



ANADA EXPORTS MANY fine products around the world and to the United States, including Molson beer and Para-Ordnance pistols.

But in the last several years, Canada's Liberal Party government has been promoting a far less benign export: repressive firearms laws.

Along with Japan, Canada has pushed very hard, and very successfully, to turn the United Nations into a gun prohibition organization. The Canadian government aggressively promotes its repressive laws as a model which should be imposed on nations with relatively greater freedom for gun owners, including the United States and Belgium.

Before 1995, Canada's gun laws were already quite strict. Handgun registration had been in effect since 1934. Purchase of rifles and shotguns required a Firearms Acquisition Certificate, which was valid for five years.

During the Second World War, an unpopular law to register rifles and shotguns had been enacted. Widely ignored, the law was repealed soon after the war ended.

In 1989, a murderer used a semi-automatic rifle to kill 14 female students at the École Polytechnique in Montreal. The perpetrator was the son of a woman-hating alcoholic Algerian immigrant with an extensive record of wife beating. The Montreal police took an extremely long time to respond to telephone calls for help, so the man was able to murder his victims at leisure.

Whatever can be said about the destructive culture that molded the young urban sociopath Gamil Gharbi (who by the time of the murders had changed his name to Marc Lépine), the problems did not originate in the duck-hunting culture of Saskatchewan. Yet many feminist organizations insisted that all guns should be banned because they were part of patriarchal culture, which should be eradicated. The government subsequently prohibited many semi-automatic long guns, and made others into "restricted weapons" (the same legal category as handguns).

In 1995, the new Liberal government vastly expanded the federal gun laws. As Canadian sociology Professor H. Taylor Buckner (www.tbuckner.com) related, the main purpose of the gun laws was cultural warfare. The Liberals believed that attacking the "male," rural culture, where firearms are most common in Canada, would be popular with urban females.

First, the legislation required the confiscation of over half the already-registered guns (handguns and semi-automatic long guns). In most cases, the registered owners would be allowed to retain their newly prohibited firearms until they died, and then required to have the guns surrendered to the government rather than bequeathed to their heirs. Registered owners may only sell the firearm to another registered user of the same type of firearm. Most of these guns have recently been banned from use at a normal target range. Law-abiding firearms owners who had their registered firearms confiscated were refused compensation by the justice minister.

Next, the government turned the Firearms Acquisition Certificate system into a strict program for licensing gun owners. A person's application for a firearms license now is subject to a veto by one's spouse, or even former girlfriends or boyfriends.

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After a decade of failure, Canada is taking steps to infect the rest of the world with its costly gun-banning schemes.

Once a person obtains a firearms license, his home is subject to unannounced, warrantless "inspections" by the police, to see if his paperwork is in order, and if he is storing the gun according to regulations that, in effect, make the gun unusable for home defense in a sudden emergency.

