American VS. Canadian Ideology: A Historical Analysis

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Introduction

Americans and Canadians are often described as two of the world's more similar peoples. Most Americans would be hard-pressed to find meaningful differences between themselves and Canadians, and usually must resort to a comparison of beer preferences or tastes in winter sports. Even business-oriented Americans who keep abreast of the international scene find it hard to say anything positive or meaningful about Canadian-American differences. Canadians, likewise, find it hard to describe how they differ from Americans, though being a North American minority has forced them to entertain this question more seriously than have their American brethren. Canadians will have a more practiced answer to this query, ranging from a fatalistic "We really aren't very different" to a statement about relative violence or conservatism. Still, the Canadian who faces this question will likely seem dissatisfied by his or her answer.

When one turns to the political forum, a few differences between the North American countries stand out. America has for the most part a two-party system of government while Canada has a multi-party, parliamentary system of government. Canada has paddled the waters of a comprehensive health-care system for years, while the U.S. government has remained deathly afraid of the issue. Ontario has recently installed a semi-socialist policy of private-sector wage fixing that has no parallel in the United States, while as recently as the 1960s all of Canada has been under martial law. But do these isolated, sometimes contradictory differences between American and Canadian people and institutions really mean anything? As suggested above, many of us do not think so.

This confusion does not arise from any serious lack of perception, but from the absence of any analytical tool for categorizing and describing these differences. Some specialists have been articulating for years the startling differences between the societies of the United States and Canada. To do this they have used a theoretical tool known as ideology. An ideology may be loosely described as a set of beliefs that define a nation's government, economics, and behavior towards other human beings. It has been assumed for years that the belief systems of
Canada and the U.S. are fundamentally the same. But a reassessment of North American historical trends has convinced many writers that the two countries may, on the contrary, be grounded in radically different belief systems.

In this paper I propose first of all that the United States is ideologically what is known as “Liberal” through and through. Secondly I propose that Canada, despite its adoption of many trappings of American “Liberalism,” has at its base a set of beliefs and ideals fundamentally distinct from the United States. I will provide support for these propositions by tracing a brief intellectual history of the interpretation of the Canadian ideology, followed by a historical narrative for the purpose of illustrating some central tenets of Canadian ideology.

Thirdly, I propose that Canada, on account of its ideology, has an organic possibility for developing a true socialism, while the United States does not. Finally I offer some conclusions about future U.S.-Canadian economic and political interactions. It should be noted that many of the arguments which I present in this paper have been made elsewhere and with greater attention to scholarly detail. Because these ideas form such an important conceptual tool for viewing the U.S.-Canadian situation, this presentation to a wider audience is warranted.

Before any theoretical argument can be offered, an explanation of the concept of ideology is in order.

Ideology

Ideology has been described above as a set of beliefs that define a nation’s government, economics, and behavior towards other human beings. Communism is an ideology, as is Fascism. The U.S. and the rest of the “free world” also have an ideology, first articulated in the writings of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. This philosophy is known to political scientists as “Liberalism.” The ideology which a nation is given, adopts, or which evolves by itself shapes the history of that country. Germany, for example, changed quite a bit when Hitler and his Fascists were elected to power, from a growing western-style state into a country bristling for war and worse. Likewise, an ideology is shaped by the ideas and events that spring from a country with that ideology. In order to find the general characteristics of Fascism, then, Mussolini’s and Hitler’s historical actions have been analyzed. The most useful aspect of an ideological analysis is the fact that general patterns and beliefs common to two or more countries can be sought out and compared to explain various phenomena, from class and interpersonal relations to government and corporate structuring.

Why were China and North Korea so desirous of each other’s friendship, and why are Germany and the U.S. currently so eager for a good relationship? Primarily because they have similar ideologies. When one turns to the relationship between the U.S. and Canada, however, things aren’t so cut and dried. Historians and economists alike have assumed for years that the U.S. and Canada share a common ideology, that is, Liberalism. In recent decades some researchers have come to the conclusion that this comfortable assumption might not be accurate.

