

TRUDEAU'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY:  
ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR  
LIBERTY AND PROGRESS

John L. Hiemstra



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by

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## PREFACE

Pierre Elliott Trudeau has been described as "the most extraordinary thinker ever to become Prime Minister of Canada." <sup>1</sup>. To date, his almost fifteen years of service as Prime Minister is rapidly approaching the record tenure of his Liberal predecessor, MacKenzie King. The political ideas of this important politician can best be understood in light of his personal history and the general Canadian history that occurred before and during his formative years.

Trudeau, born in 1919, was the son of a wealthy French-Canadian father and English-Canadian mother. He grew up in Montreal's Outremont area, fluently bilingual and deeply aware of the two cultural communities yet felt no deep commitment to either. Trudeau attended the Jesuit School, Brebeuf, where he graduated with a B.A. He studied law at the University of Montreal, received a Master's degree in political economy at Harvard, and spent several additional years studying at Ecole de Sciences Politiques and the London School of Economics.

Trudeau travelled world-wide visiting and carefully observing various cultures and countries. In 1949 he became involved in Asbestos strike in Quebec, taking sides with the unions. He taught law briefly at the University of Montreal. During the 1950's and 1960's, Trudeau authored many articles on various

political problems as they affected Quebec politics up to and during the Quiet Revolution. 2

In creating the separate political entity of Canada in 1867, the founding fathers attempted to deal with at least three problems: the cultural dualism between English and French Canadian, the religious tension between Roman Catholic and Protestant faiths, and the regional variations and sometimes conflicting interests created by the vast size of the country. During the following decades, debate surfaced concerning the nature and original intention of the federal pact arrived at under the leadership of John A. MacDonald and Georges Etienne Cartier.

Two general interpretations became dominant, one based on French-Canadian nationalism and the other on liberalism. 3 By the turn of the century the debate centred on two key figures: Bourassa, the great nationalist of his day, and Laurier, the great Liberal federalist. 4 During this period liberalism emerged as the dominant solution and interpretation of the constitutional problems of Canada.

Through the early part of this century however, nationalism reigned supreme on the provincial level in Quebec. By the early 1940's Maurice Duplessis became the Premier of Quebec heading up the nationalist government of the Union Nationale. Besides its nationalism, his government proved to be quite undemocratic and rather corrupt. By the early 1960's the Union Nationale was replaced by a new generation of democratic and progressive, yet nationalistic politicians.

Trudeau, raised and educated in the atmosphere of French-Canadian nationalism, adopted the "foreign" ideology of liberalism as his solution for the central political and constitutional problems of Canada. In the Foreword to Federalism and the French Canadians, Trudeau closes with the assertion that his book "is not a hymn in honour of what my elders called 'our race' and what my juniors now call 'our nation'. But it is none the less dedicated to the progress of French Canadians." <sup>5</sup> But what does Trudeau mean by progress?

In this paper I will defend the following thesis: Trudeau's basic assumptions concerning individual liberty, anthropology, ethics, history and the nature of political theory shape his idea of the state and federalism, and ultimately their role in human progress. I will develop this thesis in five chapters dealing with Trudeau's basic assumptions concerning the individual, ethics, history, and political philosophy (Chapter I); his key political ideas of the state, justice, democracy, and the common good (Chapter II); his examination and critique of nationalism (Chapter III); his rational solution of federalism (Chapter IV); and a concluding assessment (Chapter V).

If Canada continues to walk in the pathways of liberalism it must become aware of how this ideology understands the individual, the state and progress. Close study of Trudeau's political philosophy can help in this task, not only because he has influenced the direction of this country for well over a decade, but also because his philosophy is traditionally liberal and so deals with the full range of problems raised by the original constitutional question of 1867. The power and

consequent "threat" of Trudeau's philosophy does not lie in his suspected socialism, but in the fact of his thorough-going commitment to liberalism.

Most journalistic and philosophic commentaries on Trudeau's political philosophy have been singularly unhelpful in their analysis because the commentators themselves have so deeply partaken of liberal philosophy. By far, the most helpful commentaries have been those written out of non-liberal traditions--by persons who adhere to various neoclassical, Christian, socialist or nationalist philosophies.<sup>6</sup>

In reference to the sources used in this thesis, most of the evidence is derived from Trudeau's published writings (books and articles). Occasional reference will be made to his speeches, policy papers and general political programmes he has supported during his term as Member of Parliament and Prime Minister. Clearly, the latter forms of evidence are more likely to be influenced by day-to-day pragmatic political pressures, and will not be accorded equal weight with his personal articles and publications.

ENDNOTES

1. James Laxer and Robert Laxer, The Liberal Idea of Canada: Pierre Trudeau and the Question of Canada's Survival (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1977), p. 88.

2. More detailed accounts of Trudeau's personal history are available in the biographies by George Radwanski, Trudeau (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1978), p. 43-84, and Richard Gwyn, The Northern Magus: Pierre Trudeau and Canadians (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980).

3. The term "liberalism" I take to mean the political perspective embraced by the majority of Canadians, the dominant ideology in the Liberal Party, in most of the Progressive Conservative Party, and in a large segment of the New Democratic Party. The essence of this political perspective is best described by George Parkin Grant: "I mean by liberalism a set of beliefs which proceed from the ~~central assumption that man's essence is his freedom and therefore that what chiefly concerns man in this life is to shape the world as he wants it.~~" in Technology and Empire: Perspectives on North America (Toronto: House of Anansi, 1969), p. 114, footnote 3. de

4. Laxer and Laxer, op. cit., p. 158.

5. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Federalism and the French Canadians (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1967), p. xxvi. This work will be referred to by the initials FFC from here on.

6. For example, the studies by Ramsey Cook, Richard Gwyn, and Donald Smiley have significantly less to offer by way of critical insight than the studies by George Grant, Laxer and Laxer, and Reginald Whitaker. See Bibliographic notes for lists of works relevant to this thesis written by the above commentators.

## I. BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

Trudeau's social and political philosophy can best be understood if we begin with an examination of his basic assumptions.<sup>1</sup> Trudeau's view of the individual and his role in history can be summarized as follows: the individual is a rational entity who, under the conditions of equality and liberty, seeks to realize himself by means of the competitive practice and discovery of new and superior values. Historical progress is the result of this dynamic process of individual interaction. Political philosophy, in this context, is defined as a "value-free" tool designed to facilitate the free interaction of individuals and stimulate progressive development.

Although Trudeau does not directly discuss his basic assumptions in a book or article, they are essential to a clear understanding of his writing and work. They constantly appear in his writing, undergirding and directing his social and political analysis and philosophy. In this chapter, I present and analyse Trudeau's basic assumptions concerning the individual ethics, historical progress, and the role of political philosophy.

### A. THE PRIMACY OF THE INDIVIDUAL

The key assumption underlying Trudeau's philosophy and action is his idea of the primacy of the individual. The individual is the fundamental starting point, goal, and mover of history.<sup>2</sup> In a speech to the 1970 Liberal Policy Conference, Trudeau states: "For the liberal, the individual represents an absolute personal value; the human person has a transcending social significance."<sup>3</sup> Thus for Trudeau, the individual is of

"infinite value,"<sup>4</sup> of far greater importance than any human creation in the realm of politics, economics, society, or religion.

The primacy of the individual is most clearly exhibited in its priority and superiority over all collectivities. It is further reflected in the purpose all collectivities are expected to serve.

To begin with, Trudeau argues that the individual precedes and supercedes the claims of "capital, the nation, tradition, the Church, and even the state."<sup>5</sup> Even when faced by these collective entities, the rights of the individual remain "inalienable."<sup>6</sup> It is a denial of the individual's dignity to reduce him to a mere identification with a particular mass of humanity, be that a nation, a state, a church, etc.<sup>7</sup> This is not to suggest that collective entities are inherently bad, but that they must not be allowed to dominate individual freedom. Only the individual may be sovereign.

Trudeau describes the goal of individual freedom as the "full flowering of personality,"<sup>8</sup> and "the right of every individual to do his own thing."<sup>9</sup> These are in fact the goals of history. Trudeau states: "For humanity, progress is the slow journey towards personal freedom."<sup>10</sup>

Consequently Trudeau argues that the purpose of collective entities is to further the goal of individual self-fulfillment. People collect together and agree to function together out of this motivation.<sup>11</sup> Trudeau states, "The point of human society is that men living together, by mutual help, cooperation, and the division of labour, can fulfill themselves better

than if they lived apart."<sup>12</sup> Social entities and collective movements are functional instruments designed to better realize individual self-fulfillment.

Trudeau's belief in the centrality of the individual is connected to his personal religious Christian faith. Trudeau is a devout Catholic who attends mass most Sundays.<sup>13</sup>

Reginald Whitaker explains this connection as follows:

In Trudeau's case, personalism (as a philosophy) meant that the fundamental datum of the social order is the individual, not a technological Prometheus unbound from the chains of religious tradition, but rather the individual as the personal reflection of humanity's origin as God's creation in His own image.<sup>14</sup>

The Christian teaching of man created in the image of God seems to be interpreted by Trudeau as a special relationship between God and independent moral centres. This relationship is essentially personal and private. He states, "I feel religion is basically and essentially a communication between a man and his God and I think it is the most personal thing of all and I don't think it concerns too many people."<sup>15</sup> This personal relationship constitutes a strong explanation for Trudeau's insistence on the notion that each man is "of infinite value in himself."<sup>16</sup> Because each individual is created as a free moral being capable of communicating with his God, society must value and support each person regardless of how we might value their personal ideas, worth, or God.

While Trudeau's religious notions do influence his understanding of the individual, he does not think religious ideas should extend beyond private relationship to and personal communication with God. Personal religious beliefs should not influence one's decisions concerning public issues and institu-



tions. To do so would infringe on the freedom of others to select and shape their own values. Private religious values have no place in the public political realm. Trudeau illustrates this division between public and private values in the following statement: "In my political philosophy, I think that there is room for violence. In my private religion, I really can not think of cases where violence is justified."<sup>17</sup>

This localization of personal religious values in the private realm is not intended to demean or degrade them. To the contrary, the public realm is established for the very reason of facilitating greater personal freedom to choose one's own values. Whitaker summarizes these points cogently:

Philosophic or theological knowledge unconnected to the market is not denied; it is simply assumed to be the realm of the private, autonomous self, the inner person, which his personalistic Catholic liberalism tells him forms the end of social and political organization.

#### 1. The Individual as Rational

Trudeau's personal motto, "Reason over Passion," summarizes his view of two major motivators of human action. Clearly the primary motivation for Trudeau must be rationality. All human beings have the capacity to will, but such willing is only useful if it is directed by reason.<sup>19</sup> Thus Trudeau can argue: "the only good action, or real moral value, is a voluntary action [willed], chosen by the enlightened [rational] thinking of the person who performs it."<sup>20</sup>

Action of moral value is inspired by reason, not by passion. Passion is essentially inferior motivation for action. It is based on emotional appeal and relies on weak psychological forms of commitment. Passion creates a feeling of rightness

and goodness without any rational basis for such a feeling. It produces collective cohesion without the rational pre-conditions. According to Trudeau, nationalism is a political example of passionate commitment. It produces an emotional attachment to a state. The problem with passionate motivation is that it eventually leads to breakdown and destruction. Such is the legacy of nationalism, as history testifies to the war, revolution, and carnage left in its wake.<sup>21</sup> Political and intellectual energies directed toward the "emotional sop"<sup>22</sup> of nationalism will eventually be lost down the "drain of emotionalism."<sup>23</sup>

When Trudeau argues for "Reason over Passion" he does not intend that certain intellectual persons be commissioned to rule over the passionate masses. Rather, Trudeau thinks that all individuals are capable of acting rationally. Although it is clear that not all persons are equally endowed with reason, every person can be educated to act according to reason.

In the series of articles now published in English as Approaches to Politics, Trudeau at one point argues that "the only good action" is one based on "enlightened thinking."<sup>24</sup> Later in the series he suggests that all men are capable of this form of thinking. He states "all men can be made fit to participate, directly or indirectly, in the guidance of the society of which they are members,"<sup>25</sup> and express themselves on the value of the laws.

What is the character of reason, in which Trudeau expresses such boundless confidence? Clearly it is not the classical Greek view of "ratio"--where reason seeks "to know the ultimate ends or purposes of the state or man...."<sup>26</sup> Nor is reason

understood as the human ability to distinguish differences.<sup>27</sup>

Whitaker and Bradshaw point out that in an individualistic society founded on liberty and equality, the only form of reason which can be assumed to be common to all is calculative self-interest.<sup>28</sup> Calculative reason, they argue, assumes that at minimum the individual will be directed by his self-interest--"reasoned, deliberate self-love."<sup>29</sup> This individualistic, self-interest form of reason is Trudeau's alternative to passion on which to build a just society. Trudeau boldly pins his hopes for the future on this "fully developed man of intellect."<sup>30</sup>

## 2. The Individual and Liberty

The essential correlate to the notion of the primacy of the rational individual is liberty. If one assumes the centrality of the rational individual, then the next absolute requirement is individual liberty. As Trudeau argues, the "primordial responsibility" of the liberal is "individual freedom,"<sup>31</sup> and further, "The liberal philosophy sets the highest value on the freedom of the individual...."<sup>32</sup> He joins Thomas Jefferson and the American Declaration of Independence in asserting that individual liberty is an "inalienable right"<sup>33</sup>

Liberty serves a specific goal in Trudeau's philosophy-- the creation of conditions in which every individual has the right and ability to fully realize himself. Liberty sets forth the conditions for the individual to choose, change himself and remake his world. Trudeau states, "The first visible effect of freedom is change. A free man exercises his freedom by altering himself and--inevitably--his surroundings. It follows that no liberal can be other than receptive to change and

highly positive and active in response to it, for change is the very expression of freedom."<sup>34</sup> Therefore, the end result of individual liberty is to set the conditions for "free competition" which produces a gradual "evolution" towards greater "human progress."<sup>35</sup>

Trudeau's understanding of the origin of liberty reflects his assumption concerning the primacy of the individual. Liberty is founded not upon a struggle of capturing certain rights from the prior authority of the state, but stands as an original endowment to the individual. Trudeau states, "Liberty is a free gift--a birthright, which distinguishes man from beast."<sup>36</sup> Liberty originates with the individual and is not a dispensation from a collective authority. Collective authority is created by individuals when they agree to some restriction on their liberty.<sup>37</sup> Individual liberty is the original reality and "authority exists only because men consent to obey it."<sup>38</sup>

However, liberty is not abdicated when individuals consent to obey a state authority. Individuals always retain the full right to throw out those whom they have placed in authority over themselves.<sup>39</sup> The primary reason Trudeau offers for changing or dismantling authorities they have created is the failure of these collective entities to better ensure personal freedom.<sup>40</sup>

### 3. The Individual and Equality

For Trudeau, equality is the second essential correlate to the notion of the rational individual. Equality, like liberty, is a way of recognizing that the individual "is a possessor of a special dignity..."<sup>41</sup> and that each man is "of infinite value in himself."<sup>42</sup> Equality can mean several things, and Trudeau uses a variety of phrases to discuss it. He talks about the "equality of all before the law,"<sup>43</sup> the right of "all to participate in government," and "the equality of opportunity for everyone in all important fields of endeavour."<sup>44</sup>

It is clear that Trudeau does not take equality to mean that all individuals possess similar abilities, or that one can not distinguish between individuals. Nor does he interpret equality to mean "equity"--that interpersonal relationships be governed by fairness and justice. Rather, Trudeau understands equality as the opportunity for similar treatment and consideration for all individuals--essentially, the equality of opportunity for all. Equality of opportunity promises that the public order will ensure every individual the right to fully realize himself according to his personal values, and to participate in, and contribute towards, the public order from the results of his self-realization. The specific role of equality, therefore, is to ensure that no individual will be positively or negatively inhibited by the public order or by other individuals. However, this notion of equality pays little attention to the inequity that may result from the procedural definition of equality of opportunity.

