

PRESS
AND
PARTY
IN
CANADA



G. V. FERGUSON -

F. H. UNDERHILL

PRESS AND PARTY IN CANADA: ISSUES OF FREEDOM

BEING THE SEVENTH SERIES OF LECTURES
UNDER THE CHANCELLOR DUNNING TRUST DELIVERED AT
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY AT KINGSTON, ONTARIO
1955

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

GEORGE V. FERGUSON
Editor, *Montreal Star*

CANADIAN LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN 1955

F. H. UNDERHILL
Professor of History, University of Toronto



The Ryerson Press ~ Toronto

FOREWORD

THE PURPOSE of the Chancellor Dunning Trust, established at Queen's University in 1948, is "to promote understanding and appreciation of the supreme importance of the dignity, freedom and responsibility of the individual person in human society."

Since its inception the purposes of the Trust have been carried out by annual lecture series given at the University during the academic session by distinguished visiting lecturers.

In past series, the philosophic bases of freedom have been examined and the theme has been followed through the fields of history, political philosophy and literature.

In the present series consideration is given to the status and problems of freedom in contemporary society. During the session 1954-1955 the lectures here published on freedom of the press and Canadian liberal democracy were given and each lecturer spent a week at the University among staff and students.

Mr. George V. Ferguson, Editor of *The Montreal Daily Star*, is an eminent journalist concerned with the place of the press in society. Having been a westerner, a Rhodes Scholar, protege and colleague of John W. Dafoe, Executive Editor of *The Winnipeg Free Press*, a member of the United Nations Commission on Freedom of the Press, he spoke from a background of experience and thought.

Professor Frank H. Underhill, Professor of History at the University of Toronto, is equally well known as a writer and commentator. As a scholar he is known for his profound knowledge of the origins and growth of Canadian political parties.

Though the lectures differ in subject and the lecturers in experience and temperament, both are relevant and important to the purpose of the Chancellor Dunning Trust.

W. A. MACKINTOSH
Vice-Chancellor and Principal

*Queen's University at Kingston,
April 30, 1955*

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
FOREWORD	v
by W. A. Mackintosh, <i>Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Queen's University, Kingston.</i>	
I. FREEDOM OF THE PRESS	1
by George V. Ferguson.	
II. CANADIAN LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN 1955	27
by F. H. Underhill.	

CANADIAN LIBERAL DEMOCRACY
IN 1955

CANADIAN LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN 1955

F. H. UNDERHILL

I HAVE to thank you, Mr. Principal, and I have to thank Queen's University for the honour you have done me in inviting me to be one of the lecturers this year under the Chancellor Dunning Trust. It is a very high honour to be chosen to talk on the theme of freedom, of the free individual in a free society, to a Queen's audience. For in Canada Queen's is our great liberal university. All universities should be centres of liberalism, liberalism with a small "l." But my own University of Toronto, surrounded as it is by the city of Toronto, has never quite managed to make itself a congenial home for the liberal spirit.

More than a hundred years ago Toronto, the city, was turning Anglo-Irish gentry like the Baldwins and the Blakes into liberals, by way of reaction against their environment, and driving William Lyon Mackenzie into revolution. "In Toronto," said Mrs. Jameson in 1837, "we have conventionalism in its most oppressive and ridiculous forms. . . . In this place they live under the principle of fear—they are all afraid of each other, afraid to be themselves; and where there is much fear, there is little love and less truth." And ever since then it has been generally true that such liberalism as has shown itself in that great metropolitan community has survived in spite of, rather than because of, its environment. In Toronto the new mayor of 1955 starts off his duties by trying to protect the university male undergraduates from the demoralizing influence of art exhibitions in Hart House which contain drawings of nude females.

So it is with a certain sense of exhilaration that one comes

to visit Queen's, the University of G. M. Grant, of Adam Shortt, of O. D. Skelton—to mention only some of the giants of the past—the university of the *Queen's Quarterly*. Incidentally, I have sometimes wondered why someone at Queen's hasn't undertaken to publish a selection of the more or less journalistic writings of Grant, Shortt, Skelton and other Queen's men, their comments on Canadian public affairs from the 1880's to the 1930's, as published in the *Queen's Quarterly* and other Canadian journals and newspapers. It would provide a fine liberal political anthology, an interpretation of Canadian political history much more penetrating and enlightening than most of our modern professional history writing. It would be more cheerful than the *Bystander* comments which that grim English liberal, Goldwin Smith, poured forth for forty years from his intellectual prison in Toronto; and it would be almost as well written.

