

The Un-American Conservatives

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IF I WERE an Angry Young American Conservative, or a Tired Old one for that matter, my view of the strange antics of my so-called conservative confreres to the north of the U.S.-Canadian border would not exactly sweeten or comfort my disposition. Indeed the cold crisp air up thisaway in Canada only brings into so much sharper perspective the infuriating image of what must seem to be a conservative world congenitally distorted. For what else could an innocent American conservative make of true-blue Tories apparently busy as beavers throughout their Dominion earning a perfectly splendid ADA rating? As oddly consistent as they are determined, for example, in building a domestic policy of stronger-ever-stronger federal government over the protests of "states' rights," and in blueprinting a foreign policy of truck and trade with international communism.

It is self-evident then that there has to

be some kind of root difference, something more than idiosyncrasy, between a stalwart conservative of the American Republic and his counterpart of the Dominion of Canada. What is not so evident, perhaps because the naively simple seldom is, is really nothing more subtle than that one is a good American and the other is a good Canadian! They are so different precisely because they are both conservatives with the same fundamental conservative instincts: they act so differently only because they are reacting to "conserve" their respective societies against threats and dangers that are quite totally distinguishable.

The American Right is occupied with two broad areas of worry and concern—the insidious pull of liberal socialism at home, and the overt thrust of totalitarian communism abroad. These are the proper concerns of members of the Western World's most gigantic society and mightiest leader. But for the citizen of a small

country and a junior middle-power everything is on an incomparably reduced scale. Except for his worries, which—to him—loom every bit as large.

So, while the right-of-center American fights for the preservation of democracy across the wide world and of the American way of life internally, the Canadian's struggle is for the very survival of his homeland on the North American Continent and for his Canadian way of life within it. The fear that troubles him most is the rather natural fear of a Lilliputian for a Gulliver, and the darkest shadow over him is actually cast by the (friendly) American giant right across his back fence.

This is not to suggest that the Canadian conservative really believes that this giant is prowling voraciously just below the border. But smothering to death under the caress of a Jolly-Green-Giant is not a particularly consoling notion—nor is the acute awareness that certain fellow-Canadians are actively encouraging the courtship. It is the Canadian Liberal Party's affinity for liberal Americanism, and its cozy ties to the Washington liberal establishment that presents the "clear and present danger" for a Canadian of conservative faith.

Throughout long history the Canadian Liberal Party has always been the "pro-America" party and rather less than lukewarm to the British tradition cherished by Canadian Tories. Its modern record is firm and consistent—all the way from scourging the U.K. over Suez to scuttling the union-jack as part of Canada's national flag and making noises in favor of "republicanism." Its base economic thesis countenances a form of "continentalism" which would do away with the U.S. Canadian border, and its socio-political philosophy is close enough to U.S. liberalism to warrant investigation under breach-of-copy-

right laws. (Liberal Leader Lester Pearson has, for example, copycatted Kennedy's Peace Corps to the letter and Johnson's War On Poverty verbatim.) Allied for so long with Washington's entrenched liberal camp—and remember that liberal administrations have governed in both national capitals for nigh on 30 continuous years—Canada's Liberals give the impression of half-hankering for some form of American-Canadian assimilation.

All of it is anathema to the Canadian Conservative Party. In *its* bones is the instinct to complete the job started by its United Empire Loyalist ancestors when they moved out of the revolutionary American Colonies to found "British North America." All but a century ago the proudest "Fathers of the Canadian Confederation" were the Conservatives, and nowadays their *raison d'être* is to fulfill their historical commitment to perpetuate a sovereign nation on the North American Continent with a distinct identity which is non-American.

So, since the Canadian Liberal Party represents liberal socialism as a matter of political ideology, and liberal Americanism as a matter of national philosophy, Canadian Conservatives find themselves involved in a rearguard action against what they sense to be the "Americanization" of their beloved Dominion . . . and a liberal Americanization at that. Their spiritual opposition, often aggressive in nature, has been quite unfairly labelled anti-American when it is truthfully no more than *un-American*.

