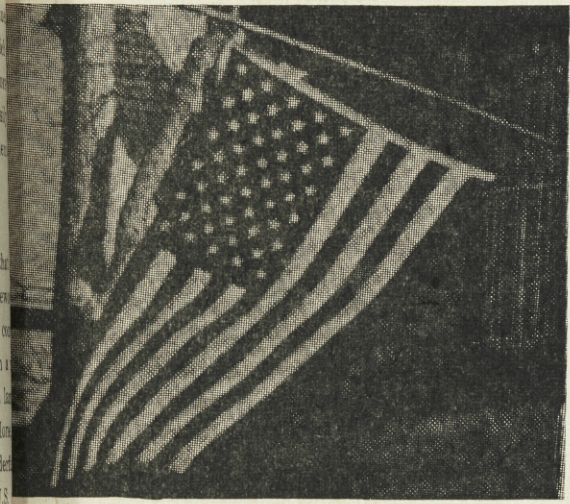


States, they are also integrated into a general national community. They acquire a strong identification with the American nation. Here they assimilate culturally without being integrated into a unifying national community. It is this absence of a strong Canadian or English Canadian loyalty, combined with the example of French Canada, which enables ethnic spokesmen to demand for their willingly assimilating "constituents" a status similar in principle to that of English and French Canada.

I would rather be a Jew in the United States than a Jew in Canada. The Jews are more ghettoized, but their cultural life as Jews is thinner. Their part-recent arrivals, and separate of the "protection" of the cipation in the general national culture is also less profound in Canada than in the United States. The ghettoization of the ethnic communities of Canada stifles me, and I suspect it stifles all non-British non-French Canadians except those who make the nurturing of particularism a professional career in the Senate and elsewhere.

Our image of the United States as a melting pot is very much overdrawn. A Jewish community and a Jewish culture are so powerfully present in the United States that Canadian Jews, even though they are more mosaic, look south of the border for



the U.S., after all, is no utopia. Dare we try to come closer to utopia, or must we imitate American models all the time, in every way?

Community leaders, for rabbis, and for ideas. Most American Jews identify strongly with the Jewish community; at the same time they are very American. They have powerful feelings of commitment to, and participation in, the American national community. Canadian Jews on the other hand, feel themselves to be not so much a Canadian Jewry as an extension of American Jewry. It should be evident that this relatively weak identification with Canada is not the result of a strongly felt Jewish particularism. It is rather, a natural reaction to the absence of any real Canadian community with which they can identify.

I suspect that this is equally true of the other immigrant groups: They remain in their ghettos; at the same time, they assimilate. English becomes their language, the ways of the English-speaking become their ways. But they do not acquire a strong identification with the Canadian nation, because there is none except in the political sense. The whole ideology of the mosaic came into being not so much to justify cultural diversity as to justify the absence of a national community embracing that diversity. We have only the pluribus, not the unum. The mosaic ideology is not needed to preserve the diversity; it is a weak and often sincere apology for the absence of unity. What differentiates us from the Americans is not our cultural diversity — they have it too — but our failure to develop a national community. That is the meaning of the "mosaic."

The ethnic politicians' pretensions to semi-equality with the French and English must be rejected, just as the provincial politicians' pretensions to equal status with Quebec must be rejected. These pretensions have no solid bases of support in the ethnic and provincial constituencies. The French Canadians of Quebec want to be a nation in an autonomous province. The Ukrainians of Manitoba do not want to be a nation; the people of British Columbia do not want their province to be autonomous.

The ethnic and regional particularisms of English Canada are neither powerful nor self-sustaining; they are artificially stimulated by self-seeking politicians; they are almost wholly parasitic growths on the genuine, deeply felt, self-sustaining autonomist impulse of Quebec. If an overarching English Canadian national community existed, the ethnic and regional particularisms would evaporate with no regrets and little nostalgia.

When the mosaic celebrator thanks the Lord for Canada's exemption from the conformitarian pressures of the American melting pot, he is confusing a very important issue. It is true that the U.S. enforces conformity to a greater degree than Canada, but that conformity is ideological, not cultural. American liberalism is all-engulfing; non-liberal ideologies are excluded from the pale of legitimacy. Liberalism is Americanism; other "isms" are un-American. But cultural conformity of the same type does not exist. I return to the Jewish situation because it is the one with which I am familiar. Jewish parochial schools exist in the United States — cultural diversity. But in these schools the cult of Americanism is taught — ideological uniformity.

The development of an English Canadian national identity does not require that we impose a single set of social and political values on our society. The United States is not the only model of a nation. Most countries manage to combine national identity with ideological diversity. Our terrified equation of nationality with uniformity is irrational.