Furthermore, Trudeau's idea of equality is applicable only

to individuals. Equality cannot and must not refer to any collective entities or associations. All groupings in a society, whether they be economic, social, religious, political or regional, have no status when faced with the right to equal opportunity of the individual.<sup>45</sup> This individualistic view of equality complements and reinforces Trudeau's assumption of the absolute priority of the individual.

#### B. ETHICS AS VALUE SELECTION

The rational individual situated in the context of liberty and equality also operates as an ethical creature. Each individual is capable of determining his own values and living in accordance with those values. However, Trudeau observes that in practice there are two basic ways for individuals to come to hold their values. There are those "who seek their moral values within themselves and those who will need it from a collective endorsement of certain beliefs."<sup>46</sup> In his foreward to Federalism and the French Canadians, Trudeau clearly establishes which process is superior: "I found it unacceptable that others should claim to know better than I what was good for me."<sup>47</sup>

For Trudeau, determination of values is posited squarely within the realm of individual choice.

I believe that in the last analysis, a human being in the privacy of his own mind has the exclusive authority to choose his own scale of values and to decide which forces will take precedence over others. A good constitution is one that does not prejudice any of those questions, but leaves citizens free to orient their human destinies as they see fit.<sup>48</sup>

In this description, Trudeau confirms that he stands within the mainline tradition of liberal ethics. The individual is

free to choose and rank his own scale of values.

Trudeau's understanding of values is fundamentally different from the classical Greek notion of natural law, understood as "a standard of right and wrong independent of positive right and higher than positive right: a standard with reference to which we are able to judge of positive right."<sup>49</sup> Nor is it related to the Christian concept of Revelation--the Divine revealing his will for all of mankind's activities. Trudeau understands ethics to be an activity fully within the private authority of the individual. Man defines, evaluates and ranks his values only in reference to his own calculative preference. No outside criteria are required in this process. The essence of ethics is to act freely.

In order for the individual to be free to select his own values, however, certain more basic values must be entrenched to guarantee a structure or order of freedom. Here Trudeau implicitly introduces a distinction between particular and universal values. While individuals are defined as individual subjective value selectors, there is a category of values which, as they gain popular support, appear to become more and more objective. That is because certain values are so self-evidently important in their role of setting the conditions for individual freedom and value selection, that they must be considered not particular but universal values.

Particular values are defined in Trudeau's scheme as those values which tend to be of a purely local or private nature. In this set, Trudeau mentions values which are associated with particular cultures,<sup>50</sup> languages,<sup>51</sup> racial groups,<sup>52</sup> ethnic

groups,<sup>53</sup> or values based on a regional identity.

Universal values, on the other hand transcend the petty boundaries which confine particular values. In this set Trudeau includes equality, liberty,<sup>54</sup> democracy,<sup>55</sup> truth,<sup>56</sup> life,<sup>57</sup> and certain technological and economic values such as efficiency and competition.<sup>58</sup> Trudeau does not consider either group of values as permanent or final, nor does he see them as closed sets, unable to change or develop.

The two sets of values are qualitatively different.

Particular values are associated with passionate, nonrational activity, while universal values are directly founded upon rational consideration.<sup>59</sup> Particular values in the scale of time are only recognized as transitional and useful in our own age.<sup>60</sup> They lack universal character and are limited in their applicability. On the other hand, universal values have a lasting utility and enduring quality. While falling short of being absolute and eternal, universal values tend to be international and common to all men.<sup>61</sup>

### C. HISTORY AS PROGRESS

In Trudeau's philosophy, history is the arena of human progress. Here a dynamic interaction occurs between various particular values and between particular and universal values. Each individual with his personal set of values competitively interacts with others, leading to progress and the creation of a better society.<sup>62</sup>

According to Trudeau, the individual is free and therefore by nature seeks to change himself and his society. He argues, "A free man exercises his freedom by altering himself and--



inevitably--his surroundings."<sup>63</sup> History is being created by individuals struggling to realize themselves through the competitive discovery and practice of new and superior values. Progress results when individuals achieve greater freedom to realize themselves. The competitive interaction of values is believed to produce more universal values which contribute to and guide the process of value clarification and advance.<sup>64</sup>

Two factors are important in guiding individuals to progress: competition and protection of values.<sup>65</sup> Competition is the real dynamic force behind progressive change. It is the crucial mechanism for entertaining and testing new values.

Trudeau states:

I just feel that the challenge of the age is to live together with people who don't have all the same values as yourself. I believe in pluralistic societies. I believe that the way to progress is the free challenge of ideas and confrontation of values...the challenge is to have all these values challenge each other in terms of excellence, and it is this challenge which permits a society to develop on the basis of excellence.<sup>66</sup>

Trudeau goes as far as suggesting that particular values "do not deserve to survive at all unless they can successfully survive external competition."<sup>67</sup>

While Trudeau's long-term goal is the creation of an open culture,<sup>68</sup> a certain degree of protection is vital for buffering the impact of too rapid change. Protection of various degrees creates a context which permits all values to assume an equal opportunity to compete.<sup>69</sup>

Although other schools of philosophy have advocated either greater competition or more protection of values as the route to social stability and/or progress, the genius of liberalism

is its insistence on maintaining an equilibrium between the two forces. Trudeau reflects this liberal tradition of mediated change through carefully constructed equilibrium in his advocacy of a middling position between competition and protection in the process of value change.

Creating a disequilibrium by tilting the balance in favour of the protection of values would result in cultural isolation, generally inadequate cross-fertilization of values, and ultimately a "hot-house" culture.<sup>70</sup> On the other hand, unbridled competition would unfairly and cruelly decimate particular values which certain groups of individuals may still require for their survival. Trudeau recognizes that "depersonalization" is the likely result of an individual losing his values too rapidly. Therein lies the attractiveness of a middling position--gradual change is more likely to convince rational individuals of the irrationality of their particular values and encourage them to willfully accept new or adapted universal values.<sup>71</sup>

Particular values can have one of two ultimate fates: they may either fade away as their utility is diminished and other values dominate, or they may survive the competition and gradually ascend to a level of acceptance constitutive of the (more) universal values. Trudeau states:

And just like clannishness, tribalism and even feudalism, nationalism will probably fade away by itself at whatever time in history the nation has outworn its utility: that is to say, when the particular values protected by the idea of nation are no longer counted as important, or when those values no longer need to be embodied in a nation to survive.<sup>72</sup>

The values which emerge from this process as universal--especially those values that allow the individual the freedom

to remake himself and the world--from the context in which further historical progress can occur. In the long term, as society progresses further, a culture should reduce its protection of particular values and become more open.<sup>73</sup> In an affirmative quotation from Emmanuel Mounier, Trudeau suggests that the state should place "no obstacle in the path of free competition between schools of thought " except to guarantee "the fundamental rights of the individual."<sup>74</sup> All forms of protection should eventually be dropped except protection of individual freedom.

Thus the fundamental rights of the individual constitute a basic order that is essential for guaranteeing progress in history. Trudeau affirms this notion in his discussion of the potential for "regression" through violence, from our "contemporary pinnacle of human evolution." According to Trudeau, society has evolved past the position where violence is an acceptable option for change. "Violence is the negation of individual rights." It not only harms individuals, but it destroys the order which guarantees individual freedom to determine values and the human self. If the order that guarantees individual rights collapses, then the engine of progress--individual value determination--is gone.<sup>75</sup>

#### D. PHILOSOPHY AS AUTONOMOUS

Before engaging in an analysis of Trudeau's political philosophy, I will close my consideration of his basic assumptions with a discussion of his ideas concerning the nature and task of political philosophy.

Following his election as Canadian Prime Minister, Trudeau gave this succinct summary of his view of political philosophy:

I am a pragmatist in politics, which does not mean that I do not have ideals. I have some basic principles which I like to see applied in our country and they can be very roughly and easily defined in terms of liberty, a democratic form of government, a parliamentary system, respect of the individual, balance between federal and provincial governments, and so on. But beyond these ideals, I am a pragmatist, I try to find the solution for the present situation, and I do not feel myself bound by any doctrines or any rigid approaches to any of these problems. <sup>76</sup>

Political philosophy, according to Trudeau, is not an examination of and discourse on some enduring and abiding idea of justice and good, as it was for the classical Greeks. Nor is it an examination of a divine calling for humanity to live together in accord with justice. He argues that one should not get hung up on "historical might-have-beens,"<sup>77</sup> or get bogged down in normative ought-to-be's, because these attempts mislead at best and at worst produce an ephemeral politics of marginal utility.

The error of political theories that dwell on the conditions for a 'just' or 'good' political life is that they end up claiming "exclusive possession of political truth."<sup>78</sup> Such political philosophies eventually crystalize into dangerous ideologies. They outlive the factual conditions which led to, their original formulation, they degenerate into ideologies, and trap individuals in outdated solutions. Political philosophies that have become ideologies are the "true enemies of freedom." They close off the avenues through which individuals are meant to realize their full freedom.<sup>79</sup> Trudeau states:

I early realized that ideological systems are the true enemies of freedom. On the political front, accepted opinions are not only inhibiting to the mind, they contain the very source of error. When a political ideology is universally accepted by the elite, when the people who 'define situations' embrace and venerate it, this means that it is high time free men were fighting it. For political freedom finds its essential strength in a sense of balance and proportion. As soon as any one tendency<sup>80</sup> becomes too strong, it constitutes a menace.

Trudeau argues that political philosophy should be based on a careful examination of the here and now. He states, "The first law of politics is to start from the given facts." Political philosophy and action will be of genuine utility if they develop "at specific times, to combat given abuses," and if the philosophies are discarded when they have outlived their specific task.<sup>81</sup>

Basing his work on factual realities, the political scientist should "seek and define the conditions of progress in advanced societies."<sup>82</sup> We recollect that Trudeau defines progress as "the slow journey towards personal freedom."<sup>83</sup> Consequently, political philosophy must narrowly focus on guaranteeing an order which encourages the greatest degree of individual liberty. Political philosophy is reduced to the handmaiden of individual self-realization.

Political philosophy fulfills this function by analysing the facts of a situation, determining whether a disequilibrium exists and, finally, designing and applying appropriate counterweights to reestablish equilibrium. Trudeau states, "My political action, or my theory--insomuch as I can be said to have one--can be expressed very simply: create counterweights."<sup>84</sup> Trudeau thereby assumes that the task of political

philosophy is neutral--free of all ideological content.<sup>85</sup> The creation of overarching systems, timeless solutions, or ultimate answers is ruled out by this pragmatic view of philosophy.

This equilibrium model of political philosophy is reflected and illustrated in Trudeau's attitudes toward federalism:

In the 1950's he was a staunch supporter of Duplessis's policy of provincial autonomy and a severe critic of the post-war centralization in Ottawa, even to the point of taking the unpopular stand of opposing federal aid to universities. In 1965, when the extension of provincial autonomy threatened to destroy legitimate federal power, he entered federal politics as a defender of constitutionalism and Canadian federalism.<sup>86</sup>

Trudeau's idea of political philosophy as a method of judiciously applying checks and balances to maintain social equilibrium can easily be misunderstood as a formula for static and conservative politics. However, Trudeau's methodology must be understood within the context of his assumptions concerning anthropology, ethics and history. As argued above, Trudeau understands the individual to be a rational entity endowed with equality and liberty, seeking to realize himself by means of the competitive practice and discovery of new and higher values. History is the story of man progressively re-making himself and his world in higher and better forms.

These assumptions create a dynamic context in which his apparently benign view of political philosophy must be situated. By their very nature, political decisions concern questions of the public good. However, in Trudeau's scheme, only individuals may determine what is good for themselves. The only decisions left to political philosophy concern the maintenance of a public order ensuring individual freedom.<sup>87</sup> Political

philosophy is left with the task of dreaming up checks and balances to maintain the public order at an optimum equilibrium.

In summary, political philosophy becomes an apologetic for a procedural justice state<sup>88</sup> and a guide for the judicious application of checks and balances when one excess or another threatens the survival of individual liberty and its procedural guarantees. Political philosophy is the servant of the individual and the guide to historical progress.

## ENDNOTES

1. By the term "basic assumptions" I refer to suppositions that are basic premises, generally taken for granted by the holder, yet determinative in his thinking and writing. Basic assumptions often take on a "belief character."

2. FFC, p. 159. Trudeau quotes Father Delos: "the question is whether it is not a denial of man's dignity to reduce him to mere identification with any particular mass of humanity." Taken from J.T. Delos, La Nation (Montreal, 1944), Vol. 1, p. 196.

3. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Conversation with Canadians (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 86. This work will be referred to by the initials CWC from here on.

4. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Approaches to Politics (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 27. This work will be referred to by the initials ATP from here on.

5. FFC, p. 205.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., p. 159.

8. ATP, p. 87.

9. CWC, p. 4. See also Leah Bradshaw, "Trudeau's Liberal Society", read at the conference: The Thought and action of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, at the University of Calgary (October, 1979), p. 10.

10. FFC, p. 209. See also CWC, p. 173 and The Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, The Constitution and the People of Canada: An Approach to the Objectives of Confederation, the Rights of People and the Institutions of Government (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1969), p. 8, where he argues: "the fulfillment of the individual is a primary goal" of society.

11. ATP, p. 34.

12. Ibid., p. 43.

13. Radwanski, op. cit., p. 39. See also CWC, p. 8, where Trudeau states, "I believe in life after death, I believe in God, and I'm a Christian."

14. Reginald Whitaker, "Reason, Passion, and Interest: Pierre Trudeau's Eternal Liberal Triangle", Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory, vol. 4, no. 1 (Winter, 1980), p. 7.



15. CWC, p. 10. At a later point, Trudeau states, "I think that the only ultimate guide we have is our conscience, and if the law of the land goes against our conscience I think we should disobey the law... [and] be prepared to pay the consequences....", p. 68.

16. ATP, p. 27.

17. CWC, p. 67. At a later point, he states, "My whole position on morality vs. criminality is that the criminal law should not be used to express the morality of any one group, religious or pressure groups, or others." p. 88. In other words, public law should not enforce private morality, only criminal matters.

18. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 18

19. FFC, p. 195.

20. ATP, p. 36. See also the discussion in FFC, pp. 182-203.

21. FFC, p. 157.

22. Ibid., p. 200.

23. Ibid., p. 202.

24. ATP, p. 36.

25. Ibid., pp. 87-88. Laxer and Laxer, op. cit., pp. 94-5 argue the opposite proposition than this author, that Trudeau is an elitist in his political preferences. They state that "He is obviously not a populist liberal, sharing little in common with the faith in the rationality of ordinary people that has been the bedrock of North American liberalism."

26. William Christian and Colin Campbell, Political Parties and Ideologies in Canada: Liberals, Conservatives, Socialists, Nationalists (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1974), p. 70.

