

# Chapter 10

## Challenging Liberalism

### Key Skill:

Developing and supporting informed arguments in response to issues

### Key Terms and Concepts:

- Aboriginal collective thought
- Aboriginal self-government
- alternative thought
- civil disobedience
- environmentalism
- extremism
- religious perspectives

### Key Issue:

*To what extent should we embrace an ideology?*

### Related Issue:

*Is resistance to liberalism justified?*

### Chapter Issue:

**How can liberalism be challenged by other ways of thinking?**

### Question for Inquiry #1:

**What ways of thinking can challenge liberalism?**

### Question for Inquiry #2:

**When are challenges to liberalism justified?**

Have you ever felt that something was unfair and wanted to do something about it? Classical and modern liberalism came about from people challenging the world in which they lived. Some members of society were unhappy with certain changes in the world and decided to take action. Especially since the development of modern liberalism, the idea of changing the world we live in has been a common theme in popular culture. For example, science fiction and fantasy television shows, movies, novels, and computer games often explore the idea of challenging those in positions of power to change the world for the better.



▲ **Figure 10-1** During the Second World War, J.R.R. Tolkien wrote a fantasy trilogy called *The Lord of the Rings*. In these books, the heroes challenge the spread of the forces of the Dark Lord Sauron. Lord Sauron is attempting to take control of the world and turn it into a place of darkness, pollution, and slavery. The heroes fight against Lord Sauron's vision of the world to protect the natural world and the freedom of all who live in it. Here, Aragorn is leading the men of Gondor into battle, from the movie *Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003).



◀ **Figure 10-2** During the 1960s, the *Star Trek* television series presented a future world in which humans had evolved to overcome many of the issues that people were struggling with in the 1960s: war, racism, human rights, and women's rights. In the show, the people of Earth are no longer focused on gaining wealth, but rather on gaining knowledge through exploration of the universe. Heroes face challenges to their values and beliefs and must work toward keeping the universe a peaceful place in which the rights of all peoples and beings are protected.

**Figure 10-3** When the development of the Internet forever changed the way we live, the film *The Matrix* (1999) explored the idea that the world is actually a simulated reality made by machines, that is, a “matrix.” In the movie, most humans are unaware that they live their lives trapped in pods and experience the world only through their imaginations. When the hero, Neo, becomes aware of this, he must make a choice: fight against the machines for his freedom to live in the real world or live under their control in the matrix.

### READING GUIDE

When responding to issues, use the following questions to help you develop, support, and communicate an informed position:

- Have you thoroughly considered the issue by looking at different sources and by evaluating your viewpoint and the viewpoint of others and assessing possible consequences of each?
- Does your evidence include at least one or more of the following: a primary source, a quotation from someone directly involved in the issue, an expert analysis, and/or data or statistics related to the issue?
- Have you clearly identified your main position about the issue, reasons for your position, and supporting evidence for each of your reasons? Do your reasons and evidence effectively support your main position? Is your material clearly and logically organized?
- Is your response to the issue interesting, convincing, and easy to follow?



The characters in these examples challenge the world around them and face challenges to their beliefs and values. They strive to change their world for the better. In a similar way, some people question liberal society and challenge governments that are based on liberal beliefs and values. These challenges to how we govern our society can help us see how it might be improved and, in some cases, can lead to changes in the way we live together. Can you identify any television shows, movies, online video clips, or other sources that reflect these ideas today? Explain.

### Chapter Issue:

*How can liberalism be challenged by other ways of thinking?*

In society, different and sometimes conflicting visions of what life should be like are proposed. This means that while sometimes the values of liberalism are supported, sometimes they are challenged. In this chapter, you will look at examples of different groups of people whose ideas challenge liberalism, especially modern and contemporary expressions of liberalism. These examples will help you explore the Chapter Issue: *How can liberalism be challenged by other ways of thinking?*

As you explore this question, it is important that you consider what specific values of liberalism are being challenged and how. You should also ask yourself whether or not the challenge is justified, evaluate the evidence, and examine other points of view when coming to your own informed conclusions.

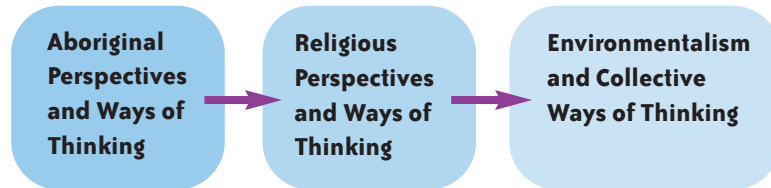


## Challenges to Liberalism from Other Ways of Thinking

### Question for Inquiry

#### 1. What ways of thinking can challenge liberalism?

#### In this section ...



◀ **Figure 10-4** Protesters demonstrated in support of the Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule in Tibet in front of the Chinese Consulate in Vancouver in March 2008.

People can choose to challenge decisions made by those in power or challenge ideas held in society for a variety of reasons. Often challengers wish to protect or promote their own beliefs and values or change government decisions that impact their lives. What examples of people challenging decisions made by those in power or challenging ideas held in society can you think of in your community? What examples can you think of in your country? What about around the world?

As you have seen in past chapters, some of the key values of liberalism are

- individual rights and freedoms
- self-interest

- the rule of law
- economic freedom
- private property

Sometimes the values of liberalism are challenged by **alternative thought** or ways of thinking, such as by the beliefs of a particular cultural, political, economic, or social group or by other political ideologies, such as communism, fascism, feminism, environmentalism, and socialism. In the following pages, you will explore how Aboriginal perspectives, religious perspectives, and environmentalism can present ways of thinking that challenge some values of liberalism.

## Aboriginal Perspectives and Ways of Thinking

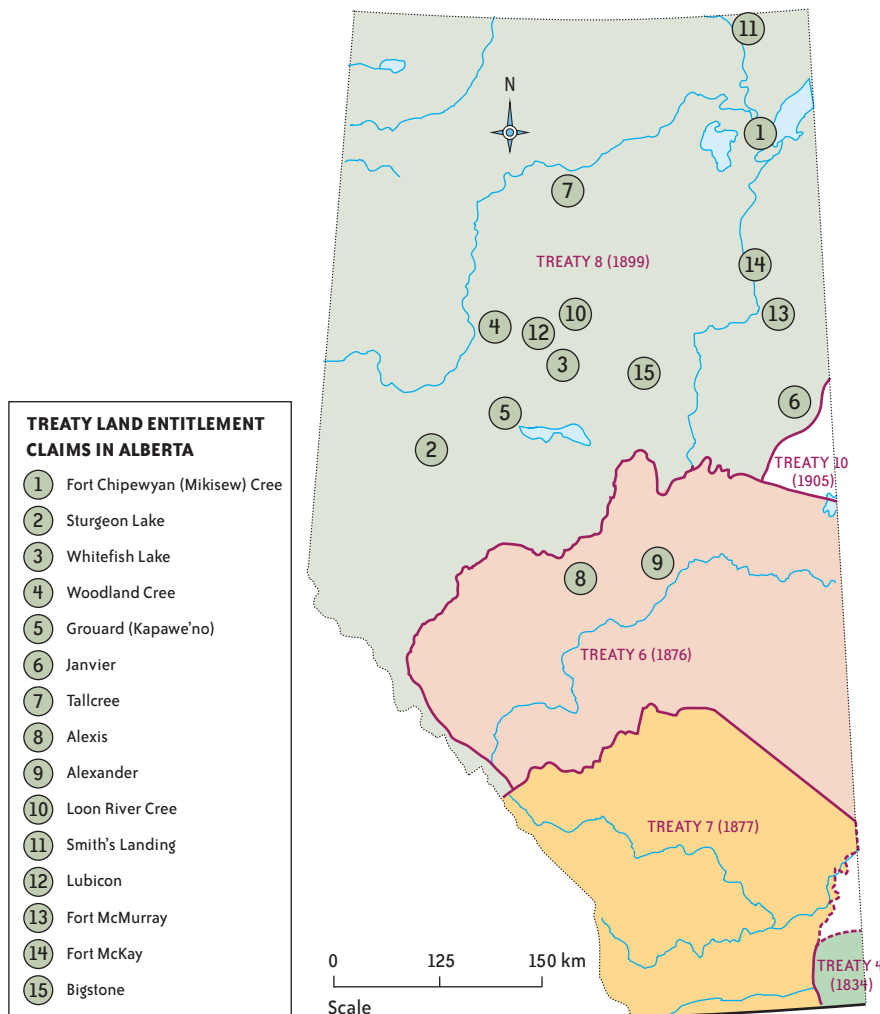
As you read in Chapter 9, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples emphasized the importance of the collective, whereas the Europeans emphasized the importance of the individual. Where First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples emphasized shared stewardship of the land, the Europeans emphasized private ownership of it. Thus, for some First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples **Aboriginal collective thought** and ways of thinking reflected valuing the group more so than the individual, and viewing all living things as interconnected.

The belief that collective interest is more important than the individual could be seen as challenging to most early European explorers' ways of thinking. Their beliefs and values were largely based on individualism—seeing society as a collection of individuals with opportunities to work toward their own self-interest. Aboriginal collective thought also challenged some European-led government policies, laws, and practices that did not recognize Aboriginal collective rights as the first peoples in Canada. It also challenged European views that did not consider Aboriginal collective social and cultural knowledge, practices, and traditions as valid. These challenges to European-based liberal ways of thinking arose because of former government policies and practices, resulting in what some have called a legacy of intergenerational trauma. This legacy is part of the collective memory, or identity, of many Aboriginal peoples.