The perceived problem lies not with any of the three ideologies mentioned above, but with a fourth, known as “Conservatism.” Conservatism, a term explored more fully below, is roughly synonymous with the French phrase ancien regime. It is a word used to describe the crotchety ancestor to our modern philosophy of Liberalism, as enshrined in the U.S. Constitution. The anti-monarchical American and French Revolutions signalled the end of the old system and the beginning of our age of Liberalism. Today, no major government actively espouses Conservatism, though snatch-es of it do survive in countries with a history of this philosophy. The United States, uniquely among the Western democracies, is a country without a feudal, or Conservative, past. (See Lipset on Engels, p. 25) During the Revolutionary War those elements of American society that were truly Conservative (i.e., those who were loyal to the crown) were swept away. Swept where? Largely to Canada, where these

1Throughout this paper, the names of ideologies will be capitalized so as to avoid confusion.

2By more stringent definitions of ideology than the one presented in this study, Conservatism is not an ideology per se because it lacks the evangelical aspects of most others. For our less technical purposes, however, the term ideology will more than suffice.
loyalist refugees augmented a much older French Catholic, almost medieval, society. (Philips, p. 69) Already the stage for separate ideological destinies had been set. Let us now explore the development and characteristics of the American and Canadian ideologies so that they may be productively compared.

America's Ideology

America's national consciousness and many of her most pervasive myths were forged in the late eighteenth century, during Liberalism's fiery youth. In practical terms, Liberalism was at first an intellectual and then, in America, an actual revolt against the tenets and institutions of the Conservative ancien regime. What exactly are those tenets of Conservatism? In defining this philosophy, we can more readily understand its antithesis, Liberalism.

A most obvious aspect of the ancien regime was its belief in a natural hierarchy, a caste system of nobles and commoners at the head of which stood a king. We can recall from grade school how abhorrent was the figure of King George III to the patriots. In America, then, no one was to be born inescapably higher than another. A man's merit would be based solely on his ability to reason, and the proudest title would not be earl or duke, but that of citizen. (Herold, p. 29)

Another hated aspect of the old Conservative order was its worship of the status quo and tradition. The Conservative orator and statesman Edmund Burke expressed the basis of the Conservative's strong grounding in tradition when he said, "In the long term, mankind is wise.... In the short term, man is a fool." (Burke, p. 137) Locke, and with him the American founding fathers, saw this traditionalism as stagnating and a chokehold on the rational powers of man. They believed that tradition was not necessary to prove an idea useful; the only criterion for that need be its reasonableness. Their revolution itself was attempting to establish a democracy, a governmental form with no grounding in tradition whatsoever, for no democratic state had existed in the Western world since the time of Pericles's Athens. The Liberal patriots threw tradition to the wind, convinced that the rationality of man would enable a democracy to survive and even to thrive.

This substitution of Liberal rationality for the old Conservative traditions occurred not only in politics, but also in the sphere of economics. In medieval and renaissance Europe, what we call Conservatism was the only functioning ideology, what little trade did occur was monopolized by the hierarchy of the guilds. As a rule, no one could set up a business unless he was born into the right class and spent a mandatory number of years as a journeyman, no matter what talent or ideas he may have had. Only after a man had achieved the ceremonial rank of "Master" could he own his own shop, and even then his hands were tied by a stifling code of traditions. For example, a clothmaker in London was forbidden to produce more than thirty bolts of cloth per week, and it had to be dyed one of that week's specified colors, even if another color was selling like hotcakes. To the Liberals of the American revolution, these formalities seemed as absurd as they do to most of us. The new leaders swept away many vestiges of the feudal economy, and encouraged in its stead a modern market economy based upon individual initiative, the laws of supply and demand, and free competition.

A third aspect of Conservatism against which the Liberals reacted violently was the view of society as a corporate whole. This view, which is difficult for many who are products of Liberalism to conceptualize, holds a man's worth at nought or, less than that, as irrelevant when he is considered outside of his society. To the Conservative philosopher, the individual meant nothing out of a societal context. The death of Socrates will help to illustrate this point. When offered the chance to escape from death at the hands of the Athenian government by living in exile, Socrates chose to die, because he believed that leaving the society with which he had willingly coexisted simply because it did something he did not like was anarchic. Apart from his society, Socrates was not truly human. In opposition to this idea, the Liberals believed in the individual worth of each man. All men are created equal, and each man has worth as an individual. In the Liberal ideology of the U.S. constitution, each man has the rights of an individual, while the old duties of a member of a body are downplayed.
To restate, the American Fathers reacted against what they saw as the tyrannical and stifling institutions of the ancien regime. They believed in equality and opposed hierarchy; they believed in the power of reason over the irrationality of tradition; and they believed in the rights of the individual over the duties of the corporate slave. The degree or success to which any of these notions has been actualized in the history of the U.S. could and has been debated ad nauseam; but their pervasiveness in American history, and more importantly in American myth, still remains. The Pioneer, perhaps the ultimate embodiment of individuality and equality and the search for a better life, dominated American culture through the turn of the twentieth century. In our own century Americans have raised the standard of individual liberty and progressive initiative whenever they have needed it most, such as in their fights against the forces and ideas of Communism and Fascism. The very Liberal idea of "business" as we know it is believed by most Americans to be one of the great trademarks of America. In short, these ideas always have and still do comprise the solid core of common American beliefs. In fact, these Liberal beliefs have so dominated her history that America has in effect become a mono-ideological state.