27. This view of reason discharges the notion of its "religious" content. Reason here is not a special capacity to apprehend God and commune with other men, but rather a gift to humankind to distinguish creaturely differences.

28. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 18. See also Bradshaw, op. cit., p. 2 and FFC, p. 192.

29. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 18.

30. FFC, p. 181.

31. CWC, p. 86.

32. Ibid. See also FFC, xxi.

33. ATP, p. 80, and FFC, p. 53.

34. CWC, p. 86.

35. Ibid., p. 87.

36. ATP, p. 31.

37. Ibid., p. 35.

38. Ibid., p. 31.

39. Ibid., p. 74.

40. FFC, p. 209.

41. ATP, p. 88.

42. Ibid, p. 27. Comments by Trudeau, such as "many Catholics would claim that democracy follows from the Christian belief that all men are brothers and fundamentally equal," tend to suggest that his idea of equality is also closely tied to his Christian beliefs. See also FFC, p. 111, Note 25.

43. ATP, p. 80.

44. FFC, p. 114, and see also CWC, p. 205.

45. Abraham Rotstein, The Precarious Homestead (Toronto: New Press, 1973), pp. 105-110. See also Laxer and Laxer, op. cit., p. 161.

46. CWC, p. 39.

47. FFC, p. xxi

48. Ibid., p. 11.

49. Leo Strauss, Natural Right and History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 2.

50. FFC, pp. 46, 188.

51. Ibid., pp. 46-7, 188, 159.

52. Ibid., p. 159.

53. Ibid., pp. 188, 34-5.

54. Ibid., pp. 6, 157.

55. Ibid., pp. 6, 150.

56. Ibid., p. 146.

57. Ibid., p. 157.

58. Ibid., pp. 22-3, 206.

59. Ibid., pp. 189, 195-7.

60. Ibid., p. 172.

61. Ibid., p. 29. See also the discussion on pp. 34-5.

62. CWC, p. 16. He states, "The rapidity of the new facts developing calls for perhaps a set of new values and because you are unprogrammed by previous moralists to a large extent I believe that you can help us to discover values for a better society."

63. Ibid., p. 86. Trudeau's view of history is "anti-historical" or historicist. Laxer and Laxer call it an "ideology of the here and now." op. cit., p. 211.

64. FFC, p. 189. In this passage Trudeau discusses the disappearance of the "particular values" protected by the idea of nation. Laxer and Laxer also identify free individual action as the motor of progress. op. cit., pp. 75-6.

65. FFC, pp. 33-4.

66. CWC, p. 195.

67. FFC, pp. 33-5.

68. Ibid., p. 29.

69. Ibid., p. 47.

70. Ibid., pp. 29, 33.

71. Ibid., pp. 29-35.

72. Ibid., p. 189.

73. Ibid., p. 29.

74. CWC, p. 87. Emmanuel Mounier was a "Christian personalist" philosopher from France. As Trudeau states, he was "a thinker who has had a profound influence on so many of my generation."

75. Ibid., pp. 86-88.

76. CWC, p. 11 and FFC, p. 53.

77. FFC, p. 192.

78. Ibid., p. 205.

79. Ibid., pp. xxi, xxii. See also Daniel Bell, The End of Ideology (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960), p. 402, where he states: "the old ideologies have lost their 'truth' and power to persuade."

80. FFC, p. xxii.

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid., p. xxiii.

83. Ibid., p. 209.

84. Ibid., p. xxiii.

85. See here Herman Dooyeweerd, A New Critique of Theoretical Thought, 4 vols. (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1969). Here he deals with the pretended autonomy of theoretical thought. Trudeau assumes that his philosophy is "autonomous", that is, without ideological or belief character. For instance, in discussing the differences between liberal democrats and social democrats, he argues that both are democrats and that history will determine the future. "In this sense, the democratic revolution is the only one necessary: everything else follows from it." "Un Manifeste democratique," Cité Libre, No. 22, Oct. 1958, p. 21.

86. John T. Saywell, "Introduction" to FFC, p. xii.

87. FFC, p. xviii.

88. For further discussion of Trudeau's concept of the procedural justice state, see Chapter II, section B, of this thesis.

## II. THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE STATE

This chapter will examine Trudeau's understanding of the basic political problem of how the individual relates to the state. The investigation will include an explanation of how his basic assumptions provide the foundation for his political ideals: the nature of society and state, the content of justice, the origins of authority, the role of participation, democracy, and the majority mechanism in determining the common good.

Throughout his political philosophy, Trudeau maintains and expresses the centrality of his basic assumptions of individual freedom, ethical competition, and progress. His idea of political philosophy is clearly expressed in the series of articles collected together in the book Approaches to Politics, since they were written to check and balance the corruption, lack of democracy, and nationalism in the Duplessis government of 1958.

### A. SOCIETY AND STATE

Trudeau's basic assumptions concerning the primacy of the individual are the best starting point for understanding his idea of society and the state. To begin with, society is seen by Trudeau as a human creation intended to aid the individual in self-fulfillment. Trudeau states, "The point of human society is that men living together, by mutual help, co-operation, and the division of labour, can fulfill themselves better than if they lived apart."<sup>1</sup> Two separate but related points are important here: that society is not a real independent entity but a human functional creation, and that the goal of this society is strictly the fulfillment of the individual.

Some of the common objectives that men group together to attain include economic, social and cultural well-being. Clearly, co-operation is essential to the self-realization of the individual in each of these areas of human endeavour.<sup>2</sup>

The state is an instrument of society aimed at serving individual self-realization. Trudeau states, "The state is by definition the instrument whereby human society collectively organizes and expresses itself."<sup>3</sup> He describes this as "the doctrine of the servant state."<sup>4</sup> The state as an instrument of society and therefore of the people, provides hospitals, schools, etc. to the people as part of their "due from an obedient government."<sup>5</sup> Trudeau summarizes the goal of the state in the following phrase: "Men do not exist for states: states are created to make it easier for men to attain some of their common objectives."<sup>6</sup>

Trudeau's definition of the state as the servant of the individual citizen raises the problem of the source of coercive authority wielded by the state. Trudeau phrased this problem succinctly in Quebec, during 1958: "how it is that Maurice can give orders to Pierre."<sup>7</sup>

The argument that authority is derived from an external source is rejected by Trudeau. He systematically denies that political authority can be based on "God, Providence, or Nature."<sup>8</sup> Any external source of authority would be a betrayal of his basic assumption concerning the centrality and freedom of the individual.

The state's authority to place some restrictions on individual liberty are not derived from its intrinsic duty or calling to enforce justice, but are grudgingly delegated from individual citizens.<sup>9</sup> The state, Trudeau argues, is "simply

a creature emanating from the members of...society,"<sup>10</sup> and therefore the state derives its authority from the citizens' agreement to obey it.<sup>11</sup> Trudeau summarizes this problem: "Authority exists only because men consent to obey it."<sup>12</sup>

## B. JUSTICE AS PROCEDURE

Trudeau's desire to build the state on the consent of the individual in order to fulfill the general aim of the greatest happiness for everyone raises a question. How does Trudeau define justice? What is the nature of justice in the public area of life—the state?

Clearly Trudeau does not want to define justice according to a transcendent notion of "good." He states that "a constitution of free men must be free of bias."<sup>12</sup> Fixing a substantive idea of justice to the task of the state would violate the prior freedom of the individual to select his own values, including justice. It is not the state's task, according to Trudeau, to enforce one particular definition of justice; rather, it should only act to ensure the individual's liberty to define his own idea of justice. Trudeau states:

But the state must take great care not to infringe on the conscience of the individual. I believe that, in the last analysis, a human being in the privacy of his own mind has the exclusive authority to choose his own scale of values and to decide which forces will take precedence over others. A good constitution is one that does not prejudge any of these questions, but leaves citizens free to orient their human destinies as they see fit.<sup>13</sup>

Since the state may not advocate a particular definition of justice, the only notion left for the state to defend is that justice consists in the establishment of a public order which guarantees each individual the freedom to subjectively

select his own idea of justice. In the following statement, expressed in the aftermath of the October crisis (1970), Trudeau clearly implies that the central task of the state is the defense of a procedural order. Trudeau states:

This is the beauty of the democratic process: it permits that subjective view of justice--which everyone holds--permits that subjective view to express itself peacefully through discussion, through reason, and through the voting process.... I think that as the guardian of justice elected by the people it is our duty to use whatever forms of force--police, army--to make sure that at least the freedom of choice is preserved.<sup>14</sup>

The maintenance of this procedural order is so crucial that force may be employed in its defense. No minority, such as the FLQ, can be permitted to hold the entire country hostage to its particular definition of justice.

Trudeau rests his theory of the procedural justice state partially on the assumption that there is a public consensus of universal values. This assumption is related to his idea of rationality. All rational individuals, he assumes, will recognize that individual liberty must be the prime aim of society. They will agree, therefore, that at minimum certain "universal values" --including liberty, equality, respect for the individual, rationality--ought to be entrenched as procedural guarantees for this aim. However, if the assumption concerning the rationality of individuals fails to hold up, this procedural view of justice and concurrent idea of liberal society could not work.<sup>15</sup>

The idea of justice as procedure also conforms to, and complements Trudeau's basic assumptions in that it allows for maximum freedom for private individual moral choice.



Trudeau argues that the realm of private morality should be increased and public morality should only function to minimize interference in private morality.

I know that it is impossible to draw an absolute impermeable line between your private life and public conduct.... But what happens in private, once again, is a matter of your relations with your god and your own internal values. And I think it is more destructive of society to force people to live as hypocrites and to respect a morality in which they don't believe for metaphysical or ethical reasons and to have a certain outward conduct because the majority of the people say that is right and this is wrong in moral terms. I think a society can be just as badly maimed by hypocrisy as by those private codes of conduct which don't overflow.<sup>16</sup>

A further benefit of defining justice as procedure is its compatibility with, and support of, the gradual evolution of progressive values. When justice is viewed as a procedural order, the values of a society are not fixed according to some "arbitrary" absolute. Rather, open value competition is encouraged and progress stimulated. Every individual is free to subjectively select his own values. As a result, a diversity of value options will be generated in society, which in turn compete for public attention and acceptability. A procedurally defined "just state" will not bias this value progress, it will only facilitate it.

In the final analysis, the unwillingness of Trudeau to identify a public definition of justice means that his procedural justice state can never climax. It can never reach the final utopian pinnacle because the process of progress, in Trudeau's understanding, can have no end. Individuals continue to forever remake themselves and the world in ever better and higher stages of being.

A final benefit of defining justice as a procedural order relates to Trudeau's notion that political philosophy should not attempt to define ultimate solutions and discuss transcendent notions of good. Identifying such a substantive notion of justice, for instance, would cause one's political theory to deteriorate to the level of an ideology. However, since Trudeau has simply defined justice as procedure, the task of political philosophy simply concerns the maintenance of procedural order through the judicious application of checks and balances.

Reginald Whitaker summarizes the liberal view of procedural justice--a view Trudeau adheres to--when he argues that modern liberalism has developed a

mechanism for managing the tension between change and continuity. The key is to develop a procedural basis for resolving conflicting demands in criteria minimally acceptable to all others in the process. Individuals compete, economically, socially, and politically, in a continual process of remaking the world; the only constant in the process itself--the rules of the game, so to speak... If justice is the resolution of competing demands on a procedural basis acceptable to all reasoning and calculating participants, then any dedication of the community to a particular concept of Good is ipso facto an upsetting of the procedural fairness of liberal political order. 17

Trudeau's long advocacy of a Canadian Charter of Rights practically demonstrates his conception of justice as procedure. As early as 1958 Trudeau argued for a Charter of Rights which would entrench certain rights and values beyond the grasp of

the state and any individual. He assumed that these rights, and the values which they represent, would be acceptable to all as the minimum conditions for the state. The Charter would ensure that procedural justice could not be infringed upon by either the state or the individual.

A Charter of human rights should be a declaration of belief, not only of the governments but also of the people: belief in the inherent rationality of man, and in the right to live his life in dignity and freedom. Consequently, the charter should be self-denying for both governments and people, a shield against public or private interference with the rights of the individual.<sup>18</sup>

A state should entrench a Charter of Rights to give legal expression to commonly held political values, and to guarantee a just order. In this sense, the Charter is an expression of an individualistic ethos for society. It is the guarantor of a procedural justice framework which will permit every individual the liberty to subjectively select his own values.

#### C. DEFINING THE COMMON GOOD IN A PROCEDURAL JUSTICE STATE

In a state based on procedural justice, the determination of the common good presents a unique challenge because it can only be determined on the basis of the variety of competing private ideas of justice found amongst all the citizens. The common good cannot be based on some transcendent notion of "Good", because the procedural justice state excludes the possibility of one absolute "good". The state can only attempt to formulate an aggregate solution reflecting the multitude of competing private justices. Some method must be devised that will allow the government to move from individual private notions of good to a comprehensive idea of the public good.

## 1. Participation and Democracy

As a necessary prerequisite to the definition of the common good, the state must encourage every individual to participate and fully exercise his freedom. This is first of all a recognition of the inherent equality and rationality of all individuals and Trudeau's belief "that all men can be made fit to participate directly in the guidance of the society of which they are members." (Emphasis mine)<sup>19</sup> Secondly, participation reflects Trudeau's assumption that the state is an instrument in service of the individual. Participation guarantees that the state listens to its "maker", the individual. Trudeau argues, "The state cannot and must not make laws that do not tally by and large with what the citizens want; if it does, they will defy its laws, until the time comes to overthrow it."<sup>20</sup>

Thirdly, participation is necessary, because it allows the creative liberty of every citizen to produce the data from which the state can determine the common good.<sup>21</sup> When all citizens participate in government, Trudeau argues, "the laws, in a sense, reflect the wishes of the citizens and thus turn to account the special wisdom of each one; the social order to some extent embodies all the wealth of human experience that the citizens possess."<sup>22</sup> In such a state, he continues, "The authorities don't think of it [participation] as an annoying phrase; on the contrary, they want it, and encourage it as the surest guide to the common good."<sup>23</sup>

Trudeau points to two mechanisms--universal suffrage as expressed in the democratic system, and the majority convention--which can assimilate diverse private demands and integrate them into one common good. Trudeau states, "We have seen that the truly democratic state is bound to encourage the exercise of freedom among its citizens so that, by listening to them, it may learn better what paths to follow to the common good."<sup>24</sup>

The first advantage of democracy is that it promotes and enables the full participation of all individuals. It also respects the rationality and liberty of the individual. Furthermore, democracy serves to facilitate and protect Trudeau's idea of the procedural justice state by providing easy and peaceful transitions between governments. It allow "the people to express their opinions freely on the excellence of the regime"; it ensures the abdication of government when opinion goes against it; and, finally, it provides a means "to designate, peacefully, a successor whom the people would agree to obey."<sup>25</sup>

Trudeau is so certain of the merits of democracy that he charges his discussion of the idea with religious terminology such as "believe", the "democratic faith", and the "gospel" of democracy.<sup>26</sup> Democracy, according to Trudeau, is the best mechanism available for ensuring the triumph of the public good over the private goods.

## 2. Majority Mechanism

The threat is always present, Trudeau argues, that a private or special interest will usurp government for its own benefit rather than the common good. This can be prevented through reliance on the democratic majority. Trudeau turns

to the majority convention in order to calculate the common good because no other instrument will perform as well and still respect his assumptions concerning the individual and the concurrent notion of the procedural justice state.