A key change for Aboriginal peoples occurred in 1982 with the passage of the Constitution Act. Aboriginal collective rights were specifically included in Section 35 of the Constitution Act, referred to as the Rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, and in Section 25 of the Constitution Act within the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Constitution Act reflected a shift in thinking by governments in Canada and provided First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples with recognition of their collective rights and the legal grounds to challenge the denial of their rights by governments in Canada. Since that time, Aboriginal peoples have seen the Supreme Court of Canada rule in their favour over disputes about land, fishing, hunting, and logging.

A number of land claims and other forms of agreements have also been reached between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit groups and governments in Canada, and more are under negotiation. Some claims are being negotiated through a federal-government process that does not involve going to court. These settled agreements and negotiations indicate a new respect on the part of the Canadian government for Aboriginal collective rights. Some other claims are engaged in legal action, suggesting that Aboriginal peoples must also keep on challenging government policies based on liberal policies and values in seeking recognition of their collective rights and identities.

Métis groups in Canada have also worked to have their collective rights and identities recognized. For the Métis, however, land claims can sometimes prove to be an even more difficult challenge since Métis groups



Source: Aboriginal Relations: Land Claims Map, April 2001. Government of Alberta, [http://www.aboriginal.alberta.ca/documents/landclaims\\_map.pdf](http://www.aboriginal.alberta.ca/documents/landclaims_map.pdf).

Figure 10-5 In Canada, Aboriginal land claims fall into two broad categories:

- comprehensive land claims, which are based on Aboriginal rights recognized in the Constitution Act and involve land and issues that are not yet affected by any existing treaty or agreement.
- specific land claims, which are disagreements over fulfillment of existing treaties or other legal agreements. Specific claims may be about land or about other treaty-related items. Specific claims also include Treaty Land Entitlement claims regarding land allegedly promised through existing treaties but not delivered.

As of 2001, this map outlines Treaty Land Entitlement claims in Alberta, largely within Treaty areas 6, 7, and 8.



## Aboriginal Rights in Canada

The following statements were made about Canada's decision to not sign the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2006, and about recognition of Aboriginal collective rights in Canada:

*"In Canada... you negotiate on this...because [Aboriginal rights] don't trump all other rights in the country. You need also to consider the people who have sometimes also lived on those lands for two or three hundred years, and have hunted and fished alongside the First Nations."*

**—Chuck Strahl (Indian Affairs Minister), quoted in Steven Edwards, "Tories defend 'no' in native rights vote." Canwest News Service, September 14, 2007.**

Chief Stewart Phillip, grand chief of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, made the following remark:

*"Canada's position is terribly unfortunate. They have not supported this over the last 20-year period and it doesn't bode well for the genuine hope for reconciliation with aboriginal peoples."*

*The [Stephen] Harper government has eroded the relationship between First Nations and the federal government. This government is opposed to doing anything associated with collective rights and has favoured individual rights. There has been no consultation with Canada's aboriginal community...*

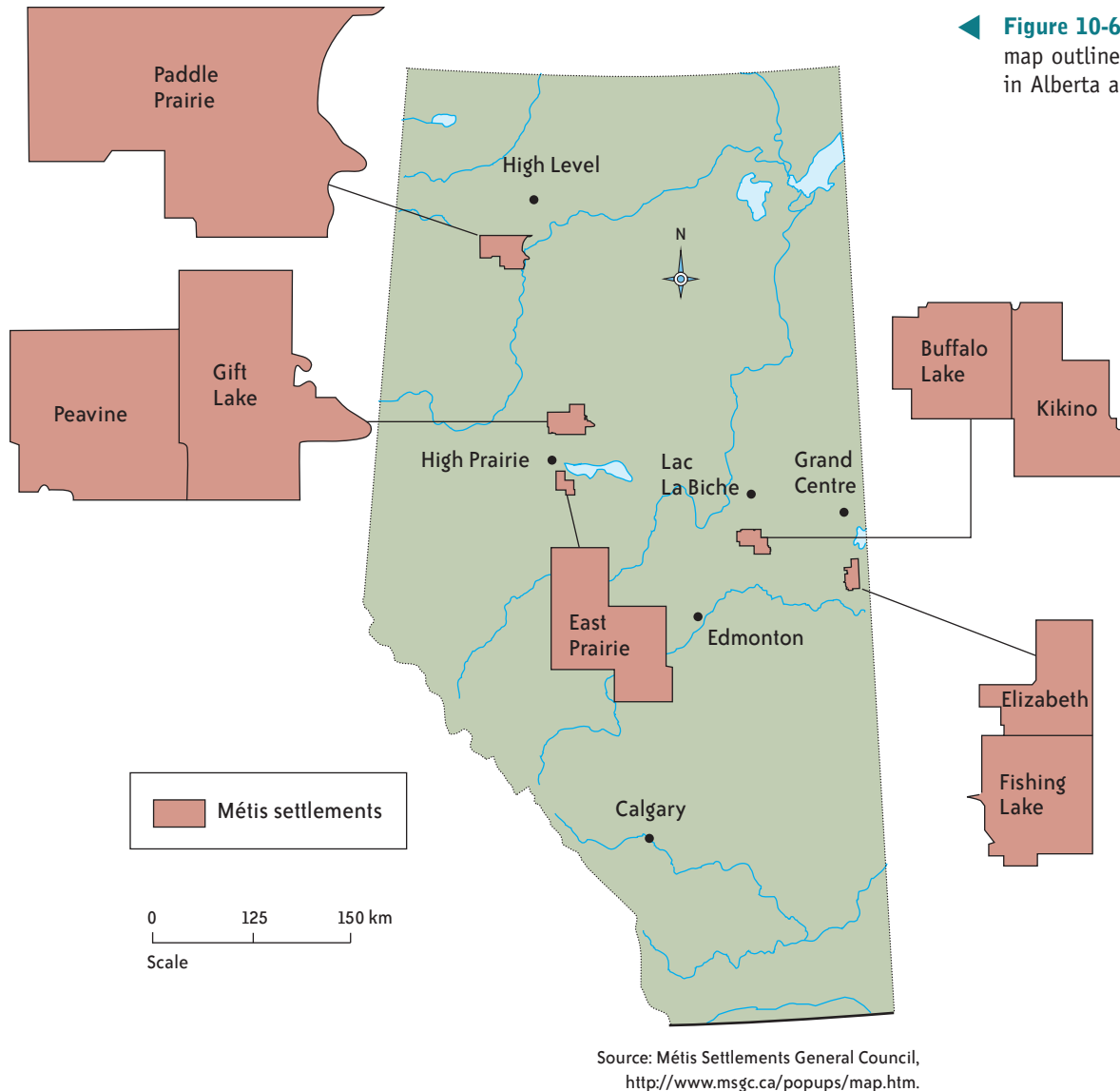
*The Harper government has been unilateralist [one-sided] in its approach to aboriginal issues. It remains to be seen what the final outcome will be. It will take a joint effort on the part of nation-states to put forward legislation that passes and meets the standard set by aboriginal communities."*

**—Stewart Phillip, quoted by Am Johal, "Rights: First Nations Feel Betrayed by Canada at UN," August 7, 2007. IPS News Agency, [ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=38819](http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=38819).**

- 1 Chief Phillip talks about reconciling with the Canadian government. What do you think this means?
- 2 What challenges are faced by governments that represent many different groups of people with differing perspectives?
- 3 Why do you think that the government of Canada might sometimes see the recognition of collective rights as a challenge to liberal values of individualism?

have not had the same historic treaties with the government as some other Aboriginal groups have had, perhaps due to the government policy of issuing land and scrip to Métis individuals and not to groups.

In Alberta, a milestone in the recognition of Métis collective rights occurred in 1989, when the (Alberta) Métis Settlements Accord was passed by the Alberta government and the Métis Settlements General Council (a governing body that provides a voice for the eight Métis settlement communities collectively). This Accord included transfer of settlement lands to Métis peoples and provisions for self-governance. It also led to the 1990 Alberta government amendment to the Constitution of Alberta to protect eight Métis settlements—the only Métis land that is constitutionally protected in Canada today. It should be noted that there are still other



**Figure 10-6** As identified in 1989, this map outlines the eight Métis settlements in Alberta and their locations.

claims and agreements regarding Métis collective rights that have not been settled in Alberta and in Canada.

In Manitoba, Métis people launched a land claims suit in 1981, claiming ownership of 566 000 hectares of land in the Red River Valley, including Winnipeg, on the basis of the Manitoba Act, 1870. The Manitoba Act, agreed to by the federal government and by Métis residents and their provisional government led by Louis Riel, included the creation of Manitoba as a province, and a promise that 1.4 million acres of land would be set aside for Métis children and that land occupied along the rivers would not be touched. A Manitoba judge dismissed the claim in 2007, saying that the Manitoba Act is not a treaty and that too much time had passed between 1870 and the present. The Manitoba Federation of Métis is



**Figure 10-7** In April 2006, members of the Métis community marched to the Manitoba Law Courts in Winnipeg in support of the largest Métis land claim in Canada.



expected to appeal this decision. The judge's ruling suggested that too many other people's rights to the land would be at stake if the Métis claim were supported. This decision provides one example of the court seeming to place constitutionally guaranteed individual rights over collective rights in Canada for the perceived common good.

One example of the federal government's perspective on Aboriginal rights was shown in its refusal to sign the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, even though many Canadians had participated in writing it. Three other liberal democratic countries also did not sign the declaration—the United States, New Zealand, and Australia. The government of Canada stated that it supports the ideas of the UN Declaration, but also stated that it would not work for a constitutional democracy that had to balance individual and collective rights. From the federal government's perspective, the document would potentially grant rights to Aboriginal peoples in Canada that could challenge some individual and collective rights, including treaty rights, guaranteed in Canada's Constitution (a document that is reflective of many liberal beliefs).

