

QUEBEC....

trudeau's attack needs historical interpretation

Pierre Elliott Trudeau will be asking all Canadians to unite behind him. He will have on his side the anguish brought upon by the death of Pierre Laporte and he will draw upon it to "cut out the cancer" in Quebec.

The arrests, the censorship, etc., are expected to continue: and opposition, even of the civil libertarian — anti war measures act — kind appears still for the time being.

Is the Trudeau government's holy war against the FLQ and sympathizers simply action to defend the safety of all Canadians, or is it more than that?

The identity of many of the arrested lead one to believe that the government is attacking all left wing militant members and supporters of the entire separatist or independentist movement. It is more than an effort by legal authorities to round up law-breakers and terrorists: it is an attempt by the political authorities to eliminate and incarcerate a political opposition of a certain genre — that is to wipe out left wing Quebec nationalists.

To understand the attack of Trudeau, Pelletier, et al, on the separatist movement, we must go further back than to the kidnapping of James Cross, back further even than the birth of the FLQ in 1963.

In the 50's, Trudeau and Pelletier were among the Quebec intellectuals opposed to the conservative Duplessis regime, a group centered around the leadership of the CNTU (then CTCC) and the magazine Cite Libre.

While Trudeau acquired at this time some reputation as a radical a careful re-assessment of his writings reveals that he was radical only in his opposition to Duplessis and that his own positive ideas were more or less those of an orthodox Liberal.

With Duplessis' death in 1959, intellectual unity ended, and many of the more dynamic, such as Rene Levesque and Michel Chartrand, as well as of the new generation, like Pierre Vallieres and Charles Gagnon turned toward Quebec nationalism.

With the failure of the Quiet Revolution to bring about real social and economic change in Quebec, this movement turned avowedly separatist within a few years.

Trudeau and Pelletier were appalled. Their classical Liberalism as well as their hatred of Duplessis' so-called nationalism made them avowedly anti all forms of Quebec nationalism.



"The truth is that the separatist counter revolution is the work of a powerless Petit Bourgeois minority afraid of being left behind by the twentieth century revolution. Rather than carving themselves out a place in it by ability, they want to make the whole tribe return to the wigwams by declaring its independence. That, of course, will not prevent the world outside from progressing by giant strikes: it will not change the rules and the facts of history, nor the real power relationship in North America."
Pierre Trudeau - Federalism and French Canadians

While some of their colleagues were going to Quebec City to work with Lesage, Trudeau and Pelletier went to Ottawa, soon to take power within the Liberal establishment which lacked at that time the intellectual capacity to do anything with their power.

Trudeau had gone from small "L" Liberal to big "L" Liberal to the biggest big "L" Liberal of them all.

Any support he might have retained among the Quebecois, intellectual left disappeared at this point.

He is a vendu — a sell out — Peter Elliot. (Gerard Pelletier was less ignored and more hated). Yet Trudeau could not abide by this fact. Even before coming to Ottawa in his late days at Cite Libre, Trudeau denounced the whole idea of independence for Quebec.

Self determination was possible, as many Cite Libre articles suggested, even desirable for the Algerians, and Latin American countries might be better off freed from colonialism. Yet the whole idea of a separate socialist state of Quebec was beyond discussion. It was heresay.

Thus the new men in power were intellectual Liberals but... some advances in civil liberties were possible. But just as Locke argued that toleration should not be granted to atheistic heretics, so his disciple Trudeau was willing to allow civil liberties to all but political heretics. Separatism was a cancer that had to be rooted out.

Yet it was not only in intellectual circles that independantisme was spreading.

In early 1969, there were "disturbing" reports that the population of Quebec was moving leftwards (and) — towards separatism.

Public opinion polls consistently showed this.

PQ membership increased, the language question grew in importance and labour and the students were becoming more militantly nationalist.

Soon there was almost no news to be heard on the national networks or in the media on Quebec. Consistently the CBC news would describe demonstrations on American college campuses but would fail to mention larger demonstrations on the streets in Quebec.

One effect of this policy has been clear. Canadians outside of Quebec have been kept essentially in ignorance about the growing movement.

Generally the only kind of information to be found has been the occasional hysterical news report of the type published by the Toronto Telegrams of the Nation. Ignorance tempered by bias.

In Quebec however the movement grew.

Even the muzzling of Radio Canada, the busts, arrests and seizures of literature of October 1969, the continued harassment of the citizens and workers committees as evidenced by the closing of CYC Quebec operations, and some hard line speeches of Trudeau have little effect. As many French Canadian voted PQ as voted Liberal in the 1970 April election.

A period of calm seemed to begin after the election. The people of English Canada were led to believe that all Quebec had united behind Trudeau and his man in Quebec — Bourassa.

Yet it was not so — and Trudeau knew it.

It is in this context that the kidnappings took place. The government waited then acted, imposing wartime emergency measures. The time had come to deal head on with this whole movement.

Not that it needed 12,000 soldiers and wartime measures.

The movement in Quebec, unfortunately perhaps, does not need an occupation army to be checked. Trudeau is just preparing Canadians for the day some time hence when the troops will be rushed in shooting. Then the shock of seeing troops around will have worn off somewhat.

Which is not to say three or four police forces are not trying their damndest to root out the cancer now, it's just that these gave a nasty habit of growing again.

But Trudeau knows that the separatist movement as a whole is a threat to his power and the Bay Street economic and political powers he represents.

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- 2 Jobless PhD's.
- 3 First printing of PhD statistics

Room 106, SUB is an interesting place to go.