George Grant's Anti-Imperialism: Old Right or New Left?

BRIAN T. THORN
Nipissing University

Abstract: This article discusses the nature of George Parkin Grant's opposition to imperialism, especially of the American variety. Grant opposed the American war in Vietnam and often presented American liberal modernity against Canadian traditionalism. In this article, we attempt to explain Grant's ideology in light of the "Old Right" ideology of traditional moral and religious values and anti-interventionism, and the "New Left" ideology of localism and communitarianism. This article argues that Grant's anti-imperialism came more from the "Old Right" viewpoint—even if Grant himself might not have approved of this viewpoint—although with surprising connections to some "New Left views. With the new rise in some elements of "Old Right" views in the Trump movement, Grant's expressions of opposition to imperialism, and support for a vision of Canadian nationalism, in *Lament for a Nation* remain as relevant as ever.

Keywords: Liberalism, Conservatism, "Old Right", "New Left", Nationalism, Imperialism, Independence, Continentalism.

INTRODUCTION

As part of *Lament for a Nation*, George Parkin Grant expressed views that, taken in isolation, would not have seemed out of place in much more leftist publications from the 1960s. Writing in 1965, Grant praised Howard Green, Canada's external affairs minister under John Diefenbaker, for Green's criticisms of U.S. President John F. Kennedy and of Kennedy's efforts to place BOMARC missiles on Canadian soil. Then, Grant remarked on Canadian Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker's tepid defence of Canadian nationalism in the face of what Grant saw as American advancement against Canadian independence. Grant noted that Diefenbaker "did not criticize American world policy but insisted that Canadian defense policy not be determined in Washington. Only at one point did he by implication criticize American world policy … at no other time did he imply any criticism of America's world role; he simply affirmed his belief in Canadian sovereignty" (Grant 2013, pp. 29-30). Here, Grant portrays Diefenbaker's words and actions positively, although he implies that the Prime Minister could have done much more to forestall Canada's integration with the United States. Later, Grant strongly criticized Canada's Liberal Party, arguing that "it was under a Liberal regime that Canada became a branch-plant

society; it was under Liberal leadership that our independence in defence and foreign policy was finally broken" (Grant 2013, p. 39). Grant presents ideas that prefigured late-1960s and 1970s-era "left nationalism," such as that of the "Waffle Movement" within the New Democratic Party (NDP). Grant also spoke to the concerns of "New Left" activists within groups like the Student Union for Peace Action (SUPA), established in 1964. Taken on their own, these statements could be read as endorsements of a leftist ideology.

ARGUMENT AND ORIENTATION

Of course, we cannot take these statements out of context and in isolation. Many, perhaps most, commentators on Grant present him as a conservative traditionalist. Grant argued for Protestant religion as the basis of society, the traditional nuclear family, and opposition to abortion. Grant also offered critical support for a British vision of Canada. This viewpoint is not incorrect but this paper argues for a more nuanced and complex view of Grant's ideology, where the "Old Right" and the "New Left" ideologies meet. Simply put, this paper argues that, although Grant's views *largely* cohered with those of the "Old Right" in the United States and Canada during the 1900-1954 period, some of his ideas can also be equated with the localist, communal, even Jeffersonian, values of the "New Left" in the United States and Canada. This is why we see some "New Leftists" of the 1960s and 1970s supporting Grant's views on issues like Canadian nationalism, the war in Vietnam, American imperialism, and community vs. individualism (Azzi 1999, pp. 126-7). We cannot ignore the more left-wing, or "liberal" elements of Grant's thought, even if his overall ideology was conservative. This paper begins with an overview of "Old Right" and "New Left" ideologies and then moves into a discussion of Grant's ideas in *Lament for a Nation*, examining his ideas in light of the discussion of the "Old Right" and "New Left." It is true that Grant himself, in his opposition to Lockean liberalism and American individualism, did not directly address ideas from the American "Old Right." Yet, even if unknowingly, Grant's views dovetailed with the localist, decentralist, often Christian, vision of many "Old Right" thinkers and politicians. The paper concludes with an attempt to unite the ideas of "Old Right" and "New Left," using Grant's views as a basis for this new kind of politics but introducing other thinkers to the discussion, notably Karl Hess, Jeff Taylor, and Ralph Nader. The paper gently chides Grant for not looking more deeply into American conservative ideologies, which might have strengthened his anti-imperialist, pro-traditionalist arguments.

