

# Lester Pearson: Godfather of Canada's Cold War against the new "Red" enemy

"[T]here are two sides whose composition cuts across national and even community boundaries. The issues have by now been pretty clearly drawn, and ... can be described as freedom vs. slavery.... [T]wo powerful leaders of these opposed sides have emerged—the United States of America and the **USSR**.

"We are faced now with a situation similar in some respects to that which confronted **our forefathers in early colonial days when they ploughed the land with a rifle slung on the shoulder. If they stuck to the plough and left the rifle at home, they would have been easy victims for any savages lurking in the woods.**"

**Lester Pearson, then Minister of External Affairs.**

Speech, "Canadian Foreign Policy in a Two Power World," April 10, 1951. Joint meeting of the Empire Club of Canada and Toronto's Canadian Club.



bit.ly/lbp-1

For centuries, self-righteous myths have depicted Canada as a champion of democracy and human rights. Despite Canada's long record of genocide, land plunder and war profiteering, official narratives about noble 'Canadian values' still reign in our imagined 'peaceable kingdom.' Canada's ethnonationalist propaganda demonized First Nations as hostile subhumans to be enslaved, imprisoned on reservations and made Christian in residential schools. This White-Power racism served imperialist containment policies designed to turn 'Red Indian' enemies into captive nations.

In the early 1950s, then-External Affairs Minister Lester Pearson pioneered a new containment policy. During the transition to the Cold War's new world order, he

rallied his elitist allies in Canada's racist old-boys' clubs by comparing the new Red Menace to what he called "savages lurking in the woods." These "savages," he said, had violently threatened the peaceful lives of innocent white settlers whom he lovingly called "our forefathers." (See quotation above.) By conjuring up unsettling images of a Red-Indian bogey, Pearson helped fabricate consent for a new, politically-Red enemy to meet the needs of NATO's capitalist powers.

On the home front, Pearson's fierce anti-communism was used to fuel Canada's abuses of civil rights. As Ian MacKay and Jamie Swift note in *Warrior Nation*:

Pearson enthusiastically supported a Cold War against any Canadians suspected of viewing the world outside the newly hegemonic framework of the

American imperium.<sup>1</sup> Targeted for abuse by Canada's Cold-War elites were "peaceniks," radical unionists and others branded as too left wing. "Pearson had become an ever-more-aggressive accomplice," said Swift and MacKay, "in government attacks on dissidents."<sup>2</sup>

As chief architect of Canada's post-war anti-Red foreign policy, Pearson demonized the Soviet Union as the diabolical centre of global evil. The USSR was still reeling after 27 million of its citizens had been killed by Hitler's anti-communist crusade. After the Red Army liberated Eastern Europe and led Germany's defeat, the US replaced the Nazis as global leaders in the struggle to vanquish the Soviets. NATO efforts to destroy the USSR used Cold-War "containment" strategies: surrounding the country with nuclear weapons, isolating it with political and economic sanctions, supporting Nazi collaborators inside and out of the Soviet Union, and vilifying it with propaganda. Pearson played a central role in this new phase of the war on communism.

For decades, Canada and other Western powers had fought to contain the left. Canada even ran slave labour camps (1914-20) that interned thousands of single immigrant men, mostly Ukrainians, who had been laid off from rural work camps. Elites feared that their growing protests in urban centres might spark a revolution.<sup>3</sup> In 1919, Canada was among 13 countries that invaded the newborn state of Soviet Russia with 150,000 troops to reverse the Bolshevik revolution.

One means of dismantling Canada's self-righteous myths is to examine this country's support for US militarism throughout the Cold War. This study leads to the conclusion that little if anything has yet changed. Always a stalwart NATO warrior giving solid allegiance to US-led military, political, economic and propaganda wars, Canada has taken on leading roles in a new Cold War now being waged by the American empire.

Facing Canada's history of duplicity is especially difficult because it means fac-

## "Manufacturing Consent" ... for fascism

In 1988, just before the destruction of the USSR, Herman and Chomsky published a theory on the use of corporate media "to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior" that "integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society." (p.1) The mass media's "societal purpose," they explained, is to "defend the economic, social, and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the domestic society and the state." (p.298)

This propaganda model focuses on five thematic "filters" of mainstream media:

- 1) size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth and profit orientation...;
- 2) advertising as primary income source ...;
- 3) reliance... on info. provided by government, business and "experts" funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power;
- 4) "flak" as a means of disciplining the media;
- 5) "anticommunism" as a national religion and control mechanism. (p.2.)

