

MUGWUMP

by Lynne Wanyeki

I spent last weekend in New Hampshire - enjoying a second Thanksgiving with a Jewish-American family I'd known growing up in Kenya. The house was full of people, laughter and long discussions. As three of us were university students, talk invariably turned to activism on campus. Several interesting questions were raised related to this:

1. Does university life actually change the perceptions of students? If so, how much and in what way?
2. Is increased consciousness of social/political issues really a motivator to action?
3. How much power to affect change do students really have? How much power do they perceive themselves as having?
4. Within the university milieu, who do students see as being the ultimate authority?
5. Do students have a say in the silent workings of the faculty and the administration? Do students really have a say in decisions taken that affect faculty?

I could go on, but won't. Suffice it to say that I found it fascinating to talk to the other two students, who both attend small liberal arts colleges in the USA, and to compare these with UNB.

Back to UNB. . . one more week of classes. I can't believe it! Where did all the time go?!? All those resolutions I'd made (i.e. to attend class regularly rather than sporadically) will have to hold until next term. I've slept an average of four hours a night for this past week - papers, papers and more damned term papers. Of course, it's my own fault - I should have started them much earlier in the term - but there's something about the fall semester that completely distorts my perception of time. At the beginning of term, I methodically sorted out all my courses, listing all my assignments, tests and due dates on a piece of paper which I tacked up in a place where I'd see it every day. Feeling very proud as my organized list of good intentions, each day, each week, I'd look at my list and mentally say "lots of time." Wrong. I'm only comforted (albeit slightly) by the knowledge that I'm not alone in this. Own up, how many of you had lists too?

Oh, by the way, this is the second last issue of the Brunswickan. Anybody who's interested in submitting that "one last letter" for Blood 'n Thunder, go to it.

Talking of the Brunswickan, our Feature this week is on "Exam Blues"; i.e. how to handle the stress of exams. For some reason I don't have a problem with exams. I like reading all the pertinent information then going in and spewing it out again in a three hour time period (Well, OK, I don't often last the full three hours). What I need is a feature on "Ccourse Blues" how to cope with the whole shebang: from attendance; to guilt complexes; to PAPERS; and finally to situation reevaluation i.e. if I don't get this done I won't do as well as I want to and I might (horror of horrors) even fail so stop feeling sorry for myself and kick into gear. What a war school is!

Have a good week! (Yes, I am being inane - it's going to be a hellish week for all of us!).

OPINION

The opinions found in Opinion are not necessarily the views of *The Brunswickan*.

Okagate

A look at the role of the Media during the Oka crisis

By P. J. Waddell

Thank you Mr. Valk, your understanding and sensitivity of the Oka issues was truly inciteful as well as constructive.

On the other hand the article went way over the head of at least one member of the student population. One Mr. Sean Maloney who in a letter to the editor (Nov. 9) put forward some of the most misinformed, blatant and hateful, white supremacist BS that I've ever read.

His only motive it would seem, was to inflame racist passion and sentiment regarding Indians. (I understand this guy is in Conflict studies at UNB - "a small racist enclave, leaching off the Nation"-?).

Here are a few facts he can check out. The South African Apartheid system, was actually adapted from our Indian reserves system. The Natives of the Iroquois and five Nations were given the *existing* border crossing rights to facilitate fur trading with the white man. The document (Jay Treaty, 1783) that conferred these rights also acknowledged their Aboriginal and land title rights and remains in force today.

Treaties, by definition are agreements signed between Nations, so while they may not have the might, we do acknowledge their right as a sovereign peoples. These treaties go back almost to the day we set foot on this continent; the day we were discovered on the beach by the Natives.

The Native peoples have never surrendered their land or Aboriginal rights to us. But we have kept them in our courts for over 200 years in various legal and semantic riddles. Even so the Canadian Constitution CA 1982, reaffirms these Aboriginal and Treaty rights in Part 2, sec. 35 of this fundamental document. *They* never surrendered their rights through conquest, as ironically *the French did*.

It is these people who are the menace to society, not a few Indians standing up for their rights by saying no to having their hand planted 150 year old pine forest and burial grounds moved down for the sake of a few rich folk with golf clubs.

The only real threat to public security in Montreal this summer came from the vengeful mobs of non-natives who roamed the city streets and highways in convoy disrupting traffic at will. Or the ones who patrolled the riverside landing sights looking for Native people, the old, the sick and women and children who were only seeking safety and sanctuary.

What about Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Bourassa? You want to talk about Law and Order? Sending in the troops broke about every law and convention in the book. There was no invoking of the War Measures Act yet the powers *guarded* by that act were used indiscriminately by all levels of authority. Charter violations occurred as a matter of course, the message was clear. Might is Right.

Unfortunately what also seems to be lacking from general understanding of this debacle is the irony that Quebec, the "distinct society" had absolutely no compassion whatsoever for another distinct society within its own borders. And once again we see Quebec solving its own internal problems at the expense of the rest of Canada. By bringing in 4500 Canadian soldiers armed with everything from Swiss army knives to tanks, helicopter gunships, tracker and surveillance aircraft, Navy patrol boats and supersonic F-18 Fighter/Bombers, to take on about one hundred Indians *in a defensive position*.