"OLD RIGHT" AND "NEW LEFT IDEOLOGIES": POLAR OPPOSITES OR MANY SIMILARITIES?

On the surface, the values of the "Old Right" and the "New Left" seem to have little in common. Yet, a closer examination reveals more similarities than might appear at first glance. In the context of the United States, the "Old Right" referred to a loosely connected group of elected officials, activists, writers and journalists, and academics from roughly 1914-1954. This group strongly opposed the League of Nations, international entanglements, Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, and American entry into the Second World War. "Old Right" supporters also opposed American intervention in the Cold War of the late-1940s and 1950s, and favoured localist, individualist solutions to American problems, rather than solutions imposed on Americans by the federal government in Washington, D.C. (Raimondo 2008, pp. 52-3, 173-7). Examples include famed aviator Charles Lindbergh, journalist John T. Flynn, writer Garet Garret, historian Charles Beard, Senator Burton Wheeler, Rep. H. R. Gross, Rep. Howard Buffett, writer Rose Wilder Lane, Rep. George Bender, General Robert E. Wood and writer Isobel Patterson. "Old Right" supporters often, although not exclusively, hailed from rural areas, and from Midwestern, Rocky Mountain West, or Pacific Coast states, where opposition to federal government controls and overseas interventionism was strong (Doenecke 2003, pp. 2-3). Many, like Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio, favoured frugality, anti-corruption and limited government in domestic policy. "Old Rightists" like Taft also supported rural and small-town values, Protestant religiosity,

low taxes, small business and local manufacturing concerns, and an American foreign policy that did not intervene in European, African, or Asian affairs (Radosh 1975, pp. 121-2, 168-95).

Taft and other "Old Right" supporters expressed scepticism toward aspects of internationalist American foreign policy like the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, membership in NATO, and, later, the Korean and Vietnam Wars (Doenecke 1979, pp. 11-12, 20-6). With the defeat in Congress of the 1954 Bricker Amendment—an attempt to restrain the power of the President to proclaim international treaties—the "Old Right" faced defeat. Yet, elements of the Old Right ideology continued, notably in the person of Rep. Eugene Siler, a conservative Republican opponent of the Vietnam War (Kauffman 2008, pp. 125-6; Raimondo 2008, pp. 180-3). As a strong Baptist, much like later Old Right supporters like Oregon Republican Governor and Senator Mark O. Hatfield, Siler supported a vision of New Testament Christianity that opposed alcohol, pornography, and abortion, as well as foreign wars. Protestants like Siler and Hatfield saw Americans as "peaceful Christian agriculturalists" who needed to return to a Bible-based Christianity as well as the values of the American Founding fathers with a local, "human scale" kind of politics (Johns 2006, p. 589). Given the endorsement of Bible-based Christianity among some elements of the Old Right, we can easily see elements of Old Right ideology within George Grant's views, even if Grant saw the modern United States as endorsing a libertarian, modernist ideology, which went against Grant's Anglican traditionalism. Even in the context of Canadian history and political ideologies, where the Old Right view was weaker, we can see Grant, along with such writers and politicians as Cornelia Wood, Muriel Manning, and Judith Robinson, as an exemplar of an "Old Rightist" viewpoint.

In Canada, "Old Rightist" values, sometimes called "Toryism," implied a close connection with what Old Right figures in Canada saw as British values, or at least values borrowed from Britain. This viewpoint encompassed ideas like veneration for the British Crown and its' traditions, and liberty and diversity for those who accepted the Crown. The Canadian Old Right view also encompassed discipline, a hierarchical vision of society with the lower classes accepting the dominance of the upper class, and an acceptance of an established church, in this case Anglicanism, as the official church of the nation (Champion 2010, pp. 81-92). "Old Rightists" in Canada borrowed from their version of Edmund Burke's view of society. The "Burkean" vision emphasized "ordered liberty," where freedom came from English/British values such as those in Magna Carta, but also implying an acceptance of tradition, authority, and hierarchy (Thorn 2023, pp. 17-19). Part and parcel of this viewpoint was a belief in the power of the, federal and provincial, Canadian states to order society economically, by creating an independent Canadian economy based on industry and natural resources. Early Canadian politicians like independent Canada's first Prime Minister John A. Macdonald saw Canadian culture as inheriting the "rich culture" of Britain and reading authors like Milton, Shakespeare, Keats and Burke, among others (Bliss 1994, p. 16). Macdonald and other old conservatives also argued that the Canadian state would order Canada socially and economically by creating harmonious social relations between the warring classes and ethnicities of society, and mediating between different groups in society by uniting the Canadian state and private business. At the same time, Red Tories would maintain Canada's tie to Britain's liberal and military traditions (Bliss 1994, pp. 13-17). All of this was true even if more liberal Canadians eschewed a direct tie to more conservative elements of British history and culture (Champion 2010, pp. 94-5). Thus, Grant's views on the primacy of the commonwealth and the collective over the needs of the individual go along well with Canadian "Red Tory" or "Old Right" views (Dart 1999, p. 42).