With the "specter" of communism as "the ultimate evil," the media create a "cul-

tural milieu in which anticommunism is the dominant religion." By "elevating opposition to communism to a first principle of Western ideology and politics," the media use it as a "potent" "political-control mechanism." This helps "fragment the left and labor movements" and sideline "social democrats" accused of being "too soft on communists." While many Cold War "liberal" progressives supported US-led wars justified with anticommunist pretexts, "others lapsed into silence, paralyzed by the fear of being tarred with charges of infidelity to the national religion." (p.29)

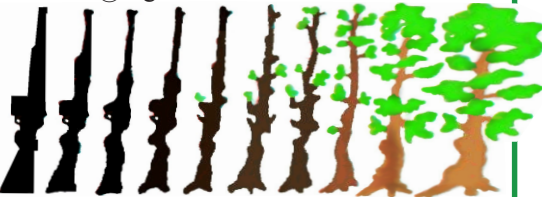
By stirring "anti-Communist fervor ... the demand for serious evidence in support of claims of 'communist' abuses is suspended, and charlatans can survive as evidential sources." These "charlatans" take "center stage" as media "experts" and "remain there even after exposure as highly unreliable, if not downright liars." (p.30)

**Source:** Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, 1988.

## Press for Conversion!

191 James St, Ottawa ON K1R 5M6

overcoat@rogers.com Web: coat.ncf.ca



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ing the villainous hypocrisy of some of this nation's most-beloved leaders. It also means confronting the powerful, political descendants of Canada's much-glorified cult heroes.

### Collaboration in the Vietnam War

Noam Chomsky is among those scholars who debunk the national myth that Canada is a "peaceable kingdom" promoting high, moral values. To do this, Chomsky tags Canada's most iconic peacemaker as a virulent warmonger. "Lester Pearson," said Chomsky, "was a major criminal, really extreme." For example, "Pearson's support for the war in Vietnam," Chomsky notes, included Canadian government collaboration in "spying, weapons sales, and complicity in the bombing of the North."<sup>4</sup> (For details on Canada's role, see Victor Levant's *Quiet Complicity*.<sup>5</sup>)

As early as 1951, Chomsky noted, one of Pearson's many tirades against what Canadian elites saw as the evils of communism clearly affirmed his blind-eye support for the US-backed, French war in Vietnam: "If the valiant efforts now being made by France ... were to fail," said Pearson, all of South-East Asia, including Burma, Malaya and Indonesia, with their important resources of rubber, rice and tin, might well come under communist control.<sup>6</sup>

As a leading Cold War zealot, Pearson justified the genocide in southeast Asia (which eventually killed 3.5 million civilians) as a war to protect the "free world" from communism. As Chomsky noted in 2005, Pearson called Vietnam's independence struggle an example of "communist aggression." Chomsky also noted that Pearson claimed the "'Soviet colonial authority in Indochina' appeared to be stronger than that of France." Considering, said Chomsky, that there was "not a Russian anywhere in the neighborhood ... [o]ne has to search pretty far to find more fervent devotion to imperial crimes than Pearson's declarations."<sup>7</sup>

His hawkish stand on Vietnam was cheered by East European émigrés, like Lithuanians, Czechs and Slovaks.

### NATO cofounder / Peace cult icon

While state myths have created a cult around Pearson, Canada's beloved Nobel Peace Prize winner was actually a vociferous Cold Warrior. Besides using hateful anti-Red rhetoric to whitewash war crimes in Vietnam, Pearson rallied public support for other crimes against peace. These included many covert actions to squash anti-colonial struggles in Africa, Asia and Latin America.<sup>8</sup>

Canadian political, corporate, religious and media elites shared with their Western allies a fierce loathing for anyone who could be labelled communist. Their glo-

## Defunding the Myths and Cults of Cold War Canada

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bal crusade maligned all individuals, groups, parties, movements and governments that dared to threaten the freewheeling reign of predatory corporations. In Lester Pearson, these fear-mongering elites found a capable voice whose skillful devotion to Cold War tropes served their shared, vested interests.

Pearson's subservience to the moneyed interests of empire helped ensure his rise to power through the Department of External Affairs. After joining that bureaucracy in 1928, Pearson worked his way up through Ottawa's ranks to receive top postings in the capitals of Canada's two imperi-

al masters. At WWII's onset, he served Mackenzie King's Liberal government at the High Commission in London (1939-42). After transfer to Washington, Pearson was Canada's ambassador and "envoy extraordinaire" to the US (1942-46), and then became Canada's foreign minister (1948-57).

Pearson was very useful to both British and American power elites because he leveraged Canada's well-crafted reputation as a neutral "middle power" to cheerlead their imperial, neocolonial adventures. This included lending Canada's voice to such Cold War excesses as the ousting of elect-





ed, socialist-friendly governments that tried to limit the exploits of foreign corporations.