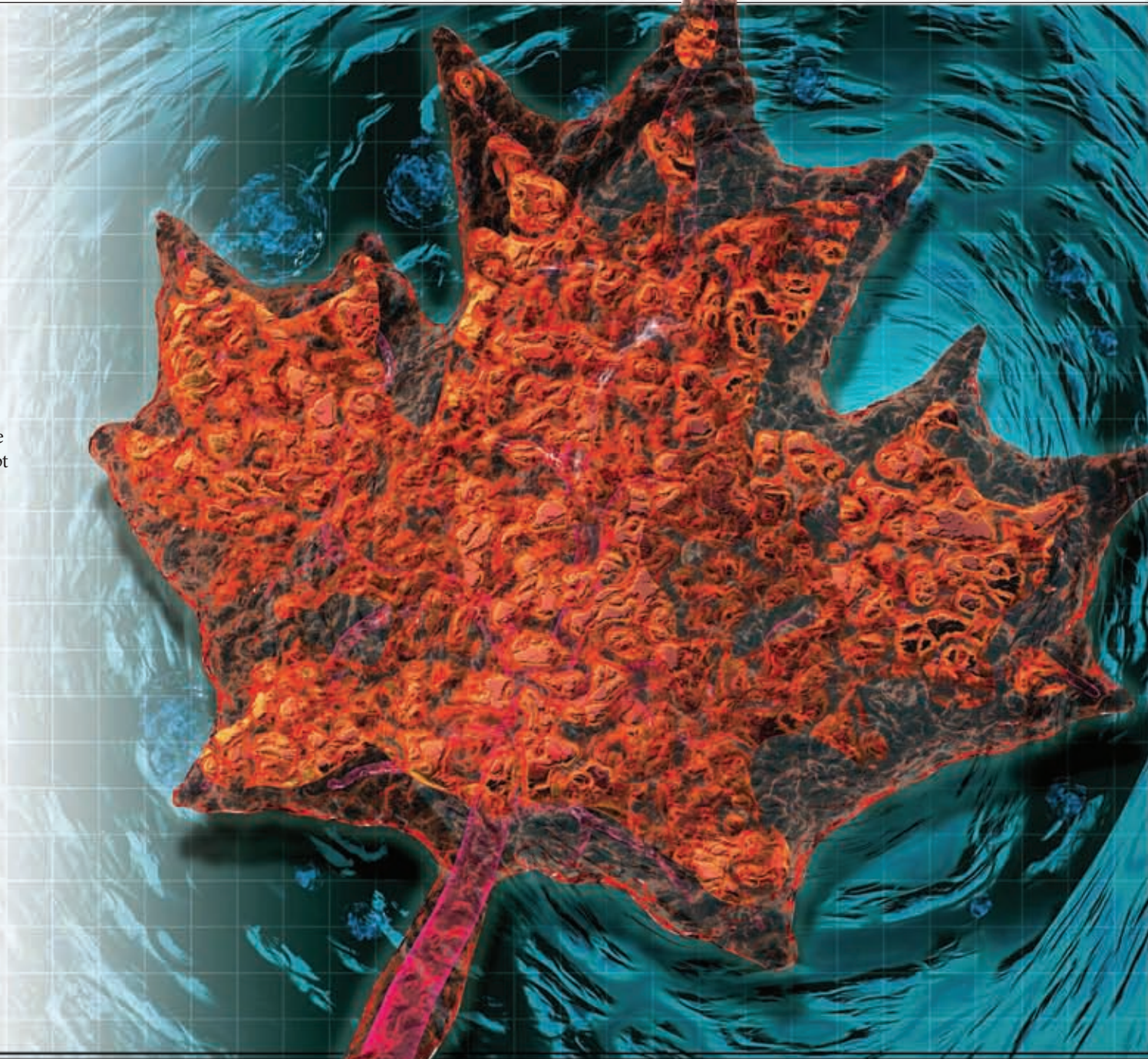
But the most controversial aspect of the new laws, for most Canadians, was the imposition of universal registration for all long guns.

Allan Rock, then justice minister, claimed that universal firearm registration would reduce criminal violence, total suicides and domestic abuse. He spoke forcefully against the use of firearms for self-defense, except by police and military, and said that the strict gun laws would distinguish Canada from the United States.

The Liberals promised that the entire firearms program would cost about 2 million Canadian dollars over five years. In 2002, a report by the auditor general estimated that the firearms program would cost taxpayers at least \$1 billion by 2005.

The billion-dollar cost, while 500 times higher than the promised cost, is probably an underestimate. First, the audit examined only the Department of Justice, but many other federal and provincial ministries are involved in administering the firearms program.

Second, the auditor general had to end her investigation prematurely, leaving her financial analysis incomplete because the government refused to reveal all of the firearms



program's expenditures, such as enforcement costs, compliance costs and economic costs.

The Canadian government ignored warnings from the New Zealand police, which had scrapped the N.Z. long gun registry in 1982 because it was too expensive, had too many errors and was of little use in crime-fighting. The Canadian Liberals replied that a universal registry would be inexpensive and easy to implement because, unlike the old New Zealand registry, the new Canadian registry would use computers.

Apparently, however, no one in the Department of Justice had experience designing and implementing such a large information technology project. The registry was supposed to start in 1998. Despite enormous spending on the registry from 1995 to 2002, the government still cannot get the registry to work. Millions of entries are incomplete or incorrect.

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The registry is ineffective in tracking stolen firearms due to duplicate serial numbers and inadequate descriptive information. One imaginative Canadian even managed to register a soldering gun because the clueless officials in Ottawa did not know that a soldering gun is not a “firearm” under the Canadian criminal code. The RCMP (Royal Canadian

Mounted Police)—the national police agency—has stated it does not trust the information in the registry.

