

Oka Crisis Photo Analysis

(Historical Significance)

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Mr. Bauer

Introduction

There are several reasons as to why we should even consider learning about the Oka Crisis. For one, it was a fairly violent standoff between the Mohawk warriors and Quebec police as well as the Canadian soldiers. It even received international media attention. ^{SOURCE ...} Another reason to learn about it is because it was a significant event in Canadian history. It is remembered as the event that urged the Aboriginals to stand up for their rights and values as Canadians, and more importantly as human beings.

Criteria 1

The Oka Crisis resulted in change, as the Aboriginals were able to win the struggle in a relatively peaceful manner, winning their land back. In the effort to expand a golf course on to the ancestral burial grounds of the Mohawks, the government of Quebec did not take into consideration the importance of the land that they were going to destroy and frankly, they didn't care. The Oka Crisis also changed the mindset of those who walked all over the Aboriginals and their values as it showed them that the Mohawks in Oka would fight for what they believe in and would do anything it takes to prevent their rights from being stripped from them. A Kanesatake resident named Linda Simon, one of those who experienced the violence, says in an interview, "the common lands had slowly been given away and sold and there came a point where people weren't going to take it anymore. You reach a point after a while where you have to make a stand." ^{SOURCE ...}

Criteria 2

This event revealed that the Aboriginals had a fighting spirit within them. It revealed that they were tired of having their beliefs and values taken away from them. In this case, they would fight for what they wanted and it didn't matter who was in their way. This mentality was crucial as it aided them in their standoff against the authority (Quebec police, then Canadian soldiers). As well, this event revealed and deepened the understanding of land claims in Canada. Tom Siddon, the federal minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development at the time said that he believed, "Oka played a key role in improving the thorny issue of land claims." Siddon went on to say in the interview, "Oka was an important turning point in our natural history." Land claims continue to be a problem in Canada and Oka was just one of the events that displayed this. ^{SOURCE ...}

Criteria 3

The photo seems to connect to both the Mohawk warriors and the Canadian soldiers. In the photo, both men are standing face-to-face trading glances in a threatening manner. Neither man seems to be backing off, although, the Canadian soldier seems a little intimidated by the Mohawk soldier and there is a little fear in his eyes. Therefore, I would say that the dominant story is that of the Mohawk soldiers. This photo epitomizes the standoff between the sides as it shows that the Aboriginals were firm in their belief and they were not going to back down to the authority. At the same time, this photo could just as well portray the Canadian soldier as a hero. On an episode of Unreserved with Rosanna Deerchild (entitled, "How one photograph shaped how everyone saw the Oka

✓
(Crisis) the hostess speaks with Rima Wilkes a sociology professor at the University of British Columbia who has spent time studying the photograph. According to her, "both the mainstream Canadian public and media both latched onto this image because it appeared to show Canada in a peacekeeping role, casting the soldier as a hero". Wilkes adds that the photo is "a misrepresentation of the reality of the situation". In the photo, the indigenous man, whose weapon is clearly noticeable, is leaning over the smaller soldier who appears to be unequipped with a weapon. "It makes it look like there's this 2:1 ratio in favor of the Mohawks when in reality there were 50 Mohawks, is my understanding, and 1500 Canadian soldiers". By this understanding, the photo seems to be heavily biased towards the Canadian soldiers as it gives off the impression that the Canadian soldier is a 'hero'; this ideology was the dominant story portrayed by the media. excellent analysis! & use of sources...

Criteria 4

Different stories are shared about this event as different views are questioned. If one were to ask a Canadian soldier about this event, they would say that the Aboriginals were in the wrong; on the other hand, if one were to ask a Mohawk warrior their thoughts, they would say that the Canadian soldiers were scared and in fault for their actions. In an article by the Montreal Gazette, a Mohawk warrior named Piper was asked about the event. He believed that what occurred actually benefited the Mohawk community saying, "it was a really great thing we did back then, 25 years ago; there has been so much native movement since then that they are not afraid to stand up anymore." Recent sources seem to include more material on the crisis compared to the past, as more evidence is being found and understood about the event. For example, in present day, views about the Aboriginals and their actions could be a bit more understanding as many people now know about the many injustices that they have had to face in the past. The significance of the Oka Crisis has carried over today, as we now have a better understanding as to the motives of the Mohawks and why they acted in protest.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this photo is a source that captures the historical significance of the crisis. This photo represents in many ways the fighting spirit in the Mohawks, as they were not afraid to stand up to the authorities for what they cared for. Although some consider this photo to be favoring the government, it is still a good representation of the force that was the Mohawk warriors. Tired of being wronged so many times, they fought and stood up for themselves. This photo symbolizes the will and heart of the Aboriginals and that for once, others were actually beginning to take notice.

which also captures how mainstream Canadian Media captured / presented the event ...

(CM) 9.5
(SER) 10
(DUI) 10
(ASC) 10
(BDUC) 10

KU 10
T 10
COM (WS) 9.5
APP 10/10/10 10

39.5 / 40
Bravo Beta!
top product!

#4 CAUSE & CONSEQUENCE: Oka Crisis

Karrie Yu

Criteria #1

There are many causes and consequences of the Oka Crisis. The short term causes ^{were} ~~was~~ the town of Oka deciding to build a 9-hole golf course (1961), the town of Oka wanting to expand this golf course to a 18-hole golf course and adding residential space (1989), two injunctions being made to remove the Mohawk barricade ^{that} ~~but~~ were ignored, chaos from Mohawk protesters and Sûreté du Québec (SQ) expanding near the Montreal area, SQ being unable to stop the Mohawk and the increasing number of soldiers pressurizing the Mohawk.

