

## Is nationalism the last refuge?

by E. Nijenhuis

Thursday evening February 19, Prince Hall of King's College was the scene of another King's Debate. "Nationalism is the last Refuge of a Scoundrel" was the motion represented in the affirmative by Dr. Edgar Friedenberg of the Department of Education and Dr. John Godfrey of the Department of History. The negative position was represented by Mr. David Treleaven, President of the Committee for an Independent Canada, and Dr. Jonathan Wouk of the Department of Political Science. The Hon. George Mitchell, Nova Scotia Minister of Development, acted as Speaker of the House.

### Dr. Friedenberg (affirmative)

Nationalism could be seen as the primary source of identity for Canadians but according to Dr. Friedenberg, nationalism was not a valid way to derive a sense of identity. A more likely source would have been through local loyalties or personal associations. Nationalism has become a component of Canadian identity, because Canadians are a product of living in a Canadian context. Part of that context, indeed an important part of the Canadian heritage, was a tolerant social and cultural eclecticism. One reason that immigrants come here is because we are not stridently nationalistic.

According to Dr. Friedenberg, social and cultural autonomy is a different issue. Canadians should, and do, object to economic imperialism.

The crux of the issue at Canadian universities is the place of foreign intellectuals. Dr. Friedenberg argued that American intellectuals, who come here, do not represent U.S. interests: they just come here for the advantages of a continental job market - a privilege that Canadians enjoy as well.

### Mr. Treleaven (negative)

Mr. Treleaven said that he recognized the term "nationalism" has militaristic connotations for those of European origin. Patriotism as a pride in the nation, is a more acceptable term. The CIC (Canadians for an Independent Canada) is patriotic in this sense.

Many, of the ten thousand membership of the CIC, also belong to the World Federalist Organization. According to Mr. Treleaven, one must be a nationalist in order to be a World Federalist since Canada must be independent before it can play its full role.

Two examples cited by Mr. Treleaven are Canada's participation in the International Energy

Agency and the International Commission for the North West Atlantic Fisheries. In both of these cases the organizations are dominated by the U.S. In the first case, Canada's energy resources are opened to foreign use and investment without any real benefit to Canada. In the second case, Canada's fisheries could have been more beneficially managed by Canadians.

What Mr. Treleaven supports is defensive nationalism. This type is a world-wide phenomena of a pride in one's nation without the desire to dominate one's neighbors. Offensive nationalism is an attitude of willingness to use one's neighbors as a source of cheap labor and raw materials. Canada must protect itself from the aggressive nationalism of such countries as the United States.

### Dr. Godfrey (affirmative)

Dr. Godfrey sees nationalism as a megaphone: the voice of a national culture. In the case of the U.S., it is the voice of progress and technology. It is also the most pervasive because it is international in scope. That of the British is the parliamentary system of government and the Common Law judicial system. Canada has borrowed elements of each. If these are not enough, Dr. Godfrey suggested a sense of irony at being caught between opposing cultures. This should be based on a recognition of our national limitations and a sense of decency and tolerance. He said, "We should ask not who owns the Alberta tar sands, but whether we need them".

Dr. Godfrey accused the CIC of accepting the American model, such as the free enterprise system and being interested only in changing the nationality of the principal actors.

Dr. Godfrey summed up by saying that we in Canada have an opportunity to build a society without nationalism and that we would be better people for it.

### Dr. Wouk (negative)

Dr. Wouk asked, "Where would Nova Scotia be without Canada? The condition of Nova Scotia is that it is part of Canada". The phenomena of Canada is shaped by its people, cultures and economy. As such we should avoid accepting other people's models and look at what is inherently Canadian. He suggested that it must be based on something more substantial than a sense of irony or humour.

On the question of the place of foreign intellectuals in Canadian universities, he said that what he objects to is those, who come

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David Treleaven: Nationalism has militaristic connotations

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