I propose this morning to make some more or less journalistic comments of my own on the state of our contemporary liberal democracy in Canada. There are various topics which one might discuss under this heading but which I shall avoid. Having now reached the age at which men prefer to repeat themselves and to thresh old straw over again, whatever the effect on their audience, I am going to confine my remarks chiefly to the working of our Canadian democratic politics.

However, when a Canadian speaker, lecturing to a Canadian audience, proposes to deal with liberal democracy in the middle of the twentieth century, he must mark out rather carefully some important reservations of territory into which he is not going to trespass. As everyone knows, our western world in the mid-twentieth century is going through a profound crisis of liberalism. The triumph of the liberal democratic way of life which seemed so sure in the generation before 1914 is now anything but sure. Today our

western free society, instead of spreading its liberal institutions and ideas over the rest of the world, is again on the defensive; and the attackers this time are the most dynamic, confident and ruthless opponents that the West has ever met.

More dangerous than this attack from outside is the attack upon western liberal democracy from within. We have lost a large part of that faith in the rationality of man upon which liberalism essentially depends. At the same time we have lost our belief in progress, in the indefinite perfectibility of man and his institutions. Liberalism is in essence a Utopian faith with a confidence in the possibilities of human nature. But our modern psychologists have uncovered deep sub-conscious instinctive drives in us which pervert our reason; our theologians have achieved a renaissance of original sin; and we have had to witness in the last generation outbursts of the demonic elements in human nature whose existence we had forgotten. We have learnt to our cost the terrible potentialities of man's inhumanity to man. We have had borne in upon us how fragile is our civilization. Our life seems to be one continuous process of preparing for, fighting or recovering from war. Religious thinkers, moreover, tell us that this sickness of our civilization is directly due to its liberalism, to western man's belief that he could solve his problems by reliance upon himself alone, without having recourse to supernatural help.

Apart from this omnipresent violence which defeats all our better aspirations, we have another problem. Even in those countries of the West where liberal democracy has proved most stable and where it has not disintegrated, we seem to be faced by the frustrations of a social order which has got beyond the capacity of the individual citizen to control or to understand. He stands alone, afraid, in a world he never made, surrounded by great power organizations: big business and big labour, big opinion industries—the press, the

movies, radio, television, advertising enterprise, all of which have learned the techniques of manipulating and moulding and exploiting him—big churches, big political parties, and, looming over all, the big state; which, in proportion as it has become more democratic, i.e. formally more under his control, has also become more unlimited in the demands which it makes of him.

But as soon as one has tried to sum up in this way our twentieth century crisis of liberalism, one becomes aware that one is really talking about the world outside of Canada. We Canadians have been mainly spectators at this tragic process of the disintegration of nineteenth century liberal democratic values. We have taken part in the wars of our time, but we have experienced little of the moral perplexity or the spiritual agony, not to mention the material destruction, which our contemporaries have gone through. Whether we are too placid, or too insensitive, or too lethargic, or too superficial, we are incapable of either the messianic exaltation or the existentialist agonizing of some of our contemporaries. Our limitations, in fact, make us a people incapable of tragedy. No poet could write of any experience through which we have gone that a terrible beauty is born of it. And while the world has been going to pieces all around us, how can we understand what the poet means when he exclaims that—

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold,
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

The best lack all conviction, while the worst
are full of passionate intensity.

And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

Yet it was as long ago as 1921 that the Irish poet wrote these lines.

Canada, in fact, is still living mentally and spiritually in the nineteenth century. Our problems of liberalism and democracy are mostly nineteenth-century problems. It was almost one hundred years ago, in 1859, that John Stuart Mill published his essay *On Liberty*. When 1959 comes round and the centenary of Mill's *Liberty* is celebrated, I suppose that in most countries commentators will remark that our age is familiar with dangers to liberty such as Mill never dreamt of, that we have probed depths of human depravity such as he could not have imagined. Mill thought that coercive organizations of power were no longer a danger to modern society. What worried him was the mediocrity, not the potential depravity of mass man—"collective mediocrity," as he called it. He was afraid that in democratic society there would not be room for the distinctive uncommon individuals, the individuals of superior intellectual and moral qualities, from whom, he believed, came the leadership that made progress possible.