The Canadian author Seymour Martin Lipset has quoted Richard Hofstaeder as saying, "It has been our (America's) fate as a nation not to have ideologies, but to be one." (Lipset, p. 19) Uniquely among the nations of the world, America has a galvanized set of beliefs by which someone or something may be labeled American or un-American. The Canadian author Gerard S. Vano argues that this set of ideas has been actively forged into America's national consciousness through the fighting of a revolution. It has become a true ideology because Americans have actively fought for these values throughout her history and have just as actively forced any incompatible elements of American society to assimilate into this ideal or be destroyed. Take the antebellum South as an example of this expurgating tendency. Many historians have characterized that society as an essentially feudal one, and surely a good case can be made for this idea. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the American North developed a Liberal economy and ideas, becoming de facto the living seat of the revolutionary ideology while a largely traditional plantation economy became entrenched in the South. When tensions reached a head, the old South was summarily swept away and replaced by mainstream American culture. The Plantationers came to share the fate of the Tory establishment of four score and seven years before. With the triumph of the North, Liberalism remained the core of American national culture.

It can be readily argued, then, that America's ideology is known and fixed if such a thing can be known of any country. Perhaps, as will be seen below, America's ideology is the closest thing to a "sure thing" in the field of ideological study. The surety of American ideology is one thing upon which most of the pundits agree.

This is not the case with Canada, however. Whereas America has a strong and focused ideology, Lipset goes so far as to claim that Canada has no ideology. (p. 57) Many authors still fit Canada comfortably into the sphere of Liberalism. Other writers have sifted through Canada's past and found a strong strain of old Conservatism, though few have agreed upon what to do with this. Have Canada's Conservative roots been completely buried? Have they been hybridized through contact with other ideologies? Does this strain really affect Canada at all? Most authors do point out that Canada has undergone no active genesis or formative period where she forged an ideology of her own, as did the Americans at the time of their revolution. This paper proposes that Canada's Conservative past is still very much with us, in somewhat evolved form, and it is to an elaboration of this idea that we must now turn.

What is Canada?

Canadians have certainly adopted the more obvious traits of a Liberal state. If this were not the case, the inquiry pursued here would hardly be necessary. Canada is a Liberal democracy, and her people enjoy the benefits of advanced technology, modernity, and generally higher living standards just like Americans. (Vano, p. 22) She has played the world economics game so well that she has been admitted into the "Big
Seven" club of advanced economies. But what has happened to the ardently Conservative Canada of the eighteenth century? Has it simply disappeared without a trace? As we shall see, entrenched ideologies seldom disappear unless they are actively eradicated. The Canadian author George Vano argues that "Canada has absorbed... the most superficial (i.e. empirically evident) aspects of the liberal process." (Vano, p. 23) He continues: "In Canada no indigenous ideological respect for the components of Liberalism has been popularly ingrained because the derivative benefits of a truly Liberal system were obtained in Canada relatively easily by a process of osmosis from the Anglo-American World." (Vano, p. 23) In short, some historians believe that those Liberal characteristics by which many people tend to gauge Canada do not constitute a Canadian ideology, but are simply traits which have been grafted onto an older, Conservative base. Many Liberal historians have written without taking this ideological consideration into account, and their theories have been Copernican in nature — generally able to account for events and happenings, but never thoroughly satisfying. Let us briefly sketch the chain of thought by which historians have discovered the un-Liberal streak in Canada's character.

