

National Affairs by Claire Hoy ? It's a real and ongoing danger

My old golfing buddy Bert is 97 now and living in an apartment for veterans. He still plays golf once or twice a week in the season. Bert, who is Jewish, spent most of his life in Toronto, growing up in the 1920s and 30s in what was then a heavily Jewish area around Bathurst and Bloor, and going to school with the famous Wayne and Shuster comic duo.

He's the kind of guy who exudes happiness wherever he goes. He likes to say of his golfing, for example, that he's had bad games but never had a bad day on the golf course.

Bert doesn't dwell on the bad stuff, but he does have some memories of the old, pre-war Toronto that aren't pleasant. He remembers going to Cherry Beach with some friends and seeing a sign "No Jews." He remembers similar signs and attitudes from that time but marvels in how far we've come in what really isn't that long a time.

I was thinking of Bert the other day when Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau accused Prime Minister Stephen Harper of practising the "politics of fear" something Liberals are experts in (remember their vicious attacks on Tories and Reform for their so-called "hidden agenda" for example?)

Bert is not a Tory ? never was ? but would laugh at the notion that a piece of legislation aimed at terrorists would drag us back into the dark side of his youth.

Trudeau ? attacking Harper's Anti-Terrorism Act of 2015 ? says Harper is deliberately blurring the line ?between a real security threat and simple prejudice.?

He went on to say he's possibly leading us back to older times when, among other things, Canada refused to allow a boatload of Jewish survivors land in this country.

"Leading this country should mean you bring Canadians together. You do not divide them against one another," said Trudeau.

His hubris here is so breathless ? even for a Liberal ? it's hard to know where to begin.

Trudeau portrayed himself as a champion of liberty ? and was roundly applauded by the usual cheerleaders in the media ? and yet, this is the man who, without so much as a how-de-do announced that anybody who disagrees with his pro-abortion stance is not welcome in his party. Period. Full stop.

He is a man who can, with a straight face, paint a horrendous picture of the kind of Canada he says Harper is building with his response to the terrorism threat, yet at the same time ? unlike, to his credit, NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair ? plans to vote FOR the legislation. Amazing, don't you think?

This phony theme of deliberately confusing legitimate dissent with genuine terrorism was on full display on the weekend in a series of festivals of outrage staged ? with only moderate attendance ? at various spots across the country.

Mind you, there's been a lot of crazy talk about this from all sides of the political aisles ? including the Tories ? but the fact is, like it or not, the jihadist "war on Canada" that Harper talks about is real. We've already had some deadly examples ? and numerous other planned attacks have been foiled ? and the jihadist themselves have made it clear that Canada is on their A-list of targets. Only a fool would chose to ignore the threat.

It is true that governments can go too far in clamping down on legitimate dissent, but obviously Trudeau, despite his inflammatory rhetoric, doesn't think the current bill does. If he did, he wouldn't be voting for it?

Or would he?

And despite all the best ongoing efforts of the Harper haters out there, a massive public opinion poll by Ekos shows that Canadians are quite supportive of Harper's efforts on the terrorism file. Overall, Canadians favored Bill C-51 by 56-42 percent. They were even more supportive of the current military mission in Afghanistan (which the Liberals and NDP opposed), favoring it by 60-33 percent, and on the question of extending the mission beyond the current deadline, those polled gave it the thumbs up by a 54-38 margin.

Clearly, most Canadians can see past the scare-mongering from the critics and recognize that, although it's unfortunate, the current jihadist campaign represents a real and ongoing danger against us, against our way of life, against everything we hold dear.

Pretending it isn't so will not make it go away.

And attacking it with your left hand while voting for it with your right just won't wash outside a deeply partisan core.