This devotion to the preservation of Canada and Canadianism has become markedly more stern, too, in response to the threat to their "single-nation" concept posed by the emergence of a virulently "separatist" French-Canada. Quebec's dramatic demands for near-absolute autonomy and complete economic, social, and cultural separation from federal centralism

present a grave danger to the continuation of the Confederation itself. Imagine, if you will, a huge chunk of the American republic, such as the South, deciding to go it alone by ousting Washington from such fields as taxation and social security, by taking over independent social and economic development through the process of state-ownership of industry, and by kicking against such federal prerogatives as treaty-making with foreign powers. The reaction of Anglo-Liberals has taken the form of a newly-invented system they call "co-operative federalism" which seems to involve much "co-operation" and precious little "federalism." The Anglo-Conservatives view this as a (garden) path down which the Canadian Confederation will be led into wholesale fragmentation.

It is in an energetic attempt to reverse this course, and to head-off a Canada weakened by splintering, that the Canadian Conservative Party is so frantic in turning its road-signs away from "states' rights" and all toward central authority and more and stronger federal government.

While the Canadian Tory's desperation to keep his country "in one piece" explains his un-conservative position on big central government on the home front, it is his ultra-Canadianism that is responsible for his un-American (as opposed to anti-American) position on the international front. His basic right-of-center thinking, which brings him into fellowship with the American Right on such issues as Communist slave-state imperialism, West Germany, and Vietnam—and into conflict with the American Left on the United Nations—is wholly overtaken by his fundamental Canadianism in all matters which affect, or which he believes could affect, *Canada's independence on the North American Continent.*

If the U.S.A.'s political influence on

Canada's affairs is only an indirect one resulting from the unhealthy affinity between liberal establishments in Washington and Ottawa, its economic hold is very direct and very real. It is a hard fact that private U.S. investment in Canada is such that Americans actually *own* Canada's industry—certainly as much as 60 percent of its key manufacturing operations and over 90 percent of its automobile, rubber, and petroleum enterprises. These private strings on Canada's economy, which are hardly calculated to make Canadians feel comfortable at any time, have become intolerably tight and binding under the pull of the muscle-power of U.S. government. Authoritarian orders from Washington to U.S. parent-corporations passed along, under instructions, to their Canadian-based subsidiaries result in the unhappy spectacle of Canadian businesses, located in Canada, and growing fat on Canada's resources, jumping to the dictates of *American* economic and political policy.

The superimposition of Big Brother Johnson's investment "guidelines" on Canadian-operated subsidiaries is just the latest in a long series of incidents of the application of U.S. power extra-territorially into Canada. And while this particular exercise stems from a genuine conflict of economic interests in which U.S. economic health is at stake, there have been other occasions when U.S. political considerations alone have intruded into Canadians' lives. When, for instance, the powers in Washington, in pursuance of U.S. political determinations, banned Canadian subsidiary manufacturers from filling automobile orders contracted for by the Canadian government in pursuance of a Canadian political decision. Rubber products and canned goods for Cuba, chemicals and flour for China, have all fallen under this direct ban—in accordance with the laws of the U.S.A.—and wheat shipments have been

indirectly sabotaged by Washington-imposed restrictions on rolling-stock and box-cars ready and available across the border. Self-respecting Canadians of all political stripes, pro-American or otherwise, in favor of trade with communism or not, have come to resent this clear breach of Canadian sovereignty by an outside power.

Conservatives in Canada concede that the propriety of trading with international communism is a fitting subject for debate—even when it is in food for starving Chinese peasants and non-strategic goods for suffering Cubans (which, in passing, is of less volume than that flowing from the U.S.A. itself). The bitter irony in the debate for Canadians, incidentally, is that they would have had no need even to contemplate wheat exports to China in the first place had it not been for the ever-gaping deficit in their trade-balance which results from the massive outflow of Canadian wealth to American importers and investors. But while they understand that the U.S.A. must look to U.S. interests, and don't deny Americans the right to quarrel with Canadian decisions, they do deny Washington's right to interfere physically with the implementation of decisions "Made In Canada" to serve Canada's interests—especially to extend U.S. law over the border to private business corporations resident in Canada which happen to be controlled by U.S. personal capital.

