

LifeSiteNews.com Special Report

February 28, 2005

Same-Sex “Marriage,” “Hate Crimes,” and the New Totalitarianism

by Michael D. O’Brien

*Lost is our old simplicity of times;
the world abounds with laws
and teems with crimes.*

This anonymous aphorism, published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* in 1775, rings even more true of our times. Proliferating crime is endemic to contemporary democracies, it seems, and the Western world is awash in so many laws that one hardly dares guess what will next be made illegal. Strangest of all is that so much of the new legalism is directed not at criminals but at the moral structure of private life.

Disturbing Aspects of Homosexual Hate Crimes Law

The recent passage of Canada’s Bill C-250, which amended the hate crimes law to include sexual orientation, is a case in point, and the looming “same-sex marriage” bill is another. A number of aspects of the new hate crimes law are especially disturbing. For one thing, previous to the passage of this law there already existed in Canadian law abundant protection of human rights, including protection against discrimination on grounds of “sexual orientation.” What is distinctive about the new law is its criminalisation of negative criticism of homosexuality as such.

While the bill was in formation in Parliament two crucial amendments proposed by the opposition party were defeated. The first was to ensure that religious pastors and teachers would retain full freedom to teach traditional Judeo-Christian beliefs on these matters. The second was an attempt to make a distinction in law between homosexual persons and homosexual activities. The Catholic Church, for example, does not condemn homosexuals as persons; it condemns as sinful those activities which are not only an offense against God, but are destructive of the person, as well as society in the long run. In rejecting these two amendments, Parliament simply decreed that henceforth any negative public reference to homosexuality must be considered a possible hate crime against homosexual persons, prosecutable and (where a verdict of guilty is delivered) punishable by a jail sentence.

Of course, the ink is still wet on the document, and charges have not yet been laid. For the moment we are in the eye of the storm, a temporary calm. There is a widespread drawing back as journalists, teachers, and pastors ponder their options. At the same time activist homosexual groups have been bombarding a number of pro-family, pro-life organizations in this country with mockery and threats, planning strategies (in open forums) for neutralizing all

opposition, warning that those who don't keep silent on homosexuality will go to court, and to jail. The high level of emotional violence in homosexual militants' strategy is at times astounding. They seem consumed with hatred and determined to bring about an entire social revolution in their favor.

I should mention at this point that over the years I have known several persons with homosexual inclinations, some of whom are members of my extended family and some of whom I count as friends. Of these, the happiest are those who do not define themselves according to their sexual inclinations. They know that their personhood derives from something else, from their inherent dignity as human beings. By contrast, the unhappy have insisted on the single defining factor of their active homosexuality and pursued it as if it were the only meaning of their lives. Of this latter group three are now dead, one by AIDS, and two others by murder—murder committed by other homosexuals. It should be pointed out that the murderers were people who were not driven to such acts by oppression from a “homophobic” society, but committed their acts from motives of jealousy, rivalry within the “homosexual community.”

The level of aggression on the part of militant homosexuals against their critics is indicative of their long-range aims, for it would seem that they have already achieved what they wanted, and then some. During the two years preceding the passage of C-250, a number of significant “human rights” law suits were brought against traditional Christians and Jews. In their decisions, the Canadian courts generally sided against the churches and individuals who did not want to cooperate with the “gay agenda.” For example, a printing company that declined to print letterhead and envelopes for the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives was brought before the Ontario Human Rights Commission, fined \$5,000, incurred \$40,000 in legal costs and was forced to print the material or close their business. A Catholic school was coerced by a court order to admit an openly homosexual teenage boy and his older male lover to the school prom; the court also refused the school board permission to cancel the prom. A daily newspaper that published an advertisement page of Biblical quotes regarding homosexuality was fined. Such incidents are multiplying.

Clearly the new law will be used not so much to protect homosexual persons against unjust discrimination as it will be wielded as a cudgel to intimidate those who simply disagree with them and to punish those who are outspoken about it. It will also be used as a wedge to further invade the education systems and potentially invade the life of all families, disrupting the formation of the coming generations.