Captivated by the era's anticommunism, Pearson ignored Western war crimes. In fact, these crimes were glorified with phobic, Cold War narratives that painted US assaults on democracy as if they were part of a noble war to wipe out communism. Pearson played a key role in leading Canada's support for these anti-democratic, regime-change coups. Here are but a few examples:

**Iran, 1953:** Pearson's government supported the coup that installed Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi as Iran's dictator in 1953. This CIA/MI5-led coup ousted Mohammad Mosaddegh's elected government after it dared to nationalize Iran's UK-owned oil industry. Although not a socialist, Mosaddegh worked with Iran's communist party, Tudeh, which had played a key role in Iran's struggle to gain control of its own oil resources.

As historian Bill Blum noted: "To the likes of [US Secretary of State] John Foster Dulles," Iran was "the epitome of all he detested in the Third World: unequivocal neutralism in the cold war, tolerance of Communists, and disrespect for free enterprise." To this "apocalyptic anticommunist ... Mosaddegh was indeed a madman."<sup>9</sup> Dulles' contempt for democracy was shared by the AntiBolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN), a US/UK-backed network of Nazi collaborators. In 1954, it printed that "Red Moscow" had tried "to take over all of Persia ... during the rule of the *mad* Mossadegh."<sup>10</sup>

Iran's duly-elected government also angered Pearson. "In their anxiety to gain full control of their affairs by the elimination of foreign influence," he said, Iran had exposed itself "to the menace of communist penetration and absorption ... into the Soviet sphere."<sup>11</sup> After the coup, with Iran safely absorbed into the Western sphere, its CIA- and Israeli-trained secret police used mass arrests, torture and murder to decimate Tudeh and other popular, democratic forces.<sup>12</sup>

**Guatemala, 1954:** A CIA-led coup toppled Guatemala's elected rulers and ushered in decades of dictatorships that killed about 200,000 people. As a US State Department official said, Guatemala's elected Pres. Jacobo Arbenz had a "broad social program" to aid "workers and peasants in a victorious struggle against the upper classes and large foreign enterprises." This, he admitted, had "strong appeal to the populations of Central America."<sup>13</sup> Arbenz was not allowed to pose the threat of a good example.

US and Canadian politicians, bureaucrats and the mass media painted Arbenz as a communist, although he was not. Even before Arbenz's 1950 election, Ottawa's trade commissioner in Guatemala reported that: businessmen and landowners do not have any cause to view the prospect of Arbenz as future president with any optimism. He is unscrupulous, daring and ruthless, and not one to be allayed in his aims by bloodshed or killing.<sup>14</sup>

Canadian elites embraced this anti-left narrative. In 1953 and 1954, Arbenz's Foreign Minister Guillermo Toriello asked Canada to allow embassies to open in their two countries. Pearson's department refused. "At external affairs and in Canadian board rooms," said reporter Peter McFarlane, "the coup was chalked up as another victory of the Free World against the [Red] Menace."<sup>15</sup>

A declassified US State Department file even noted Toriello's "strong anti-communist sentiments."<sup>16</sup> Despite this, Toriello also denounced Cold Warriors for branding as 'communism' every manifestation of nationalism or economic independence, any desire for social progress, any intellectual curiosity, and any interest in progressive liberal reforms.

The "real and effective reason for describing our government as communist," Toriello said, was "simple." His government's plan for national liberation ... affected the privileges of the foreign enterprises that are impeding the progress and the economic development of the country.<sup>17</sup>

**Brazil, 1964:** When Brazil elected a left-wing party by a huge margin in 1960, Kennedy's US government backed a coup that overthrew it. The elected government had certainly not been communist. Active in the NonAligned Movement, it tried to remain neutral in the Cold War. The coup—which led to a series of brutal, business-friendly, US-backed juntas that held power til 1985—was justified by wild claims that Brazil's elected government *might turn* communist.

Although ludicrous, this fake-news fearmongering was pushed as the truth by zealous Cold Warriors. As Blum put it:

It was only by ignoring facts...during the

cold war that the anti-communist propaganda machine of the US could preach about the International Communist Conspiracy and claim that the coup in Brazil saved the country from communism.<sup>18</sup>

The coup was actively supported by Brazilian Admiral Carlos P.Botto who, having backed fascism in WWII, then helped to lead the ABN and World AntiCommunist League through the Cold War.

