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The most interesting aspect of politics in western Canada is its tendency to generate new political parties. This has been going on for over a century and shows no signs of stopping, as illustrated by the success of the Saskatchewan Party in that province's election of September 1999. Formed only in 1998, the Saskatchewan Party won twenty-five seats as compared to twenty-nine for the New Democrats, thus reducing Roy Romanow's party to the expedient of forming a coalition with the Liberals. Indeed, the Saskatchewan Party got more popular votes than did the NDP.

The NDP is the heir of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, founded in Calgary in 1932. The CCF/NDP has always aspired to be a national party, but it still bears the marks of its western origins. After the 1999 Manitoba election, the NDP until very recently governed three of the four western provinces. And yet, in the 1997 federal election, voters in the same region filled sixty of their eighty-eight seats in the House of Commons with members of the Reform Party, which stood at the opposite end of the ideological spectrum from the NDP; and in the 2000 federal election, western voters elected sixty-four representatives of the Canadian Alliance, the successor to the Reform Party. What can one make of this except to say that, while western voters may swing either left or right, they like to support parties rooted in their own region?

Without claiming to be complete, Table 1 lists some of the most important parties founded in western Canada. Several, such as the CCF, Social Credit, and Reform, have also operated outside the West; but all were founded in the West and had their main base of support in that region. The parties are designated F, P, or F+P, depending on whether they were purely federal, purely provincial, or operated at both levels. Some of the dates may be debatable because the founding of a political party is not always a clear-cut event. The list would be considerably longer if it included the instances in which a Liberal or Conservative party was reborn after a long period of dormancy in one province or another.

TABLE 1: New Political Parties Founded in Western Canada

Provincial Rights Party (P)	1905
Non-Partisan League (P)	1916
Progressives (including United Farmers' parties) (F+P)	1919
Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (F+P)	1932
Social Credit (F+P)	1935
Social Credit Party of British Columbia (P)	1952
Western Canada Concept (F+P)	1980
Western Canada Federation (F+P)	1980
Confederation of Regions (F+P)	1983
Reform Party of Canada (F)	1987
Reform Party of British Columbia (P)	1989
National Party (F)	1992
Saskatchewan Party (P)	1997

Not surprisingly, Quebec, the other region of Canada in which many voters are fundamentally dissatisfied with the terms of Confederation, has demonstrated a similar proclivity for creating new political parties, as shown in Table 2. Again, the list does not claim to be complete but only to identify some of the most important cases.

TABLE 2: New Political Parties Founded in Quebec

Parti National (P)	1885
Nationalist League (as political party) (F)	1911
Action Libérale Nationale (P)	1934
Union Nationale (P)	1935
Union des Electeurs (F+P)	1939
Bloc Populaire Canadien (F+P)	1942
Ralliement des Créditistes (F)	1957
Parti Québécois (P)	1968
Ralliement Créditiste du Québec (P)	1970
Equality Party	1989
Bloc Québécois (F)	1990
Action Démocratique du Québec (P)	1994

The parallelism between Quebec and the West is nicely illustrated by the fact that in 1993 a new party from Quebec—the Bloc Québécois—was elected the Official Opposition in the House of Commons and was

then replaced in that role in 1997 by a new party from the West—the Reform Party of Canada. Meanwhile, the Liberals continue to govern through their overwhelming domination of Ontario. The federal politics of the 1990s were an exaggerated version of a tableau that has often re-appeared in modern Canadian history, in which political forces based in Ontario fight off challenges arising from Quebec and/or the West. At-tempts to bring Quebec and the West into coalition with each other met with only infrequent and short-lived success under Robert Borden (1911-17), John Diefenbaker (1958-62), and Brian Mulroney (1984-93).

The repeated emergence of new parties in the West is the most ob-vious manifestation of the special character of politics in that region of Canada. Historians and political scientists have identified three major features of western politics that seem to perpetuate themselves across the generations in the various new parties as they arise.[1] I would describe these three characteristics as suspicion of external control, rejection of Canada's federal parliamentary system, and a thirst for fundamental solutions. Let me expand on these three characteristics as they apply to western poli-tics and parties, particularly the Reform Party of Canada, with which I had some personal familiarity.