As the examples above show, understandings of Aboriginal collective thought and worldviews appear to conflict at times with liberal ideas and policies based on the values of individualism. In some situations, such as in the case of successful land claims, Aboriginal peoples' resistance to policies based on liberal values has resulted in changes to those policies. In other cases, such as the dismissal of Métis land claims in Manitoba and the lack of support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Aboriginal peoples' resistance to policies based on the liberal values of individualism has yet to be resolved. What these challenges have in common is that each provides an example of the impact of liberalism in Canada and the reaction to it.

## Aboriginal Self-government

What does Aboriginal self-government mean, and what position do Aboriginal peoples and the federal government of Canada take on this issue? Aboriginal self-government for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples can mean that groups can make their own decisions regarding their economy, education, culture, use of natural resources, and other areas of immediate concern to their well-being, rather than having these decisions made by Canada's federal, provincial, or territorial governments. Self-government means having some independence in decision making. Self-government would not necessarily take the same form in every community, as it would depend on each particular community's needs.

In 1995, the federal government started a policy to recognize Aboriginal self-government as a collective right under Section 35 of the Constitution Act. This policy included a process for negotiating self-government agreements. Despite this, however, Aboriginal groups and governments in Canada still do not have full agreement on what self-government means. This is partly because of the different needs of each community and the diverse understandings of how self-government should work. One of the challenges is how to best incorporate Aboriginal self-government within the framework of Canadian liberalism.



### Aboriginal Self-government and Liberalism

*Aboriginal self-government is not a new idea. The Gwich'in and Inuvialuit assert that for thousands of years before Canada was*

*founded they enjoyed their own governments, economies and societies. Negotiating self-government today is a way to provide Gwich'in and Inuvialuit with the tools to rebuild this self-reliance, to protect their languages and cultures, and to chart their own futures.*

—Source: “Inuvialuit/Gwich'in Self-Government Agreement—In-Principle: Backgrounder.” Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations of the Government of the Northwest Territories, [http://www.gov.nt.ca/MAA/negotiations/backgrounder\\_bdaip.pdf](http://www.gov.nt.ca/MAA/negotiations/backgrounder_bdaip.pdf).

*“A lot of people think Indian people are pursuing the goal of independence and that's not the case...I recognize that we live within the country called Canada and its boundaries. So we recognize that Canada is going to be in control over certain matters. And we recognize that we are in control over certain matters on our own reserves. And where there's overlapping, there's going to be joint sharing of that responsibility with the Canadian or provincial governments.”*

—Louis Stevenson (chief of the Peguis First Nation in Manitoba), quoted in Pauline Comeau and Aldo Santin, *The First Canadians: A Profile of Canada's Native People Today* (Halifax, NS: James Lorimer & Co, 1995), p. 71.

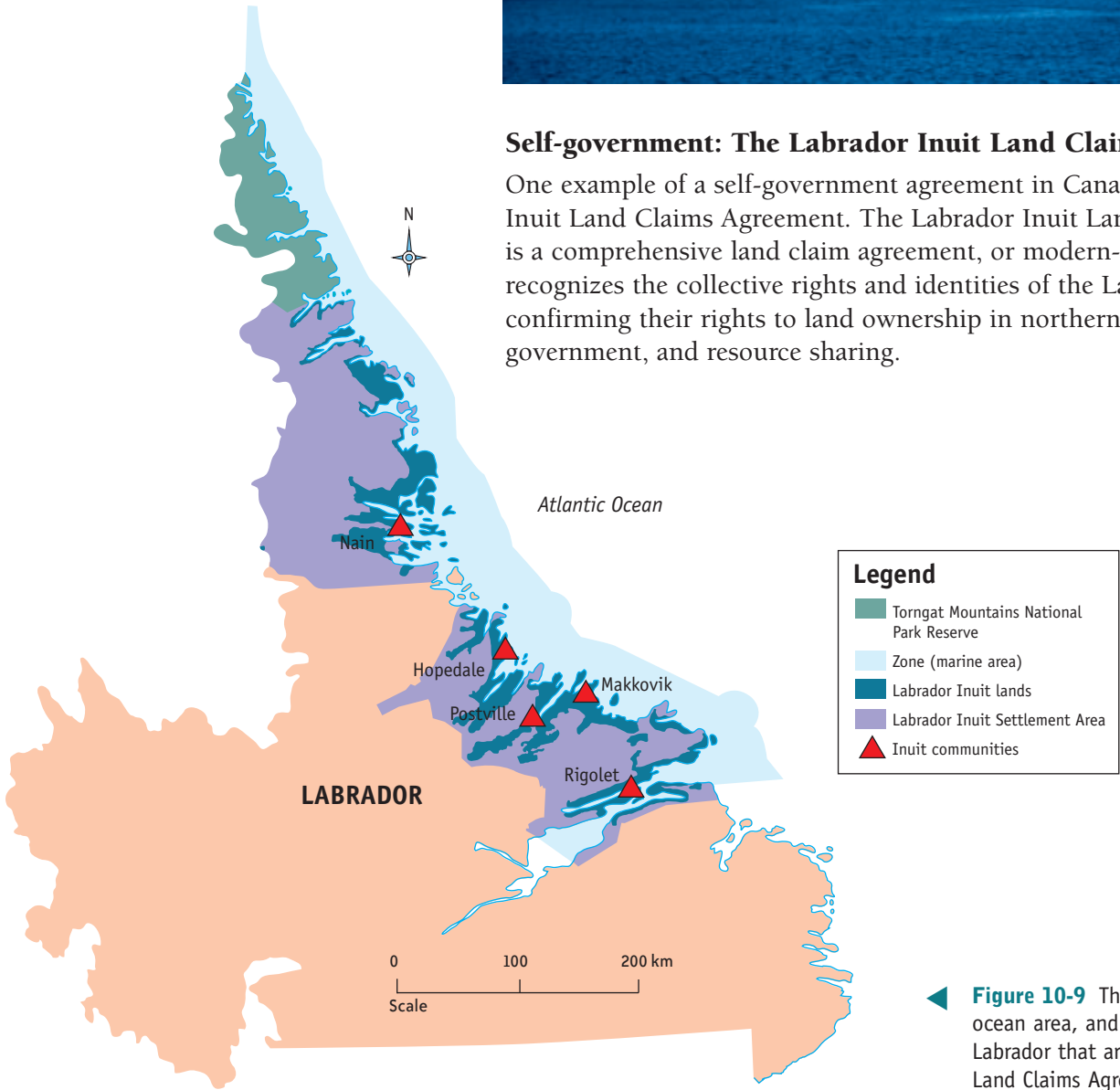
- 1 What liberal values are at issue in these quotations? Depending on your point of view, to what extent could self-government have an effect on practising liberal values? Provide reasons and evidence to support your answer.
- 2 How is self-government an example of Aboriginal collective thought?
- 3 What relationship do you see between self-government and the recognition of culture and collective identity?

**Figure 10-8** After the signing of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement in 2005, the Nunatsiavut flag flies over Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve, included under the land claim.



**Self-government: The Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement**

One example of a self-government agreement in Canada is the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement. The Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement is a comprehensive land claim agreement, or modern-day treaty, that recognizes the collective rights and identities of the Labrador Inuit by confirming their rights to land ownership in northern Labrador, self-government, and resource sharing.



**Figure 10-9** This map represents the lands, ocean area, and communities in northern Labrador that are included in the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement.



## Reflecting on the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement

After the signing of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement, the following participants shared their reflections:

*“The Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement will bring real and meaningful benefits to all of us—Labrador Inuit, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and all Canadians. It provides for certainty and rights and creates clarity for the future. It will allow us to build on the partnerships we have begun to work toward sustainable development, economic growth and social justice.”*

**—William Andersen III, President of the Labrador Inuit Association,  
“Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement signed.” Government of  
Newfoundland and Labrador—Canada news release, January 22, 2005,  
<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2005/exec/0122n01.htm>.**

*“The first modern day treaty in Atlantic Canada marks the opening of a new era of partnership between the Inuit of Labrador, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Canada. Not only will this Agreement provide certainty over land use and title, it will offer a host of opportunities for economic development for Inuit and non-Inuit alike. The Inuit of Labrador now have the tools to build their own government and take greater control of decisions affecting their communities, forging a brighter future for themselves.”*

**—Honourable Andy Scott, Federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern  
Development, “Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement signed.” Government of  
Newfoundland and Labrador—Canada news release, January 22, 2005,  
<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2005/exec/0122n01.htm>.**

- 1 Explain how, through the “partnerships” described by these representatives, the collective interests of the Labrador Inuit peoples could be balanced with values of individualism and the rights of others in Canada.

Originally started as a land claim filed by the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA) in 1977, the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement has developed over years of negotiation. Strongly supported by the Inuit people of Labrador, the agreement received the approval of over 76 per cent of Labrador Inuit voters in May 2004 (of a voter turnout of 86 per cent). On January 22, 2005, the agreement was signed by representatives of the LIA, the government of Canada, and the government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Key results of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement include

- The creation of the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area, recognizing the Labrador Inuit people’s special rights related to traditional land use. It includes 72 500 square kilometres of land, 48 690 square kilometres of ocean, and the main coastal communities.
- The designation of 15 800 square kilometres as Labrador Inuit lands within the settlement area, which will be owned by the Labrador Inuit peoples.



- Self-government provisions that allow for the creation of the Nunatsiavut government (*Nunatsiavut* means “our beautiful land” in Inuttitut).
- The designation of 9600 square kilometres as the Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve.
- The transfer of \$140 million from the Canadian government to the Labrador Inuit people and additional funding for the implementation of the agreement.