Trudeau recognizes that the majority mechanism is not a perfect tool, but it's the best we have. He states,

It is true that from one point of view the majority convention is only a roundabout way of applying the law of the stronger, in the form of the law of the more numerous. Let us admit it, but note at the same time that human groupings took a great step towards civilization when they agreed to justify their actions by counting heads instead of breaking them.<sup>27</sup>

Trudeau also recognizes that the majority mechanism is not an infallible guide to the truth, and that "one person may be right and ninety-nine wrong." The only outlet available to a dissenting minority or individual is the "sacred" institution of freedom of speech. He states, "the one person must always have the right to proclaim his truth in the hope of persuading the ninety-nine to change their point of view."<sup>28</sup> In other words, the procedural justice state allows everyone to speak his mind but only accounts for the majority in its calculation of the common good. Thus the individual or minority may continue to speak its mind, but must in acting bow to the wishes of the majority. For Trudeau, however, the continued reliance on the majority mechanism is a result of "faith in man." He states:

For if all men are equal, each one the possessor of a special dignity, it follows inevitably that the happiness of fifty-one people is more important than that of forty-nine. It is normal, then that ...the decisions preferred by fifty-one should prevail.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, in Trudeau's political philosophy the majority

mechanism actually calculates the common good from the apparent coincidence of fifty-one percent of the private interests of competing individual citizens. The government receives its commands from its "master" by means of the simple mathematical computations of the majority mechanism. The common good is instrumentalized by the greater part of the whole body of citizens.

In the last paragraphs of Trudeau's discussion of democracy and the majority mechanism, he backs off from the notion of direct participation in the governance of society by all individuals. The average citizen is not capable of deciding complicated and technical problems. He argues, "The citizens as a group can judge such measures only by their effects--real or apparent--on the happiness of the group." Therefore, the "electoral system asks of the citizen only that he should decide on a set of ideas and tendencies, and on men who can hold them and give effect to them."<sup>30</sup> In other words, the average citizen is not an expert, and therefore we should not expect him to judge more than the impact of a particular leader and his policies on his self-interest. The implication for the governing power is, as Denis Smith suggests, that "the only responsibility which can be imposed on democratic governments is the responsibility to leave office after an electoral defeat."<sup>31</sup>

#### D. PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS

There are several problems and questions which arise from Trudeau's account of the state, justice, and the common good. The first question concerns Trudeau's attempt at developing the "collective" notion of the procedural justice state

from a variety of private individual ideas of justice, and defining the public good from the various individual goods.

Although Trudeau begins by declaring that individual participation is essential in determining the common good, as we arrive at his conclusions, the individual citizen can only influence choices through occasional elections. Trudeau recognizes these limits to participation.

There is a distinction between consultation, and participation and decision-making. I think that in our democratic governments, which are essentially representative governments, I think the decision must always be taken by representatives of the people.... The government has to, on balance, make what it believes is the best choice and then its up to the citizens... to throw it out if the choices are not satisfactory.<sup>32</sup>

While in theory, Trudeau argues that the individual creates the common good, practically he seems to reduce the individual's role to quiet subservience except at election time.

Furthermore, the primacy of individual freedom appears to be swallowed up by the necessity of maintaining the public order. For instance, in his discussion concerning violence and conscientious objection to involvement in war, Trudeau insists that the individual must follow his conscience, but continues by declaring that the individual must pay the penalty for disobeying the law of civil society.<sup>33</sup> Is there an implicit necessity, for the maintenance of the procedural justice state, that the individual abdicate a large part of his freedom?

A second question concerns the ability of the majority mechanism--tempered by free speech--to withstand the pressures of powerful individuals and groups. In practice, the majority mechanism counts only effective demand. Isn't it true that



powerful interests have much greater ability to influence public opinion and consequently have a disproportionately strong influence on the determination of the common good?

Thirdly, what protection do institutions and minority groups have in this scheme? Are there tangible avenues for people who disagree with the majority to practice their view of life? Furthermore, doesn't Trudeau ignore the social and cultural institutions and associations which influence and condition our individual views? As Bernard Crick argues, "The liberal asks a man to consult his own self-interest... or to try will the common good... but wishes to take away the corporate means by which these views in fact arise."<sup>34</sup>

Finally, each of these questions point to a more fundamental problem. Does Trudeau's attempt to construct his political philosophy from the starting point of the absolute freedom of the individual actually result in a strongly collectivistic form of government? Doesn't Trudeau's failure to account for the social character of man--his embeddedness in institutions, associations and cultural groupings--and the correlating power and position of these "collective" entities in society, lead him to advocate a strong measure of de facto collectivism and centralism on the level of public institutions?<sup>35</sup>

ENDNOTES

1. ATP, p. 43. See also pp.34, 84.
2. FFC, pp. 21-35.
3. ATP, p. 44. Trudeau argues: "A Prime Minister gives nothing at all (unless it is his superfluous services): quite simply, he works in the service of the state as an instrument through which society gives to itself." Ibid., pp. 64-5.
4. Ibid., p. 44. See also FFC, p. 139.
5. FFC, p. 109.
6. Ibid., p. 18.
7. ATP, p. 28. See also FFC, p. xxii.
8. ATP, p. 31. See also Henry David Rempel, "The Practice and Theory of the Fragile State: Trudeau's Conception of Authority" Journal of Canadian Studies, X:4 (November, 1975), pp. 27-8. Rempel relates Trudeau's discussion of authority to Thomas Hobbes. Trudeau appeals to several Jesuits who "deny the transcendental origin of the state"--Suarez, Molina, Schmier, Victoria, and Vasques--to justify his idea of "the original sovereignty of the people." ATP, p. 61 and see also p. 52.
9. ATP, p. 50.
10. Ibid., p.50.
11. Ibid., p. 35.
12. Ibid., p. 31. See also FFC, p. 184.
13. FFC, p. 11.
14. CWC, p. 69.
15. See Bradshaw, op. cit., p. 5.
16. CWC, p. 86.
17. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 10.
18. Trudeau, The Constitution and the People of Canada, p. 14
19. ATP, pp. 87-8.
20. Ibid., p. 50.
21. Ibid., pp. 78, 89, 80.
22. Ibid., p. 78.

23. Ibid. See also Bruce Thordarson, Trudeau and Foreign Policy: a Study in Decision-Making (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 95. Thordarson argues that for Trudeau, participation is more for education of the masses in the meaning of democracy and the political system than allowing them to determine government policy.
24. ATP, p. 80.
25. Ibid., p. 76.
26. FFC, pp. 122-3. See the entire chapter, "Some Obstacles to Democracy in Quebec," pp. 103-123.
27. ATP, p. 88.
28. Ibid., pp. 88-9.
29. Ibid., p. 88. See also George Parkin Grant, English-Speaking Justice (Sackville, New Brunswick: Mount Allison University, 1974), p. 49. Grant questions whether a social contract can be based on individual self-interest. He asks whether a social contract "can be derived from a calculation in which the interests are self-evidently independent of any account of the way things are as a whole." The same argument can be applied to the question of the common good. Can it be based on "selfish" competing individuals?
30. ATP, pp. 89. See also Denis Smith, Bleeding Hearts... Bleeding Country: Canada and the Quebec Crisis (Edmonton: M.G. Hurtig Ltd., 1971), p. 93. Smith argues that Trudeau's theory on this point is close to Rousseau because, "a virtually mystical electoral act transmits the general will to the sovereign who alone interprets and enforces it."
31. Smith, op. cit., p. 87. See pp. 82-105 for Smith's discussion of Trudeau's political theory of participation. Cf. Walter Stewart, Shrug: Trudeau in Power (Toronto: New Press, 1972), p. 4. Stewart argues that Trudeau "by-passed the traditional day-to-day accountability and substituted an accountability that occurs only once in four--or five year periods, at election time." He further argues, "the role of government is to govern and the public is to judge him on the quality of his performance, when he chooses to call an election." p. 103. There is a basic conflict in Trudeau's thought when he defines the majority as the number of citizens who can legitimately withdraw consent and collapse a government, and then argues that a majority does so through popular elections. But in our electoral system of "first-past-the-post" geographic constituencies, the winning candidate rarely gets a true majority. Furthermore, when a majority of the Members of Parliament vote on a Bill, they rarely represent a true majority of Canadian electorate.

32. CWC, p. 49.

33. Ibid., p. 68.

34. Bernard Crick, In Defence of Politics (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1962), p. 127.

35. Cf. Willmoore Kendall, John Locke and the Doctrine of Majority-rule (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1965). In this study, Kendall explores parallel problems in the writings of John Locke.

### III. THE DISEQUILIBRIUM OF NATIONALISM

The problem of nationalism stands out as the greatest threat to Trudeau's basic assumptions and the related ideas of his political philosophy. Trudeau opposes nationalism because it fundamentally undermines or discounts his valued ideals: the primacy of the individual over all collective entities, the inherent rationality, liberty and equality of man, the definition of justice as procedure, and the democratic basis for determining the common good. Nationalism threatens to disrupt the social and political equilibrium. True to his political theory, Trudeau begins his analysis with a thorough investigation of the facts. Trudeau identifies nationalism as a major factor in creating disequilibrium in contemporary society.

Trudeau develops his critique of nationalism in the historical context of French-Canadian nationalism located in Quebec. The Canadian problem of unity between English and French cultural groups within a single political nationality existed long before the 1867 founding of Canada. The constitutional arrangement arrived at in the British North America Act has suffered strains and stress since that time.

During the latter half of the 1930's and from 1944 to 1960, Maurice Duplessis and the Union Nationale Party held political power in the province of Quebec. Political corruption was widespread in his government and many conservative and often reactionary policies were passed under the argument of protecting "our nation." Ramsey Cook argues, "Since Quebec was the only province in which the French Canadians were a

majority, skillful politicians could play upon Quebecker's fears that their culture and language would be threatened by the majority unless unquestioning support was given a party which represented the national needs."<sup>1</sup> Trudeau's early political articles were written in opposition to the corruption, lack of democracy, and nationalism of the Union Nationale.

In 1960, the Liberal Party defeated the Union Nationale in Quebec. While the Liberals rid the government of much of the corruption and managed to function in more democratic ways, they remained strongly committed to nationalism. In reaction to the Liberals' failure to carry the democratic revolution through to the demolition of nationalism, Trudeau writes some of his most scathing attacks on nationalism. Three of the most powerful articles written during this time are "New Treason of the Intellectuals", "The Separatist Counter-Revolutionaries" and "Quebec and the Constitutional Problem." In these articles he argues that just when Quebec was on the brink of revolution and progress, they balked and slipped into a reliance on a "new dogmatism."<sup>2</sup> Thus Trudeau's critique of nationalism does not occur as an abstract intellectual problem but, rather, it touches the heart of a problem that has plagued Canada since its founding.

#### A. THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem Trudeau tackles in his critique of nationalism is fundamentally one of how particular cultures can be related together under the territorial jurisdiction of one state. Historically, three dominant solutions have been developed within modern western thought: nationalism, individualism and radical

socialism. Radical socialism argues that the revolutionary abolition of classes will eliminate both the state and the nation. Radical socialism has not been a threat in Quebec or in North America in general, and consequently Trudeau virtually ignores it. Individualism focuses on the centrality of the individual, and attempts to construct the state from and on that primary reality. Nationalism on the other hand has been a central problem in Quebec and has plagued much of western Europe over the past centuries. Consequently, Trudeau, operating out of individualistic liberalism, identifies nationalism as the modern "heresy" and most burning problem in Canada.

According to Trudeau, the key issue underlying the nationalist heresy is its perversion of the relationship between state and nation. The nationalists argue that a group sharing a common cultural, lingual and historical heritage, and living within reasonable geographic proximity, is a sufficient criterion for the creation of a new state. The nation can exist long before a state is founded. Trudeau counters the nationalists with the argument that "A nation...is no more and no less than the entire population of a state."<sup>3</sup> The state cannot be defined by some criterion independent of the state.

Trudeau argues that at one critical point in history nationalism derailed from the high ideals of liberal progress. Trudeau recognizes government by consent, or popular sovereignty, as a major and positive development, since it recognized the inherent right and rational ability of all individuals to participate in political activities. The principle of nationalities, on the other hand, arose in history as an aberration of the progressive notion of self-determination. The notion

of self-determination shifted away from its origin in popular sovereignty, and became the organizing principle for nationalities. While consent had originally only been required to enable the replacement of bad governments with good ones, consent soon became perverted to also indicate whether a citizen wished to adhere to one territorial state or another. National self-determination dropped the "rationality" of self-government and merely became grounded on the "free will of free people."<sup>4</sup> The imbalance between will and reason in the concept of self-determination made it a strong and dissolving force within and amongst states, with the potential of endlessly dividing nation states into ever smaller units.

The divisive character of national self-determination cried out for a new and lasting national consensus to replace the former state unity based on the "divine right of kings." This new consensus, Trudeau argues, could only be based on reason: individual calculation of self-interest. He states: "A consensus can be said to exist when no group within the nation feels that its vital interests and particular characteristics could be better perserved by withdrawing from the nation than by remaining within."<sup>5</sup>

History has witnessed the frequent neglect of reason as the basis for national consensus within a state, Trudeau argues, because the passionate appeal of nationalism proved to be an easier solution in times of political trouble. When in difficulty, the state is tempted to reach out for simple solutions, and nationalism proved to be a very effective answer. Thus self-determination became attached to the passion of nationalism. The government became dependent on the people's "psychological



inclination to obey,"<sup>6</sup> and reason slipped even further away. The state had descended into the service of the nation.<sup>7</sup>

Thus the fruit of liberal democracy--individual self-determination--was stolen by its bastard child, nationalism. The very purpose of the state was reversed, turned from its primary duty to serve the individual, towards the service of the nation. Trudeau does not blame the progressive ideas of popular sovereignty or self-determination for this derailment, but rather accuses the nationalists of abusing passions for political purposes. If rational calculation of self-interest were to replace passionate nationalism as self-determination's partner, together they would provide adequate groundwork for the establishment of a procedural justice state in service of individual liberty.

Trudeau's conventionally liberal account of the historical roots of nationalism<sup>8</sup> allows him to draw only one simple conclusion: nationalism has failed to guarantee individual liberties and betrays the possibility of a procedural justice state. On the basis of this liberal reading of history, he further concludes that only the liberal state with its built-in concern for the individual can possibly shape a better and more progressive future.

#### B. OBJECTIONS BASED ON ASSUMPTIONS

The problem of nationalism is a central concern in much of Trudeau's political theory. His treatment of the subject is extremely critical and harsh. He raises objections to the threat of nationalism based on his basic assumptions, his political theory, and most fundamentally, his view of ethics and history

as progress. Nationalism, according to Trudeau, is the antithesis of his own liberal beliefs.

The nationalists begin their arguments by focusing their primary energies on the nation rather than the individual. They argue that the movement of the collective entity of the nation towards genuine independence is the "path to progress."<sup>9</sup> They consider themselves 'revolutionaries' in their struggle to free the nation from subservience to a foreign state. True liberty is achieved by releasing the nation from the bondage of external governance.

