

Canada sentences Rosie Douglas to probable death, cloaks racism, politics in "security risk" designation

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and
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Racism is something generally understood to be a social disease that our southern neighbours are inflicted with. Canadians pride themselves with being a "just society" with malice towards none even if they do have 'unique and distinctive characteristics'.

However this official image has become increasingly tarnished by the realities faced by newly arrived immigrants and, as well, minorities already present in our society.

We don't believe that the case of Rosie Douglas, a militant black leader now facing deportation on December 15, is an isolated incident. We feel that it is a test case which challenges Canadians to defend a person who is being railroaded out of this country for his attempts to organize the oppressed to fight racism.

Today Rosie Douglas will be speaking at a meeting designed to rally support for his fight with the Immigration Department. Vern Harper, member of the Toronto Warriors Society and leading Native militant will also speak, as will Kishore Jaggernaut, a York student facing deportation.

Rosie Douglas, if his deportation is carried out on December 15, 1975, will probably not see the end of this year. His return to his native Dominica will put him in the sights of the police and politicians of that tiny reactionary colony and they will inevitably carry out the threats that they have until now only been able to voice. Rosie's book outlining the causes of underdevelopment in Dominica, Chains or Change, has been banned on the island.

CONCERTED CAMPAIGN

The deportation, however, is only the climax to a concerted campaign that has been carried out by the Canadian government and courts in the last six years. All of this has happened because Douglas, a leader of the black community, has been an outspoken critic of the racism that blacks, natives, and immigrants face in Canada. He may be a "risk to national security" as Solicitor General Warren Allmand claims, but then the question must be asked, who are the racists that feel, in 1969, threatened?

The anti-racist protest at Montreal's Sir George Williams University is often used, through innuendo against Douglas every time his name appears in the establishment press. For his part Douglas was charged with participating in an illegal sit-in (legally termed public mischief). Bail was set at \$14,000 and his passport was confiscated.

CHARGES LEVELLED

Douglas was among 45 black and 52 white students sitting in at the university computer centre. They were making the last in a long series of attempts to get the foot-dragging university administration to undertake an investigation into charges of racial discrimination levelled by black students against a white physiology professor. Dropping the casual attitude normally exhibited towards students' concerns the administration reacted swiftly and sent in 400 armed riot police who successfully stormed the computer centre and arrested



Rosie Douglas (centre) talks to supporters in anti-racism rally in Toronto, over the summer.

the 97 armed students.

Despite similar charges and common evidence against all 97 students, bail for Douglas, who had no previous legal record, was set far above the \$5,000 average for black students and the \$1,000 for whites.

During his trial Rosie faced an all-white jury which included one man who in open court asked to be excused from jury duty because, as he said, he was "not overly fond of black people". The presiding judge told him to take his place in the jury and "serve his country". Somehow the Supreme Court of Canada did not consider this sufficient grounds for granting an appeal. Rosie Douglas drew a 2 year sentence, on evidence that often resulted in acquittal for just about all the others (92).

MEDIA RESPONSE

The public media has chosen to ignore these facts and have continually attempted to link Rosie Douglas to the destruction of computers. Computers were damaged during the police attack, but no court has laid blame on any defendants. Those computers were eventually sold to the University of Michigan and are presently in use.

Just recently, in response to a press conference at which Rosie announced his intention to sue the Globe and Mail for linking him to the damage, the Toronto Star released an article which in part stated: "Roosevelt Douglas, jailed for taking part in the sit-in which sparked a computer smashing spree at Montreal's Sir George Williams University... said yesterday he will fight deportation to his native Dominica"; and, "students set fire to the university computer centre towards the end of their occupation. Police then moved in and arrested 97 of them."

"SPECIAL TREATMENT"

Douglas continued to receive "special treatment" upon his release from jail. A deportation order was issued against him in November 1972, one month before he would have been in Canada as a landed immigrant for five years and out of reach of such an order. Such an issuance is regarded as contrary to legal precedent, since the conviction on which it was based was then before appeal courts. The government got the deportation order in spite of the judge's complaint that he was being pressured.

