

Election 2008 and Beyond

Radical-Left Strategy in a Time of Right-Wing Consensus and "Centre-Left" Illusion

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In these difficult times, those of us on the radical Left have learned to be grateful for tender mercies. And so it goes with the results of the October 14th federal election. A few bits of good news immediately come into view: the hard-Right crew around Stephen Harper was denied a majority government; and the main beneficiaries of the majority rejection of the Conservatives were not the centre-Right Liberals, whose crisis continues unabated, but rather the nominally social-democratic NDP, the sovereigntist Bloc Québécois and the vaguely left-liberal Greens.

The Conservatives overplayed the limited hand they were dealt in the 2006 elections. In a context of growing capitalist economic crisis — played out spectacularly during the campaign itself — and US-led imperialist overreach in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Caucasus, there is real disquiet, especially in Quebec, about their hyper-neoliberal and militarist agenda. Conservative strategists felt they had a small window of opportunity to secure a majority government — before the economic slowdown hit and before their American neo-con counterparts were thrown out of office. In the event, the window was even smaller than they thought and the opportunity perhaps not so great after all.

Beyond this, though, there is little to celebrate. The radical Left has arguably hit a new low within the period opened up by the mobilizations in Seattle (1999) and Quebec City (2001), especially outside Quebec. Indeed, it is very timely indeed that the long-awaited film *The Battle in Seattle* should be released in theatres just as we digest the results of the federal election. The juxtaposition enables us to contrast the tremendous hope and dynamism and the serious political discussion of that not-so-long-ago period with the virtual absence of the radical Left during this latest electoral contest. This absence is all the more striking given the crisis the project of corporate-led globalization currently faces on so many fronts. If ever there were a time for forces representing a forthright, visible and activist alternative to capitalism and imperialism, surely this is it.

This article is a modest contribution towards understanding the outcome of the federal elections and presenting a framework for the debate on radical-Left strategy that must now take place. Here are the main arguments put forward in the piece:

1. The nature of the current threat from the Right has been misconstrued. The threat of a hard-Right Conservative majority was overblown. The real right-wing threat is a bipartisan one, given the vast swathe of common ground shared by the hard-Right Conservatives and the centre-Right Liberals. With the scale of the financial crisis and the prospect of a deep recession rattling ruling-class forces at the highest levels, we are likely to see a strengthening of this bipartisan right-wing consensus in the coming period.

2. The forces and ideas associated with the cycle of protest and debate inaugurated by the events in Seattle and Quebec City have not evaporated into thin air. However, they have been on the retreat since the massive protests against the Iraq War in 2003 and 2004. These forces now find themselves in the same strategic impasse that afflicts the small and dispersed forces of the social-movement, trade-union and party-political radical Left. In a context of Conservative advance and Liberal disarray, this strategic void has been filled by forces stretching from the Layton leadership of the NDP across to the Green Party and a variety of left-liberal media personalities. These forces advocate a shift to the political centre and, implicitly or explicitly, the creation of a durable Liberal-dominated “centre-Left” alliance in Canadian politics.

3. The current context presents enormous challenges to the radical Left and our natural audience among workers, youth and other marginalized sectors of the population. We are still reeling from the effects of years of neoliberalism and now the economic downturn will make things worse. We will also find little space in a political and media landscape dominated by the hard-Right, the centre-Right and, to a lesser extent, the “centre-Left”.

However, the depth of the crisis and public anger, the impasse of the mainstream political formations, and the ongoing resilience of our scattered forces, are such that we also have an opportunity to break out of our current impasse and achieve an elementary level of common purpose and visibility. We can seize the moment and — playing catch-up with similar developments in Western Europe and Latin America in particular — lay down the foundation for the medium-term project of building a viable democratic, activist framework for anti-neoliberal and anti-capitalist politics in this country.

Harper’s Party and the Right-Wing Consensus

The threat of a hard-Right Conservative majority in these elections was overstated. If anything, it is surprising that the Conservatives did so well. This relative success has more to do with the ongoing crisis of the centre-Right Liberals. Except for the Greens, every party lost voters from the 2006 election. But only Liberal supporters stayed away from the polls in such large numbers; and the haemorrhaging would have been far worse had the anyone-but-Harper wave in Quebec not carried some voters onto its shores. The Liberals are still reeling from three self-inflicted blows: the aggressive neoliberal turn from 1995 onwards; the patronage and corruption employed to “rebuild” the Quebec wing of the party after nearly losing the 1995 referendum; and the fratricidal scramble for the apparatus of the party that accompanied the end of the Chrétien era — itself the inglorious last instalment in the history of the post-war party of St. Laurent, Pearson and Trudeau.