The mosaic preserves nothing of value. It is literally nothing. It is the absence of a sense of identity, the absence of a common life which can be shared by the English-speaking regions and tribes of Canada.

The mosaic "preserves" only political stagnation, inequality of opportunity, culturally meaningless ghettoization, and Americanization. In the absence of a Canadian identity, we identify — all of us, though to varying degrees — with the American national community. Its media absorb us. Through the American media, John Kennedy became the first President of Canada. Through the media, we participate vicariously in the affairs of the American community, without power over those affairs. Through the media the causes of American radical youth became the causes of our radical youth, automatically, without regard to the differences between the American and Canadian situations. Complete annexation of the Canadian mind will be accomplished in a few decades. Political independence will be left to us — but for what purpose?

Porter recognizes that galloping Americanization prevents the development of national identity and creative politics in Canada. The American media, he says, "contribute substantially to 'Canadian' values and to the view of the world held by Canadians . . . It is difficult under these conditions for a society to provide itself with a distinct structure of values or with an image of itself as a distinct society." A large part of the responsibility for this situation is assigned to the English Canadian intelligentsia. It is, says Porter, conservative, apolitical, disinclined to "articulate a consistent set of defensive values."

If the situation can be saved, and that is of course extremely doubtful, English Canadian intellectuals, like those of other under-developed nations plagued by tribalism, must become self-conscious nation builders, as "survivors" conscious as the Quebecers. Two huge obstacles will probably rule out this development. The first is our distaste for "imposing" a single "uniformity" on the "diversity" of English Canada. The second is our even stronger distaste for building a "Chinese wall" along the forty-ninth parallel to "isolate" ourselves from American influences. But our assumption that there can be no English Canadian nation unless these distasteful things are done is false.

There is no need to "impose" anything on anyone. If we can find a way of retarding Americanization, the fragmented elements of English Canada will come together of their own accord; they are, after all, elements of one society, speaking one

language, and bound together in one federal union. All that is needed is the will to create something new here, and something different from what the Americans have created. I would like that something new to be a social democracy, but there are other possibilities. Let one hundred flowers bloom. Something definite can grow out of the confusing mix that is English Canada. It would grow without any kind of coercion if not for the overpowering presence of pre-existing American models available for imitation in every area of existence.

The problem of Americanization then, must be faced; without chauvinism, but also without a fake, self-effacing, embarrassed cosmopolitanism. The problem of Americanization can be faced without building Chinese walls, without "restricting the free flow of ideas." It can be faced positively, by assigning a very high priority to the subsidization of Canadian cultural production of all sorts, on a very much larger scale than anything contemplated at the moment. By cultural production I mean not only the arts, but anything that can be published or broadcast. The use of the state for nation building purposes is not a new idea in Canada. We need a National Party — not of cultural tariffs and taxes, but of cultural bounties and subsidies.

We need not be "anti-American." There is much we can learn from the United States, but it should be intended learning for our purposes, not automatic imitation. The point is not to exclude everything American. That would be nonsense. There is a good deal of American already naturally present in our disintegrated identity. When our "something definite" emerges, it will have a significant American element or aspect.

The point is that the United States is a fully formed, highly integrated national community, with clearly defined ways of thought and behaviour. The Americans have chosen their direction in every sphere of life. They are stuck with Americanism. We can be different precisely because we are a muddle, nothing definite. Roads which are closed to the Americans may be open to us. Some of them may lead to a better society than theirs. The U.S., after all, is no utopia. Dare we try to come closer to utopia, or must we imitate American model all the time, in every way?



Canada may never be a national community because of the French presence. English Canada can be a national community, but only if our image of Canada is transformed from a political union of provinces and tribes into a political union of two national communities, one English and one French.

Our obsession with the question of national identity shows that we do not want to be different, but we have conflicting and undeveloped notions about the substantive content of the difference. Only until conflicting and undeveloped notions about the time can integrate them into a unity once they have been developed. But our intellectuals are afraid, and time is flying.

English Canada will not be built in a day. But we must begin very soon. First, we must give up our masochistic celebration of Canadian nothingness. This is not chauvinism — just the admission that we want Canada to be something other than a collection of disintegrated particularisms sinking into the American Mind. Second, we must realize that we cannot be something unless our imitation of the Americans is selective. Every automatic imitation of the American model closes doors to the future, diminishes our opportunity to build a better society here. Third, we must accept the fact that only a conscious nation building effort sponsored by a powerful (with respect to English Canada) federal government will enable us to emerge out of the torrent of American idea-production which threatens to drown us. If ideas are left to the forces of monetary profit and loss, we will drown.