Volume IV Number 6 July 1977

The Flow of Culture

Astute observers have noted that culture is recognizable, but undefinable. National or regional populations may be seen to be different from each other--indeed, certain indications may allow us correctly to deduce another person's geographical origins. However, no one can succeed in placing more than a fraction of those he meets in this way.

Attempts to give a precise and comprehensive description of what sets cultures apart are always inadequate. The problem is that such a description must assume that culture is standardized, which it is not. The reasons for this are easy to understand.

Every individual is different from every other; and, therefore, his culture is different from every other person's culture. Even within families, where genetic and environmental factors for several individuals are most similar, the variations of personality, interests, and aptitudes are often extreme. Children who seem as "peas in a pod" are increasingly differentiated from each other as they grow into the world. Culture is not fixed: it is always in flux, constantly being transformed through the assimilation of new experience.

Failure to perceive the obvious nature of culture--and its implications--has plunged modern societies into a series of ruinous experiments in cultural confinement. Hitler's efforts to mould Germany in accordance with Teutonic mythology and Mussolini's plans to re-establish the forms of imperial Rome are merely two striking examples of a phenomenon that has been encouraged to a lesser or greater extent in every country. In Canada, Quebec appears to be moving most quickly in this sense. Yet, if culture is different for every individual and is constantly changing, any attempt by the State to define or impose a cultural ideal is inevitably oppressive. This is the reality underlying all endeavours to legislate what culture will be.

The imposition of culture is comparable to taking the water flowing in a country's rivers and streams and making it all run down one channel. You obtain a great vulgar force, but you lose all the diverse local beauty created by the decentralized flow.

The State Cultural Planner is like an energumen who wants to freeze the relative positions of all the molecules in a gigantic, uni-directional current--as a rule, because he is afraid of the unpredictable (initiative, "dancing waters"). His schemes invariably founder, of course, after generating a great deal of personal misery, because eventually the rains come, and the admixture of new molecules with the old dissolves the relationships he has been striving to fix in place.

SEED is an independent monthly journal of philosophy, politics, economics, and culture, published by OUSIA Publishing, Box 3184, Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada T8A 2A6. All correspondence regarding SEED should be directed to this address.

Editor: Dennis R. Klinck, Ph.D.
Annual subscription: $7
Foreign subscription by airmail: $9

Our Policy

SEED aspires to fulfil a unique role transcending the functions of other magazines and journals.

Our purpose is neither to propagandize in the sense of promoting some fixed point of view or body of thought nor merely to comment on current events.

Our partisanship does not extend beyond two considerations. Firstly, we believe that reality does exist: it is not a matter of opinion and will assert its authority over all opinions that contradict it. All sanctions reside in reality; opinion has none. Secondly, we believe in the desirability of extending human freedom. Genuine freedom is contingent upon our comprehension of reality, since to the extent that men disregard reality, they court personal and social disaster.

In other words, far from conforming to the modern view that value judgments are to be avoided, SEED will intentionally consist of a succession of value judgments, which will constitute the principal criterion of its success. Man cannot approach truth without rigorous formation of value judgments and perfecting of definitions. Discovery and refinement of the correct principles for human action and association will be the focus of our attention within the field of reality. If we carry our investigation of the nature of reality far enough, we shall illuminate the way to the formulation of sound policy.

We have no delusions about the facility of the course on which we are embarking. It is possibly the most difficult course open to us. However, its value should be proportional to the efforts it requires. If the distractions to intelligence and will which characterize contemporary society are, as we believe them to be, fundamentally unsatisfying, we are confident that some seekers of truth will involve themselves in the experiment that SEED represents. Such persons are the only ones capable of responding to such an experiment.

We approach our undertaking in the spirit of making an offering that will call forth latent creative capacities. If the ideas that SEED disseminates have validity and settle in good soil, they will grow. Moreover, their growth will be progressive and cumulative. SEED will serve as a medium permitting the cross-fertilization of adventurous intellects, thereby diminishing the effects of the entropic phenomenon that paralyzes development by compelling men to struggle to find truths that they have lost sight of and had to rediscover repeatedly during the past.

If our project is conducted correctly, it will at the least generate a new conceptual vigour among a segment of the community — and perhaps even result in the formation of new men.

