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CULTURE, COMMUNICATION "TECHNOLOGY"
AND CANADIAN POLICY

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Because life and change is a process of contradictions in everything and person, it is necessary, if we want to have any identity, to be aware of what are the principal contradictions in each set of relationships. In Canada our principal contradiction in relation to our identity is that of the interests of the Canadian people vs. transnational capital. In the global society, the principal contradiction is between people, especially in the Third World, and transnational capital. In both, transnational capital is now the dominant aspect of the contradictions. For Canada the two are linked by the fact that we are simultaneously the most dependent on the United States of all capitalistically advanced countries, and an American neocolony among many Third World neocolonies.

My argument is that we serve our struggle for autonomy best by cultivating our own values. But we should recognize that our politico-economic structures and policies will either weaken or strengthen us in that struggle for autonomy. These structures and policies include the laws and practices of our governments, our private sector, the arts, and our personal and informal associational activities. Obviously, in this paper, it is impossible to analyze all the relevant relationships. But I will try to sharpen a few analytical tools, and single out some salient policy directions and alternatives.

"Culture" is one of a cluster of related concepts including: "art," "ideology" and "consciousness." Most basic of these is consciousness. It is "awareness of the realities of existence. Without it there can be no knowledge," as the Buddhists tell us. And consciousness is not only individual, it is collective, where consensual validation creates group consciousness and confirms a view of reality for a people.

One dimension of consciousness is ideology, which as Tran Van Dinh says, "...is a concentrated, dynamic, directional manifestation of consciousness." For our indigenous people, ideology is the "Great Spirit." And since civilization brought us social classes, ideology is the system of values with which people either support or attack a particular class-dominated social system. Here is an example of an ideology:

1. Personal possessiveness is essential to human beings. Private property is essential in a political system.
2. The main goal of life is to consume commodities and services.
3. Freedom and conflict are individual, not collective matters.
4. Commodities and services do not educate us or form our values; they just contribute to our comfort and pleasure.
5. A conflict of ideas need not be resolved. Every person to his/her own taste.
6. It is possible and desirable to be neutral or objective while working in the mass media, educational institutions, government and business. It is not, as Mark Twain put it, a question of "Who are you neutral against?"
7. And most important, "You can't change human nature." The status quo is timeless.

To what politico-economic system does this ideology belong? Or, reverse those seven propositions and you have most of the elements of another ideology. This one is survival-oriented in ecological terms for us, human animals, on a planet which we are now in imminent danger of

destroying through nuclear war, and through the economic systems which make nuclear war probable and preparation for it profitable.

Where does ideology come from? Not from outer space, or great men or great ideas--but from human experience in trying to solve human problems. It can be a powerful material force, as Marcos, Duvalier, and the Shah of Iran learned.

The usual definition of "culture" in civilized societies is those arts which the ruling classes have favored. By art, I mean as the Encyclopedia Britannica, puts it: "the general principles of any branch of learning or any developed craft." Art then spans every craft from poetry to plumbing. Validating this broad span of crafts is the fact that under Western patent law, a patent is granted for improvement in the "state of the art," whatever it may deal with. But "culture" is often synonymous with "high culture." In the past four centuries in Europe, "high culture" became the "fine arts" (painting, sculpture, music, poetry, and architecture, with dance, theatre, opera and prose literature sometimes added). These were the survivors in a process of debates and state-sponsorship of schools in which all the arts of ancient and modern times were contenders. Thus, fencing, alchemy, astronomy, astrology, transportation and agricultural arts were winnowed out in the process.

Three ideological propositions came to permeate our fine arts and later other arts (e.g., sports): (1) People and everything were defined as natural systems which worked by analogy to machines; hence technique became central, and, being defined as natural, technique was value-free. (2) The arts, being focussed on technique should be apolitical; hence art-for-art's sake. Technique, reduced to its rudimentary structures, provided a boundless vista for projecting feeling and "sensibilities" by art "consumers." (3) Individualism, private property, competition and market organization became essential to the arts. Competition bred "geniuses" and the monopoly power of

the "star system." The commodification of the product of artists separated them from their consumers by markets. Aesthetics became less (if ever) a set of principles used by creative artists and more a buyers' guide by which elite patrons rationalized their tastes. The illusion that the values of the high culture were timeless and universal make them what national governments consider "a potent propaganda weapon of the Cold War" (Baumol & Bowen, 1966). Whatever the motives of the creative artist, high culture is loaded with ideological, that is, political consequences.

