

17. 3. 90

Peter →

As our Staff re Cameroon's  
strategies - a letter  
from you could help -  
Hope you write -

Be well, best to  
family -

Sincerely  
D M

(enclosures)

# Paying for the past

*A brainwashing victim seeks compensation*

**L**inda Macdonald says that the first half of her life is a blank. The 52-year-old Vancouver woman adds that her earliest memory is of standing in a kitchen while her husband, Philip Cowan, gave her some pills. Then, she says, she remembers being led to a living-room sofa and gazing out the window as Cowan left for work. In 1963, at the age of 26, Macdonald had just emerged from Montreal's Allan Memorial Institute after six months of experimental treatment allegedly conducted without her consent by the eminent Scottish-born psychiatrist Ewen Cameron. Macdonald claims that, as a result of Cameron's unorthodox treatment, she was not only stripped of all memory up to the time of her release from the psychiatric institute, but that she also had to relearn such basic skills as reading and writing. "I watched and copied people, trying to be a credible human being," Macdonald told *Maclean's*. "I was trying very hard to stay in the present. I had no interest at all in the past."

Now, Macdonald is seeking compensation

for damage to her memory and other mental processes. Her lawyer, Thomas Berger, a former justice of the British Columbia Supreme Court, last week submitted an 85-page report on Macdonald's case to federal Justice Minister Kim Campbell. The report contends that Cameron's treatment of Macdonald was part of an inadequately supervised series of psychiatric experiments that were financially supported by, at different times, the federal department of health and welfare and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The report also claims that, because of that financial support, Ottawa must accept some of the responsibility for what happened to Macdonald. "Linda Macdonald's case is one that cries out for settlement," the report concludes. Berger did not disclose last week the amount of money that Macdonald is seeking in settlement of her claim.

Berger noted that in October, 1988, the CIA, which helped fund Cameron's work from 1957 until 1962, agreed to a total payment of \$907,500 to settle claims brought in a Wash-

ington court by nine other Canadians whom Cameron had treated. The CIA helped to fund work at the Allan institute because the agency was interested in possible Cold War applications of Cameron's experiments in brainwashing and mind control.

At the Allan institute, Cameron, who died in 1967, treated patients suffering from mental illnesses, including depression, with high-voltage electroshock therapy, long periods of drug-induced sleep (Berger's report said that Macdonald was put to sleep for at least 86 days) and a technique called psychic driving, which involved prolonged exposure to repetitive taped messages. Cameron also gave some of his patients the hallucinogenic drug LSD. The doctor said that, by using such techniques, he was trying to beneficially alter, or "depattern," the behavior of mentally ill patients.

Macdonald was living in Quebec City in March, 1963, when her family doctor sent her to Cameron for examination. Married in 1955 at 18, Macdonald had five children, including twins, in less than four years. She entered the Allan apparently suffering from severe post-partum depression, a condition suffered by some women after they give birth.

Berger says that Cameron's methods of treatment amounted to medical malpractice because he "did not obtain his patients' consent to his experiments" and because his "experiments were themselves a marked departure from the standards of the time." For her part, Macdonald said that "my anger is directed at this government, which has whitewashed and

covered up what happened for years and years." She says that she was unaware of the exact nature of her treatment at the Allan until she read an article in the *Vancouver Province* in 1984 on Cameron's activities. "I was horrified," she recalled. "I kept reading it, but it took a while to believe this had really happened."

In 1987, Macdonald embarked on her quest for compensation by filing a lawsuit against the Canadian government, which has not yet come to trial. The next year, Ottawa announced that it was granting \$20,000 to each of the nine former patients who were suing the CIA to help pay their legal costs. But Macdonald said that federal officials told her she was not entitled to financial assistance because she was suing the government. Officials also cited a federally commissioned 1986 report by former Conservative member of Parliament George Cooper that absolved the Canadian government of any responsibility for Cameron's work. Still, Berger said that "the Cooper report cannot stand, because of its own internal conflicts, and because new evidence that has become avail-



Macdonald, NDP MP Svend Robinson: her first 26 years are a blank

able completely undermines the report."

Berger argued that CIA officials probably settled with the nine Canadian patients in 1988 because they were aware that Cameron was using patients as part of his experiments instead of simply treating them. "The same evidence," declared Berger, "is equally compelling against the government of Canada."

For her part, Campbell, who was promoted to the justice portfolio in last month's cabinet shuffle, told reporters that she was not familiar with Macdonald's case. Later, a spokesman in Campbell's office said that the minister had instructed justice department officials to meet with Berger and his client.