The "New Left" perspective, by contrast, seems much less in line with Grant's views. Nonetheless, as we shall see, there are parallels that can be drawn between the two viewpoints. We can see the "New Left," as distinguished directly from the North American "Old Left" of the 1930s and 1940s. "The Old Left" emphasized protest at the factory—the point of production—and the labour movement and working classes as the main forces that would effect change in North American society. Thus, "Old Leftists" were often social democrats—notably the Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in Canada and union activist Democrats in the United States—or even Communist Party members, who focused on class issues first and foremost. The "Old Left" often emphasized a "top down" approach, with the state being the main so-

cial force to implement higher wages, better working conditions, and help for the poor and common people (Gitlin 1987, pp. 82-5; Palmer 2009, pp. 248-250). In contrast, the "New Left" emerged during the late-1950s and 1960s in opposition to this approach.

Indeed, scholars have portrayed the New Left as a typically American, almost anarchic, approach to radical, leftist politics. With the establishment of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in 1960 and the subsequent Port Huron Statement of 1962, written largely by Tom Hayden and Al Haber, the New Left in the United States came into being. The SDS and other New Left groups borrowed heavily from the American individualistic tradition of Henry David Thoreau, and the transcendentalism of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman (Gitlin 1987, pp. 101-111). The New Left challenged big government and big corporations, favouring a return to smaller, more authentic, communities and to individualistic, participatory democracy. New Left activists often criticized the labour movement as well, in contrast to the "Old Left's" focus on the labour movement and working-class people. New Leftists began and supported "new social movements" such as civil rights and anti-racism, the "second wave" feminist movement, environmentalism, and lesbian and gay rights movements (LGBT). There was no "centre" to the New Left movements and many different viewpoints and movements sprang up during the 1960s and 1970s. Common ideological threads among new left groups included green politics and environmentalism, decentralism and localism, populism rather than elitism, community, and a "back to the land" ethic that borrowed from 19th-century American activists like Thoreau and 20th-century anarchists like Edward Abbey (Taylor 2013, pp. 520-4; 2006, pp. 100-01).

In the Canadian context, too, the New Left was drawn to anarchism, anti-statism, anti-war politics as well as decentralization and anti-racism (Palmer 2009, p. 255). This is especially important in the long tradition of "statism" on the Canadian left. Indeed, most Canadians, with some exceptions, on the liberal left or even on the socialist and communist left, have historically gravitated toward statist solutions to social problems (Leier 1990, p. 105n). Yet, the New Left ideology in Canada, was different. In particular, Canadian new left organizations like the Voice of Women (VOW), the Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CUCND), and the Student Union for Peace Action (SUPA) focused on peace, non-alignment in the Cold War, scepticism toward anti-Communism, anti-racism, and decentralization. Among the Canadian New Left, much scepticism existed toward the possibility of Canadian governments, federal and provincial, to truly solve issues like racism, poverty, war, and sexism. SUPA activists, much like their counterparts in the SDS in the United States, went to poor areas of Canadian towns and cities to work directly among poor and working-class people. In Canada, New Left activists also spoke out against racism toward Canada's Indigenous population, and even went to live and work on remote and isolated Indigenous reserves, not always without issue (Palmer 2009, pp. 265-70). Like in the United States, Canadian New Left activists were often "Red Diaper Babies," the children of leftist activists from the 1930s and 1940s, who had inherited their parents' sense of injustice, if not all of their ideology (Kostash 1980, pp. 6-7).

Similarly, New Left supporters in Canada and the U.S. fought for authenticity above all else, seeing the conservatism of the 1950s and their parents' generation as something to overcome. To that end, the New Left generation favoured individualism over institutions and conformity, irrational adventures in drug-taking and more liberated sexual experiences, and returning to the land and rural areas like the West Kootenays in the province of British Columbia. Urban areas like Vancouver's Gastown and Kitsilano and San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury also became outposts of New Left values (Kostash 1980, pp. 111-121). Much like their American counterparts, Canadian new leftists looked for anti-authoritarianism, libertarianism, decentralization, authenticity, and anti-establishment values.