**Ideological Interpretations**

Through the 1950s the seminal volumes on Canadian history were written under the assumption that Canada was a land rooted firmly in the Liberal tradition. Creighton's 1937 study, *The Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence*, championed the "staples" theory of Canadian economy, which emphasized Canada's role as supplier of raw materials to the economies of Great Britain and the United States. (Vano, p. 26) In this view Canada was provincial and a bit of a backwater area, but it was assumed to be ideologically contiguous with the rest of the Western world. In the 1950s Careless's next-generational assessment, entitled *Canada*, expanded upon Creighton's economics themes but did not conceive of a shift in ideological interpretation. This is hardly surprising; the ingrained nature of an ideology is such that it is seldom questioned except by revolutionaries such as the American Founding Fathers and the Bolsheviks.

In 1957 the American Louis Hartz published the groundbreaking volume *The Liberal Tradition in America*. Hartz proposed a new interpretation of American politics. Europe, Hartz realized, was the place of origin for both Conservatism and Liberalism. In a country such as Great Britain, both ideologies existed alongside one another for a significant period of time. In time, Conservatism yielded to Liberalism, it is true; but the crux of Hartz's thesis lay in his proposal that the organic European Socialist movements were the modern carryovers of Conservative roots. In the European countries, Conservative traditions had mutated through their contact with Liberalism, melding aspects of both philosophies, to produce Socialism. To Hartz, therefore, organic Socialism was only possible in countries with a strong Conservative (i.e., feudal or neo-feudal) background. We may explain the Hartzian logic by hearkening back to our brief descriptions of Conservatism and Liberalism. The former philosophy is corporate, traditional, and hierarchical, while the latter is individual, rational, and egalitarian. If such is the case, Socialism can be described as corporate, rational and egalitarian. The Socialist shares with the Liberal the ideas of rationalism and equality, but holds the formerly conservative view that human beings are part of a corporate whole, and are therefore responsible for others and their betterment as much as for themselves. By a similar argument Hartz showed Socialism to be the product of an interaction between the ideologies of Liberalism and Conservatism.

To Hartz, the fact that the American mono-ideological culture has produced no serious Socialist movements came as little surprise, since organic Socialism seems to require an interaction of the corporate ideals of a Conservative tradition to counter the individualism of the Liberals. Less than a decade after the publication of Hartz's book, the Canadian writer Gad Horowitz applied the technique of

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1 I am speaking here of an effective organic Socialism. The example of F.D.R. and the New Deal era is often raised to counter the idea that the U.S. has no real Socialism. The actions of one administration do not by any means constitute a grass roots movement. An event as simple as the presidency of Eisenhower wiped a large portion of Roosevelt's legacy from effective existence.
Hartzian analysis to Canada. He believed that because Canada has a tradition of true Conservatism as well as Liberalism, Canada, unlike the United States, has a real chance of developing beyond Liberalism into some form of Socialism. (Horowitz, p. 7)

But this is beyond the present phase of our argument. For now it will suffice to note that some authors claim to have found a seriously un-Liberal (and therefore un-American) streak in Canada’s ideology. Such a revelation would conceptually push Canada out of the circle of mainstream Liberal nations. Theories of this kind hinge upon the presence of a true Conservatism in the Canadian past which has somehow survived to the present day. To search for and trace that Conservatism, we must delve into Canada’s rich and varied past.

**Conservatism in Canadian History**

Canada’s initial population was composed of Conservative French Catholics, a population later augmented by an influx of Conservative British royalists from the American colonies. To trace the effects of this initial Conservatism through Canada’s history we must have some understanding of the effects which a Conservative streak would have upon a country. First of all, some established and traditional hierarchy might be present. In addition, a great deference to authority might be characteristic of a Conservative country’s people. Finally, and most importantly to the life of the nation itself, Conservative societies would tend to be very parochial and have a centrifugal tendency in direct opposition to the nationalistic tendencies of Liberalism. This last tendency arises from the fact that Conservatives tend to honor the traditional regional differences of an area without particular attention to the inefficiencies they create, while the rational, efficiency-seeking Liberals strive to break down old barriers which stifle commerce and exchange. In the following historical analysis of Canada all three of these un-Liberal traits can be found in abundance.

