



FREE RIDERS

Should *Star Trek* Be Regulated As A Monopoly?

-Gary North

{Gary North is president of the **Institute for Christian Economics** in Tyler, Texas. The following essay originally appeared in the February 1995 edition of **The Freeman**, published by the **Foundation for Economic Education (FEE)**, Irvington-on-Hudson, NY 10533. **FEE** is a nonpolitical educational champion of private property, a free market, and limited government.}

The announcement in 1993 that **Star Trek: The Next Generation** would have only one more season of new shows was the equivalent of a photon torpedo blast into the lives of millions of fans. Well, maybe it was only a phaser set on 'stun', but the news was not well received. Even Jonathan Frakes, the actor who plays William Riker, the second in command on *The Enterprise*, complained in a televised interview that he did not understand why a successful series was being cancelled.

The answer is clear: because it was not merely a successful series. It was THE successful dramatic TV series of all time, a show possessing what has been described as a cult following --- the largest entertainment cult on earth.

For almost three decades, *Star Trek* fans have invested money, time, and imagination in a fantasy world created on-screen. The three-part entrepreneurial question that the show's producers face is this: How much money? How much time? How large a screen?

The show was costing a million dollars per weekly broadcast to produce: the highest in television. But this investment paid off very well. Syndication is bringing in millions of dollars from earlier shows. This probably will not change soon, with or without new segments. Millions of fans watch every segment of over and over. This has been true since the early 1970s. Nightly reruns still draw large audiences for both crews of *The Enterprise*. This stream of income appears to be as endless as the *I Love Lucy* reruns.

The questions facing the producers were these: (1) How much additional net income can this product line generate if we produce two dozen new segments? (2) How much net income can it generate if we produce a major movie? The answer to the first question appeared to be "marginal." The answer to the second question appeared to be "enormous."

The early fans of the original *Star Trek* series were not numerous enough to sustain the show's ratings. *Star Trek* became a huge success only after it was cancelled: a rerun and local TV station syndication phenomenon. This made it unique in television history.

Then came the 1979 movie. Its script was not noticeably superior to one of the original shows. In fact, it was suspiciously similar to one of those original shows: *The Changeling*, featuring Nomad. But it made millions of dollars for the investors. Five more movies followed, stretching for over a decade.

Toward the end of the movie releases, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* had become the most successful syndicated show on television. The original *Star Trek* series was also doing well in syndication. Like miners mining the mother lode, every time the producers started a new tunnel, they hit paydirt.

This experience sent a loud message to the producers: "A defunct series in syndication plus an occasional movie will make us even richer." Gene Roddenberry, the show's creator, was dead. He was no longer present to argue for keeping the TV series alive. So, the free market took over. That is to say, the desires of paying consumers took over, but not the desires of non-paying consumers. Therein lies the difference in marketing strategies.

THE MESSAGE OF THE MARKET

The **free market** sends information to enterprising entrepreneurs whose task it is to forecast **consumer demand** in the unknown economic future. This information is sent in the form of **price signals**. These signals are evaluated in a very specific manner: **profit and loss**. Consumers register their decisions in the form of **money**. Sometimes this message is sent directly: "I'll take one of those, please. Here is my money." In non-pay TV, the message is sent indirectly by middlemen acting on behalf of consumers: "I'll rent advertising time from you in the hope that consumers will buy something from me as a result." But the consumer is finally sovereign. Either he spends money or he doesn't.

I was a reliable consumer of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, beginning several years after the show was launched into the airwaves. It was the only TV show I watched every week. (I now watch none on a weekly basis.) But I did not watch it directly. I had my teenage son record it for me on Saturday night, blipping out the commercials. Then

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To those who consent, no injustice is done

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my wife and I and the other children would watch the tape on some other night.

I was, in the language of the economist, a **free rider**. I did not buy anything from a seller just because he advertised during the *Star Trek* hour. No commercial message ever got through to me, except when my son was not paying careful attention. He became very skilled at operating the pause button.

Did I attend the new *Star Trek* movie? Of course, and so did my family. The years of investments made by the producers, funded weekly by the advertisers, at long last paid off in my case. I was no longer a free rider. I paid for my 90-minute ride on *The Enterprise*.

The market sent a signal to the producers: there are a lot of people just like me out there. They paid for the privilege of entering into the fantasy world of *Star Trek*. The pay was direct: "Ticket, please."

After that, millions more of us will rent it in local video stores. There will also be income from cable TV and network TV and Ted Turner's *TBS TV*. The producers saw the potential.

The fans no doubt feel cheated. They want their two dozen new segments a year. They sit there --- millions of thumbs on millions of 'pause' buttons --- and say: "Take us for a ride on *The Enterprise*." The producers finally figured out that the fans were taking them for a ride.

The producers believed that the market was ready to reward them for spending less than what it would cost to produce two dozen segments for TV. Instead of paying week by week, they spent a year's budget on one extravaganza. They believed that we, the faithful consumers of *Star Trek* fantasies, would dig into our wallets and reward them for bringing one story to us on a large screen rather than dozens of stories on a small screen. They were correct.

We consumers say that we want two dozen segments a year rather than one extravaganza every other year or even less frequently. That is what we say. But talk is cheap. Are we willing to put our money where our mouths are? How much money? If we

were all willing to pay, say, \$2.50 per TV segment, and if there were some readily available way to make this transaction each week, the producers might consider keeping the show on the air (or cable, or whatever).

But the delivery system does not exist. *Star Trek* is unique. There is no other TV show with a market of fans --- as in fanatics --- that would predictably respond in this way. There is even some question in my mind about whether I would actually pay my weekly \$2.50. In any case, we are talking about \$2.50 per household. But the movie got \$6 out of me, my wife, and also three of my four children. For many fans, multiply \$6 by two. Or three. We will also rent it when it comes out on tape.

So the reality is this: what *Star Trek* fans say they want is not what they are both willing and able to pay for. We are all free riders or would-be free riders to some degree. The producers have issued an announcement: "No more free new rides."

A MONOPOLY

One of the greatly feared and hated phenomena in modern life is the **monopoly**. The standard definition of monopoly is this: "A firm that restricts the output of goods or services in order to increase its revenues." It is feared and hated because consumers seem to be thwarted. Consumers receive less of what they say they want. The seller brings in more money, net, at a higher price per sale than he would have brought in had he met all the demand at a lower price per sale. He is, in the language of Marxism and other socialist traditions, an **exploiter**.

