

Ottawa should give CUPE the Convoy treatment and shut it down



by Conrad Black

Last week was a busy one in the increasingly intense struggle of sensible Canadians to slough off, cast down, and ultimately trample into threadbare fragments, incinerate, and scatter the ashes, of woke authoritarianism. On the positive side, Federal Judge Richard Mosley's finding that there was inadequate justification for the imposition of the Emergencies Act against the trans-Canada truckers protest in February 2022, was a stirring resurrection of the official recognition of the liberties of the citizen against the capricious and heavy-handed whims of the state. The judge contradicted Appeal Court Justice Paul Rouleau's finding in the inquiry that the Emergencies Act requires in the event of its imposition, that conditions created by the actions of the truckers justified

the use of the draconian legislation. Justice Mosley wasn't so declarative on the legality of recourse to the Emergencies Act as he was in his finding that it was unjustified: it did not meet the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service's definition of a "threat to the security of Canada," and the government could not just fabricate its own criteria.

He effectively found that the only aspect of the conduct of the truckers that justified drastic and extraordinary measures was the blockage of the major crossing point on the Canada-United States border at Coutts, Alta. But this was removed by police action with no requirement of a declaration of a national emergency, no violence (though weapons were discovered), and no recourse to such extreme measures as imprisonment or seizure of bank accounts or "debanking." Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced to the media, while the truckers were still far distant from Ottawa but approaching rapidly, that they were homophobes and misogynists, outrageous and irrelevant allegations with no basis in fact. Leaders of governments who wish to be taken seriously as they implement extreme measures that suspend the rights of hundreds of people should not attempt to prepare public opinion for what they're about to do by falsely defining those whom they are about to suppress.

This climate of malicious disinformation was aggravated by the stentorian hyperactivity of the federal government's propaganda apparatus. Potential liberal leadership candidate Mark Carney wrote that the truckers were trying to overthrow the government. This was a deliberate falsehood. Once they arrived in Ottawa, they parked their trucks in inconvenient places, made a good deal of noise, but did absolutely nothing to justify allegations that they were united by extremist views or had any seriously illegal purpose. These were independent truckers who for their own reasons did not wish to be vaccinated and most of their activities were deliveries across the Canada United States border and when they returned

to Canada unvaccinated, they were required to undergo quarantine for two weeks. Obviously, this would eventually lead to bankruptcy if not starvation. In the circumstances, and in the light of subsequent research on the Covid virus and its treatment, it is clear that their objections were reasonable.

Of course, no serious country can tolerate the roads adjacent to its principal federal government buildings to be congested by protesters indefinitely. The truckers were jovial and rather likable and only occasionally slightly over boisterous, and this matter could have been dealt with by normal police methods. Other than in the fact that the authorities did not use live ammunition, we effectively, incredibly, managed to emulate the public relations and human rights disaster of the government of the People's Republic of China in clearing Tiananmen Square in Beijing in 1989: a thoroughly unjustified recourse to coercive force, extraordinary prosecution, and freezing or confiscation of assets.

This was the first use of the Emergencies Act and the first invocation of extraordinary powers by the federal government since Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau use the War Measures Act in 1970 to impose martial law on parts of Quebec following the murder of a senior member of the Quebec government, Pierre Laporte, and the kidnapping of the British trade representative, James Cross, by the avowedly violent separatist organization, the Front de Liberation du Québec. That was a justified action in a genuine emergency against violent and avowedly extra-legal extremists, but even then, the subsequent McDonald Commission revealed a good deal of astonishing official incompetence. One of the more amusing and innocuous instances of Palooka-like amateurism was that the Secretary of State of Canada, Gérard Pelletier, a respected former editor of La Presse, was on the official list of potential subversives and his Montreal home was ransacked by the police even as his son explained to them that his father

had voted (reluctantly) for use of the statute by which they stormed into his house at 4:00 a.m. without a warrant looking for evidence that he was trying to overthrow the government of which he was a member.

The decision last week in the Federal Court was that the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the Canadian Constitution Foundation were correct in their complaint that the government's "decision to declare a public order emergency did not satisfy the requirements of the Emergencies Act" and that "temporary measures adopted to deal with the protests infringed provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights." The federal government's blustering assurances that they would appeal this decision were thoroughly unconvincing. It was obviously a correct decision, but we can all be thankful that perceptions, even mistaken perceptions of a national emergency so grave that it requires emergency measures, have only occurred twice in the 79 years since the Second World War.

On the negative side of the ledger and at the lowest rung of social organization was the revelation last week that the Canadian Union of Public Employees, which inexplicably represents the teaching assistants at York University in Toronto, has demanded that its members use every opportunity, including occasions that have nothing to do with anything in the Middle East, to denounce the "Zionist Israeli state" as a "genocidal colonial project." Canada itself fares little better and is demonized as "turtle Island... the Canadian settler state." The presence of Jewish groups and clubs and organizations on the York campus and the research links between York and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem are deemed to be evidence of York University's "complicity" in genocide. CUPE has a long history of virulent antisemitism and psychotic hostility to Israel and to Jews generally, and has frequently and over many years bandied about charges of "apartheid, genocide, and state-sanctioned violence" against Israel and Canada. The CUPE local at McMaster University directly

approved of the massacre of Israelis on October 7.

With the same zeal that the federal government attacked the truckers, it should now put the Canadian Union of Public Employees in trusteeship and decertify it as a bargaining agent for anyone until the authors of this vicious racist vitriol are purged from its membership. That would be a correct use of government authority in defense of peace and freedom, which is its mission and purpose.

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