Down to the last quarter of the 19th century, "high culture" co-existed with the arts (in the general sense of that term) of the lower classes. Lower class arts have several names: "folk," "ethnic," "indigenous," "traditional," etc. There was direct borrowing between artists working in "high culture" and "lower class" art. And, in contrast with the present, the arts--fine and all the rest--had not been incorporated into mass production of culture.

From the advent of Renaissance-based "high culture" the various arts have been regarded by the ascending ruling classes as areas separate from each other, even to be treated as discrete spatially. Some European scholars have recently suggested that culture does not define a subject area of art as we have been accustomed to believe, but rather is an aspect of all areas. Culture, they say, is the aspect of enjoying the effort to meet needs. Moreover, they insist this creative effort to meet needs must be the immediate end itself. That is to say that the end to be pursued must be defined by the groups and persons who make that creative, enjoyable effort. To make the effort because of the artists' dependency is to turn it into a form of slavery (Haug, 1983, pp. 95-100). The proposition that culture is the enjoyment of the effort to meet individually and socially determined needs helps us understand workers' resistance to scientific management and automation, and also the creativity in national liberation struggles as in Nicaragua, Mozambique, etc.

I turn now to mass culture, in which all the arts--fine and other--are applied in increasingly scientific ways to the mass production and mass marketing of consumer goods and services. Consciousness Industry (hereafter CI) forms this output with the unique imprint of the directing set of institutions: the giant transnational corporations--the Fortune 400 (hereafter TNCs). I need not remind you that Canada's economy is dominated by branch plants of these TNCs and has been for many decades. The dominance of giant monopolistic corporations in the U.S. is greatest in the most dynamic sector: communications, transportation and public utilities. Here, one-fourth of one percent of the firms hold 88% of total assets in that sector. Next most monopolized is manufacturing, where one-fifth of one percent of the firms hold 73% of sector assets (Herman, 1981, p. 189).

How does CI relate to consciousness and ideology? Consider the mass media which are its leading edge. The news in the media is substantially managed--through corporate and government press releases, off-the-record briefings, the timing of government actions to manipulate public opinion (a bombing raid on Libya is timed for the eve of a Congressional vote on Reagan's Nicaragua policy) and through TV and radio addresses by our leaders. CI also produces our consumer goods and services. These products in different ways are teaching machines, forming our consciousness. Their appeal to sensuous, personal and technical pleasure pervades our marketing system. With their packaging and point of sale advertising, these products cultivate individual possessiveness and associated ideology.

The principal product of the advertiser-supported mass media is audience-power. Though there had been newspapers and periodicals before the last quarter of the 19th century, there were no mass circulation media until CI created them then. The mass media produce audience power and advertisers buy it because it does an essential service for CI. It performs the mass distribution of mass produced commodities.

The results of audience-power at work are, first, that audience members market consumer goods and services to themselves. Second, they learn to vote for one candidate or public issue rather than another in the political arena. The difference between the first and second result gets increasingly blurred as political candidates and issues are marketed with the same techniques as other commodities. And, third, audience members learn, generation after generation, belief in the ideology of capitalism. Just how audience members reach these results is very unclear and needs research -- research which economists (neoclassical and Marxist) have not yet begun to do. Here I can only say that audience-power is a very peculiar kind of commodity. When labour-power is produced and used in what is usually regarded as production and trade, the worker gets paid something for his/her labour. The exceptions where productive work is done and is not paid for are: audience-power at work -- probably more than half by women, and work performed in and around the home, again mostly by women. (An oral footnote here: the relevance of understanding audience-power to the women's movement seems so great that I wonder why the women's movement has failed to take it seriously.) And the third exception is slavery.

