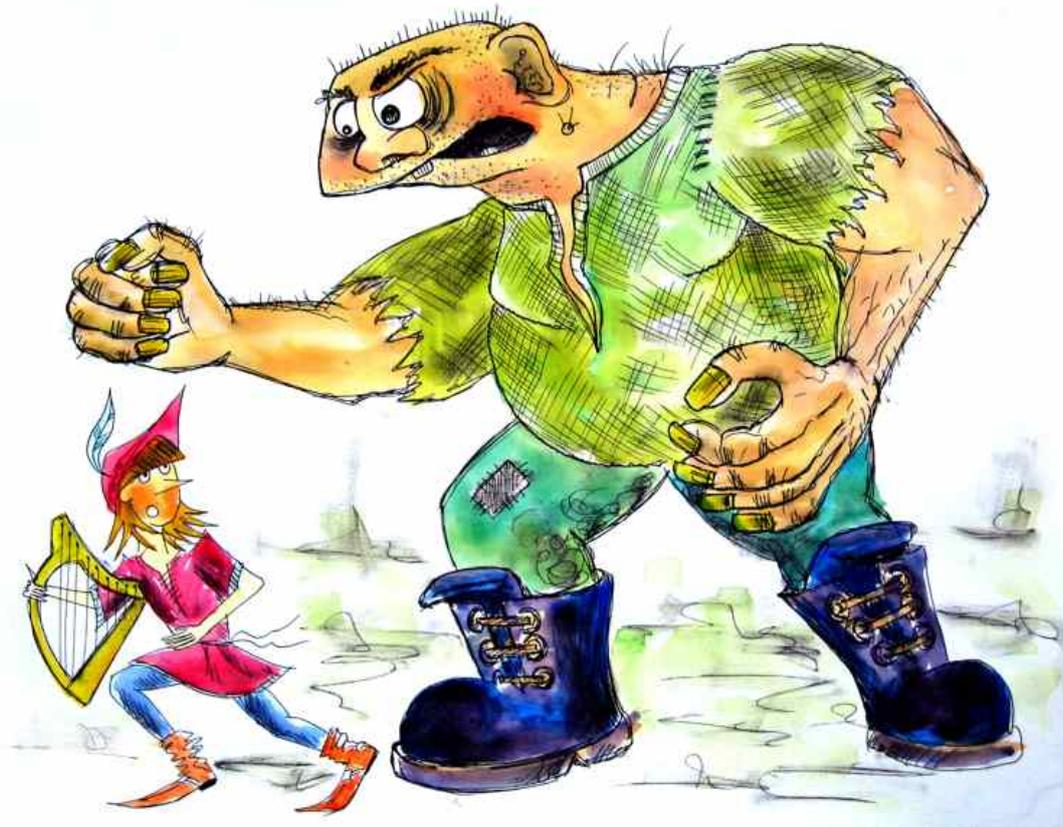


Justin Trudeau: Start of a Canadian legend

Written by Eric Walberg, Эрик Вальберг/ Уолберг □□□□□ □□□□

Sunday, 01 November 2015 21:06



Canada has just lived through a fairytale decade, complete with evil jinn and youthful hero. Think of “Jack and the Beanstalk,” starring youthful naif, Justin Trudeau, and the giant raining evil down on Canadaland from the clouds, Stephen Harper. Justin bravely climbs the slippery, perilous political ladder to fight the giant... and wins against all odds, saving his humble home from the jinn.

Canada’s prime minister for the past nine years, Stephen Harper, led a charmed life until the October 19 federal election. Despite never garnering more than 39% of the vote (in the earlier minority parliaments he had only 34%), his rule was more like that of a dictator, with policies that increasingly alarmed his followers until his support fell to 30% and united the rest of voters against him, giving the Liberals a sweeping majority.

For pro-Israeli, pro-war, anti-environment, anti-science, anti-culture types, he was perfect. But for people concerned about human rights, the environment, promoting the arts and maintaining Canada’s reputation as a nation that promotes world peace, a haven for scientific development, he has been the worst prime minister in history.

Canadians finally woke up in alarm this summer, and the Liberals under the charismatic Justin Trudeau, son of Pierre Trudeau, produced a miracle, moving from third place with 19% to 37% in the final week, and on to 40% on Election Day.

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Hours after his victory, Trudeau told reporters, “I want to say this to our country’s friends around the world: many of you have worried that Canada has lost its compassionate and constructive voice in the world over the past 10 years. Well, I have a simple message for you on behalf of 35 million Canadians. We’re back.”

The NDP “third way” followers jumped ship in the last week, horrified at the possibility of giving Harper another term in office. Despite stubborn resistance by their leader Thomas Mulcair, they did the sensible thing, individually opting to vote “strategically” in ridings where the liberal-socialist split might allow the Harperite candidates to slip in once again.

The devastation of the Harper decade is going to be very hard to reverse. It will be essential for the Liberals and NDPers (and let’s not forget the plucky Green Party leader Elizabeth May) to work together in a “Battle of Britain” spirit to salvage something from the Harper legacy.

