

# Both Europe and Canada can benefit from the link

By Paul Pilisi

*"The Canadian Government recognizes the principle of a new Europe and fully supports it."*

Pierre Elliott Trudeau

The "contractual link" that has recently been established between Canada and the European Community would seem to be the beginning of a new phase in the external policy of The Nine. During the Sixties, the major interest of The Six was directed more towards the Third World. The Yaoundé Convention, which was confirmed as a result of the independence of the African countries concerned, in 1963 and 1969 respectively, established a model for co-operation between industrialized countries and developing countries. Since Britain's entry into the European Community, the three lesser communities (the European Economic Community - EEC, the European Coal and Steel Community - ECSC, and the European Atomic Energy Community - Euratom) have engaged in intense political and diplomatic activity to demonstrate the mutual advantage of such an association. The Yaoundé Convention reaffirmed the freedom of the associated countries, thereby precluding any interference with their political and economic independence.

*Convention reaffirmed freedom of countries*

The Yaoundé model of co-operation also served as an example for the establishment of the contractual link between Canada and the European Community. The Canada-Europe contractual link, however, represents the first treaty of its kind between an industrial country and The Nine. The agreement, a major objective of which is the broadening of economic and

trade relations between Canada and the three European communities (it also provides for increased sectoral co-operation with each of the member states in order to obtain special mutual advantages), may therefore serve equally well in its turn as a model for other agreements.

It should be noted that the recent treaty is the result of a multidimensional development of transatlantic relations that has taken place over a period of more than ten years.

## U.S. leadership

In the years following the Second World War, Canada supported American leadership in Western Europe in the interests of an economically, politically and militarily united Europe, capable of counterbalancing the power of the U.S.S.R. on the European continent. The outside influence of North America played an important role in initiating European integration. At the time of the Treaty of Rome, and at the end of the Fifties, transatlantic relations in the matter of European unity began to follow the "conflictual model". General de Gaulle's conception of Europe called America's leadership in Europe into question. De Gaulle's conception opposed the American idea of transforming the tripolar form of "Atlanticism" into a bipolar form. This bipolarization should have meant the immediate integration of Britain into The Six. Faced with this model of conflict, President Kennedy, at the beginning of the Sixties, suggested as an alternative solution partnership between Europe and North America.

Canada, tied by tradition to Britain and cut off from the Common Market, remained indifferent to this dispute, wishing to see Britain stay outside the European Community. Paradoxically, the

*Mr. Pilisi is Director of the History Section at the University of Quebec in Chicoutimi, and also teaches in the Social Science Department of Laval. He is the author of a number of articles on Europe and European unity. The views expressed here are those of the author.*