What is the relation of the advertising to the ostensibly non-advertising component of the mass media? It is no secret that the policy of media enterprises on the so-called program or news content is a prime concern of advertisers. Media enterprises frame their broadcast "program" policy or print "editorial" policy to produce the kind of audiences (as measured by their demographics and psychographics) which they know advertisers will want to buy. Indeed in the 1950s and 1960s major TNCs told the media and writers:

"In general, the moral code of the characters in our dramas will be more or less synonymous with the moral code of the bulk of the American middle-class....There will be no material that may give offense either directly or by inference to any...organizations, institutions, residents of any state or section of the country, or a commercial organization of any

sort....There will be no material for or against sharply drawn national or regional controversial issues....Where it seems fitting, the characters should reflect recognition and acceptance of the world situation in their thoughts and actions, although in dealing with war, our writers should minimize the 'horror' aspects....Men in uniform shall not be cast as heavy villains or portrayed as engaging in any criminal activity. There will be no material on any of our programs which could in any way further the concept of business as cold, ruthless and lacking all sentiment or spiritual motivation."

("Madison Avenue's Program Taboos," Variety, 26 October 1960). Since then the guidance has been less strident but similar. And as Applebaum-Hébert said:

"Without any direct intervention by sponsors in production or programming decisions, producers make programs and broadcasters schedule them with a view to achieving the real purpose of commercial broadcasting--namely, the delivery of large audiences to paying advertisers." (p. 278)

The conclusion is inescapable that there is no real separation of the advertisements from what lies between them. The commercial mass media product is entirely advertising.

Some have criticized my Dependency Road analysis as being economic determinism, suggesting that it shows CI as irresistible. On the contrary, it is analysis of a dialectical struggle in which CI is resisted by people and their older institutions. The dominant side today is that of capital, working through CI. But while alienated from each other by the ruling ideology, people daily resist CI as individuals, as members of families, labour unions, churches, political parties, and government (most often local government, as when nuclear free zones are proclaimed). My analysis argues that this popular resistance has the potential to take back the hegemony which CI seized over the past century. But in reality CI now is clearly the stronger side.

It helps to grasp the size of the reorganization of policies and structures which is required to ask who are the players in CI? The

leading edge is the advertising/market research agencies plus the mass media. Backing them are the educational system, photography and commercial art. In the next rank are professional and pre-professional sports, comic books, parlor games (such as Monopoly), recorded music, tourism, restaurants, hotels and transportation. In the next rank are the other consumer goods industries--the Homogenous Package Goods (soap, soft drinks, etc.) and the consumer durables (such as household appliances, motorcycles and automobiles). As backdrop for CI are the industries which bind together the whole Monopoly Capitalist system: the Military-Industrial Complex, telecommunications, banks, insurance, finance, real estate, the gambling industry, and crime, both organized and unorganized.

How are the arts related to CI? Dialectically. Suppose a TNC decides to create a fast food chain. It employs people from dozens of arts, ranging from architects to clowns (to publicize the chain near elementary schools). All of these artists are constrained by policies scientifically determined to be most efficient -- productive of highest profit. And while the individual artist working in mass culture production may struggle against capital, the latter is the principal aspect of the contradiction.

Where does Canada's national policy stand on culture and "technology?" The extent to which a country has autonomy may be judged by whether it practices a common body of culture as expressed in its values, artifacts, institutions and policies. I call this the cultural realism of a country. It gives coherence to the peoples' consciousness. When a country's cultural realism is highly developed (as in Sweden), it doesn't need royal commissions to assert the need for cultural identity: it already has it. In Canada, frequent royal commissions and government policy statements keep telling us that we need to do certain things in order to establish our elusive identity. Why don't we have an identity?

Our population contains streams of cultural realism from many sources: the conquered cultures of our indigenous peoples; the dominant elite culture from Britain; the Francophone culture from France; substantial (and largely folk) streams from other European countries, from Asia, and from Central and South America. They could have been, and still could be, nurtured together to create a unique and vibrant Canadian cultural identity. To accomplish this would require a conscious national policy.

A variety of measures, which I call collectively a "cultural screen" would have been used to protect a small country's cultural realism. Sometimes a language barrier is its anchor, as in Finland and Quebec. To counter the homogenizing effect of anglophone mass culture, much more would be needed. A wide range of protective measures to shield pursuit of unique Canadian values by writers, performers, and producers has been available for the print media, TV, and motion pictures, but never implemented (Smythe, 1981, pp. 241, 133-135). Why not?

