

An Academic Bay of Pigs

By ROBIN MATHEWS

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Perhaps the biggest joke in Canadian publishing so far this year is the first issue of The Canadian Review of American Studies. Canada desperately needs journals in many areas of Canadian studies.

A Canadian publication on U.S. (and Canadian/U.S.) affairs would be useful if it was a dynamic expression of Canadian perception. It would, I suspect, have to be anti-imperialist, to possess a truly Canadian perspective. Like the Canadian American Committee, however, the Canadian Review of American Studies engages in the erasure of Canadian uniqueness.

It wishes to show what the two countries "share". It does not declare the presence of the American Empire, but it supports the American Empire. The general propulsion of the Review is to swallow Canada and to burp the American Dream.

A Canadian journal of U.S. studies should be something very different from a journal or review produced by Americans and colonials in the U.S. and Canada to shape and serve continentalists and continental integration.

York's financial support

The universities of McMaster, Manitoba, Toronto, Western Ontario, and York didn't think so, as their financial support showed. Every Manhattan has its Canadian ice breaker. Perhaps especially fitting is the University of Toronto contribution, since The University of Toronto Quarterly I am told, recently refused an article on Canadian Literature with the excuse that it doesn't publish articles on Canadian literature. The University of Toronto tries not to teach Canadian literature either, as a glance at their calendars will show.

One of the reasons I am reviewing this latest cultural gunboat in the harbour of Canadian colonial restlessness is that there are "three reviews of Mathews and Steele". In fact there are four, but the fourth so clearly does not even pretend to consider the issue that it is set apart at the end of the issue, the final blow, one might say, at anyone who would be ridiculous enough to address the subject seriously.

It is yet another one of the standard academic "satires", based upon the idea that the concern with the right of Canadians to a majority in their own higher educational institutions is folly. And so it assumes, also, that some proportional representation that would treat aliens generously and provide international differences of understanding is so ludicrous a suggestion that one can only laugh at it.

McGill goes American

Who are Canadians that they think the Canadian university should be largely Canadian? The dreary satire out of McGill University — soon to be re-named "The American University of Quebec" — was reprinted from the McGill Reporter especially to adorn the first issue. A recent U.S. draft dodger publication in my possession reports, happily, that McGill has now between twenty and thirty per cent U.S. students. To hell with the French Canadians; to hell with the English Canadians. Clearly McGill is trying to bring the student body into line with the proportions of faculty in some of the more "advanced" departments.

To describe the publication as the latest cultural gunboat in the harbour of Canadian colonial restlessness as above will offend Joseph Gold, one of the reviewers, who doesn't believe U.S. takeover should be described as U.S. imperialism. "Certainly," he says, "to introduce a phrase like 'American Imperialism' into this discussion is inaccurate, unwise and unjustifiable." And he suggests that Mathews and Steele really caused the heat in the debate. Also, we remember, forty-seven suspected communists caused thousands of U.S. paratroops to drop into the Dominican Republic.

Cultural gunboat

Why is the publication a cultural gunboat? It is an act of arrogance at a time when studies of the U.S. multiply with such rapidity no one can keep up with them and when whole major areas of Canadian

thought and information desperately need journals. Moreover, the editor is a U.S. citizen. The association executive is heavily American. So is the Editorial Board. Characteristic of many non-Canadians in Canadian universities, the group has pursued a U.S. interest which is unnecessary in Canada, instead of developing a journal in an area of pressing interest to Canada. The first three articles (two of which are "scholarly") are by U.S. citizens. The publication is generally pro-U.S. in the way that is anti-Canada.

F.H. Matthews

F.H. Matthews, of York's History Department, in the first article on cultural pluralism and cultural relativism, has sixty-eight footnotes and says the U.S. has been marked by people who wanted homogenization and people who wanted pluralism. One group, desiring Americanization (you are intended to read Canadianization), the bad guys, "was a monument of naive environmentalism — in the melting pot, Southern and Eastern Europeans were to be sweated clean of clinging cultural traits. . ."

We are asked to believe that culture is not nearly as fixed as we believed a few years ago. Though Ruth Benedict declared that destroying a culture was near to delayed genocide, hers was a "doctrine of a transitional period," which was passed through to "a 'post-modern' age in which the establishment of universal categories of analysis will gradually increase the power to create rationally planned cultures producing maximum happiness and efficiency at the minimum cost in tension and hostility."

If the reader doesn't know what is going on yet, F.H. Matthews says: "Margaret Mead concluded from her re-study of the Manus of New Guinea, who had Westernized rapidly between 1930 and 1950, that in many cases cultures could transform themselves with amazing speed and relatively little psychic stress."

Inconsistent analysis

In other words, why fuss about Canadianization when Canada can be made a part of the U.S. "with amazing speed and relatively little psychic stress"? Professor F.H. Matthews' article doesn't hold up on its own terms. So-called primitive societies are not like the others, as Vietnam has proved.

Moreover, his comments about the U.S. are so depoliticized as to be almost meaningless in relation to serious U.S. intellectual history. As an attack upon the de-Canadianization issue, Professor F.H. Matthews' article would have made considerably more sense, as would the McGill "satire" already mentioned, if Steele and I had co-operated with the editors.