One important result of the signing of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement was the creation of the Nunatsiavut transitional government. Until the agreement is fully ratified (officially confirmed by the federal government), the Nunatsiavut government will progress toward self-government, gaining greater control of its own policies and systems. Inuit languages and culture will be added to school curriculum and support will be provided for Inuit peoples for such things as education and employment. Guidelines for resource use, such as hunting, fishing, and mining, and for environmental goals will also be determined in collaboration with the provincial and federal governments. The Nunatsiavut government will also operate its Assembly of representatives on a consensus model similar to Nunavut and the Northwest Territories rather than on a system based on competition among political parties. It will decide how Inuit law will be applied, such as through law enforcement and Inuit court. Decisions will be based on the Labrador Inuit Constitution (2002) and the Labrador Inuit Charter of Rights and Responsibilities, as well as the Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms of Canada.

The elected members of the Nunatsiavut Assembly make decisions by reaching a general agreement, or consensus, rather than by conducting a vote in which the majority wins and the minority loses. The Nunatsiavut government's blend of elected democracy, traditional laws and values, and consensus decision making can be viewed as a challenge to some of the liberal ideological beliefs supported by the government of Canada. At the same time, recognition of Nunatsiavut can also be seen as recognition of Labrador Inuit collective rights by governments in Canada.

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples have been working to have their perspectives, rights, and identities recognized by governments in Canada and around the world for many years. Many feel that Aboriginal peoples will achieve true recognition and representation only through self-government. In Canada, some governments have attempted to address these challenges by developing policies that support the recognition of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples' right to self-government. Not all challenges have been resolved, however, and differences in ways of thinking and in understandings of what self-government means are still being addressed. These challenges are viewed by some as examples of the impacts of and reactions to liberalism in Canada.

## Religious Perspectives and Ways of Thinking

At times, religious beliefs and ways thinking have led people to challenge the liberal values of the Canadian government. For example, some new religious movements call for an appreciation of the environment and encourage practices that work to protect our planet, such as those supported by the Gaia-Movement, which is concerned with sustainable living on earth. Other religious movements work toward solving social and economic problems, such as homelessness and poverty. They use the collective approach to try to promote change or offer alternatives. For example, Inn from the Cold works closely with the inter-faith community and the Calgary public to provide compassionate care to homeless children and their families and others in need. Its programs include a family shelter, a temporary emergency shelter, and other services. Members of this organization are helping to overcome some of the hardships that often accompany individualism and economic freedom.

### The Doukhobors

From early on in the development of Canada as a country, Canadians have come from many different religious and spiritual backgrounds and reflect various ways of thinking. The Doukhobors, for example, were a group of Russian-language speaking dissenters who rejected authority of Church and state. They came to Canada and the United States from Russia to escape persecution at the turn of the 20th century. In Russia, they had been persecuted for their religious beliefs, their pacifism (refusal to participate in military service), and their refusal to recognize secular (non-religious) government. They believed that individual rights need to be balanced with the rights of a community as a whole. As a result, Doukhobors owned and worked land as a community, rather than owning private property as individuals; these economic expressions of their values were closer to those of communism than to those of an individualistic, capitalist society. After arriving in Canada, the Doukhobors refused to take any oath of allegiance to the country for fear it would lead to compulsory service in the military, and most were granted exemption from military service.

Initially, the Doukhobors were allowed to work homestead lands as a community of four settlements in what is now Saskatchewan. In 1906, however, Canada's new Minister of the Interior, Frank Oliver, began the process of taking their land away because of their refusal to take an oath of allegiance to the queen and their refusal to register homestead land in the names of individuals. They wished to do so in the name of the community. Most of the Doukhobors moved to British Columbia, where their leader, Peter Verigin, purchased large areas of land for the community.

A smaller group of Doukhobors, the Sons of Freedom (or Freedomites), had more radical ideas and engaged in demonstrations and were even accused by the government of engaging in arson to protest compulsory education, taxation, and land seizures by the government and the excessive



**Figure 10-10** Volunteers prepare meals for the Inn from the Cold Program. Since opening its doors in 1997, Inn from the Cold has helped more than 1000 homeless families in Calgary.



### PAUSE AND REFLECT

**Frank McKenna, former premier of New Brunswick, has stated that “Canada is truly a secular state. Religion and politics do not mix in this country.”**

Source: Frank McKenna quoted in Juliet O'Neill, “U.S. a theocratic state, says former Canadian Ambassador.” CanWest News Service, June 1, 2007, <http://www.canada.com/topics/news/politics/story.html?id=54dc1e4b-de0c-4feb-8c0b-93b8968d793e&k=76500>.

**Nonetheless, religious perspectives sometimes challenge liberal values of individualism in Canadian society. How effective do you believe Canada's governments are at addressing issues and rights that are important to diverse groups, such as religious groups?**

materialism of society. The Sons of Freedom believed in living the simplest and most perfect life possible, subjecting themselves to self-denial and tests of endurance and generally rejecting materialistic ways of thinking. They also rejected public education, excessive materialism, and other aspects of liberal society that they felt subjugated or controlled people and got in the way of living a simple and pure life like that which they saw in the Bible.

In 1924, Peter Verigin was killed in an explosion and many of the Doukhobors, including the Sons of Freedom, were convinced that he was murdered. Many Doukhobors protested his “murder” by not allowing their children to go to school. Government authorities responded to the Doukhobor protest through such actions as taking away their belongings. This began the escalation of tensions between the ways of thinking of the Sons of Freedom and of the government.

Later, Verigin’s son became the leader of the Doukhobors, encouraging them to unite and the Sons of Freedom to be less extreme in their methods. His arrival and the economic crisis of the Great Depression of the 1930s helped the Sons of Freedom gain a broader outlook and following. Many Doukhobors could no longer afford to pay taxes to the government because they lacked jobs and money. People who were unable to pay, especially the Sons of Freedom, were forced to either leave or go to one area in the community called Krestova. In 1932, the Doukhobor community forcefully evicted over 200 members sympathetic to the Sons of Freedom, and instead of going to Krestova, they chose to leave on a protest march to another community. Many other Doukhobors joined the Sons of Freedom in this march to protest what was happening in their communities.

As the Doukhobor protests grew, the police intervened and detained all protesters, stopping their march. In the end, the BC government sentenced and detained over 900 people for 3 years and imprisoned Verigin’s son for 3 years. During their detainment, the government forcibly removed the children of the Sons of Freedom and put them into foster homes around Vancouver. This had a negative impact on the children and helped the Sons of Freedom gain support from other Doukhobors who lobbied to get the children back and have them placed with Doukhobor families. This series of events caused some of the majority Orthodox Doukhobors to also believe that private ownership of land and individualism could lead to negative results. Thus, the policies and responses of the federal and provincial governments to the actions and ways of thinking of the Sons of Freedom impacted the lives of all Doukhobors, potentially causing an even greater challenge to liberalism and individualism from some Doukhobor groups. As you reflect on this, consider: If individual rights in a liberal democracy are to be respected, should not the Doukhobors been able to live their lives as they wished according to their own model of liberalism?

**Figure 10-11** On March 24, 1962, 150 RCMP officers rounded up 59 leaders of the Sons of Freedom sect for bombings they were suspected of committing (or being involved in). The leaders were charged with conspiracy to intimidate the governments of Canada and British Columbia. After the arrests, Freedomite women burned down more than 200 of their own homes in protest. They staged nude parades (which symbolized for them a simpler, truer life) and, in June 1962, a group disrobed in front of Prime Minister John Diefenbaker while he was making an election campaign speech in Trail, British Columbia. ▼







◀ **Figure 10-12** Today, approximately 30 000 descendants of the original Doukhobors live in Canada. About half still maintain their religious and pacifist beliefs, and the use of the Russian language.



## Welcoming War Resisters

### B.C. Doukhobor museum will take draft dodger statue

Thursday, May 11, 2006

*Nelson, B.C., didn't want it, but the Doukhobor Village Museum in nearby Castlegar is happy to house a statue commemorating American draft dodgers and the Canadians who took them in.*

*The statue will be called *The Welcoming* and will feature a Canadian greeting two Americans with open arms. The nine-foot [2.75 metre] bronze statue is to be sculpted by figurative artist Naomi Lewis of the Kootenays region. She has completed a three-foot [0.9 metre] clay model and the final sculpture will be unveiled this July at *Our Way Home*, a conference for Vietnam War resisters.*

*"It will be a reminder, a permanent reminder, of the thousands of Canadians who assisted those who came to Canada, as war resisters during the Vietnam War," Isaac Romano, the organizer of the reunion, said in an interview with CBC Radio...*

—Source: "B.C. Doukhobor museum will take draft dodger statue."

CBC News, May 11, 2006,

<http://www.cbc.ca/arts/story/2006/05/11/war-resistance-statue.html>.

- 1 To what extent did the US government's mandatory military service law and treatment of draft dodgers reflect the liberal values of individual rights and freedoms?
- 2 How could this statue represent Doukhobor support of the liberal values of individual rights and freedoms? How could it represent Doukhobor resistance to US government interpretations of liberalism?
- 3 Do you think resistance to participation in a war based on your beliefs is justifiable? Please provide informed reasons and evidence to support your answer.



▲ **Figure 10-13** A clay model of "The Welcoming," by Naomi Lewis. During the Vietnam War, the United States government legally required young men to serve in the military and made few exceptions. Individual rights and freedoms were interpreted differently during this time of conflict by the US government in order to benefit the perceived safety and common good of all. Between 50 000 and 90 000 American war resisters came to Canada during the 1960s and 1970s. They were conscientious objectors who viewed the Vietnam War as unjustified, and they therefore refused to participate in it. The Canadians who welcomed the draft resisters to Canada believed that they were justified in leaving the United States. The United States government believed that the resisters were illegally fleeing from their responsibilities as US citizens.