Suspicion of External Control

The course of western history has indelibly etched suspicion of ex-ternal control into the western psyche. The story begins with the grant in 1670 by King Charles II to the Hudson's Bay Company of a trading monopoly in, and ownership of, all the lands drained by all the rivers flow-ing into Hudson Bay. The presence of fur traders naturally gave rise to a mixed-race population, now known as the Métis, who grew to resent the Company's control. Encouraged by traders from the North West company, they resisted Lord Selkirk's settlement scheme, leading to the tragic Seven Oaks Massacre of 1817; and they broke the Company's trading monopoly in the 1840s by forcibly insisting on their right to sell furs and buffalo robes to American buyers. In 1869, led by Louis Riel, they resisted transfer to Canadian jurisdiction until their concerns about land titles and local self-government received consideration.[2]

The federal government, although it partially granted Riel's demand for immediate provincial status, retained control of public lands and natu-ral resources, thus making Manitoba a second-class province dependent on federal subsidies to carry on its government.[3] Federal control of lands

in the North-West, though not as inefficient as often depicted, set the stage for Riel's second rebellion in 1885.[4] The federal government then extended the policy of federal ownership and control long past the time when it might have been justified, when Alberta and Saskatchewan achieved provincial status in 1905.[5] It took twenty-five more years before the three prairie provinces got control of their natural resources plus some compensation for lands alienated by Ottawa in making land grants for railway construction and other nation-building purposes.[6]

The prairie provinces got control of their lands and resources just as the Great Depression brought nightmarish conditions for western grain farmers, who were heavily indebted to eastern banks and trust companies. Bankruptcy became a way of life for western farmers, and Alberta, the hardest-hit province, had to default on its provincial debt. Throughout all these decades, western farmers had to sell their grain on world markets while the protective tariff, legislated for the benefit of eastern manufacturers and workers, prevented them from taking full advantage of cheaper American farm machinery and consumer goods. Under the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the Progressives, Farmers' parties, CCF, and Social Credit trained their artillery on eastern corporations, financiers, and the "old-line" politicians who collaborated with them. William Aberhart's denunciation of the "fifty big-shots" is perhaps the most memorable of the epithets hurled at such targets.[7]

In more recent times, heavy-handed federal interventions paved the way for the Reform Party's remarkable rise to prominence. In the early 1980s, Pierre Trudeau's National Energy Program, which tried to benefit eastern consumers by setting western oil and gas prices below world-market levels, destroyed any lingering support the Liberals might have enjoyed in the West. Then came Brian Mulroney's 1986 decision, allegedly taken "in the national interest," to give the billion-dollar CF-18 maintenance contract to Canadair in Montreal, even though a Winnipeg consortium's bid was cheaper and judged by the federal government's own experts to be technically superior. The CF-18 decision outraged adherents of all parties in the West, but particularly the Progressive Conservatives, who had thought the Mulroney government would give higher priority to their concerns. To be fair to Mr. Mulroney, he did do several things designed to conciliate the West, such as ending the National Energy Program and moving the National Energy Board to Calgary; but the blatant unfairness of the CF-18 decision robbed him of the favor he might otherwise have gained with western voters.

These developments of the 1980s made it plausible for Preston Manning to argue that neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives could ever represent the interests of western Canada, and that only a new, western-based party could do so.[8] As a would-be national party, Reform phrased its policies in national rather than regional terms, but its positions were popular in the West because they represented the objective interests of the western provinces, especially Alberta and British Columbia, which are heavy contributors in the redistributive game of contemporary Canadian politics and have the least to lose in case of a serious confrontation with Quebec separatism. Reform prospered with this strategy and exercised substantial influence upon the federal government's agenda, but its own success trapped it in the perpetual dilemma of regional politics. It reflected the views of its western supporters so well that it was not able to assemble enough voters in Ontario and elsewhere to elect M.P.'s there. Be that as it may, it is obvious that Reform was only the latest, and probably not the last, in a long line of western parties and movements that saw themselves as protectors of western interests against external exploitation.

Rejection of Canada's Federal Parliamentary System

Western Canada is famous for its large number of central and east European immigrants; yet these newcomers, whatever their other contributions to western life, adopted rather than created the political culture. The creators of that culture were three rather different groups of English-speaking settlers: those from Ontario and the other original provinces, who brought with them the traditional Liberal-Conservative axis of Canadian politics; British immigrants familiar with socialism and trade-union politics; and American ranchers and farmers imbued with populism and Progressivism. This American influence is felt to some degree everywhere in the West but is particularly strong in Alberta, which has experienced three different waves of American immigration: frontier ranchers in the 1880s; dry-land farmers, especially Mormons, around the turn of the century; and petroleum-industry workers and executives in the last fifty years.