Under this law, how can we object? Moreover, if the proposed “same-sex marriage” legislation is passed by Parliament, the concept of homosexual unions as a positive fundamental cornerstone of society will enter the mainstream of life in this country. Fostered by all the powers of the State, with the courts ever-ready to inflict punishment on dissenters, it cannot fail to be promoted as a perfectly viable, normal option for young people who are considering their life choices. If the law declares a homosexual union to be a marriage and hence a family, why would it not be considered a cornerstone of society, just like the traditional heterosexual family? To object to this and to a number of false corollaries (adoption of children by homosexual

couples, for one) would be to risk violating hate crimes laws. While it is doubtful at this point whether anyone would be convicted under the statutes for the simple misdemeanor of raising an objection, it is probable that dissenters will have to endure a great deal of harassment, legal costs, lost time, and much stress in defending themselves from unjust lawsuits.

The subjectivity of the courts on homosexual issues is a portent of what is coming. A breath of protest from a Christian is examined carefully as a possible hate crime, while aggressive disruptions of peaceful Christian gatherings by gay militants are often overlooked and go unprosecuted. A whiff of Germany in the early 1930's is discernible in the atmosphere. Of course, glancing about our streets we do not see any concentration camps or marching jackboots. But will our prisons some day hold politically incorrect inmates whose only crime is speaking the truth? And as for jackboots, militant homosexual groups have behaved like Nazi hooligans of the late 1920's and early 1930's, for example their recent outrageous behaviour at Archbishop Adam Exner's residence in Vancouver.

It must be understood that the new "hate crimes" law and the same sex "marriage" law are an incestuous partnership, the sole purpose of which is to bring about the enforced restructuring of the nature of human society itself. It is a top-down revolution, and none of the government's pantomime gestures in imitation of a genuine parliamentary democracy will make it anything other than what it is. Both laws have been forced through the legislative process only by violating the basic procedures of democracy, and against the will of an overwhelming majority of citizens in this country. The present government has reassured us that there is no need to be alarmed about the matter, that freedom of conscience will be respected, that the law is only designed to ensure the well-being and civil rights of a small minority, and as such will not affect other people in our society. This argument is more than a case of intelligent people having a lapse into naïvete. This is a ruling oligarchy trying to impose a diktat, but doing it "nicely," which is the Canadian way. The consequences will not be so "nice."

Where is it all Going?

As Aristotle points out in his classic *Politics*, democracies degenerate into oligarchies, and we in the O-so-enlightened twenty-first century are merely following the long established pattern of decay. This process can be reversed, but it will take effort and courage. Unless there is a renewal of far-seeing thought in our elected representatives, the new "same-sex marriage" bill will indeed pass into law, bringing about negative consequences for generations to come. If it passes, it will be due to the government's policy of maintaining the surface appearance of democracy while undermining its principles.

Is it so far-fetched to consider the possibility that we are in a downward slide toward totalitarianism? Few people would go so far as to maintain that we are living in the early phase of an Orwellian *1984* or alternatively a softer form of totalitarian government such as Huxley's *Brave New World*, yet the elements of State-enforced social reconstruction are now in operation. We should also consider the fact that in just over one generation we have been shifted from a society in which homosexual acts were a crime under the then existing law, to a society in which

homosexual acts have become a government-protected and fostered activity, while voicing criticism of it “publicly” has become the crime. Call it by any name you like, but this is Thought Crime. As Orwell predicted, we have arrived at a situation in which “some of us are more equal than others.”

“Crime” is an ambiguous word. Governments of widely differing worldviews use it to restrain anti-social elements in their societies. But the heroism of one nation can be the pathology of another. Regardless of its political philosophy, in every country someone decides who is or is not an anti-social element, determines which of us is “an enemy of the people.” So which will we choose, here in this brave new social experiment we have created in Canada? And by what lights and criteria shall we choose? Who will judge our judges? Who will restore to us the tools of discernment if the spectrum of thought has been blanked out in this or that zone, journalism fettered, literature now circumspect (books, after all, are public forums). Where is it all going? Is it back to normal now, business as usual? Or is there another wave coming, propelled by the success of its predecessors? Each of these questions needs sober reflection, but we will be handicapped in our assessment if we have little understanding of how totalitarian regimes develop.