Another area of contention is the unilateral application of the U.S.A.'s Monroe Doctrine over the entire American Continent. When Conservative Prime Minister Diefenbaker ignored the military necessities of the Cuban crisis by sulking over the diplomatic niceties of "prior consultation" and delayed mobilization of Canada's nuclear defense system, this was regarded even in Canada as an extreme demonstration of national sensitivity. (It eventually led to desertions from Diefenbaker's own

cabinet and the downfall of his government.) But it was part and parcel of the same sensitivity which makes Canadian conservatives hesitate to endorse Johnson's intervention in the Dominican Republic. Their doubts are not so much over Washington's actual judgment as over its claim of the unilateral right to make that judgment. Does it claim the same right to send the marines into Canada's part of the American mainland?

Add to this indignation over Washington's tendency to over-ride Canada's economic and political sovereignty, quite personal antagonisms provoked by the U.S. liberal establishment's occasional interventions into Canada's Parliamentary elections. The bad blood between the Kennedy Administration and the Diefenbaker government was not entirely due to the instinctive hostility of Tory John Diefenbaker. The unmasking of JFK's personal poll-manipulator, Lou Harris, in Canada incognito on a secret mission for the Canadian Liberal Party: public broadsides from the U.S. State Department in contradiction of Conservative campaign material: private briefings for the Canadian liberal press clandestinely arranged in the basement of the U.S. Embassy at Ottawa—all this did nothing to warm the Canadian Conservative Party to a pro-American disposition.

Take these things into consideration and you uncover the cause of much of Canadian conservatism's strategy that must bewilder and irritate its right-wing friends and allies within the American Republic. But take away special issues which touch upon the preservation of the Dominion of Canada on the North American Continent it shares with its good neighbor, and you find Canadian Conservatives lining up four-square with the American Right.

While youthful Canadian liberal socialists convene teach-ins to protest Ameri-

can "aggression" in Vietnam, Young Tory Organizations pass resolutions for the raising of a Canadian military force to march alongside American GIs in that distant battlefield. While full-grown Liberals genuflect to the holy-of-holy United Nations, adult Conservatives stand up to be counted as heretics. While left-of-center members of the Parliamentary Liberal Party strive to make good Lester Pearson's public boast that there is no difference between his party's domestic policies and those of the New Democratic Party socialists, Her Majesty's Loyal Conservative Opposition strains mightily to defeat his complete-welfare-state legislation.

Conservatives then are in the thick of the familiar fight against the spread of statism and liberal socialism that already threatens the citizen with loss of individual freedoms and lackluster conformity. Their fight is against such recognizable specters as bureaucratic "management" of our lives; against official do-goodism running rampant, and egalitarianism running riot; against fancy sociological theorizing in education, law and order, crime and punish-

ment. Their struggle is for balance between the lonely individual and the omnipotent state; for quality as well as equality in the social order; for a return to fundamental standards—and for the elimination of double standards.

Of course, the official Canadian Conservative Party, as a political machine, does not exactly send the ideological conservative, as a political intellectual, into uncritical ecstasies, any more than the U.S. Republican Party always enchants the right-of-center American. Genuine Canadian Conservatives have their problems—and some very special ones too, by reason of their particular birthright as good Canadians in the midst of a predominantly American continent. But they are trying to hang in there with courage and determination for the cause of conservatism and Canadianism alike.

They may seem to strain excessively at times to wear a label that must not bear the legend "Made In The U.S.A.," but let there be no doubt that they are staunch small-c conservatives no less because they happen to be stalwart capital-C Canadians.