GEORGE GRANT'S AFFINITY TO THE "OLD RIGHT": AN OFTEN FORGOTTEN VIEW

We can see many similarities between Grant's viewpoints and those of the Old Right. Grant remarked that Canadian Prime Minister John Diefenbaker implicitly symbolized the final gasp of the British tradition in Canadian politics and culture. Indeed, Grant argued that the Canadian ruling class "was radically re-

shaped … from 1940 to 1957." Grant saw this change as a move away from British, "Tory" traditions of the Crown, gradual change, localism, and religion to a viewpoint based on American ideologies. After 1940, Grant asserted, the ruling class "found its centre of gravity in the United States. The Liberal Party ruled Canada for most of the period from the 1920s-1957, with some interruptions. As Grant argued, "during the long years of Liberal rule, the strength of the Conservative Party was maintained by those who were still to some extent oriented toward Great Britain" (Grant 2013, p. 10).

Indeed, Grant saw Diefenbaker, coming from the isolated province of Saskatchewan, as an outsider to the business elite of Canadian politics. Grant wrote that Diefenbaker "only came to leadership because of support of the fringe area of the country, and because the Toronto group was at the end of its tether." Coming from the West, Diefenbaker was not a favourite of the business elite in the Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal axis who had largely ruled Canada since Confederation in 1867. Grant noted that business elites in Central Canada donated funds to both the Liberals and Conservatives because business leaders desired favouritism regardless of which party came to power. Yet, corporate elites in the 1957 federal election "did not expect or support the defeat of the Liberal Party" (Grant 2013, p. 11). Grant argued that corporate elites, whom by 1957 had become largely pro-American, did not favour Diefenbaker's pro-British, traditionalist ideology. If unknowingly, Grant's ideas hearkened back to the old, Canadian conservative tradition of John A. Macdonald's pro-British views. Similarly, Grant saw Diefenbaker and Howard Green's opposition to American imperialism and support for Canadian independence as a kind of localism in opposition to American domination. Grant noted that Green "cried out against Canada becoming a vassal … but such independence in international relations was not something the dominant forces in Canadian life could accept" (Grant 2013, p. 36). In that Grant supported Canadian nationalism against American imperialism and internationalism, Grant was a "localist." Like many Old Right supporters in the U.S., Grant endorsed a "country first" viewpoint in foreign affairs.

Elsewhere, Grant followed up on these points by presenting John A. Macdonald as Diefenbaker's hero. Accurately, Grant suggested that Diefenbaker was the heir to Macdonald's nationalist viewpoint of Canadian independence—a "Canada first" viewpoint—from the United States, under a British conception of the Canadian nation state. The "intellectual elite," centered in Central Canada, disliked Diefenbaker, seeing him as a "Westerner" whose nationalistic, pro-Canadian independence, views did not dovetail well with the pro-American, continentalist views of those in Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal. We can see Diefenbaker's views, convincingly presented by Grant, as similar to the nationalistic, "America First," viewpoint of many on the American "Old Right." The more internationalist, pro-NATO, Canadian establishment disliked Diefenbaker and his nationalist, even localist, sense of Canada (Grant 2013, p. 25).

Elsewhere in the text, Grant wrote more explicitly and compellingly about the virtues of tradition as an important element of Canadian history and society. Grant criticized big business and the Canadian government for throwing aside Canadian traditions of the land and church in favour of capitalist modernity, which Grant saw as being connected with an American vision of society. Grant remarked that capitalism "is, after all, a way of profit-making. That activity led the wealthy in the direction of continentalism … it is this very fact that has made capitalism the great solvent of all tradition in the modern era" (Grant 2013, p. 46). In the same passage, Grant expanded upon his critiques of liberal capitalism. He argued that "when everything is made relative to profit-making, all traditions of virtue are dissolved, including that aspect of virtue known as love of country. This is why liberalism is the perfect ideology for capitalism." Grant continued by saying that American-style capitalism "demolishes those taboos that restrain expansion. Even the finest talk about internationalism open markets for the powerful" (Grant 2013, pp. 46-7). Here, we have a typically "Grantian" statement. In his support for tradition, which Grant saw as typified by religious belief and support for rural and British values, and in his attacks on liberalism, Grant saw Canada's increasing ties with the U.S. as negative. As seen, many, although not all, American Old Rightists like Eugene Siler and Mark Hatfield, both Baptists, hoped for a return of American values to those of the Protestant Church, exemplified by opposition to abortion, secularism, and modernity. It is true that Grant's view of English Toryism, with its' focus on balancing the needs of society, the state, and the individual and the focus on the