In order for a country to develop materially, capital is needed for producer's goods. Capital can be obtained in two ways. The most culturally secure source is savings from current income, enforced on its citizens and their domestically owned corporations. Or, it can be obtained from external sources, and again there are two ways. Capital can be borrowed from abroad, and when the loans are repaid, cultural security is possible. Alternatively, foreign capital can be invited to come in and to own the enterprises it builds. This is the route taken by the Canadian ruling class and the result is that our economic and political institutions have policies determined by the TNCs. As Pierre Trudeau said in 1968, Canada is no more independent of the United States than is Poland of the Soviet Union. We both have 10% independence (Smythe, 1981, pp. 91-102).

After our dependency on foreign owners was established, the Aird Royal Commission in 1928 was the first of a long line of commissions to

search for our non-existent national identity and propose measures to protect its remaining fragments. These commissions were composed of well-intentioned people. But they focussed their concern unduly on the politically safe area of high culture, and tended to ignore both the threat to Canadian autonomy posed by CI and the track record of other medium-sized countries which have successfully used cultural screens to protect their cultural autonomy. The history of the CBC validates this analysis. Following the Aird Commission's recommendation of a publicly owned broadcasting system, the struggle led by the Canadian Radio League from 1930 to 1936 came closer than any other Canadian movement to erecting a pivotal element in a Canadian cultural screen against the onslaught of CI. Canada should be proud of it and of the CBC down to the end of World War II. Then, with the advent of TV and private cable systems, the roof fell in. What was the flaw in the movement for the CBC?

Dr. Augustin Frigon was a member of the Aird Commission and he argued that "...you cannot mix up the interests of the man who wants to make money out of the equipment and the man who wants to render service to his country." (Smythe, 1981, p. 165). Our policy was to try to mix those contradictory interests. While seemingly facing takeover by the public system, the private broadcasters never gave up. Aided by the fact that the CBC was forced to seek advertising support, CI appears to have won their objective to have a commercially-oriented Canadian broadcasting system.

Canada has not taken the necessary steps to achieve cultural autonomy because we lack the political will to do so, with the costs it would entail. We have a severe if not terminal case of political schizophrenia! I offer a recent example. The Applebaum-Hébert report (1982) made eleven proposals designed to inhibit commercial radio-TV from further damaging Canadian cultural autonomy. Prominent on that list was a proposed new Broadcasting Act. That Act would establish total political independence for the CRTC from the end-runs from the

private sector to the government which has eroded the CBC and CRTC. It would mandate the CRTC to do what it already had the responsibility to do: Enforce licence obligations by private stations to serve the public. The new Act would direct the CRTC to require private stations to allocate substantial proportions of time and gross revenues to new Canadian productions; and to require cable operators to increase the proportions of Canadian programs on their several tiers; to require cable operators to commit significant proportions of gross revenues to facilities and programming of community channels, etc. That was in 1982.

But the CRTC's policy and actions reveal it as an agency devoted to advancing the interests of CI and to opposing steps like those proposed by Applebaum-Hebert. Under its statute, the CRTC is supposed to take an arm's length relationship with both the private businesses and the CBC to which it grants licences and the groups representing the public interest. A review of the CRTC's posture and actions since 1984, however, shows it as maximally identified with the private sector and distanced from the latter groups. We are always told that the reason U.S. broadcast programs must be imported is that Canadian broadcasters cannot afford to produce programs to compete with them. André Bureau, as chair of the CRTC, told the Montreal Association of Financial Analysts recently that by comparison with other sectors of the economy, it did "extremely well." The average return on investment of private TV broadcasters, year after year, is about 50% per annum. For private radio, the figure is about 40%, and for cable more than 20%. As Bureau told the financial analysts, "Broadcasting and telecommunications must be seen and treated as industries like any other and not simply as cultural forces or vehicles."

Shortly after moving to the chair of the CRTC from the private sector, Bureau told the Broadcast Executives Society, in March 1984, that the CRTC's first priority is the "financial viability of proposed undertakings," in other words, protecting and increasing its

profitability. Accordingly, it recently proposed regulations which would cut out any limits on advertising on private AM broadcasting, and loosen limits on FM advertising (March 19, 1986). Its second priority is to take a "supervisory," not a regulatory approach to the industry, following Washington's lead where it is called "deregulation."

