



Free Trade Ensuring a Strong Canadian Culture

--- By Dr. Walter Block

(Dr. Block is senior economist at the Vancouver-based Fraser Institute.)

It is agreed on all sides that a policy of free trade with the U.S. will be to the economic advantage of Canadians. The ability to sell to a market of 250 million people instead of a mere 25 million, the opportunities to enhance the continental division of labor, and to specialize in the things we do best, while trading with the Americans for products which embody their particular excellences, guarantee an economic improvement for this country.

All this is so blatantly obvious that even the opponents of reduced trade barriers concede that Canada has to pay a price, a real price, for the status quo.

But the Canadian nationalists have an arrow in their quiver which is even more powerful than a fine calculation of dollars and cents advantages and disadvantages. They claim that closer commercial ties would put at risk our cherished political sovereignty. It is as if along with the cheap goods and services which will come flooding into Canada, there would be hidden platoons of U.S. soldiers, ready to pounce upon the RCMP and take over the country.

But when the argument is stated in this nuts and bolts manner, it is easy to see the nonsense it embodies. Ronald Reagan does not need free trade to take over Canada militarily. If he wanted to do so (a ludicrous proposition), he surely has the means at his disposal under the present regime of trade barriers.

With this argument in tatters, the nationalists have a second one to fall back upon. Free Trade may not mean an actual loss of political sovereignty, but it may lead to a loss of the Canadian soul. And what is the Canadian soul, you may well ask? It is to be found - you had better be sitting down when you read this - in the unique Canadian spirit or character as expressed by no less than the arts community of this country.

This, too, is ridiculous. For apart from a few hundred Canadian writers, painters, and musicians, etc. in this country who make it on their own, without subsidies from government, there are no artists in this country. The several thousands of people who line up at the Canada Council, Canadian Film Board, CBC and numerous other public troughs for grants are only welfare recipients whose "salaries" are a means of disguising the true reality. No doubt, some of these people could prosper in a free marketplace, but we'll never know for sure until the welter of government arts grants is ended.

Who says that only home grown art can express the culture of a nation? Mozart and Bach, the works of Shakespeare and Rembrandt were not composed in the true north, strong and free.

The U.S. is self-assured enough not to "protect" itself against foreign films, books, magazines, orchestras, ballet companies, etc.

To those who consent, no injustice is done

Canada will never attain any comparable level of artistic maturity and self-confidence if it continues to hide behind a system of subsidies for domestic "artists" and restrictions on the import of the products of those living abroad.

No, the way to save a national soul is to allow our artists to compete with foreigners for the allegiance of the Canadian public. Free trade - full free trade - can only hasten the coming of this glorious day. It is to be applauded on both pocket-book and artistic grounds.

SUNDAY SHOPPING AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS

--- By William Frampton

(Mr. Frampton is Freedom Party's Regional Chairman of Metro Toronto)

The position taken by the major churches supporting the Sunday closing laws is a matter of serious concern for us all. Considered objectively, this position is difficult to justify on either religious or humanitarian grounds.

Christians must not allow Caesar to rule the sabbath.

The fourth Commandment, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy," is very specific. Each of us is directed individually to observe the sabbath. However, this does not give us any spiritual authority to compel others to observe it. That is something only they can decide.

The eighth and tenth Commandments ("Thou shalt not steal" and "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbors' goods") implicitly support the institution of private property. Sunday closing laws violate fundamental principles of private property rights. Certain retailers are being told that, every Sunday, they will not be permitted to exercise their right to the peaceful use of their own property. Consequently, if one is true to these Commandments one cannot support such legislation.

The coming of Christ foretold "Peace on earth and goodwill toward men" (Luke 2:14). If we attempt to use the law to impose our values and choices upon others we are not observing a common pause day in the Christian sense. Many Muslim countries impose the same restrictions on

Fridays. Would Christians appreciate living under such restrictions if they were in the minority? If not, then they "should do unto others as they would have others do unto them".

Christ directed his followers to "Render therefore unto Caesar those things that are Caesar's and to God those things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). If retailers close on Sunday only because the law compels them to, it is clear that they are rendering obedience only to the state (Caesar) and not necessarily to God. This is obviously contrary to Christ's teaching. Christians must not allow Caesar to rule the sabbath.

Incredibly, some clerics have even attempted to justify Sunday closing laws on the grounds that "Our governments exist to serve the wishes of their constituents." This line of reasoning is false and dangerous. Who were Pontius Pilate's "constituents"? What were their wishes in 33 AD?

But what about the Christian "tradition" of having the sabbath as a common day of rest?