If we take this definition seriously, then *Star Trek* is surely a monopoly. Rather than producing and then renting two dozen new segments per year to local TV stations, the owners of the rights to the *Star Trek* product line are now going to produce only one movie every two or three years, which they will rent to movie theatres. Then they will rent it to cable

TV stations. Then they will sell copies of the videotape. They will get *Star Trek* fans to pay again and again to see that one movie. By restricting production, they will bring in far more money. But if the standard definition of monopoly is correct, it should be clear that this can be accomplished only through the wilful exploitation of the public, and a highly vulnerable public at that: people who show many of the elements of serious psychological dependence.

A good Marxist would know what to call the owners of the rights to *Star Trek*: "capitalist exploiters." Clearly, the state, as the legitimate voice of the proletariat, should confiscate these rights and begin to produce weekly broadcasts of *Star Trek* on a year-round basis.

This would be very expensive under present conditions. The main actors receive very high wages, since the show has been running for years. The featured actors' salaries rise each year. Also, what about residual payments to them for the reruns? There would be no residuals under true socialism. After all, the Marxist says, labour is the sole source of all value, and these actors have already contributed whatever value the show possesses. Residuals? This is clearly exploitation by the actors, who have also become capitalist exploiters.

But what if the actors should quit? Here socialists disagree with each other. Some would favour laws making it illegal for anyone to quit his job without permission from the state. This would include actors. Other socialists, influenced by capitalist concepts of supply and demand, would say that new actors should be hired by the national government's Department of Public Entertainment. Hire some minimum-wage, out-of-work English character actor to play Captain Picard. Just shave his head. Nobody will notice. Anyone can be dressed up as a Klingon.

All the fans really care about is Lieutenant Worf's turtle-shell forehead. A computer synthesizer can produce a match of Michael Dorn's voice --- after all, even he doesn't sound like that in real life. As for Jordie LaForge, the whole appeal of the character is that woman's hair gadget he wears over his eyes. Who needs LeVar Burton? The *Star Trek* characters are all stick figures anyway: the chocoholic, half-breed mind reader who never seems to know what the bad guys are really

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"A liberal is a person who is happy to give another person a helping hand --- providing he can make a third person pay for it." - Richard Needham.

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thinking; the twitching robot with the green contact lenses; the bearded first mate who seems to be an ulcer candidate; the bossy female physician who takes over every time anyone gets the sniffles. Who needs highly paid actors? Just hire new actors who can remember their lines. If they start demanding higher pay, replace them. The viewers don't care. Don't talk nonsense about the show's 'chemistry'. Television shows do not have chemistry. They have scripts, actors, and special effects. In the case of *Star Trek*, the proper order is special effects, scripts, and actors. What the show needs is scripts that conform to the theory of socialism. Actors are peripheral.

The question now arises: Should *Star Trek* fans set up a Political Action Committee (PAC) devoted to electing candidates who promise to compel the producers to deliver a minimum of two dozen shows per year? Such legislation is surely Constitutional. Perhaps it could be done under the interstate commerce clause, or maybe under "promote the general welfare." These are mere details. The Supreme Court can sort it all out later. The point is, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* is an exploitative monopoly, and it must be stopped by law.

Something sounds wrong with this analysis. The question is: What?

CONSUMER'S SURPLUS

A seller who wants to sell many units of a particular item will price each unit at what he believes is the highest price consumers are willing to pay for all units he brings to market. The revenue-maximizing price is that price which empties the seller's inventory but leaves no consumer standing in line ready to buy. This is called a **market-clearing price**.

No matter what price he establishes, there will be some buyers who would have paid more for the item. To maximize his total revenue, he sets the price lower than what he could have received from a small percentage of buyers. These buyers who would have paid more receive a benefit. Economists call this benefit a consumer's surplus.

The producers of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* for many years have given millions of viewers a consumer's surplus. These viewers would have paid more, but they were not asked to pay more. I am clearly one such viewer. I paid nothing except my time in viewing --- leisure, a rare form of income which the government does not tax --- and the price

of a cheap videotape (two shows per tape). My teenage son's time spent recording and blipping out commercials I receive at no additional marginal cost --- one of the very few income streams I have generated so far from this particular investment in human capital (and now it has dried up): no more *Star Trek* segments.

The producers decided that they would no longer provide such an immense consumer's surplus. They have created enormous demand for their product line by means of offering millions of consumers a consumer's surplus for over two decades. We can best understand this as a form of advertising. Advertising expenses are not borne for their own sake. The goal of advertising is to sell more products. This is now what the producers of *Star Trek* intend to do.

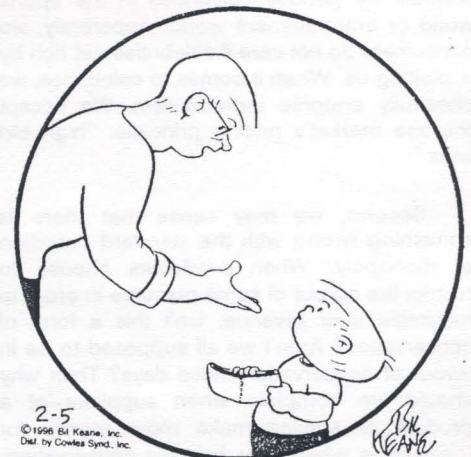
STAR TREK AS SOFTWARE

Star Trek: The Next Generation is properly described as a software product. The hardware is our TV sets. Software is what we run on our hardware. For example, when *Sony* bought *CBS Music*, financial journalists identified this as a move by *Sony*, a producer of hardware, to acquire a line of software. The big money is in software, not hardware, unless you are the *Intel Corporation* or *Motorola*.

In recent years, software products that are assumed to be capable of reaching a large market have been priced quite low: a hundred dollars for a program that in 1990 would have retailed for \$495 (\$235 through a mail-order firm). Software producers realize that the big money is made on the back end: money sent in by existing users who buy software upgrades. The marketing strategy is to gain the largest number of users, who hate to re-learn new software programs that perform similar tasks. The strategy is to create a huge market of users who do not want to switch. They become, as it were, psychologically dependent on the product. Very few software companies have achieved this.

Star Trek has accomplished this remarkable feat. The producers introduced their software at very low prices in 1968, but now the upgrades are going to be less frequent and more expensive than before: every other year instead of every week for half the year. Consumers received an enormous consumer's surplus for decades, but now the producers know that their software's "installed base of users" --- software marketing terminology --- is huge, that users are not going to switch, and that the weekly reruns will now serve as

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"You need a BUDGET for your money, Billy - and stick to it! Where would this country be if the government didn't do that?"

"shareware": free or nearly free introductory software that creates a market for the big-screen 'upgrades'.