His international sins are well known, especially his withdrawal from the Kyoto environment treaty in 2011, and his warmongering and his kowtowing to Israel. In 2010 he granted a new identity and passport to an agent of the Mossad who had been involved in the assassination of Hamas leader Mahmoud al-Mabhouh in Dubai in 2010. He suddenly broke diplomatic relations with Iran in September 2012 at the height of the Israeli mania to attack the country. The list goes on.

It was Canada’s turn to join the UN Security Council in a rotating regional seat in 2010, but UN members snubbed Canada, acknowledging the affront on Kyoto and the outrageous pro-Israeli bias of the Conservatives. Almost overnight, Harper reduced Canada to at best a laughing stock, at worst an international pariah.

He was loathed by 65% of Canadians — make that 70% as of election day — not so much for these humiliations, but for his many domestic policies, which include gutting scientific research and social welfare programs, undermining environmental protection laws, massive vote rigging in the 2011 election, proroguing Parliament twice to avoid the need to call a new election, becoming the first prime minister ever to be found guilty of contempt of parliament.

In a cynical Islamophobic thrust as his re-election campaign tanked this summer, he trumpeted the dangers of letting Muslim women take the oath of citizenship wearing a niqab, which he later included in “barbaric cultural practices.”

In Harper's favour

I wish I could say something positive in Harper’s favour...

Wait! His bigotry and warmongering inspired our hero Justin to defy the evil jinn’s criminal rule and to rally Canadians. The ogre inadvertently galvanized the Canucks and transformed parliament, giving it a more inclusive face, and a fresh commitment to assert Canada on the world stage in its traditional image of a haven for the persecuted, a defender of peace and the environment.

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The 12% of Muslims who supported the Conservatives in 2011 fell to zero this time around. Harper didn't even bother responding to the Canadian-Muslim Vote's request for a Conservative message (the other political leaders complied).

Justin's intrepid band include 10 Muslims, the most in Canada's history, including the first Somali Canadian MP, Ahmed Hussen, and the first Afghan Canadian, Maryam Monsef. The Muslim Canadian MPs are all newcomers to politics with the exception of Omar Alghabra and Yasmin Ratansi.

This could become the Liberals' new road to majority governments, as Canadians continue to embrace multiculturalism and Muslims continue to immigrate. It also can ensure that Muslims have a strong voice on Parliament Hill. Win-win.

Muslim historic shift

Canada's first Muslim MP, Rahim Jaffer, ironically was elected to the Conservatives in Edmonton in 1997. Wajid Khan was elected as a Liberal in 2003 but switched to the Conservatives in 2007 in protest against the gay marriage legislation. Yasmin Ratansi was elected as the first Muslim woman MP 2004–2011, and Omar Alghabra 2006–2008, both Liberals. 2011 left only one Muslim, NDP Sadia Groguhe in Quebec, who lost in 2015.

So the new roster of ten Muslims on Parliament Hill is a historic moment for Canada. The higher numbers make sense considering the demographic changes in the past four decades.

In 1971 there were 33,000 Muslims in Canada, the earliest group being Bosniaks. In 1981, there were 98,000, now coming from the Muslim East, by 1991 it had climbed to 253,265, and by 2001, more than half a million. As of 2013, there were more than one million Muslims, 3.2% of the population, and Islam is now the fastest growing religion in Canada.

In contrast, there were three Jewish MPs before the 2015 election, now five, and like their Semitic cousins, all of them Liberal and all of them new to the House of Commons. Jewish Canadians comprising 1% of the population nationally.

The star is no doubt Omar Alghabra, a Saudi-born Syrian immigrant, former president of the Canadian Arab Federation. In 2008 he was defeated by Bob Dechert, a close ally of Harper, so Alghabra's victory is particularly heartening for the dragon-slayers. Alghabra is a friend and now a senior policy adviser to the PM.

Alghabra also provided the most entertaining video campaign ad, a cartoon inspired by an HBO tale of treason, revenge and magic, "Game of Thrones".

"Omar, you've got to help," pleads a poor peasant. "The people are getting ready to storm the capital. They want change but no one's listening."

Says an inn owner, "We've been ignored for too long. Every year it gets more expensive to run my inn. I can barely afford to keep it open."

"What we really need is someone who's going to fight for us," exhorts a friar.

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The triumphant insurgents set right to work. Trudeau informed Obama within hours of his victory of his intention to pull Canada's fighter jets out of the anti-ISIS campaign. He has invited all opposition and provincial leaders to join him at the UN climate conference in Paris in early December to try to repair some of the damage that Harper inflicted on that part of Canada's image. The adventures of Justin and the Beanstalk continue.

<http://www.crescent-online.net/2015/11/justin-trudeau-start-of-a-canadian-legend-eric-walberg-5153-articles.html>

For [Chapter II Justin's band cleans up Harper holocaust](#)