We were invited repeatedly to write the

central article, around which the others — on the subject of cultural nationalism — would be arranged. In fact the editors took for granted, when they first asked, that we were "in the bag". We refused because we dislike the term cultural nationalism as a phrase to describe Canada's present fight for survival and prefer to speak of a political and economic imperial/colonial problem. Moreover, we refused to place ourselves in the position of permitting people whom we knew were aggressively opposed to our position to "arrange" the forum from which we would be "handled".

Quite clearly we were wise. The Canadian Review of American Studies (CRASS, for short) rigs an assassination of the de-Canadianization question, but it does not, at least, have Matthews and Steele appearing to give murder an apparent sanction.

Who was Ethan Allen?

The next article about Ethan Allen, written by U.S. citizen John Ditsky, is less subtle in intent and even more obviously bizarre in statement. Ethan Allen was one of the Americans who believed God designed Manifest Destiny and the Munroe Doctrine. That was in the eighteenth century. The writer of the article, John Ditsky, is therefore in an old tradition.

But Ethan Allen is useful in this issue (and doubtless will be in subsequent issues too) of CRASS. For he was involved in Canadian history, having once attacked Montreal. Ditsky's reading of Canadian history has the stamp of much U.S. imperial expression in Canada. He is not wrong when he is at his best. His statements are simply so tortured they merely gesture towards real history. The loyalist population, he tells us, effectively ended "the threat of French enlistment in the American separation." He says nothing, of course, about the traditional French-Canadian *rejet des Etats-Unis*.

He says nothing of post-conquest attitudes generated among the French-Canadians themselves. He says nothing of French-Canadian conservatism. He simply leaves out ninety per cent of history. One is to believe that the French in Canada would have embraced the U.S. if it had not been for the enemy, Britain, supported by the UEL. But he goes on steering the cultural gunboat into the Canadian harbour. What became of Canadian history?

"By denouncing revolution in favour of enforced union with the Crown, Canadians decided to delay as well the acquisition of that fringe benefit of independence, national 'character,' until some more settled time, and by means of peaceful relinquishments of power on the part of gentlemen, instead of by violent seizure of it by rebels."

Canadian history for whom

The imperialist U.S. myth continues. Poor Canada fell into "enforced union" with Britain (though really slaving to be a part

of the U.S.), and thereby got no national "character", since no country can have a national character unless it has an American Revolution.

The article by Mr. Ditsky is dreary and uninformed. And, of course, even in the present frantic violent insanity of the U.S., Mr. Ditsky will have Canada homogenized into the Empire. Thus we are informed that we "share" today the fact that "collapse is a distinct possibility on both sides of the border". And we share, too, "the disinterested caring by tolerant men" (who cut oil quotas for coercive purposes) "above and beyond the idiocies sired by the sense of flags."

Professor Steele and I have never been in favour of a quota system on foreign scholars. The present issue of CRASS, however, brings me closer to the sense of a need for a quota system than I have ever been before.

Virginia Rock — more of both

The third article is a tentative report on U.S. and Canadian courses. The conclusion, as one might have wagered had one been drunk, a U.S. citizen without sleep for 72 hours, and fresh arrived from a CIA crash course, is that the writers "wonder if the data doesn't suggest that both Canadian and American materials, particularly at the upper-division and graduate levels, are not insufficiently attended to in Canadian universities." The writers are Wayne Cole, Virginia Rock, and Robert L. White.

One need not say much about the "Reviews" of Matthews and Steele. They are transparent. Garth Jowett's article contains errors of fact, but that is a small thing. If no other sign were needed, Mr. Jowett describes the incredibly splenic letter of Ramsay Cook in Canadian Forum as "a remarkably lucid letter". That is the letter in which Professor Cook called the people concerned with de-Canadianization "second-raters" and the issue a natural extension of the black power movement.

By contrast MacLennan responds "loudly", the problem of de-Canadianization "remains one of pure speculation", the MacKinnon/Brown survey of Political Science is "rather suspect". Lewis Hertzman, who declared the debate a non-issue, is quoted without modifying adjectives. Ramsay Cook is "lucid". There is no evidence that "foreign invasion" (to use Claude Bissell's phrase) is detrimental.

Mr. Jowett even makes the inexcusable error of saying: "as usual, DBS do not keep statistics of a personal nature, such as the citizenship of professors." DBS, in fact, has been trying to collect that information recently. Citizenship is a legal status and a matter not of personal but of public information. Garth Jowett is a Canadian doing graduate work in history at the University of Pennsylvania. I would be interested to know by what route his article landed on the editors' desk.

Talk and pray

Joseph Gold writes a pleasant little piece of sentimentalism containing the sentence already quoted, disdaining the phrase "American Imperialism" as "inaccurate, unwise and unjustifiable." What we must do, he urges, is talk amiably, think generously, pray.

Somehow, there is an article which obviously got into the book by mistake. It is by Ronald Bates. He is neither a U.S. citizen nor a colonial. He sees the problem in a large perspective. He can spot the imperialists and the cultural colonials like Robert Fulford. He knows what the problem is, and he doesn't try to lie. But I have been told, by way of explanation, that occasionally a Canadian is published in a U.S. journal even when it originates in the USA.

I began this review by saying that the Canadian Review of American Studies is a joke. It is really a tragedy. It contains almost every bad characteristic Americans are accused of in Canada. It attracts colonials. It attempts to homogenize the two countries. It condescends to Canadian problems and is blind to Canadian needs. It huddles U.S. people together in positions of patronage. That is a tragedy because there are many, many U.S. citizens in Canada of whom the publication is no way representative.



Branch-planting in the intellectual colonial garden.