The decision to produce *Star Trek* movies rather than weekly TV shows will probably turn out to be very profitable. The product line's installed base is enormous. Having created this installed base through a quarter century of either brilliant or very lucky marketing, the owners of the product line have decided to maximize their revenue by spending more money on a few major upgrades rather than spending smaller amounts of money on more frequent but marginal upgrades. For most TV shows, this marketing strategy would produce a gigantic loss, once. But *Star Trek: The Next Generation* is not like most TV shows.

RATIONAL UPGRADE

The marketing of *Star Trek* is rational from an economic point of view. While it would be possible to denounce as monopolistic the decision of the owners to move from TV production to movie production, such an analysis does not ring true. Nevertheless, the decision does seem to conform to the standard definition of monopoly pricing: "Restricting the output of goods or services in order to increase revenues." But most people --- even devoted fans --- are unwilling to call the producers of *Star Trek* a bunch of exploiting monopolists. Why?

I suggest two reasons. First, when it comes to entertainment, we are all capitalists. Nobody suggests government-imposed wage

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"To talk about the future is useful only if it leads to action now." -E.F. Schumacher

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controls for famous celebrities in the sports world or entertainment world. Apparently, we consumers do not care if celebrities get rich by exploiting us. When it comes to celebrities, we cheerfully endorse individualism. We accept the free market's pricing principle: "high bid wins."

Second, we may sense that there is something wrong with the standard definition of monopoly. When producers choose to restrict the output of some resource in order to maximize their revenue, isn't this a form of conservation? Aren't we all supposed to be in favour of conservation these days? Then why should we complain when suppliers of a product or service make more money for themselves when they become conservationists? There is something wrong with the textbook definition of monopoly.

Murray Rothbard has suggested a different definition. He argues that a monopoly is created solely by the state. The economic conditions for monopoly exist whenever the civil government threatens reprisals against competing firms that enter a market to supply a service that consumers are willing to pay for, but which the existing seller refuses to meet by lowering the price and increasing output.

If a firm can increase its revenues by restricting output, it should probably be called a conservation-minded firm. But if its ability to increase revenues by raising prices and restricting output exists only because the state has placed restrictions on its competitors, then it is a monopoly.

What is the most effective way to stamp out monopolies? Revoke the legislation or bureaucratic rules that have created them.

Star Trek has become a conservationist firm, not a monopoly. I am not pleased with this development, since I am a greedy, profligate, free-riding consumer who wants lots more rides on *The Enterprise* for the price of cheap videotapes. My motto in this case is simple: "Conservation? Who needs it?" But millions of trekkies will probably confirm the economic wisdom of the producers to move from 'profligate' production to conservationism. Trekkies will not verbally applaud this form of conservation, but I think they are ready to pay for it. So do the producers. They are just doing their job.

After all, what else should we expect from people in command of something called *The Enterprise*?

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THE CANDLE MAKERS

- Theresa Amalfitano & Professor Walter Block

TECHNOLOGY AS THE CAUSE OF UNEMPLOYMENT?

{**Professor Walter Block**, formerly senior economist with the *Fraser Institute* in Vancouver, is now professor of economics at *College of the Holy Cross* in Worcester Massachusetts. The following essay was co-authored with his student, **Theresa Amalfitano**, and is exclusive to *Consent*.}

For decades now, it has been a popular belief that machines on net balance create unemployment. Society has been concerned that increased global communication and widespread use of technology and robotics would displace existing jobs. People have questioned whether enough employment would be created to supplant that being dislocated by new machinery.

Spokespersons for unions, particularly, claim that the US has an aggregate labour surplus. If new technology is allowed, they fear we will increase unemployment.

Other leftists believe that workers have every right to full consideration when new technologies are being implemented. Individuals have invested their lives and careers (and sweat) in some jobs. Workers should therefore not be discarded like yesterday's newspaper. Just because machinery enables a company to make a certain product with fewer employees does not mean that a hard working labour force should be cast off. Where are these people to go now that they have no skills other than the ones now rendered obsolete?

Interventionists also argue that the pace of change is simply too rapid for employment to keep up. The 'blotting paper' industries will soak up no more men.¹ There seems to be no place for human beings in a world where new technology not only improves industrial processes and replaces physical labour, but even carries out ordinary every-day thinking. They feel this will undoubtedly diminish labour's role as an indispensable factor of production.

All this *sounds* reasonable, but this is incorrect.

The blame for unemployment should not be placed on new machines. Technological change has meant a rising standard of living. New advances have increased leisure, decreased work time, created less danger for workers, and improved goods and services and lowered prices. Technology has, in general, improved the overall quality of life.

"The basic fact is that technology eliminates jobs, not work."² If a society barred labour-saving innovations, it would slow the growth of productivity. This would leave living standards and wages at a standstill. We can only imagine life today if we had stopped the invention of the automobile to save the job of a coachman, or if we had held

back the lamp out of consideration for the candle makers.

Technological change has displaced workers; no one can deny that. New inventions radically change job descriptions, they can destroy one occupation --- but they create new ones. What must be understood, however, is that while employment in one area may decline, it is always offset by an increase in another. An industry that has laid off workers because of new and more efficient technology may even end up hiring back more employees than before.

Is it possible that machines and technology can create unemployment? When this view is held with any logical consistency, it leads to preposterous conclusions.

The first would be that we are creating unemployment with every single technological improvement we make. At this rate, no one should have ever found any work at all.

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"A thing moderately good is not so good as it ought to be. Moderation in temper is always a virtue; but moderation in principle is always a vice." - Thomas Paine, 1777

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The second is that primitive man must have started causing unemployment with the first efforts he made to save himself from unessential drudgery.³

We have been trying to find new and innovative ways to do work more efficiently since the beginning of time. It goes against human nature to try to retard innovative progress. We naturally look for easier ways to do things in order to save time and exertion.

Yet, it is interesting to see that people still think that new machines take away their jobs. They will agree that a dishwasher and a washing machine are wonderful labour-saving devices in their home, but think a new machine should not be brought into the workplace if it will replace labourers.^{3a}

The history of economics contains countless examples of this phenomenon:

During the Industrial Revolution, new stocking frames were destroyed by the hand-craft workmen in the stocking industry. The leaders of the revolt obviously thought the new machines would replace them. Yet, before the end of the nineteenth century, textiles were employing at least one hundred men for every one employed at the beginning of the century!