It is not entirely correct to say that Sundays have "traditionally" been a common rest day. This has been a convenience enjoyed only by some segments of the retail industry. Employees of theatres, restaurants, gas stations, gardening centres, etc. are examples of those who have different traditions.

No one would be forced to open if the present law was repealed. The fact that someone's competition is open does not force him to open as well. Those retailers who don't want the law changed

are unwilling to meet the demands of their customers. They recognize that this decision has a cost, but they want to make their neighbors and competitors share that cost. Stores that lose money on Sunday openings will simply stay closed.

... true obedience to God is only seen when it is offered voluntarily.

No doubt there are many families (Christian and non-Christian alike) who prefer to spend Sunday as a day of rest. However, there are also families who like to shop together and families who like to work together. There are also families who depend on the income they earn on Sundays. Families, like individuals, have different needs, preferences, and lifestyles. Freedom of choice accommodates everyone, and true "obedience" to God is only realized when it is offered voluntarily.

Governments should exist to protect the natural rights of all, not to grant

special privileges to favoured groups--- even Christians. If the church is to fulfill its role as an agency of good, it should not behave like just another special interest group. Such an image will alienate the public and thus impede the church's outreach efforts. The church should lead by example and moral suasion, not through legal coercion.

The Charter of Rights states that freedom of religion is a "fundamental freedom." The Retail Business Holidays Act flagrantly violates this freedom and discriminates against anyone --- Christian or non-Christian --- who does not worship on Sunday. Once each week, the law treats people like criminals for earning an honest living. This is a terrible injustice, but in December 1986 the Supreme Court ruled that this violation is "reasonable and justifiable."

This means that freedom of religion is not an absolute right in Canada, but can be taken away from us whenever some politician can invent a justification for doing so. Any law that violates freedom of religion should be condemned in the strongest possible terms from every pulpit in the country.

Films for the Rational Filmgoer.

--- By Marc Emery

(Mr. Emery is Action Director of the Freedom Party of Ontario)

There are many entertaining films around, but very few films have ever been made that feature reason, individual freedom, capitalism, and the importance of the rational individual as central themes.

Here is a review of a number of films that place reason and personal integrity in conflict with the forces of irrationality, evil philosophies, long odds, or a benign, but suffocating, collectivist apparatus.

Films not included are ones that have some characters or situations that represent major moral conflicts (ie. Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, Casablanca, Star Wars) but the film as a whole does not represent a philosophical struggle or does not do so in a consistent way. ("Feel the power of the force, Luke", while entertaining, is, let's face it, a call to mysticism, within a story of good/freedom vs. evil/oppression).

The reviewed films articulate the conflicts of reason vs. irrationality, integrity vs. corruption, right vs. wrong and are entertaining, well-told stories.

Films of Individual Integrity

The Man In The White Suit (1951) Directed by Alexander MacKendrick, Starring Alec Guinness and Joan Greenwood

Alec Guinness plays an inventor who develops the ultimate textile fibre; he can make clothes that are indestructible at a reasonable cost. Concerned only with producing the perfect product and having it distributed worldwide, Guinness is entirely oblivious to the politics generated by his discovery.

Predictably, the labour unions want his invention suppressed, at the prospect of seeing their jobs threatened (while they decry exploitation!) by a product that never needs replacing. They become so emotional they hunt Guinness down, perhaps to do him in.

But unions are not his only problem. Guinness refuses to deal with the factory's owners as well, recognizing that they too want his invention suppressed. The fraternity of industrial giants conspire to suppress his invention.

Ultimately, Guinness is locked up while both "labour" and "business" interests decide what they want done with him. Meanwhile, Guinness's girl-friend tests his resolve, and assured he is sticking to principle, helps him escape. The final resolution I'll leave for you to see.

Amidst this telling satire is some outstanding comedy, mostly about hypocrisy and double standards.

The film is simply outstanding and top-notch in every way.

Boomerang (1947) Directed by Elia Kazan, Starring Dana Andrews

Boomerang is a documentary-style drama about a district attorney's task of

prosecuting a man accused of murdering a priest. The D.A., played by Dana Andrews, discovers, through a meticulous investigation of the facts, that the accused is innocent, and that the murderer is still loose. Revealing this information to the Mayor, Chief of Police and other officials, he is instructed to ignore his own findings and set up a convincing prosecution of the innocent man, an itinerant no one will miss.

Andrews' job as D.A. and future standing with the city's elite hangs in the balance. His investigation reveals a web of conspiracy between the city's elected officials to suppress the truth. It seems the priest had heard many a confession, and that many are only too relieved to see the priest dead.