When one sets Mill's apprehensions over against what has actually happened, one has to say that his fears of the death of individuality in his own England have not been justified. Democratic England continues to throw up men of genius from all classes in all activities of life; and the dead uniformity of mediocrity has not settled upon English existence, except perhaps at English dinner tables. Every Englishman still continues to go to heaven in his own way as he did when Voltaire first drew attention to this phenomenon.

Nor in the United States has the democratic uniformity come about which was feared by Tocqueville, who was Mill's teacher in these matters. American intellectuals have unduly slandered their fellow-citizens. The mere fact that such a hullabaloo has to be raised by those one-hundred percenters who want to impose upon everybody what they call the American way of life shows how difficult it is to enforce uniformity upon the American people. A really

conformist community would not publish so many books and articles each year denouncing its own sinister tendency to conformity. The lengths to which McCarthyism was allowed to go are not more significant than the rapidity with which this latest anti-intellectual demagogue has outworn his welcome. In fact, if one looks at our American neighbours realistically, one realizes that, far from their being a conformist population, there is likely at any given moment to be a higher percentage of American citizens raising less corn and more hell than you will find in any other country.

No, when 1959 comes round and the English-speaking world commemorates the essay *On Liberty*, it will not be in Britain or the United States that critics will most easily find cases to illustrate what was worrying Mill and Tocqueville. The typical community in which collective mediocrity and democratic uniformity reign supreme and unquestioned will be our own English-speaking Canada. We Canadians are immune to most of the ills that have produced the deeper and darker aspects of the twentieth-century crisis of liberal democracy. As I have said, we are a people incapable of tragedy. Our democratic failings are the simpler, more superficial and more genial ones of the nineteenth century. We are the political animals about whom Mill and Tocqueville ought to have made their generalizations.

Well, such being the nature of our Canadian community, I shall devote the rest of my remarks not to these great themes connected with the crisis of twentieth-century liberalism—about which I could do little more than quote from books written by Englishmen, Americans and Frenchmen—but to the more modest and humdrum topic of the functioning of some of our democratic political institutions in Canada.

When one looks back over the generation that has elapsed since the end of World War I, what are the main things that

have happened in the working of Canadian government? We are all conscious of one outstanding development, the series of upheavals in our Canadian party system; and to that I shall return in a moment. We are not so conscious as we might be of another change which has transformed the whole atmosphere of Ottawa. I mean the emergence of a great body of expert administrators in the federal civil service. The Laurier and Borden reforms emancipated the civil service from patronage and political pressure, through the introduction of the system of appointment by graduated competitive examinations. This has brought about a professionalization of our public services which is surely the greatest advance in the functioning of Canadian democratic government in our generation. The net result is that our federal government is now equipped with an expert civil service which can reasonably be compared for its high standards with that paragon of public organizations, the British Civil Service. Our Canadian universities can be proud of this development, for it has been our graduates who have staffed the upper ranks, the policy-making ranks, of the service. Incidentally, this has been a development with which certain famous Queen's names are specially connected—Shortt, Skelton, Clark. What I wish chiefly to emphasize here is that the secret of the success of this important instrument of democratic government in our country is professionalization, the establishment in the civil service of standards similar to those which prevail in the learned professions.

But while we have here one of the great advances in the art of democratic government in the twentieth century, there is a danger that some of the most important advantages which we might derive from this highly professionalized service will be lost to us because of too wide a gap growing up between those who govern us and us who are governed. We have committed ourselves in Canada to complete

democracy, mass democracy with all adult citizens participating as voters in a society in which there is no select governing class based on status or inheritance or wealth. Our equalitarian democratic experiment will not work unless the masses of the citizens can be stirred to some continuous interest in the problems of government and can be given some intelligent understanding of the complex considerations upon which are based the policies of the government and its expert advisers in the civil service.

Now, the two chief instruments in democratic communities for mediating between the government at the centre and the citizen body at the circumference have always been the press and the party system. The new instrument of radio and television is still far from being able to take the place of the press. And it seems to me fairly evident that neither press nor party is performing its function very satisfactorily at present in our Canadian political society.

I had intended at this point to deliver myself of some rather sweeping criticisms of our Canadian newspaper press. But there is no time. My chief point was to be that this question of the functioning of our Canadian dailies needs to be discussed, not in the frame of reference of freedom of the press, but in that of the professionalization of journalism. As a mere lay observer I cannot see that our Canadian press in my lifetime has gone through anything like that advance in professionalization which has transformed our federal civil service.