Signs and Elements of Impending Oppression

Let’s go a little deeper than the usual Political Science 101 thought-bite on human affairs. Indeed let’s look simultaneously deeper and higher—as high as a cosmic perspective perhaps. This could be helpful, because ranging from the proliferating social engineering class to the cynical new criminal classes (I mean thieves and murderers), modern man has pretty much lost his vision of the hierarchical universe. Gone is the sense of the moral absolutes, gone is accountability to any authority outside of whatever political correctness is the current fashion, gone the principle inherent in Western civilization that the honest citizen is an equal partner in a federation of free beings, all under the mantle of exterior transcendent absolutes that protect the human community from the subjectivity of aggressive social movements. That mantle has been discarded in the public forum. We should ask ourselves what will go next. The philosopher Peter Kreeft once wrote that a people who abandon moral absolutes will inevitably be ruled by a police state. “We choose,” he said, “either conscience or cops.”

The word totalitarianism usually generates impressions of dictatorial systems which brutally crush civic freedoms and negate the humanity of their subjects in an effort to achieve complete control. Images of barbed wire, jack-boots and thought-control are conjured up in our minds. 20th century literature has given us some powerful works of fiction which suggest a variety of possible totalitarian futures: one thinks immediately of Orwell and Huxley. But the societies they described were very different from each other. Indeed, as in fiction, actual tyrant states can assume many masks. What should be discerned are the elements common to those governments that oppress their peoples.

Common to all of them is the absolutising of the power of the State or systems controlled by the State. In order to succeed in this, totalitarian governments must invariably strive to do

away with genuine absolutes and to establish false absolutes in their place. Genuine absolutes are fundamental, ultimate, unqualified truths, independent of the ebb and flow of cultures, fashions, myths and prejudices. Human nature (never perfect) more or less thrives upon such absolutes. Upon such absolutes healthy societies are built, and though these societies are never perfect they are generally beneficial to their peoples. An example of genuine moral absolutes is the Ten Commandments. An example of false absolutes can be found in Marx's ideology, where the theory of *dialectic* is posited as the mechanism which determines human history—an abstraction that has resulted in many millions of violent deaths.

The absolute ruler always attempts to destroy diversity in the name of unity. What he really means by the word "unity" is uniformity, sameness. He cannot remain content with a pacified populace, because there always lurks beneath the surface of even the passive a potential for dissent, the threat of revolt against his power. Thus the pacified must be re-educated, so that at the core of their thinking no virus of resistance remains. The totalitarian begins with a seemingly benign re-education, but as he extends his grasp into more and more aspects of human life he gradually becomes hostile to everything outside of his own will. As his power becomes near absolute it grows increasingly negative, because by its very nature it must oppose what cannot be extinguished in the human person. It must seek at some point to destroy the inviolability of conscience and the inner impulse to genuine creativity which depends for its well-being on freedom from manipulation.

The individual tyrant rarely looks like a monster in the beginning. He usually appears as a saviour of his people, though once he has attained power he will eventually show his hand—at root he merely wishes to accumulate as much power as possible in order to obtain an absolute security or glory for himself, and to enjoy it at any cost. This kind of tyrant is not difficult to identify, given enough time. When he runs out of gasoline or bullets or wheat the people cast him off, because he is a monster who looks like a monster. He has blown his cover. There is little depth to such men, for they exemplify "the banality of evil," to borrow Hanna Arendt's phrase.

Beware of Deadly Idealists

More difficult to identify is the idealistic tyrant who expands his power in a sincere effort to protect what he considers to be the good of his subjects. He will reduce crime, balance the budget, bring order and a measure of material plenty to the nation. He will surely labour to make a better citizen of the raw material of his subjects. There can be a reassuring sense of security in all this—in the beginning. We feel so much safer in a milieu of dependable public services and an ordered economy, though we would, perhaps, remain uneasy about trading away certain freedoms in exchange for them. But it is precisely the elimination of personal responsibility which is the new totalitarian's ultimate goal, for this is what he sees as our fatal flaw.