The pivotal scene in Boomerang occurs when Andrews faces the decision of whether or not to pursue the truth despite the rancour, upheaval, scandal, and recriminations these revelations will bring to both him and other elected officials.

Dana Andrews does a marvelous job of projecting a logical mind, moral integrity and tenacity in a heroic character. Based on a true story, this mystery drama packs a wallop.

Hud (1963) Directed by Martin Ritt, Starring Paul Newman, Patricia Neal, Melvyn Douglas

At first, this film seems to have little to do with philosophy or personal integrity. Paul Newman, the son of a ranch owner (Melvyn Douglas) shows himself to be a sleazy, opportunistic, immoral and fundamentally rotten guy, and his idolizing younger brother is slowly seduced into Newman's tainted and unprincipled world.

The stark contrast is provided by Newman's father, an uncompromising, man of high integrity, racked with rueful remorse over his degenerate son's failure to follow an honest and principled life-style.

When it comes to politics, seeming is believing. --- Robert Metz

The scene where the ranch is ravaged by the cattle having hoof and mouth disease (brought on by Newman knowingly buying inferior, cheap, cattle), and Newman then scheming to sell the cattle before the disease becomes obvious, is outstanding. Douglas, appalled by the disease of his livestock, presents a tremendous paragon of virtue by clearly stating how rotten Newman is and why a principled man with "nothing" is worth far more than a dishonest man with "everything".

The contrast between the personalities of Douglas and Newman is what this film is all about. Douglas is outstanding in a subtle way. He exudes moral integrity in every word, every look. Newman is tremendous as a modern-day rogue son, caring only about how he can 'beat the other guy'.

High Noon (1951)
Directed by Fred Zinnemann,
Starring Gary Cooper

Gary Cooper's wooden acting style made me cringe in The Fountainhead, where a young, vital, demonstrative lead was required (a la Gregory Peck, Kirk Douglas), but in High Noon, he was perfectly cast.

Cooper plays the sheriff of a small western town in the 1880's whose tenure in the job is drawing to a close. He has just married a Quaker woman, and today is the last day he is Sheriff. At noon, his job is over.

But the sheriff finds out that a murderer has been released from the state prison after 8 years (a man Cooper sent there) and is arriving on the noon train seeking vengeance on the town and sheriff.

Incredibly, the townspeople all vacillate, fidget, and basically abandon him in his hour of need, despite his serving them faithfully for years.

All the males in this town but Cooper are variously cowardly, jealous, envious, traitorous, and/or hypocritical. Even Cooper's own deputy sheriff hates him for

his rectitude, and his Quaker wife urges him to flee the conflict.

Unlike later westerns of the Eastwood variety, machismo does not factor into Cooper's character, it is simply the principle of right and wrong on which his decision is based.

Friendless and alone, Cooper stays to face the four outlaws who come for him after the noon train arrives, but his real contempt is reserved for the townspeople who lack the courage to back their moral principles.

This is an outstanding drama with a great many visual touches and nuances that show Cooper's plight, and his humility in accepting the inevitable battle that only he is willing to endure. Cooper really makes you feel for his character, and the story effectively evokes disgust towards the gutless townspeople.

(Clint Eastwood directed and starred in an effective remake of High Noon in 1973 called High Plains Drifter, but it is morally ambiguous in comparison with High Noon).

Absence of Malice (1981)
Directed by Sidney Pollack,
Starring Paul Newman, Sally Field

This film is the story of the pacifist's revenge. A wrongly labelled businessman, Paul Newman, wreaks clever vengeance on the town mayor, a special prosecutor, and a newspaper reporter, who, claiming that he is in the mob and responsible for a murder, have seriously impugned his reputation and have driven a female friend to suicide.

In this modern setting, Newman uses cool logic and reason to expose the careers of those who are ruining his life and livelihood. Carefully exploiting the weakness of his enemies, he creates a situation whereby his opponents are all ruined by their own excesses.

It is particularly satisfying to witness Newman single-handedly bring his opponents to justice.

Reason Vs. Irrationality

Twelve Angry Men (1957)

Directed by Sidney Lumet,
Starring Henry Fonda, E.G. Marshall,
Ed Begley, Lee J. Cobb, Jack Warden,
Jack Klugman

For a few seconds, we hear a judge's distant voice recite murder charges against a frightened, strangely ugly, Hispanic boy (about 18 years old) from the New York slums, as a 12-man jury is led away to deliberate.