French Canada, which encompassed most of modern day Quebec and Ontario from the 1540s until 1763, was certainly a Conservative society. (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland had been wrested from the French by the British in 1710.) An aristocratic class, called *seigneurs*, constituted the landed power base of the country. A priestly class directed philosophy, education, and morality towards the supremely Conservative Jesuit ideals of hierarchy and tradition. The government of New France rested upon the shared power of both royal representatives and the clergy. Even Careless describes the “typical builder of New France” as a “fur trader and a Jesuit,” calling the society of New France “authoritarian and hierarchical in character.” (Careless, p. 61) As one author sums up, “Life in New France was not only European but almost medieval in character. There was no system of representative government, such as appeared in New England....” (Philips, p. 69)

The British, who nominally controlled most of continental Canada after the French and Indian War, found themselves in the curious situation of being overlords to a French-speaking group of territories. As tensions in the southern American colonies mounted, Britain realized that a stabilization of the conquered territories of Canada would be desirable. As a result, the Quebec Act of 1774 was passed, which guaranteed the continuation of the Conservative seignorial system and French language rights. From the outset, then, Britain conceived of Canada as a set of colonies where maintenance of the status quo was the most desirable policy.

The first introduction of non-feudal elements into Canadian society occurred in the 1780s with the oft-cited flight of the Tories from America after the Revolution. The Tories, who were loyal to the British crown, were a half-Liberal, half-Conservative breed — too non-Liberal to be tolerated by the American ideology, and yet not as thoroughly *ancien régime* as the French Catholics. Religious and linguistic differences between the two groups moved the British government to divide continental British North American into Upper and Lower Canada, creating the ancestors of modern day Quebec and Ontario. The seignorial system was reaffirmed by the same legislation and was to exist as the legal form of landholding in Canada until 1825. Even then, a voluntary — as opposed to forced — forfeiture was introduced, where seigneurs were encouraged by various
incentives to give up their feudal rights. The 1830s and '40s saw an increase in British emigration and a subsequent agitation for reform of the old system. Only in 1854 were the seigneurs, or lords, finally abolished as a landholding class. Through the 1850s and '60s a "deep misunderstanding continued to separate urban, profit-minded British businessmen from largely rural French farmers and professional men concerned with maintaining tradition." (Philips, p. 71) Through these times the British had continued their tradition of introducing no radical change in Canada, preferring to govern traditionally and conservatively.

Only in 1867 did Canada become a self-governing entity, pushed by the mother country over the objection of many maritime and other subjects. It was still not a sovereign state in the way of other western nations, and Canadians remained subjects of the British Empire. There was no revolution in Canada, only a gradual evolution. The population of the vast new country consisted of roughly one million French Catholics, one million Irish Catholics and Protestants, and one million English and Scottish Protestants. These groups were known more for mutual suspicion than brotherly love. Three-fourths of the population was rural; and only Quebec, Montreal, and Toronto were worthy of being called cities. (Philips, p. 72)

The "White Lie"

Until this point our historical analysis has treated the lands that comprise the modern state of Canada as if they were intrinsically a whole, when in fact the histories of each province have been very different. Newfoundland, Acadia-cum-New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Labrador, Quebec, Ontario, the Hudson's Bay area, and various and sundry islands (some of which are still French) have all been governed as independent territories, flying at various times the flags of France and Great Britain under such diverse magnates as bishops and trading companies. The Maritimes spent the years 1710-1763 under a different flag from the Canadian mainland. Newfoundland, from the beginning an integral part of Canadian settlement, only decided to join the Canadian union in 1949. The Canadian provinces simply do not have a history of loyalty to each other. Rather, like the disparate territories of the medieval church, they looked to a more or less spiritual overlord who governed them wisely from afar.

This strange conglomeration of peoples and ideas never had been and even in 1867 was not really a nation. A nation in the modern, Liberal sense must have a strong central government or focus that evokes common feelings of loyalty and obedience from its people. Canada, in contrast, more closely followed the old feudal model. Under the feudal system, a lord such as a duke or king might hold territories all over Europe which were more or less loyal to him irrespective of nationality. In the 1300s the Gascons and Normans (of modern-day France) felt more loyalty to their English King (who spoke French) than the King of France. The pope was the ultimate example of supernational loyalties. Through the renaissance, more than one-tenth the land of Europe felt more loyalty to the Roman pontiff than the king of whatever country in which it lay. Europe under the older Conservatism did not have strong, centralized nations.

