

National Affairs by Claire Hoy ? Friends Mulcair could do without

There's an old Ethiopian proverb that says, 'A close friend can become a close enemy.'

This is something the privileged authors of the 'Leap Manifesto' might have kept in mind last week before unleashing their over-the-top hardcore socialist ideas in the middle of the current election campaign, apparently to help their 'friend' NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair find his way to the new Utopia.

If they really see themselves as 'friends' of the NDP ? and there is no doubt most are long-time NDP activists and supporters ? then they might have held off on a manifesto that will only serve to underscore the simmering fear that so many Canadians have about electing an NDP government.

Fronted by radical lefty Naomi Klein, the Manifesto is endorsed by a host of the usual left-wing suspects ? all of whom are perfectly content to dismiss the capitalist system as a scourge on mankind while, at the same time, living comfortably (indeed, luxuriously) on the profits they have made from the system which is supposedly so terrible.

Their main message seems to be that Mulcair, in his quest for votes from the plebes, is committing heresy by not tacking further and further to the left, not really a helpful message for Mulcair in the midst of a three-way election battle.

Many of them, e.g. Canadian superstars Donald Sutherland, Neil Young, Bruce Cockburn, Pamela Anderson, Alanis Morissette and Ellen Page apparently spend their days fretting in their California mansions about the direction the evil Stephen Harper has taken Canada.

Indeed, Sutherland recently received a ton of favourable publicity after writing a public letter ? published just about everywhere ? accusing Harper of stealing his vote. This was based on a recent court decision coming out against some Canadian ex-patriots who wanted to vote and appealed the law requiring recent residency. The problem, which as far as I saw only the National Post pointed out, is that the law was brought in by the previous Liberal government, not by Harper, which means, of course, that Sutherland hasn't been able to vote for years. But who cares? Harper is evil and details be damned.

Meanwhile, back at the manifesto ? also endorsed by former Ontario NDP Leader Stephen Lewis, who, like all the others, has done exceedingly well for himself under our horrid system ? government austerity as seen as 'a threat to life on earth.'

They apparently believe Canada should get out of the oil business completely ? which makes you wonder how they would get around the world the way they currently do ? and our vast wheat fields in the Prairies should be all turned into 'localized' organic farms.

They want to end all trade deals and institute a 'universal basic annual income.' There's more, but you get the point. Or, as Tristin Hopper recently summarized it in the Post, 'The manifesto is essentially a shortlist of everything ... Mulcair has been carefully avoiding in his bid to convince voters that social democrats aren't nearly as scary as the Conservatives say they are.'

Hopper characterized the manifesto of the left-wing equivalent of a bunch of ex-Conservatives getting together to sign an open letter 'vowing to bring back the death penalty, reinstate prayer in public schools and extend 'conscience rights' to all public bureaucrats.' The difference, alas, is that had a Conservative gang done that, the media would be all over Harper, blaming him directly. But with the lefties, ah well, for the most part Mulcair is getting a free pass even though the manifesto does indeed show there is a powerful segment of Mulcair's party which would use its considerable clout to push the NDP in that direction should they ever gain power ? a scary prospect, indeed.

The centrepiece of the Manifesto ? itself an unfortunate term, conjuring up images of Mao (which should please Justin Trudeau, who recently said he admired China's government) ? is the completely unworkable notion that, 'If you wouldn't want it in your backyard, then it doesn't belong in anyone's backyard.'

Talk about a menu for stopping anything from happening, ever. It is, as journalist Rex Murphy pointed out, a former of 'universal NIMBYism ... Everyone under this plan will thereby be able to say no to everything.'

Mulcair has tried to stay as far away as he can from this patent nonsense, but hey, most of them are his 'friends.'

And, as the other old saw goes, 'With friends like these ...'