People who have grown up with the American separation-of-powers system often dislike the parliamentary system. They tend to be put off by rigid party discipline, block voting, and the polarization of all issues between government and opposition; they yearn for representative independence and nonpartisan support for major policies. Thus the legacy of

American immigration created a political basis for movements critical of parliamentary government.

The connection, however, is even deeper. Americans coming to western Canada have tended to come from the western plains states where the populist and Progressive movements were strongest around the turn of the century. Populism is much more than a candidate wearing denim shirts to convince gullible voters he's a regular guy. Populism is a distinctive style of politics which holds that political supremacy ought to rest in the common people, whose interests and desires are fairly homogeneous; which craves direct links between people and government and is suspicious of intermediate institutions such as interest groups, political parties, and elected assemblies; and which tends to see the cause of misgovernment as rule by elites or special interests that have lost contact with the common people. Underlying all these characteristics is the myth of the popular will, and the belief that politics should consist of discovering that will and putting it into effect.[9]

Populism has run like a red thread through western Canadian political movements since the early years of this century. It reached its highest development in Henry Wise Wood's theory of group government, which the United Farmers of Alberta acknowledged in principle but never put fully into practice.[10] Ideally, for Wood, parties were supposed to represent functional groups in the society—farmers, labor, merchants, employers—and all parties with members in the legislature would participate in the cabinet. The legislature would be a congress of delegates who could work in harmonious cooperation because there were no fundamental conflicts among the interests they represented. This would truly be a government of the whole people, not just a government of the majority enforced by party discipline and propped up by patronage and corruption.

Wood's theory of group government was never fully accepted, even in Alberta; but more conventional populist ideas were espoused by all the Farmers' parties—the enfranchisement of women, so that the whole people could be politically active; direct democracy in the form of referendum and initiative, so that the people could make governmental decisions for themselves; recall, so the people could quickly replace politicians who did not do their bidding; proportional representation, so that all interests could receive adequate expression in the elected legislature; reduction in party discipline to break the power of "machine" politics; election of Senators, so that all lawmakers would be dependent upon the

popular will; and reform of electoral finance to reduce the "money power" of the "special interests."

All of these ideas—some in their original form, some in slightly modernized guise—reappeared in the Reform Party's platform. Preston Manning was a keen student of populism; in the years when I worked for him, he kept a well-thumbed copy of W.L. Morton's classic book, *The Progressive Party in Canada*, on his shelf. But the populist notions in the Reform Party's platform ideas did not just come from Mr. Manning; they also sprang spontaneously from the members of the party. Grassroots enthusiasm even required Mr. Manning to accept proposals of which he was personally rather skeptical, such as recall and proportional representation. Although he did not expend much of his personal capital defending such ideas, he found it politic to let them into the party's official policy manual.

The media portrayed Reform as an ideologically conservative party, and it certainly was that. However, the energy of its most active members and workers came not so much from conservative ideology as from populist enthusiasm. They wanted a grassroots party in which the members would control organization, policy, and even strategy; they dreamed of governing Canada through a combination of direct democracy and independent-minded M.P.'s responsive to what Mr. Manning called the "consensus of the constituency."[11] They, at least most of them, were not wholly opposed to parliamentary government because they believed it could be reformed; but their populist reforms, if ever thoroughly implemented, would have changed the parliamentary system almost beyond recognition.

To the outside observer, such populism may seem more like myth than reality. It was obvious that Mr. Manning carefully controlled the Reform Party, using his genius for agenda manipulation.[12] Although I haven't done an exact count, my impression is that the Reform caucus engaged in at least as much block voting as the Liberals. Certainly Mr. Manning set some kind of record for party discipline by suspending or expelling five caucus members in six years.[13] But myths are notoriously resistant to critical analysis, and the myth of populism lent Reform its energy, just as the Liberals derive energy from increasingly hollow assertions that they have given Canada the best system of medical care and the most compassionate welfare state in the world.

There is, of course, more than populism to the politics of western Canada. The CCF was a grassroots party, but not populist in the sense in which I use that term here. Its 1933 Regina Manifesto proposed a hyper-

parliamentary system in which the Senate would be abolished and federalism would be centralized, leaving the federal government a free hand to nationalize the means of production—or at least the "commanding heights"—and direct a planned economy. This vision never found much support in southern Alberta and other parts of the West where American-style populism predominates; but it sank deep roots in areas of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia, where it appealed particularly to British and other European working-class immigrants.