At any rate, Canadian journalists are rather too easily satisfied with low standards of performance. They assume that it is not necessary to compare Canadian newspapers with the *New York Times* or the *London Times* or the *Manchester Guardian*, just as the Canadian Authors' Association assumes that it is not necessary to measure Canadian poetry by the best American and English standards. Both assumptions are survivals from the parochial colonial stage

of our history, and it is time that we grew out of them. Surely we are approaching the stage, at least here in central Canada, with our two metropolitan cities of Toronto and Montreal, when we might expect at least morning papers that were more directly aimed at the more intelligent and educated groups in the community. Most of our evening papers we can, of course, abandon to the mass-entertainment industry, along with Hollywood movies and Madison Avenue television. But our political democracy is in danger unless we can rely on some part of our press setting itself seriously to the task of reporting the unseen environment to us every morning so that we can make reasonably intelligent judgments about it.

This desirable end can be achieved only by further advances in the professionalization of journalism. I do not know how such further professionalization of journalism is to be brought about. As a university man I suppose I should look forward to schools of journalism in our main universities. But as an old-fashioned Arts professor I have as little hope of getting better journalists from schools of journalism as I have of getting better teachers from colleges of education.

Let me turn to the subject of our party system.

Party is the great all-important instrument which mediates between the government and the governed. Its function is to organize public opinion so that government shall be carried on in accordance with the opinion of the citizens and also that the citizens shall be kept informed what the issues of government are. Political parties first grew up in England; and in that country they have adapted themselves with marvellous success to the economic changes that transformed a mainly agricultural community into the highly industrialized, mainly urban, community of today, and to the political changes from a narrow oligarchy to the twentieth-century mass democracy. Through all these

changes Britain has kept a two-party system; which has the great advantage that it presents the voters with a fairly clear-cut choice between alternative men and policies at election time, and secures a stable, solid majority basis for the government from one election to the next.

In Canada we reproduced the British two-party system as well as we could, and it served our purposes satisfactorily down to the end of World War I. Our two parties called themselves by the British names, Conservative and Liberal. But, in effect, they alternated in office after 1867 in accordance with the success of one or the other in convincing the people that it was the nation-building party. Macdonald's Conservatives built up a support in all sections of the Dominion through their great expansionist nation-building policies of railway-building, tariff-protection and immigration, and through their ability to keep French and English working together in one party. When their momentum was exhausted by the 1890's, Laurier and his Liberals took their place with almost identically the same nation-building policies. Laurier also made the Liberal party a successful bi-racial party just as Macdonald's Conservative party had been in its great days. By the early twentieth century each party was a fairly representative cross-section of the Canadian people. Their British names suggested a division between a Right party and a Left party, but their practical politics resembled much more the intricate group-diplomacy of the composite non-ideological Republican and Democratic parties in the United States. By 1914 no one could have told what Canadian Conservatives were trying to conserve, what Canadian Liberals were trying to liberate. In fact, hardly anybody bothered to ask. Those were happy days.

After World War I this simple carefree two-party structure broke up, and it has never been restored. Only a

small minority of Canadians are now old enough to remember what a two-party system was like.

At the beginning of the 1920's the western prairie farmers staged a revolt against the control over party organization and policy exercised by eastern big business. Their so-called Progressive movement had been defeated by the end of that decade, and in the 1930 election the old-time two-party regime of Conservatives and Liberals seemed to have been restored. The French-Canadian nationalist revolt which had culminated in the conscription crisis of 1917 had also by this time died down, and the French were back in the Liberal party.

But the depression of the 1930's shook up the Canadian collective mind even more violently than the War had shaken it. In 1932 a new Socialist party, the C.C.F., took over where the Progressives had left off. We can see now that the essential thing about the C.C.F. was not its socialism, which is by this time about as hard to define as the Liberalism of the Liberals or the Conservatism of the Conservatives; it was its attempt to establish a British pattern in Canadian politics, a division between a Right and a Left, with a genuinely radical party democratically financed on the Left in opposition to big business on the Right. So far this attempt has failed.

In 1935, in Alberta, a still newer phenomenon emerged, the Social Credit movement, which turned that Province almost into a one-party state and set new standards for Canada in demagogic plebiscitary democracy. And the depression of the 1930's also brought French Canadian Laurentian nationalism to life again, in the new incarnation of the Union Nationale.