But the Liberals remain the largest opposition party in Ottawa and are woven into this country’s fabric of power at all levels. In the party-electoral-institutional sphere, the danger does not come as such from the threat of a Conservative majority, as real as that threat remains. Rather, it comes from the deep commitment of both the Liberals and the Conservatives to exercise power within a staunchly neoliberal policy regime and authoritarian institutional order, with only very slight differences between one political family and the other on the key questions of the day.

More than anything else, the Conservatives have run up against both the limits of their own project and the constraints imposed by the fragmentation and centrifugal forces at play in Canadian politics. These tendencies have been present throughout Canadian history, but have been exacerbated by the neoliberal transformation of socio-economic and political life

over the past quarter century.

The Conservatives have been transparently trying to rebuild the Mulroney-era alliance of Western elites, Bay Street, social conservatives, Thatcherite ideologues and disgruntled Quebec nationalists. They have made real inroads into Bay Street and Toronto-based media, whose main concern is to be on good terms with whichever right-wing party has the wind in its sails. But there continues to be even elite-level resistance — in urban areas outside Alberta and Saskatchewan and in central and eastern Canada more generally — to a political movement with origins in the western-regionalist and religious-populist Reform Party and strong ties to the Calgary-based oil industry. This is one key explanation for Liberal resilience in many areas, but it also accounts for the grudging support Harper receives from former nominally Red Tory sectors of the defunct Progressive Conservative party. Indeed, the tenuous gains the Conservatives have been able to make among immigrants in suburban areas by appealing to religion and “family values” are more than offset by the allergic reaction of many women in particular to the fireside patriarch Harper. No wonder then that avowedly Red Tory and feminist figures such as iconic writer Margaret Atwood came out strongly against the Conservatives during the campaign, going so far as to advocate a vote for the BQ in Quebec. Such are the sands upon which Conservatives must build.

However, Conservative designs have floundered most strikingly in Quebec, where they were unable to consolidate and expand the electoral foothold gained during the 2006 campaign. Despite a greater proclivity to embracing the cause of decentralization favoured by their old Reform base in the West, the Conservatives ultimately share the Liberals’ strong commitment to the institutions of the Canadian central state. Taken together with their class and English-Canadian majoritarian antagonism towards the Francophone mass base of Quebec sovereigntism, they are unable to go beyond symbolic accommodation of Quebec’s national aspirations, which continue to shape attitudes toward federal politics in that province. Repealing the interventionist Clarity Act, for example, is on the agenda of neither its Reform-Conservative masterminds nor its Liberal sponsors. Not surprisingly, then, no political force of any weight in Quebec is willing to cast its lot in with the federal Conservatives in the way that disgruntled sovereigntists such as Lucien Bouchard did with Mulroney in the mid-1980s. And the neoliberal gutting of the post-war federal redistributive regime of social programs and transfer payments has substantially reduced the appeal that the modernizing federalist project of the Liberals once held for traditional federalists in Quebec. When combined with the relatively stronger position of Left-progressive organization and opinion in Quebec, that key province will remain a tough nut to crack for any pan-Canadian party — and therefore an ongoing source of institutional stability of the federal system itself [1].

The Conservatives will now have to regroup and rethink their strategy for securing a majority in Ottawa. Despite the current predicament of the Liberals, the Conservatives are in no rush to hurl themselves yet again against the limits of their own project. What’s more, with the scale of the financial crisis and the prospect of a deep recession rattling ruling-class forces up to the highest levels, the Conservatives will be in damage-control mode for some time. While the partisan posturing will continue, the backdrop will be a growing right-wing consensus in the coming period — with the Conservatives shifting a little to the centre and the Liberals dutifully shifting even further to the right for a sickening display of “national unity” in the search for (neoliberal) solutions to the economic crisis. The gentlemanly sparring that characterizes relations between the McGuinty Liberal provincial government in

Ontario and the Harper Conservative government in Ottawa — as both prepare to confront recession with cutbacks and initially modest deficits — is the likely model for Conservative-Liberal relations across the country for the coming period.