It must be understood that the highly motivated idealist is not merely interested in improving the exterior forms of society. Ultimately, he wishes to reform us to the core, to save us from ourselves. Of course, he will find that basic human nature is rather difficult to remold, and as time goes on he will need to continuously expand his power until his control approaches

the level of totality. If he is clever at it and fills up the world with beautiful rhetoric, and takes care not to grossly infringe upon our pleasurable rights, and if, at the same time, he takes upon his own shoulders our unpleasant rights, the ones which demand effort and sacrifice, then he may get away with it. This is never more possible than in a historical period of extreme stress. In such a climate the lifting of our responsibilities is not felt as deprivation; it feels, rather, like relief from intolerable tensions. Somebody at last is doing something about the human condition! A sick society is getting therapy! A cancer patient puts himself into the hands of his doctor, so why shouldn't a "dysfunctional" people entrust itself to its sociopolitical physicians?

Somewhere during the therapy there is a decisive transfer of power and responsibility. When this happens on a massive scale something is seriously amiss. There may not be brown-shirts and jackboots marching in the streets. No public book-burnings. No grotesque executions. In some cases there may even be no visible dictator, only a system or a social philosophy which permeates and controls everything. Indeed, the world may appear to be perfectly normal. The philosopher Josef Pieper points out that this is the most dangerous form of totalitarianism of all, almost impossible to throw off, because it never appears to be what, in fact, it is.

In his prescient book, *The Judgment of the Nations*, historian Christopher Dawson warns:

“Thus, the situation that Christians have to face today has more in common with that described by the author of the Apocalypse than with the age of St. Augustine. The world is strong and it has evil masters. But these masters are not vicious autocrats like Nero and Domitian. They are the engineers of the mechanism of world power: a mechanism that is more formidable than anything the ancient world knew, because it is not confined to external means, like the despotisms of the past, but uses all the resources of modern psychology to make the human soul the motor of its dynamic purpose.”

Writing in the late 1940's, Dawson was describing the shape of a possible future, a global non-violent totalitarianism that is the most serious of all tyrannies because in it evil has become depersonalised, separated from individual appetite and passion, and “exalted into a sphere in which all moral values are confused and transformed.” “The great terrorists” he points out, “have not been immoral men, but rigid puritans who did evil coldly, by principle.”

In his memoirs, *Inside the Third Reich*, Albert Speer, Hitler's architect and armaments minister, wrote about the state of mind of the German people as Hitler rose to power. He says that most Germans disliked the sinister side of Hitler's policies, but in a spirit of optimism they assumed that he would leave behind his more unpleasant policies once he attained the dignity of high office. They overlooked his errors because they thought his form of law and order would be a lesser evil than the social disruption they were suffering during the nineteen twenties and early thirties. By succumbing to the “lesser evil” argument, they brought upon the world an evil of epic proportions.

We Must be Rooted in the Truth in Order to Resist

But what happens to the discernment of a people when a tyrant arrives without the usual sinister costumes of brutal dictators? What happens when the errors come in pleasing disguises, and are promoted by articulate, educated people who speak only in measured tones? Those living in such an environment have more than one difficulty to overcome in accurately assessing what is happening. They find themselves within the events which are unfolding, and thus are faced with the problem of perception: how to see the structure of their times, how to step outside of it and to view it objectively while remaining within it as a participant, as an agent for the good.

How are we to do this if we are not rooted in the truth? Will we be willing to compromise moral absolutes as the State more and more invades private life (the social indoctrination of our children is a prime example) merely because persuasive idealists say we should? Will the homogenization of our children's minds be acceptable simply because we want the next generation to be nicely outfitted to cope with a profoundly disordered society? Will we be willing to sacrifice *any* moral principle in society for the sake of the illusion of unity? Just as Dawson predicted, the confusion and transformation of moral values is seen widely as a moral cause.