Canadian officials, Liberal and Tory, also feared the rising popularity of communism. After a 1961 government mission to South America, Tory MP Pierre Seigny told parliament that in Brazil, Canada's

allies want to cooperate with us and to prevent ... the birth of subversive movements in that country where huge illiterate populations are living, which, if they were to be subjected to communist influence, could easily cause a social and economic revolution.<sup>19</sup>

The Liberals shared this rightwing mindset. "Canadian reaction to the military coup," said historian Rosana Barbosa, "was careful, polite and allied with American rhetoric." Barbosa, a Brazilian-Canadian, says Pearson, who became prime minister the year before the coup "did not publicly criticize the new regime. Pearson's foreign policy ... was supportive of the United States."<sup>20</sup>

Pearson's pro-coup stance was good for business, especially the Brazilian Power & Light Co. (Brascan), one of Canada's top profiteers in Latin America. As revealed in *Let Us Prey* (1974), there was a revolving door between Brascan and Liberal cabinets of St. Laurent, Pearson and Pierre Trudeau. For example, Robert Winters, who held two cabinet posts under St. Laurent and was Pearson's trade minister, was Brascan's president. Winters praised Brazil's coup regime, saying it "was dedicated to the principles of private enterprise" and "create[d] a climate friendly to foreign capital." Jack Nicholson, Brascan's CEO in Brazil in the 1950s, had three cabinet posts under Pearson. Mitchell Sharp, whose career began under St. Laurent in 1947, held the trade and finance posts in Pearson's cabinet. After a stint as Brascan's VP, Sharp returned to politics to become Trudeau's foreign minister.<sup>21</sup> Another Brascan executive in Trudeau's cabinet was Anthony Abbott,<sup>22</sup> who held three finance-related posts in the late 1970s.

**Dominican Republic, 1965:** Pearson showed support for the 1965 US invasion of the Dominican Republic, when 20,000 Marines propped up the army junta that ousted a pro-Castro government after it won a landslide election victory in 1963. Popular attempts to restore this leftwing government were described in the ABN magazine, as "the

attempted overthrow of the government ... saved only by the decisive actions of US Marines.”<sup>23</sup> Pearson too defended the invasion, intoning in parliament that

it is well known in international law... that a government has *responsibility for protecting* its own citizens in situations of insurrection and disturbance when those citizens are in danger and when the forces of law and order seem to have temporarily disappeared.<sup>24</sup> (Emphasis added.)

In 2000, Liberals institutionalised this Pearsonian tradition by helping create a deceptive, UN doctrine called “Responsibility to Protect” (R2P). This effort was led by Jean Chrétien’s foreign minister, Lloyd Axworthy, who had rallied support—including from some mainstream peace activists—for NATO’s illegal 1999 war against Yugoslavia. In 2004, Paul Martin’s Liberal government used R2P memes to disguise Canada’s righteous complicity in the US-led invasion, regime change and occupation of the Dominican Republic’s neighbour, Haiti, as a humanitarian “peacekeeping” mission.<sup>25</sup>

### Aiding US nuclear war policies

From the Cold War’s earliest days, Pearson was a strong voice for the idea that the moral forces of what he called the “democratic West” had to amass a vast arsenal of weapons for a possible world war against “the totalitarian East.” This, ironically, is why Pearson saw his key role in creating NATO as one of his most valuable gifts to global peace. From its inception in 1949, before the Soviets had tested a single nuclear bomb, US nuclear weapons have been a cornerstone of NATO’s “defence” policies. From the Soviet perspective, they had been under attack by Western forces obsessed with their containment and annihilation since 1917. They responded to NATO’s creation by forming the Warsaw Treaty alliance in 1957.

During the early 1950s, the USSR and left-leaning peace groups around the world supported the Stockholm Peace Appeal. This campaign, promoted by the World Peace Congress, called for a ban on all nuclear weapons and said that their first use in a future war would be a war crime.<sup>26</sup> Of the 400 million who supported this resolution, most were citizens of the USSR and China.

For its part, the communist-led Canadian Peace Congress collected 300,000 signatures for this global, antinuclear appeal for peace which successfully rallied public opposition to the West’s bellicose “first use” nuclear weapons policies. This enraged Pearson. In a 1951 speech to the well-heeled Sudbury Chamber of Commerce and Kiwanis Club, he called the Peace Congress an agent of “foreign aggressive imperialism.”<sup>27</sup>

In a 1950 address to 500 civil servants, Pearson had said Canada would “take every...measure to find and root out treason and sedition in our midst.”<sup>28</sup> Sedition and treason carry penalties of 14 years and life imprisonment. Pearson’s speech, quoted in an Ottawa paper, singled out the Congress: “[B]e on guard against the more immediate menace of the individual who beneath the mask of loyal service to the country, or wearing the mantle of the Peace Congress has knowingly or unknowingly sold his soul to Moscow.”<sup>29</sup>