This entire movie takes place in a jury room, on a sweltering, humid summer day. It is immediately obvious that all members of the jury (except one, an architect played by Henry Fonda) are ready to convict.

Fonda uses logic, reason, facts, and reality to convince fellow jurors that reasonable doubt exists not to convict, while other jurors rely on prejudice, gut feelings, and evasions of reality. Slowly, one by one, Fonda's undeniable statement of facts sink in on each juror.

All twelve jurors are brilliantly played, and Fonda is the ultimate rational man in this film, his best role ever.

While Fonda's character may use rational, cool-headed, logic, to crush the futile assertions of his fellow jurors, it is his character's love for humanity and justice that wins over the audience.

An ethical and cinematic tour-de-force.

Name of the Rose (1986)

Directed by Jean Jacques-Armand,
Starring Sean Connery

Not a classic, but a good film, the Name of the Rose is a murder mystery set in the 15th century.

The interesting premise of this film is that the "detective", played by Sean Connery, is an Aristotelian monk.

Connery is logical and rational, and attributes these characteristics to his schooling in the works of Aristotle. (It must be noted that monks were the educated elite of the 15th century society, before the advent of the printing press, and would likely be the only individuals lucky enough to get an opportunity to read Aristotle.)

Using logic to track down the cause of a series of murders in an Abbey, Connery discovers that the reason monks are being murdered is because they are reading a forbidden book from the secret library.

The book, the 2nd Poetics of Aristotle, a lost work, apparently makes fun of God. According to the movie's villain it questions the existence of God, mocks Him, and "encourages men to laugh at Him".

There are very few villains who will murder men for reading philosophy, but modern parallels can be drawn. The movie makes clear where it's sympathies lie from Connery's character and the fact the mystical villain will kill to prevent men from reading Aristotle.

The movie is steeped in style and is no action picture, but how many films offer a tribute to Aristotelian logic to the degree that the villain will murder men to prevent them from reading it?

Objectivist Drama As It Should Be Done

Humoresque (1946)

Directed by Jean Negulesco,
Starring John Garfield, Oscar Levant,
Joan Crawford

Humoresque is a drama of a young man (played by John Garfield) aspiring to be the world's greatest classical violinist, never compromising in order to be the best, and to show the world he is the best.

Throughout the serious story-line is hilarious comic relief provided by the truthful insights of Garfield's piano playing friend and accompanist, Oscar Levant. Tragedy is provided in the flawed character of Garfield's patron and worshipper Joan Crawford, who cannot control him or make him love her.

An outstanding score is provided by Isaac Stern. The philosophy and conflicts are clear-cut. The performances are first-rate and the dialogue is crisp and intelligent. It is a cinematic experience. (Screenplay by Clifford Odets.)

Limits Mean Poor Service

--- By Lloyd Walker

(Mr. Walker is Vice President of the Freedom Party of Ontario)

Many municipal leaders in Ontario limit the number of taxis permitted to operate within their boundaries. This policy does the community at large a great disservice.

There are several losers when politics takes control.

Those who use the taxi service suffer as a result of limited choices, a lack of competition, monopoly style pricing, and a lack of variety in services. A greater supply of taxis in a community would mean that the companies and/or drivers would have to compete for customers, resulting in better service.

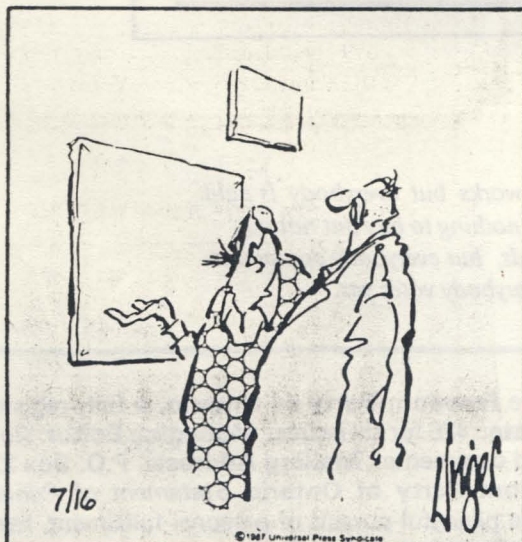
Another victim is the entrepreneur. Drivers who wish to work for themselves rather than for a cab company or people wishing to earn a living by offering a service to the public are prevented from

doing so. The limited supply of licenses, and resulting high price, denies many people a means of earning a living.

Who then wants this limited supply of taxis? Politicians and those who hold licenses seem to be the only ones interested in maintaining the status quo. Politicians will, as a result, continue to make decisions controlling this segment of citizens' lives. Licence holders seek to preserve their hold on an under-supplied, and therefore lucrative, market.