In this sense, and for what it's worth, the specific danger of the hard-Right project has retreated for the time being. However, given the ongoing volatility in mainstream politics and the absence of any alternative to neoliberalism, things could get very ugly if the recession is deeper and longer than expected. The Conservatives could very easily reactivate the groundwork they have already laid to more aggressively court those sectors of the crisis-besieged middle and upper-middle classes that have thus far remained out of their reach, and likewise nurture a right-wing populist base among working-class and other disenfranchised sectors with hateful campaigns about unionized workers, the poor, Aboriginals, anti-war forces, Quebec and non-whites — campaigns of a kind not seen since the days of Mike Harris in Ontario. The Conservatives would be encouraged down such a path by developments south of the border, where the reactionary passions whipped up by the McCain-Palin ticket will coalesce around an unsavoury assortment of right-wing-populist and even far-Right ventures if the economic crisis dramatically deepens under a neoliberal Obama presidency [2].

But this is speculation about the medium term. For the time being, the dominant features of mainstream political life will be the stalling of Conservative efforts to secure a majority in Ottawa and the building of a right-wing consensus between Conservatives and Liberals on a response to the economic crisis. If nothing else, such a configuration quite clearly undermines the fanciful and misguided idea of a "centre-Left" alliance between the NDP, the Liberals, the BQ and the Greens advocated in some left-wing circles (with the activist and radical Left presumably playing the role of fast-fading rump). In that purely party-political-institutional sense, at least, the Left broadly speaking now has a little bit of breathing room.

The Radical Left

This new context, rich with danger and opportunity, cries out for a truly left-wing force in the country, rooted in the realities and struggles of working-class and marginalized sectors of the population and intervening in mainstream political and media life. Just a few short years ago, it seemed that such a goal was within reach for the first time in a generation. What happened?

It isn't that the Seattle-era radicalization — the first broad youth radicalization in a quarter century — has disappeared without a trace. In fact, many of the people who entered left-wing politics at that time today play key roles in the small and dynamic activist projects that are sprinkled across university campuses and the bigger urban centres — whether around support for war resisters, opposition to the war on Afghanistan and skyrocketing post-secondary tuition fees, solidarity with struggles in Palestine, Latin America and among Canadian aboriginal peoples, the defence of undocumented immigrants, migrant and casual workers, or service-sector union drives, just to name a few. The sustained appeal of the subversive work and public personality of Naomi Klein, an emblematic figure of the Seattle-era radicalization, also speaks to the influence those heady days still exert within Canadian society. And while older generations of the radical Left are far weaker and more fragmented than their recently resurgent counterparts in many parts of Latin America and Western Europe, it is not the case either that we are entirely absent from the social-movement, trade-union, intellectual and media landscape.

Rather, the problem would seem to be the radical Left's inability to structure itself around a common strategic vision and organizational project. Indeed, the recent election campaign reveals that the radical Left has arguably hit a new low within the period opened up by the mobilizations in Seattle (1999) and Quebec City (2001).

The appeal of the call for "strategic voting" came from the understandable impulse to stymie the Conservative quest for a majority government. And it is a truism that the first-past-the-post system gives the radical Left very little room for manoeuvre in as much as we are individual voters scattered across a huge number of ridings with wildly differing local characteristics and relationships of forces. We lack a presence in an electoral arena whose rules in any case virtually guarantee our total marginalization. As a result, individually, we always vote tactically — and even strategically in those rare cases of consistently left-wing and activist-oriented NDP candidates and (even rarer) cases of credible non-sectarian candidates running to the left of the NDP. It is hardly surprising then that, collectively, we would be on the lookout for short-cuts around the daunting long-term endeavour of fashioning our own strategic-organizational project and pursuing radical electoral and institutional reform.

But this understandable impulse has now gotten caught up in a much larger slide to the centre and right of the political spectrum, a trend over which we have little or no influence — especially in the heat of an election campaign. In response to fears of a Conservative majority government, and in the absence of any viable radical-Left framework for debate and action, we have seen growing calls to embrace the centre-Right Liberals as a viable last line of defence against Conservative advance — either implicitly through support for online "strategic voting" initiatives such as vote4environment.ca and avaaz.ca, or explicitly through endorsement of the (largely illusory in any case) idea of a Liberal-led accord or coalition government involving the NDP, the BQ and the Greens [3].