In response, Peace Congress activist Edith Holtom wrote to the paper saying, If enough Canadians, including civil servants, would protest against selling the soul of Canada to American militarism, there would be no need for Mr. Pearson to refer to peacemakers as a menace .... [H]ow dare Mr. Pearson call a person a menace who joins ... with thousands of others to warn our government of what might happen if changes are not made in policy-making?<sup>30</sup>

Besides the Liberals and Conservatives, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), forerunner of the New Democratic Party, also saw the Peace Congress as a menacing threat. The CCF executive forbade members from joining the Congress and threatened disciplinary action against CCFers who signed the Stockholm Appeal.<sup>31</sup>

Pearson had such hate for the Congress that when 50 engineering students made a coup-like effort to destroy its University of Toronto chapter, he said in their support:

If more Canadians were to show something of this high-spirited crusading zeal, we would very soon hear very little of the Canadian Peace Congress and its works. We would simply take it over.<sup>32</sup>

Pearson himself became prime minister in a constitutional coup. In 1962, CIA and State Department staff, the US ambassador to Canada and the US general who lead NATO, worked with Canadian allies to spark a political crisis to oust PM John Diefenbaker. US officials, George Ball and McGeorge Bundy, skilled in planning coups, bragged they had “knocked over the Diefenbaker government.” Dief’s crime was refusing to base US nuclear weapons in Canada. After Dief’s removal, Pearson immediately brought US warheads into Canada. So blatant was his role in aiding the US nuclear-weapons agenda that Pierre Trudeau called Pearson the “defrocked priest of peace.”<sup>33</sup>

### Imperialist proNATO propaganda

Pearson was groomed for political power by another loyal Canadian servant of imperial interests. In 1948, before Pearson was elected to office, Mackenzie King made him for-  
eign minister. King’s own ascent to power

had been aided by his work as “labour advisor” for J.D. Rockefeller Jr., America’s richest, anti-union, robber baron, fascist financier and Nazi collaborator.<sup>34</sup> King, who praised JDR Jr., was also a dreamy-eyed admirer (until 1939) of that century’s leading antiRed crusader, Adolph Hitler. King’s suggestibility was clear from his use of séances and crystal balls to get advice from dead relatives and political heroes. From his unelected cabinet post, Pearson was well placed to guide his gullible boss.

An example of Pearson’s early pro-US advice occurred in 1946, when King was considering whether to take Canada along a middle path between the hardened Cold-War extremes of the US and the USSR. To convince King that he should hitch Canada securely to America’s anti-Soviet wagon, Pearson wrote a memo telling him that

without some fundamental change in the Soviet state system and in the policies and views of its leaders, the USSR is bound to come into open conflict with western democracy.<sup>35</sup>

With this prediction, said historian Joe Levitt, “Pearson seemed to be asserting that a war with the Soviet Union was virtually inevitable.” Levitt says, “Pearson may have worded the memo... to play on ... King’s fears of the Soviet Union” so that he would bow to US demands for greater military access to Arctic regions claimed by Canada.<sup>36</sup>

Pearson’s fearmongering was clear from his first speech to Parliament. “There is no doubt that fear has gripped the world again,” he said, “fear arising primarily out of ... the brutal domination of revolutionary communism, based on the massive and expanding militarism of totalitarian Russia.”<sup>37</sup>

Pearson’s anti-Red hyperbole knew few bounds and smacked of racism: “[T]he crusading and subversive power of communism has been harnessed by a cold-blooded, calculating, victoriously powerful Slav empire for its own political purposes.”<sup>38</sup>

To Pearson and other Cold Warriors, the world was torn apart by a battle between pure good and utter evil. Describing these mortal foes in 1951, he said “there are two sides whose composition cuts across national and even community boundaries.” These forces, led by the US and USSR, Pearson said, represented “freedom vs. slavery.”<sup>39</sup>

Pearson also warned that a war between freedom and slavery would take place for one of only two reasons. World War III, he said, would result from an accident, or “a deliberate and controlled explosion brought about by the calculated policy of the hard-faced despots in the Kremlin, men hungry for power and world domination.”<sup>40</sup>



In July 1967, Pearson used 1,500 uniformed Ukrainian youth standing in formation as a backdrop to denounce Gaulle's "Vive le Québec libre" speech and to praise Canada's "two founding races." Another speaker, Yuri Shymko, was a leader of the Ukrainian youth movement that still glorifies Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera as a war hero.

During WWII these Ukrainian scouting troops recruited for Bandera's fascist army and the Nazi's Waffen SS Galicia. Both collaborated in Nazi Germany's invasion of the USSR which killed 27 million Soviet citizens.