Priority 3 is "flexibility in aiding the industry to respond to changes in technology, the economy, or public taste." Lest anyone suspect that an arm's length relationship still exists, Bureau assured the cable industry, "The Commission has been swift to act when structural changes have been necessary...changes which the market told us were needed." Indeed, he said, "...we are moving to respond as quickly as possible to your concerns; often even before you formally make them known to us." (April 9, 1985).

Priority 4, Bureau calls "strategic planning" by the private **broadcasting industry.** Here is where the CRTC deals with the issues involved in Canadian content rules. "Strategic planning" means that the CRTC has invited the industry to formulate an agenda of proposals which are then informally discussed, jointly with the CRTC. Out of such meetings come CRTC proposals for formal hearings. Bureau describes these sessions as "executive brainstorming." To further assure the licensees they could trust the CRTC, they were told, "Insisting on knowing where the industry wants to go will also help us determine our own priorities and get the structures in place...."

It would be wrong to think that the CRTC is totally indifferent to the public, simply because its first four priorities relate to the welfare of the industry. The concerns of the public are the fifth and last priority of the CRTC. However, the agency's posture toward them is passive and formal. Mr. Bureau speaks of "concerns coming from the public" and underlines the words. There is no mention of "brainstorming," informally, with Canada's creative artists (unions or associations) in connection with Canadian content. And, as if in an

afterthought, Bureau warns the industry: "However, the objectives and solutions we have described cannot be examined in a vacuum. Political realities and government objectives must also be brought to bear." He confirms the CRTC role by saying, "The challenge for all of us is indeed significant, but with mutual understanding and concentrated planning, it is certain that your successes will be maximized." (Cable Association, April 9, 1983).

What about the CBC? In this context the CRTC's relationship to the CBC seems to be at arm's length in contrast to its cozy relationship to the private sector. To discuss the CBC's present and potential cultural role would require another speech.

The split between our Canadian need for cultural autonomy, and our policy and actions which move us to greater dependence on foreign TNCs, is currently bound up with the illusion that "high technology" and the law of comparative advantage will magically confer autonomy on us. In fact they will have the opposite effect. The establishment uses the term "technology" as a talisman as if it referred to some autonomous, exogenous force to which people must submit. While this determinist notion, "technology," is a myth, there is a kernel of fact buried in it, namely, the art of designing, producing and using tools and machines. The present notion of "technology" indeed originated with the TNCs, which in the last quarter of the 19th century combined capital, science, engineering, bureaucracy, ideology and propaganda to create a one-word slogan more compelling than the terms modern industrialism, or monopoly capitalism.

Two Canadians (Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan), helped popularize the myth. Mesthene, of Harvard's Program on Technology, defines technology as "...the organization of knowledge for practical purposes...." (Teich, p. 152). Federal and provincial government policies push "high technology" as an export to help us to autonomy. This is a delusion which assumes that Canada can compete with the

U.S, Japan, etc. in the world market. This delusion rests on the supposed advantages of free trade, or the law of comparative advantage. According to it, specialization according to the relative cost of using resources in every country results in the most efficient division of labour possible for world-wide markets. The key word is "efficient," meaning that it results in the largest possible profit. But profit for whom? Profit for those enterprises and countries which are major players in world markets. But when Britain was accumulating the capital and other resources of the development of the factory system (from the 15th to mid-19th centuries), it practised the opposite of free trade. Its Mercantile regulations were an effective screen to protect its cultural realism. Only when Britain's economic and military might gave it monopoly power for its basic industries in the world market, about the middle of the 19th century, did it talk about the law of comparative advantage. And weaker countries (such as Britain before then, and Japan until recently) always defy it and erect economic and cultural screens if they hope to reach autonomy.