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("Trudeau", continued from p. 8)

mankind may not be an unmitigated blessing. Whatever Acton's assertion means, however, what Trudeau makes of it is unequivocal: there is a causal relationship between the material and moral ruin involved in "nationalism" and the introduction of the "new invention". That is, nationalist tensions and antagonisms must occur before the new invention can be installed. This is why Trudeau is quite happy to engage René Levesque in a nationalist conflict: out of the ruin may emerge the new invention—"functionalism in politics", the rational collectivist dispensation.

This may be a good thing: I think that it is of the devil, as is any innovation which proposes to subordinate personality to a function, to collectivize "will" in the state. Many, I know, regard this sort of thing as the "only hope for mankind". To them, I can only express relentless disagreement. There are, on the other hand, those who take the Prime Minister too much at face value. Trudeau's ultimate allegiances are, I think, clear—unless he has undergone some subtle change of heart and mind. He may be right, and I wrong. But, in view of his stated goals, and his avowed methods, to accept that he is "the only man who can—or wants to—save 'Canada'" is mere dribbling naiveté.

D.R.K.

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[1]The full text of the speech was published in *The Toronto Star*, February 23, 1977.

[2]*The Guardian* (weekly), March 13, 1977.

[3]Toronto: Macmillan. In his introduction to the collection of essays, John T. Saywell speaks of Trudeau as "an advocate of extensive state power who denies that anyone knows better than he what is good for him" (vii). The contradiction involved in this will be discussed later in my essay.

[4]Trudeau gives some examples: "Certainly, there are historical cases in which personal freedom has scarcely been protected at all by established institutions; it has been possible, then, for a genuine revolutionary to stress collective freedom as a preliminary to personal freedom: Castro, Ben Bella, Lenin..." (209).

"Yet Quebec separatism did not wither away under their [Trudeau, Marchand, and Pelletier's] impact on the Federal scene. On the contrary, it grew in scope, cohesion and respectability with the consolidation of the Trudeau regime in Ottawa".

Lubor Zink, *Trudeaucracy*, 65

Trudeau and Separatism

Most Canadians understand that the rupture of their country would be an aberrant departure from the norms they themselves have set, a crime against the history of mankind. . . .
--Pierre Elliott Trudeau

Of these sentiments the Prime Minister delivered himself to Congress in Washington earlier this year.[1] They were a declaration, on an international platform, of Trudeau's ostensible position on an issue that has become sometimes tediously familiar, to Canadians at least, during the past several months. At the risk of compounding the tedium, I offer the following reflections, not only on "separatism", but also on the alternative epitomized in Mr. Trudeau, to whom many look as a kind of federalist saviour, "the only man who can keep this country together".

Separatism, of course, is not new: it has characterized movements of "national self-determination" from time immemorial. The Jews of the first century, trying to resist Roman rule, were separatists, as were the Americans who perpetrated the revolution of 1776. Nor is separatism, currently, unique to Quebec: recent manifestations of the phenomenon have occurred in Hungary, Biafra, and Bangladesh; in Scotland, the Nationalist Party is apparently growing in strength, and visitors to Wales see English road signs obliterated. Thus, if "separatism" is a "crime against humanity", it is a fairly common one.

Moreover, it is an understandable one. Presumably, any group of persons who feel that they share a common "culture" (a language, say, as in the case of Quebec or Wales, or certain legal or constitutional assumptions —the common law versus the Napoleonic code, or parliamentary versus congressional government) or policy will wish to maintain the integrity of that culture or policy against incursions from without. Indeed, "separatism" —to the extent that it involves genuine (as opposed to spurious) decentralization—is far from being in itself undesirable. Some form of separatism is inevitable in a world in which persons have different policies or objectives, often centring on "cultural" matters. However, in view of the multiplicity of possible policies in the myriad spheres of human activity, the only practicable form of decentralization, ultimately, is the distribution of power to individuals, not to *soi-disant* "groups", to which given persons may or may not belong.