### **Hypocrisy and doublethink: "Free Europe" vs. "Free Quebec"**

Pearson's bombast also exaggerated Soviet control over what he slurred as their "completely servile" "puppet regimes."<sup>41</sup> When discussing nonaligned Yugoslavia, he referred to the "unquestioning and slavish obedience that the Kremlin demands." With regards to Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland, and "the subjugation of states by soviet communism," Pearson spoke of "communist pressure to liquidate every element of national independence and every trace of opinion or feeling which is not abjectly subordinate to Soviet Russia."<sup>42</sup>

But Pearson was blind to the subservience of Canada and its NATO allies to the US. Pearson had such faith in Western morality that he declared in 1959 that "western democratic governments have no aggressive or imperialistic designs." Similarly, he said "Americans ... are perhaps the least imperialistically minded people that have ever achieved great power in the world."<sup>43</sup>

As *Canadian Dimension* founder, Cy Gonnick, explained in 1975, "Canada's role, as devised by Pearson, was to assist the United States to achieve its goals, which were by definition the same as Canada's." Canada's servility to the US was summed up by a top Pearson colleague: "We can tell our neighbour when we think he is wrong," said John Holmes, "but we know that in the end we will, in our own interest, side with our neighbour right or wrong."<sup>44</sup> After being Canada's chargé d'affaires in Moscow (1947-48) and a top bureaucrat at the UN (1950-53) and External Affairs (1953-60), Holmes continued his neighbourliness to the US as president of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs (CIIA)<sup>45</sup> (1960-73) and as a CIIA counselor (1973-88).

In a speech to CIIA-Vancouver in 1948, Pearson expressed faith that "democracy" in the US-led "free world" had, by its treatment of the global poor, proven "its superiority as a form of government and a way of life." Pearson then boiled everything

down to the West's existential struggle with evil. In one corner of the globe was America's "free, expanding progressive democracy." In the other, was the USSR's "tyrannical and reactionary communism."<sup>46</sup> The so-called free world countries, said Pearson, being "strong, healthy and progressive," had to "protect themselves from the threat of a sudden attack by an aggressor communist state." Pearson also believed the US-led free world must "remove the menace of aggressive communism, at home ... [and] abroad."<sup>47</sup>

To "remove" the Red Menace, Pearson said Canada and other "free" nations had to "pay tribute" to the US by foregoing their own independent foreign policies. He outlined this strategy to the Empire Club of Canada and Toronto's Canadian Club, saying:

we must recognize and pay tribute to the leadership being given and the efforts being made by the United States in the conflict against Communist imperialism, and realize that if this leadership were not given we would have little chance of success in the common struggle. Secondly, we must never forget that our enemy gleefully welcomes every division in the free democratic ranks and that ... there will be times when we should abandon our position if it is more important to maintain unity in the face of the common foe.<sup>48</sup>

### **Vive le Ukraine libre**

The hypocrisy of Cold-War "doublethink"<sup>49</sup> is illustrated by Pearson's indignant reaction to Charles de Gaulle's "Vive le Québec libre" speech in 1967. During his visit to Montréal for Canada's centenary celebrations, the French president's allusion to an independent Quebec outraged Prime Minister Pearson. De Gaulle's reference to a "free Quebec" was nothing compared to the onslaught of "free Ukraine" propaganda that Canada had beamed at the USSR for the past 15 years. Under Pearson's guidance, CBC International had long provoked ethno-nationalist schisms in the USSR. From its

first Ukrainian-language broadcast, on Canada's 85th birthday (July 1, 1952), the CBC's Voice of Canada had collaborated with Canada's far-right Ukrainian emigrés to drive a political wedge into the USSR. Canada's Cold War propaganda broadcasts were part of a US-led political/psychological warfare campaign to exploit internal Soviet conflicts and to foment the break-up of that extremely multicultural country.

Canada's media decried de Gaulle's call for a free Quebec. Most papers quoted Pearson's speech at a huge 1967 rally of anti-Soviet Ukrainian youth on Parliament Hill,<sup>50</sup> organized by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC).<sup>51</sup> (See photo above.) The UCC was created by King's government in 1940 to unify far-right Ukrainian groups. While the UCC meddled in Soviet politics by demanding a "free Ukraine," it was happily used as a backdrop for Pearson to condemn de Gaulle's meddling in Canadian politics.

In Pearson's speech he acknowledged only "two founding races and languages and cultures in Canada, British and French." Ignoring Canada's genocide of First Nations, he also left out Britain's conquest of New France in 1760. "In our country," Pearson claimed, "we have required neither revolution nor civil war nor outside intervention to settle our differences."<sup>52</sup>

Canada's amnesic myths were echoed by Yuri Shymko, who told the crowd:

Canada is one of the few countries of the world that can proudly and justly say it has maintained throughout its young history the principle that men [sic] of all races and nationalities shall live and prosper in peace, liberty and equality.<sup>53</sup>

Shymko was described in 1967 news items as "a leader of the Ukrainian Youth Organization." Then 26, he later became an MPP and MP. Shymko continues to lead Ukrainian groups that glorify Stepan Bandera, a WWII fascist leader whose army massacred Jews, Poles and communists.

