

course, our whole civilization is based on the premise that the state was wrong in that instance.

● (1120)

If we look at another stream in our civilization, the Greek civilization, we soon come to the figure of Socrates, who was also executed by the state for subversion. He was charged with corrupting the youth of the time, but Socrates had more respect for the Greek polity than his accusers, refusing to go for the escape plan that some of his friends had set up for him. He said that because he had respect for the laws of Athens he would rather drink the hemlock than bring dishonour on his society.

There in the two mainstreams of western civilization, Mr. Speaker, we find two central events in both of which, I think Hon. Members would agree, the state was wrong. The Romans were wrong in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the Greek authorities were wrong in the execution of Socrates.

Let me cite a few more examples, Mr. Speaker. During the time of the American revolution, many revolutionaries were charged with sedition and subversion for their attempt to resist the unjust imposition of taxes by the British Government on the 13 colonies. Americans would say now—although perhaps in Canada this is not a safe thing to say given the United Empire Loyalist tradition—that the British Government was wrong in the things it did to people who dared to express the opinion that there ought to be independence for the 13 colonies or perhaps only that the tax laws of the time were unjust.

Another example in our political life and in the tradition of the New Democratic Party in particular is the Winnipeg general strike of 1919. J. S. Woodsworth, someone I think it is fair to say who all now regard as a leading figure in the political history of Canada and who is generally revered not just by members of the political tradition to which he belonged but by many others, was charged with sedition in 1919. The charge was not based on violence or calling into question the state but because he quoted Isaiah. That is why he was charged with sedition. People at the time did not like that. I guess they would not have liked Isaiah either because he expressed strong and harsh criticism of people in authority, of people with power and what they did to others who did not have power.

That is why we are concerned about the power given to the state through this Bill—power given to it anew because the state has always had that power. What we lament is that we had an opportunity, when reforming our security system, to make that power more accountable, to learn from the mistakes of long past and we have not done so.

● (1125)

I am not just talking of Canada's past and Canada's political life, events like the charging of J. S. Woodsworth with sedition; I am referring right back to Christ and to Socrates. When are we ever going to learn from history, Mr. Speaker, that the state ought to be more accountable than what the present Solicitor General (Mr. Kaplan) now proposes in this

Security Intelligence Service

Bill? When are we going to learn to have some self-criticism built into agencies like security services? Are we never going to learn that the world view of any particular state at any particular time is, in view of everything we have ever learned from history, a limited and self-righteous view of itself which has to have built into it elements of accountability? I fault the Solicitor General for having passed up this opportunity to make Canada an example to all other nations in this regard. There could have been this opportunity if the Minister had been willing to follow some of the recommendations of the McDonald Commission, particularly with respect to parliamentary accountability.

We in the New Democratic Party perhaps know better than others, by virtue of the fact that we come out of a tradition which has been more critical of the prevailing views of society, what the power of suspicion is all about and what the power of the state can be *vis-à-vis* those it regards as potential subversives. We know only too well that over the years legitimate political dissent and ideas—many of which have now become part and parcel of the fabric of Canadian life—when initially advocated were suspected of being the latest advance of Bolshevism into Canadian society. When medicare and pension plans were originally advocated it was thought they were being transplanted into Canadian society by the Bolsheviks.

I listened with interest to the Hon. Member for Victoria (Mr. McKinnon) when he said recently that we did not have a monopoly on our concern in this area, and we do not. There are many people in other political parties who have a genuine concern about these issues. We want to hear from them and work together with them to change this Bill. However, it remains a fact that it has been a political policy or strategy on the part of the right in this country to question the loyalty of the people on the left, in the sense of their loyalty to their country, implying that their ideas might be subversive. This has been done decade after decade. I say, therefore, to the Hon. Member for Victoria that although he himself may say that although he might not agree with what I would say, he would defend to the death my right to say it, there are others in his political tradition who have not been so eager to defend the rights of people to say what they feel. That is something we ought to be conscious of when we are debating this particular kind of Bill.

We are living in the kind of situation today, Mr. Speaker, with respect to peace groups, where many people are not only loyal to Canada but they observe a higher loyalty to the future of the planet earth and to the future of human life on this planet. They ought not to be considered by this Government, as I know they are, and will continue to be if this particular Bill goes through, as somehow subversive because they question the shortsighted, limited, and as it will be looked back on 100 years from now, insane policies of this Government.

We failed, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister has failed, by imposing this regime on Parliament and on the country. He has missed a great opportunity finally to have done something good in this area.