## Religion and the Law

**Figure 10-14** In September 2005, protesters, many of whom were women, demonstrated against sharia law in Toronto.



One recent challenge to liberal values in Canada has been the request by religious groups to use religious law, such as one of the many interpretations of Muslim sharia law, to settle legal disputes. Sharia is a legal framework that can be practised in many different ways to govern private and public aspects of life for Muslims in some countries. Iran and Saudi Arabia fully implement sharia in all areas of law; however, many countries today that use sharia law apply it only to the area of personal status law (for example, marriage, divorce, inheritance). Other countries have considered or expanded some of the classical sharia restrictions, such as allowing more rights for women. Some Muslims living in Canada and other liberal countries want to use these religious principles, instead of secular judicial institutions, to settle family law matters.

Similarly, some Catholics, Jews, and Mennonites have a desire to be governed in family law by the religious principles of their respective faiths. In May 2005, Québec's National Assembly blocked the use of sharia law in Québec courts. That same year, Ontario decided against the use of religious arbitration, regardless of the denomination. If some faith-based laws are allowed on the grounds of religious freedom, how might they reflect respect for some individual rights and freedoms guaranteed under Canada's constitution? How might they also be seen by some to pose a challenge to some individual rights or freedoms guaranteed by Canada's constitution? To what extent are different faith-based laws in alignment with the individual rights and freedoms in Canada's constitution?



## Religion, Sharia, and Human and Individual Rights

Sometimes human or individual rights and freedoms can be challenged by religious practices. For example, some religious

beliefs include the idea that men are superior to women, and that women should therefore be subservient. This is one example of how freedom of religion could conflict with other rights and freedoms guaranteed under a constitution. In such a case, a careful balance between religious laws and laws of the state would have to occur in order to respect both religious freedoms and other rights and freedoms, such as equality.

*[In Canada] we not only celebrate differences but we also value the human rights that define the quality of our democratic norms and practice... One obvious fault line, one that we have tended to tip-toe around, is the rights of women in different religious and cultural traditions...*

—Janice Gross Stein et al., *Uneasy Partners: Multiculturalism and Rights in Canada*. (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007).

What are some of the traditional sharia laws governing personal status issues for Muslims?

**Marriage** *Islamic marriage is a contract between a man and a woman. In the broadest of terms, the husband pledges to support his wife in exchange for her obedience... Women can demand certain rights by writing them into the marriage contract, but the man is the head of the family, and traditionally, a wife may not act against her husband's wishes...*

**Divorce** *Under sharia, the husband has the unilateral right to divorce his wife without cause... If he does divorce her, he must pay her a sum of money agreed to before the wedding in the marriage contract and permit her to keep her dowry... Classical sharia lays out very limited conditions under which a woman can divorce a man... Most Islamic nations, including Egypt and Iran, now allow women to sue for divorce for many... reasons, including the failure to provide financial support.*

**Custody** *In a divorce, the children traditionally belong to the father, but the mother has the right to care for them while they are young... Many nations... allow courts to extend the mother's custody if it is deemed in the child's interest.*

—Lauren Vriens, “Islam: Governing Under Sharia,”  
CFR.org Backgrounder, March 23, 2009. Council on Foreign Relations,  
<http://www.cfr.org/publication/8034/#2>.

- 1 To what extent should the Canadian government accommodate cultural or religious practices, such as that of sharia law, that seem to discriminate against women? Can a balance be struck so that all individual rights and freedoms can be respected? Explain your answer.

Throughout history, religious groups have influenced the way society is structured. In more recent times, some governments have attempted to separate religion from government. Some religious groups feel that this separation can lead to a disregard for their beliefs and values. In Canada, religious freedom is guaranteed; therefore, each challenge based on religious beliefs must be addressed by governments to determine to what extent these beliefs and ways of thinking are in alignment with constitutional rights and freedoms. Governments must consider how the challenge will impact the rights and freedoms of all Canadians and the country as a whole.

## Environmentalism and Collective Ways of Thinking

**Figure 10-15** In the science fiction movie *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004), the effects of global warming suddenly create weather phenomena that devastate the earth.



**Figure 10-16** Environmental demonstrators protested the extraction of oil from the Alberta oil sands during a visit by Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach to Washington, DC, in January, 2008.



As described in the chapter introduction, characters from science fiction often challenge those in power and face challenges to their beliefs and values. Concern over the future of the environment has long been a focus of science fiction and many science fiction works describe the dangers of pollution, overpopulation, and resource depletion. In some cases, these science fiction writers are showing their ideological resistance to government policies that affect the environment, such as those based on economic freedom and self-interest. Their books, movies, and television shows can instead promote the beliefs and values of **environmentalism** and ways of thinking collectively about society.

When you think of the term *environmentalism*, what comes to mind? You might think of events such as Earth Day, when communities hold celebrations across Canada to bring awareness to issues such as conservation and sustainability. Or perhaps you think of organizations such as the Sierra Club and Greenpeace, which advocate for action on issues such as renewable energy, caps on carbon emissions, and regulations for genetically modified foods. How can environmentalism, which is strongly represented in liberal democracies by events and organizations such as these, be considered a perspective or way of thinking that can challenge liberalism?



Consider the views of Terence Corcoran, editor of Canada's *Financial Post*. According to Corcoran, the limits environmentalists wish to place on carbon-emitting and chemical-producing industries will have a negative effect on what he sees as global progress, which, many would argue, is a direct result of the adoption of liberal values, such as economic freedom. In a discussion of Indur M. Goklany's book *The Improving State of the World: Why We're Living Longer, Healthier, More Comfortable Lives on a Cleaner Planet*, Corcoran says the following:

*The conditions that created the great improvements—in health, environment, living standards, mortality, disease control, smog reduction, and human happiness—are the very same conditions the Financial Post has typically advocated over a century: growth, technological change, free trade in products and ideas, market forces and personal freedom.*

*...The carbon and chemical economies that green salvationists [those who say that environmentalism is necessary to save the planet] will want to curtail, even eliminate, are in fact the very basis for the world's current and improving conditions. The message in Mr. Goklany's book is that government policy must, above all, preserve the general conditions that have brought us to this state of achievement, not destroy them.*

—Source: Terence Corcoran, "Good sense to prevail over enviro-alarmism." *Financial Post*, March 1, 2007,  
<http://www.canada.com/nationalpost/financialpost/story.html?id=36e9cc22-feeaa49ee-a36f-0e4d2b890147>.



- ▲ **Figures 10-17, 10-18** The title of the cartoon in Figure 10-17 is "Oil Consumes Us." In the cartoon in Figure 10-18, the man carrying the detonator is Nobel Peace Prize winner and former US vice president Al Gore. Gore has long been an advocate of environmental responsibility and a critic of policies that encourage irresponsible economic growth. The detonator represents the Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions in an effort to prevent global warming. What does this cartoon say about the relationship between Gore's environmentalism and economic liberalism? How would you compare the views expressed in these two cartoons?



Among other things, liberalism and the ideologies that challenge it differ in their interpretations of history and visions of the future. How are these differences between environmentalism and liberal economic views apparent in Corcoran's quotation on page 261? Think about some of the core values of liberalism. Which ones are supported by Corcoran? Which ones could be affected by government intervention to protect the environment?

Free-market economists and skeptics of global warming claim that environmental reform of the economy will do more harm than good; however, most environmentalists stress the negative impact of current human economic activities. The Worldwatch Institute's 2004 annual report was titled *Richer, Fatter, and Not Much Happier*. It advocates measures such as increasing taxes on manufacturers, minimizing the impact of production on natural resources through government regulation, requiring manufacturers to collect their products from consumers when they are no longer useful, and encouraging individuals to consume less.

*The world is consuming goods and services at an unsustainable pace, with serious consequences for the well-being of people and the planet...Around 1.7 billion people worldwide—more than a quarter of humanity—have entered the “consumer class,” adopting the diets, transportation systems, and lifestyles that were limited to the rich nations of Europe, North America, and Japan during most of the last century...*

*“Rising consumption has helped meet basic needs and create jobs,” says Worldwatch Institute President Christopher Flavin. “But as we enter a new century, this unprecedented [never before experienced] consumer appetite is undermining the natural systems we all depend on, and making it even harder for the world’s poor to meet their basic needs...”*

—Source: Worldwatch Institute, “*Richer, Fatter, and Not Much Happier*,” *State of the World 2004: The Consumer Society*, January 8, 2004, <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/1043>.



▲ **Figure 10-19** Canadian environmentalist Dr David Suzuki

Canadian scientist and writer David Suzuki says,

*“We no longer see the world as a single entity. We’ve moved to cities and we think the economy is what gives us our life, that if the economy is strong we can afford garbage collection and sewage disposal and fresh food and water and electricity. We go through life thinking that money is the key to having whatever we want, without regard to what it does to the rest of the world. So that is the challenge—to put the world back together again and realize that everything we do has repercussions, and that we have responsibility for our actions.”*

—Source: David Suzuki, “this man can’t save you” (interview with Swami Sivananda). *ascent magazine*, <http://www.ascentmagazine.com/articles.aspx?articleID=183&page=read&subpage=past&issueID=29>.

Environmental ways of thinking can challenge or align with a society's liberal values, depending on the society's interpretation of environmental issues that affect the common good. Part of the problem lies in whether governments should limit the individual's freedom to consume and to freely pursue his or her own self-interest. Should governments limit individual economic freedoms and place collective interests ahead of self-interest in order to protect the environment for the common good (for example, by minimizing pollution and climate change) as some environmentalists propose?