Trudeau squarely opposes these assumptions. In his mind, "progress is the slow journey towards personal freedom", and, contrary to the nationalists, "the very purpose of a collective system is to better serve personal freedom."<sup>10</sup> The nationalists are "counter-revolutionaries", Trudeau argues, since the revolution consists of "freeing the individual from collective coercions",<sup>11</sup> not the freeing of the national collectivity. The nationalists teach authority and obedience without the need for recognizing the prior rights of the individual.<sup>12</sup> Trudeau considers it a denial of man's dignity to reduce him to a mere part of a greater national whole.

Nationalism also systematically ignores the essential priority of individual liberty over and above the rights of the national collectivity. How can individuals be genuinely free if they must submit to a prior authority founded in the national group? Christian and Campell summarize the essence of the conflict between the individual and national groups: "national loyalties are incompatible with...[Trudeau's] liberal assertion that the lone individual is the ultimate moral unity."<sup>13</sup>

Nationalism also fails to recognize that equality is a characteristic of the individual, arguing instead that equality is primarily an attribute of the national collectivity.<sup>14</sup> The nationalists predicate their argument for a separate state on the basis of the equality of all national groups. This is outright 'heresy' to Trudeau. Individual equality cannot be compromised. It is the source of consent and authority in the state. Surrendering control of a state to a nationalist group violates the very foundation of individual liberty by permitting a national majority to dictate state policy regardless of the views of individuals in the minority. This would end effective individual participation in the development of state policies and create an inflexible and stagnant state.

Abraham Rotstein responds to Trudeau's critique of nationalism by suggestion that "the liberal-individualist notions of equality and freedom as we find them articulated in English Canada (and in Trudeau) are no less ideological, and produce inflexible postures as well, if they go unrecognized."<sup>15</sup> Trudeau's insistence upon individual equality as the sole basis for consent and formulating state policy can prove equally restrictive as the nationalist formula for the same.

The insistence on an individualistic order for society tends to undermine the social institutions and associations through which people can give expression to their particular language, religion and culture. With the loss of these "local" communities, citizens are forced to rely on the national community as the only remaining arena in which to express their values. Thus liberalism as espoused by Trudeau correctly identifies the

serious pitfalls of nationalism, but at the same time also strongly contributes to the creation of nationalism through its individualistic undermining of social institutions.

The social institutions and associations through which groups of individuals express their ideas and commitments are human realities which must also receive equal rights and treatment under the law. Therefore a state must, in some manner, recognize and support both the equality of individuals and the equality of their social institutions.<sup>16</sup> A "national group" would not, under these protective conditions, require a separate state to fully express its social, religious, cultural and linguistic heritage in a meaningful way.

Nationalism further transgresses Trudeau's basic assumptions in its reliance on the lower faculty of passion rather than reason, to justify the primacy of the national collectivity. This is in direct conflict with Trudeau's idea that the rational faculty is the central determinative core of the individual.

The nationalists, Trudeau argues, do not recognize that the "glue" of passion is an insufficient, reactionary, and temporary solution to the problem of state unity.

No doubt, at the level of individual action, emotions and dreams will still play a part; even in modern man, superstition remains a powerful motivation. But magic, no less than totems and taboos, has long since ceased to play an important role in the normal governing of states. And likewise, nationalism will eventually have to be rejected as a principle of sound government.<sup>17</sup>

Since Trudeau has identified the goal of the state as the facilitator of maximum individual liberty, he cannot, and does not, oppose passion in the private realm of the individual.

However, on the level of the state, individual liberty can only be achieved by rejecting passion and ruling according to the dictates of reason.

Political obedience predicated on the "emotional sop"<sup>18</sup> of nationalism, Trudeau continues, is likely to lead to a variety of unforeseen dangers. "History is full of this," he argues, "called variously chauvinism, racism, jingoism, and all manner of crusades, where right reasoning and thought are reduced to rudimentary proportions."<sup>19</sup> Freedom gained through the use of passion frequently backfires and requires a strong oppressive government to forcibly subdue continuing unrest.<sup>20</sup>

Nationalist passion at its worst, Trudeau argues, has often provided a fertile ground for war. In passionate disgust, he outlines the devastation brought on by nationalism.

The tiny portion of history marked by the emergence of the nation-states is also the scene of the most devastating wars, the worst atrocities, and the most degrading collective hatred the world has ever seen...the nation-state idea has caused wars to become more and more total over the last two centuries; and that is the idea I take issue with so vehemently.... In days gone by religion had to be displaced as the basis of the state before the frightful wars came to an end. And there will be no end to wars between nations until in some similar fashion the nation ceases to be the basis of the state.<sup>21</sup>

There is merit in Trudeau's argument that "national political self-determination" has led to a great number of European wars. However, in the article containing the above quotation, "New Treason of the Intellectuals,"<sup>22</sup> Trudeau is not attacking one of the great powerful nationalisms of Europe, but a fragment of French culture grasping for its life at the edge of an Anglophone continent. The real question raised by

the predicament of French Canada is: in what way can a multiplicity of distinct cultural, religious and linguistic peoples be united in one state as a single citizenry?

Other evidence Trudeau cites in confirmation of his argument that the nationalists reject reason is the circular logic in their self-justification. The ideology of nationalism, Trudeau argues, "claims to supply a formula for determining what section of the world's population occupying what segment of the world's surface should fall under the authority of a given state...." However, the internal lack of logic in the nationalist argument is clearly exposed in the formula they propose: "the nation first decides what the state should be: but then the state has to decide what the nation shall remain."<sup>23</sup>

Trudeau does not restrict his condemnation of passionate nationalism to the nationalisms at the state level. Nationalism is equally inappropriate at any level of government. Pan-Canadian nationalism is as detestable as the Quebec variety.<sup>24</sup> The new and broader emotionally based arguments of continentalism are as distorted as Canadianism. Trudeau's point is clear: energies spent on emotional nationalism are wasted, but efforts expended in support of "cold, unemotional rationality" will succeed.<sup>25</sup>

### C. POLITICAL OBJECTIONS

Trudeau critiques nationalism not only for its perversion of his individualistic assumptions but also because it threatens to destroy his political ideals. Nationalism is a 'heresy' because it betrays democracy, procedural justice as the foundation of the state, and the individualistic determination of the common good.

The original political error of the nationalists is that they designate the state as a servant of the national collectivity rather than the individual. This directly contravenes Trudeau's theory that collectivities, including the state, are created for the sole purpose of aiding individuals in their self-fulfillment. Nationalists add to their error by arguing that authority originates with the national collectivity rather than in the consent of the individual. The nationalists have wrested authority away from the individual and handed it over to the nation.

Trudeau's notion of democracy also falls prey to the nationalist error. Whereas Trudeau asserted that every individual citizen could be made fit to participate in the guidance of society, nationalism places individual participation secondary to the nationalist guidance of the state.<sup>26</sup> Trudeau vents his disagreement when he argues: "a nationalistic government is by nature intolerant, discriminatory, and, when all is said and done, totalitarian."<sup>27</sup> For Trudeau, true democracy is incompatible with nationalism.

Trudeau's definition of justice as a state procedure facilitating maximum individual freedom is also undermined by nationalism. The nationalists err when they attempt to define a "good" for the public community. They are faulted for coming to a common agreement as to what idea should regulate their society and direct their state. They accept a non-political imperative as the directive for political life. Leah Bradshaw identifies the issue in this manner: "Whereas the liberal state exists in order to adjudicate a multitude of diverse opinions,

and to maximize the expression of all, the nationalist state exists for the purpose of legitimizing a set of commonly held opinions."<sup>28</sup>

The intent of Trudeau's definition of political justice as a procedure is to ensure the maximum freedom and equality for every individual citizen to fulfill himself, express his opinions, and participate in the life of the state. The nationalist definition of the state undermines this objective. It restricts the field of individual freedom to those areas which are outside of the interests of the national collectivity.

Finally, nationalism undermines Trudeau's notion of the common good. The nationalists desert Trudeau's individualistic interpretation of the common good for a definition which makes it the function of the national group. Trudeau states:

In attaching such importance to the idea of nation, they are surely led to a definition of the common good as a function of an ethnic group, rather than of all the people, regardless of characteristics.... A truly democratic government cannot be 'nationalist' because it must pursue the good of all its citizens, without prejudice to ethnic origin.<sup>29</sup>

Once the common good has been instrumentalized in service of the nation, the individual is no longer able to contribute to the determination process; he is the passive recipient of a predetermined common good.

#### D. ETHICAL-HISTORICAL OBJECTIONS

Nationalism makes both an ethical and historical error, according to Trudeau, in failing to recognize that historical progress is only possible in an open society which allows for maximum individual liberty. Open societies must include a



variety of values and ideas, free competition between these values and ideas, and encourage growing interdependence between various societies. Nationalism is socially reactionary, intellectually oppressive, and culturally stifling because it slams the door on all of these essential components of progress.

Trudeau begins by refuting the nationalist claim that independence would stimulate a flowering of culture through the fresh release of energy. He counters that an isolated culture will become too 'anemic' to survive.<sup>30</sup> True culture, according to Trudeau, requires competition to advance. Since nationalists tend to be intolerant of other cultures co-existing within their political boundaries, they reject competition and consequently stifle progress. Isolation provides "sterile soil" for cultural development, and will eventually end in a "barren waste."<sup>31</sup> In an age when science, technology, and culture are becoming international and more and more interdependent, the nationalists hide from reality by trying to construct a "perfect society"<sup>32</sup> out of imperfect material.

From Trudeau's perspective, the advancement of any society is measured by the degree to which it has 'cast' off any semblance of a nonpolitical imperative, whether moral, religious, philosophic, or nationalist. The nationalists, faced with the historical reality of ever increasing individual acceptance of universal values, opt to entrench their own particular values. They seek to base their society on the particular values of a language, nation, and culture just as scientific and high cultural values were becoming universal and translingual.<sup>33</sup> If the nationalists want their particular

values of language and culture to be truly significant, then they must allow them to compete openly and achieve a level of acceptability which could serve the higher aims of liberal man.

The movement in history is toward progress, Trudeau argues, and the nationalists reject progress. They reject the notion that individual liberty is the goal of history. They reject value competition as the motor of progress. The nationalists are retrogressive. They buck the flow of history.

In keeping with his notion that political philosophy must begin with the factual reality, Trudeau identifies nationalism as the joint projection of an aggregate of individuals who have not ordered their values "correctly." As discussed in the previous chapter, Trudeau argues that it is essential that every individual have the freedom to select and order his own scale of values,<sup>34</sup> but he cannot ensure that such selection and ordering will be "appropriate." Trudeau's own political philosophy dictates that all he can do to counter such reactionary selection of values is to point out their retrogressiveness and point to a better way.

He clearly condemns the nationalist's choice: "A concept of nation that pays so little honor to science and culture obviously can find no room above itself in its scale of values for truth, liberty, and life itself."<sup>35</sup> With a sharp sense of condescension, Trudeau characterizes everything held dear by the nationalist as inferior and temporary.

The nation is, in fact, the guardian of very positive qualities: a cultural heritage, common traditions, a community awareness, historical continuity, a set of mores; all of which, at this juncture in history, go to make a man what he is. Certainly, these qualities are more private than public, more

introverted than extroverted, more instinctive and primitive than intelligent and civilized, more self-centered and impulsive than generous and reasonable. They belong to a transitional period in history. But they are a reality of our time, probably useful, and in any event considered indispensable by all national communities.<sup>36</sup>

Trudeau further argues that the French-Canadian nationalist's failure to opt for universality and progress, instead of the particular "doctrinarism" of nationalism, is due to their lack of nerve and maturity.

In 1960 everything was becoming possible in Quebec, even revolution. In fact revolution would probably not have been necessary, so wide open was the road to power for all who had mastered the sciences and techniques of the day: automation, cybernetics, nuclear science, economic planning, and what-not-else.... Alas freedom proved to be too heady a drink to pour for the French Canadian youth of 1960....and it took refuge in the bosom of its mother, the Holy Nation.<sup>37</sup>

French Canadian nationalism is a typical example for Trudeau of how regressive nationalism can be. The nationalists arrive at a historical juncture where the option of making significant progress is possible. They taste, they hesitate, refuse, and then revert to the tested emotional crutch of nationalism. Nationalism rejects Trudeau's procedural justice state in favour of establishing a single national understanding of justice for the state. Value competition is de facto eliminated. Nationalism rejects the "meat" of universal progress and in its place they opt for the "milk" of protectionist particularity.

In the wake of this seething critique of nationalism, some critics have recently asked whether the policies of the Liberal government do not in fact reflect a switch in Trudeau's

thinking towards Canadian nationalism. The policies in question included the National Energy Program (NEP) and the Federal Investment Review Agency (FIRA). In 1981, Trudeau confirmed his continued opposition to nationalism:

As a doctrine, nationalism is something I oppose, I haven't changed my views on that. But sometimes these are certain pragmatic reasons why the state should enter a sector of the economy. I am not adverse to interventionism to protect the public good. We are disturbed when foreign parents let their Canadian subsidiaries twist in the wind. If a nation wants to preserve its identity there are certain sectors of the economy that should be under domestic control.

The passion and thoroughness of Trudeau's critique of nationalism would suggest that a changed mind on this subject would require nothing short of an intellectual conversion. There is no evidence that such a conversion has occurred.

#### E. PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

As alluded to in the beginning of this chapter, Trudeau's debate with nationalism occurs because of the fundamentally different, yet related, solutions of nationalism and liberalism to the basic problem: how can several cultural groups be accommodated within the territorial jurisdiction of a single state? As a result of their respective answers to that question, the nationalists and liberals vary greatly on several key issues: the meaning of liberty, equality, the nature of the state and justice, the determination of the common good, etc.

However great these apparent differences, both nationalism and liberalism (as well as radical socialism) arise out of the common motivation of modern humanism. Humanism originated during

the Renaissance and placed its greatest stress on the freedom and autonomy of human personality and the mastery of nature.<sup>39</sup> Nationalism and liberalism derive their thrust from this "faith", developing related though often conflicting solutions to various problems. The inherent tension in the humanist position posed a dilemma between "individualism and universalism, the exaltation of either the 'autarkic individual' or the 'autonomous community'."<sup>40</sup> Liberalism claimed that the individual determines the community, while nationalism argued that the community determines the individual.

While Trudeau's critique of nationalism is an attempt to solve the problems posed by nationalism, the question must be raised: is Trudeau's liberalism a superior solution to the tension between the individual and the state? Does not Trudeau slip into several of the same problems that he accuses the nationalists of? For instance, while nationalists require national values to be the foundation of the public order, does not Trudeau's philosophic position require individuals to commonly accept certain universal values--such as the primacy of the individual, liberty, rationality, and equality--as the necessary foundation of his procedural justice state? Is Trudeau thereby requiring less public consensus than the nationalists? Is there a basic difference between a view of the common good as an instrument of the national collectivity or as an instrument of the majority of individuals? Don't both slip into the ideological error of making the common good the function of a part of the citizens?

On the basic question of the resolution of various communal expressions of culture, religion, and language within a single political community, does Trudeau's individualistic solution bring us further than the nationalist's collective solution? Is there a significant difference between the nationalist exclusion of diversity and Trudeau's argument that minority cultural values must bow out to the majorities' wishes when it comes to public institutions? Can Trudeau's tolerant liberal state tolerate non-liberal citizens better than a nationalist state can tolerate non-nationalist citizens?