The Canadas, as they were known, were a group of colonies and territories controlled by the same government as per the feudal model, which in Canada's case happened to be geographically contiguous. Each territory was more loyal to the British government than to any Canadian power. When it became convenient for the British to have these colonies become self-governing, all of British North America excepting Newfoundland was christened the Dominion of Canada. This was accomplished despite considerable objection from the Maritime provinces, which preferred to remain under the largely absent British control. Thus, almost by default, Canada became a pseudo-nation. The signing of the Versailles Treaty of 1918 was the first time Canada was to represent herself in a major international

--The rise of the absolute monarchies in the 17th and 18th centuries spelled the end of true feudalism, of course; but the underlying Conservative premises remained more or less constant. The use of Conservatism to describe feudal and monarchical ideals is an oversimplification, but does not substantively weaken the point of our argument.
Only in the 1950s did Canada realize that her ties with the U.S. might become more important than her old British ties. Today, Canada certainly displays the most important characteristics of a nation; yet Britain remains the spiritual home of English Canada, while France is re-emerging as the spiritual mentor of Quebec. For a nation, this is a surprisingly colonial mentality.

Analysis

Several Conservatively-influenced traits in Canadian history have been highlighted in the preceding narrative. A sanctioned aristocracy was in place in Canada through the mid-nineteenth century. Canadian deference to British authority was explicit up through the same time, and has been implicit through the pseudo-colonial mentality of today. More importantly, Canada has never developed a strong nationalism. Rather regionalism has always been the norm through the beginning of this century. A strong example of this is Quebec, which has been seriously considering secession ever since the Dominion was created. Supporting fully one-fourth of Canada's population, including two of the largest cities, this unruly province represents a large piece of the Canadian pie. History has witnessed what happens to any American states that think of secession. The agitators would be dubbed rebels and promptly crushed to the tune of "Stars and Stripes Forever." Yet Canadians are very calmly and coolly (at a national level) dealing with the possible dissolution of their country as if it's not a terribly big deal. One may well argue that Canadians do this because of their regional loyalties and lack of a true nationalism, i.e., because they have inherited an ideology laced with Conservatism.

Perhaps more important than what has happened in Canadian history for our purposes is what has not happened. That is, Canada has never undergone a trial or crisis which has focused her ideology, or forced a change or a dramatic step. The British takeover in 1763 was for the most part an exchange of documents. The same can be said for the colony's change of status into a self-governing dominion. Fifty years after this change, Canada was representing herself at international functions. Fifty years after the beginning of international representation she promulgated a new constitution which no one really likes. In the absence of national turmoil or external pressure, Canada has simply coasted along, retaining the same Conservative roots with which she was born, picking up choice bits of Liberalism along the way. Or as Vano puts it:

Nor did incentive to liberalize Canada exist: why bother with the enormous discomfort of socio-ideological readjustment like that which elsewhere attended the triumph of Liberalism? Why bother, when the superficial benefits could be so readily possessed without comparable sacrifice — without civil and revolutionary wars, without those acts of public violence so absolutely essential to the fusion of diverse, often contradictory values into a single, logically consistent, Liberal value system? (Vano, p. 23)

Such is a partial case for the discernment of Conservatism in the Canadian mindset. It is important when considering this argument not to equate Canadian regionalism with weakness. As Liberals, Americans are predisposed to dismiss as weak or worthless regions of the world which do not strongly centralize and become international power players. This non-centralizing attitude on the part of Canadians should not be taken as a weakness, but as a possible alternative from which Americans may learn.

The discovery of Conservatism in the Canadian mindset might be left as a free standing point of consideration. But some authors such as Hartz and Horowitz have gone beyond the observation of Canadian Conservatism to further propose Canada's possible future as a strongly Socialist country. Hartz's theory that both Liberalism and Conservatism are necessary for the growth of organic Socialism and Horowitz's application of that idea to Canada have already been mentioned. To enter into a full-blown discussion of Canadian socialism here would push this article far beyond its bounds. It will have to suffice to suggest the possibility of a real Canadian Socialism, and perhaps discuss some of the contributions which Canadians have made to the world Socialist canon.
A Canadian Critique

In Canada, Socialist thought is alive, well, and a welcome part of the public forum. In the 1960s and '70s the Socialist thinker and teacher C.B. Macpherson was known and respected by the Canadian media and government, as well as by his academic peers. Macpherson, who is regarded as one of the most influential Socialist writers of the century, constructed among other things a thorough and as yet unanswered (though many have tried) critique of Western Liberalism. Detailing this with any hope of success is impossible here, but an illustration of one of Macpherson's non-Liberal viewpoints might prove enlightening.

