

# Charter: Half step in the right direction

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In the military dictatorships of Latin America today, life for many consists of waiting for the knock on the door at night that will herald their disappearance. The people picked up in the juntas' fishing expeditions for dissidents might return weeks later. As often, they will simply disappear forever.

In South Africa, almost 20 million blacks provide a pool of slave labor for 4 million whites.

In Poland, farmers demand the right to join their colleagues in the cities in an independent labor union. On the borders, Soviet, East German and Czechoslovakian soldiers are massing.

In Saudi Arabia, women accused of adultery are stoned to death. Thieves sometimes lose their hands.

And in Canada, the first volume of the Macdonald report on decades of illegal RCMP activity has been in the hands of the federal solicitor-general for weeks; the report is in the process of being "abridged", and only selected portions will ever be made public.

All of these are the consequences of governments whose power is unbridled, and of societies willing to tolerate the resulting excesses or unable to resist them. An observer is hard-pressed to find any country in the world where citizens can live unmolested to any degree by government. Where they are not openly predatory, governments are

strangling people in bureaucracy, oppressing them with odious laws, ignoring the plight of the poor while fattening the rich, etc.

Canadians are lucky in that our population is relatively small in a rich country. Further, we are lucky in that we are a small country that has transferred from one empire (the British) to another (the U.S.) relatively bloodlessly. Our overlords were and are most interested in plundering our resources than in stationing armies on our territory.

As a result, we have been spared the brutalization that afflicts much of the rest of the world.

But in no way can we pretend that Canada has been free from oppressive government. From the crushing of the Métis in the 1870s to the police states inaugurated under the War Measures Act in 1914, 1939 and 1970, and from the extermination of Canada's native peoples to Duplessis' padlock laws, Canadians have tasted what others have lived with for generations.

The contempt our governments hold for civil rights is eloquently demonstrated in the bargaining that has taken place since the present prime minister proposed an entrenched Canadian Charter of Rights while still justice minister in the Pearson cabinet. Provincial premiers have effectively held our civil rights to ransom, holding out on the Charter until the federal

government agrees to dismember itself by "repatriating" its powers to the provinces.

The events of October 1970 make it difficult to take Pierre Trudeau very seriously when he speaks, eloquently as always, of the need to place checks on Parliament's and provincial legislatures' powers.

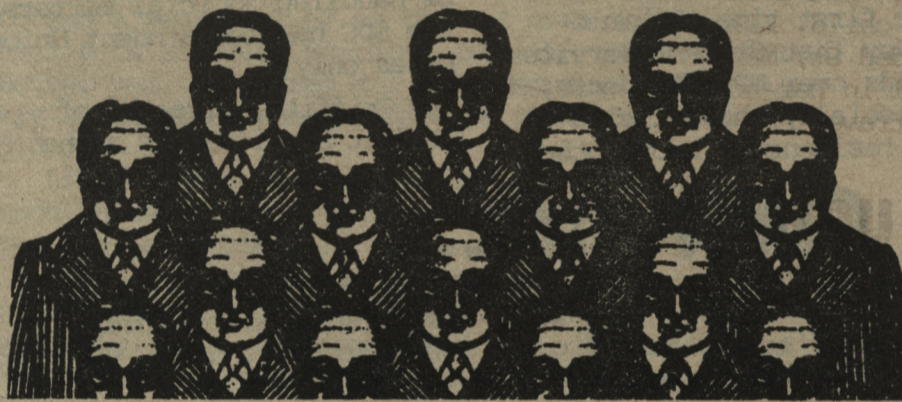
But in something like the proposed Charter of Rights, we have a first, incomplete step in the right direction.

It is true, as opponents of the Charter argue, that Canadian courts have not shown themselves to be outstanding defenders of civil rights; we can expect their performance in enforcing the Charter to be mediocre in the great Canadian tradition.

Further, it is true that the courts can do little against a truly repressive and authoritarian government. Against guns and tanks, judges can do nothing.

But a constitutionally entrenched Charter, and the opportunities it opens for individuals to seek redress for violations of their rights, is a step in the direction of creating a political atmosphere in this country which will make people more conscious of their liberty, fragile as it is.

And perhaps then Canadians will be less willing to barter their rights for law and order at the first hint of disturbance.



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## Do I get the job?