Also closely related to the myth of "technology" is the "Information Age" slogan. This refers to the application of sophisticated electronics, arts and scientific management to both the production and consumption "fronts" on which people confront capitalism. Through it, information is now commodified in a new way: As a resource input into the production system. Information age policy follows Charles Babbage's 1832 dictum for the expansion of capital, the sense of which was: Increase profits by breaking down traditional jobs and substituting machines for their simpler, repetitive functions. Today, the TNC's practice of it has two targets. On the production front, it is to substitute machines for people. It does this by eliminating paperwork and workers up to and including the level of executives (and their staffs) at branch plant levels. On this front complete automation (including robotic factories) is the goal. On the consumption front, the target is to create a new market structure resting on new equipment in the home--to encompass "entertainment" plus banking, home security,

etc. On both fronts its effects are to increase the wealth of the few at the cost of the many.

But this Information Age offensive involves a dialectical process of struggle. On the production front, people resist through unions, political parties, spontaneous demonstrations and sabotage. And on the consumption front, the drive of monopoly capitalism collides with the results of its successes on the production front. With unemployment, lower incomes and inflation in the cost of living, middle class, white collar and blue collar people simply do not have the buying power to buy the "wired city" electronic goodies. Thus in the United States in the six months ending in March 1986, videotex service was stopped by the Knight Ridder firm to 20,000 subscribers, the Times-Mirror to 3,000, and Central terminated 1,000. Why? The stated reason was lack of consumer interest. Simultaneously sales of home computers have fallen.

Organizationally, the "Information Age" is causing mergers in industry and trade sectors, with lay-offs of redundant executives and professionals. It means further convergence of giant TNCs which previously worked different markets, e.g., telecommunications by the Bell companies and computers by IBM, et al. Now they are rivals in the same market; the teleprocessing of information, and further mergers (with resulting lay-offs) will come. A simultaneous merger process in advertising agencies signals the effect of the Information Age on CI. Already in 1985 the ten largest U.S. agencies with about \$27 billion in advertising billings accounted for nearly 17% of the world total billings of \$162 billion. On May 12, 1986, Time reported that "Merger mania is turning Madison Avenue agencies into mega-shops with clients in almost every business and bases in every world market" with three huge mergers in the preceding month. One of these, combining BBDO International with two smaller agencies, produced a super-agency with nearly \$5 billion in billings--the world's largest agency. Among the reasons given is "...the increasing international needs of advertisers.

As U.S. businesses seek a stronger foothold in foreign markets, the agencies are under pressure to offer these clients full-service global marketing operations." At the same time, mergers among investment bankers and stock brokerage firms presage further TNC integration which is currently diminishing the scope for Canadian-owned financial institutions.

A spin-off from the slogan of free trade, which is particularly relevant to Canada's communication and cultural policy is the "free flow of information." Like its cousin, "free trade," the free flow of information policy assumes that in the real world there is substantially perfect competition. Because monopoly is more common than competition in both trade and information exchange, both slogans are used by the dominant empire to justify its market control. In the peak period of British empire, the globe-circling Cables and Wireless submarine cables linked with the Reuters News Agency and the similar partnership between French cables and the Havas News Agency to provide a "free flow of information" essential to the hegemony in global markets enjoyed by their empires. Shortly before World War II, the head of the Associated Press and the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission attacked those monopolies of the flow of information. As Kent Cooper, President of the AP, put it:

"In precluding the Associated Press from disseminating news abroad, Reuters and Havas served three purposes: (1) they kept out Associated Press competition; (2) they were free to present American news disparagingly to the United States if they presented it at all; (3) they could present news of their own countries most favorably and without it being contradicted....This was done by reporting great advances at home in English and French civilizations, the benefits of which would, of course, be bestowed on the world." (Schiller, 1976, p. 27).

These are among the arguments that Third World countries today use against U.S. dominated free flow of information. Put simply, free trade and free flow of information are like one-way streets down which you are free to drive bulldozers, if you have them.

What can Canada do in this situation? About the end of World War I, when Canada was emerging from British colonial status, it could have played off British as against U.S. influence to achieve a modest national autonomy, analogous to that of Finland. Our ruling class, however, from the beginning, has preferred to manage Canada as compradors, serving colonial masters. Therefore, it increasingly shifted our dependency to the United States after 1918. What are our broad alternatives, culturally, politically, economically? Looked at logically, there seem to be two viable alternatives, though they are starkly different. The first is to negotiate with the United States to accept ten or twelve new states into its Union. Then, like California or Oregon, we could continue to have our distinctive flags, and the limited autonomy enjoyed by the several states. If effected, this union would offer material advantages, over time. It is a realistic if unattractive option.