partnership between the state, religion, and the people, was not quite the same as American "Old Right" liberalism, with its echo of John Locke (Dart 1999, pp. 63-5). In particular, Grant envisioned a much larger role for the federal state in ensuring social welfare than American Old Rightists, with their focus on state and local government did. Yet, with that said, Grant's beliefs in religion and morality as key focal points in society and his opposition to imperialism go along well with an American Old Right view.

In another passage, Grant remarked on Canada's local culture and the destruction of localist values. Canada's increasing turn to American liberal individualism related all elements of society to profit-making. This, in turn, destroyed local and traditional values. Grant remarked that "modern civilization makes all local cultures anachronistic. When modern science has achieved its' mastery, there is no place for local cultures." Grant applied this argument against modernity, in its' American variety, to Canadian history and society. He wrote that "our culture floundered on the aspirations of the age of progress." "Canada," Grant wrote, for many internationalists and supporters of liberal capitalist modernity, "a local culture, must disappear" (Grant 2013, p. 53). Much like supporters of the "Old Right" in their American and Canadian varieties, Grant argued for support of the national against international and the local and particular against the national and the universal. Grant argued that modern liberal capitalism, typified by the United States, had given up history, tradition and the "authority of discipline" in favour of hedonism, unfettered markets, and the commercialization of almost every aspect of society. Grant contrasted this newer vision of American capitalism with an earlier, "producerist" vision of capitalism prior to modernity that "was full of moral restraints" (Susman 2003, pp. 1-27). Modernity and automation in 20th-century industrial capitalism led to the end of the "work-ethic of Protestantism." In keeping with this "the titillation of the jaded tastes of the masses serves the purpose of the corporation elites" (Grant 2013, p. 58).

Here, Grant criticizes capitalism more directly with his attacks on modernity as an element of society that brought in a new version of capitalism that commercializes all aspects of modern life. Similarly, for Grant, modern liberal capitalism refers to a business ethic without any form of responsibility, which leads to the destruction of traditions like family and church. American Old Rightists like Siler and Hatfield, as well as Democrat Harold Hughes with his opposition to alcohol and near-pacifism, had similar views surrounding American modernity (Taylor 2006, p. 251). Grant specifically mentioned *Playboy* magazine, founded in 1953, as an example of the new American variety of consumer culture capitalism that destroyed traditional sexual mores (Grant 2013, p. 58). We can hear echoes of Grant's critiques of capitalism in work like Barbara Ehrenreich on the decline of responsibility among men in 1950s-era America (Ehrenreich 1983, pp. 42-51). In short, Grant's ideas, as we have seen, dovetailed well with "Old Right" viewpoints in both their American and, especially, Canadian, varieties.

GEORGE GRANT AND THE "NEW LEFT:" AN UNEASY RELATIONSHIP

We can also see affinities between Grant's views and those of the "New Left." In a 1970 introduction to a new edition of *Lament*, Grant expressed ideas that would not have looked out of place in a Marxist interpretation of Canadian history. Referring to John F. Kennedy and Jacqueline Kennedy, Grant remarked that "how much closer were 'Jack and Jackie' to the culture of Forest Hill and Westmount than was the remembering rhetorician from Prince Albert," a reference again to John Diefenbaker. Here, Grant discusses the class links between elite American practitioners of corporate capitalism and imperialism and their counterparts in Canada. Grant continued by commenting on Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Eliot Trudeau's ideology, in commenting that "Mr. Trudeau's policies may be inadequate, vacillating and tailored to please the dominant powers, yet they all show traces of care about Canada which could not have been present in Howe's worship of the corporation," a reference to William Lyon Mackenzie King's "minister of everything," C. D. Howe, a strong supporter of American-style corporate capitalism. In the same paragraph, Grant expressed some hope, and even admiration, for young people in Canada, remarking that their "desire for independence is greater than for many generations." Similarly, and tellingly, Grant then argued that young people in Canada "unlike the generation of 1945, which scrambled into the corporations, they

have a realistic suspicion of corporate capitalism," which went against "any nationalism" (Grant 2013, pp. lxx-lxxi). Grant coupled this rhetorical support for young Canadians' support for "left nationalism" with attacks on the American war in Vietnam. Here, we can see Grant's, somewhat begrudging and tentative, support for "New Left" ideas in opposition to American imperialism. Grant's ideas about American intervention in Canada went alongside the "left nationalist" viewpoint of social democratic Canadians. For example, for Mel Watkins and James Laxer in the "Waffle Movement" in Canada's NDP and among some members of the federal Liberal Party such as Walter Gordon, Lester Pearson's finance minister from 1963-1965, Canadian left nationalism became a strong ideological trend (Azzi 1999, pp. 168-174).