Reprinted from the Charlatan by CUP

*If you could read their minds. Watch as our dauntless computer student applies for a job with IBM and read what he and the interviewer are really thinking as their thoughts appear in italics.*

**Scoop Harrish**

Job hunter: *God. They're ten minutes over their time. What are they discussing? where they'll put his desk? Come on, come on.*

DOOR OPENS, RELAXED WOMAN LEAVES, CLOSES DOOR

Job Hunter: *God. Not already. OK. OK. Let's see, is my tie straight? Should I knock or go in? Should.* Interviewer: *Enter.*

Job hunter: *Good afternoon. . . I mean morning. He's a bear. . . a bloody grizzly bear they've trained to sit behind a desk.*

Interviewer: *Take a seat.*  
Job hunter: *Where should I take it? Heh heh Good broke the ice. Shake hands. Be firm. . . shit! sweaty palms.*

Interviewer: *Cigarette? Hmm, must have forked out a bundle to rent that suit for the day. Must be hungry for a job.*

Job hunter: *Thanks. He's wearing jeans, the man is wearing jeans. Looks like we'll be discussing land rovers and wood stoves.*

Interviewer: *So you want a job as a computer programmer, what languages do you know?*

Job hunter: *English and a bit of french. I've got to start relating to this granola head.*

Interviewer: *I wouldn't be so quick with the first one. No, I mean computer languages.*

Job hunter: *Oh yeah, well, all of them, in fact. . . do you like granola? Was that too obvious?*

Interviewer: *Pardon??*

Job hunter: *Split logs not atoms eh?? Heh heh I'm making an idiot of myself.*

Interviewer: *So, why do you want to work for IBM? Now there's a hypothetical situation.*

Job hunter: *I've grown up with IBM. It's in my blood like baseball and Mom's apple pie. I can't believe I'm saying this crap.*

Interviewer: *I can't believe he's saying this crap. Well, do you believe in what we do at IBM?*

Job hunter: *Oh yes, defense has to be a high priority in North America. Where's the ashtray?*

Interviewer: *What are you talking about? Uh huh.*

Job hunter: *And missiles are the key. No ashtray! Help!*

Interviewer: *He can't be talking about ICBMs, can he?*

Job hunter: *And I think Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles are the key, . . . are you OK sir?*

Interviewer: *uh, just something in my eye. Just five more minutes.*

Job hunter: *Five more minutes.*

Interviewer: *What do you feel your greatest weaknesses are? Try to keep it within an hour.*

Job hunter: *I have an insatiable urge to work, that drives fellow employees to drink and suicide. I also have a pocketful of hot ashes.*

Interviewer: *Insatiable, are you? Not bad, four syllables.*

Job hunter: *I'm still looking for a woman to prove I'm not, heh heh. I hope he doesn't think I'm a sexist bastard.*

Interviewer: *Sexist bastard.*

Job hunter: *As for my strengths, I'm a man of strong convictions, liberally speaking. . .*

Interviewer: *Liberally?*

Job hunter: *Liberally, oops.*

Conservatively speaking. . .

Interviewer: *Conservatively?*

Job hunter:

*Conservatively? . . . NDPLY? . . . help!*

Interviewer: *Well, where do you think you'll be in five years? If he says sitting in my chair, I'll shove my pen down his throat.*

Job hunter: *Sitting in your chair interviewing you, heh heh. Not bad. Not bad.*

Interviewer: *Heh heh. Where's my pen? Have you got any questions?*

Job hunter: *Yes, if I don't take a vacation this year, can I save it up for twice as long next year?*

Interviewer: *Don't laugh, don't laugh.*

We'll see. Tell me, what do you do in your spare time? Watch the laundry spin? Count sidewalk cracks?

Job hunter: *Got to get back to the environment. I rally against nukes.*

Interviewer: *I can't hear anymore. Uh huh.*

Job hunter: *Yes, split logs before atoms. God, I already said that.*

Interviewer: *Wonder what's for supper. Uh huh.*

Job hunter: *And as for the whales. . .*

Interviewer: *ZZZZ. . . Whalers?? Are you a Whaler fan?*

Job hunter: *Uh. . . sure. What?*

Interviewer: *Not many Hartford fans up here.*

Job hunter: *No, not many of us. Football? Soccer? Ping pong? Help!*

Interviewer: *I'm a relation of Rick Kehoe you know. Never noticed how intelligent this lad looks.*

Job hunter: *Finest player on the team*

Interviewer: *You think so eh? Heh heh. I can find a spot for a bright light like this. Well listen son, there's no use going on.*

Job hunter: *No?*

Interviewer: *I should be calling you in a couple of days, with a contract.*

Job hunter: *I should have known. . . mafia.*

Interviewer: *I'll keep in touch. Dresses well.*

Job hunter: *Thanks very much.*



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