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# Those American Radicals

By RONALD HAMOWY

EDMONTON, Alberta—Canada is now gradually emerging from one of the worst domestic crises she has faced in this century.

With the proclamation of the War Measures Acts by Prime Minister Trudeau, the Government conferred upon itself powers so extraordinary and far-reaching as to be unimagined except in times of grave civil disorder. The War Measures Act empowers any peace officer, Federal, Provincial, or local, to search and arrest without warrant, to detain incommunicado anyone arrested for up to 90 days without bail and without charges being laid for as long as three weeks.

The regulations outlaw membership in the Front de Libération du Québec, the group responsible for the kidnaping of a Quebec Provincial Minister and a British diplomat, and any "successor group." They provide a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment for any person who advocates the use of force or the commission of a crime "as a means of or as an aid in accomplishing governmental change within Canada."

Among a lengthy list of things banned are advocacy or promotion of the "acts, aims, principles or policies of the unlawful associations." The discretionary powers granted arresting officers by the regulations are as broad as is possible. They empower a peace officer to arrest "a person who he has reason to suspect has committed, is committing or is about to commit" any act.

These vast powers were invoked, we are told, for the specific purpose of quelling further disturbances in Quebec and to aid in the apprehension of the terrorists. But these same sweeping powers, once proclaimed, are granted to all law-enforcement officers (including members of the Canadian Armed Forces, prison guards, and sheriff's officers) throughout the Dominion.

Thus, these powers are even more easily subject to abuse, not only in Quebec — where, to date, over 400 persons have been arrested — but throughout Canada. For example, on the day after the Act's promulgation, the Mayor of Vancouver announced that he might use these powers against radical groups, drug pushers and American draft-dodgers. There is little question that legitimate political dissent in Canada is today much more difficult than it was two months ago, particularly in western Canada.

Because of the far-reaching implications of these events, one would expect that they would trigger a wave of public debate and concern, especially at the universities. Reports in The Toronto Globe and Mail indicate that this is, in fact, the case in the East. What is so astounding in western Canada, however, is the complete serenity, one might better say apathy, with which the people of this area seem to take what has happened. The University of Alberta ranks as probably the best institution of higher

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learning between Toronto and Vancouver. Its students seem neither unusually backward nor ignorant; its faculty is competent. Yet, on this campus, there appears only the slightest concern for what is happening in French Canada, and for the potential precedents for arbitrary government.

The contrast between the almost paranoid fear of government erosion of civil liberties which typifies the student at most American universities and the unconcern of the students and faculty here leads almost to culture shock for the American coming from one environment into the other. (Additionally, this lack of concern suggests that there might very well be something to the claim of Quebec separatists that English-speaking Canadians will never understand French Canada for they will never be concerned enough to take an interest in what is going on.)

Over the past few years I have become more and more sympathetic to the position adopted by increasing numbers of my fellow colleagues in America that a university cannot operate under crisis, that what is required is restraint, order, and sobriety, that to transfer the ills and disorders of the society into the university leads only to the destruction of the means by which the university can effectively deal with these disorders.

What I have begun to learn in western Canada, however, is that too much restraint, too much order, too much sobriety, can easily and unnoticeably evolve into unconcern. Unconcern is as much destructive of the goals of the university as chaos. Maybe many of the more activist students I spoke with at the American university where I last taught [Stanford] were correct when they insisted — not on the basis of empirical evidence, I'm sure, but perhaps out of an intuitive grasp of things — that some members of the university community must take upon themselves the task of goading the others, even if this goading has to take the form of spectacular action, if civic concern is to remain an important part of the university.

In any case, as uncomfortable as I have at times been when speaking with these radicals in America, I now wish at least a few were here. It is, I think, a valuable thing to learn that social responsibility is of greater concern, that an interest in individual freedom is probably better protected, and that, in the final analysis, the function of the university is better served, among those with the consciousness of an American radical than among those with no consciousness at all.

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