There are bigger questions here about the accountability and transparency of maverick websites with pseudo-scientific pretensions launched by a small handful of individuals with their own political agendas and little or no connection to democratic, transformative politics; and of individual personalities whose influence the mainstream media projects far beyond the limited mechanisms for discussion and decision-making currently at our disposal. These important issues are beyond the scope of this article.

However, for the activist and radical Left, the embrace of "strategic voting" and broad governmental alliances marks a shift from the previous period. Following the collapse of both Rebuilding the Left under the weight of the ultraleft ultimatums of some and the organizational conservatism of others (1999-2002); and the undemocratic dissolution of the New Politics Initiative into the Jack Layton NDP leadership campaign (2001-2003), we have lacked a framework to debate and approach these matters in any sort of coherent and unified fashion. Two broad streams emerged in the wake of these two failures. Schematically put, the larger one has tended to supplement its activist work with varying levels of support for the NDP; while the other has tended to focus exclusively on single-issue activist campaigns. A small number of people from both streams have additionally tried to build small independent political organizations and currents, with very little success.

While both options were certainly inadequate to the challenges of the day, they shielded us to some extent from the rightward drift of mainstream political life and public opinion that followed the terrorist attacks of September 2001. They appeared to provide a viable framework for activist organizing efforts, such as the large short-term mobilizations against

the war in Iraq. The problem is that, as far as the debate on the broad Left was concerned, this approach ceded the political initiative entirely to the Layton leadership of the NDP, the Green Party and broader left-liberal sectors gravitating toward the centre-Right Liberals following the elections of June 2004 — which produced a minority Liberal government in a context of a resurgent hard-Right and the discrediting of the Liberals in Quebec.

This trend rapidly accelerated with the disgraceful events surrounding the May 2005 NDP-backed rescue of the doomed Martin Liberal minority government; and with the subsequent panic and demoralization that followed the Harper victory in early 2006. The result since then has been a pronounced marginalization of our issues and forces within left-liberal opinion, never mind on the broader stage, in a way not seen since the period immediately preceding the protests in Quebec City and Seattle. And as greater attention has turned to illusory “centre-Left” electoral and parliamentary responses to right-wing attacks, it has become increasingly difficult to organize extra-parliamentary campaigns and mobilizations, while space for the efforts already underway has grown narrower and narrower.

The “Centre-Left” Alliance Strategy

Thoughtful left-wing proponents of the “centre-Left” strategy argue that such a perspective would create a context favourable to mobilizing the social movements and trade unions, as they seek to secure the best possible terms for any alliance with the Liberals. But which social movements and trade unions in particular are they talking about? How much mobilization and pressure was there under the Liberal minority government from 2004 onwards; or even after the oft-touted NDP-Liberal accord that rescued the Liberals from defeat in May 2005? To ask the question is to answer it: it was all quiet on the social-movement and trade-union front during this period. And once the doomed NDP-Liberal accord came crashing down later that same year, and the Conservatives won their first minority government in January 2006, shell-shocked social movements and trade unions were even more demobilized and divided than they had been a year earlier.

After a quarter century of neoliberalism, if ever we could we can certainly no longer speak of compact blocks of social movements and trade unions that can be easily called upon to mobilize and to pressure social-democratic, left-liberal and progressive representatives in the institutional sphere. On the one hand, the movements themselves have been beaten back and fragmented; on the other, the institutional sphere has massively narrowed, virtually inoculating it against pressure from below in any immediate sense. While the NDP-Liberal federal and Ontario accords of the 1970s and 1980s are cast in far too positive a light in most of today’s discussions on the Left, it should be obvious to everyone that the relationship of forces and policy context of the time were radically different from today’s configuration. It is a gigantic stretch to imagine that the progressive reforms associated with those accords could be reproduced today under the umbrella of an alliance with the Liberals. Today, far from offering a perspective for rebuilding and remobilizing the labour and social movements, calls for an alliance of the “centre-Left” further disorient and demobilize these already fragmented and weakened forces.