How long will it take for our people to understand that when humanist sentiments replace moral absolutes, it is not long before very idealistic people begin to invade human families in the name of the family, and destroy human lives in the name of humanity? This is the idealist's greatest temptation, the temptation by which nations and cultures so often fall. The wielder of power is deluded into thinking he can remold reality into a less unkind condition. If he succeeds in convincing his people of the delusion and posits for them an enemy of the collective good, then unspeakable evils can be released in society.

Those who share a mass-delusion rarely recognize it as such, and can pursue the most heinous acts in a spirit of self-righteousness. Democracies are not immune from such delusions, although they tend to forms of oppression which are not overtly violent in the beginning. Democracies in decline, however, will eventually revert to covert oppression and the overt erosion of human rights, which is the Siamese twin of eroded personal responsibility. Are we there yet? If it is true that rhetoric about freedom and democracy intensifies as the real thing declines (thinkers as diverse as Orwell, Huxley, Dawson, and Pieper are agreed on this point), then the Western world has indeed entered a period of institutionalized unreality.

The social revolution is far from over. Crucial choices have arrived and more are approaching. The abortion and euthanasia issues are the most ugly of these crises, but they are symptoms of something deeper, and that "something" is no less than the auto-demolition of a civilization, beginning with the eradication of its moral foundations. The homosexual revolution, institutionalized by the powers of the State, is but one component in this ongoing process. Polygamy and paedophilic "marriage" are on the horizon. Euthanasia is already a widespread practice, which in all probability will be legitimized by new laws, given enough time and media propaganda. Malcolm Muggeridge once pointed out that the only reason it has been slow in

coming is that it was one of the war crimes condemned at Nürnberg. Note carefully, however, that in the modern age it takes little more than one generation to turn a war crime into an “act of compassion.”

Now May be the Last Brief Period to Reverse the Tide

For several years now we have lived in a situation very close to the crisis which Germany reached when the National Socialists enacted the racial laws, when state-sanctioned evil was funded by a large number of its citizenry who regarded the acts they were paying for through taxes to be gravely wrong. It is a sobering thought that it all came about through the democratic process. Only hindsight informs us that unspeakable horrors were released precisely because an aggressive and immoral political party, sanctioned by the elusive “voice of the people,” had attained the highest offices in the land. Thus, within a few short years, democracy was turned against itself in one of the most civilized nations of Europe, and as a result disaster spread throughout the world. It began with average decent Germans not understanding the nature of totalitarianism, nor of democracy itself, nor of the cost in preserving it. In the end they became “law-abiding” citizens of hell on earth.

And what of us? Are we all now to become law-abiding citizens of a nation that is destroying itself, that has already destroyed hundreds of thousands of its own children and forced taxpayers to fund it? Though we do not yet have the benefit of full hindsight regarding our own nation, we would do well to exercise some foresight and reflect upon what is next. Because there will be a “next” as the social revolution presses onward toward its concept of total victory. We must ask ourselves if, in a few short years from now, the uncooperative Christian or Jew or Muslim (or, for that matter, the non-religious classical democrat) will be considered “an enemy of the people.” And will those families which fail to conform to State-defined notions of social hygiene be categorised as “dysfunctional,” and thus undeserving of custody of their children? If we should wake up some morning to find that a massive infrastructure of conditioners has accomplished the total re-engineering of society, will we look back upon the present as the last brief period in which it was still possible to reverse the tide?

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Canadian artist and author, Michael O’Brien, has written seven novels including the widely acclaimed *Father Elijah*, and *A Cry of Stone*. Notable among his non-fiction books are *The Family and the New Totalitarianism* and his examination of the paganization of children’s literature, *A Landscape With Dragons*. His forthcoming novel, *Sophia House*, deals in part with the issue of homosexuality. It will be published in the spring of 2005 by Ignatius Press, San Francisco. His writings on the new totalitarianism can be found on his website: www.studiobrien.com

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