. I had and still have no formal post-secondary training either as a writer or in the subject matter contained herein. When these columns were first penned, I was just a high school educated mid-thirties layman who liked to play connect the dots and had a passion for promoting better government. To do so, obviously it would help to know a little bit about the subject.

To that end, you might say I had built a grid of information over the years through which new information and events were filtered. To the extent the grid was faulty, so too would be my interpretation of those developments. Likewise to the extent the grid was properly built. You will be the judge as to its construction.

To understand the early columns, one must be made aware of what were then some recent developments in the province. One was the Supreme Court of Canada's Vriend decision in April of 1998 in which the high court agreed with an Alberta



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Court of Queen's Bench ruling to read 'sexual orientation' into the province's Individual Rights legislation. Another was that over the previous years the Tory government had brought electronic gambling devices known as Video Lottery Terminals into the province and placed them pretty much anywhere a person could sit down for a cold one.

Vriend, VLTs, judge-made law, major political cover-ups and many other issues are dealt with in these pages. Occasionally some good news even creeps in. Depending on one's existing paradigm, or world view, one might find points with which one agrees and others with which one will perhaps even strongly disagree. Hopefully more of the former than the latter, though obviously I can offer no guarantees.

Should the column itself, though, have been written? It was well received by the readership, so probably, yes. On the other hand, should this book have been honed and refined these several times as I approach the publication of this twenty-first and (keeping in mind that I've said this sixteen times now) presumably final edition? In fact, I was almost daily asking myself a similar question in the spring of '07 for reasons that will later be made clear. The answer came while reading a book on 18th century philosopher Adam Smith.<sup>3</sup>

Smith is widely revered as the Father of Capitalism for his work, *Wealth of the Nations* (1776). This much I knew. What I discovered therein was that *Wealth* was almost an addendum to his earlier, seminal work entitled *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. This he first published in 1759... and republished five times in the thirty-one years following. (Further revisions were precluded by his passing in 1790.)

*Well hold the phone and note the timing!* Questioning if I was on the right road publishing and republishing a book to a significant extent on Smith's 'moral sentiments'—social issues in today's lingo—it came to my attention that the one I was on had been trod before by no less than the Father of Capitalism himself! The moment was almost spiritual frankly, and after it there was no question about continuing with this project, though not everyone will share my enthusiasm.

Comparing the home of the brave with our native land, one McGill University economist surmised: “You can be a social conservative in the U.S. without being labeled a wacko. Not in Canada.” Having spent considerable time in both countries, I can attest to the veracity of that statement and know full-well that some of my countrymen will be tempted to write me off in short order.

Topping the list of reasons why might be my conviction that it's wrong for society to normalize, promote or, disregarding a little thing called freedom of speech, in any way discourage legitimate discourse on what many consider an emerging plethora of harmful lifestyles in the west. Or maybe it will be because I believe it's wrong for governments to place what's known as the crack cocaine of gambling devices under people's noses in bars and restaurants across the land. Or perhaps, like John Moerman before me, it will be because I do my editorial best to defend those yet incapable of doing so themselves.

One is, of course, free to disagree with these or any other positions articulated on these pages. Unfortunately for those who take issue with the aforementioned big three, though, they are the first three dealt with in the book you're presently reading and comprise the first approximately dozen columns. And then like a dog with a bone buried in the back yard, I occasionally return to them.

Winston Churchill (at whose shrine I unapologetically bow) defined a fanatic as “one who can't change his mind and won't change the subject.” Once again, you will be the judge, this time as to whether I qualify.

In closing, I by no means have the final word on the issues contained herein, but humbly submit my thoughts on them to you for your consideration. They may enrich or enrage you, or both, but I suspect they won't leave you entirely unmoved. So with no further adieu I encourage you to jump in, buckle up, get ahold of that grab bar and let's see where this takes us.

# Provincial Issues

## NOTE

The following two columns are not the first two in the book, but they're innocuous enough that they may evade Ottawa's censorship.

# Just call me Cassandra

January 4, 1999

Journalists rule occasionally, and sometimes they even do a good job of it. John Robson, for instance, became the ninth premier of British Columbia. Prior to that province's entry into Confederation in 1871, Robson the journalist's editorial arguments for confederation earned him the opposition of those seeking to maintain the status quo. "Honest John" won the battle for hearts and minds, got himself elected and had a mountain and park named after him. That's no small feat for an ink-stained wretch, most of whom are satisfied using their at times powerful pens to merely influence public opinion as opposed to writing policy.

Two such individuals would be Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein who together broke the Watergate story that brought down a president. Another was one William Connor who wrote under the byline Cassandra instead of his real name.

In pre-WWII England, this Cassandra was the only writer with the spine to preach against Chamberlain's policy of appeasement toward Hitler. Most reporters of the day were, in a manner of speaking, in bed with the government officials on whom they depended for their headlines and thus refused to speak against them in their milquetoast columns. Not Cassandra.