In 1760, the cotton spinning machine was invented. Again, there was opposition. Yet, by 1787, twenty-seven short years later, the number of spinners and weavers in the cotton industry increased from 7,900 to 320,000!⁴

Market critics believe that to maximize jobs, we need to make labour as inefficient and unproductive as possible. Why should freight be carried from Chicago to New York by railroad or plane when we could employ hundreds of men to haul it on their backs?⁵ If these 'technophobes' were consistent with their premises, all ingenuity and progress would have to be completely dismissed as useless and evil.

Let's say, hypothetically, that a labour-saving machine is installed in a factory. The manufacturer can now make the product more efficiently using half the labour. This, obviously will bring the manufacturer much profit.

But the public looks at this as a great injustice. The 'fat capitalist pig' firm put half its men out on the street. What the public does not realize is that it is precisely out of these profits from whence comes the social gain.

There are three things the manufacturer can do with the profits: (1) buy more machines, (2) invest the money in some other industry, or (3) spend the money on private consumption. Either way, employment will be created. Spending the profits from the new machinery induces employment in other areas: the machine makers, the operators, the repair men, and the builders of the capitalists' new house.

Eventually, other firms in this industry are going to buy such a profitable machine. As a result, the supply of the product will rise, reducing prices. In due course, profits will fall. If demand is

elastic, revenue will increase, and now more money will be spent on the product that before the new machine was invented. (This is what happened in the stocking industry.)

Even if total spending does not increase with the cut in prices, those who buy the product will still have more money to spend on other goods and industries. This does not even assume that wages may increase due to the increase in productivity of the workers.

The problem with the leftist view is that it only looks at the immediate effects of a new machine or technological advance. Leftists say: "Look at Joe Smith thrown out of his job because of the new machine." What they do not consider is Tom Jones who just got a new job operating that machine, or Jimmy Brady who is now making them, or Sally Miller who can now buy that product at a cheaper price.⁷ They fail to realize that employment is not directly taken away; it is just displaced to other areas of industry.

Yes, it is a tragedy that people have to

lose their sources of income due to technological advancements. Some have worked in particular jobs for years and find themselves obsolete. We also have to consider, however, that it is the market's function to properly allocate resources, including those in the labour market. Whether there are highly-skilled, educated people or the opposite, the market will adjust to use its resources.

Certain industries, in the past, helped educate their employees instead of letting them go. Instead of firing unneeded workers when machines were introduced, they aided their workers in the 'new and improved' industry. In other cases, workers were freed up to create goods which were unattainable before the innovation.

Technological progress opens the door to a re-evaluation and redefinition of skills and the skill levels of workers. It widens the range of leisure increasing options and opportunities and increases the options for creating and distributing the nation's wealth. Technology will eventually bring us to an age where nobody has to do 'work'. Everyone will do the 'work' that they love to do (which makes it 'play'). Technological change is a good, not a bad in our society, and it does not create unemployment.

In conclusion, technological change displaces jobs; it does not destroy them. It moves people from one industry to another, from where they are no longer needed to where they are. Although this may not be the best situation for the individual involved in the change, it is necessary for the advancement of society. In the long run, it will create more jobs for other people and benefit everyone. {END}

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NON SEQUITUR — BY WILEY



"Today, racism is regarded as a crime if practised by a majority --- but an inalienable right if practised by a minority." - Ayn Rand

THE JOY OF LEARNING

-R.N. Whitehead, Ph.D

{R.N. Whitehead is the clinical director and founder of the **Oxford Learning Systems** and the **Oxford Learning Centre** schools. The following essay is the third of three parts describing **How Children Develop Passive Minds**. Part 1, "Why It Happens and What We Can do About It", appeared in *Consent* 24. Part 2, "Embrace The Challenge - Motivation, The Road To An Active Mind", appeared in *Consent* 25.}

Part III An Active Mind

Have you ever asked yourself why we send our children to school to get an education in the first place? As parents, why do we care if they are mentally active or passive? We seem to spend a lot of time chasing our kid's educational goals. Why? Depending upon who you ask, the answers vary so much that it leaves your head swimming.

I still clearly remember nights from almost forty years ago with my mother standing over me while I slumped at our big dining room table defeated by grade 6 math. Those feelings of defeat are still real to me. Mom was worried and was trying to motivate me. How? By telling me how much I needed math!

"Why?" I asked, hating math and feeling defeated.

"Just because you need it --- you can't get a job without it." She then went on to further inspire me: "Besides, you should be doing this just for the love of learning. Isn't it great to learn something new?"

Now there was a good one for a grade 6 kid! Mom finished inspiring me and went away to paint a picture, read a novel or watch TV. I didn't notice her studying something new just for the love of learning! How often do you do that?

I'm not trying to get even with Mom, but rather to point out that she was unable to inspire me because she used concepts that were well beyond my immature thoughts. Now, if she had told me that Rocket Richard used math to calculate the angle before he scored his goals; that would have inspired me! The truth is, she didn't really understand why I needed to be educated.

Despite all the claims to the contrary, the main reason for getting an education is to successfully live mature lives. Yes, knowledge can bring joy, enlightenment, pleasure and can help you get a better job, but those are values

which give meaning to our lives and not the reason for educating our children. Therefore, if we expect our children to be prepared to live successfully, then we must decide what qualities are important to this preparation.

Believe it or not, reading and math by themselves are useless except as a way to kill a few hours on a rainy day. It is not the specific skills, such as reading and math that matter at all. It is the whole package.

Only when our kids can use all of their diverse learning skills such as, concentrating, attending, sequencing, recalling, abstracting, generalizing, transferring, etc., and then can apply the material they memorized from their curriculum such as, history to help understand our race or science to understand our world, can we consider that they have been educated. They need to be able to use and apply these skills to adequately deal with

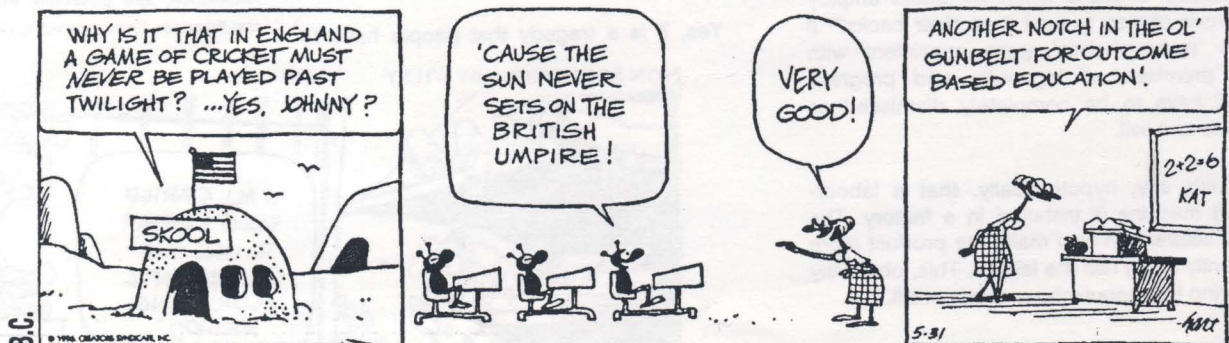
the terms and conditions of their lives and to achieve the goals and dreams they have set.