## ENDNOTES

1. Ramsey Cook, "Introduction", ATP, p. 9.
2. FFC, p. 206. Interestingly, Trudeau expects the French Canadians to escape from their sterile past via the same route he personally had taken--a conversion to "self-disciplined cosmopolitan, liberal individualism which transcends the ties of nation." Smith, op. cit., p. 132.
3. This concept is one of the positive contributions of liberalism to modern political thought. The weakness of the statement is related to liberalism's exclusion of all non-individual (institutions, associations and groups) entities from state protection.
4. FFC, pp. 184-5.
5. Ibid., p. 189. See also ATP, pp. 32-7.
6. ATP, p. 32.
7. FFC, pp. 160-1.
8. Cf. FFC, pp. 151-181, and Smith op. cit., p. 109. Smith states: "His account of modern history is summary, closed and conventionally liberal; and from that account he can see only one acceptable pathway forward for mankind, into a future of rational, progressive, technically advanced, anti-nationalist federal societies."
9. FFC, p. 168.
10. Ibid., p. 209.
11. Ibid., p. 205.
12. ATP, p. 32ff.
13. Christian and Campbell, op. cit., p. 67.
14. FFC, p. 173.
15. Abraham Rotstein, op. cit., p. 110. See his full article "La Survivance" for further discussion of the two forms of equality.
16. See for instance the brief presented by the Committee for Justice and Liberty (CJL), a Toronto-based Christian public interest group, to the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on the Constitution. For an overall assessment, see Paul Marshall, "Reflections on the Constitutional Package," Catalyst (publication of CJL), June 1981, p. 8f. (CJL is now known as Citizens for Public Justice.)
17. FFC, pp. 202-3.

18. Ibid., p. 200.
19. Ibid., p. 175.
20. Cf. FFC, p.175.
21. Ibid., pp. 157-8.
22. Ibid., pp. 151-181.

23. Ibid., p. 190. A practical example of "circularity of logic" is evidenced in the situation of Quebec. While the Quebec nationalists argue that a sovereign state would be the best solution for the survival of their national cultural values, the solution literally recreates the original problem for the several small minority groups within a new sovereign Quebec, ie. the English, non-English immigrants, Indians and Inuit. In other words, the citizens domiciled within the boundaries of Quebec are not homogeneous in outlook. Diversity can be seen even within the cultural community of the French Canadians.

24. FFC, p. 155, Footnote 8.
25. Ibid., p. 203.
26. Ibid., p. 162.
27. Ibid., p. 169.
28. Bradshaw, op. cit., p. 4.
29. FFC, p. 169.
30. Ibid., p. 170.
31. Cf. Ibid., p. 179.
32. Ibid., pp. 169-70.
33. Ibid., p. 174.
34. Ibid., p. 11.
35. Ibid., p. 157.
36. Ibid., p. 177.
37. Ibid., p. 206.



38. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, cited in Heather Robertson, "The New Patriots: Pierre Trudeau and the Liberal Party have discovered that nationalism is sexy politics," Today Magazine, April 25, 1981, p. 8.

39. Herman Dooyeweerd, Roots of Western Culture: Pagan, Secular, and Christian Options (Toronto: Wedge Publishing Foundation, 1979), pp. 148-218. See also Eric Voegelin, From Enlightenment to Revolution (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1975).

40. Dooyeweerd, Roots of Western Culture, p. 180.

#### IV. THE RATIONAL INSTRUMENT OF FEDERALISM

In the various articles contained in his book Federalism and the French Canadians, Trudeau outlines his opposition to nationalism and his conclusion that federalism is the best mechanism for containing nationalism and re-establishing equilibrium. Federalism is Trudeau's rational solution to the threat of the passionate heresy of nationalism. Federalism solves the problem of unity within diversity in a single state. At the same time it promotes individual liberty, respects citizen participation in the government, it complements his procedural justice state, it accommodates and eventually eliminates many particular values, and, ultimately, it contributes to the development of progress. Indeed, federalism is a praiseworthy instrument.

##### A. FEDERALISM DEFINED

In place of the despised nationalist state, based on an exclusive definition of 'good', Trudeau advocates the "multi-national state." Recognizing the great variety of ethnic, regional, and value divisions in the world, he argues that it is naive to suggest that each group could or even should receive its own state. Consequently, Trudeau argues, "For those who recognized that the first law of politics is to start from the facts rather than from the historical 'might-have been's', the federal compromise thus became imperative."<sup>1</sup> Federalism is the progressive solution for "poly-ethnic pluralism" presenting a solution far superior to the retrogressive nationalist fragmentation of states into ever smaller units.

Trudeau's understanding of classical federalism is a state which "would have divided the totality of its sovereign powers between regional and central governments with such sharpness and adequacy that those governments would have been able to carry on their affairs in complete independence of one another." He doubts whether such pure federalism really ever existed since it would have conflicted with the factual conditions of the modern world. The federal division of powers, according to Trudeau, must be tempered with frequent "cooperation and interchange between the two levels."<sup>2</sup> Thus the essence of federalism consists in the territorial division of a state according to certain regional qualities--i.e. concentration of ethnic, religious or lingual populations, peculiarities of history, geography, etc.--and, furthermore, the resolution of the division of powers between the two governments according to criteria broadly reflecting the original rationale for the federal division.<sup>3</sup>

#### B. FEDERALISM AND BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

The first argument Trudeau raises in support of his "admirable vehicle" of federalism is its rational basis. He states: "the mainspring of federalism cannot be emotion but must be reason."<sup>4</sup> As argued in Chapter one, the human will is susceptible to the lure of passion when reason is neglected as the guiding force. Self-determination is lured astray in the paths of passionate nationalism. In this context, the strength of federalism is founded on its positive regard for the individual will, while guiding it according to the dictates

of reason. Trudeau states:

The French Revolution attempted to delineate national territories according to the will of the people, without reference to rationality; the Congress of Vienna claimed to draw state boundaries according to reason, without reference to the will of the people; and federalism arose as an empirical effort to base a country's frontiers on both reason and the will of the people.

The federal solution rationally transcends the passion of nationalism while duly recognizing its factual existence. Federalism "is an attempt to find a rational compromise between divergent interest-groups which history has thrown together; but it is a compromise based on the will of the people."<sup>6</sup> It diffuses conflict by placing it in the realm of regional government, while maintaining unity and common agreement in the realm of the national government. Emotional nationalism is caged in by the lower jurisdiction of regional government.

Federalism is not only the product of reason, it also respects the rationality of the individual. Each individual, because of his intrinsic qualities of liberty and equality, has the right to determine for himself whether or not the benefits of the federal compromise outweigh the advantages of a separate state. Recollecting that Trudeau defines reason as calculative self-interest, the federal arrangement is open to reassessment by each individual. For instance, in the case of a minority group integrated into a country through a federal system, Trudeau argues that "The advantages to the minority group of staying integrated in the whole must on balance be greater than the gain to be reaped from separating."<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, the federal solution is an "admirable vehicle"

because it respects Trudeau's individualistic assumptions concerning man. Federalism places no additional collective constraints on the individual. It respects the primacy of the individual as the top goal of society, and assists in furthering that goal when its boundaries ignore collective loyalties and cut directly through regions, cultural groups, lingual groups, and religious groups.

The integrity of individual liberty and equality is protected and enhanced in federalism through the social contract which originally established the specific division of powers between the national and local governments. Trudeau states, "the nation is based on a social contract, the terms of which each new generation of citizens is free to accept tacitly, or

to reject openly."<sup>8</sup> The federal division of powers requires the consent of all individual citizens. They must come to a common agreement on which points constitute a consensus on the national level, and which issues are potentially divisive and should be relegated to the regional level.

The individual citizens as electorate retain the right to censor their governments when they are incompetent. Therefore Trudeau argues that the citizens must "clearly know which level of government is responsible for what area of legislation, so that they may be aroused to demand good laws from all their governments."<sup>9</sup> Clear division of responsibility is an essential component of federalism if the primacy of the individual is to be safeguarded.

Trudeau's argument that federalism protects individual rights is correct in so far as federalism fragments the strength of collective entities within the state-- be they

nationalist, ethnic, or even political in nature. However, to suggest that individuals retain the power, even as aggregate majorities, to alter the division of powers of a federal agreement is unwarranted.

The patriation of the Canadian Constitution was stalemated for fifty-three years because of the inability of the federal partners to agree to an amending formula, which, in itself, did not change the federal division of powers. Even Quebec, a province with a large majority sharing in a particular cultural tradition, was unable to win a majority on a referendum vote to exchange federalism for a new relationship of "sovereignty association." Is theoretical proof that change is possible sufficient grounds to conclude that our federal system is directly responsive to the citizen?

### C. FEDERALISM AND POLITICAL IDEALS

Another reason Trudeau supports federalism as a desirable tool, is that it is compatible with his political ideals. It respects and utilizes the same political ideals which Trudeau himself holds: individual democratic participation in the affairs of a government and in the determination of the common good through the majority mechanism.

Federalism's greatest political feature, however, is its compatibility with and parallel functioning to the procedural justice state. Just as the procedural justice state establishes a consensus in the public realm and relegates individual differences to the private realm, so the federal mechanism delegates areas of broad consensus to the national realm and relegates individual and collective particularities to the

federal sub-divisions. Trudeau states, "The federal state... deliberately reduces the national consensus to the greatest common denominator between the various groups composing the nation."<sup>10</sup> Federalism manages to bind different communities into one nation by lowering the degree of commitment to the nation required from each group. The greater the diversity within a nation, the smaller the area of consensus at the national level, and the greater the area of differences left to the local levels.

The ideal state would therefore seem to be one with different sizes for different purposes. And the ideal constitution for it would be one that gave the various parts, whatever their size, the powers they needed to attain their own particular objectives.

In practice, the federal state comes closest to this ideal. Its advantage is to be able to create a state that fits the dimensions of the problem; there are two levels of government, and the measure of sovereignty each one has is dictated by necessity.<sup>11</sup>

A deliberate balance between "autonomy and centralization" is maintained in the federal scheme through pragmatic adjustments. The national-regional division of powers is purely a question of "means" and not "ends" for Trudeau. The divisions must be set "according to their usefulness in each specific case."<sup>12</sup> National unity in the midst of diversity is maintained by fine-tuning the equilibrium between divisive regionalized loyalties and the centralizing effect of national integration. As mentioned above, Trudeau's career choices reflect his intention of balancing federalism.<sup>13</sup>

Reginald Whitaker affirms these conclusions when he argues: "just as conflicting self-interests can be linked together by procedural justice in a liberal democracy, so it may be that

conflicting passions of nationalism may be linked together by another form of practical rationality [Federalism]."<sup>14</sup> Whitaker's statement can be expanded, however, beyond the idea that federalism integrates passionate nationalism(s) within a single state. Just as nationalism is exemplary of the worst collective transgressions against the individual--such as clericalism, regionalism and racism--so the political instrument of federalism may be appropriate for dealing with other collective aberrations besides nationalism.<sup>15</sup>

Trudeau's efforts to entrench a Canadian Charter of Rights is significant beyond its role in providing ground rules for the procedural justice state. The Charter is also intended to entrench the points of consensus on the national level of the federation.<sup>16</sup> This consensus reflects the "common values" held by all Canadians. In a 1969 Government of Canada publication on the Constitution, Trudeau stated:

The political leaders of Canada should first try to agree on those fundamental values which all governments ought to respect and protect. In this endeavour it should be possible to find a common ground which all Canadians can share. Human rights are, after all, of equal importance to every person whatever may be his province, region, religion, or language.<sup>17</sup>

and,

A Charter of human rights should be a declaration of belief, not only of governments but also of the people, belief in the inherent rationality of man, and in his right to live his life with dignity and freedom.<sup>18</sup>

The notion that the state must protect the rights of the citizen, irrespective of his membership in other non-state structures, is a positive contribution of liberalism which Trudeau endorses. However, the "common ground" Trudeau assumes



should be declared as a "belief" includes at minimum his concept of the autonomous rational individual, and the corresponding notions of liberty and equality. Certainly a significant number of Canadians would fundamentally disagree with these individualistic assumptions. The values which Trudeau would like to entrench in the Canadian Charter of Rights directly contradict key values held by certain "collective" groups in Canada.

Although there may be almost unanimous consent to the provisions guaranteeing individual rights, many would demand due recognition and protection of their collective identity and rights as well. As Leah Bradshaw contends, Trudeau's liberalism allows him to construct "myths about the liberal homogeneity of Canadian society."<sup>19</sup>

#### D. FEDERALISM AND PROGRESS

The most valuable feature of federalism is its suitability as a vehicle for progress: the movement towards the absolute freedom of the individual. To begin with, we must recollect that a basic condition for progress is competition. Trudeau states, "I guess I just feel that the challenge of the age is to live together with people who don't have all the same values as yourself. I believe in pluralistic societies. I believe the way to progress is through the free exchange of ideas and confrontation of values."<sup>20</sup>

Trudeau also urges us to recognize that the adherence to particular values is a reality in our age. There is "the federal data that some like to live by the sea, some in the plains, and that some prefer to speak French."<sup>21</sup> An excessively competitive climate for these preferences (values) would be destructive and

elicit defensive reactions on the part of collective value groups.

History teaches us that diversity rather than uniformity is the general rule in this land. With the exception of a certain number of basic principles that must be safeguarded, such as liberty and democracy, the rest ought to be adapted to the circumstances of history, to tradition, to geography, to cultures, and to civilizations.<sup>22</sup>

Consequently, for Trudeau a measure of protection for particular values is essential for progress.

Trudeau points to federalism as the mechanism which is able to reconcile the goals of competition and progress with the historical realities of diversity and the need for a minimal level of protection.

Federalism serves admirably as a vehicle for competition by combining various groups with different particular values within one structure. At the same time, a degree of protection against the stress of competition is offered by regional levels of government. Trudeau argues:

Canadian federalism is ideal. While requiring French Canadians, in the federal sector, to submit their way of doing things (and especially their political forms) to the test of competition, the federal system allows us at the same time to provide for ourselves in Quebec the form of government and educational institutions that best suit our needs.<sup>23</sup>

and

In a great number of vital areas, and notably those that concern the development of particular cultural values, Quebec has full and complete sovereignty under the Canadian constitution.<sup>24</sup>

What federalism in fact achieves is the delegation of more universal values--those areas of national consensus--to the national government while leaving the diversity of particular

values in the hands of regional governments. Thus, while the regional government offers a degree of protection, the particular values of a group must also undergo competition in the process of contributing to a common national government.

Trudeau states:

In the field of political culture, no less than in other fields [such as "economic", "moral, intellectual, artistic, scientific, and technical" fields] our institutions do not deserve to survive at all unless they can successfully survive external competition. And Canadian federalism is a closed field in which the French-Canadian province can seek to rival other provinces in political maturity and administrative efficiency, on a more or less equal footing.<sup>25</sup>

In the case of nationalism, the federal state would offer some protection for their particular values, but at the same time force them to undergo competition. Christian and Campbell suggest that "federalism allows the accommodation of different nationalities within one political framework. This not only gives nationalist feelings an outlet at a level where the harm they can do is minimized, but in the long run teaches toleration, and works toward the end of nationalism."<sup>26</sup> As a result of the federal system, some values would emerge as universal in character and live on in the national federal consensus, while other values, such as nationalism would be rejected as too particular. Not only will the nationalist emotion (particular value) wither and disappear, all collective expressions of particular values will fade away under the conditions of competition offered by the federal solution.

Trudeau demonstrates this point in his argument that federalism will enable French Canadians to really progress. They can expect to adopt some new values, lose some values and,

finally, have some of their "particular values" become more universal.