The NDP and the Greens

The NDP has accompanied and exacerbated the drift towards the centre and right with a purely electoralist strategy aimed at occupying ground in the centre of the political spectrum freed up by the crisis of the Liberal Party. In this latest campaign, this meant strongly asserting the NDP “brand” through the promotion of Jack Layton as a candidate for

prime minister, while simultaneously waging an extremely timid campaign on the issues. While certainly welcome, promises to roll back Conservative corporate tax cuts, withdraw Canadian troops from the US-led war in Afghanistan and kick-start a countrywide childcare program were the most radical features of an NDP campaign that remained silent on the key pillars of neoliberalism — corporate power, privatization, financial deregulation, free trade, precarious work and the radical transfer of income from labour to capital. All these questions took a backseat to appeals to the media-defined political “centre”. We were even treated to the absurd spectacle of the NDP leader — in the midst of a historic meltdown of financial markets and credible predictions of the worst economic downturn in generations — refusing to countenance the very idea of running a government deficit, just as neoliberal governments themselves here and abroad prepared to do just that.

While making sure to mobilize its core working-class and lower-income electorate in held and winnable ridings, the NDP pitched its pan-Canadian campaign to the disaffected Liberal middle-classes and to the emerging “opinion-leading” left-liberal electorate in gentrifying urban areas. In Quebec, this appeal to disaffected Liberals was carried even further. The centre of gravity of the party’s campaign was their lone MP in the province, Thomas Mulcair, a staunch federalist and former cabinet minister in the right-wing provincial government of Jean Charest.

Numerous commentators have correctly noted that the party executed this strategic orientation quite capably in both Quebec and the rest of Canada. But even in crassly electoralist terms, it is hard to take the results as a ringing endorsement of the party’s lunge towards the political centre — especially given that the Liberals cannot be counted upon to remain eternally in crisis. Outside Quebec, the share of the vote remained level and the number of votes actually dropped by almost 250,000. And in Quebec itself — where the party’s share of the vote rose from 7.5 percent to 12.2 percent (or by almost 63 percent) and total votes rose by 165,000 — it is difficult to imagine how the NDP can substantially improve on this score given its rigid approach towards the national question and the intense competition in that province for the votes of the federalist and soft-sovereignist political centre. The return on the party’s investment in this campaign is poor, but the small breakthrough in Quebec and the increased number of seats in the rest of Canada provide the party with leverage in Ottawa for negotiations in view of some sort of accord or coalition with the Liberals. That will be a cause for satisfaction within the party leadership. Though it is premised on the marginalization the radical Left and leaves the bulk of the party’s electorate in a blind alley, in purely electoral terms this perspective is sustainable for the time being but will run into the wall of a revived Liberal Party sooner rather than later.

It will be interesting to see what rumblings emerge in and around the NDP. Though the leadership is trapped within the policy and institutional framework of neoliberalism, the party’s core support continues to come from working-class and lower-income sectors. While more detailed analysis is required, the election results appear to be quite clear in this regard. And though they have weakened in recent years, the NDP still has ties to labour, the social movements and the ideological Left, especially outside self-identified middle-class-dominated urban areas such as Toronto. Large sections of the trade-union leadership continue to look to the NDP as an expression of their interests in the institutional sphere — with even the CAW by and large returning to the party fold in the wake of Buzz Hargrove’s departure and the Liberal-hugging theatrics that marked his final years at the helm.

Given the terrible effects of the coming recession that will rain down on an already seriously weakened union movement, and the impasse of the NDP’s present strategy, it seems

probable that a debate will open up within both the unions and the NDP itself. Given the moribund state of the party on the ground between elections and the low level of participation and political debate in most union locals, it is hard to see what form this debate will take, and what possibilities there will be for the radical Left to intervene in any meaningful way. But these are the principle fora for something resembling class-based politics in this country, and the radical Left would do well to follow developments there very closely in the coming period.

It is certainly hard to say as much for the Greens. While their profile around the all-important question of the environment gives them a youthful and progressive gloss, the party's positioning within the political spectrum is to the right of the NDP's on both economic and social questions (such as abortion rights); and they more aggressively target small business, the self-employed and higher-income urban professionals. The party has very little sustained appeal within the NDP's core working-class, unionized and lower-income electorate, not least because of their embrace of regressive taxation and market-based approaches for solving the ecological crisis. With no presence as an activist, campaigning force even around environmental questions, the party's success can only be measured in purely electoral terms. As such, it is hard to see much future for the Greens, whose fickle electorate and lack of institutional presence will make it very difficult for the party to resist pressures to support the Liberals. Elizabeth May has already brought the party into the orbit of the Liberals and has been touted for a role within that party somewhere down the line. However that plays out, the party itself will continue on as a bit player in elections.