In May of 1973 it became apparent that the government wanted Douglas out of the country and they were willing to do anything. A special certificate branding him a "risk to national security" was signed by Solicitor General Warren Allmand and Immigration Minister Robert Andras.

CHALLENGE

This prevents Douglas from appealing his deportation on humanitarian grounds that his life would be in danger in such a repressive society as Dominica. The government knows this. Both ministers have been challenged by Douglas to substantiate with evidence the security risk designation. Their refusal to do so, has been used to uphold the Montreal immigration appeal board deportation order in May 1975. Catch 22 is pressed forward with a vengeance as the government has now forced Douglas to surrender his passport in order to remain free, pending the December hearing. Without a passport he is unable to leave Canada and go to a less repressive country even if he wanted to.

Black community organizations took up his case at the Annual Conference of National Black Coalition in January 1975. During questioning there, Allmand admitted that he had issued the certificate based on RCMP reports that indicated an unsubstantiated arson "conviction".

Previously he had been forced to retract a statement he himself had made which linked Douglas with such an arson conviction. He stated then that the error in the file would be corrected. Allmand now claims that both ministers must withdraw the certificate, but in fact, should one minister withdraw his signature, the certificate would become null and void.

PUBLIC STRUGGLE

Rosie Douglas is prepared to make his case a public struggle. He says he is being deported because of his political views as a leading member of the Black Workers Alliance, and his willingness to fight back. Understandably the only way people can change the course of these events is to actively oppose the deportation.

The increasing groundswell of racist attacks by groups like the Western Guard, repression of natives, and even public attacks from the media (the Rastafarian religious group was attacked this summer by Globe and Mail) has left an ugly air in the country.

The Green Paper hearings try to identify recent immigrants as being the root of the economic recession, unemployment, and other problems faced in Canada.

Deportation has become the new method in de-populating Canada. The case of 1500 Haitians bears witness to this, along with countless other individuals about whom we never hear.

Douglas, a member of the National Alliance Against Racism and Political Repression wants people in Canada to take notice of what is happening here and to oppose it as something that is clearly against the interest of the majority of Canadians.

The precedent this case sets will determine whether or not the government will be able to remove those it opposes without facing massive opposition.

More letters

Reader applauds Ritch's defense of students' rights

"I have never yet been afraid of any men who have set a place in the middle of their city, where they come together to cheat each other and to forswear themselves." (Cyrus the Great)

That statement is intended as a reply to Commercial Caterers vice-president Paul Farkas's statement: "What we do, we do honestly" (quoted in the Oct. 2 issue of Excalibur). Earlier, I wrote Excalibur a letter about what I believed to be an injustice:

the prices Rill Food Services and Commercial Caterers charge for their fresh fruit.

I was angry then; I am angry now, and I will continue to be angry until food prices are explained and justified to the public. At the CYSF food rally, Dale Ritch reeled off a list of food items which have risen 30 per cent or more in the past year: coffee up 33 per cent, muffins up 100 per cent. Meals across the menu are up at least 30 per cent.

Here are other interesting facts I have dug up. If you bought a pound of cheese at the Founders-Vanier servery, you'd pay \$6 for it! If you bought a six quart basket of apples at the Central Square cafeteria, you would pay at least \$5.

Perhaps, these are ludicrous suggestions, but think of this. I paid \$1.25 for a six quart basket of Fancy McIntosh apples (none of the fruit in Central Square is fancy graded) recently at a fruit

market. The proprietor had no reservation about telling me the apples cost him \$1.

Why aren't the catering companies content to earn a 25 per cent profit? Why are they allowed to make 300 per cent or more on some food items?

Someone has said that the caterers operate on a 43 per cent mark-up on everything they sell. Obviously, I am suffering from a misunderstanding or that person is telling less than the truth.

I don't agree with all President Ritch's remedies, but I do applaud his inflation-fighting efforts and his stand for our beleaguered rights.

Robert Houhannessian

EXCALIBUR
Staff meeting
2 p.m. Room 111