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Marginal Politics

by Gordon Boulter

Canada is a democracy. Therefore the national political parties in Canada are similar. This was the opinion expressed by Professor Baird of the Political Economy Department at SCM prof talk, Friday. Parties in Canada are opportunistic, in contrast to the parties of principle in Europe. Canadian parties would rather be in office than be right.

"Our electoral system is responsible for lack of principle in parties. To succeed at all, a party must succeed vastly. So principle is dropped to gain numbers. But this is just as well since there is no principle worth basing a party on."

Dr. Baird commented on the intellectual and student bias against opportunistic, pragmatic parties; "Those who knock opportunistic parties are knocking democracy in which parties are supposed to be responsive to the people. Democracy is not that great, but it is worth something."

NO FUNDAMENTAL ANTAGONISMS

Other factors contribute to the almost indistinguishable alignment of Canadian parties at the center of the political spectrum. Canadians are much alike. No fundamental antagonisms between atheistic and theistic Socialists, and between Conservatives and Socialists, appear in Canada as they do in France. Secondly, there are fewer differences in wealth among Canadians.

However, the two political systems, Canadian and European, achieve essentially the same results. In Canada compromise precedes an election,

in Europe compromise comes after an election; in the form of a coalition.

MARGINAL DIFFERENCES

Despite the basic similarity of Canadian parties some marginal differences in principle exist. "For example, there will always be a CBC. But it will be more vigorous if the Liberals or the New Democrats are in power than if the Social Credits or Conservatives are."

In characterizing a party attention should be paid to what the party does in concrete or particular rather than what the party says in its platform or through speeches. "The platform is the last place I would look in considering a party's philosophy." In this regard Dr. Baird said the Social Credit party should be judged on its actions, not on the beliefs of Aberhart. "The public policy of Alberta is similar to that of Saskatchewan, the best-governed place on earth."

The traditional terms "liberal" and "conservative" break down when the real situation in Canada is considered. "It is more realistic to term the Conservatives aristocratic and the NDP and the Liberals egalitarian. Social Credit and Conservatives are traditionalists while the Liberals and NDP are rationalists."

But political parties in Canada are little different, concluded Dr. Baird. All parties endorse welfare state, aid to agriculture, full-employment, economic growth and socialism. Marx's influence is a determining factor in this. "There is no one who is not a Marxist more or less. But Keynes has meant the end of Marx. Parties concentrate on control of industry rather than absolute ownership."

Peacable Partisans

(Continued from Page 1)

of power. Pointing to the peace that prevailed during the periods of the Roman Empire and British Empire, he noted that "Peace prevailed because there was overwhelming force at the centre."

Peace will therefore be endangered by anarchy, he said. "Peace will always be in danger as long as there is no central authority strong enough to maintain strength as against one or all others." How would such a pre-eminence of power be brought about, he asked. "The ultimate solution must be international security force under world government. But this is some considerable distance in the future."

AMERICAN POWER

The best hope for peace now, Mr. Dean went on, is the overwhelming preponderance of American international strength, which preserves a semblance of international order. "The U.S. today wields enough power to keep the peace. This is an insufficiently secure basis, and only a temporary expedient." Eventually, he said, "the most promising hope is for international rule of law and order," that will grow out of the Western Alliance and a drastically reworked United Nations. "My hope is that the United States will have the will and determination to use her power for the benefit of peace," he concluded.

Professor Linton could not agree. "I find myself in total disagreement with the press," he started off. "I would fear the thought of a world dominated by America."

"The time has come in history when man can be rational. For the first time, man is in a position to shape his change. We need a complete reversal of our concepts of

foreign policy, so as to make room for peaceful means of promoting change," he said.

The West has been unduly hostile to change, he commented. "What we call the Cold War is largely a question of change. Our Cold War attitude has been a negative one. We do not control history." So too is our anti-Communist attitude incorrect, he said. "It is ridiculous to speak of containment of Communism," he concluded.

There was a short intermission, during which a collection was taken. Dr. Alcock commented that people tended to be friendly towards the concept of peace research until they were approached for financial contributions. "Perhaps your first direction of research should be in finding out how to pacify the public, when going to it for money," Dr. Linton cracked.

Mr. Dean kicked off the informal forum. "At the Journal we don't have much faith in attitude surveys, any more," he told Dr. Alcock. "We took a survey that disclosed that the comic strip Pogo was unpopular. But when we tried to take it out of the paper, we were deluged with protests!"

MANKIND'S CHANCES

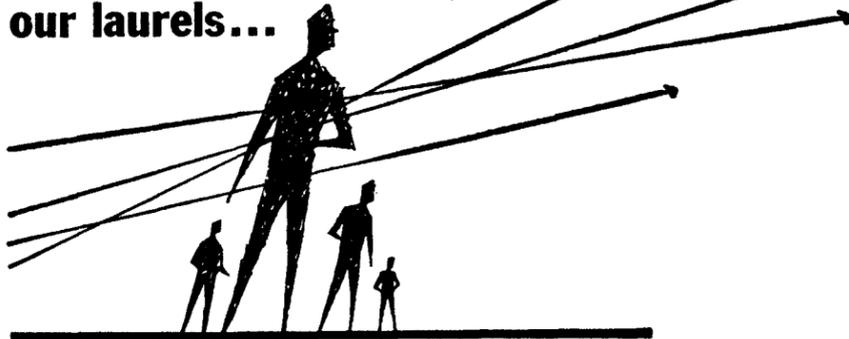
Dr. Alcock was asked what he thought mankind's prospects for the future were. "Myself, I would say that the odds are 2-1 against humanity at the moment," he answered.

Several members of the audience, aware that Mr. Dean has criticized the CAPRI on prior occasions in The Journal, tried needling him. "Now that we have discussed the matter, do you consider the idea of peace research to be good?" asked Professor Hedges of the economics department. "If so, will the Journal now use its resources to promote it?" "The Journal will use its resources for the good of mankind," answered Mr. Dean, crisply. "Baloney!" shouted a heckler.

"Who are the 'we' at the Journal you keep referring to, Mr. Dean," asked a questioner. "I will be happy to discuss the internal affairs of the Journal with any person, privately, in the Journal offices," the Publisher shot back.

The meeting which was well-attended, was moderated by Dr. L. H. Cragg, Vice-President of the university.

We haven't time to rest on our laurels...



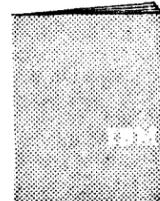
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