



# Canada's 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era

*Bryan Palmer*

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Rebellious youth, the Cold War, New Left radicalism, Pierre Trudeau, Red Power, Quebec's call for Revolution, Marshall McLuhan: these are just some of the major forces and figures that come to mind at the slightest mention of the 1960s in Canada. Focusing on the major movements and personalities of the time, as well as the lasting influence of the period, *Canada's 1960s* examines the legacy of this rebellious decade's impact on contemporary notions of Canadian identity. Bryan D. Palmer demonstrates how after massive postwar immigration, new political movements, and at times violent protest, Canada could no longer be viewed in the old ways. National identity, long rooted in notions of Canada as a white settler Dominion of the North, marked profoundly by its origins as part of the British Empire, had become unsettled.

Concerned with how Canadians entered the Sixties relatively secure in their national identities, Palmer explores the forces that contributed to the post-1970 uncertainty about what it is to be Canadian. Tracing the significance of dissent and upheaval among youth, trade unionists, university students, Native peoples, and Quebecois, Palmer shows how the Sixties ended the entrenched, nineteenth-century notions of Canada. The irony of this rebellious era, however, was that while it promised so much in the way of change, it failed to provide a new understanding of Canadian national identity.

A compelling and highly accessible work of interpretive history, *Canada's 1960s* is the book of the decade about an era many regard as the most turbulent and significant since the years of the Great Depression and World War II.

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