

Trudeau *by George Radwanski*

(Taplinger; xii + 372 pp.; \$14.95)

Alfred O. Hero, Jr.

Pierre Elliott Trudeau, one of only three French Canadians among the fifteen Canadian prime ministers, will undoubtedly be considered by historians as one of the most complex, enigmatic, intellectual, and otherwise atypical political leaders in Canadian experience. Without really pursuing or coveting political office, he was persuaded rather against his inclinations to run for parliament at age forty-six. He quickly became minister of justice; three years later he replaced Lester Pearson as leader of the Liberal party, and was shortly elected prime minister in his own right. Whether or not he is reelected this month, he will have served longer as prime minister than any other, and longer than any contemporary chief of state of an industrialized democracy. He has been the central figure in opposition to Quebec nationalism, setting much of the tone for the federalist side of the debate. If reelected, Pierre Trudeau will be the critical factor in determining whether and how Canada remains a single country.

George Radwanski, a leading Canadian political journalist and Ottawa editor, has attempted to trace the development of Trudeau's character from early childhood and to assess its impact upon Canada. While this is no "authorized" biography, Radwanski, obviously regarded as a serious and not unsympathetic journalist, was accorded eight hours of generally candid and cooperative interviews with the prime minister and considerably more of the time of his busy senior staff and others who worked closely with him. The author also met with a number of his critics, and consulted the historical record. While the resulting book is only partially successful in its purposes, it represents the most serious effort so far to deal analytically with Prime Minister Trudeau.

Radwanski describes the intellectual and character development of this economically and socially privileged bright youngster in a supportive upper-middle-class family—a financially successful French Canadian father, an intelligent bilingual mother of Scottish heritage, and a younger sister and brother who were both intelligent, but less determined and intellectually oriented. Pierre attended the most stimulating and élite Jesuit school through college, followed by the University of Montreal Law School. More interested in ideas than in legal practice, after only a year as a practicing attorney in a Montreal law firm he went to Harvard for two years for an M.A. in political economy. Then he went to the Ecole de Sciences Politiques in Paris for a year, and after that to the London School of Economics.

Unwilling to commit himself to a career involving routine and long-term responsibilities, and sufficiently wealthy to be able not to do so, Trudeau extended his informal education through worldwide travel and brief, often intensive, involvement in problems he felt were significant. He took a professorship at the University of Montreal Law School only a few years before he was persuaded in middle age by his two close friends, John Marchand and Gérard Pelletier, to run for parliament in 1965.

Radwanski describes Trudeau as a most unlikely politician—sensitive, inner directed, solitary, philosophical, and more interested in the life of the mind than in people in large numbers. Most politicians bored him. He often gave the impression of impatience with detail, flippancy, abruptness, condescension, and of contempt for arguments and people he considered inferior.

These strengths and weaknesses are

evident in Trudeau's performance as prime minister and leader of the Liberal party. He brought to government a coherent philosophical framework, rational analysis, and long-term perspectives as well as a simple and informal elegance of style. He seemed to some a modern version of Plato's philosopher-king; he embodied the concepts of Acton, Tocqueville, Montesquieu, and the classic liberalism of John Locke and John Stuart Mill. At the start of his tenure in 1968 he reorganized the prime minister's office from the improvised and largely political one of Pearson to a highly structured, efficient one staffed by intellectually aware younger people appointed for their personal talents rather than their political connections. The intellectual quality of his first cabinet was perhaps the highest in Canadian history. Trudeau also reorganized parliamentary debates and commissions along more rational lines.

But Trudeau's first government was soon in trouble with both the politicians and the public. The government was out of touch with party politics and with politically influential groups across the country. Trudeau himself struck politicians and the public as cold, curt, combative, and intellectually arrogant. (In fact he has been open minded and has encouraged alternative views on all except a few issues on which he feels strongly.) The "charismatic" momentum of his 1968 campaign petered out when few concrete programs seemed to follow. He was reluctant to discharge hardworking officials of high intelligence who proved to be ineffective in their roles. Trudeau's first administration was also faced with a series of unanticipated problems—growing inflation, unemployment, general economic slowdown, the terrorism of the Quebec Separatists (PLQ) in 1970, and the gradually growing popularity of the Parti Québécois in Quebec. There was also widespread opposition to bilingual programs in the anglophone provinces, particularly the Prairies and the West, coupled with relative indifference in Quebec. Trudeau's popularity fell precipitously during his first several years, and in the 1972 election he failed to win a majority of seats and was obliged to form a minority government.