That is the purpose of education!!!

Now what about active minds? Well, acquiring a successful education is impossible for a child with a passive mind. The child may be sharp enough to memorize his/her way through enough situations and may acquire enough sub verbal reading skills to adapt in public situations, but, without a vital and active mind searching for principles and seeking truth, the child will never really be happy and will never reach his/her human potential.

In our previous chapter, we concluded that children must somehow learn to try and take ownership if they are to become intellectually active. The only way this can be done is if the child is motivated. I

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"The only place where success comes before work is in a dictionary." - Vidal Sassoon

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cannot stress this enough. Motivation first! Teaching second!

In most life situations, children are motivated by their desire to understand - to survive. They watch, copy, integrate and learn all by themselves. In fact, the hardest task that any human will probably ever face is the acquisition of language, and as children, we do that all by ourselves. Why? Because we need language to understand, to organize and to keep and use our experiences. We need to know in order to understand and we need to understand in order to survive! This is motivation enough!

So what happens when children start school or someone tries to teach them to read? Where does this motivation go? How can we change this? The answer lies in a strange place.

First we must learn that WE cannot motivate children! They motivate themselves because they discover that what we are offering to them is something that they want. We must learn to respect the fact that children are logical and rational already. The only difference between us and them is their lack of experience. Our experiences have allowed us to expand our understanding of situations (context).

If we realize that our children are just like us, minus the knowledge, experience, and context, then we can begin to understand how to better offer these jewels of wisdom and learning to them. A child who becomes active intellectually does so by him/herself when (s)he decides to, and not one second before.

However, there is some 'table setting' that we can do before our children will make this decision. If we do this carefully, they will decide that the results are worth the effort.

We can begin by fully learning what the previous statement --- that our children are rational and just like us --- means, and what will result from the understanding. If children are just like us minus the experiences, then they must have the same basic rights as we do. This means we must learn to respect their right to learn or not learn.

Sure, we know how difficult their life will be without an adequate education, but if we

force them to follow our standards, they will only do so grudgingly and will certainly never be motivated.

Therefore, we must encourage independence and self-esteem in our children. Reconsider how you react to them and learn to treat them as immature equals. Treat their feelings with respect. If kids don't want to go to school, learn to read or simply concentrate, there is a rational reason somewhere. Find it. It may appear strange or funny when you finally hear this reason but, remembering that the only difference is that children lack experiences, we can now see that the child does indeed have a GOOD reason for not wanting to try this new activity.

I worked with a young girl recently by the name of Jenny who had trouble remembering the sounds of some letters. She really wanted to please her Mom as well as me, so when she couldn't remember her letter sounds, she felt 'stupid', and worse, she felt she was letting us down.

The next time I wanted to work with her letter sounds, she wanted no part of them and she had a great reason. Her refusal to look at the letters did not indicate that she had a behaviour problem. In fact she was highly motivated. She wanted to please both Mom and me and there was no way she could do so with these "stupid letters". The logical answer, given her experience, was "No way! I'm not doing em!!! I hate the dumb things anyway!"

Now we were really getting somewhere. The problem was not with the 'dumb letters', it was with the way she interpreted our expectations of her. She assumed that we needed her to succeed, that the only reason for dragging out those "dumb things" was so that she could show us that she knew them. It never occurred to her that we only wanted her to try. The secret learning here, for us as parents, is to make sure that our expectations are understood at our children's level, not just ours.

Ask me why you should learn to read and I will tell you that you can't experience the great literature, can't graduate from school, can't get a great job and will consequentially be doomed to struggle and underachieve throughout your life without reading.

ZIGGY



Good answer, eh? But what if you're five years old? What does that answer mean? Nothing! While it impresses me, it has absolutely no motivating power at all.

OK, what did eventually motivate Jenny? It was easy. Mom and I began to listen to her and she provided the clues for us. She wanted to read like her best friend, Abbie. She wanted some chapter books with nice stories about horses. She wanted to surprise her brother and suddenly read one day.

The answers were right there in front of us. Somehow Jenny was treating reading as something to please us instead of something she wanted for herself. If we removed the judgements and even the encouragements and merely offered her a way to reach her dreams, she bought in all by herself. Within two weeks she was laughing with me about how hard it was to remember some of those 'dumb letters'. By changing the way we voice our concerns and desires for our kids, by listening to the things that are important to them right now in their world, we have the tools necessary to guide them along the path that we know is best for them.

Let us assume that we, as parents, have learned how to stand aside while our children 'motivate themselves'. What can we do with these young, bright, motivated, yet demanding minds? We can provide the games, activities and learning exercises in such an orderly, sequential and rational manner that these young minds seize them and eagerly master new skills with glee!

In deciding which games and activities are most appropriate, we must first identify

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"Government is not reason, it is not eloquence --- it is force." - George Washington

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learning objectives or criteria (such as concentration, the ability to stay on task without changing the subject, hearing discrimination --- the ability to hear different sounds distinctly --- and recall or memory) that will apply to these activities. Then you must decide just where your child is in terms of the material being presented. Is he ready for this material? Will it make sense to him? Has he developed sufficient skills beforehand so that these new ones will be useful? In other words, even though the child is interested (motivated) in learning, it does not mean that that child is actually ready to learn.

When teaching children information or skills, we must ensure that our presentation has a distinct beginning, middle, and end, and that it comes at the correct time and in the correct order.

For example: Let's say that I wished to teach a young lady by the name of Lenka to read. Wouldn't it seem logical that she should know the sounds of the alphabet first?

Yes, but what if Lenka is 3 years old and has not learned to actually distinguish one sound from another, or has not yet developed memory skills sufficiently to remember more than one sound at once?

To begin with an exercise that drills the sounds of the alphabet would be harmful and might begin to erode both the enthusiasm and the motivation this young lady has brought to the task. Instead, I would have to begin with memory games designed to improve concentration and recall. Then I would start to teach auditory discrimination by playing silly memory games such as:

Me: "Say cowboy."

Lenka: "Cowboy."

Me: "Now, say it again but don't say 'cow'."