## Summary

There are many ways of thinking that can challenge liberalism, such as **Aboriginal collective thought**, **religious perspectives**, and **environmentalism**. Sometimes groups who have perspectives or ways of thinking that differ from those of liberal governments feel the need to stand up for their beliefs and values. For example, some First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Canada may challenge liberal policies, decisions, and beliefs in the form of land claims or **self-government** in order to have their collective rights and identities recognized. Some religious groups wish to follow some aspects of religious-based, not secular, laws. Some environmentalists challenge economic theories of liberalism in favour of sustainable development and use of the planet's resources. These are just a few of the types of alternative thought that can challenge liberalism to different degrees in Canada.

## Knowledge and Understanding

- 1 In a chart like one below, summarize the challenges to liberalism that you have explored in this chapter.

Group	Beliefs/ Ways of Thinking	What liberal values are challenged? How? Why?

- 2 Explain why Aboriginal collective thought from some groups may pose a challenge to liberalism in Canada. Provide at least two reasons and examples from the chapter to support your answer.
- 3 How are liberal beliefs about land and resource exploitation being called into question by alternative ways of thinking, such as that of environmentalism? Please explain.

- 4 What do you believe is the strongest example of how religious perspectives or ways of thinking can challenge liberalism? Explain your answer.
- 5 Speaking about the successful peaceful negotiation of a \$1.4-billion settlement between the federal government and the Québec Cree First Nations, former grand chief Billy Diamond commented, "It beats blocking roads and railroads. You don't have to block railroads. You stay at the negotiating table."

**Source: Billy Diamond, quoted in "Ottawa commits \$1.4 billion to Quebec Cree." CTV News, July 16, 2007,**  
[http://calgary.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20070716/cree\\_ottawa\\_070716?hub=CalgaryWeather](http://calgary.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20070716/cree_ottawa_070716?hub=CalgaryWeather).

Diamond was referring to the illegal road-blocking actions undertaken by some First Nations groups frustrated by the lack of recognition of their rights. Do you agree or disagree with Billy Diamond's point of view? Why?

# Justifying Challenges to Liberalism

## Question for Inquiry

### 2. When are challenges to liberalism justified?

In this section ...



▲ **Figures 10-20, 10-21, 10-22, 10-23** Different people challenge liberal ideas in many different ways. Some methods used are peaceful, some violent. Some people work within the system, some outside of it. Figure 10-20: an Iraqi insurgent; Figure 10-21: the Supreme Court of Canada; Figure 10-22: Mohawk protestors in Québec; Figure 10-23: the aftermath of a Red Army Faction car bombing in Germany.



In the first section of the chapter, we looked at some alternative ways of thinking that can challenge liberalism. In this section, we will be taking this a step further by considering whether or not a variety of challenges to liberalism are justified. Just as challenges in a person's life can make the individual examine his or her values, rethink priorities, and reaffirm choices or make new ones, so too can challenges to liberal society. Challenges to individuals—or liberal society—can also cause harm. The question is, when are challenges to liberalism justified?

By definition, something can be *justified* when it can be demonstrated or proven to be right, valid, or just, though this varies with personal interpretation. In some circumstances, being an active citizen may require us to challenge liberal beliefs and values. Our own beliefs may lead us to question and to possibly push to change what we see around us rather than passively accept it. In a true democracy, citizens have a responsibility to exercise their rights and challenge what they feel is unacceptable, so long as their actions are not illegal or take away the rights of others. Challenges to liberalism can also occur by peoples who are not living in a liberal democracy, but who believe that the imposition of, or belief in, some liberal values is somehow destructive or incompatible with what is “right.”

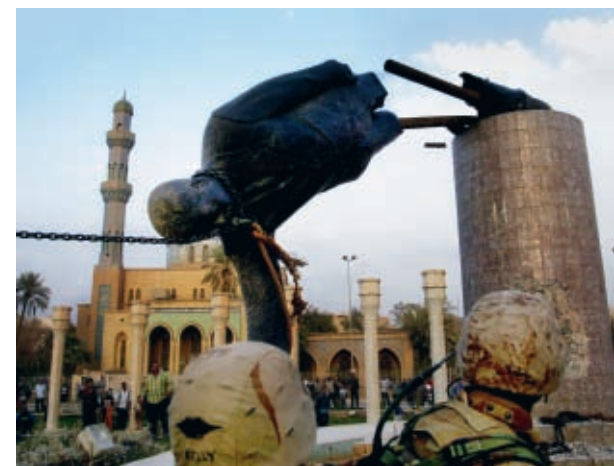
Some thinkers and activists would argue that “the end justifies the means”: if a goal is particularly important, then any action that will achieve that goal is justifiable, even an action that most people would normally oppose. Others, however, believe that it is necessary to ask not only whether the goal is worthy, but also if the means are just.

Can an illegal action ever be justified by its outcome? As you read about the challenges to liberalism in this section, consider both the goals of the challenge and the methods employed. Are there challenges for which you believe the ends justify the means? Are there actions that cannot be justified by any outcome?

## The Use of Force: The Iraq War

In some cases, people feel they must challenge or reject liberal ideas that have been imposed on them, especially when the ideas directly conflict with their own beliefs and ways of thinking and come from outsiders or foreign countries. This can even lead to a struggle that results in warfare between the two sides.

When the United States led the invasion of Iraq in 2003 with the support of troops from the United Kingdom, and almost 40 other countries, part of their goal was to get rid of Iraqi president Saddam Hussein because he did not govern democratically, he oppressed or denied rights to minority groups in his country, and the US government claimed that he was developing weapons of mass destruction that could threaten world security. Since the capture, trial, and execution of Saddam Hussein for his crimes, the United States, Britain, and the other coalition countries supporting the goals of the United States in Iraq have found that building a democracy in



▲ **Figure 10-24** American soldiers pulled down and destroyed many statues of former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein after the invasion of 2003.



**Figure 10-25** What does this cartoon say about the difficulty of building a democracy in Iraq?



Iraq based on liberal values is difficult. Some people have also questioned whether the US had enough accurate information about weapons of mass destruction to invade Iraq without UN support and questioned the US government's motives for the invasion.

The people of Iraq want their own government based on their own values, and a large number of Iraqis are prepared to challenge largely British and American efforts to impose some Western values and beliefs. To further complicate matters, there has been a bitter ongoing struggle between two



### The Iraq Freedom Congress

The Iraq Freedom Congress (IFC) is a multicultural, democratic, non-religious, grassroots resistance group that opposes US and Islamic (Shiite and Sunni) forces in Iraq.

According to the IFC's manifesto, the invasion of Iraq by US forces has had devastating effects.

*The US war on Iraq has led to the disintegration of the fabric of the civil society in Iraq. This war has unleashed the most reactionary religious and ethnocentric forces against the people of Iraq. Daily social, economic, and cultural life has plunged into an abyss [bottomless pit]. Iraq needs to rebuild its civil society. The security, livelihood and the basic freedom of the people must be maintained and their right to an informed and free determination of their future regime in Iraq guaranteed.*

—Source: “Manifesto of Iraq Freedom Congress.” IFC website, [http://www.ifcongress.com/English/manifesto\\_of%20congress.htm](http://www.ifcongress.com/English/manifesto_of%20congress.htm).

- 1 According to this excerpt, in what ways does the IFC promote liberal values and beliefs?

main rival groups, Shiite and Sunni Muslims. Thus, while some Iraqi groups and areas in Iraq may have experienced positive effects from the removal of Saddam Hussein and the establishment of democratic systems and rebuilding efforts, many areas of Iraq are still experiencing high levels of violence and warfare. The US-led coalition's claim that one of the goals of the invasion was to establish liberal values and practices does not necessarily align with the will of the Iraqi people, as many of whom see the coalition's presence as foreign occupation of their country. Many international observers believe that the US-led coalition needs to be more open to an Iraqi solution that may or may not agree with liberal values if the country is to achieve peace and stability.

Some Iraqis have resorted to extreme violence to protect their own beliefs and values against those of the US coalition. Many different competing organizations, armies, and militias are fighting coalition forces. These groups together are generally referred to by the coalition as the Iraqi insurgency. Since 2003, the fighting in Iraq has been occurring largely between the Iraqi insurgency and the US-led coalition forces and the new US-supported democratic Iraqi government. There are also non-violent groups in Iraq that oppose the US-led coalition and seek to regain their way of life, money, jobs, and security. As of 2009, the United States, Britain, Romania, and Australia still had troops in Iraq. Given the events of the war thus far and its duration, some feel that it is largely an attempt to impose liberalism on Iraq. Iraqi insurgents could be seen to strongly and violently oppose this imposition of liberalism. The goals of these groups are to challenge Western political and social views and ultimately force the American-led coalition to leave Iraq. In some cases, even Shiite and Sunni militias have worked together on this effort. They justify the violence of their actions by saying that the invasion of their country was illegal and motivated by greed. They wish to see an Iraqi government based on their religious beliefs and reject the new democratic government and Western liberal beliefs that are not compatible with their religious beliefs or ways of thinking. Therefore, the insurgency in Iraq can be seen as a strong example of a challenge to, or attack on, Western liberal democratic values, potentially questioning their viability in non-democratic countries.

Do you think that the Iraqi people's resistance to Western liberal ideas can be justified? Why or why not? Consider the use of force to challenge liberal ideas, as illustrated in this example. Do you think there are circumstances under which you should use violence to protect your values and beliefs? What other options might be available to challenge beliefs and values that you oppose?