Meanwhile, back in Quebec City, Bourassa and Parizeau are laughing; they have managed to teach the Indians (Elijah Harper among them) a lesson, they along with Mulroney have created a polarization of public opinion in English Canada that pits one against the other while almost totally uniting the Quebecois Nationalists who want some pay back for Meech.

The value of propaganda and disinformation is not lost on our Federal Government. They thought it so important that they created a special task force called "Special Words and Tactics" just for Oka. (This is being investigated by an opposition MP, for Ottawa centre, Marlene Caterall) Unfortunately it seems they were successful to a significant degree in biasing public opinion. In the words of the leader of the Quebec Government's version of this special squad; Jean Claude Clutier (chief psychologist) he says "We prepared in advance a series of press releases which we distributed when the time was right and we controlled almost everything our Commanders and spokesmen said throughout the whole affair". Clutier says of his grand scheme "We had what you might call a script on the whole Mohawk crisis. . . we followed the script exactly". (CP, MtL, Oct. 26, Gleaner)...

It seems obvious to me that Quebec's use of the Military against the Mohawk was payback, pure and simple, for Elijah Harper's stand on Meech. There is also a message in this for the Cree of James Bay, on whose land the Quebec Government wants to build another huge hydro electric dam. But the real bonus for Quebec was how they managed to consolidate their own power base at our expense, by creating another divisive issue for Canadians. Alas, the tail wags the dog again.

Another "minor detail" of this story: the SQ were called in to remove the barricades the Natives had put up on a *dirt, back road in their forest*, by the Mayor of the village of Oka, a Mr. Jean Oullette. It was later reported that Mr. Oullette had a major financial interest in the company that wanted to build the golf course. Being a rather astute as well as greedy little tyrant, he knew that if he forced the issue by sending in the police he'd gain in the end; either by getting his golf course developed or forcing a settlement from the government, which is ultimately just what happened. The Canadian Government had to buy the land from his associates under duress at a highly inflated price. Mr. Oullette got the cash, the rest of us, including the forces, got the shaft, the Mohawks got temporary use only of the still disputed land and we're back exactly where we started.

Actually on July 9th, two days before we started, Marie Andree Jobin, an aide to Quebec's Indian Affairs Minister John Ciacca, said to The Montreal Gazette's reporter, Alexander Norris that "Mayor Oullette had reneged on an agreement with Mr. Ciacca last May when he pressed ahead with golf course expansion scheme after undertaking to put plans on hold." On July 10th, it was reported "an aide to Quebec Public Security Minister Sam Elkas said, 'provincial police won't use force to resolve what is essentially a "civil dispute," provided no criminal acts are committed and Public safety is not endangered."... And so far there is *no evidence crimes are being committed* at the roadblock, (on the back road)* nor that public safety is being compromised there' said the Aide, Helen Menard". (emphasis mine)

On July 10th "the Mayor (Oullette) was demanding that the SQ be sent in, defying a request by Quebec Indian Affairs Minister, John Ciacca. Mayor Oullette said he 'was tired waiting for results of talks between the Mohawks and government officials. Mr. Ciacca said he 'would oppose using police to resolve the dispute' pitting Oka's town council against the Mohawk settlement of Kahnstake". I really believe it's more important to settle the historic claims of the Native people of Oka than to proceed with a real estate development on a golf course; the Minister said in a telephone interview.

On July 11th at 5:30 a.m. the MtL Gazette reports that "About 100 SQ officers in riot gear surrounded the encampment of 300 Mohawks, including woman and children, on the land next to the golf course, the *police fired shots* and lobbed tear gas canisters." (emphasis mine) The gas blew back in their faces forcing them to retreat. At 9 a.m. "After Mohawks refuse to leave, the police stage a massive frontal assault on the armed camp, firing semi-automatic weapons, lobbing concussion grenades (to stun and shock) and more tear gas. The Mohawks responded with semi-automatic weapon fire and set fire to a pile of tires at *their* barricade. Constable Marcel Lemay 31, is shot in the face during the battle. At 10:15 a.m. Doctors in St. Eustach declare Lemay dead. The Surete constable had been wounded in his mouth. Serge Montpetit, a Surete Quebec spokesman, said, police were unsure whether Mohawk bullets or *police gunfire* killed Lemay". (emphasis mine)

The Mohawk later said they were only firing in the air and that Lemay was behind a tree out of view anyway. An autopsy report or statement has never been issued or made public by the SQ....

In September the Canadian Police Association bought large advertisements in local and National newspapers and Journals saying, among other things that the Surete never fired a shot. "The Surete never returned any gunfire!!!" (sic) it said. Yet there are numerous references to shots being fired by both sides: See also Globe and Mail, July 13 (2 days after the incident) Lise Proulx, spokeswoman for the Montreal Urban Community Police (who by this time were handling the investigation) said to reporters, "We can't say for sure from which side the bullet was fired ... whether from the Surete Quebec or from the Mohawks".

Raise some questions? Sound Machiavellian? It should, it is and the only way to find out the whole story is to demand a public inquiry!!

Next time, it would be nice to know that they would be fulfilling "the first and final, fundamental duty of a democratically elected Government to its citizens, and that is to tell them the truth"!*

*Brian Fawcett, Globe and Mail, Nov. 23rd, 1990.