



October Crisis 1970 lingers

It is my hope that some day the full details of the intelligence upon which the government acted can be made public, because until that day comes the people of Canada will not be able fully to appreciate the course of action which has been taken by the government.

John Turner, October 16, 1970

by Michael McEvoy
for Canadian University Press

For most Canadians, the October Crisis of 1970 is a closed case. Most people still feel the federal government was correct when it proclaimed the War Measures Act (WMA) to bring "peace and order" to a country wrought by terrorists.

But 10 years later many questions linger about the War Measures Act and the Crisis itself.

Was it necessary to invoke the WMA to solve the Laporte/Cross kidnapping or did the government have other reasons for its proclamation?

Still other mysteries surround the actual murder of Pierre Laporte. Did Paul Rose, serving a life term for Laporte's killing, actually murder Quebec's labour minister? And what was the role of Canada's police forces throughout these events?

These questions have remained largely unexamined by the English media, although in Quebec they have been probed with startling results.

Preliminary investigations by journalists and inquiry commissions reveal four things.

First, the federal government, either intentionally or unintentionally, overreacted to events in 1970.

Second, Paul Rose was probably not present when Pierre Laporte was killed.

Third, RCMP and police had, by 1970, penetrated the FLQ thoroughly enough to know what the group was

planning.

Fourthly, Pierre Laporte had extensive connections with Montreal's Mafia community, a fact which seems to have muddied speculation about Laporte's actual murder.

The Front de Liberation Quebecois (FLQ) was founded by a small band of people in 1963 who were dedicated to the cause of an independent Quebec. The FLQ was one of many independence groups formed at the time, but it became the most notable because of its bombing missions in affluent English suburbs in Montreal.

In 1964, the FLQ was given an intellectual shot in the arm when Pierre Vallieres and Charles Gagnon assumed leadership. Both were jailed two years later when police connected them with incidents of violence.

By 1970, rumours abounded that the FLQ was about to attempt something more daring than mail box bombings.

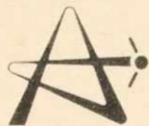
In May of 1970 police officials say they foiled an FLQ attempt to abduct an American government official. By

this time the police had identified the handful of people in the FLQ. Jacques Lanctot and Paul Rose, involved in the Cross and Laporte kidnappings, had been arrested at the raucous demonstration during the St. Jean Baptiste Day celebrations in 1968. Others, such as Marc Carbonneau, a Cross abductor, were leaders of the "liberation" taxi drivers movement a few years earlier.

When Cross was kidnapped, the police had a good idea who the culprits were. And so did La Presse, Quebec's largest French language daily newspaper. They speculated in a front page story the day after Cross's abduction that Jacques Lanctot was involved since he was a cab driver and Cross was kidnapped in a taxi.

According to Pierre Vallieres, in his book, the **Assassination of Pierre Laporte**, police also knew the house

liberation du quebec



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