Meanwhile, Macdonald, who supported herself as a nightclub singer during the 1970s, now works at a Vancouver training centre as a counsellor for adults re-entering the workforce. She separated from her husband and children after her treatment at the Allan, and her marriage to Cowan, a psychiatrist, ended in 1972. Now, Macdonald says that she is in regular contact with most of her children. "I am determined to have a family," she

said. She is equally determined, she added, to make Ottawa compensate her for her misery after Cameron's treatment. "It's impossible to pay somebody back for 26 years of their life," said Macdonald. "But there should be a gesture that says, 'This never should have happened.'"

# Phoenix Rising



The Voice of the Psychiatrized

March 8, 1990

The Honourable Kim Campbell, M.P.  
Minister of Justice  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

Re Ms. Linda Macdonald

Dear Ms. Campbell:

On behalf of the Canadian magazine Phoenix Rising, I am very pleased to write you for the purpose of urging prompt and substantial compensation for Ms. Linda Macdonald. We are writing now mainly because of recent media coverage re Ms. Macdonald's brainwashing case, and because of our great admiration and respect for her.

As you undoubtedly are aware, Ms. Macdonald is one of many Canadians who was permanently damaged by the unethical, brainwashing experiments conducted by the late Canadian psychiatrist D. Ewen Cameron in the 1950s and early 1960s at the Allan Memorial Institute in Montreal. We understand that during one 6-month period in 1963 at the Allan Memorial, Dr. Cameron forcibly subjected Ms. Macdonald to over one hundred, intensive electroshocks (Page-Russell "ECT"), massive drugging including drug-induced comas lasting over one month, and psychic driving. We also understand and deplore the fact that Ms. Macdonald never gave her voluntary and informed consent to such "treatment", despite the fact that informed consent to any medical experiment or procedure was an ethical requirement at the time. Dr. Cameron knew it or should have known it, since he was present during the drafting of the historic Nuremberg Code of Medical Ethics in 1946. Further, Dr. Cameron's brainwashing experiments were also funded by the Canadian government, specifically the Department of National Health and Welfare.

As a direct result of the barbaric and unethical experimental methods authorized and administered by Dr. Cameron with Canadian government funding, Ms. Macdonald suffered massive and permanent memory loss, as well as great humiliation, invalidation and loss of a musical career. We also wish to point out that permanent memory loss, as any competent physician knows, is a definite indication of brain damage.

Phoenix Rising, as well as several other magazines and newspapers, has already exposed Dr. Cameron's psychiatric atrocities. It has

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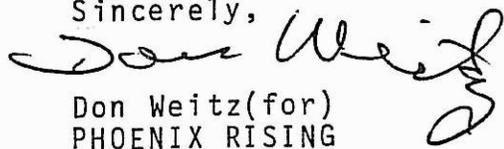
also publicly denounced Dr. Cameron, severely criticized the Canadian Psychiatric Association and American Psychiatric Association for their inexcusable and cowardly silence re these brainwashing experiments, and demanded substantial reparations and justice for all of Dr. Cameron's Canadian victims. So far, to no avail, except for the token government payoffs in the CIA case.

For your further information, we are pleased to enclose some of our relevant material re Dr. Cameron's brainwashing experiments, the Canadian victims' case against the CIA, the Justice Department's formal whitewash known as "The Cooper Report", and a personal story titled "Breakthrough" by Ms. Macdonald published in the Canadian book titled Shrink Resistant: The Struggle Against Psychiatry in Canada and edited by Dr. Bonnie Burstow and myself (Vancouver: New Star Books Ltd, 1988). We hope you find this material informative and useful.

Once again, we strongly urge you as Justice Minister to act fairly and justly toward Ms. Macdonald by providing her with substantial compensation and a formal apology. While no amount of money can bring back the first twenty-six years of Ms. Macdonald's life which Dr. Cameron permanently erased, we feel that Ms. Macdonald at least deserves compensation and a formal apology from yourself and/or Prime Minister Mulroney. What Ms. Macdonald does not deserve is a token payoff and more insensitivity and injustice from your Ministry and government.

We request a letter from you acknowledging receipt of this letter, and your personal reply to our recommendations of substantial compensation and a formal apology from the Canadian government to Linda Macdonald.

Sincerely,



Don Weitz (for)  
PHOENIX RISING

Enclosures: "A Psychiatric Holocaust" (vol.6 no.1, June 1986); "The Cooper Report: Another Government Whitewash" (vol.6 no.2, October 1986); "Victims of Cameron's Brainwashing Experiments Suing CIA" (vol.7 no.4, May 1988); and "Breakthrough" by Linda Macdonald (in Shrink Resistant: The Struggle Against Psychiatry in Canada, Burstow & Weitz, eds. New Star Books, 1988).

c: Ms. Linda Macdonald  
Mr. Ron Shulman, Barrister and Solicitor  
Mr. Thomas R. Berger, Barrister and Solicitor  
Mr. Svend Robinson, M.P. (Burnaby)

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