While the present volatility of the party-electoral-institutional sphere makes forecasting a perilous enterprise, the arguments of this piece point to a shrinking of the space for a putative "centre-Left" strategy in the coming period. The Liberals will tack right to join a right-wing consensus on confronting the economic crisis; and the NDP and Greens will be stuck at current levels of support. This "centre-Left" peaking and faltering opens up some potential space for more radical voices. The radical Left has an opportunity to propose an alternative to tail-ending the rightward drift of the mainstream political formations.

Strategy for the Radical Left

Seizing this opportunity will not be easy. For the same reason that thoughtful left-wing proponents of a "centre-Left" strategy for government are misguided in thinking that social movements and trade unions are chomping at the bit to mobilize and pressure a supposed NDP-BQ-Liberal government, the radical Left also has no clearly defined foundation for putting an alternative strategy into practice. While there are numerous examples of interesting campaigns and organizing efforts across the country, taken individually they are small and isolated and do not play a catalyzing role as far as the broader dynamics within the given union, campus or community are concerned — let alone on a provincial or pan-Canadian level.

We can all attest to involvement in campaigns and organizing efforts which, though sometimes successful in terms of their own modest objectives, do not lead to enduring mobilization and politicization on a broader scale. This predicament stems from both the weakness of social-movement forces on the ground and the absence of a credible political perspective on the broader stage. Any solution must therefore address both areas. There will be neither a spontaneous sustained upsurge of social struggle nor a sudden shift to the left of the NDP leadership — let alone a leap forward in the size of one of the existing tiny political organizations of the radical Left. There is no shortcut around the long-term project

of simultaneously building a new political organization of the anti-neoliberal and anti-capitalist green Left while building, unifying and broadening labour and social-movement struggles. The two go hand in hand today in a way not seen since the early days of the working-class and socialist movements of the late 19th and early 20th century.

It goes without saying that such a venture cannot hope to find expression in the electoral arena in the short term. That “space” is comfortably occupied by the NDP for the time being. Similarly, a radical-Left project cannot hope to secure majority support within any of the unions in the foreseeable future nor substitute itself for the role these institutions play for the working class. What it can do, though, is provide a framework for debate and action for the currently scattered forces of the radical Left. It can build among sectors entering politics and activism for the first time and participate in broad campaigns, while weighing in on the fault lines that appear within the established segments of the Left.

Such a strategic project is in line with developments on the anti-neoliberal and anti-capitalist Left that we have seen in a number of Western European and Latin American countries. Much closer to home, Québec Solidaire (QS) was founded on the basis of a similar perspective — the need to combine extra-parliamentary struggles with a serious intervention in the party-political sphere. In addition to providing an example for the rest of Canada, QS also provides the radical Left with a historic opportunity for a serious exchange on pan-Canadian strategy. Indeed, such an exchange with a strategic partner from the radical Left in the rest of Canada might also revitalize QS itself and weaken the electoralist drift of many components of that party since its foundation in 2006 [4].

Inadvertently perhaps, left-wing voices rooting for the “centre-Left” option are at least conceding that questions of political strategy and political power are now back on the agenda in a way not seen for a generation. This was one major weakness even in the debates surrounding the movement identified with Seattle and Quebec City: the question of governmental and state power took a back seat to directionless and ephemeral movement-building inspired by post-modern notions of networks and multitudes. In that sense, while there are very serious disagreements, at least now the terms of the debate are much clearer than they have been for a long time.

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NOTES

[1] Nathan Rao, “Canada, Quebec and the Left: Outflanked Again?,” *Relay*, January-February 2007.

[2] Mike Davis, “Can Obama See the Grand Canyon? On Presidential Blindness and Economic Catastrophe,” *TomDispatch.com*, October 15, 2008.

[3] Judy Rebick, “Here’s a modest proposal: Grit-NDP-Green-Bloc accord,” *The Globe and Mail*, October 7, 2008. For variation on this theme in the post-election context, see Murray Dobbin, “Left coalition badly needed,” *rabble.ca*, October 27, 2008; and Lloyd Axworthy, “Unite the left,” *Ottawa Citizen*, October 28, 2008.

[4] For an interesting account of the debate within Québec Solidaire during the federal campaign, see Richard Fidler, “NDP or Bloc? Quebec Left debates election tactics,” *The*

Bullet, September 26, 2008.

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