When she gets it wrong, I must laugh with her and get her to repeat the same one back to me. Just remembering to repeat it helps with memory, and models the distinction between the two words. I would, perhaps, give her an incorrect and funny answer back to allow us both a laugh. Soon I will be able to proceed from whole words to sound blends such as 'at', 'ar', etc. Playing a bingo or board game and using one of these tasks whenever she lands on a particular square also makes this activity fun.

Once we have made a small inventory of our child's general learning skills (memory, etc.), we can then begin to do the same thing with his/her information processing skills. Such as:

1) How precise is her/his word understanding? Do specific words have precise and specific meanings or does (s)he still struggle with this task? (Are there lots of unfinished sentences with 'like' or 'you know' in them?)

2) Can (s)he think figuratively or is (s)he still more concrete bound? (Can (s)he listen to a story and tell you what the moral is or what the hero learned?)

3) Does (s)he prefer specifically structured activities or can (s)he understand cause and effect? (Does (s)he prefer to remember what the princess wore rather than attempt to explain why the princess did something?)

The object of this exercise is to determine the level of cognitive skill the child possesses. Remember that you must present new information in a logical, sequential, clear and meaningful manner. It must be appropriate to the child's overall context.

I recently sat in a Grade two class and heard a teacher explain how pollution was bad because it was killing the earth. The kids all nodded their heads and sweetly sang an anti-pollution song but they had absolutely no real idea what that teacher was talking about! It was completely beyond their context and could only be processed passively! The kids sat nodding and singing because it was expected of them, not because they had any idea what was or was not polluted. They were

appropriately rewarded after the song with positive feedback while the teacher naively thought they had learned something. All they did was to learn that when an adult said, "pollution" the kids were supposed to acknowledge that it was bad. This was passive memory work, not understanding at all.

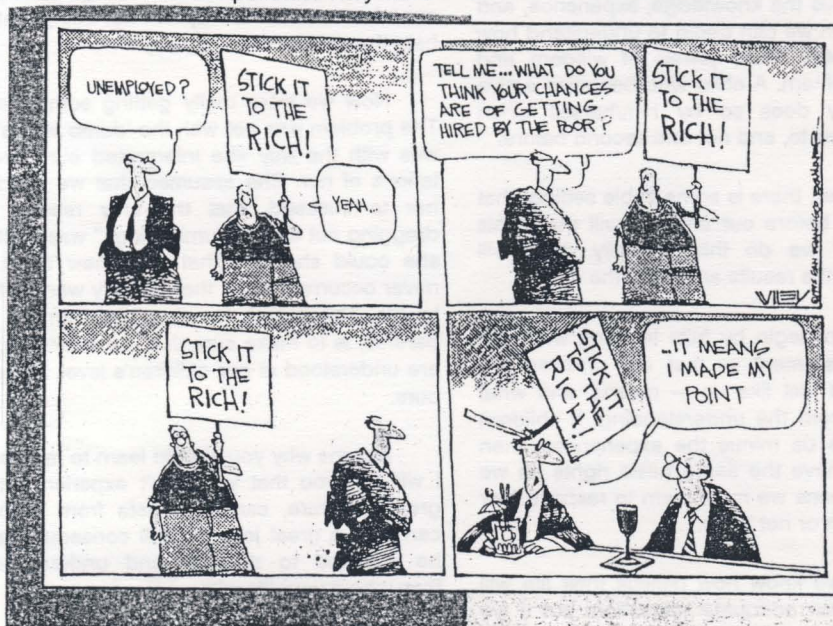
As parents, we must not make this same mistake. We must carefully help our kids develop context so as to understand what we are trying to teach them. Children learn best by example. When you are problem-solving, model your thinking process for them, don't make it a lecture about how they should do it. Rather, model your own thinking out loud. The more examples children see of how something should be done, the better they will become at discovering the logical methods you are using.

In truth, education, or the actual training of the mind to successfully deal with life, is not a lifelong process.

A successful education must occur when the child is young. As we grow older it is much harder, if not virtually impossible, to change the actual process of learning, i.e., the methods of the mind. We can grow, discover new and fascinating things about life, and understand much more with our mature intelligence, but, after the age of ten, changing the way we think and learn is extremely difficult.

This is why it is essential for us to learn to be active intellectually while we are children. Helping children along this path as they discover the joys of an active, inquisitive, unafraid and healthy mind is one of the greatest rewards of parenthood --- for both parents and children.

{END}



CREDIBILITY GAP

-William Frampton

{William Frampton is Regional vice-president, Eastern Ontario, for the **Freedom Party of Ontario.**}

In October of 1995, Canadians were put through an wrenching experience we won't soon forget. With the Quebec referendum, our country was taken to the brink of chaos for reasons most people are only vaguely aware of. The separatists were so confident of success that communiques were sent to Canadian soldiers and foreign embassies seeking their recognition.

Canada today is virtually awash with plans that purport to 'solve' the country's national unity problem without even acknowledging its real roots. These plans are based on a false premise, and consequently they will never work. This premise is the idea that it is possible to unite Canada by accommodating what have become known as Quebec's traditional demands.

If Canadians wish to get their country back on track, we must resolve this separation nonsense once and for all. This can only be done if we understand how we came to be where we are today.

Quebec's demands are based on a false notion of what Confederation was all about and Quebec's place in that vision. As the recent CBC National News presentation *Clash of Histories* showed, Quebecers have been taught that Canada is composed of two distinct nations, one English-speaking and one French-speaking. Historian Ramsay Cook describes this idea as part misunderstanding and part invention. The record shows there simply is no evidence whatsoever to support this claim. Quite frankly, it's a fantasy.

In the decades before 1960, events in Quebec received hardly any attention from people in other parts of Canada. During this time, Quebec politicians such as Honore Mercier and Maurice Duplessis convinced themselves that Canada was actually comprised of two distinct nations, one English-speaking and one French-speaking.

In the early sixties, the federal govern-

ment of Lester Pearson became aware of this development. Faced with two completely divergent views of Canada, the Pearson government panicked. The **Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism** was established in 1963. Instead of challenging the two-nations myth, the Pearson government instructed the Commissioners to "recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races." From that day on, Quebec has been given special treatment in Canada.

"Canada today is virtually awash with plans that purport to 'solve' the country's national unity problem without even acknowledging its real roots."

A number of administrative measures allowed Quebec to pretend it actually was a nation. The most notorious one is the Cullen-Couture agreement on immigration. Since 1978, Quebec has received money from Ottawa for a provincial immigration program. This has made things easier for the separatists by allowing the provincial government --- whether Liberal or Parti Quebecois --- to select immigrants and operate a program which tells these people the country they have immigrated to is Quebec, not Canada.

