

## Editorial

# Reason required, but panic offered

The terror tactics of the Front de Liberation du Quebec are being rendered more and more effective by every Canadian who screams fanatically for revenge and by every governmental over-reaction such as the implementation of the War Measures Act.

The FLQ set out to knock Canada on its ear by striking panic in the hearts of every citizen. They set out to call attention to the frustration of all Quebecois who advocate separatism. They set out to evoke a reaction from governments that would not be grounded in reason and common sense.

And almost every reaction from every Canadian politician and much of the reaction from the public have been monuments to the success of the FLQ scheme.

When a sober, calm approach was needed, the federal government offered the War Measures Act, a blatant and savage travesty of the same civil liberties and democratic principles they claim they are trying to salvage.

Under the War Measures Act, democracy ceases to exist in Canada. And the fact that the Front de Liberation du Quebec can be credited with its destruction is a pitiful commentary on the Canadian political system whose mandate it is to preserve it.

The last time that a Western nation deemed it necessary to compromise its democratic values it lost them, and while few Canadians realize it, we are in very real danger of losing ours.

That occasion was the establishment of Nazi rule in Germany in 1933.

The pretext for invoking the law was the Reichstag fire of February 27, 1933. Hitler at the time was leader of a democratic coalition government that was about to face an election.

He called the fire a "communist crime" and used it to justify an act that was frighteningly similar to the Canadian War Measures Act.

This decree laid down that:

"Restrictions on personal liberty, on the right of free expression of opinion, including freedom of the press; on the rights of assembly and association; and violations of the privacy of postal, telegraphic and telephonic communication, and warrants for house searches, orders for confiscations as well as restrictions on property, are also permissible beyond the legal limits otherwise prescribed."

By the use of the powers granted in the act the Nazis and their allies were able to obtain a majority in the Reichstag and pass an "enabling act" giving the government exclusive legislative powers.

Whenever a nation lays aside democratic principles that appear to be getting in the way of swift action to solve a crime, it jeopardizes its entire democratic system.

Sections of the Canadian Criminal Code dealing with sedition are almost as biting as sections of the War Measures Act and in normal circumstances the police can usually find ways of holding a person for three or four days before charges are laid.

The War Measures Act was a dangerous overreaction by the government and should be repealed as fast as possible.

Under the emergency regulations of the War Measures Act, it is considered an indictable offence, bearing a prison term of up to five years, to "communicate statements on behalf of or as a representative of the unlawful association," in this case the FLQ.

It is also unlawful, and liable to the same punishment, to "advocate or promote the unlawful acts, aims, principles or policies of the unlawful association."

Under these regulations, the government, widely interpreting the clauses, can effectively muzzle any and all information about the FLQ.

It is perhaps, desirable to muzzle FLQ propaganda. But it is unforgivable and unjust to attempt to block legitimate information about the organization because this information is essential if Canadians are to make intelligent assessments of the movements, assessments which they are making hurriedly during the current crisis.

Under no conditions could we endorse the FLQ or its tactics. The murder of Pierre Laporte, whatever his politics and whatever his social standing, was cowardly, ugly and pointless. But to deny Canada vital information about the group contributes nothing to the salvation of the democratic system and, in our view, takes something away.

In the next four pages, The Cadre presents what we consider important information about the FLQ and about government tactics in dealing with them.

While we agree that some of the information we are presenting here — particularly the FLQ manifesto — could under a broad interpretation of the War Measures Act Regulations — be classed as FLQ propaganda, we feel that to omit it for this reason is to deny our readers a fair account of the aims, aspirations and tactics of the movement, and would thus be a barrier to their own assessments of the Quebec situation.

Already some Canadian university papers, including the university of Guelph, "Ontario," have been confiscated by police for publishing the most recent FLQ manifesto.

Our own denunciation of the FLQ and their tactics was made after considering the information which we are publishing here. We feel that our readers should at least have access to the same material and thus be given an opportunity to consider the issue from different angles before deciding where they stand.

Much of the political frustration in Quebec is not hard to understand. Even the federal Royal Commission on bilingualism and biculturalism acknowledges that Quebec workers are exploited and that the whole Quebec economy is geared towards the interests of the Anglo-American investors.

The following material, which for one reason and another has been all but ignored by Canada's commercial news media, provides some insight into the FLQ movement, the separatist movement in general and the crisis of democracy through which Canada is now struggling.

Most of it was prepared by Canadian University Press, a collective of Canadian college newspapers of which the Cadre is a member.



## FLQ: when a nation panics

Any Canadian in any corner of the country can be arrested without a warrant and held without charge under the sweeping powers the federal government has given itself under the controversial War Measures Act.

This is the ultimate meaning of the new emergency laws as explained by officials of the federal justice department at a press briefing last Friday.

Justice Minister John Turner told the Commons that the law is aimed at terrorists and criminals who promote violent revolution.

Under the authority of the Act, the government outlawed the FLQ and any similar organizations advocating the violent overthrow of the government.

Any members or supporters of such groups are eligible for a \$5,000 fine and five years in prison. Peace officers, including the armed forces, need only have "reason to suspect" before making an arrest.

Suspects can be held as long as 21 days without being charged, and the date for a trial need be set only within 90 days. At the trial itself, the principle that a person is presumed innocent until he is proven guilty is reversed. A person is deemed to be a member of the FLQ if he ever attended a Front meeting, spoke publicly in support of the group or acted as its representative.

Thus the burden of proof is on the suspect to establish that he is not an FLQ member.

But how the law is applied, Turner's officials made clear, depends largely on the judgement and fairness policemen and soldiers (who are now "peace officers" with wide powers to arrest).

Clearly by their language, the new laws are directed at the Front de Liberation du Quebec, its aims, its methods and its members.

But they apply outside of Quebec as well, and their power actually extends far beyond the ranks of the FLQ.

The Black Panthers, the officials conceded, could be a target.

The sweep of the new powers is illustrated in a regulation under the War Measures Act that outlaws the FLQ — and goes on to say — "any group of persons or association that advocates the use of force or the commission of crime as a means of or as an aid in accomplishing governmental change in Canada is declared to be an unlawful association."

At 3.59 a.m. Friday, a member of the FLQ who did not commit any crime under the country's statutes, as they stood then, was a law-abiding citizen.

But at 4.01 a.m. he became a criminal simply because of his membership in the organization.

As such, he could be awakened and arrested by any policeman or member of the armed forces and jailed for up to 90 days before being brought before a superior judge who could set his court trial date.

The accused could subsequently be sentenced to a maximum term of five years in jail even if there is no evidence that he committed any act of violence, or any other crime under the normal laws of the Criminal Code.

Following the assassination of Pierre Laporte, however, the House of Commons endorsed implementation of the Act, with only the New Democratic Party objecting.