Elsewhere, in the main text of *Lament*, Grant expressed criticisms of what he saw as Canada's quasi-colonial subservience to the United States. Perhaps unconsciously borrowing from C. Wright Mills' ideas, as well as echoing points from the Port Huron Statement, Grant asserted that "in the 1960s, state capitalism organizes a technological North America. The ruling classes are those that control the private governments (that is, the corporations) and those that control the public government which co-ordinates the activities of these corporations" (Mills 1968, pp. 147-170). Grant continued that "North America is the base of the world's most powerful empire to date, and this empire in is competition with other empires" (Grant 2013, p. 9). Grant's implied critique of technology and empire dovetailed, at least implicitly, with the critiques of "big government" and corporations that political scientists and historians have portrayed among ideologues of the "New Left." Grant continued in the same section of *Lament* to offer an analysis of Canada's subservience to the United States. Drawing on his knowledge of Canadian history and culture, Grant suggested that "since 1960, Canada has developed into a northern extension of the continental economy … our traditional role—as an exporter of raw materials (particularly to Europe)—with highly protected industry in central Canada—gradually lost its importance in relation to our role as a branch-plant of American capitalism" (Grant 2013, p. 9). Thus, Grant remarked on Canada's economic dependence on the United States and the American economy. Grant drew on older traditions of the "Canadian political economic tradition," exemplified by Harold Innis's notion of the "staples thesis." Innis presented a vision of Canadian history based on Canada's natural resources like fish and fur being exploited by foreign powers such as Britain and the United States (Innis 2001, pp. 383-402).

Grant continued by suggesting that economic dependence led to the subservience of Canada's military to American foreign policy goals. Grant stated that "our ruling class is composed of the same groups as that of the United States, with the signal difference that the Canadian ruling class looks across the border for its final authority in both politics and culture." Grant concluded that "our military is less influential at home than is the case in the United States. Of all the aspects of our society, the military is the most directly an errand boy for the Americans" (Grant 2013, p. 9). In this evocative passage, Grant offered a direct critique of the Canadian ruling class's wish to put Canada under the power of American elites. In his view, Canadian business and political elites, exemplified by Lester Pearson's Liberal Party, had introduced a vision of corporate liberal capitalism, bereft of any sense of moral restraints. Yet, as we see here, Grant's view of Canada's relationship with the United States, and his critiques of modern capitalism and militarism, stood in the same vein as New Left critiques both of American domination of Canada and the triumph of corporations in North America.

In a number of other passages from *Lament*, Grant criticized both Marxism and modern liberalism for upholding technological progress and centralization at the expense of local and particular traditions, which Grant favoured. While Grant's views on this subject reflected Old Right ideas about local traditions, they also went along well with the "left-libertarian" views of many New Leftists, who used Jeffersonian and "back to the land" ideas typical of American libertarians, localists, and anarchists such as Henry David Thoreau and Edward Abbey (Taylor 2006, p. 238). In supporting a localist vision of society, Grant wrote that "indigenous cultures are dying everywhere in the modern world. French-Canadian nationalism is a last-ditch stand … the reality of their culture, and their desire not to be swamped, cannot save them from the inexorable facts in the continental case." Grant tried to contend with how to maintain a local, indigenous culture in the face of the power of the modern, centralist state and modern technology. He remarked

that "all the answers face the same dilemma: Those who want to maintain separateness also want the advantages of the age of progress … nationalism can only be asserted successfully by an identification with technological advance." Yet, Grant argued, "technological advance entails the disappearance of those indigenous differences that give substance to nationalism" (Grant 2013, pp. 74-5).

