

Laxers hit Liberals for sell out of Canada

"The failure of Liberalism in Canada: The Liberal Idea of Canada" by James and Rober Layer

reviewed by Doug Smith of the Manitoban for Canadian University Press

When Pierre Trudeau became prime minister more than nine years ago, most Canadians expected a lot out of a man who made no promises.

He was to usher in a Just Society, he was to cement Canadian unity in the spirit of Expo 67, and do away with poverty.

But, as James and Robert Laxer point out in this brilliant analysis of the crisis facing Canada, he has

been one of the most dogmatic of Canadian politicians, holding the country together by rifle point in 1970 only to lose it in the ballot box in 1976.

After a decade, the poor are still with us and the army of unemployed is growing. And a reckless economic policy, based on the ruthless exportation of natural resources, has led to an economic crisis severe enough to warrant the imposition of an almost universally detested incomes policy.

What has happened, the Laxers argue, is the failure of the liberal idea of Canada. This idea is based on a belief that free market competition is driving man toward an ever glorious future.

The Liberals have convinced workers to submit to a country run by large corporations in return for the stability it offers. And they have convinced the French-Canadians to accept the extinguishment of their nationalistic aspirations, in exchange for language rights outside of Quebec.

In every one of these compromises the liberals have dangled a carrot in the future.

But in 1975 the Liberals came to the startling conclusion that the future isn't what it used to be, that Canadians would have to start cutting down.

The Laxers trace the economic crisis to the so-called energy crisis of the early 1970s, when it became apparent Canadians would no longer be able to export oil and natural gas at the rates anticipated.

The high level of exports had been counted on to balance Canada's inordinate dependence on the import of manufactured goods from the United States.

It is this balance of trade crisis, not inflation, which the Laxers see as the primary cause of wage and price controls. With wage and price controls has come the rhetoric of decreased expectations; a rhetoric that has gained support because of the simultaneous growth of ecologically-oriented thought.

The crisis in Quebec comes from the Liberals' inability to deal with

the new Quebec nationalism. Trudeau associates it, the Laxers say, with the old conservative nationalism of his youth.

The old nationalism was centered around the Church and projected an image of the Quebecois as rural hewers of wood and drawers of water. Trudeau sees himself as the unemotional technocrat who must put the unrealistic nationalist dreamers in their place.

Instead of falling into the usual fallacy of seeing Trudeau, the man of intellect, pitted against Levesque, the man of heart, in a battle for the future of the country, the Laxers fasten on the PQ's own technocrat, Claude Morin.

Morin does not anticipate an economically independent Quebec: this is the reason why Levesque made his famous trip to New York. The PQ will not bring to an end the branch-plant economy in Quebec;

instead it will concentrate on ensuring Quebec's cultural survival.

The Laxers doubt the ability of the Quebec government to maintain the cultural independence it seeks, without a corresponding economic independence. They point out that Canada's political independence becomes more precarious the longer we remain tied to the plummeting American star.

The idea of a politically and economically independent country north of the United States is still highly attractive. But it is only possible, the Laxers suspect, if there is a major reordering of confederation to allow the people of Quebec more autonomy.

The way to economic independence, they suggest, lies through the revival of Canada's tradition of public enterprise and the nationalization of many of our resource industries.



Medicine as religion

"The Theology of Medicine" By Thomas Szasz

reviewed by Patricia Moser of the Silhouette For Canadian University Press

He stresses the point that physicians should not be able to impose treatment on anyone and if a person wishes to be left alone they should be allowed to exercise this right.

One of the areas which Szasz discusses with respect to, infringement on human rights is the much-talked-about subject of legalization of drugs. With a very forceful and convincing argument he states that it is none of the government's business what drug he puts into his body.

It is a book which should be read, if not to gain insight into the power of the medical profession, to obtain an alternative view as to how it should be regarded. As Szasz states:

"Formerly, people victimized themselves by attributing medical powers to their priests; now they victimize themselves by attributing magical powers to their physicians."

"In a conflict between the individual and the state, where should the former's autonomy end and the latter's right to intervene begin?" This is just one of the many plaguing questions which is presented and discussed in Thomas Szasz' most recent book, *The Theology of Medicine*.

Szasz, a controversial figure in the field of psychology, presents many novel ideas about various areas of the medical field. Throughout the book Szasz states that society has made an error by raising physicians to a demi-god level, thus allowing them to infringe on the basic human rights of all individuals.

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