There is no positive reason for keeping government controlled limits on taxis. The opposition complains that there is potential for oversupply, causing some drivers or companies to suffer a loss in income as a result of competition. In any free market there is always a possibility of oversupply, but is that a problem?

HERMAN/by Jim Unger



"I'm so bad, I get a government grant not to paint anything."

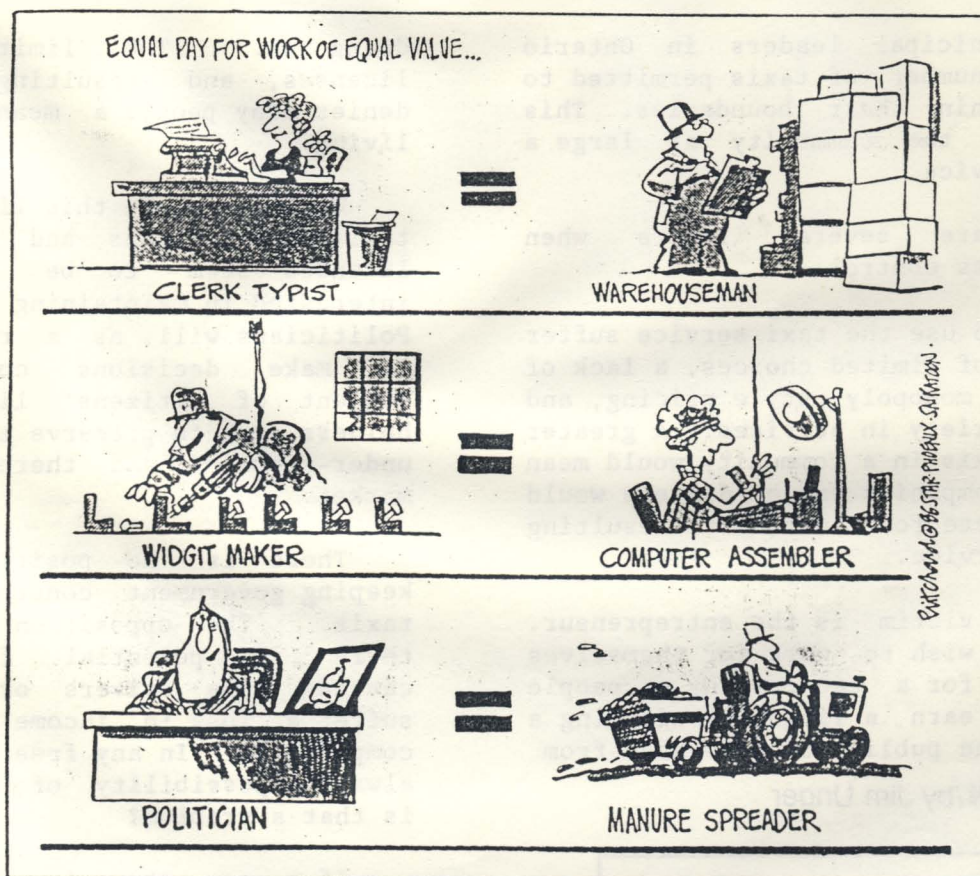
If a new automotive plant wanted to set up in your community, for example, should politicians listen if a vested interest (another automotive plant) in the area protested? Should there be no new restaurants because a new entry into that market may take business from existing restaurants? Should there be a ban on new political parties so that existing parties have a better chance of getting votes? Obviously, the answer to all those questions is no.

In all cases, competition brings the best to the consumer and the consumer in turn rewards those who provide the best product or service. If someone manufactures poor-quality products in

industry, or poor-tasting food in the restaurant business, or voices poor ideas in the political market-place, it is only they who will suffer if competition is allowed. Those who supply the best will eventually be recognized and rewarded by consumers and the taxi industry is no exception to this rule.

The arguments for limiting competition are the same self-serving arguments that would have had the light

bulb banned to preserve the candle industry. Limiting competition means nothing less than limiting our standard of living and that is something our politicians should never do. There should be no limit on taxi licenses. Anyone willing to work hard to provide your community with better services should not be prevented from doing so by our politicians, they should be welcomed with open arms. Wouldn't that be a pleasant change?



Russian Saying

Nobody is unemployed, but nobody works. Nobody works but everybody is paid. Everybody is paid but there is nothing to buy. There is nothing to buy but nobody lacks for what he needs. Nobody lacks for what he needs, but everybody complains. Everybody complains, but when it comes time to vote everybody votes yes.

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