Source: *Bulletin of the World Anti-Communist League*, June 1969. [bit.ly/PearsonWACL](http://bit.ly/PearsonWACL)

## Pearson's anti-Red crusade: Spiritual, moral, economic, academic, political and military

Pearson said the global war against communism had to be fought on all fronts, using weapons from all fields of culture. To amass the arsenal needed for this full-spectrum war, Pearson tailored his rhetoric to suit his audience. To his allies in Canada's old boys' clubs, he said the anti-communist struggle has not yet become a shooting war, except in Korea, but ... goes on in the field of economics, finance, and public opinion, and extends far beyond any military or even political operation.

"Strength," he reminded this wealthy audience of corporate movers and shakers from the Empire Club of Canada and Toronto's Canadian Club, should not "be interpreted in military terms alone, but has also its economic, financial and moral aspects."<sup>54</sup>

On becoming chancellor of the University of Toronto's Victoria College, which included a theological school, Pearson focused on the need to fight the Reds using "intellectual and spiritual weapons":

It would be a mistake to believe we can... defeat communism by force.... Communism is an idea. No idea, however perilous or noxious, as communism is, can be killed by bayonets or even by an atomic bomb. As an idea, it must be resisted by intellectual and spiritual weapons....<sup>55</sup>

To fight the Cold War crusade against communism, Pearson often wielded Christian rhetoric. For instance, when promoting the creation of NATO in early 1949, he said "Canada should not remain aloof" because aggressive forces outside Canada allied to subversive forces within it .... [could] lead the world into war between totalitarian Communism and the Christian democratic way of life.<sup>56</sup>

Due to his upbringing, Pearson slipped easily into sermonizing. His father, and father's father, were both Methodist ministers. His dad, Rev. Edwin Pearson, was "a strong imperialist" whose "three boys shared his enthusiasm for sports and the empire."<sup>57</sup> Having absorbed this zeal for imperialism, Pearson equated anti-communism with "spiritual faith" and "Christian morality." He saw these as "the basis for the individual and for society."<sup>58</sup> Within his black-and-white universe, Cold War's rivals were engaged in a mythic, existential battle: the evil darkness of totalitarian communism vs. the pure, radiance of civilized Western capitalism. This cartoon ethos left no room for grey areas. Canadians had to either embrace the enlightened "free world," or be damned and condemned as treasonous, diabolic Reds.

In one parliamentary polemic, Pearson contrasted the "dark practice of govern-

ment through tyranny and ignorance" behind "the shadow of the iron curtain," with the glowing "human spirit" that made Europe the "fountainhead of light and progress" for "a thousand years." Pearson's melodramatic tropes shone when he said Europe's "light still burns, and that eventually it will help lift the darkness that now surrounds it."<sup>59</sup>

As a diehard Cold Warrior Pearson had zero-tolerance for communism. Their anti-Red phobia was akin to the "one-drop rule" dominating racist societies. Apartheid regimes in South Africa and the US, institutionalized racism to disempower all those alleged to have even one drop of black African blood in their veins. Similarly, Cold Warriors like Pearson were intolerant of all individuals, groups and foreign leaders said to be tainted by dreaded "Red" political blood; "Pinkos" could not be abided.

As the much-heralded, peace-cult icon who long spearheaded the social phobia of extreme anti-communism in Canada, Pearson should be recognised as a political godfather of the Cold War and the heroic patriarch of its hate-filled propaganda.

See a much-expanded, two-part version of this article in *Covert Action Magazine*.  
[bit.ly/Pearson-1](http://bit.ly/Pearson-1) and [bit.ly/Pearson-2](http://bit.ly/Pearson-2)

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# Wielding CBC's "Voice of Canada" as a weapon of Cold War propaganda

Throughout the Cold War, Canada's Department of External Affairs wielded the CBC's International Service (CBC-IS)<sup>1</sup> as a propaganda weapon in what it called "political warfare." The CBC-IS (aka "The Voice of Canada") was, Liberal Foreign Minister Lester Pearson boasted in 1951, "doing valuable work for Canada and playing a useful part in the psychological war against communism." As he explained to the House of Commons, this "psychological war" is "an important part of the total war against communism—the struggle or the battle for men's minds."<sup>2</sup>

As Canada's leading Cold Warrior, Pearson was key to orchestrating the psy-war operations of a top-secret interdepartmental group called the "Psychological Warfare Committee."<sup>3</sup> Like others dedicated to fighting what he called the "total war against communism," Pearson's dream was not only to collaborate in the subversion, breakup and eventual destruction of the Soviet Union, he also wanted to rid the entire world (including Canada) of all communists.