Trudeau found it prudent to act like a more conventional politician—he modified his personal style and politicized his personal staff, his cabinet, and his rela-

tions with parliament and the Liberal party. He himself assumed a lower political profile and shifted from long-term planning to decisive responses to more immediate problems. In the 1974 election he won a clear majority.

Radwanski argues that Trudeau has since squandered the power he had thus gained. His larder of useful, concrete plans was by 1974 nearly barren; he had no coherent program. His new administration got off to a very slow start. He felt compelled to go back on his campaign promises by applying mandatory controls to reduce inflation. The quality of his cabinet deteriorated as he lost key ministers, both francophone and anglophone. Above all, the victory of René Lévesque's nationalist Parti Québécois raised to top priority the issue of Quebec's future, and indeed the future of Canada itself. Thus the issue that had initially drawn Trudeau into national politics has become his number one problem.

Radwanski describes Trudeau's abhorrence of all emotional nationalisms, deriving from his experiences in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy as an adolescent in 1933. He gives due credit to Trudeau's efforts to bring able Quebec francophones into all levels of federal government, to modify Canadian foreign policy toward more emphasis on relations with French-speaking countries, and to develop French-speaking governmental services across the country comparable to those for anglophones in Quebec. However, Radwanski underestimates the degree to which Trudeau is himself part of the problem, and he overestimates the likely efficacy of Trudeau's policies.

Trudeau's expensive bilingual program has perhaps dampened somewhat the rate of francophone assimilation into anglophone society, especially in the Acadian region of New Brunswick along the Quebec border and in parts of Ontario near Quebec. But the accelerating assimilation of children of francophone and mixed parentage outside Quebec, particularly to the west of Ontario, supports the argument of the Parti Québécois that these minorities will very likely disappear in another generation. Moreover, the bilingual program has alienated many anglophones, a major cause of the weakness of the Liberals outside Quebec, and it has encouraged long-developing demands for greater provincial autonomy from the Prairies

westward. Quebec nationalism, on the other hand, is here to stay—it reflects the inescapable linguistic, cultural, and social differences between Quebec and the rest of Canada.

Trudeau's unwillingness seriously to consider constitutional alternatives other than the current and increasingly centralized federal system has polarized the crisis. The constitutional crisis is by no means limited to Quebec: The West particularly is increasingly determined to extract changes toward provincial autonomy that Trudeau refuses seriously to consider. Trudeau's personal relations with provincial leaders have also exacerbated the issue. His dealings with the intelligent but emotional René Lévesque have long been strained and stormy. There are no Liberal provincial governments outside the Maritimes, and even there the Tories have experienced recent success. Although Trudeau's rapport with Liberal leaders outside Ottawa has left a great deal to be desired, his relations with other parties have been either distant or confrontational. Canadian voters may now decide that a different prime minister would be more likely to evolve constitutional changes that would preserve the country while maintaining enough federal power to deal with common problems. They may well be right.

Labor and Communism: The Conflict That Shaped American Unions by Bert Cochran

(Princeton University Press; 394 pp.; \$25.00)

Michael Kerper

American communism, like Sisyphus, has endured the ultimate punishment: the crushing frustration of endless, futile work. For the Communists each step forward, each momentary victory in the labor movement, soon proved insignificant and transitory. Just as they seemed poised for certain success, the great rock of trade union resistance rolled back on them, pushing them further and further away from their revolutionary goals.

While it is easy to sympathize with poor Sisyphus, the Communists in Bert

While national unity is in the forefront, Canada faces other, more long-term problems. Radwanski's analysis is especially disappointing in its failure to note major difficulties in Canada's international economic relationships. It is unlikely that European countries will greatly liberalize the barriers that seriously inhibit Canadian trade. The possibility of working out mutually advantageous relations leading toward free trade with the United States, acknowledging legitimate Canadian concern about limiting U.S. control of their economy and influence on their culture, is much greater. However, to achieve such arrangements a prime minister must convince Canadians that it is in their long-term interest to reduce their own trade barriers, particularly on manufactured products that could be much less expensively produced in a larger North American economy, and thereby concentrate manufacturing on fewer products.

These and other problems perhaps require a stronger prime minister with wider anglophone appeal and more interest in Canada's international economic relations. And that of course assumes that Quebec remains within a revised constitutional system. Mr. Trudeau seems unwilling to accept the changes that would make this possible.

Cochran's *Labor and Communism* are of a different breed. Whereas Sisyphus suffered for boldly defying the Greek deities, the Communists were doomed for obediently serving their gods, gods that exacted a terrible price from the faithful. Moreover, the ideological gods of the Communists were alien to Americans, even to the supposedly friendly working class.

As an alien movement in a politically peculiar—and sometimes baffling—nation, the Communists faced several agonizing dilemmas from the very outset.