The anti-parliamentary populism of the United Farmers of Alberta, Social Credit, and the Reform Party is antithetical to the hyper-parliamentary system proposed by the CCF, but there are also points of similarity. Both reject the Canadian federal parliamentary system, albeit for opposing reasons—populists, because the system gives the governing party in Ottawa too much power; socialists, because the system does not give the governing party in Ottawa enough power. Both, moreover, desire root-and-branch solutions to the perceived problems of Confederation—not just modest, incremental reforms, but the thoroughgoing renovation of political institutions. In that sense, both visions exemplify the third enduring feature of western politics, the thirst for fundamental solutions.

The Thirst for Fundamental Solutions

Millenarian dreams have crisscrossed the western Canadian landscape as far back as Louis Riel's second rebellion. Thinking he was divinely inspired, Riel called himself the "Prophet of the New World" and tried to set up a reformed version of Roman Catholicism in North America. Speaking from the steps of the parish church at Batoche, he opened the North West Rebellion with the apocalyptic pronouncement "Rome has fallen," which in his special vocabulary meant that the Holy Spirit had left the Roman Catholic Church and now spoke through him as "Prophet of the New World."[14] Both the Farmers' parties and the CCF were strongly influenced by the Social Gospel movement, which reinterpreted the kingdom of God on earth as the product of political reform rather than otherworldly piety. Protestant clergymen preaching the Social Gospel—men such as William Irvine, J.S. Woodsworth, and Tommy Douglas—were important early leaders in these parties.[15]

William Aberhart rejected the Social Gospel, but he was strongly influenced by Dispensationalism—a fundamentalist eschatology he inher-

ited from the Plymouth Brethren by way of the Scofield Interpreter's Bible. In the radio play "The Branding Irons of the Antichrist," which he wrote together with his protégé Ernest Manning, he brought the themes of the Rapture and the Second Coming vividly to life.[16] He would not have been surprised to see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven the day after tomorrow. When he turned to politics, he embraced C.H. Douglas's Social Credit theory, which is best understood as an example of secular millenarianism. In the Douglas vision, Social Credit "experts" would bring about permanent peace and prosperity by manipulating the money supply, dividing the "social dividend," and determining the "just price" of commodities. It was, in Aberhart's memorable phrase, as simple as electricity; it just had to be plugged in to transform the human condition.[17]

Aberhart's unique contribution was to build a victorious political party around Social Credit ideology—something that Douglas never knew how to do. Once in power, Aberhart learned, I think, that Social Credit was an impractical chimera, but he died before he had to face all the consequences of that insight. As his successor, Ernest Manning gradually turned Social Credit into a new doctrine that he called social conservatism.[18] Under that aegis, he cautiously used Alberta's new resource wealth to repay Alberta's debt, balance the public accounts, and fund a provincial welfare state that, for its time, was arguably the most expansive in Canada, even if it rejected socialist measures such as the introduction of Medicare in neighboring Saskatchewan. Yet to the end of his time in office, he retained much of the original Social Credit terminology, whose futuristic character struck a certain chord with Alberta voters.

Reform, led by Ernest Manning's son Preston, was far less millenarian than any of its forebears, but there were still eschatological echoes. Preston Manning was raised in an atmosphere of both fundamentalist eschatology and Social Credit theory. He was candid in his autobiography that he saw his mission in politics as a divine calling to reconcile Canadians through self-sacrifice, modelling himself upon the supreme self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ the divine Redeemer.[19] Indeed, he followed that model of self-sacrifice when, in the course of transforming the Reform Party into the Canadian Alliance, he called for a leadership race that cost him his job. Manning did not evoke future utopias, either sacred or secular, but his political rhetoric was surprisingly futuristic for someone typecast as a conservative. He entitled his book *The New Canada*, and he frequently repeated that traditional concepts like left and right were already obsolete and would play no role in the politics of the twenty-first century. He

tried to position himself beyond ideology, evoking systemic changes and new paradigms that could only be dimly glimpsed at the present moment.[20]

The rampant millenarianism and futurism of western politics are undeniable facts, but their causes are a matter of speculation. Maybe the experience of opening up a vast new country fosters the feeling that almost anything is possible, that the old rules of politics need not apply forever. To be sure, the West has been largely settled since the early decades of the twentieth century; but a resource frontier continues to exist as virgin forests are still being cut and new deposits of coal, oil and gas, potash, and hard-rock minerals are being discovered and exploited. Although Reformers were conservative in their emphasis on property rights, free markets, and individual responsibility, their mood was as impatient and forward-looking as that of firebrand socialist organizers from the early days of the CCF. Anyone who attended both Reform and NDP meetings would have recognized that, whatever their ideological differences, the true believers of both parties exhibited frustration with present reality, confidence in abstract ideas, and eagerness to put them into practice— in other words, a thirst for fundamental solutions as opposed to modest, incremental changes.

