

VIOLENCE IS PART OF

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When Canadian historians 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-racism 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."

Yet further investigation by police has demonstrated that no such "foreign" (except for the presence of a number of black, foreign-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.

Is Canada a "non-violent" country? Every labour union member who has faced police protecting strike-breakers, every Canadian Indian who has to break through the barriers of legal discrimination, every French Canadian who has attempted to exercise his inherited language and cultural rights, knows that violence and repression exist in Canada.

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 cynically neglect to point out that the chief offender against the ideals of the British Constitution in Canada, has been the Government itself.

This is not to say that such authority-directed violence is necessarily illegal. If anything the opposite is true in Canada. As John Porter pointed out in his book, *The Vertical Mosaic*, a strong stable elite controls the Canadian government, civil service and judicial system.

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 satisfactory 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 program on CKCO TV criticising Major Holdings for land speculations 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 pursued to demand laws which work against its best interest, and destroy its rights and liberties.

NEWS MANAGEMENT

Two such instances, the passing of Section 98 of the criminal code in 1919 and Quebec's Padlock Laws, show how fragile our civil rights are, and how the facts are manipulated to allow their destruction.

In 1919 Canada was experiencing a severe post-war depression. Farm and labour 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 deperate condition of the laborers, farmers and returning soldiers, they decided to force concessions by means of a general strike, which was touched 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, firemen, waterworks employees and bread and milk delivermen remained on the job with the approval of other strikers.

Although a Manitoba Royal Commission to investigate the strike later concluded that the 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 98, 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 awaiting 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 would deport him.

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.

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 "Communist" — 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 governments 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 Murdochville in 1957. In each case the tame press justified the use of the police or army to crush against exploitation by greedy owners by raising the Communist bogeyman.

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

NOW THAT THE BUFFALO'S GONE . . .

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

Not satisfied with having stolen a continent from the Indian, now the RCMP and government officials are attempting to steal the few remaining acres left to the Indians and to repudiate the rights they were promised in exchange for their freedoms. In Brantford in 1952 and in Buffalo Narrows, Saskatchewan, today, the Indian's battle still goes on.

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



Demonstrators feel passive silence gives assent (Daily Ryersonian Photo)