Although he did not use the words "community" or "authenticity"—typical words often used by New Left supporters—Grant implied that modern technology did not give humans true freedom. Rather, modern Canadian society needed "a definition of human freedom quite different from the modern view that freedom is man's essence. It implies a science different from that which aims at the conquest of nature" (Grant 2013, p. 94). Using ideas similar to anarchists, Grant further argued against the power of the "universal and homogenous state," which he equated with American-style corporate capitalism. Grant offered a tacit critique of American imperialism and the military-industrial complex that Dwight Eisenhower famously spoke against (Sherry 1995, pp. 233-6). These views, too, show how Grant's ideas went along well with many elements of a New Left ideology. Decentralization and localism, a land ethic, opposition to militarization, and a quest for a new kind of community and authenticity were key parts of Grant's ideology, as they were of many branches of the New Left.

CONCLUSION: ARE GRANT'S VIEWS A WAY OF RECONCILING THE "OLD RIGHT" AND "NEW LEFT"?

What are we to make of this investigation of George Grant's political ideology? Although the "New Left" element of Grant's views represents the weaker aspect of his perspective, the evidence above suggests that the "Old Right" and "New Left" had much more in common with each other than partisans of either viewpoint cared to admit. Perhaps Grant was correct to note the similarities between these two views. Partisans of the mainstream political "right" and "left" often fail to notice the affinities between their views (Taylor 2013, pp. 293-320). In fact, there are ways that we might unite the "Old Right" and "New Left" in an ideology based on a vision of libertarianism—an idea that supports as much human freedom as possible—and localism, that is, the view that all political and social solutions to problems must be found at the most local level possible. Indeed, Karl Hess, a former speechwriter for libertarian conservative and Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater, supported a vision of localism, coined the term "anarcho-capitalism," and also endorsed free markets, anti-militarism, and civil liberties for all (Johnson 2015, para. 7). It is true that Grant, as a traditionalist foe of modernity, saw libertarianism as an element of modern American capitalism, which he opposed. Similarly, as we have seen, Grant's view of religion and the relationship between the church, state, society and the individual borrowed from the old English Toryism of More, Ridley, and Cranmer, and not the American ideologies of Jefferson and Locke, where much American Old Right ideology stemmed from (Dart 1999, p. 63). With this in mind, in the end, Grant probably should have paid more attention to the "Old Right" ideas of Taft, Hughes, Hatfield, Hess and others: after all the high point of Old Right ideology came during the 1930s-early-1950s when Grant was active in writing and publishing. Conservative foes of the Vietnam War like Eugene Siler and Harold Hughes were politically active during the 1960s, when Grant wrote *Lament* and other texts. Grant's view of American ideology and society was perhaps somewhat narrow in that he saw American liberalism and conservatism as both stemming from the "liberal" views of thinkers like John Locke. In fact, American conservatism, as espoused by the Old Right, went back to the Christian, localist values that Grant favoured. Had Grant looked more deeply into American history and political ideology, as well as the Old Right figures of the 1930s-1960s, he might have realized that his views had more in common with some elements of American conservatism than he had assume.

Similarly, political scientist Jeff Taylor has convincingly argued, many links exist between the Old Right and New Left. Old Rightists and New Leftists might find common ground on the basis of opposition to corporate power, a return to morality and religion, local answers to problems, anti-militarism and anti-interventionism in foreign policy, and a land ethic (Taylor 2006, p. 238). Barry Goldwater, in 1968, re-

marked to Hess that "when the histories are written, I'll bet that the Old Right and the New Left are put down as having a lot in common and that the people in the middle will be the enemy" (Hess 1969, pp. 28-9).

We can see specific examples of this Old Right-New Left coalition in the joining of Ralph Nader and Pat Buchanan to oppose a congressional pay raise in 1989 and 1991. As part of the opposition to the Gulf War of 1990-1991, American liberals and conservatives similarly joined together to fight overseas expansion in the Middle East. Conservative columnist Joseph Sobran even recommended the writings of anarchist scholar Noam Chomsky during the early-1990s. Leftists and rightists in the U.S. and Canada, such as Ron Paul, Ralph Nader, Ed Broadbent and David Orchard, also opposed trade agreements that went against local sovereignty such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1992-1993 (Taylor 2006, pp. 238-39). Nader has explicitly called for a left-right coalition to battle against the power of corporations, the subservience of much of the mainstream media, and foreign interventionism (Nader 2014, pp. 2-10).