The other course would be to make the effort necessary to gain and maintain a modest but substantial Canadian autonomy in cultural, political and economic terms. This alternative might have as a first step the analysis of the nature of our predicament and possible policies to cure it. Would it be possible that people in the cultural/communication area might take the initiative? We might explore and develop the enormous potential of our diverse peoples for enjoying the act of meeting our needs of all kinds. Would Canadians then make the effort needed to get a working consensus on strategies and tactics to be pursued? Even this preliminary stage might free us from the terrible inferiority complex which prevents us from being self-reliant and self-sufficient -- a complex which will only be cured when the prospect of being a star in Hollywood or New York (or Harvard or Chicago) no longer hypnotizes us.

If such a cultural program were to be viable, it would have to be based on a progressive withdrawal from our dependence on the U.S. economic system. We would have to abandon the fantasy that our

success depends on our subsidized private sector's entries in the "high technology" sweepstakes in competition with the U.S., Japan, et al. We would have to buy out our present branch plants, progressively. We would control our own industries, paying for them through our own savings or through borrowing abroad, but never through allowing new direct foreign investment. We would take back control of our own military, as well as our own communications institutions. We would withdraw from Norad and NATO and pursue a foreign policy designed by Canadians for Canadians. We would preserve and extend our public sector and its expenditures would serve Canadian interests. In short, we would adjust our national goals to realistic possibilities. But it would be naive and foolhardy to begin such a planning process, (much less to put it into effect), without facing the fact that it would cost us heavily in material standards of life during the transition stage, and perhaps later.

What is involved is a basic redirection of government and private sector policy. It would require reorganization of structures which we have come to take for granted over the past century. While in principle realistic, this alternative would be immensely difficult. Of course, the development of public opinion to support such a social reorganization is a necessary basis for accomplishing it. The policy of Canadian mass media has served CI to bring us to our present politically schizophrenic condition. And I wonder how the ideology of our mass media now relates to a policy which would make Canada modestly autonomous. For example, the leading editorial in the Vancouver Sun, (June 3, 1986), "Shooting oneself in the head," criticized the Mulroney government's use of a tariff on books and periodicals as being like "committing intellectual suicide." I am not now concerned with the merits or demerits of that tariff, but with the ideological position from which the editorial made this attack, namely: "It is not only economic nationalism, it represents cultural nationalism at its worst and most damaging." I think we should face that ideological position squarely. How can Canada attain substantial autonomy if our

mass media propaganda treats the cause of economic nationalism and cultural nationalism as "stupid" and "suicidal?"

Why is the second alternative so drastic, calling for deep structural reorganization of our ways of living and our means of communication? Why don't we have a third option: to let the status quo continue and work to reform it? Because the record of the past century shows that piecemeal reform doesn't achieve its professed objectives. Because if the status quo continues, the public sector will continue to be eroded by the market. Because the gravitational pull of the U.S. will pull us closer and closer to it.

A continuation of royal commissions, as those from Massey-Levesque to Applebaum-Hébert show, fail to confront the whole scope of Canada's dependence on the U.S., including our complicity in the U.S. Military-Industrial Complex. By and large such royal commissions offer a show-and-tell opportunity for our creative artists. Their testimony is tidily summarized; then well-meaning, minor recommendations are based on them. The usual result is titillation of our artistic sensibilities, and promises without performance to back them up. In fact, there is no static status quo. If we try to maintain it, Canada's cultural identity will remain an unapproached goal. We will increasingly exhibit the symptoms of political schizophrenia: talking pretty idealism, and practicing a less worthy materialism. We know that fence-straddling is not a long-term viable option. Indeed, fence-straddling is no more healthy for a country than it is for an individual: it damages the means of production and reproduction of both.

I am convinced that the cure for our political schizophrenia is to be found in either alternative one or two. As between them I would struggle for the pro-autonomy alternative. It may be too late for the autonomy course to succeed. But it is certainly not too late to try to make it work.

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