

Arms and goody two-shoes

The unions and church groups that loudly demand the government create new jobs might be interested to learn that some of the very policies they espouse are costing Canada at least 100,000 jobs.

Canada is the only advanced industrial nation that does not manufacture and export arms. Why? Because our leftward-ho politicians in Ottawa, cheered on by labor and churches, don't want to see Canada make instruments of death. Such a policy might be debatable if we had full employment and strong exports of manufactured goods. But at a time of 10% unemployment and weak exports, refusing to make products that the world demands is incredibly foolish.

Look, for a moment, at Brazil. Twenty years ago Brazil had no arms industry. In the mid-1960s Brazil's government and private industry embarked on a long-term program aimed at making the nation self-sufficient in most arms and developing a large export market.

The Brazilians acted with remarkable speed, organization and marketing savvy. Instead of trying to compete with the U.S., France or Britain in hi-tech arms, Brazil concentrated on making cheap, efficient and robust equipment aimed at Third World nations. Brazil's low-tech approach has paid handsome dividends.

In 1985 Brazil is estimated to have exported \$2.4 billion U.S. in arms, a figure almost equal to its leading export, coffee. Brazil's humming arms industry has 350 companies that employ over 120,000 workers. In two decades, Brazil's *Engesa* has become the world's leading producer of wheeled armored vehicles; *Embraer* a major aircraft exporter.

Now Brazil may be entering the hi-tech field.

Punch



"I most solemnly swear to discharge my duties with decorum, conscious at all times of the dignity of my high calling."

ERIC MARGOLIS



Engesa has just scored a major triumph by reportedly securing a Saudi contract for what could amount to 1,000 of its new *Osorio* main battle tanks, beating out British, French and German competitors. This from a nation whose most advanced military industry in 1964 was truck assembly.

Brazil's triumphant success in producing jobs and hard currency stands in stark and depressing contrast to Canada. In 1964 Canada still had much of its World War II industrial base and the ability to be a major producer of advanced arms. Then came two decades of ideologically-left governments that would not deal in arms. The cancellation of the Avro Arrow and the persecution of Dr. Bull's Space Research Co. were death warrants for Canada's defence industry.

This ideological daintiness has made Canada dependent on foreign arms suppliers for its own puny armed forces — and cost an estimated 100,000 jobs. Had Canada become a serious arms producer, there is little doubt that its exports today would be well over Brazil's \$2.4 billion U.S.

Canadian industry could, for example, make tanks and armored vehicles, missiles, rockets, warships, radar and other military electronics, munitions and small arms. Instead, all we have left is a modest electronics industry and a lot of small firms making spare parts and componentry for the Pentagon. Pretty pitiful for one of the world's top industrial nations.

Each billion dollars in export earnings means at least 25,000 jobs in Canadian industry — highly paid, hi-tech jobs requiring intelligent, motivated workers. Another 15,000 jobs are indirectly created. Yet what does our government do? It pours money into non-military manufacturers that have no markets for their exports, spending \$100 million, for example, to sustain 400 jobs.

Generous Canada gives cash aid to Zimbabwe which then turns around and uses the money to buy arms from Brazil. This just does not make sense. At the very least, working people should be aware of the cost of the policies advocated by their liberal union leaders and churchmen. That cost is the 100,000 jobs already mentioned — Canada's current arms export potential that is being suppressed on grounds of ideology.

Even as left-wing policy, a ban on arms-making does not make sense. The USSR, China, and many other socialist nations are major and unblushing arms exporters. Nobody in the rest of the world gives one hoot that Canada is such a goody two-shoes. It's time we face economic and political reality. The French do it, the Russians do it, the Yanks do it, the Greeks do it. Everyone does it except Snow White Canada.