Most recently, in the Canadian context, Ontario Conservative Premier Doug Ford has come out against President Donald Trump's tariffs, using similar language to Liberal Party and even NDP supporters. Thus, although George Grant's ideology had more in common with the "Old Right" vision, we can see elements of "New Left" viewpoints creeping into his writing. Similarly, we have seen that the "Old Right" and "New Left" have much in common in their views on economic and foreign policy concerns. In a sense, a return to localist and nationalist ideas go along well with a traditionalist and moralistic viewpoint, which Grant might have favoured, since the overarching state is a product of modernity. In the United States, important, if largely forgotten, Old Right figures like Mark Hatfield, Eugene Siler, and Harold Hughes expressed ideas like pacifism, opposition to abortion and violence, morality, and Protestant religiosity, which Grant's ideas dovetail with. I have argued elsewhere that "traditionalist localism" is a potentially fruitful way of combining traditionalism and modernity, as well as leftism and conservatism (Thorn 2023, pp. 27-8). Perhaps this unity of Old Right and New Left ideologies might be a fruitful way to unite leftists and religious conservatives of various stripes in contemporary North America. In these days of "Trumpism," a potential annexation of Canada, perpetual foreign wars, a modernist morality, and the unchecked power of the state in conjunction with powerful corporations, perhaps a union of Grantian ideas of the "Old Right" and "New Left" is needed to unite people of different political persuasions against statism and war.[1]

NOTES

1 This article is dedicated to the memories of Jane Power and Jack O'Dell, two strong opponents of militarism and imperialism as well as exemplars of Canadian nationalism.

REFERENCES

Azzi, Stephen. 1999. *Walter Gordon and the Rise of Canadian Nationalism*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Bliss, Michael. 1994. *Right Honourable Men: The Descent of Canadian Politics from Macdonald to Mulroney*. Toronto: HarperCollins.

Champion, C. P. 2010. *The Strange Demise of British Canada: The Liberals and Canadian Nationalism, 1964-1968*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Dart, Ron. 1999. *The Red Tory Tradition: Ancient Roots, New Routes*. Dewdney, B.C.: Synaxis Press.

Doenecke, Justus D. 1979. *Not to the Swift: The Old Isolationists in the Cold War Era*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press.

_____. 2003. *Storm on the Horizon: The Challenge to American Intervention, 1939-1941*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.

Ehrenreich, Barbara. 1983. *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment*. Garden City: Doubleday.

Gitlin, Todd. 1987. *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*. New York: Bantam Books.

Grant, George. 2013/1965. *Lament for A Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Hess, Karl. 1969. An Open Letter to Barry Goldwater. *Ramparts* pp. 28-29.

Innis, Harold. 2001/1930. *The Fur Trade in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
Johnson, Charles. 2015. Karl Hess on Anarcho-Capitalism. Center for a Stateless Society. 28 Aug.
Johns, Andrew L. 2006. Doves Among Hawks: Republican Opposition to the Vietnam War, 1964-1968, *Peace and Change* 31(4):585-628.
Kauffman, Bill. 2008. *Ain't My America: The Long, Noble History of Antiwar Conservatism and Middle-American Anti-Imperialism*. New York: Henry Holt.
Kostash, Myrna. 1980. *Long Way from Home: The Story of the Sixties Generation in Canada*. Toronto: Lorimer.
Leier, Mark. 1990. *Where the Fraser River Flows: The Industrial Workers of the World in British Columbia*. Vancouver: New Star Books.
Nader, Ralph. 2014. *Unstoppable: The Emerging Left-Right Alliance to Dismantle the Corporate State*. New York: Nation Books.
Mills, C. Wright. 1968/1956. *The Power Elite*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Palmer, Bryan D. 2009. *Canada's 1960s*: *The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
Radosh, Ronald. 1975. *Prophets on the Right: Profiles of Conservative Critics of American Globalism*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
Raimondo, Justin. 2008/1993. *Reclaiming the American Right: Lost Legacy of the Conservative Movement*. Wilmington: ISI Books.
Sherry, Michael S. 1997. *In the Shadow of War: The United States Since the 1930s*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
Susman, Warren I. 2003/1985. *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Culture in the Twentieth-Century*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books.
Taylor, Jeff. 2013. *Politics on a Human Scale: The American Tradition of Decentralism*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
_____. *Where Did the Party Go? William Jennings Bryan, Hubert Humphrey, and the Jeffersonian Legacy*. 2006. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press.
Thorn, Brian T. 2023. Little Platoons and Ancient Traditions: Edmund Burke's Critique of Imperialism and Contemporary North American Indigenous Anti-Colonialism. In: Lee Trepanier and Richard Avramenko, eds., *Canadian Conservative Political Thought*, pp. 17-34. New York and London: Routledge.