

REVIEWS



Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada Seymour Martin Lipset

New York: Routledge, 1990, 337 pp.,
\$35.00, cloth

Rumours of Canada's imminent demise are flourishing south of the border following the failure of Newfoundland and Manitoba to vote for ratification of the Meech Lake accords. Many analysts are jumping to the pessimistic conclusion that Canada's days as a unified nation-state are numbered; that first Quebec and later other provinces will go their own way or join the giant to the south.

In this context the differences between the Quebecois and other Canadians, or those between Anglophone and Francophone Canadians take centre stage in current and historical studies of Canada. The similarities between Americans and Anglophone Canadians are usually taken for granted. For Canadians in need of an elixir that reaffirms their identity as a people distinct from Americans, Seymour Martin Lipset provides it in *Continental Divide*.

Lipset theorizes that the multitude of differences between Canada and the United States, two "complex, continent-spanning federal unions marked by great social heterogeneity and economic diversity," stem from the contrasting circumstances of their births. Variations in governmental structure, institutions, policies, values and public opinion on a host of topics are traced to their origins as nations.

The United States, the product of a revolt against Mother Britain remains suspicious of government, rejects aristocratic notions, and is fervently devoted to the rights of the individual. Canada slowly evolved into a nation, long

clinging to the same parent the US rejected. Canadians, as a consequence, are more respectful of authority – both governmental and that flowing from class position – and persistently protective of groups' rights.

Lipset acknowledges the role of variation in geography, climate, demography, and economics in forging the present condition of the two states. Yet he supports his theory with an impressively broad array of evidence, ranging from economic data to literary criticism to public opinion polls. He argues that differences in welfare policy, education, religion, societal violence, national heroes, regional identification, and many others all stem to one degree or another from America's revolutionary genesis and Canada's anti-revolutionary foundation. Some of the differences are very small, others, like the sharp contrast in accessibility of health care, indicate seriously different societal choices.

While Lipset overuses the explanatory power of his theory, even if he is right only part of the time, his work deserves serious thought. Lipset weaves two tapestries, profoundly different in their intricate design, that appear at first glance to be remarkably similar. The book's main contribution may be more his insightful description of the differences that permeate each nation's identity, rather than his theory of their origins. – *Marie Isabelle Chevrier*

Ms. Chevrier is a doctoral candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. An American, she counts among her grandparents the first Francophone mayor of Casselman, Ontario; a Scottish Tory; and German immigrants to Nebraska.

Damn the Torpedoes: My Fight to Unify Canada's Armed Forces Paul Hellyer

Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990,
306 pp., \$29.95, cloth

The problem facing any memoir writer is how to deal with the extraordinary mass of events that

make up a hectic life. Good memoirs read like novels, not like an exhaustive mining of private journals and cabinet minutes. If no way is found to accomplish this, the reader is left with the morass of details and confusion that make up day-to-day existence. For the reader, a work that does not transmute life into art becomes exhausting. It is difficult in Mr. Hellyer's book to gauge how he feels about any subject; they all seem to be treated equally, only some go on much longer.

This is, of course, literary criticism. But it is the first means to deal with the problems of this book. I know not everyone can write memoirs like Charles Ritchie (it would be wonderful if they could) but prolixity and sloppiness seem to be the hallmarks of this book. While discussing the introduction of Bill C-243, the unification bill, Paul Hellyer recounts the story of how Elgin Armstrong, deputy minister of National Defence, came to see him to discuss the minister's draft speech:

He was extremely nervous as he sat down opposite me and finally, ashen-faced, told me clearly and unequivocally that the second, and central, section was unacceptably bad... "In that case," I said, "we will have to do it over again."

Mr. Hellyer needs a firm editorial hand.

In addition, Prime Minister Mike Pearson's initials never were "LPB," and as for calling Judy LaMarsh "the one and only" more than once... And since I am carping about minor details: Ron Sutherland and R.J. Sutherland are two different people, but the indexer missed that, as well as getting numerous page references wrong.

"My fight to unify Canada's armed forces" – the subtitle for this book – should really read: "My fight, and Bill Lee's." The fight itself is between two "idees fixes" – on the one side Paul Hellyer and Bill Lee and on the

other, Admirals Brock, Landymore and Dyer, Air Marshall Frank Miller and others. Bill Lee certainly played an enormous role in the whole unification debacle, though he seems to have been less Hellyer's Svengali than an extremely ambitious operator who was willing to play the Minister card as far as possible. Lee clearly believed that Hellyer would become Prime Minister and that he could help push his career.

Bill Lee is still remembered by many officers with particular loathing, and is reputed to have been somewhat of a trouble-maker even before he latched onto Hellyer (apparently he was involved in bringing in General Lauris Norstad to Canada during the time of the Diefenbaker government – a visit that contributed to the woes of a government already struggling with its own defence policy). During his stint as Hellyer's Executive Assistant, Lee seems to have become a sort of alter ego to the "MND," as he calls him.

The whole fight to unify the Armed Forces has passed into history: the Canadian Armed Forces were given one name; they were given unattractive "garbage bag" green uniforms (now replaced with distinctive uniforms once more) and the duplication and waste of three entirely separate services has dwindled to merely the duplication and waste of three inherently different services with one Chief of Defence Staff. Although the United States has never attempted unification (and probably never will), Paul Hellyer's term as Minister of National Defence saw the Canadian Armed Forces, above all the Navy, lose their traditional British character and style to become much more American.

What Hellyer never really seemed to understand during his battles with the Admirals, and with groups like "TRIO" (the "Tri-Service Identity Organization") was that the group loyalty and bonding that a clearly identifiable service and uniform pro-