This climate of constitutional appeasement has convinced many people the government is unable to deal with Quebec's radical demands. They think the government's political weakness undermines its position.

In fact, Canada's position is much stronger than many people realize, and I have already dealt with the practical and political problems of separation in my 1992 essay, *How To Deal With Quebec* (Consent 16).

However, even more fundamentally, the notion that Canada came into being around two founding languages is completely false, as

the late Eugene Forsey has described. Forsey, who was for many years a member of the Senate, was a very highly respected public figure. He was very well educated about Canada's constitution and history, as well as being an excellent linguist who spoke English, French, and German.

In his memoirs, Dr. Forsey wrote about "the French-speaking Fathers of Confederation Georges-Etienne Cartier, Etienne Tache and Hector Langevin who repeatedly spoke of the founding of 'a great nation' and 'a single great nation'" --- a Canadian nation.

He also wrote: "there is not, as far as I can discover, [and his research was very thorough] the faintest evidence of any pact, agreement, or bargain --- in the Charlottetown, Quebec or London conferences --- between the two linguistic blocs."

He also says: "I cannot find the slightest evidence that at Charlottetown, Quebec or London, the delegates lined up on linguistic lines."

As Dr. Forsey describes it, "Over and over again --- in Charlottetown, in Halifax, in Saint John, in Quebec city, in Montreal, and above all in the debates on Confederation in the Legislature of the Province of Canada --- the 'Canadian' Fathers of Confederation, French-speaking and English-speaking, made it plain, emphatically and in both languages, that they

"Quebec's demands are based on a false notion of what Confederation was all about."

considered they were founding 'a new nation', 'a single great nation, a political nationality independent of national origin' (Cartier). Macdonald spoke of 'joining these five peoples into one nation.' He added: 'We make the Confederation of one people and one government, instead of five peoples and five governments...'

There you have it as Macdonald and Cartier put it on the record almost 130 years ago. Clearly Confederation was about creating

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"When the collective is held supreme, all men must be held as objects of sacrifice." - Steve Ditko

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one nation --- and that's what a majority of the Quebec members voted for. To suggest that they were duped or fooled, as some have done, is simply dishonest.

Unfortunately, our governments --- including the national government in Ottawa --- never did explain this vision fully and clearly to all Canadians. The July 1, 1867 issue of *La Minerve* erroneously reported that "the new Constitution recognized the French Canadians as a distinct and separate nationality. We constitute a nation within a nation." This shows there was a basic misunderstanding in Quebec right from the beginning.

There is similar confusion about the question of Manitoba school legislation in the 1890s. It is commonly believed in Quebec that Manitoba abolished French schools that were constitutionally guaranteed.

Dr. Forsey describes the notion that French schools were guaranteed in the four original provinces in 1867 and Manitoba in 1870 as "pseudo-history." He writes, "There is not one syllable about school language in the Constitution Act of 1867, or in the Manitoba Act of 1870. Denominational schools, yes; but not French or English." He also points out that Manitoba's school legislation was not even about the language of education.

The misunderstanding about confederation lies at the root of Quebec's dissatisfaction with Confederation. Many people in Quebec think their province did not get something it was promised. If that were true, their unhappiness would be entirely justified. Yet, as Dr. Forsey has shown, there never was any such promise. So it is not sensible for Quebecers to be dissatisfied with Confederation.

Yet, most proposals to deal with the unity problem in Canada do not take any account of these facts. They attempt to deliver on a "promise" that never existed. In the process, they imply that English-speaking Canadians are guilty of a serious "wrong", when we are not. As a result, such plans are a recipe for further misunderstanding and division in this country.

It is not the responsibility of English-speaking Canadians to atone to our French-speaking compatriot for breaking a promise that was not made. On the contrary, it is up to French-speaking Canadians to come to terms with the truth and stop asking for special treatment. It would be unreasonable for them to do otherwise.

The vision of uniting into one nation that led Macdonald, Cartier and the other Fathers of Confederation --- English-speaking and French-speaking alike --- to establish this country was a great and noble one. The product of their deliberations was by no means perfect, but it did provide a good foundation that we can build on. Too many people today are ignoring the basis this country was founded on. This disturbs me deeply.

Those of us who are Canadian patriots have remained silent for too long. It's time for us to stand up for our country before we lose it.

Tough times demand strong government. Quebecers have indulged in their fantasy for long enough. It's about time they were given a clear message telling them how things really are.

1. Criminal charges should immediately be laid against Lucien Bouchard, Bernard Landry, and all others responsible for sending traitorous messages to Canadian soldiers and foreign embassies.

2. All existing agreement between Canada and Quebec which would suggest that Quebec is anything other than a province of Canada --- such as the Cullen-Couture agreement on immigration --- should be cancelled immediately.

3. the government should apply to the Supreme Court to have the draft Bill on sovereignty and the provinces's referendum law declared unconstitutional. Serious consideration should be given to disallowing the referendum law if the Court was to uphold it.

4. The government should declare that there will be no participation in any future Quebec referendums on separation. In the event that any such votes are held it should advise federalists to boycott them.

5. The government should publicly recognize the right of all loyal Canadians to remain in Canada without having to leave their present residence and its moral obligation to defend that right.

Of course, separatists won't like this message. They will rant and rave about provocation, but that will only undermine their credibility. Strong, bold action by the federal government is needed to stop this nonsense before it goes any further. Concert people have to put pressure on MPs to stand up for Canada.

As Edmund Burke once said, "When bad men combine, the good must associate; else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle." {END}

HOW TO SPOT THE CANADIAN..



"The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well meaning, but without understanding." - Louise Dembitz Brandeis 1856-1941

LEADING QUESTIONS

-Robert Metz

{Robert Metz is president and a founding member of Freedom Party.}

"IN THOSE DAYS a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the FIRST ENROLMENT, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child." (Bible: Luke 2)

It is no coincidence that the world's first census occurred during Rome's transition from a strong republic to a weak empire. This is not to suggest cause and effect; the cause of all breakdowns of great civilizations occurs when the government of the time grows too large, has too many powers, and no longer guarantees the rights of its citizens. As such, Rome's census, and the manner in which it was conducted, was symbolic of the political environment at the time: a totalitarian one.

"Census questions are completely political. No one ever denies this."

It has been almost 2000 years since Caesar's "first" census, and with Canada's May 14 census now behind us, perhaps we should count our blessings that we, as Canadian citizens, were not forced to return to our places of origin to be enumerated. Could you imagine the chaos?