By the terms of the existing Canadian constitution, that of 1867 [federalism], French Canadians have all the powers they need to make Quebec a political society affording due respect for nationalist aspirations and at the same time giving unprecedented scope for human potential in the broadest sense....If Quebec became such a shining example, if to live there were to partake of freedom and progress, if culture enjoyed a place of honour there, if the universities commanded respect and renown from afar, if the administration of public affairs were the best in the land... French Canadians would no longer need to do battle for bilingualism; the ability to speak French would become a status symbol, even an open sesame in business and public life. Even in Ottawa, superior competence on the part of our politicians and civil servants would bring spectacular changes.<sup>27</sup>

The Canadian Charter of Rights and national bilingualism policy also serve the federal structure and purpose by guaranteeing individual rights. The Charter places all individual citizens on "a more or less equal footing," thereby facilitating fair competition. The inclusion of French language rights, in the Constitution, Trudeau argues, works toward the creation of fair conditions for French Canadians to compete in. Trudeau states:

I do not think there is any permanent equilibrium in the political affairs of any nation. It is always a moving equilibrium. This is particularly true of a federation where regions and the centre are constantly adjusting that equilibrium. What we are doing today is merely providing Canadians with the means [the constitution and Charter of Rights] of seeking that equilibrium....we are merely setting the stage for the contest about the kind of Canada we will have in the future. (Emphasis mine).<sup>28</sup>

The bilingualism policy was not created to recognize Canadian cultural duality as such. Rather, Trudeau sees the two languages policy as a response to aggregate individual demand for recognition of French as a national language. Language is basically an individual right. He states, "In terms of realpolitik, French and English are equal in Canada because each of these linguistic groups has the power to break the country. And this power cannot yet be claimed by the Iroquois, the Eskimo, or the Ukrainians."<sup>29</sup> Thus rights for fair competition are based on the size and power of different "aggregations" of individuals.

Through the introduction of the Bilingualism policy, Trudeau seeks to establish for the French Canadians an "equal opportunity to participate."<sup>30</sup> Bilingualism sets fair ground rules for value competition within a federal state, and thus avoids prejudicing the process in favour of one group or another.

Trudeau takes this instrumentalist view of the role of language in the federal system because he sees language not as value but as a carrier of value. Language is only a value in itself when it does not isolate individuals from the competition necessary for progress. The true value of language is only guaranteed by whether or not it serves as a carrier of progressive values. Trudeau states:

French will only have value to the extent that it is spoken by a progressive people. What makes for vitality and excellence in language is the collective quality of the people speaking it. In short, the defence of the French language cannot be successful without accomplishments that make the defence worth while.<sup>31</sup>

and

the French language will be able to express progressive values only if North Americans who speak it are themselves in the forefront of progress, that is to say if they compete on an equal basis with English-speaking Canadians.<sup>32</sup>

Thus French Canadians, like the English, are given the right to preserve their language and culture only if it promotes the higher goals of the liberal individual and his progress.

The problem with this assertion is that the most significant minority cultural group in the country, the French Canadians, have generally not accepted his atomistic individualism as a sufficient ground for a just society. Merely individualistic ground rules within a federal system are not likely to protect the integrity of any cultural or religious collectivity. Certainly René Lévesque has "rejected Trudeau's notion that French Canadian survival could be reduced to a matter of individual excellence and language rights."<sup>33</sup>

All of the above features of federalism have persuaded Trudeau to praise (especially Canadian) federalism as a "brilliant prototype for the moulding of tomorrow's civilization."<sup>34</sup> Trudeau states:

It would seem...a matter of considerable urgency for world peace and the success of the new states that the form of good government known as democratic federalism should be perfected and promoted, in the hope of solving to some extent the world-wide problems of ethnic pluralism. To this end, as I will show later, Canada could be called upon to serve as mentor, provided she has sense enough to conceive her own future on a grand scale.<sup>35</sup>

### E. FEDERALISM AND THE FUTURE

A cursory look at Trudeau's understanding of what the future holds helps to place both his idea of federalism and his overall political theory into perspective. In keeping with his emphasis on the "here and now" Trudeau hardly discusses the future. The future is not predictable because it is dependent on the outcome of individual value competition. However, several things are clear from Trudeau's comments. In keeping with his understanding of political philosophy as temporary checks and balances for current and specific political problems, federalism is a temporary tool for the specific problem of nationalism. In maintaining equilibrium, federalism creates the conditions of value competition and progress which eventually render federalism itself obsolete.

Trudeau argues: "at certain times and in certain places federalism may be held to be a fundamental value."<sup>36</sup> However, his own philosophy does "not consider a state's political structures or constitutional forms to have absolute and eternal value."<sup>37</sup> Federalism is a timebound and historically conditioned means, not an end. The Canadian federal state, for instance, should not be considered permanent, because "if and when inter alia the political maturity of all Canadians has reached a very high level, a more centralized state could be acceptable for Canada."<sup>38</sup>

The future, Trudeau suggests, will usher in greater interdependence and lessening of national divisions and independence. "In 1962 it is unlikely that any nation-state--or for that matter any multi-national state either--however strong, could

realize a complete and perfect society; economic, military, and cultural interdependence is a sine qua non for states of the twentieth century, to the extent that none is really self-sufficient."<sup>39</sup>

Values are becoming increasingly international and common to all men, a fact which questions the long-term utility of the state itself. As citizens rationally reject their irrational obsession with sovereignty, the state will gradually fade away.

Trudeau states:

Just as each citizen must recognize the submission of his own sovereignty to the laws of the state... so the states will know no real peace and prosperity until they accept the submission of their relations with each other to a higher order. In truth, the very concept of sovereignty must be surmounted..."<sup>40</sup>

Thus not only will federalism be discarded, the "Canadian nation will be asked to yield a part of its sovereignty to a higher authority."<sup>41</sup> For Trudeau, "neither Canada's present constitution nor the country itself represents an eternal and unchangeable reality."<sup>42</sup>

Clearly Trudeau's central purpose for the federal mechanism is to counter nationalism and to encourage the development of more purely universal values and the rejection of remaining particular values (those values which have not become universal). As a society begins to develop and adopt more and more universal values, its members will begin to recognize that it is in their interest to further integrate into larger, more universal forms of political organization. The protection of smaller political units can be abandoned for the greater competition and progress available in more universal political units. As individuals dissolve smaller political units in favour of the freedom of



larger more universal political organization, value competition increases and universal values become shared by greater and greater numbers of people. Eventually individuals begin to hold more and more homogeneous values. Understanding this process of progress, it is clear that Trudeau's aim is not (as so many have argued) so much centralization as it is homogenization and universalization.<sup>43</sup>

As a member of The Committee for Political Realism, Trudeau co-authored the 1964 document "An Appeal for Realism in Politics" where his inclination towards homogeneity and universality is clearly illustrated.

The most valid trends today are towards more enlightened humanism, toward various forms of political, social and economic universalism. Canada is a reproduction on a smaller and simpler scale of this universal phenomenon. The challenge is for a number of ethnic groups to learn to live together. It is a modern challenge, meaningful and indicative of what can be expected from man. If Canadians cannot make a success of a country such as theirs, how can they contribute in any way to the elaboration of humanism, to the formulation of the international political structures of tomorrow? To confess one's inability to make Canadian Confederation work is, at this stage of history, to admit one's unworthiness to contribute to the universal order.<sup>44</sup>

In this paragraph, which constitutes the philosophical justification for their declaration, the authors identify "enlightened humanism" as the "most valid trend" today. In so identifying this particular constellation of values as superior and likely to win out in the public competition for value ascendancy, Trudeau is suggesting that political, social and economic structures are moving toward more and more universal forms. This in turn will ensure that society will become more homogeneous in values. As Reginald Whitaker suggests, "there

is an unmistakable flavour here of Hegel's universal, homogenous state as the end of history."<sup>45</sup>

A practical example of Trudeau's inclination towards the homogenization of public values in Canada is found in his treatment of aboriginal peoples. As Prime Minister, he attempted to abolish the Indian Act in order to end the "second-class citizenship" of the natives. In response to a question concerning the 1969 White paper, Trudeau replied:

Our approach is saying 'here is a very difficult problem of native peoples who for a hundred years and more have been treated as apart from the rest of society, second-class citizens, citizens, with special status, citizens with special privileges, of very heavy obligations and very heavy inequalities weighing on their shoulder.' We started with that. We said, how can we bring them to be full citizens over a period of time...<sup>46</sup>

In a television program, he elaborated further on the results of failing to enter mainstream liberal culture.

No small group of people can long remain outside of the mainstream of education, technology, urban living, and all of these things.... you cannot do this without paying a very heavy penalty in terms of the health of children, the education of minds, the freedom to move, the right to accumulate property and the right to be treated as an equal under the law.<sup>47</sup>

If native people resist entry in the mainstream society of the liberal state, they cannot expect to reap its fruits. They will be rejecting the opportunity to maximize their individual self-fulfillment.

The final comprehensive picture we receive from Trudeau's philosophy begins with the progressive unfolding of increasing opportunities for individual self-fulfillment. This movement is accompanied by the evolution of the masses toward greater

homogeneity on universal values. These values provide the basis for political institutions--such as the procedural justice state and federalism--which evolve along with the "maturing" populace. As the citizens increasingly develop and accept universal values as their own, they will begin to recognize that global rather than local political structures are rational and progressive.

The end result is a universal state containing a homogeneous population of individuals, free to privately value whatever they wish but publically bound to uphold the order which guarantees this freedom. Does Trudeau then predict a final utopian state as the end to this competitive process of value ascendancy? That would be impossible because it would contradict the primacy of individual freedom. The only permanency possible is the movement toward an increasingly universal state containing increasingly homogeneous individuals, who are free to value anything that does not conflict with the consensus of values required to uphold the procedural justice order.

Trudeau outlines the endless path to progress:

To seek to create the just society must be amongst the highest of those human purposes. Because we are mortal and imperfect, it is a task we will never finish; no government or society ever will. But from our honest and ceaseless effort, we will draw strength and inspiration, we will discover new and better values, we will achieve an unprecedented level of human consciousness. On the never-ending road to perfect justice we will, in other words, succeed in creating the most humane and compassionate society possible. 48

If greater homogeneity of values and more universal forms of political organization result from the competitive interaction of individual values, why does Trudeau then reject

the American "melting-pot" model as a more direct and appropriate route to his goals? The key to this rejection lies in Trudeau's desire to start from the factual reality. Canada and much of the world contain vast numbers of ethnic groups. The melting-pot model is too extreme and harsh a method for realizing progress through competition in such diverse populations. It is much better to take a "middling" route--to adapt a model that finds a rational method of maintaining the desired equilibrium and direction in a society. Thus the tool of federalism is superior to the melting pot because its respects the reality of diversity while using such diversity to generate progress in a society.<sup>49</sup>

#### F. FINAL QUESTIONS

Trudeau's critique of nationalism and defense of federalism is conceived and written from out of his basic assumptions.  
The fundamental picture of reality Trudeau seems to work with can be summarized: how can the rational individual, in a political order based on freedom and equality, best actualize himself, have his values compete for ascendancy, and thereby remake the world in a general movement towards progress in history? Trudeau blurs together several distinct problems as he develops his political ideas and particularly his view of the structure and purpose of federalism and the state.

Four basic problems are either ignored or (presumably) solved by Trudeau's fundamental picture of reality and the concurrent political ideals, especially federalism. Although Trudeau's philosophy fails to directly deal with these four problems, they are dealt with in one context or another. The

following questions identify the four problems accompanied by a summary of Trudeau's response to each.

1. The religious problem: How should individual and communal religious convictions be expressed within the public realm and within institutions required and supported by the public order? For Trudeau, religion is a personal, non-communal private affair between an individual and his god. Religion may have no real impact on the content of public decisions because politics is a non-ideological matter pertaining to a public order which guarantees each individual the right to personal freedom. Personal freedom includes freedom of religion, but religion so defined must be a private matter. In so far as religion pertains to values, a public order so conceived would maximize religious (and other) value competition and so guarantee progress.

2. The cultural problem: How can a multiplicity of cultures co-exist and develop within the territorial jurisdiction of a single state? For Trudeau, culture is the product of individual activity. Individuals are free to choose the cultural characteristics they prefer out of the broad range of world cultures that exist. Cultural "communities" only exist to the extent that they are aggregations of individuals who adhere to similar cultural values. Public accommodation and protection of values would only reduce competition and thereby short-circuit progressive development.

3. The sociological problem: What is the role of non-state institutions and associations in relation to the individual and the state? The basic unit in Trudeau's sociology is the individual. All other social entities are secondary creations and servants of individuals. Public recognition and protection of these entities would unduly detract from individual liberty and curtail its central role in progress.

4. The geo-political problem: How can unity be created within a geographically large and diverse country? For Trudeau, large countries require a political structure that recognizes that particular regional identities develop, distinct geographic problems exist, and that individuals can feel remote from large and distant governments. The federal mechanism is enlisted to solve these problems by creating smaller political subdivisions that bridge the gap between the individual and the state.

ENDNOTES

1. FFC, p. 192. The term federal was originally coined by 17th-century theologians. It was derived from the Latin term foedus (covenant) and first appeared in 1645. For a thorough discussion of federalism, see Daniel J. Elazar, "Federalism", in the International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, 1968, and Gillies Lalonde, In Defense of Federalism (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978). Johannes Althusius mentions "Confederation" in 1603 in his Politica Methodice Digesta. Edited by C.J. Friedrich, Cambridge, Mass., 1932.

2. FFC, p. 134.

3. W.S. Livingston, "A Note on the Notion of Federalism," in J. Peter Meekison, Editor, Canadian Federalism: Myth or Reality (Toronto: Methuen, 1968), p. 20.

4. FFC, p. 194. Later on in this article, Trudeau states, "I am suggesting that cold, unemotional rationality can still save the ship." He also states, "if not a pure product of reason, the political tools of the future will be designed and appraised by more rational standards than anything we are currently using in Canada today." Federalism, he suggests, is one of the new, more rational political tools. p. 203.

5. Ibid., p. 195.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., p. 192.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., p. 149.

10. Ibid., p. 191.

11. Ibid., p. 35.

12. Ibid., p. 148.

13. Ibid., pp. xix-xx, See also pp. vii-xiii, and p. 33.

14. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 21.

15. Other historical forms of collective "heresy" which Trudeau identifies are "clannishness," "tribalism," and "feudalism." FFC, p. 189.

16. FFC, pp. 54-5.

17. Trudeau, The Constitution and the People of Canada, p. 14. See also Thordarson, op. cit., p. 79.

18. Trudeau, The Constitution and the People of Canada, p. 20.

19. Bradshaw, op. cit., p. 11.

20. CWC, p. 195.

21. FFC, p. 150. In this passage, Trudeau uses the words "like" and "prefer." While it is true that "some live near the sea" because they "like" it, and that some "speak French" because they "prefer" it, most people live and talk as they do because of "over-riding" non-choice factors, e.g. due to their birthplace. In this context, Trudeau's use of these words clearly indicates that he is seeing reality through the, "spectacles" of an ideology.

22. FFC, p. 6.

23. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, "In Defense of Federalism," in Paul Fox, editor, Politics: Canada, 2nd edition (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1966), p. 110. Laxer and Laxer argue that the liberal desire for competition among nations is parallel to the desire for competition in the business world. They state: "national cultures should compete in the market place just as businesses should." op. cit., p. 24.