## **Civil Disobedience: Food Not Bombs**

Legal appeals, negotiations, lobbying, peaceful protest, and community action are essential components of a liberal democracy. Some activists challenge the beliefs and values of modern liberal society with methods that



## Fighting for Civil Rights

▼ **Figure 10-26, 10-27** Martin Luther King, Jr and Malcolm X were both prominent civil rights leaders in the United States. King was perceived by most observers to be more moderate than Malcolm X; however, he was nonetheless willing to engage in some forms of illegal protest in his struggle for equal rights.



*"A riot is at bottom the language of the unheard."*

—Martin Luther King, Jr, 1967.



*"We declare our right on this earth...to be a human being, to be respected as a human being, to be given the rights of a human being in this society, on this earth, in this day, which we intend to bring into existence by any means necessary."*

—Malcolm X, June 28, 1964, quoted on [Malcom-X.org](http://www.malcolm-x.org),  
<http://www.malcolm-x.org/quotes.htm>.

- 1 What does each of the quotations suggest about methods used to challenge those in power?
- 2 What might Malcolm X say about the expression "the end justifies the means"?

use the institutions of liberal society, such as the courts, elections, demonstrations, and the media. These challenges are within the law.

There is also a wide spectrum of illegal acts used by people to express political resistance, ranging from civil disobedience to riots to violent attacks. **Civil disobedience** is intentionally and publicly breaking a law in protest. Mahatma Gandhi, who led the movement in India for independence from British control, believed in non-violent civil disobedience, as did Martin Luther King, Jr in the United States. Why would people who normally abide by the law intentionally and publicly break the law to challenge the political status quo or government policies and decisions?



For example, in 1980, a group of Americans who had actively protested against nuclear power and militarism coined the name “Food Not Bombs” to draw attention to the fight against war and hunger in the United States. Food Not Bombs has since grown to be a worldwide movement (including members in Canada) that provides free vegetarian and vegan meals to those who are hungry while protesting against war, poverty, and homelessness. Food Not Bombs is able to redistribute healthy food that is often donated by grocers and markets—food that otherwise would have gone to waste. Food Not Bombs considers this food wastage to be a result of the failure of capitalism to meet everyone’s needs.

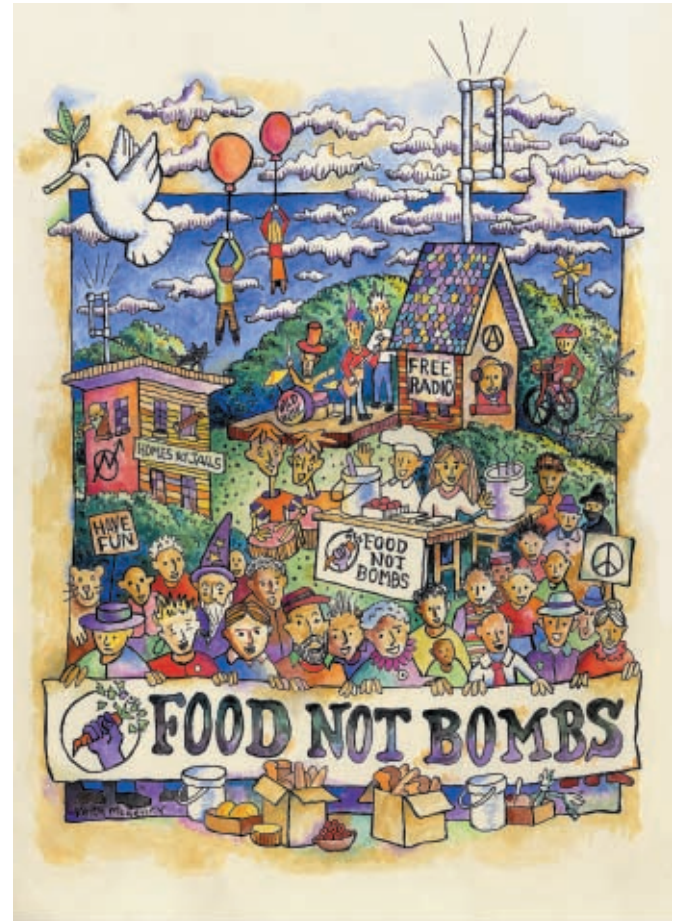
The movement is committed to non-violent social change. It has no formal leaders and seeks to include everyone in its decision-making process. Food Not Bombs’s end goal is to

- work to end hunger
- support actions to stop the globalization of the economy
- end exploitation and the destruction of the earth

The San Francisco chapter of Food Not Bombs gained attention from the public after numerous run-ins with police beginning in 1988, as officials tried to stop the mass feedings that drew large crowds of homeless people. Founding member Keith McHenry says he has been arrested over 100 times for “making a political statement” by sharing free food in San Francisco. He has spent over 500 nights in jail for his peaceful protest against militarism. Amnesty International wrote letters and campaigned for McHenry’s unconditional release and his case was taken up by the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, Switzerland.

Some of the group’s members have been arrested for their protests on homelessness or have been accused of having links to terrorist groups, like al Qaeda. Food Not Bombs activists in the United States have been under investigation by the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, the Pentagon, and other intelligence agencies.

In Orlando, Florida, in 2006, City Hall acted on complaints from business owners and residents that Food Not Bombs activists were causing problems by feeding homeless people in downtown parks, noting that the group would only be entitled to two permits per year. Food Not Bombs pledged to continue serving meals, even if it had to do so illegally.



▲ **Figure 10-28** Poster of the organization Food Not Bombs, created by its founder, Keith McHenry.



► **Figure 10-29** In the 1990s, the San Francisco Police prevented Food Not Bombs from distributing food or information to people. In what ways are the actions taken by Food Not Bombs considered a challenge to liberalism?

“So far, no one has been arrested in Orlando for feeding a hungry person. But the day it happens, says Sergeant Barbara Jones, a police spokeswoman, ‘we know we’re going to look like the bad guys.’” (Source: “Orlando homeless laws stir heated debate,” February 3, 2007. Red Orbit, [http://www.redorbit.com/news/general/826094/orlando\\_homeless\\_laws\\_stir\\_heated\\_debate/index.html](http://www.redorbit.com/news/general/826094/orlando_homeless_laws_stir_heated_debate/index.html).)

Each year the Council of Canadians Chapter in Comox Valley, BC presents a Community Action Award to a local group that has significantly contributed to the community. The 2008 award went to Food Not Bombs.

*“This group of young volunteers, supported by donations from Edible Island Whole Foods and funds from their own pockets, prepares, transports and serves a hot lunch for the hungry on Sundays in the Peace Park.”*

**—Source: “Canadians recognizing activists,”  
February 19, 2009. Comox Valley Record.com,  
[http://www.bclocalnews.com/vancouver\\_island\\_north/  
comoxvalleyrecord/community/39884718.html](http://www.bclocalnews.com/vancouver_island_north/comoxvalleyrecord/community/39884718.html).**

## Extremism: The Red Army Faction

How far will some groups go to express their beliefs and values? In some cases, people have resorted to extremism, which involves measures such as kidnapping, bombing, hostage taking, and other acts of terrorism, to protect their beliefs and values from the liberal ideas of those in power. Examples of these groups include the Iraqi insurgency (which you explored earlier in this chapter), the *Front de libération du Québec* (FLQ) (which you will explore in Chapter 11), al Qaeda (which you explored briefly in Chapter 8), and the Red Army Faction of West Germany. Ideas of **extremism** such as these can be thought of as actions or political theories or beliefs that generally favour uncompromising, often violent approaches to decision making and are often based on beliefs and values that are beyond the scope of the majority of those in their society or in the societies around them.

After the Second World War, many West Germans became dissatisfied with the influence of capitalism and the values of NATO countries that had occupied West Germany. Many preferred communist ideas that focused on the importance of the collective rather than the individual. Between the 1960s and 1998, a leftist guerrilla group named the Red Army Faction (RAF) was accused of killing at least 30 people in Germany. Beginning as a student activist movement fighting for civil rights, the RAF targeted industrialists, prosecutors, and other agents of “the capitalist state.”

In 1968, the RAF set fire to two department stores. During the early 1970s, it was involved in a series of bank robberies and bombings of US military facilities. In 1975, the RAF seized the West German embassy in Sweden, killing two hostages. During the autumn of 1977 (known as German Autumn), a series of kidnappings, hostage takings, and other attacks left several dead, including a federal prosecutor and a prominent banker.



◀ **Figure 10-30** The *Baader-Meinhof Complex* is a 2008 film about the beginnings of the RAF in West Germany. The group began as young students in post-Second World War Germany that banded together to express their dissatisfaction with capitalism. The members of the RAF described themselves as left-wing, anti-capitalist, and communist.



### Violence and the RAF

Hans-Georg Brum, a former West German student activist, commented in a 2007 interview with *The Washington Post*,

*“It was a very strange time back then. We were all very critical of society. The question was, how far can you go? Can you turn to violence?” The impact of the crime on German society, Brum said, was immediate—even committed leftists realized that the Red Army Faction had crossed a line. ‘Any kind of support or understanding for the RAF immediately vanished,’ he said. ‘It was incomprehensible that people would commit murder like this.’”*

—Hans-Georg Brum, quoted in Craig Whitlock,  
“Germans reliving Red Army Faction’s Season of Terror.”  
*The Washington Post*, March 4, 2007.

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/03/03/AR2007030300979\\_2.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/03/03/AR2007030300979_2.html).

*“The entire idea of the front is based on self-determination, on the force of independent political and practical organization by groups that carry out attacks to achieve their own goals. From our point of view, the activity and the growth of the front must occur in the illegal context.”*

—Members of the Red Army Faction, “Interview with Comrades from the RAF,” April 1985. *GermanGuerilla.com*,  
[http://www.germanguerilla.com/red-army-faction/pdf/85\\_04.pdf](http://www.germanguerilla.com/red-army-faction/pdf/85_04.pdf).