Out of all this confusion of the 1920's and 1930's and out of the strains and stresses of World War II there has emerged a political situation in Canada which no one could have foreseen and about the full implications of which none of us

are very certain. Of these various competing party groups only one has succeeded in maintaining itself as a national party in the full sense of the term—the Liberals. All our experience goes to show that this country cannot be governed, so long as it remains free and democratic, except by some kind of a party or coalition which attracts support from all the major interest-groups in the country—ethnic, religious, linguistic, geographical and economic. Only the Liberals have met the specifications for a party capable of government in this sense, and they have now been in office continuously since 1935.

Whether you approve of him or not, it is almost impossible to overestimate the importance of the statesmanship of the late Mr. Mackenzie King, which was what chiefly brought about this result. He undermined the Progressives and the C.C.F. by treating them kindly, as impatient Liberals, and by stealing enough of the planks in their platforms from time to time to keep farmers and working men and little people in general from flocking in crowds to the new movements. He was the only man in his day who could hold French and English together inside one party. He was the greatest master who has yet appeared in our country in this peculiar North American political art of group diplomacy.

But it is now clear that Mr. King was too successful for the good of Canadian democratic politics in general. He destroyed the possibility of an effective opposition at Ottawa. Today the Opposition consists of three splinter groups, each of which would rather see the Liberals in office for the time being than either of the other two opposition groups, and no one of which seems by itself capable of growing from the status of a splinter group into that of a national party. The result is that it is no longer possible to have general elections in Canada in which the voter is presented with a real choice between possible alternative governments, because there is no party except the Liberals

that is capable of forming a government. And what this means was shown in our last general election, that of 1953, the dullest, dreariest and drowsiest within living memory. Our democratic ritual of consulting the people at elections has become dangerously unreal, and evokes a dangerously widespread apathy.

This element of unreality comes out most clearly if we compare the Canadian election of 1953 with the American presidential election of 1952. The Americans still get fun out of their politics, which is a sign that their politics is in a pretty healthy condition. We Canadians feel a prim genteel disapproval of the boisterous, vulgar circus aspect of American party politics; but thousands of us attended the circus in 1952 by listening to the two American party conventions in Chicago on the radio or watching them on television, and we had fun, too. Perhaps it is a national Canadian characteristic that we take our pleasures sadly, but surely that doesn't necessitate anything so sad or so drab as a Canadian general election campaign. We are sad because we are conscious that we are just going through the motions, not making any real choice. In the American campaign it was obvious that at each party convention there was a real fight over candidates and policies, and that a genuine democratic choice finally emerged from the fight. And this was followed by a real and exciting fight in the election campaign from August to November. Many good patriotic Canadians must have envied their American neighbours this opportunity to make a real choice, even if the choice turned out to be for the Republicans—for practically all Canadians, of course, vote Democratic in American elections.

This blanketing of our Canadian federal politics by one national party, with the resulting impossibility of an effective Opposition at Ottawa, has had a further effect. By some instinctive sub-conscious mental process the Canadian

people have apparently decided that, since freedom depends upon a balance of power, they will balance the monopolistic power of the Liberal government at Ottawa by setting up the effective countervailing power not in Ottawa but in the provincial capitals. Her Majesty's loyal Canadian Opposition now really consists of the Social Credit governments in Alberta and British Columbia, the C.C.F. government in Saskatchewan, the Conservative governments in Ontario and New Brunswick, and the Union Nationale government in Quebec. These are all governments who get elected in their own Provinces in order to save their people from the malign influence of Ottawa. Furthermore, there must now be thousands and thousands of Canadian citizens who vote Liberal in federal elections and anti-Liberal in provincial elections. What substantial or intelligible meaning is left in the words Liberal, Conservative, Socialist, Social Credit, in such circumstances? Of all conceivable party systems under which free government can be carried on in a democratic community, I should say that our present Canadian system is about the worst.

All this might have been prevented had any of the movements of the Left succeeded in building up a new party capable of fighting the Liberals on equal terms and shoving them rightward out of their monopoly position in the centre. But Mr. King, with his shrewd and subtle policy of No Enemies in the Left, prevented that. Things would be different also if the Conservatives had ever succeeded in making a firm comeback as a genuine national party of the Right.

