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Don't you know there's a war on?

Remember Second World War English films and this inevitable exchange?

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Interlocutor A: "Let's take a holiday/boil a second egg for breakfast/fall in love." Interlocutor

B: "We can't possibly. Don't you know there's a war on?"

Interlocutor A then sighs, resignedly suppressing selfish yearnings for Brighton beach, adequate protein or sex.

How strangely archaic it seems, that generation's ready acceptance of sacrifice in a collectively acknowledged war against obvious enemies. We speak of existential threats too, but we're ideologically divided on what they are. Today, a liberal Interlocutor B would still scold Interlocutor A, but probably cite carbon footprints, cholesterol or commitment issues, instead of the real enemy, anti-Western jihadists.

"Know thine enemy" is a dictum lost on the organized left. Islamist radicals seek to establish dominion over those who do not share their ideology. If they prevail, the rights and freedoms especially cherished by leftist Canadians -- institutional secularism, gender equity, gay rights, abortion on demand, early and broad sexual latitude -- will disappear, and taking their place will be conventions rightly regarded with repugnance by virtually all Westerners.

Leftists, then, should be Islamism's most vigorous critics. But logic and the left are rarely fellow-travellers, as an Ottawa Citizen series last week by Don Butler and Terry Glavin on the Canadian "peace" movement persuasively reveals. Their analysis of the recent fifth annual Cairo Conference presents disturbing evidence of complicity between Canadian "anti-war" influence makers and terror-sponsoring Islamist spokesmen.

Pride in that indecent alliance, kindled in Cairo by honeyed statements of mutual admiration, was stoked in last weekend's Toronto conference, Marxism: A Festival of Resistance, which featured several of the Cairo Conference's 2007 Canadian participants unabashedly recruiting grunts to swell the ranks for Cairo 2008.

The Cairo Conference was largely sponsored by the Muslim Brotherhood (motto: "Allah is

our objective, the Prophet is our leader, the Koran is our law, jihad is our way, dying in the way of Allah is

our highest hope"), with high-level participation by Hamas and Hezbollah, amongst other terror-promoting groups. The conference's mandate was "to forge an international alliance against imperialism and Zionism," with corollary support for a nuclearized Iran and a de-nuclearized Israel. (What could possibly go wrong in that scenario?!)

Canada's 20-strong contingent at the conference acted for various anti-war groups united under the banner of the Canadian Peace Alliance (CPA). In peacetime, they would be historical footnotes, but in parlous times like ours, they pose dangers. Critical media coverage of this benighted conference was therefore myopically scant.

It is particularly shameful, for example, that an influential organization like CUPE International, which helps fund the CPA, linked its name to one conference delegate, Ali Mallah, an apparatchik of both a Toronto CUPE branch and the Canadian Arab Federation, who said: "When we hear about Islamist resistance, let's try to put ourselves where they are and try to see it from their point of view." At the previous Cairo conference, in 2006, which Mr. Mallah also attended, the "final declaration" explicitly refused to condemn Palestinian suicide attacks. It sounds, then, as if he is calling for an understanding attitude toward suicide bombing.

Though little known to us, Mr. Mallah (later seen strolling around a Hezbollah-controlled sector of Beirut with some Islamist conference "brothers") is to Hezbollah and Hamas a Canadian somebody, and buoys their toxic ambitions.

To identify the CPA as a cluster of "useful idiots" or "fifth columnists" is correct, but inadequate to convey these leftists' betrayal of their own ideals. Nothing in the name of reason or morality or peace can rationalize the comfort that leftist elites are at present giving to those enemies of the very constituency that organizations like CUPE officially represent.

Our ruthless, supremacist Islamist enemies should be acknowledged as the fascists they are, a word leftists generally prefer to apply to ideological adversaries at home. This is real life, not a movie. The question is no longer rhetorical: Don't you know there's a war on? Sacrifices must be made. Go to the beach, eat eggs, make love. But consider jettisoning such consequential peacetime luxuries as naivete and apathy. The politically mainstream media must go even further, though, and forswear their default tendency to indulge the kind of anti-democratic perfidy from the extreme left that they would never tolerate from the right.

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