- 1 To what extent do extreme acts like those of the RAF challenge modern liberal values of rule of law and security of the person, while at the same time support values of individual freedoms? Explain your answer.



Many members of the RAF who were imprisoned during this period died in prison. Several more were executed. The RAF considered members of their group who were imprisoned to be political prisoners and accused the West German government of keeping them in solitary confinement without access to doctors. The RAF viewed its struggle as a political one against a corrupt and inflexible capitalist government.

The RAF members resorted to extreme violence to protect their beliefs and values and to send a message to the world. Members of the RAF challenged liberal ideas, such as the rule of law, and infringed on the rights of others to advance their own ideas. Do you think the RAF’s challenge can be justified? Why or why not? Do you think their methods were necessary?

Summary

In this section, you explored several very different examples of individuals and groups challenging liberalism, and you were asked to consider which challenges could be justified. The Iraqi challenges to invading US-led forces illustrate that people may react violently when liberal ideas that conflict with their religious and political beliefs are forced on them. In an example of **civil disobedience**, Food Not Bombs challenged the decisions and policies of liberal democratic governments that they felt did not respect the right of every person to have certain basic needs met. The Red Army Faction used violence to challenge the capitalist liberal democratic government in Germany and to promote its extremist views.

What conclusions did you draw about whether or not these challenges could be justified? Through your exploration of these examples, you should now be able to form an answer to the Question for Inquiry: *When are challenges to liberalism justified?*

Knowledge and Understanding

- Using the examples in this section, place the various challenges to liberalism on a scale from the most peaceful to the most violent. In each case, explain what the group’s goals were, what methods they used, and how successful they were.
- Create and fill in a chart like the one on the right based on the examples from this section.

Group or individual presenting a challenge	Liberal beliefs and values they challenged	I believe this challenge was justified/not justified because

- Which example from this section is most similar to your point of view about when challenges to liberal values are or are not justified? Why?

## Religious Freedom and the Law

### Something to Think About:

Individual freedom of choice and freedom of religion are central beliefs in modern liberalism. What happens when a group of people within a liberal society use their freedom to structure a community that embraces illegal behaviour? What role should government play when people suggest that a religious practice infringes on an individual's rights?

### An Example:

There is a wide range of religious beliefs in Canada. Even within the same religion, sects have vastly different beliefs. In Bountiful, a town in southern British Columbia, this difference has created a dilemma that governments have not resolved after more than 50 years. A breakaway sect of the Mormon Church, the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, allows the practice of polygamy, whereby men are allowed to have several wives at the same time.

Canada's liberal ideology is confronted with a dilemma. As a liberal society, common beliefs include freedom of religion, freedom of choice, and following the rule of law. Canada has a law against polygamy, but it is rarely enforced. As sects of various religions continue to practise polygamy, Canada must decide whether it will grant the freedom to practise polygamy, considering the possible effects of this decision both nationally and internationally. In January 2009, Canada and British Columbia took some action regarding this issue, charging Bountiful leaders Winston Blackmore and James Oler with committing polygamy. Their cases are currently before the courts.

*While the church calls itself the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the mainstream Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or Mormon church, has distanced itself from the polygamous sect. The main Mormon church ended the practice of polygamous marriage in 1890 and eventually adopted a policy of excommunication for those who continued the practice.*

—Source: “Bountiful leader calls polygamy charge ‘religious persecution.’” CBC News, January 8, 2009, <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/british-columbia/story/2009/01/08/bc-polygamy-winston-blackmore.html>.



◀ **Figure 10-31** These students from the Mormon polygamist community of Bountiful, BC, go to an independent school that teaches according to their beliefs. How might their lives be affected by the enforcement of the law against polygamy?

“An International Review of Polygamy: Legal and Policy Implications for Canada,” a report posted on the Status of Women Canada government website states the following:

*At the international level, there is a clear movement toward the legal abolition of polygamy to promote the interests of women and children. Canada is widely known for its leadership in promoting the rights of women and the recognition of human rights. Canada should be very reluctant to alter this reputation by decriminalizing polygamy.*

—Source: “An International Review of Polygamy: Legal and Policy Implications for Canada,” December 19, 2005. Status of Women Canada, [http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/pubspr/0662420683/200511\\_0662420683-2\\_9\\_e.html#1](http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/pubspr/0662420683/200511_0662420683-2_9_e.html#1), December 19, 2005.

An article published in the *National Post* in January 2006 says the following: *A new study commissioned by the federal government recommends Canada legalize polygamy and change legislation to help women and children living in plural relationships.*

*The paper by three law professors at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ont., argues a Charter challenge to Section 293 of the Criminal Code banning polygamy might be successful, said Beverley Baines, one of the authors of the report.*

*“The polygamy prohibition might be held as unconstitutional,” she said in an interview Thursday night. “The most likely Charter (of Rights and Freedoms) challenge would be brought by people claiming their freedom of their religion might be infringed. Those living in Bountiful (B.C.) would say polygamy is a religious tenet.”...*

*Chief author Martha Bailey told The Canadian Press that criminalizing polygamy serves no good purpose. “Why criminalize the behaviour?” she said. “We don’t criminalize adultery. In light of the fact that we have a fairly permissive society, why are we singling out that particular form of behaviour for criminalization?”*

*Baines said polygamy is rarely prosecuted. “No one is actually being prosecuted but the provision is still being used in the context of immigration and refugee stuff. People are not being admitted to the country.” She said removing it from the Criminal Code will not force marriage laws to recognize it, but would only remove criminal sanctions.*

—Melissa Leong, “Legal experts recommend Canada legalize polygamy.” *National Post*, January 13, 2006, <http://www.canada.com/vancouver/news/story.html?id=e20244cb-63b2-47f9-893e-390453fa5067&k=24668>.

## Questions for Reflection

- 1 What values of modern liberalism are challenged in this example? Please provide at least two or three reasons and pieces of evidence for your answer and organize them in order of least to most important.
- 2 What may be the consequences of granting the legal right to practise polygamy to a group based on its right to religious freedom? Whose rights might be compromised if this freedom is granted?
- 3 Based on this example and others in this section, in what ways can granting religious freedom challenge modern liberal beliefs and values? Please provide an informed response to this question by stating a clear position and at least two or three reasons and pieces of evidence to support your position. You can refer back to the Reading Guide on page 244 of this chapter to help you build your informed position.



## FURTHER EXPLORATION

- 1 Record examples of challenges to liberalism from this chapter in a chart, and respond briefly for each example to the following question: **Is resistance to liberalism justified?** When you finish, compare your personal reflection with a classmate's.
- 2 Investigate another example of an individual or group that is challenging liberal beliefs and values. Find several news articles about the individual or group, and complete a summary of the story that includes the five Ws and one H. Number the articles in order of which provides the greatest support for the particular group's argument or point of view.
- 3 What do you think are the effects of these types of challenges on the Canadian government and on life in Canada? Create a cause-and-effect chart that shows how different challenges affect how we are governed and our way of life in Canada.
- 4 Robert F. Kennedy, in *The Pursuit of Justice* (1964), said, "What is objectionable, what is dangerous about extremists is not that they are extreme, but that they are intolerant. The evil is not what they say about their cause, but what they say about their opponents." Do you agree or disagree with what Kennedy says about extremism in this quotation? Explain your answer.
- 5 Which examples in the chapter would you describe as extreme? Why? What criteria can be used to determine whether a group's beliefs or actions are extreme? Discuss your evaluations in small groups. What are possible responses to extremism? For example, should extremists be allowed to have freedom of speech? Work toward reaching a consensus in your group and identify the best possible reasons and evidence to support your group's position. Reflect on the process and your answer and identify any ways that you could have strengthened your analysis of the issue.
- 6 What issues can you think of in the news today that the courts may not be able to solve? Explain the issue and the challenge to liberalism that it represents. Develop a plan for dealing with this issue through civil disobedience. What information would you need? What actions might best draw attention to this issue? Consider the degree of civil disobedience that you would suggest. Consider the justification for your action. Present your informed plan to your classmates, using the Reading Guide on page 244 of this chapter to help you.
- 7 Compare the methods used by various groups to resist the values of liberalism. What methods does each group employ? Which group presents the most effective challenge to liberalism? Present your ideas in a poster and be prepared to support your decisions with examples of well-chosen reasons and evidence in discussions with your classmates.

## Chapter Summary and Reflection

At the start of this chapter you read how science fiction is often used as a means of critiquing or challenging commonly held ideas or decisions in society. Throughout the chapter, you learned about individuals and groups that have questioned aspects of liberal society.

In Canada, **Aboriginal collective thought** can challenge ideas about how Canadian society is organized and governed, and how it should recognize collective **rights, land claims, and self-government**. Liberal laws may also be challenged by people whose religious or spiritual values may challenge individual rights and freedoms. Liberal ideas may be challenged by environmentalists who believe that economic freedom and individual self-interest should not take priority over collective interests.

Different individuals and groups may choose different methods to challenge liberalism. Some of these methods may be justified; others not. Some groups feel they must resort to violence and **extremism**, such as the Iraqi insurgents and the Red Army Faction. Some walk the fine line of **civil disobedience** (Food Not Bombs). Others may choose legal channels to challenge the upholding of liberal ideas. Based on the material in this chapter, reflect on the Chapter Issue: *How can liberalism be challenged by other ways of thinking?*, and the Related Issue: *Is resistance to liberalism justified?* What conclusions can you draw? What position do you take?