Although planning for the CBC's international reach began in the late 1930s, not until 1942 did Prime Minister Mackenzie King issue an order-in-council to create

it. Two years later, just as the Soviets were finishing the liberation of Eastern Europe, having forced the Nazi war machine back to Germany's borders, the CBC-IS began broadcasting. It was Christmas Day, 1944. From head offices in a former Montreal brothel,<sup>4</sup> the CBC-IS began its military mission to beam messages in English and French to Canadian soldiers, and in German to Nazi troops. But with the Allied victory almost complete, CBC-IS broadcasts soon made an about-face. Canada's German-language transmissions quickly redirected their propaganda attacks against the citizens of East Germany, and communism across Eastern Europe became Canada's prime target.

The first language to be added to CBC-IS broadcasts was Czech. This began in 1946 because Czechoslovakia's communist party won that year's democratic election. To anticommunists around the world, the communists' election victory was an intolerable precedent to be nipped in the bud. Canada soon began a steady barrage of politically abusive Czech programming. Commenting on these broadcasts, an article in the Czechoslovak daily, *National Liberation* said "from Canada we hear nothing except

large doses of anti-Soviet insults and a lot of slander against people's democracies." This harsh critique of Canadian propaganda was later quoted by CBC-IS director Ira Dilworth as proof that Canada was doing an excellent job fighting the global war against communism.<sup>5</sup>

In 1946, after four years at Canada's embassy in Washington, Pearson became the deputy minister of External Affairs and helped to oversee Canada's proUS, Cold War agenda. This included ramping up CBC-IS propaganda. After adding Czech broadcasts, CBC-IS began programming in Dutch and three Scandinavian languages, as well as in English to the Caribbean, and in Portuguese and Spanish to Latin America.

CBC broadcasts to "America's backyard" were in tune with US offensives assailing popular left-wing liberation movements. Besides using economic and propaganda weapons, the US pushed the West's twisted ideas of "freedom" and "democracy" by rigging elections, fomenting coups, waging counterinsurgency wars and launching invasions to install brutal, far-right dictatorships. The US propped up its business-friendly client states, and their terrorist death

.... continued from previous page

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## Pearson College and NATO's United World Colleges

### The UWC's NATO origins

In 2017, Pearson College in BC, a Canadian government-funded member of the United World Colleges (UWC) "movement," co-hosted an event with Global Affairs Canada at which then-foreign minister Chrystia Freeland celebrated Pearson as a "Canadian Icon" who promoted "peace, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law around the world."<sup>1</sup>

Pearson College president, Désirée McGraw,<sup>2</sup> a prominent Liberal, noted that Freeland is "an alumna of UWC Adriatic and a good and knowledgeable friend of the College and the UWC movement [who] spoke at this event to recognize her predecessor."<sup>3</sup>

Now-deputy prime minister, Freeland was a student at UWC Adriatic in Italy during her teens (1984-86).<sup>4</sup> The UWC network of elitist boarding schools has shaped the minds of all manner of celebrities, royal-family members and other agents of influence. UWC alumni from its eighteen colleges on four continents include those who have become heads of state, political decision makers, CEOs, venture capitalists, religious and military leaders, influential artists, actors and powerful members of the Fifth Estate. Besides training privileged kids of the world's power elites, whose sponsors pay \$100,000 for a two-year degree, the UWC also allows some refugees on scholarships to represent carefully selected war zones.

British Air Marshal Sir Lawrence Darvall played a key role in creating the UWC. In 1955, UWC founder, Kurt Hahn, "visited the NATO Defense College in Paris" where Darvall was commandant. There, Hahn "was inspired by the cooperation and loyalty to a common cause that he witnessed among military men who had been adversaries in World War Two."<sup>5</sup> The military enemies who "inspired" Hahn with their "cooperation and loyalty" to NATO, included officers from Italy and Germany, which joined NATO in 1949 and 1955. Their "common cause" in NATO was a seething hatred of communism, both at home and abroad. NATO embraced fascists and Nazis, and their East European collaborators, because they wanted to continue fighting the USSR.

Hahn, a German nationalist, converted from Judaism after WWII. "I am of the firm opinion," he said, "that you can fight Communism only on a Christian basis."<sup>6</sup>

The second factor that "laid the foundation of the UWC movement" was the "rapidly developing relationship" between Hahn and Darvall. One of their goals was to bring together promising young men in a milieu of proNATO/antiSoviet ideologies and to groom them for leadership roles. This "led directly to the concept of Atlantic College."<sup>7</sup>