"Collective Freedom"

Because the Parti Quebecois is preoccupied with entrenching the "rights" of the group (a different group) and not of persons, Quebec nationalism is a spurious decentralization. Its aim is that curious and contradictory creature, "collective freedom". That is, the Parti Quebecois sees "Quebec" as a unit, a collectivity, whose liberation from a larger collectivity, "Canada", is desirable. However, as we have noted before in this publication, the question to be asked is: "What are the implications of "collective freedom" for *personal* freedom?" For all I know, Idi Amin regards himself as a nationalist freedom-fighter. Is, then, the individual *Quebecois* freer in a province governed by separatists than in the same province governed by Liberals? Would he be freer in the independent nation of Quebec? In what ways? The answer to this is problematical: obviously, this is not the issue being debated at the moment. What is being debated is whether the relatively nebulous entity "Canada" is somehow "better" than the same nebulous entity fragmented: Canada/Quebec. Some indication of the answer is, however, provided by Quebec's proposed language legislation: it is exclusive, restrictive, designed to *narrow* the scope of possible associations, to discourage diversity, rather than to expand the realm of possibilities. One suspects that the major advantage the individual citizen of Quebec will reap from "independence" (the abstract state's, not the concrete and particular person's) will be the right to wave a Quebec flag (which he can do at the moment) or receive income tax forms with no maple leaves on them.

Economics

An important aspect of this whole "impassioned dialogue" is, of course, economics. Many of the *Quebecois* grievances are economic: the upper echelons of business /industry in Quebec are exclusive English clubs; Ottawa takes away more money from Quebec than it returns; francophones are "discriminated against" on the job market. On the other hand, Eric Kierans (for example)

argues in an article entitled "The High Cost of a Free Quebec" that independence would be economically ruinous to the prospective new country.[2] And, in spite of their grievances, the Parti Quebecois envisage an economic union, or "common market", with Canada (presumably even to the extent of sharing the deficits of Air Canada) —to which William Davis, Premier of Ontario, says, "No way". To which René Levesque replies: "Ontario industry cannot afford to lose Quebec markets". The same René Levesque, of course, hurried off to New York shortly after his election to assure the bankers of Wall Street that an independent Quebec, no less than one dependent from Ottawa, would want to remain in debt to them for as much and as long as possible. I believe that he made his speech in English.

The point is that, in the economic sphere, where alterations could radically affect personal (again, as opposed to collective) freedom, the Parti Quebecois proposes no substantive changes—just a measure more "socialism". Unemployment, inflation, international balance of payments deficits, public debt—all those conditions which keep populations in fear and trembling and induce them to accept (nay, welcome) forced associations and more and more state intervention will doubtless persist. The nationalized industries of an independent Quebec will, as likely as not, be effectively owned by the Chase-Manhattan Bank, for whom the *Quebecois*, like their erstwhile compatriots in Saskatchewan and elsewhere, will labour—paying principal and interest (but mainly interest) on the financiers' faith in their continuing servility. For the privilege of speaking French to his immediate masters (one doubts that David Rockefeller will take a Berlitz course in order to accommodate the cultural aspirations of his debtors), the individual *Quebecois* will happily remain a slave, going into debt, paying taxes, and fighting for "the right to work"—like the rest of us.

Separatism, it seems to me, is in the case of Quebec largely a fraud. It will not alleviate those very questions, generally economic, which make coercion inevitable; it is the concentrating of frustrations on the emotional (and certainly important) issues of culture and language for the sake of obfuscating problems which underly much of the "oppression".

What, then, about the alternative offered to Quebec independence by Mr. Trudeau?

It strikes me that this is a fraud as well.

Trudeau on Separatism

Trudeau's most consistent and "academic" treatment of the subject appears in his *Federalism and the French Canadians*, published first in French in 1967 and in English in 1968[3]. Most of the essays in the volume were composed in the 1950's and early 1960's, before the author joined the Liberal Party and, subsequently, became Prime Minister. Admittedly, there is some danger of misrepresentation in holding a person to views expressed many years ago and before an important switch of ostensible political allegiance. Nevertheless, Trudeau was a mature thinker when he wrote *Federalism and the French Canadians*, and his assertion of methods —for example, "The true tactical position of the *democratic* socialist is on the left, *but no further*", "The Practice and Theory of Federalism", 128—suggests that he is not above representing his goals as slightly different from what they ultimately are. In any case, it may be worthwhile to remind ourselves of declarations made by the Prime Minister in a work which, because it is very familiar, has doubtless been forgotten.

