

## COMMENT

## LABOUR

## Keep cars built at home

Canada's auto industry is worth investing in

ARMINE YALNIZYAN

Contract talks currently underway between Unifor and the Big Three U.S. auto manufacturers are being called the most significant in a generation, maybe a half-century.

The union has put future auto investments at the top of its wish list — not pay rates, even though they have been stagnant for a decade.

Underlying it all is that old existential question: does Canada really need an auto industry, especially now that Mexico is such a magnet for new investment?

It's true demand is expanding in Mexico, but it only represents about 10 per cent of all Ford, GM and Chrysler sales in North America now. Population growth is faster there, and the Panama Canal has just been deepened to accommodate bigger ships, making Mexico a possible launching pad to other emerging markets.

But there is a strong business case for why Canada is critical to the auto industry's business plan. It's not a case of Mexico versus Canada, but of Mexico and Canada.

Indeed, GM has invested \$1.6 billion into Oshawa, St. Catharines and Ingersoll in the past few years, and this June announced it would hire 700 more engineers, bringing the total to 10,000 in Ontario.

In February, Fiat Chrysler spent an unprecedented \$3.7 billion on the minivan line in Windsor, and added 1,200 new jobs.

Ford broke hearts in 2014 by choosing Mexico over Windsor for production of a new engine, but last year the company's Oakville plant saw \$700 million in investments and 400 new jobs.

Unifor is right to focus on future investment, particularly in a year that every one of the Big Three are seeing record profits and outpacing expectations this year.

What we are witnessing is hardball negotiations: these companies will see even more profit if they can wring concessions from the Canadian union before they announce next steps.

High costs of labour aren't the dealbreaker for future investments that we often hear about. Japan and Germany have the highest labour costs in the world — and they have thriving auto industries.

Mexican wages are obviously lower than Canadian wages, but Canada is cheaper than the U.S., where these companies are also investing billions of dollars in production.

Labour gets 99 per cent of the attention during contract talks, but represents a tiny 4 per cent of the price of an average Big Three car in Canada, the same amount these companies spend on advertising.

Linda Hasenfraz, CEO of auto-parts giant Linamar, dismissed the high cost of labour argument, which she noted actually paid off for her company, leading to a 21 per cent increase in sales over the past year.

As cars get more complicated, more connected, she said, a smart workforce can improve quality control and innovate processes and products. That spurs savings and creates new markets.

And when it comes to markets, consider this: southern Ontario's auto plants are a day's drive from half of all North American sales, and those sales account for 90 per cent of the profits for the Big Three.

Auto is not only Canada's No. 1 export industry, bringing in \$77 billion last year; Canadian buyers are the fifth largest market for Big Three vehicles in the world. The reason: the Auto Pact of 1965. Increased production of cars in Canada led to more good-paying jobs here, which meant increased consumption.

But shut down production and watch consumption fall. The Centre for Spatial Economics estimates closing the Oshawa GM plant would see a direct job loss of 4,300 workers spiral out to affect 30,000 jobs.

That would trigger \$1 billion in lost provincial and federal tax revenues, creating further pressures to cut jobs or services.

If these companies don't invest in Canada, they will lose the buyers who can afford to purchase their most profitable products. It's hard to grow the bottom line when you're killing the top line.

It may seem like a man-bites-dog story, but when you add it all up, the business proposition is simple: If the Big Three want to make more money making cars, they should invest in Canada.

Armine Yalnizyan is senior economist at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and vice-president of the Canadian Association for Business Economics. You can follow her on twitter @ArmineYalnizyan.

## OLYMPIC LEVEL SEXISM

## Olympic reporting reflects sexism in sports

Athletes use their platforms to reinforce the importance of equity and inclusion



DEIRDRE PIKE

It's been two weeks since I was sitting in the middle of an eight-day silent retreat reflecting upon stillness and movement, contemplation and action. Re-entry into a world that loves to talk takes some effort. (Though Renée will tell you it was seamless as I emerged with much to share.)

Since venturing out and about I've noticed many conversations starting with, "Hot enough for ya?" and "Have you been watching the Olympics?"

On the weather front, I've been loving the heat this summer and if I wasn't worried about farmers and the potential impact on our local crops I would say it's been picture perfect.

As for the Olympics, I've been trying to minimize my interactions with screens this summer so I've been hearing stories from Rio via CBC radio or reading about them in the local paper rather than watching. Radio sports reporters require better story telling skills than their television counterparts who can rely on the pictures to do some of their talking and our Canadian radio cover-

**If men don't call out men when we are being sexist, then we are not a part of the solution.**

ADAM VAN KOEVEDEN  
CANADIAN SPRINT KAYAKER

age has been stellar.

It's through that coverage I came to learn once again the Olympics has become a world stage for outing the reality of sexism in sport and beyond.

Most of the public offenses have come through the words of reporters covering the games and even some athletes have surprised us with their statements.

Thankfully some very articulate and, I am guessing by the power of their responses, contemplative athletes have used their platforms to ensure the last word has gone to speakers standing for equity and inclusion.

Take Adam vs. Adam. Canadian Olympic champion sprint kayaker, Adam van Koeveden, may not have brought home a gold medal this time 'round but he certainly earned a laurel for being a feminist ally when he took the time, thought and energy to pen a piece in response to misogynist comments made by fellow Canadian Olympic champion rower, Adam Kreek.

Kreek took it upon himself to critique Canadian tennis champion, Eugenie Bouchard, opining she wasn't committed to winning, spending too much time on selfies and some other offensive drivel he added.