But the Conservatives are now almost reduced into being an Ontario party. Their effort to woo Quebec through Mr. Duplessis shows a fantastic misreading of the lessons of Canadian history, lessons which point to the necessity of winning the Quebec moderates, not the Quebec separatist nationalists, if a successful bi-racial federal party is to be

built up. Last year, 1954, was the hundredth anniversary of the birth of the Liberal-Conservative party of Macdonald and Cartier; yet, if the anniversary was celebrated in any way by the present Conservative party, the celebration failed to attract public notice. Think of a Conservative party which is so insensitive to history and tradition that it doesn't even take care to cultivate its own history! And how strange it is that all over the Western world conservatism in politics should be going through a renaissance, with Conservatives in office in Britain and the United States, and yet that this new conservative spirit should be so voiceless in Canada.

Most distressing of all, in this point of view, is the failure of any Conservative philosophy to show itself in Canada now in the 1950's. Where are our Canadian *Wall Street Journals* and *Fortunes*, trying to instil intelligence and imagination into a business man's conservatism? Where are our Canadian Russell Kirks and Peter Vierecks? Incidentally, Peter Viereck, besides being a conservative historian teaching in an American college, is a poet. I just can't imagine a poet among our Canadian Conservatives.

Now, obviously, this permanent hold on national office by the Liberal party is fundamentally unhealthy. What can be done about it? Surely the time has come to give serious consideration to one possible change in our political machinery, the introduction of some system of proportional representation. For when we examine what actually happens in our elections, one startling fact emerges. The Liberal party, which has such an overwhelming majority of the seats in the House of Commons, never wins anything like this proportion of support from the voters. In 1953, when they captured 170 seats out of a total of 265, they got only about forty-eight per cent of the votes. And a similar picture can be traced through nearly every general election right back to 1921 when Mr. King first came into office.

This fantastic disproportion between the distribution of the votes among contending parties and the distribution of the seats at Ottawa is due to our single-member constituency system and our practice of accepting as elected in each constituency the candidate who gets a plurality of the votes rather than a majority. Surely, if we take the idea of government based on public opinion at all seriously, we should do something to make the balance of power at Ottawa approximate more closely to the balance of opinion in the country.

Of course, the present system is defended by all orthodox political scientists in Canada, i.e. by all political scientists in Canada, as having the great virtue that it makes for a strong stable government in office, a government with a secure majority. And it would be foolish to deny the force of this argument. But it is possible to have too much of a good thing: our governments at Ottawa are too strong and too stable. Our academic authorities also all hold up their hands in horror at the idea of Proportional Representation; since P.R., according to the standard text-books, makes for a multi-group system rather than a two-party system. Look at what happens in France, they say, and among the benighted continental Europeans generally. And by contrast look at the admirable two-party system in Britain.

I think that an examination of British and French history would show that the two-party and multi-party systems are not due to electoral machinery but to much deeper causes in the structure of English and French society. At any rate, we have in Canada a society of greater diversity than that of Britain. It may be that the British division into two cohesive disciplined parties is not a natural expression of our social conditions, though it is probably necessary if our British cabinet system of government is to work well. I think a fair case could be made for the thesis that we should either have two loose parties in Canada like those of the

United States—a system that works well under their American division of powers between executive and legislature but is not adapted to our cabinet system—or a multi-group system as in France and continental Europe. And, as a matter of fact, we have not had a two-party system since before most living Canadian citizens began to vote. Surely the whole structure of our electoral machinery needs re-examination.

There is another reform in the working of our parties which is badly needed to help break up this deeply-entrenched Liberal domination of the Ottawa parliament. Under modern conditions, with every question of policy needing long expert study and analysis, the government in office has, in the nature of things, an overwhelming advantage over its opposition critics. It has at its disposal all the accumulated knowledge and experience of its Civil Service officials. It can call for information from them at any time on any subject. Cabinet ministers only make speeches after being briefed by their expert advisers. It is high time for our Opposition parties to stop whining about this domination of parliament by the government and to set themselves to do something more effective about it, rather than just sitting in their seats waiting for some juicy scandal to break—like that of the horses on the army pay-roll. If the opposition parties want to achieve a position of some intellectual equality with the government, they must equip themselves with brain-trusts, with expert secretariats, staffed by some of the brightest of young university graduates, and they must do much more than they have yet done to draw on the intellectual help which they could easily get from university departments of economics and political science and sociology and history.

