

# Entertainment

## Russian history inaccurate?

A couple of weeks back, as you'll recall, Mikhail Gorbachev caused a sensation in the U.S.S.R. by revealing that the country's history books were riddled with inaccuracies.

In fact, Gorbachev went so far as to cancel the year-end history exams for Russian students on the grounds they had all been fed a steady diet of historical misinformation.

On first hearing this, two thoughts sprang immediately to mind. One: bravo for Gorbachev. Two: where in heck was Gorbachev when I was getting a C-minus in History 12?

My high school history marks proved beyond question that the textbooks and I differed fundamentally as to what had actually taken place. Naturally, I have always assumed the misinformed party was me.

But all of a sudden, Gorbachev's revelation raises the question of whether our own history books are as accurate as we've always assumed — which in turn raises the possibility that I may have been absolutely correct when I identified Raddison and Grosseillers as defencemen for the Montreal Canadiens.

It's a disturbing notion — and it's all the more disturbing because our own government has been hinting of late that far too many Canadians are misinformed and deluded about key historical truths.

In fairness, the Tories have always had to fight against a bad historical rap — it is commonly pointed out, for instance, that Quebec refused to vote Tory for 100 years because Sir John A. Macdonald hanged Louis Riel.



**Weir's View**

By Ian Weir  
Thomson News Service

But of even greater significance is the Tories' oft-stated belief that their present unpopularity arises from the voters' inability to perceive the truth — which is, more or less, that all of Canada's problems have been caused by the Liberals, and that the current administration is the best we've ever had.

And this raises an urgent question. Can the Tories continue to put up with such injustice? Or will they sooner or later have to follow Gorbachev's lead, and publish a new set of history books to

explain what really happened?

Obviously, a full account of Canadian history can't be given in the space of this column. But perhaps a brief summary could be provided.

In the beginning (as we should all have been taught in school) this great nation was opened up by the fearlessly progressive (and yet wisely conservative) pioneers known as the Free Traders — a term later corrupted to Fur Traders by Liberals who slurred their speech because of chronic alcoholism.

These early Free Traders built the country almost single-handedly, and from their ranks arose the venerable Sir John A. Macdonald, the man who re-

mained Canada's greatest-ever prime minister until the 1984 election.

Macdonald, of course, is best remembered for having built the railway — upon completion of which he appointed Louis Riel as the first chairman of CN's board of directors.

The Conservatives continued to lead Canada toward ever-greater prosperity until they were interrupted by the First World War — a tragic conflict which began when an Austrian archduke was assassinated by a Serbian fanatic who has since been identified as the great-uncle of Pierre Trudeau.

An even greater setback was caused by the notorious election of 1929, when the voters inexplicably rejected the Conservatives (who promised good government) in favor of the Liberals (who promised to cause the Depression).

The Liberal Depression gave rise to numerous lamentable developments, including the emergence of the CCF — the forerunner of the NDP — a party which was formed by a group of men who had inherited thriving businesses

and promptly mismanaged them into bankruptcy, and thus had a lot of time on their hands.

For reasons beyond mortal comprehension, Canadians continued to elect Liberal governments. Mercifully, however, the Tories managed to get in just often enough to introduce many badly-needed innovations — including Medicare, the right to due process of law, the right to own property, and sliced bread.

And then came 1968, and the onset of the Dark Ages. But just when all seemed lost, a boy from Baie Comeau, while strolling through an empty churchyard, stumbled across a magical sword embedded in a stone.

And the rest, as they say, is history.

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