Then, as now, Pierre Elliott Trudeau declared himself to be powerfully anti-separatist, pro-federalist, and much of what he has to say contains a measure of sense. Thus in "The New Treason of the Intellectuals", he writes, "every national minority will find, at the very moment of liberation, a new minority within its bosom which in turn must be allowed the right to demand its freedom" (158). French-speaking Quebec demands its independence from predominantly English-speaking Canada: what is to prevent English-speaking Quebeckers from separating from Quebec—or Italian, Greek, or Inuit minorities from further seceding? Note that Trudeau sees here a process of ongoing conflict, one which (as we shall see) he feels can be resolved only by "true law"—"coercive order...for the promotion of peace". While he correctly diagnoses one of the implications of separatism, his prescription of increasingly centralized administration as an antidote is questionable—partly because separatism is a response in the first place to such centralism. What *is* required is a maximizing of mobility of association, and a minimizing of coercion so that individuals may associate with whomever they please—even if this means that one can find only a single other person to whom he can speak Aramaic, or agree to cooperate on some project.

Another of Trudeau's observations germane to Quebec appears in the same essay:

> I was in Ghana during the first months of her independence. The poets were no better, the chemists no more numerous, and, on a more tangible level, salaries were no higher. Since the intellectuals were unable to explain to the people why this should be, they distracted their attention to some obscure island in the Gulf of Guinea which needed to be 're-conquered'. To this end a large slice of this economically destitute state's budget was ear-marked for the army—which ultimately served to put the parliamentary opposition in jail (175).

Readers will remark in this passage the same point that I made earlier: "collective independence" is no guarantee of a "higher" culture, or of better economic conditions. Moreover, the piece provides a striking example of the "smokescreen" effect: when "nationalism" proves not to be a panacea after all (as it will in Quebec, should independence occur), some external pathogen must be identified to explain the persistence of the malady. In preparation for such an alibi, the Parti Quebecois (a friend tells me) are producing maps of the "new" Quebec in which Labrador seems to have disappeared as a distinct geographical entity. One sees here, at least, the seeds of future conflict: what will happen when an independent Quebec decides to annex a substantial portion of Canadian real estate?

The Rhetoric of Revolution

Trudeau's disdain for Quebec nationalists is particularly evident in his essay "Separatist Counter-Revolutionaries", whose thesis is summarized in the epigraph to the article, a quotation of Nikita Khrushchev: "We are against the leaders who are of the left and who hide behind Marxist-Leninist ideology but who make it represent chauvinism.... They now offer a reactionary thesis founded on a union of peoples based on racism and nationalism" (204). In this article, Trudeau berates the *Quebecois* revolutionaries for their reactionary nationalism: "It [the youth of the 1960's] reproached my generation with not having offered it any 'doctrine'—we who had spent the best part of our youth demolishing servile doctrinairism—and it took refuge in the bosom of its mother, the Holy Nation" (206). But, what he berates them with is 'deviationism'—straying from the path of genuine revolution.

The terms which Trudeau uses (used) are, at least to me, disturbing. His opposition to separatism in this essay (1964), far from being expressed in the words of the "quintessential Canadian" ("I am confident", he said in his 1977 speech to Congress, "that we in Canada are well along in the course of devising a society as free of prejudice and fear, as full of understanding and generosity, as respectful of individuality and beauty, as receptive to change and innovation, as exists anywhere"), was couched in explicitly "Marxist-Leninist" revolutionary language: "Separatism a revolution? My eye. A counter-revolution; the national-socialist counter-revolution" (212). Which sort of rhetoric expresses his real sentiments? Are the two kinds incompatible?

Means and Ends

An answer to these questions may be found in another essay, "The Practice and Theory of Federalism" (1961), from which I have already quoted. The epigraph to a section of this article is from Mao Tse-Tung, and has to do with revolutionary tactics, as Trudeau explains: "The drive towards power must begin with the establishment of bridgeheads, since at the outset it is obviously easier to convert specific groups or localities than to win an absolute majority of the whole nation" (126). This, together with his description of "the true tactical position of the *democratic* socialist", suggests at least that Trudeau at one time had no scruples about adopting a pose which disguises his ultimate objective; moreover, it is an admission that his ultimate objective is *power*. "Obviously", he says, "a strategy limited to Saskatchewan (or Quebec, or British Columbia) will be less exciting than one covering the whole of Canada. But it will also be less exciting than a plan applicable to the Socialist International. And much much more telling than either!" (130) Trudeau, in other words, advocates pursuit of limited objectives as a way of attaining a final goal. No doubt this is an effective approach, and he is an adept at his own game. But we should take note of the terms of reference surrounding his final goal.