He fearlessly took on everybody, and the paper he wrote for, *The Daily Mirror*, became the most financially successful newspaper in the history of the written word. He wrote against Chamberlain and for Churchill, essentially bringing England into the war during which he laid down his pen and took up the rifle for five years. Returning to his trusty Underwood and dissatisfied with the great man's post-war agenda, he would thereafter write equally vociferously

against Churchill, presumably contributing to the great man's electoral defeat mere months after having saved the free world from the Nazis. So this Cassandra fellow's was apparently a particularly powerful pen.

Klein likes to compare his battle with the deficit to Churchill's victory in Europe and has said that, unlike the British prime minister, he needs a post-war agenda to inspire the electorate. I hate it when people drop names like that, but if Klein can liken himself to Churchill you can from henceforth call me Cassandra, for it is my unwavering commitment to use this pen to promote better government, which in this case logically necessitates bringing down a certain, particularly poor one.

As the 23-year-old Abraham Lincoln (*cough, cough*) said in his first campaign speech, "Every man is said to have his peculiar ambition," and now you know mine.

**UPDATE:** Why did pre-WWII era English reporters, with at least one notable exception, not criticize their political overlords? Because they didn't want to bite the hand that fed them! Prime Minister Zoolander understands how that works, and in an era of seemingly endless deficits has reached into our grandchildren's pockets for \$600 million, give or take, with which to fill the pockets of those reporters' "worthy" (ie: sufficiently liberal) successors.

In this the PM has made a mockery of our independent press, and if there's any justice in this world every publisher who accepts those funds will, upon doing so, immediately die of embarrassment. Why? Because next to the right to life itself, free speech is the second most important right we have, as without it we have no way of defending our other rights short of taking up arms. So to the extent that publishers and editors restrict respectful dialogue on controversial issues, like Hitler's apologists, they may very well be hastening our decent into anarchy and the inevitable police state that follows. In fact, I suspect that's exactly what the government wants, so let's make sure we don't give it to them.

# Socialists and other monkeys

August 2, 1999

Radio commentator Paul ‘and now you know... the rest of the story’ Harvey tells of an experiment involving a chimpanzee that scientists were determined to teach written communication skills. For fourteen years, project directors worked patiently with the chimp, providing it with symbols in its cage to enable it to form words.

When this primate had finally constructed a sentence from the symbols it had been learning word went out, and many scientists gathered around the cage. The tension in the room was palpable when the little guy approached his work and threw off the veil. And what was this primate’s first articulated sentence? *“Get me the h-e-double-hockey-sticks outta here!”*

Fabricated, sure, but a great story. The fictitious monkey might have been the most pampered primate in history, but it was meaningless to him without freedom. And that, dear reader, is the inherent, unanswerable problem of socialism.

Socialist goals seem reasonable enough – basically to provide a decent standard of living for all. Unfortunately, while trying to provide such, socialist governments thoroughly undermine their citizens’ economic freedom. You see, to provide goodies for all, governments have to first take them away from those who honestly earned them, in the process destroying a little thing called incentive, without which even the most industrious eventually give up and the whole shootin’ match goes down the toilet.

So one can accept that we’re different and as such will reach different stations in life. Or if you prefer, we can enjoy an equal share of misery to paraphrase Churchill, but we can’t have both freedom and equality; they’re mutually incompatible. So the next time you’re tempted to vote for a

leveling of the outcome (like for a higher minimum wage or national minimum income, for instance) just remember: such equality comes at a price, and what that little monkey wanted most is exactly what you'll pay for it.

**ADDENDUM:** Socialism can be loosely defined as a system of governance in which the state controls the means of production in society, be that through the outright ownership of the same or through an equally unworkable, centrally-planned economy. Communism is all that and more at the end of a bayonet. For the finer differences between these philosophies, I encourage you to consult people who have spent time in the parties that espouse them.

Brian Mason, for instance, who led the socialist NDP in Alberta for a decade, was a long-time member of the Communist Party of Canada and the fruit that didn't fall far from the tree (though they kept his membership low key as he intended to run for the Dippers one day). Or maybe you can talk to Ann McGrath who got her feet wet as a member of the Communist Youth League before reaching the age of majority, becoming a member of the party proper and running as a candidate in Edmonton Strathcona in 1984. Of course, I wouldn't be telling you this if she too didn't fall to the base of the tree and serve as Chief of Staff to then national NDP leader Jack Layton (1950-2011) and more recently Alberta's Rachel Notley.

Or maybe you can ask Toronto mayor Olivia Chow whose municipal campaigns have long been staffed by communist volunteers. As were those of her late husband, the aforementioned Jack Layton. How do I know this? I know this because a long-time friend of mine used to be one of those volunteers. He's since seen the light thankfully, but he was active in the party for years and involved in a number of campaigns. Now friendships are invaluable for their own sake, of course, but some people bring more to the table than others, and this guy has been a wealth of information about who's who in the communist zoo.