A Peek into the Future

The course of western Canadian history has produced a distinctive political culture manifested in the repeated creation of new political parties. Ideologically, these parties may stand either on the left or right, but they all share three characteristics: suspicion of external control, rejection of Canada's federal parliamentary system, and a thirst for fundamental solutions. Political cultures, once established, tend to be self-perpetuating and can last for a very long time, certainly past the original conditions under which they were formed. One need only recall the remarkable fact that the dividing line between Catholic and Protestant in central Europe is roughly the same as the boundary of the Roman Empire to see how long cultural influences can endure. Canada, to be sure, has more geography and less history than central Europe. Nonetheless, it is fair to expect the distinctive western Canadian political culture to last, if not a thousand years, at least a few decades more.

Having said that, let us retreat from a millennial timeframe to the events of the last three years. For Preston Manning, the Reform Party was always supposed to be a vehicle, not just of representing western concerns,

but also of winning a national election and forming a government. After failing in that objective in 1993 and 1997, he decided to transform the party into something larger. In the spring of 1998, therefore, he announced the United Alternative movement, which led over the course of two years to the creation of a new party, the Canadian Alliance, which has absorbed the Reform Party of Canada.[21]

The original hope of the United Alternative project was to get together in some way with the federal Progressive Conservative Party, either through amalgamation into a single party, or a formal coalition of distinct parties, or tactical cooperation to avoid vote-splitting at the local level. The leadership of the Progressive Conservatives rejected all offers of cooperation, but the United Alternative was able to reach a modus vivendi with many individual Conservatives, including some quite prominent and influential ones, who had become disillusioned with their own leadership. A crucial achievement was to obtain the explicit support of Alberta's premier Ralph Klein, and the tacit endorsement of Ontario's Premier Mike Harris, for the creation of a new and broader party. Numerous Conservatives from these two provinces, who had hitherto remained loyal to the federal party, then went over to the United Alternative and ultimately to the Canadian Alliance. There are, of course, other new elements in the Alliance, including people whose provincial vote would go to the Liberal Party in British Columbia, the Saskatchewan Party in Saskatchewan, and the Action Démocratique in Quebec. Nonetheless, the most important accomplishment was to bring in the provincial Conservatives.

Another crucial development was that Stockwell Day, formerly the provincial Treasurer of Alberta, won the new party's leadership contest.[22] If Mr. Manning had won, the Canadian Alliance would have seemed like the Reform Party under a new name; but with a new leader it had a genuine chance of creating a new image and attracting new supporters. Early indications suggested that some progress has been made. Several polls taken in July and August 2000 measured national support for the Canadian Alliance at between 20 percent and 25 percent. This may not sound like much to those accustomed to the two-party politics of the United States, and indeed it was still far behind the governing Liberals, whose support hovered around 45 percent. It was, however, a significant step above the support of the Reform Party, which was usually measured at 10 to 15 percent between elections.

In the federal election of 2000, however, the Canadian Alliance did not live up to its buoyant expectations. It garnered 25 percent of the popu-

lar—substantially better than the Reform Party had ever done, but still far from becoming a truly national party with a chance of forming a government. Of its sixty-six seats, sixty-four were in the West, two in Ontario, and none further east. It seemed that the Canadian Alliance had become a bigger and better Reform Party, but not something qualitatively different.

The Canadian Alliance still hopes to gather enough support across Canada that one could realistically talk about winning an election and forming a government. If this happened, it would be both a triumph and a test for western regionalism. Western elements are still dominant within the Alliance; but if it continues to grow, there will be ever more members, workers, donors, and voters from Ontario, Quebec, and the Atlantic Provinces. That is as it should be, for no party in Canada can win a national election and govern the country if its strength is limited to one region. But the success of the project, if it turns out to be successful, will impose many compromises upon the westerners who originally founded the Reform Party.