But perhaps we *should* start imagining it. Though our government does not force us to RETURN to our places of origin, it does now force us to REPORT, not only on our place of origin, but also on our race of origin.

I can think of no clearer warning to illustrate that the Canadian government is deeply entrenched in the process of abandoning its proper function of guaranteeing individual rights in favour of establishing false 'group rights' and engaging in social engineering.

Despite this ominous warning, most Canadians still can't see what there is to be upset about when it comes to having to fill out a census: "So what's the big deal?" they ask. "Censuses have been around for thousands of years. They're only a head-count and the government simply needs the information to help them determine and meet the government's goals and targets, don't they?"

To which I cynically reply: "Yes. And that's the big deal. That's exactly why you should be worried."

Of course, a questionnaire, in and of itself, is not an issue at all, regardless of what questions may be asked. People have filled out questionnaires that have included information on everything from the brand of tea or coffee they drink, to their favourite sexual position.

However, the fundamental issue is this: when Cana-

dians are FORCED, by law, to provide personal information about themselves or face the threat of fines or imprisonment for failing to do so, those who have a moral disagreement either with the initiation of force, or with what the government is doing with the information, are placed in a serious dilemma. The law forces them to act against their conscience, and thus denies their fundamental freedoms.

The **Statistics Act** (Section 29) provides for a fine not exceeding \$500 or three months in jail or both for "knowingly giv(ing) false or misleading information," whether caused by "refusal or neglect, or false answer or deception."

What makes this penalty doubly unjustifiable is that census questions are completely political. No one ever denies this. In fact, the questions on this year's census culminated with *Statistics Canada's* lobbying to get certain questions on the census, in full view of the public, and getting 55 million extra dollars from other government departments and agencies who had a stake in the census

industry, including: **Citizenship and Immigration, Heritage, Health Canada, Human Resources Development, Industry, and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.**

How the information from the forced census would be used was outlined in the 1996 census guide prepared by *Statistics Canada*: "Census results are used: to decide how much money is transferred from the federal government to your province or territory; to plan pension, health care, housing and employment programs; to determine where hospitals, roads, schools, day care centres and public transit are needed; to analyse markets, select sites for building locations and develop marketing strategies."

From the standpoint of legitimate government activity, and of freedom, these are all destructive, immoral purposes.

For example, federal transfer payments dislocate capital and labour, keep unemployment high, and are immoral, arbitrary transfers of wealth based on nothing but statistical inequity. Likewise, Canada's pension plan is

actuarially unsound, built not upon a 'plan', but upon pyramid scheme principles that would otherwise (and justly!) be illegal and immoral in the private market. Our hospitals and

schools have become government monopolies paid for by taxes extorted from people who are increasingly being denied their freedom of choice in either area.

And as government grows and gets more and more out of control (by becoming more controlling), the questions asked on the census continue to reflect the political environment in which they are asked.

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"Men will resort to plunder whenever plunder is easier than work." - Frederic Bastiat

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Thus, the highly controversial racial questions on the 1996 census had to be justified by Statistics Canada as follows: "This information is collected to support programs which promote equal opportunity for everyone to share in the social, cultural and economic life of Canada." (Translation: "...so that employment equity laws can be properly administered.")

If such are the purposes to which the government applies the information it forces from us, then our governments are forcing us to participate in the destruction of our country. Ironically, our being forced to participate in the process is already evidence that Canada no longer respects the freedoms it purports to protect. To think that any of us, who should each be free solely by our definition AS Canadian citizens, could face threats of fines or imprisonment for not completing a state-ordered census form, is unconscionable.

We must come to face the fact that the information collected by our government is being used against us, to the detriment of our individual well-being, and to the well-being of the country. Governments of free nations cannot be social "planning" instruments, even if everyone wanted government to run their lives. Every society ever built upon such a principle has perished.

Unfortunately, when politicians and bureaucrats run out of RATIONAL reasons to justify their existence, they know that they can count on the next best thing: they can (mis)use STATISTICS. Indeed, governments have promoted a CULT(ure) OF STATISTICS, at the expense of REASON, MORALITY, and just plain old-fashioned COMMON SENSE.

"20% of people are unemployed. Under-employed. Disadvantaged. Over-advantaged." Whatever. The given assumption in quoting

such a statistic is that the government has to 'do something' about them. But whenever governments 'do something', it means more laws, more bureaucracy, more taxes, and less freedom.

Statistics can be used to evade issues of morality, values, and ethics in the consideration of objectives. More specifically, governments can avoid identifying the FALSE morality on which THEIR actions are based: the IMMORALITY OF EQUALITY OF RESULT.

"The questions we are forced to answer in virtually every government census are dangerously leading questions."

The issues, for example, of whether it is moral or not to force, by law, working people to subsidize the unemployed, or employers to hire people based on race, or whatever other choices are forced upon (or denied to) people are completely avoided by using statistics.

It is simply not true that the census exists to help government determine its objectives, as so many people mistakenly believe. Remember, any collection of statistics PRE-SUPPOSES a given objective.

After all, if you're going into the stamp collecting business, the statistical information you need would relate to stamp collecting: which stamps were valuable, how many in supply, how many collectors, which markets are the largest and smallest, etc. You certainly would NOT be collecting information on comic books or the number of comic book collectors.

That government is no different in this regard is documented by the government's own admissions that it already has its objectives in place and that it only uses census statistics to carry out its agenda.

Thus, we can be certain that a government which collects and segregates information on the basis of personal income, racial or ethnic background, or any other such criteria, is a government that PLANS TO TREAT EACH GROUP DIFFERENTLY. If that were not the case, SUCH INFORMATION WOULD BE IRRELEVANT to any of its objectives, and would therefore not be collected.

Armed with its egalitarian philosophy, EQUALITY OF RESULT is both the standard and objective by which government interprets the statistics collected. The tragedy is that it is the very existence of government equity laws and the process of wealth redistribution that is tearing Canada apart.

It is simply not possible to make people economically, socially, or morally equal by law! It is a contradiction in terms. To even entertain such a notion requires making people UNEQUAL BEFORE AND UNDER the law.

This would require the violation of every individual right that exists: private property, freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of thought and religion, and without them, we no longer have a free country.

Game over.

The questions we are forced to answer in virtually EVERY government census are dangerously LEADING QUESTIONS --- questions which are leading us to the abyss of social and economic stagnation in the name of the 'collective good' and for the sake of political power.

Statistics are a powerful weapon to use against the citizenry. That's why Canadians have "STATISTICS CANADA". And that's why Caesar Augustus needed a census. [END]

CONSENT

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