

Editors' Preface

The *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* is guided by the following three principles:

First, the publication of the *Journal* is intended to provide a vital gathering-point for the generation of a new tradition of critical and creative political and social theory in Canada. Rather than assuming a fixed theoretical focus at the moment of its inception, the *Journal* declares loyalty only to the tradition of intellectuality itself. Accordingly, while the *Journal* is devoted, in general, to the appreciation of a diversity of competing theoretical perspectives, it is committed, in particular, to those theoretical viewpoints which, in addition to their scholarly excellence, are manifestations of a living intellectuality. As a working review of political and social theory, the *Journal* will emphasize articles that are "caught up" in the dialectics of development and whose final expression, and thereby full evaluation, may, in fact, await broader transformations of the process of human history. This "working" approach to political and social thought is meant to encourage critical reflection on the project of theory itself — its historical modalities, philosophical principles, and prospects for reconstruction — and to engender creative dialogue on the main question confronting contemporary theorists: How may the reification of actualities be overcome by the actualization of possibilities?

Second, the *Journal* is devoted to the application of the categories of theoretical thought to a new understanding of the Canadian public situation and, by extension, to a decisive interpretation of more general transformations of the contemporary historical circumstance. This project is based upon a firm determination to overcome both the inherent elitism of past theoretical traditions and the present indifference of the surrounding population by demonstrating a *lived* connection between the products of theoretical inquiry and the momentary settlement of the "grand" problems of human existence, whether personal or collective. For a variety of reasons, including both the sustained challenge to the development of a theoretical mentality in a technocratic age and the failure of theorists to overcome in practice the "institutional categorization" of thought, the project of theory has become intolerably distanced from the human tradition. One task of the *Journal* is to resolve the alienation of theory from the practicalities of history by encouraging intellectual discourse on public issues of pressing historical importance. While such public issues remain but passing manifestations of more immanent theoretical principles, nonetheless their clarification has always provided the basis for the most acute of political and social reflections.

Third, the *Journal* is committed to contributing in a significant way to the development of a distinctively Canadian intellectual sensibility. Ultimately, such a "sensibility" will develop not from the activities of this *Journal* alone but from a growing conjunction in Canadian life of common intellectual dispositions on the part of writers, whether of prose or poetry, visual artists, dramatists, political commentators, and other participants in the criticism and revision of public life. However, a theoretical review such as this one bears the special responsibility of delineating in a reflective and systematic way the obstacles to be overcome and the directions to be taken in the literary and cultural renaissance presently taking place in this country. Moreover, a theoretical review is obligated to remain true to the enduring values of scholarship that have continuously characterized the better tendencies of Canadian intellectuality: passionate concern for the fate of the Canadian historical prospect; genuine world-consciousness; active toleration of oppositional perspectives; and sensitivity to the moral claims of truth in a world held together by the pathological politics of power. What lends historical poignancy to the faithful discharge of these special responsibilities is the conviction that the *soul* of any country's intellectual tradition has always been the quality of its theoretical thought. Destroy the tradition of political and social theory, whether by the active assault of technocracy or by the paralysis of popular indifference, and a country — indeed a whole historical age — is cut adrift from its sense of philosophical destiny: lost in a world of provisional and disconnected events without the organizing grace of self-conscious knowledge of its principles.

The aims of the *Journal* are well-illustrated by the articles included in the present issue.

The first section, *Critical Perspectives*, contains three divergent viewpoints on the possibilities and problematics of twentieth-century political and social theory. In the lead-off article, "Dialectical Sensibility I: Critical Theory, Scientism and Empiricism", Ben Agger develops in a novel and productive fashion the theoretical categories for a "repoliticized", and thereby revitalized Marxism: a Marxism that is principled in the meta-vision of "active constitutive subjectivity", and in the regeneration of an "advisory" role for critical theory. This proposal is based upon a persuasive critique of the failure of leading theoreticians of the Frankfurt School of Sociology, particularly Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, to transcend the radical pessimism of "ideology-critique" to a reconstruction of critical thought in lieu of a transformed historical circumstance. The reciprocity of theory and praxis, of an advisory role for critical theory, is called into question by Michael A. Weinstein in his article "Political Philosophy and the Public Situation". Weinstein penetrates to the essence of the contemporary crisis of political philosophy by exploring the tragic disjunction which exists, at present, between its transcendent and immanent tendencies. This exploration interweaves two complementary strands of thought. First, Weinstein contends that the "new universalism" of twen-