That goal, in Trudeau's terms, is "power", "collectivism", and, curiously, "freedom". Thus, in "Separatist Counter-Revolutionaries", he wrote: "For humanity, progress is the slow journey towards personal freedom. Those responsible for a sudden reversal of this course can be defined as counter-revolutionaries" (209). In the same place, he says: "...the very purpose of a collective system is better to ensure personal freedom.

(Or else you are a fascist.)" Perhaps he really believes this—that the collectivization of society leads to increased freedom. That is, of course, excepting fascist collectivism. That he does *mean* it (whether or not he *believes* it) is clear from "New Treason of the Intellectuals": "If...Hydro-Quebec were to expropriate the province's hydro-electric industries for nationalistic rather than economic reasons, we should already be on the road to fascism. The right can nationalize; it is the left that socializes and controls for the common good" (169). Collectivism is fine, desirable, if the motive is "economic" and if the perpetrators are "leftists"; when the motives are nationalistic and the perpetrators "rightists", it is a great evil. No doubt this is why Stalin was a much finer fellow than Hitler. As we have often observed, collectivism is collectivism, and the "right/left" dubiety is a fraudulent antithesis. If Trudeau really believed (or believes) the distinction he made, he must be foggy-minded. Whatever else he has been accused of, I have never heard him called foggy-minded. Indeed, there is some warrant for the widespread belief that he is the only intellectual in Canada.

The Larger Federalism

I suspect, in fact, that he knows precisely what he is doing, and he is doing (more or less) what he has said he would do—contributing to the creation of a new, "ideal" order. Perhaps he is sincere in what he is doing, and really believes that the end which he envisions justifies the means which he is using. That end is explained in "Federalism, Nationalism, and Reason":

> In the world of today, when whole groups of so-called sovereign states/are experimenting with rational forms of integration, the exercise of sovereignty will not only be divided within federal states; it will have to be further divided between the states and the communities of states. If this tendency is accentuated the very idea of national sovereignty will recede and, with it, the need for an emotional justification such as nationalism. International law will no longer be explained away as so much 'positive international morality', it will be recognized as true law, a 'coercive order...for the promotion of peace' (195-6).

Several points should be noted here: (1) Trudeau anticipates not mere national federalism, but *world* federalism; with Toynbee, he foresees the disappearance of "national sovereignty"; (2) he extols "rational forms of integration" and rejects "emotional justifications", thus erecting reason into an ultimate criterion in social organization (custom, tradition, myth, religion, etc., being "non-rational", have no place in this scheme of things); (3) the basis of order will be international law, coercion whose centre is ever further from those to be coerced; (4) the justification for this coercion will be the maintenance of peace; therefore, conflict is a crucial prerequisite for its establishment ("only in war, or under threat of war", the old saying goes). Trudeau goes on to elaborate:

> The rise of reason in politics is an advance of law; for is not law an attempt to regulate the conduct of men in society rationally rather than emotionally? It appears then that a political order based on federalism is an order based on law. And there will flow more good than evil from the present tribulations of federalism if they serve to equip lawyers, social scientists, and politicians with the tools required to build societies of men ordered by reason (196).

This passage, too, raises many vital questions: (1) again, we see the emphasis on reason, now as a means of regulating human conduct; (2) apparently, not all men are capable of this reason, so a class of *illuminati*, of social technologists ("lawyers, social scientists, and politicians"), will be required to establish that order; (3) the "present tribulations of federalism" will provide the "tools" that these *illuminati* will require for their exalted task.

Conflict and Unity

This last point is intriguing, for it seems to imply that current struggles involving federalism are a means of bringing about the new world order. How? In one sense, this could mean merely that experience in dealing with the problems of federalism will provide the bureaucrats of the new state with the knowledge necessary to establish that order. On the other hand, these tribulations themselves could be an essential part of the process, the mechanism, for achieving a larger objective. We have noticed already that conflict is a prerequisite for the imposition of "peace"; the federalist-separatist confrontation (particularly if it should lead to the threat of "war"—say, over Labrador) is just such a conflict, one that will no doubt be fueled by growing economic hardship and frustration, and the consequent fostering of regional envy and antagonism, throughout Canada.