The Canadian Liberals contend that the registry helps police know when they are entering a home that contains a firearm. But since violent criminals rarely register their guns, a prudent police officer must assume that any home could contain an unregistered gun.

The Canadian homicide rate, which had been in a long-term decline before 1998 (when the registry became operational) has risen by 3 percent since then. The firearm homicide rate is rising even faster. Gang-related homicides jumped by over 60 percent since 1998.

Predictably, the government response is to crack down on innocent, law-abiding gun owners; the city's mayor proposes that gun ownership in the home be forbidden, and all gun owners required to store their guns at a central police depot.

According to the federal government's Canada Firearms Centre (CFC), about 2 million firearms owners have been licensed, and about 7 million guns have been registered. The CFC estimates that about 200,000 gun owners have not obtained licenses.

Canadian Professor Gary Mauser (who writes on firearms policy for

the Simon Fraser Institute in British Columbia) estimates that the number of unlicensed owners may be as high as 1.5 million. Among Indians (or members of “First Nations,” as they are called in Canada), the compliance rate with licensing laws is less than 25 percent, according to the *National Post* (July 23, 2003).

Professor Mauser also estimates that at least a million Canadians have given up gun ownership in recent years, because of the difficulty and expense of the licensing and registration process. Many gun stores and hunting guides have gone out of business.

Since the late 1970s, when the Canadian Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau first launched an assault on the “gun culture,” the number of firearms business licenses has plunged from 16,420 in 1979, to 6,378 in 1995, down to 4,326 in 2002. The number continues to fall.

Of course, the severe damage to Canada's hunting heritage is terrible news for wildlife conservation.

The gun laws have not made Canada safer, but they have achieved their main purpose. The devastation of Canada's rural hunting heritage is a source of great satisfaction to the mean-spirited and ignorant urban elites whom the new laws were designed to please.

There is still hope for Canada, though. The leading opposition party, the Conservative Party, calls for repeal of the registry. The party's spokesman on gun policy is Garry Breitkreuz, a member of Parliament from eastern Saskatchewan who relentlessly calls attention to the lies and cover-ups that pervade the government's anti-gun program.

For example, he points out that \$2 billion and 10 years wasted on the gun registry could have paid for “28,000 more police officers and border guards; or more women's shelters; or more suicide prevention

programs; or more scientists to clear up DNA backlog; or kicking bogus refugees out of our country; or even keeping more violent offenders in jail where they belong.” (For more, see www.garrybreitkreuz.com.)

The other opposition party

but not the extreme process recently enacted by the Canadian government.)

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with a national base is the New Democrats; they lean very far left on economic issues, but they, too, oppose the registry. As many as eight of the 10 provincial governments have refused to cooperate with the federal government in enforcing the new law. The Province of Ontario reversed its non-enforcement policy with the election of a Liberal government in 2003. The registry is, however, supported by the Bloc Québécois (the Quebec Separatist Party), which supports authoritarian policies of all kinds and opposes individual rights.

Meanwhile, Canada's ruling Liberal Party is using the United Nations to promote further infringements of civil liberties at home and abroad. For example, the Liberal government has signed the international “Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms.”

The Liberals are using the protocol as a pretext to require that all firearms imported into Canada undergo a special marking and stamping process that will add about \$200 to the cost of each gun. (The protocol does require marking,

should be considered guilty of violating human rights.

A major United Nations gun control conference will convene in New York next July. The Canadian government will be pushing for a legally binding, severe treaty and will be supported by many “non-government organizations” that are actually funded by the Canadian, British and other governments in order to promote the gun prohibition movement.

Even without a treaty, the international gun prohibition is already looking at ways to sue American gun manufacturers in foreign courts, where American constitutional rights would be irrelevant.

Pro-rights Americans have done a splendid job in the last two decades of defeating most efforts in Congress, state legislatures and city councils to destroy Second Amendment rights. But there is no denying that the international threat grows more dangerous every year, as foreign governments such as Canada's attempt to impose worldwide repressive policies that will harm public safety and destroy the culture of responsible firearms ownership. 17