tieth-century political philosophy — the discovery of the full dimensions of of "intra-subjectivity" and of "intra-consciousness" — has made political philosophy a radically impractical activity by removing politics to an in-authentic dimension of human existence. Second, Weinstein argues that the transcendentalism of the philosophy of intra-subjectivity has been blocked from its moment of actualization by the implacable social fact of a "deprived public situation" held together by organized instrumentalisms. Weinstein concludes on a searing note by affirming the tragic sense of politics: the equivocal and paradoxical character of all contemporary modes of political experience. This shearing of political philosophy from the public realm is implicitly, if not overtly, critiqued in Arthur Kroker's article "On Moral Economy". While Kroker's analysis of the coordinates of the "conglomerate of all conglomerates" is similar to Weinstein's description of the "deprived public situation", a radically different conclusion emerges. Beginning with José Ortega y Gasset's evocative image of the "generation", philosophically conceived, Kroker elucidates the regulatory ideals for a morally as well as an empirically learned Canadian intellectual sensibility. Within the overarching category of moral economy, Kroker draws together the epistemology of reconstructive empiricism, an historical perspective on world corporativism, and an interrelated network of problematics for further investigation. Unlike Weinstein who espouses the tragic sense of politics, Kroker's thesis envisages the inherent fragility of world corporativism being overcome by the development of new modes of philosophical politics in *marginales* such as Canada.

In the second section, *Critical Retrospectives*, two important, and indeed dramatic, reinterpretations of past political thinkers are offered. In the first of these articles, "Harold Laski: The Paradoxes of a Liberal Marxist", Irving Layton examines the unsuccessful reconciliation achieved in Laski's political thought between the altruism of reformism and the necessities of revolutionary praxis. Dwelling on the uneasy tension between the apologia of liberal parliamentarism and the revolutionary impulse of Marxism, Layton's argument is of prophetic importance for an active appreciation of the contradictions inherent within the political philosophy of "social democracy". It is, moreover, an elegant description of how the prescriptions of social democratic thought enable a bourgeoisie under-siege to save itself from the twin "catastrophes" of fascism and genuine libertarian commitments. This critical revision of the tradition of liberal democratic thought is eloquently sustained in Phillip Hansen's examination of the political thought of T. H. Green. In his article "T. H. Green and the Moralization of the Market", Hansen carefully explicates the ontological presuppositions of Green's political thought, and provides a provocative estimation of Green's contribution to the defense of capitalism. Hansen contends that the thrust of Green's thought, particularly in its movement from Utilitarian to Idealist categories, was directed towards a "developmental" reconceptualization of the human essence in accordance with the

shifting imperatives of industrial capitalism. "Positive freedom", in this sense, becomes but the opening gambit in a two-pronged liberal democratic defense of the rights of capitalism: (i) an attempt to satisfactorily resolve the worst "abuses" of early industrial capitalism; and (ii) the creation of a new "moral personality" in line with predetermined beliefs in the justice of the market economy and in the "right", indeed, the *moral* right, of individual appropriation.

In a final *Commentary*, Howard Aster provides a stimulating reflection on the debilitation of political education in a "corporate-dominated environment." Aster's contribution, "A Philosophical Commentary on the Canadianization of Political Education", combines both a retrospective survey of the dissolution of the educative function, and a prospective discussion of the possibility for its reconstitution. The article begins with a thoughtful passage on "the loss of the sense of responsibility, the incapacity of the tragic experience and the decadence of the personal" in today's educational experience. Refusing to be placated by the dictates of a conventional nationalism, Aster submits that the transformation of political education must be undertaken within the broader context of providing an explanation for the "character of our own civilization." Ultimately, such an explanation is held to involve the creation of active dialogue among participants in Canadian intellectual life: a dialogue that seeks to weave together the different modalities of our historical heritage into some "reflective whole which has shape, character, and form."

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