That Trudeau is willing even to acquiesce in the irrational rampaging of the *bête-noire*, nationalism—if it serves his larger objectives—is clear from an as-

sertion in "Federalism, Nationalism, and Reason":

> It is possible that nationalism will still have a role to play in backward societies where the *status quo* is upheld by irrational and brutal forces; in such circumstances, *because there is no other way*, perhaps the nationalist passions will still be found useful to unleash revolutions, upset colonialism, and lay the foundations of welfare states; in such cases, the undesirable consequences will have to be accepted along with the good (202)[4].

Nationalism is useful—in some cases. In the case of Quebec, however, he argues that this stage is past, that the province was well along the road to being freed from "collective coercions" ("reactionary and arbitrary governments", "oligarchic capitalism", "authoritarian and outdated traditions") and that "nationalism", which tends to embody such characteristics itself, is reactionary when the old totalitarianism is already breaking down. At the same time, it is very interesting that the very thing which Trudeau ostensibly opposes —"collective coercions"—is the thing he advocates: collective societies subject to the coercions of law, oligarchic socialism dictated by elitist rationality. And, again, just as he recognizes the validity of crude forms of nationalist revolutionism as a tactic in fostering this process in "backward" societies, so (one suspects) he is not above exploiting nationalist sentiments for the sake of achieving his goal in Canada.

Nationalism versus Nationalism

Which, it seems to me, is precisely what he is doing in the present situation. He is merely opposing Canadian nationalism to Quebec nationalism; for both of these, ultimately, he has disdain: he speaks of the futility of "any expenditure of emotional appeal (flags, professions of faith, calls to dignity, expressions of brotherly love)" (194). Perhaps, since he does not really believe in these things, his invocations of them (for example, his talk of "charity, in the biblical sense", his alluding to "the tragic failure of our pluralist dream", or his fatuous description, in a recent speech in Winnipeg, of the warm spring wind awakening the winter-bound prairies) sound so hollow. Nevertheless, they are (from his point of view) useful: Canadian nationalism serves as a focus around which public opinion (and emotions: "Anyone who says that Quebec should be permitted to separate is not a *real* Canadian", said a radio commentator recently, and Peter

(continued p. 8)

To Those Who Share Our Concern

The publication of SEED is an enterprise which we feel is of cardinal importance to the revitalization of our culture. This endeavour represents the concern of a few individuals sensible of their responsibility to reverse, where possible, what they perceive to be the deterioration of the ideological and practical bases of this culture, and prepared to make personal sacrifices in the accomplishment of this objective.

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("Trudeau", continued from p. 7)

Gzowski speaks of Canada as the only place where there is "Hope") can be polarized. Quebec nationalism versus Canadian nationalism: thesis; antithesis—synthesis: some "rational form of integration", or collectivism. It strikes me that, in an important sense, Quebec is Trudeau's "island in the Gulf of Guinea" which has to be reconquered—at the same time that it must be kept antagonized. As of Ghana, it might be said of Canada that the "quality of life" has not improved under Trudeau's brand of "nationalism", and that a smokescreen for this failure is desirable (to some), and a justification for further "hardship", "self-sacrifice", and "innovation" is wanted.

"The true tactical position of the *democratic* socialist is on the left, *but no further*." Similarly, perhaps, the true tactical position of the international federalist is "federalism, *but no more*". Or, the true tactical position of the anti-nationalist is "anti-separatism, *but no more*". This, I suspect, is Trudeau's *tactical* position. Far from deploring Quebec nationalism, he probably welcomes it. It allows him to call upon "Canadians" to give up a little more of their economic independence, to acquiesce in a little more regulation and government interference, to pay somewhat higher taxes—in short, to surrender their personal independence for the sake of "keeping this great country together". Presumably, so that it can be integrated more expeditiously into the coming world order.

"A New Invention"

Trudeau is fond of quoting Lord Acton, and one of his favourite quotations has to do with this question of nationalism: "'Its course', he [Acton] stated of nationality, 'will be marked with material as well as moral ruin, in order that a new invention may prevail over the works of God and the interests of mankind'", to which Trudeau adds, "This new invention may well be functionalism in politics...". Though I know next to nothing about Lord Acton, and Trudeau knows a great deal, I suspect that he may be misinterpreting this particular passage. He seems to regard the "new invention"—some product of the enlightened reason, no doubt —as a good thing; it seems to me that what "prevails over" (against?) the works of God and the interests of

(continued p. 2)