But all our parties need well organized brain-trusts and secretariats of a new higher quality for a much wider purpose than this—for the purpose of carrying on the political

education of the voters. How is a party today in the 1950's going to build up an intelligent body of public support for the policies which it thinks important if it continues to depend on obsolete nineteenth-century techniques—on public meetings which the public will not attend, on newspaper reports of political speeches which are squeezed in among the much more attractive columns devoted to sport and crime and sex and advertising and the comics? Our Canadian parties are, in fact, still living in the horse-and-buggy age. Outside of the proceedings in parliament, they mostly go to sleep between elections. They have learnt little from all the modern techniques of mass propaganda, and they don't take the task of political education seriously at all. They should study how things are done in Britain—read the mass of material that pours out regularly there from the two party headquarters, read the books that are written every year by Conservative and Labour politicians, publicists and professors, attend the summer-schools and study-groups and lecture-series that are going on somewhere all the time, listen to the party broadcasts and other political discussions over the B.B.C. In Canada, so far as I know, only the C.C.F. in Saskatchewan during the 1930's and 1940's, when it was building up its position among the wheat farmers, has tried to do or succeeded in doing anything comparable to this in the way of public education.

Lacking such organization and such mental stimulus, our Canadian party politics is at this moment sunk in a profound and death-like apathy. This cannot be cured by the usual spasmodic synthetic hysteria which is worked up at quadrennial election campaigns. And the potential danger of the situation is obvious. If there is no political education available to the masses of the voters, if current politics offers nothing to stir their interest, everything is prepared for the arrival one of these days of the messianic demagogue.

Some day, when men are stirred to unrest by depression, he will arrive, exploiting to the full the techniques of modern advertising, playing on fears and hatreds and cupidities, substituting slogans for programmes, intensifying his appeal by a religious brand of messianism, inviting the public to entrust themselves to the charismatic leader, substituting plebiscitary democracy for parliamentary government. We have had a foretaste of what such a movement could amount to in the success of Social Credit in Alberta and British Columbia. Our English-Canadian protestant community, with its proliferation of little fundamentalist sects, seems almost predestined to throw up such a movement on the national scale one of these days. In the two western Provinces these little sects are already beginning to function as the Social Credit party at prayer. Ontario, where politics for a long time has been almost completely devoid of intellectual content, has the potentialities for making Alberta and British Columbia look tame and colourless. All that we need at this moment, indeed, is an Ontario Aberhart. Perhaps he has already graduated from one of our teacher-training or theological institutions.

Well, this is a sad conclusion into which to decline after talking so long. But, at least, a bigger and better Aberhart is something more cheerful to look forward to than a Canadian Hitler or Malenkov. We can escape this fate only by revitalizing our Canadian liberalism, both the liberalism with a small "I" whose natural home is in our universities, and the Liberalism with a capital "L" which regards Ottawa as its home because it has had such a long lease there.

A few months ago I came across some sentences in the *Political Quarterly*, the organ of the Labour party intellectuals in England. The sentences were part of an editorial criticizing the Labour party for its lack of new creative ideas,

now that it had fulfilled its mandate of 1945; and they seem to me relevant here in Canada as applied to Liberalism with a capital "L":

As the years pass, those in power and at the head of a party, particularly if they have led the party to success, tend to grind over and over again the same old political tune upon the old party organ. Their speeches, which used to sound like trumpet calls, now sound like an old gramophone record with the needle stuck in a groove. Only a vigorous left wing, with a clear, honest left-wing policy, can prevent this political hardening of the arteries, which is always threatening to destroy the party. (*Political Quarterly*, July, 1954.)

It strikes me that these sentences could be applied without change to the Canadian Liberal party. The Liberals are now intellectually bankrupt. They have wrung out the last drop of sentiment and of ideas which can be extracted from Mr. Mackenzie King's *Industry and Humanity* of 1918. Their intellectual bankruptcy has not become a public scandal only because the other parties are equally bankrupt. A party with 170 seats in the House of Commons, however, is not likely to feel the need of revitalization.

So I turn to our universities. A revitalizing of liberalism with a small "l" can come only from our universities. I think it will have to be preceded by some much deeper soul-searching than Canadian academic liberals have yet found congenial, into the causes of the crisis that confronts liberalism throughout the Western world. We in Canada cannot much longer remain aloof from the deeper intellectual currents of the twentieth century. It is high time for our younger academic liberals to start something.