Adam Number 1, as he will forever be remembered in my heart, wrote, "This is the kind of tired, regressive, paternalistic, arrogant and sexist commentary that female athletes put up with all the time, and it needs to stop."

And he didn't stop there. "If men don't call out men when we are being sexist, then we are not a part of the solution, and the problem persists. So here I am, calling out my friend Adam Kreek. Adam, you were sexist on television Thursday night. Feminism isn't for females. It's for everyone."

Andy Murray, Scotland's tennis champ and number two in the world, is another ex-

ample of someone who was able to reflect and then answer powerfully to the reality of sexism when a BBC reporter asked him how he felt being "the first person ever to win two gold medals at the Olympics."

Andy wisely and wryly corrects him noting with a wee smile, "I think Serena and Venus have won four each." British humour won the day as the reporter was ridiculed on Twitter and elsewhere not only for his lack of fact checking, but his erasure of women as people.

"I wonder if now that Andy Murray has reminded him, John Inverdale will finally realize that women are actually people. We live in hope."

It is Penny Olechuk, stupidly and sexistly headlined in The Sun as "Pretty Penny," who gave me hope in many ways this week, not just for her amazing athletic achievements in the pool, winning four golds and breaking a record, but for her reflective response to her victorious efforts.

Many observers have remarked on her unique action when she reached the end of her race and touched the wall ahead of the pack. For 24 seconds she held onto it, breathing in and breathing out. Later she would tell a reporter she was just catching her breath. It was initially unclear she'd tied for gold so who knows what was going through her mind and heart.

All I know is she took 24 seconds to stop and breathe before she turned to face the world in a whole new light.

Penny demonstrated for me, the practice of contemplation and action.

Deirdre Pike is a freelance columnist for the Hamilton Spectator. She is learning to take 24 seconds and maybe more before responding to your emails at [dpikethepec@gmail.com](mailto:dpikethepec@gmail.com) or tweets @deirdrepik.

## GLOBAL MELTDOWN

## The good news: ultimately, the haters will lose

It can feel personal when on your birthday 85 people seem to be sensely mowed down



THOMAS FROESE

It's funny how you can give a torch to someone and he'll light up the world; and give the same torch to someone else and he'll burn the place down.

It's like love and hate. They're both consuming fires, but with different ends. (The ultimate difference is that hate is all-consuming, and, like evil, will eventually consume itself.)

Yes, there must have been a few fluttering heartbeats and sweaty palms and somersaults in the stomachs of those killers as they carried the torch for their causes in this, our summer of hate.

Forty-nine people shot dead in a gay bar in Orlando; 85 bombed to eternity at Istanbul's airport; 85 mowed down by a truck on a beach on Bastille Day; still in France, a dedicated priest's throat slashed in a cathedral for the online world to see.

These, all inspired (if that's the right word) by ISIL. Then Munich, where run-of-the-mill, garden-variety disturbed hatred caused a teen to shoot dead nine kids just wanting a burger.

This is the Summer of 2016, a summer with the largest number of terror deaths since the summer of 9/11.

Even from a distance, it can feel personal. The Bastille Day massacre fell on my birthday. As a boy, I lived near Munich. I've walked the streets of Istanbul several times.

I even once wept over the news of the day. It was Easter last year when, at a university in Kenya, 148 were killed by al-Shabaab. This, at sunrise, by men who'll tell you that God is great before they put a bullet in your head.

In response, in neighbouring Uganda, enough expatriates left, including close friends at our university home. My family stayed, a few ivory faces amid thousands of Africans. It was back in Canada, unpacking it all with someone, when I later wept.

This is it. We're blood and flesh and nerves, every one of us. (Husbands and fa-



CLAUDE PARIS, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nice is just one of grisly sites of a global summer melt down when the world seemed to go more mad than normal.

thers, I'm told, often feel the weight of these things more.)

This is what we know. The world is a dangerous place. But the world never promised anyone a safe ride while living, or dying, in it. It's foolish and presumptuous to think otherwise.

This is the good news about the bad news: it unhinges you from false notions and securities.

The long tomorrow, eternally speaking, gets more vivid. You realize we're each a refugee, homeless in a different way, unsettled with even the best of this world. The other good news is that our era may not be so dangerous after all.

No, maybe the times aren't as dangerous as they're remarkable for, say, ease of travel or longevity or, yes, peace.

There's a case to be made that, broadly speaking, war and violent crime is actually down, at least as a percentage of the world's populace. In his book "The Better Angels of our Nature," Harvard professor Stephen Pinker concludes this, that many anxieties over today's global dangers are anxieties over an illusion.

Believe otherwise and you'll get off-kilter, distracted, like a one-eyed mule, burdened and stumbling. You'll be unable to live differently with different relationships and dif-

ferent joys, different and deeper experiences with people who are different than you.

They're black while you're white. They're poor while you're rich. Gay while you're straight. Old while you're young. Muslim while you're pagan. Or you're the old, rich, white, gay Muslim. Or Christian. Or whatever.

This is our world. You can pout and refuse to sit at the dinner table with such an eclectic mix. Or you can move alongside someone who's different from you and pass the salt, bethe light.

Look at that torch in Rio where 207 nations and territories have come together to compete, sure, but also to reflect the ongoing human journey.

This is what the haters especially seem to hate, this essence of being a human, being a mixed bag, really not unlike a human body.

A body's individual parts work very differently but, remarkably, in unison. One part does what other parts could never imagine. When a highly-tuned body works in top form, there's a striking beauty to it. Look at those Olympians.

The haters would blow up that body.

They'll win some battles, but lose the war.

Thomas Froese writes about news, travel and life. Find him at [www.thomasfroese.com](http://www.thomasfroese.com)

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