

Violence Is Part Of The Canadian Way of Life

When Canadian hostirians compare Canada to the United States, they unanimously agree that one fundamental difference between the two peoples is the non-violent nature of Canadians in contrast to the crime-ridden, six-gun-toting, negro-lynching Americans.

Thus when a computer was smashed and a building damaged during anti-rascism protests at Sir George Williams University, Canadian leaders, such as John Diefenbaker, react in shock and anger to this "uncanadian" resort to "mob rule."

"Because Canadians are a non-violent people," they concluded, "such violence must have been inspired and carried out by Communists, Marxists or other paid agitators."

FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Yet further investigation by police has demonstrated that no such "foreign" (except for the presence of a number of black, foreigh-born students) inspiration was present.

Why then did the press and

authorities claim that "communists" and "foreigners" were responsible? A further examination of Canadian history is necessary before any answer can be given.

But the authorities who claimed that the result of the protest at Sir George Williams was "uncanadian" were right in one respect at least - Canadian workers and Canadian minorities (including students) have seldom protested against discrimination and oppression in a violent manner. It has been the "authorities" - government, business and civic leaders - who are most often responsible for violence when it occurs.

Moreover, when these authorities declare that extra-parliamentary protests (that is, demonstrations, marches and strikes) are unconstitutional or uncanadian their leaders synically neglect to point out that the chief offender against the ideals of the British Constitution in Canada, has been the Government itself.

CONTROL IS MONEY

The key to this control, of course, is money.

Since both the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties are dependent on big business for funds to get into office and remain there, these parties must pass laws saitsfatory to their financial backers or be removed from power.

This control, however, does not end with an ability to pour money into election campaigns. Since the elite owns the newspapers and controls the radio and television stations (did you ever see a programme on CKCO TV criticising Major Holdings for land speculators in the K-W area?) it can and does distort the news to serve its own selfish ends.

The importance of this control of the government and news media cannot be too strongly stressed. Since the news media shape public opinion, and since our source of information is the media, by concentrated propaganda, the public can be persuaded to demand laws which work against its best interest, and destroy its rights and liberties.

In 1919 Canada was experiencing a severe post-war depression. Farm and labor unrest was widespread because of the profiteering and corruption which had occurred during World War I. When government and business leaders refused to recognize the desperate condition of the laborers, farmers and returning soldiers, they decided to force concessions by means of a general strike, which was touch off in Winnipeg on May 1, 1919, and quickly spread to other major cities.

In all some 54 unions including police, firemen, and civic employees voted to strike, although the police, fireman, waterworks employees and bread and milk deliverymen remained on the job with the approval of other strikers.

Although a Manitoba Royal Commission to investigate the strike later concluded that the

by professor leo johnson
department of history
university of waterloo
distributed by
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causes of the strike were unemployment, low wages, bad working conditions and the rejection of basic union rights by employers, the Winnipeg newspapers mounted a vicious propaganda campaign declaring that the strike had been caused by communist agents paid with "Moscow gold." After several weeks of this propaganda, the Federal government responding to the demands of the manufacturers and the brainwashed public, passed the notorious section 98 of the Criminal Code.

Section 99, passed by these devious means, completely reversed the most ancient of British legal traditions - the rights of an arrested person to be considered innocent until proven guilty. Thus, until 1937 when Section 98 was repealed, the accused person was considered guilty until he could prove himself innocent. This, of course, was not easy to do when you were locked in jail waiting your trial.

In addition to Section 98,

the government amended the Immigration Act so that the Immigration Department could deport anyone, who belonged to a "subversive organization," without trial by jury. By these laws the government could accuse a striker of belonging to a "subversive organization" and if he failed to prove that he did not, then they could deport him.

10,000 DEPORTED

Between 1919 and 1935, more than 10,000 men and women were deported under these immoral laws - laws which could only have been passed and maintained because of the Communist scare propaganda of 1919.

A similar use of newspaper propaganda was made by Maurice Duplessis in 1938. Duplessis wanted to destroy opposition to his corrupt control of the Quebec government, and to do this it was necessary to close the few small newspapers who dared to expose him.

His answer - like that of the government in 1919 - was to claim that the opposition was communistic.

After a lengthy campaign which repeated, over and over, that communists killed nuns and priests, and that Quebec "Bolsheviks" were out to destroy the Catholic Church, the state and public morality, Duplessis convinced the Quebec electorate that an anti-Communist, "anti-subversive" law was needed.

"PADLOCK" LAW

The Padlock law gave the Quebec government the right to close buildings, jail editors and confiscate the files of any organization which the Quebec attorney-general declared to be subversive or "Communitic" - no proof would be required other than his statement. Not only did Duplessis silence his opposition with the Padlock law, he used it to harass such groups as labor unions, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Liberal party.

The similarities between the methods used to pass Section 98 and the Padlock Law, however are not the only common aspects of the

behavior of the two governments. In both cases, having passed the laws to silence the opposition, the government resorted to a program of calculated terrorism to subdue their critics. Businessmen and strikebreakers who were sworn in as special constables, armed, and led by regular police, smashed any protest which was raised against these dictatorial methods, nor is "smashed" too strong a word. In Winnipeg on "Bloody Saturday," police attacked a peaceful demonstration, and killed a man and a boy.

Over the years these episodes have been repeated again and again - in Stratford in 1933, in Oshawa in 1937, in Asbestos in 1949, and in Murdockville in 1957. In each case the tame prese justified the use of the police or army to crush protest against exploitation by greedy owners by raising the Communist bogeyman.

Nor are the workers the only groups against whom violence is used.

Everyone knows that European settlers destroyed the Indian civilization, but few people know that this oppression continues today.

In 1952 Brantford Reserve "rising" illustrates the present-day use of the RCMP to crush resistance to the Indian Affairs Department's dictatorial rule.

The Iroquois Indians, having been England's allies in the American Revolutionary War, had been forced to come to Canada in 1784 when England lost the war. They came, however, not as a subject people, but as a free and independent nation which had been granted lands in exchange for those which had been lost in England's cause.

With them they brought their own religion and form of government, a hereditary council, which they maintained into this century. The hereditary council, however, resisted Canadian attempts to reduce their status from that of a free and independent people to that of mere dependencies - just another band of Indians to be bullied and dominated by the Indian Affairs Department.

BROKE TREATIES

In 1923 the Indian Affairs Department decided to break the ancient treaties and enforce their domination. To do so, the officials persuaded the Parliament to pass legislation which would allow Indian bands to substitute an elected council for their traditional councils, if they so desired. This Act was passed, but the Brantford Six Nations people still decided to keep their old government and laws.

In 1952, with hope of justice gone, the Indians decided that a symbolic act was necessary. Late one night the hereditary Chiefs and their supporters occupied the Council House in hopes that the ensuing publicity would bring them public support. Unfortunately they underestimated both the willingness of the RCMP to use

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