24. FFC, p. 33.

25. Ibid., p. 35. The list inserted in the quotation is taken from the same discussion, but immediately preceding this citation on p. 34.

26. Christian and Campbell, op. cit., p. 68.

27. FFC, p. 180. Trudeau states, in reference to the potential for progress of the French Canadians, that "the French-Canadian community holds in its hands, hic et nunc, the essential instruments for its regeneration..." Taken from Ramsey Cook, Canada and the French-Canadian Question (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1967), p. 101. Original source, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, "L'Alienation Nationalistic", Cite Libre, 12th year, No. 33 (new series), March 1961, p. 5.

28. Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, The Prime Minister's Address to the House of Commons in the Constitutional Debate (Ottawa, March 23, 1981), (Separately published, edited version), p. 22.



29. FFC, p. 35. Trudeau also makes this point strongly in his address to the Ukrainian-Canadian Congress, Winnipeg, 9 October, 1971. Here he states: "Languages have two functions. They act both as a vehicle of communication, and as a preservation of culture. Governments can support languages in either or both of these roles; but it is only in the communication role that the term 'official' is employed. An overwhelming number of Canadians use either English or French in their day-to-day communications with one another and with government. It is for this practical reason--not some rationalization about founding races--that these two languages have attained an official character in Canada. French and English are not superior to or more precise than any other language. They are simply used more in Canada." CWC, pp. 34-36.

30. FFC, p. 56. See also pp. 46-7.

31. Ibid., p. 30. See also p. 46 and CWC, p. 39.

32. FFC, p. 46.

33. Laxer and Laxer, op. cit., p. 179.

34. FFC, p. 179.

35. Ibid., p. 154.

36. Ibid., p. 150.

37. Ibid., p. 6

38. Ibid., p. 139, footnote 10.

39. Ibid., pp. 169-70.

40. Ibid., p. 170. Thordarson also argues that "He (Trudeau) considers sovereignty as a means rather than an end, something to be applied judiciously and with moderation in cases where it can contribute towards the attainment of human objectives." op. cit., pp. 62-5.

41. FFC, p. 155 Footnote 8.

42. Ibid., p. 37. Trudeau's statement to the United States Congress, that the break-up of Canada would be "a crime against the history of humanity," refers not to a need to preserve Canada, but that the break-up of Canada is a movement towards smaller instead of larger political units. History is moving towards the universal homogeneous state. See George Parkin Grant, "Foreword", in Laxer and Laxer, op. cit., p. 10.

43. Grant, Technology and Empire, p. 87.

44. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, "An Appeal for Realism in Politics," Canadian Forum, Vol. 44, No. 520, May, 1964, p. 33.

45. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 24. ~~George Grant argues that the disappearance of the Canadian state is inevitable because of liberal ideology and its push toward the universal and homogeneous state.~~ George Parkin Grant, Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965), pp. 84-87. The entire book is a lament concerning the "dissolution" of the particular nation of Canada.

46. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, PM/Dialogue, compiled by Robert Moon (Hull, Quebec: High Hill Publishing House, 1972), p. 3. This book contains an assortment of quotations from Trudeau during his early years as Prime Minister.

47. CWC, pp. 13-5. See also Sally M. Weaver, Making Canadian Indian Policy (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), pp. 53-56.

48. Ibid., p. 42.

49. FFC, pp. 15, 179.

## V. ASSESSMENT

In conclusion, I would like to raise the questions mentioned in earlier chapters in the context of a general critique. I do so in five parts, the first four correspond to the problems raised in Chapter four, and the last part is a summary critique.

### A. IDEOLOGY AND RELIGION

One of the foundational notions of Trudeau's philosophy is that ideological systems are the true enemies of freedom. Ideologies are unacceptable because they claim to know "absolute truth in politics"<sup>1</sup> that is applicable in all ages. Ideology comes to an end, Trudeau assumes, in liberal philosophy of which he is a faithful practitioner.

Trudeau's theory of the procedural justice state and complementing idea of federalism are both designed to create a political order in which the individual is maximally free to do as he wishes. These political instruments, Trudeau suggests, are non-ideological--that is, they do not impose any views on the individual. It may well be correct, as Peter Newman argues, that these political instruments are "derived from the Jesuit principle of not imposing your views on others but of letting people find their own way to your beliefs."<sup>2</sup>

As alluded to in Chapters two and four, however, the procedural justice state and federalism are based on certain constants in Trudeau's thinking. The most basic constant is the assumption of the priority of the free individual. Two dependent constants are federalism and the procedural justice order.

Both instruments are beyond question because they are the product of reason--that is, the calculative self-interest of the individual.

The lack of self-conscious critique leads Trudeau to the conclusion that he has no ideology while ignoring the fact that he places his constants beyond discussion. Trudeau's failure to recognize the ideological character of his own thought can be seen in many of his ideas. For the sake of brevity, I will raise only a few. First, Trudeau correctly criticizes the nationalist practice of instrumentalizing the common good to the wishes of the nationalist group. However, he commits the same error himself when he formulates the common good as the mathematical product of the majority mechanism. The common good is then instrumentalized to the majority of self-interest seeking individuals. Both nationalism and liberalism instrumentalize the common good to a part of their national citizenry.

A second illustration of the ideological character of Trudeau's thought is his practice of describing situations as freely chosen, when in fact they are determined for most people. He does so when he argues that an individual 'consents' a state into being and can withdraw that consent to collapse a state, and when he states that some "prefer" to live by the sea, and that some "like" to speak French. These statements reflect an ideological lack of awareness of the common sense experience that people are born into a state, region or language, and often have little power to change this condition.

A third example of the ideological character of Trudeau's thought is his "faith" in reason. Even though the rationality of liberalism has not been attractive to the vast majority of humanity, and even though passionate nationalism blossoms in many parts of the world, Trudeau maintains his belief in the "right-directedness" of reason--that is, calculative self-interest. What if the "majority" calculate that individual freedom and progress are not in their best interests? What if they reject the constants that underlie the procedural justice state and federalism? What if the majority determine that it is in their interest to secede and form a new nationalist state? Only ideologically motivated "faith" can lead Trudeau to conclude that progress is inevitable.

The major reason for Trudeau's lack of awareness of his own ideology is his conviction that philosophy and action are only a matter of rational administration--the judicious application of checks and balances. All ideology is thereby banned from the public realm. In excluding ideology from the public realm, Trudeau also rejects any legitimate role for religious convictions. Both ideology and religion claim "absolute" and "timeless" solutions to political problems. That fundamentally conflicts with Trudeau's own ideological preference for the absolute freedom for the individual to determine his own values and future. This goal is realized through the ideological tools of the procedural justice state and federalism, masquerading as rational administrative instruments. This lack of self-conscious ideology leads him to exclude all ideological or religious convictions from legitimate expression in the public realm.

## B. CULTURAL PLURALISM.

A second major problem concerns the question: can a variety of cultures co-exist within a single political nationality? In 1968, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism argued that "Culture is a way of being, thinking, and feeling. It is a driving force animating a significant group of individuals united by common tongue and sharing the same customs, habits, and experiences."<sup>3</sup> Trudeau disagrees with this comprehensive definition, taking the opposite view that culture is strictly an individual quality which may be accepted or rejected at will.

Trudeau formulates the problem this way: can a state accommodate and eventually eliminate cohesive cultural communities that co-exist within a single state, without forcing them into separate states? Trudeau's ideological glasses cause him to see "group" phenomena as temporary allegiances based on emotional appeal, but in and of themselves these groups have no essential character of their own. They are merely temporary impediments to the free self-realization of individuals.

The political idea that best reflects his disregard for all minority cultural groups is his majoritarian method of determining the common good. Minority group rights are conspicuous by their absence in his thought and action. The greatest thrust in Trudeau's political ideas is to create as much competition as realistically possible, minimize protection, and thereby dissolve all cultural groupings. The most outstanding example of Trudeau's neglect of "group rights" is found in the new Canadian Constitution. Trudeau, as the single greatest influence on that document, kept groups rights to the absolute practical

minimum while entrenching firm ground rules for individual competition.

Trudeau is not unique in his failure to recognize group rights. In a certain sense nationalism, liberalism's errant sister, is so preoccupied with the survival of a particular nationalist group that it also relegates smaller groups to secondary status. Both ideologies make the common good an instrumentalization of part of the political community. Both fail to create legal protection and space within the political community for the meaningful co-existence of minority groups. What is required is structural political recognition of the fact that individuals are members of smaller cultural groupings that are essential to their "self-realization." Trudeau's ideological blinders cause him to miss the fact that most crucial human functions are achieved in community with others. In every day, commonsense experience, we perceive ourselves as individual persons embedded in group realities, e.g. being Canadian, English or French, Christian, Inuit.

### C. DISSOLUTION OF SOCIAL STRUCTURES

A problem closely related to the public role of religion and the legal protection of minority "group rights" is the function and place of non-state institutions and associations. Trudeau's neglect of the former two problems is reinforced by his disregard for the place and role of social structures. When Trudeau discounts the role and value of social institutions and associations, he takes away the means by which people develop and practice their religious and cultural convictions. As Bernard Crick argues, "The liberal asks a man to consult his

own self-interest...or to try will the common good...but he wishes to take away the corporate means by which these views in fact arise."<sup>4</sup>

Trudeau has reduced sociological phenomena to the primary unit of the individual and the subsidiary and comprehensive unit of the state. In doing so, all power in society is polarized between the free individual and the necessary state. The power of the state is created out of the urge to maximize individual freedom. The "power" required by different institutions and associations to carry out their respective functions is overlooked by Trudeau. The role these social structures play in diffusing power among more social structures than the state and the individual is discounted. The individual is absolute, the state order is a necessity for better insuring individual freedom, and social institutions and associations are merely devices to be used or dissolved at the convenience of the individual.

#### D. FEDERALISM AS RATIONAL INSTRUMENT

Trudeau's rational instrument of federalism suits his ideological description of reality well, with its privatized religion, individualized culture, and subordinated social institutions and associations. Federalism become Trudeau's ideal political tool (for this period in history) for maximizing individual freedom and progress. It solves several basic problems of the state--such as, the diversity of cultures and religions, the distance of individuals from the state, geographic variations with in a country. However, the mainopponent of federalism is nationalism and its main purpose is to dissolve nationalism



through competition. That is, federalism places nationalism in a structure that tames it, rationalizes it, and leads it toward liberalism's goal of individual freedom and progress.

Federalism gives the short-term impression that it is solving the problems of religion, cultural plurality, social structures and geographic diversity, when it narrows the gap between the individual and the state. In the long-term, however, federalism actually serves to eliminate the first three problems. Religion is relegated to the privacy of individual lives, cultural communities are splintered into individual preferences, and social institutions and associations are ignored and ultimately dissolved. Liberalism, in its ideological determinedness, quietly utilizes the procedural justice state and federalism to dissolve all barriers to individual liberty and progress.<sup>5</sup>

#### E. THE END OF LIBERALISM

There is a basic internal tension in the philosophy of Pierre Trudeau. He begins by placing an absolute value on the liberty of the individual and his ability to progress through the remaking of self and the world. This generates the contradiction of finding unity and order in society. The desire to maximize individual liberty draws out the necessity of creating political institutions that can guarantee and facilitate such liberty.<sup>6</sup>

The procedural justice state is Trudeau's "ideal" institution for creating the order necessary for individual liberty. It imposes a minimal amount of necessary order on the individual. It determines nothing except an order that guarantees individuals

the right to determine for themselves what their values will be and what they want to make of themselves. It allows free competition--the engine basic to liberal progress--so that all individual values may be tested against the values of every other individual.

In the inevitable drive toward increasing individual freedom to remake self and the world, state boundaries will become less significant and political units will become larger. This permits greater competition of a larger number of values. Federalism plays a key role here, in permitting the combination of great diversity with the maximum-sized state.

As history moves toward a more universal state, individual values are exposed to more and more direct competition. This is necessary for progress. As time passes, values which win out in the competition become more widely accepted as universal. Society becomes more and more homogeneous in composition.

However, because Trudeau has rejected all transcendent sources of authority, no criterion is available to judge the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the values which survive competition. Nor can he judge whether power exerted in the competition is legitimate or not. As George Grant so succinctly put it, "if history is the final court of appeal, force is the final argument."<sup>7</sup> As a result, all less powerful particular values are dissolved by the dominant, powerful, and thus more universal values. Thus, for example, the particular value of Canada is likely succumb to the competition of powerful and large nations such as United States. The values of the powerful win out in competition and become homogeneously accepted.<sup>8</sup>

History gradually and inevitably moves toward the universal state and homogeneous society. All particular religious, cultural, and institutional values will either fade away or be integrated into the greater stream of history--which is itself the movement of progress in time.

Trudeau's political tools are designed to move all individuals into the universal state and to have them all freely accept common values, thereby creating a homogeneous society. The values to be commonly accepted implicitly include his own liberal values of the free individual remaking self and the world.

As the universal and homogeneous state arises out of the inevitable stream of history, what remains of Trudeau's ideals of individual liberty and progress? The universal order--as the necessary dialectic expression of individual freedom--will likely eclipse and emasculate the individual. The necessary universal order will only permit liberal expression of freedom in the public arena. The universal state will only tolerate liberal people. In the remaining realm of private individual freedom only questions of personal preference will survive--such as clothing styles, sexual preferences, and recreational choices. The universal and homogeneous state is a prescription for public mediocrity and private narcissism.<sup>9</sup> If we wish to avoid this "fate", we would do well to re-evaluate our commitment to liberalism (and its parent, humanism) which currently pervades much of our society, our major political parties, and our public institutions.

## ENDNOTES

1. FFC, pp. xxi, xxxii.

2. Peter C. Newman, in Thordarson, op. cit., p. 5

3. Hugh R. Innis, ed., Bilingualism and Biculturalism: An Abridged Version of the Royal Commission Report (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), p. 4.

4. Crick, op. cit., p. 127.

5. For a discussion of an alternative sociology and political theory to the liberal and nationalist theories, and one that give due recognition to religious diversity, cultural pluralism and diversity of social structures, see Dooyeweerd, A New Critique of Theoretical Thought, vol. III.

6. For a discussion of the internal dialectic tensions in humanist thought and action, see Ibid., vol. I, pp. 169-495; Dooyeweerd, Roots of Western Culture, esp. pp. 148-218; Bob Goudzwaard, Capitalism and Progress: A Diagnosis of Western Society (Toronto: Wedge: Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1979), pp. 155-161; and Grant, Technology and Empire.

7. George Parkin Grant, Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965), p. 89.

8. It is important to note that Trudeau, and liberalism in general, view historical progress in a somewhat onesided manner. Historical development generally involves: individuation, interdependence, continuity, and diversification. Liberalism absolutizes the prior two guidelines in its view of history, and virtually ignores the latter two.

9. Trudeau's philosophy is a particularistic encapsulation of humanism's universal drive to re-create man and the world in his own image. Humanism trades in the Image of God as love for the image of man as self-love. History as the arena of the great deeds of God and the responses of human creatures is reduced to an arena of endless competition and the self-interested responses of individuals. The liberty in salvation through Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of God is rejected in favour of liberty (slavery) to the necessity in the kingdom of man. In attempting to escape into self-defined freedom, man really ends up in self-less necessity.

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