In a collection of essays entitled Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval, Macpherson touches upon the issue of scarcity of the means of life, which is an axiom proffered in every beginning economics class. Like Marx, Macpherson is fascinated by the potentialities of modern technology. Macpherson suggests that the increase in productivity experienced by the world's more advanced countries is enough to end the perceived economic problem of scarcity of the means of life, provided that people focus upon a few ideological assumptions. He says: "The difficulty to be overcome within the advanced liberal democracies is not primarily material but ideological." (Macpherson, p. 63) For, he continues, our present thinking "contains the assumption, inherited from classical Liberal individualism, that man is essentially an infinite consumer. It is only on the latter assumption that scarcity is permanent. We should be able to see that scarcity, whatever it was for many millennia, is not an invariable natural phenomenon but a human construction." (Macpherson, p. 63) As a Socialist writer, Macpherson urges us to question some of the most fundamental assumptions in our lives, and it is only natural that someone outside the Liberal sphere of thought should do this. Only by hearing the ideas of someone outside our own ideological frame of reference can we realize that our ideas are not fixed, absolute, or Right. They are part of an ongoing dialogue. To Macpherson society is not simply an impediment. Rather he realizes that if we are to build a better society, we must synthesize a belief system which does away with present hindrances while finding new avenues for our creativity. (Macpherson, p. 43) And so Macpherson, for those who can face change, proposes a challenge, not only to our positions on scarcity as in the following quote, but to our perceptions as a whole: "The most advanced problem now is not to redistribute scarcity but to see through it: to see that it is not an invariable natural phenomenon but a variable cultural one. Scarcity of the means of life, then, is a socially variable impediment." (Macpherson, p. 63)

Conclusions

In this essay an often neglected or misused tool for analysis has been applied to the Canadian-American situation: the concept of ideology. Through ideological analysis, many of the assumptions that have lurked in the minds of North Americans for decades can be illuminated. Furthermore, ideology can be used to link seemingly unrelated traits, such as the Canadian lack of violence and the Canadian declaration of martial law. Ottawa's relative indifference to Quebec's threatened secession has been seen from a new angle, as has the inability of Americans to understand and cope with un-American phenomena by some means other than domination.

Canada remains an enigma. The country is clearly not what Americans and Western Europeans like to think of as "normal." A discussion of Canadian Conservatism has provided new understanding of Canada's traits and habits. Those who have simply assumed that Canada, like the United States, is a Liberal country have been challenged on a basic level. Canadian regionalism has been highlighted, and its ideological foundation discussed. But more importantly, a picture of Canada as a dynamic, vital, and unique society has hopefully emerged from this exposition. Because Canada contains a mix of ideologies, its own ideology will tend to evolve more rapidly than that of the mono-ideological United States. Already Socialism, seen by many as the ideological successor to Liberalism, just as Liberalism succeeded Conservatism in the 17th and 18th centuries, is taking shape as an important component of the emerging ideology of Canada.
For Americans, ideological analysis poses a serious challenge. This will be viewed by many as a serious threat, or more likely, because of the immense power of the United States' mass-culture and economy, it will be ignored. Americans tend to be mono-ideological, and like the big gradeschooler on the playground, will take the path of least resistance, heedless of the damage they do to others, or even of the potential those others have as true friends. In a recent newspaper article, a White House spokesperson threatened a blockade of Cuba: “That’s obviously one of the options that we would look at in the future as we see whether or not Castro begins to make some legitimate movement toward democracy.” (Fowler, p. A-1) Why do Americans feel justified in forcing Cuba towards their form of government, without even asking the Cuban people? Again, this attitude is symptomatic of mono-ideological culture. When someone or something does resist the American worldview, Americans chafe noticeably. The same situation exists in a more subtle form in Canada. Canada is a vital culture, and potentially very different culture from America. With no effort, in fact simply by following its natural inclination, the U.S. could make Canada just like itself in a matter of decades. Americans are only now beginning to wake up to the damage its companies have done to the world ecology. The next challenge is to realize the damage they are doing in the realm of ideas: simply put, to be open, to learn and to grow.

Canadians, for their part, especially the Anglophones, must realize the value and uniqueness of their own culture, or it could go the way of the dodo. The Anglophone Canadian problem is that American Liberalism certainly is a part of their heritage, and the most modern part; but this has the effect of burying those things that make them unique. Because they are infected by the mono-ideological culture of Americanism, many Anglophone Canadians have given up hope of finding uniqueness in themselves, or are tired of wondering about differences that seem to make no sense. But this process of discovery is rather important. If Canadians begin to discover their own ideological uniqueness and realize its potential, the results could prove very interesting indeed.

REFERENCES