The Reform Party survived many failures. The ultimate test for Canadian Alliance will be whether it can survive success. Will the special features of western politics assert themselves again at some point in the future, leading to formation of other breakaway movements and new parties? The history of western politics suggests that the answer to that question is Yes, but there are some additional considerations relating to the province of Alberta that point towards an answer of No.[23]

For the last eighty years, Albertans have opposed the existing system of political parties. The two consistent objectives, pursued in tandem, have been, first, to create a new provincial party independent of the old parties dominating the rest of Canada; and, second, to create a new federal party in which Alberta's interests would receive higher priority.

The template was struck after World War One. In the provincial election of 1920, the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) entered politics and won a majority, while in the federal election of 1921 the loosely allied Progressives swept ten of twelve federal seats in Alberta as part of winning sixty-five seats overall in Canada. When the Progressives went into decline, elements within the UFA took the initiative to form another new party, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, at a conference held in Calgary in 1932.

In 1935, the Social Credit League, headed by William Aberhart, took power provincially. After winning the provincial election, Aberhart

immediately threw himself into the federal election that same year, lead-
ing his party to victory in fifteen of seventeen seats in Alberta and two in
Saskatchewan. In the 1940 election, Aberhart allied Social Credit with
W.D. Herridge's New Democracy movement in another unsuccessful at-
tempt to create a powerful new federal party.[24]

Ernest Manning, Aberhart's successor as premier of Alberta, also
wanted a federal party. After Social Credit lost all its federal seats in the
Diefenbaker sweep of 1958, Manning personally recruited Robert Thomp-
son to resuscitate the National Social Credit Party and lent his support
to Thompson's alliance with Real Caouette's Ralliement des Créditistes
in Quebec.[25] When Thompson and Caouette failed to achieve major-party
status, Ernest Manning and his son Preston wrote their famous 1967 book
Political Realignment, proposing a merger of the Progressive Conservative
and Social Credit Parties.[26]

The one great deviation from this pattern of attempted realignment
occurred during the era of Peter Lougheed. Instead of forming a new party,
Mr. Lougheed revived the moribund Progressive Conservatives as a pro-
vincial party; and he worked closely with the federal Progressive
Conservatives, especially after his former assistant, Joe Clark, went on to
become federal leader. Together they opposed such Liberal initiatives as
the National Energy Program and the unilateral patriation of the consti-
tution.

When Brian Mulroney came to power in 1984, Lougheed's strategy
seemed vindicated. Alberta appeared to have gained a position of crucial
influence, not by creating new parties but by participating in an old one.
Yet the vindication proved short-lived. By 1987, many Albertans were
so dissatisfied with the Mulroney government that they began to follow
Preston Manning into yet another new movement, the Reform Party of
Canada; and in the early 1990s, the provincial Progressive Conservatives,
led by Mr. Lougheed's successor, Don Getty, cut all their official ties to
the federal PCs.

Many prominent PCs—including Ralph Klein, Mr. Getty's succes-
sor as premier—continued to support the federal party, but they could not
influence their followers, and more than half of Alberta's voters cast their
ballots for Reform in 1993 and 1997. Viewed in this historical perspec-
tive, Premier Klein's decision to support the United Alternative, join the
Canadian Alliance, and back Stockwell Day's leadership bid symbolized
a return to Alberta's grand strategy of seeking to realign federal politics
by creating a new party in which Alberta would play a key role.

The consistent element in this grand strategy is the quest for re-alignment, while the variable part is the choice of allies. Alberta has tried alliances with Anglophone farmers and organized labor (the Progressives) as well as conservative Quebec Catholics (Social Credit). The Canadian Alliance is based on rural and suburban voters in the "have" provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, and (wishfully) Ontario. That is enough to make it the Official Opposition, but not enough to win a federal election. If Mr. Day is to become prime minis-ter, he will have to successfully woo at least one more major bloc of voters, such as socially conservative Roman Catholics or Asian im-migrants (both hitherto wedded to the Liberals), or Francophones in Quebec who might be more interested in obtaining decentralization than in continuing to support the Bloc Québécois.

The Canadian Alliance in power would represent the fulfillment of Alberta's grand strategy—forming a new national governing coalition in which Alberta would hold a pivotal position. *Realpolitik* should then dic-tate that Albertans continue to support it rather than declare it to be "Ottawashed" and start to oppose it through formation of new parties. This is particularly important because it is Alberta's chronic dissatisfaction with federal politics that has been the main source of dynamism for the new western parties and movements that emerged during the twentieth cen-tury. If Alberta was satisfied with a federal government, there would probably not be enough energy in the rest of the West to launch a viable new movement.

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