The long term cause was the dispute of agreements between the Canadian Government and the Mohawks. An example of a dispute was in 1717, when "The Mohawk claimed that the original grant included about nine square miles reserved exclusively for their use. Although the Sulpician Seminary was supposed to hold the land in trust for them, the seminary expanded this agreement to grant itself sole ownership rights" [Wikipedia] - not authoritative... encyclopedia...

The short term consequences were the Mohawks not agreeing to the building of the golf-course but it was not heard of until much of the land was cleared and filing a land claim, the Mohawk protesters setting up a barricade to block access to the area, the mayor of Oka, Jean Ouellette, calling in the SQ to attack leading to a small gunfight and death of SQ Corporal Marcel Lemay, the RCMP and the Canadian Armed Forces (more specifically the Royal 22nd Regiment aka the "VanDoos") to help and the surrendering of the Mohawks.

✓ The long term consequence was the bad relationship created between the enraged non-Mohawk living near the conflict and the Mohawk. - supporting source...

These causes and consequences are all interrelated. First, the town of Oka built a 9-hole golf course onto the Mohawks' land (this included "the pinelands" as well as their ancient burial ground). The immediate result was the Mohawks not agreeing to this but it was not known of until most of their land was cleared and later on the Mohawks tried to file an official land claim but, this claim was rejected as it did not meet the requirements. The trigger of this crisis was in 1989, when the mayor of the town of Oka wanted to expand the golf course and residential space on to more of the Mohawks' land and "did not consult the Mohawk on the plans" [Wikipedia]. Tension was already high between these two groups due to the previous building of the 9-hole golf course and the dispute of agreements between the Canadian Government and the Mohawks in the past. That and the fact that there was no notification of the plans aggravated the Mohawk to take action. The Mohawk wanted to protect their land thus, setting up a barricade. Next, two injunctions to remove the barricade were made but were ignored. The mayor of Oka accelerated this crisis by calling in the Sûreté du Québec aka SQ (provincial police force) to attack the barricade using tear gas and concussion grenades. This eventually led to a short gunfight in which, SQ Corporal Marcel Lemay gets killed in. The chaos from the Mohawk protesters and SQ made it worse as it enraged and disturbed people living nearby. The SQ could not put an end to this problem so the RCMP and the Canadian Armed Forces came as reinforcements. As there was an increasing number of soldiers this resulted in the Mohawk protesters surrendering on September 26, 1990 (Research sources: Wikipedia and The Canadian Encyclopedia).

Criteria #2

✓ The most important cause/trigger of this crisis was in 1989, when the mayor of the town of Oka wanted to expand the golf course and residential space on to more of the Mohawks' land and "did not consult the Mohawk on the plans" [Wikipedia]. Tension was already high between these two groups due to the previous building of the 9-hole golf course and dispute of agreements between the Canadian

Government and the Mohawks in the past. That and the fact that there was no notification of the plans aggravated the Mohawk to take action.

Criteria #3

The causes that were human intentions, according to The Canadian Encyclopedia, is the town of Oka building a 9-hole golf course on the Mohawks' land, wanting to expand the golf course and residential space, the chaos from the Mohawk and SQ expanding close to Montreal, the two injunctions to remove the barricade and the Mohawk getting surrounded by an increasing amount of soldiers.

The causes that were prevailing conditions at the time were the bad relationship between the Mohawk and non-Mohawk and struggle that the Mohawks had of regaining land according to The Canadian Encyclopedia and Wikipedia.

Criteria #4

The unintended consequences, according to The Canadian Encyclopedia, are enraged citizens living near the blockade, loosening of the bonds of Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals (the non-Aboriginals living near the conflict), and citizens living near the conflict who threw stones at cars of people, (consisting of mainly women, children and the elderly) trying to escape the Kahnawake reserve.

✓ The intended consequences is to cause people to be more "aware of Aboriginal rights and land claims; it also illustrated the potential for future conflict if such claims were not resolved in a timely, transparent, and just manner" The Canadian Encyclopedia. The intended consequence from the police/government side was removing the barricade and causing the Mohawk to surrender, according to The Canadian Encyclopedia.

Criteria #5

✓ There are other casual possibilities or counterfactuals that highlight the non-inevitability of the Oka Crisis. For example, what if the town of Oka respected their Aboriginals' land and did not try to build or expand the golf course and residential buildings? What if this situation was negotiated peacefully instead of using weapons to settle the problem? What if the Mohawks' land claim was accepted? Any of these variables could have changed the outcome. (Information used to create these What if's was obtained from The Canadian Encyclopedia and Wikipedia).

Conclusion

In conclusion, I believe this photo captured cause & consequence fairly. It illustrates the main consequence of the crisis. That is, the tension and confrontation between the Mohawk protesters and the opposing forces (here in the photo "Pte. Patrick Cloutier, a 'Van Doo' perimeter sentry, and Mohawk Warrior Brad Larocque, a University of Saskatchewan economics student, face off" Wikipedia). As shown in the picture, they are both armed, dressed in army clothing and Brad Larocque has his face covered. This symbolizes that it was a very serious situation because, the Mohawk were so desperate to protect their land (shown in the background is their "pinelands") that they were willing to break the law. Also, it shows how when the "two injunctions to remove the roadblock were ignored, the mayor of Oka asked the provincial police force, the Sûreté du Québec (SQ), to intervene" (The Canadian Encyclopedia). These are the reasons why I would say this photo is a fair representation of cause & consequence.

CM 9.5

SER 9.25

DUI 9.25

ASC 10

BDUC 10

KU 9.25

T 9.25

COM (WS) 8.75

APP 10/1.25/10 9.75

37/40

Bravo! a solid product... just watch that you don't rely on 1 or 2 sources only... especially wikipedia encyclopedias...

use other sources than just 2... many on project page...