

Barbara Kay: Another fine event the left wants killed

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The SNC-Lavalin scandal has Canadians fixated on justice and the rule of law. The timing could not be better for a charity called Canadians for the Rule of Law (CFTRL), which is hosting a full-day “National Teach-in” in Toronto on March 17, entitled, “The New Taboo: Respect for the Rule of Law in Canada.” It was planned long before the present political brouhaha, and isn’t concerned with corporate corruption, but it’s a nice marketing coincidence all the same. In fact, the Teach-In’s main thrust is freedom of speech and citizens’ legal rights. The range of challenges to the rule of law addressed includes those posed by “the radical left, radical Islamists, and the radical right.” The conference was organized by David Nitkin, president of EthicScan, a consultancy that pairs businesses with ethical partners, and a volunteer with a raft of civic groups. The SNC-Lavalin scandal has Canadians fixated on justice and the rule of law (--image--)

Some of the content deals with hate speech, religion in the public square, the BDS movement, terrorism and public safety and, notably, lawfare (the use of law as a weapon to advance political causes). The keynote speaker is Ben Ryberg of the Lawfare Project, which provides pro bono legal services for protection of Jews’ civil and human rights worldwide. Other participants, like Stewart Bell, Father Raymond de Souza and Rex Murphy, will be familiar to National Post readers. Toronto lawyer Donald Carr will moderate a panel on sham charities. John Carpay, president of the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms (on whose board I sit), will speak on lawfare in Canada. I can’t tell you where the conference is taking place, because the original locale, a large Toronto synagogue, withdrew its invitation when it was “doxxed” (with a photo of the building) in a column by Michael Coren in Now Toronto, fomenting security concerns. As is becoming the norm for groups mounting events that deal with conservative ideas or politically incorrect topics, locales are being kept secret until the last minute to avoid potential violence from Antifa-style activists, for whom Coren’s column was, in my opinion, a dog whistle. (--image--)

Lawyer John Carpay speaks at Toronto City Hall in a file photo from Dec. 10, 2015. Carpay, president of the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms, will speak on lawfare in Canada at a March 17 “Teach-In” in Toronto.

Michael Peake/Postmedia News

Coren paints a sinister picture of CFTRL and some of its supporters, implying that the day will be dominated by a spirit of fear-mongering and hatred for Muslims and gays. As evidence, he points to the support for the Teach-In by, amongst others, Charles McVety, president of Canada Christian College, who advocates against progressive sex ed, and who has described the mission of Islam in Canada as a “democratic jihad,” as well as to the participation of John Carpay, mentioned above, “who recently compared the swastika to the rainbow flag.” (Carpay’s linkage, when heard in context of his general thesis, is not shocking at all. Should Privy Council clerk Michael Wernick be forever shunned by all right-thinking Canadians for once having compared students protesting a looming tuition fee increase to “brownshirts and Maoists”?) Coren’s attack was echoed by longtime Jewish community professional, Bernie Farber, chairman of the Canadian Anti-Hate Network, who reportedly pestered several of the conference’s Jewish participants in a stream of reproachful emails to step away from this perceived hate-in. Should Privy Council clerk Michael Wernick be forever shunned? (--image--)

(--image--)

Coren’s and Farber’s righteous indignation would arouse less cynicism if they were not casting these stones from glass houses. In a previous spiritual incarnation, Coren was happy to have platforms to speak his (then) truth on gay marriage (against it), and would not have reacted well to threats of mobbing by those with opposing views. Farber can only see danger to Jews and democracy on the right. He finds it difficult to admit that anti-Semitism is, for some of us, a greater problem when it comes from the anti-Zionist left and its complicity with political Islam. Farber showed amazing restraint, for example, dealing with an imam captured in a video, crying “O Allah! Purify Al-Aqsa Mosque from the filth of the Jews,” advocating publicly for sympathy on his behalf. Conservatives don’t clutch their pearls and try to de-platform leftists they disagree with when they exercise their freedom of association and speech. Considering the topics, all

important and well within the bounds of civil discourse, the Teach-In seems like a worthy enterprise to me. Although I can't attend the Teach-In, I hope it is well-attended and a big success. Thanks to Coren and Farber for helping to publicize it. • Email: kaybarb@gmail.com | Twitter: [BarbaraRKay](#) Barbara Kay: Revisiting the many massive failures of Parkland, one year later Barbara Kay: The euthanasia slippery slope is here Barbara Kay: A joke is all in the delivery (do you hear me, son?)