

RE: 'POLITICS' (considered from the Latin to mean 'The workings of the many'). The following article points out a set of relationships that many of us have considered at one time or another, put forth here as a topic for discussion.

Please also see Comments on Media Control on pages 8 and 9 by Marcus Macdonald.

IS THE POLITICAL SYSTEM BEYOND OUR CONTROL? AND HOW MIGHT WE RECLAIM IT?

Getting the right party elected to govern a nation is a key concern for many organisations, businesses and even states. The battleground is world wide even though our awareness as citizens is quite local. Canada and Quebec are small but essential parts of worldwide power-blocks. Let us assume that electoral preparedness is a major strategic battleground that goes on at every moment & antedates any specific event or action that we experience as a news event by years and decades. While I write this piece about forces at the Quebec & Canadian levels, please consider these forces operating at every Municipal, Provincial & Canadian level as well as in every country around the world and on multi-national levels.

EFFECTIVE CHOICES TODAY

While Canada and the provinces (Quebec Select Committee on the Election Act SCEA) are studying the possibility of implementing Proportional Representation and other options such as developing more full representation for women, First Nations, Ethnic Minorities, Provincial or regional representation and further restrictions on campaign financing, we are still not respecting the hidden hand of economics that effectively governs the political system regardless of our superficial attentions.

In this article I treat the hidden hand of economics as representing an essential force for our daily lives and democracy. I propose that; we've made a huge mistake in trying to exclude or demonise Economic Partner involvement in the political system, when we can respect its role and recapture universal economic participation & ownership for all of us in community.

QUEBEC & CANADIAN INDIGENOUS HERITAGE

It is revealing that the Quebec SCEA doesn't refer to the democratic heritage of Quebec First Nation, during its proceedings. We have been so inundated by our Colonial religious and national teachings that we've never been exposed to the knowledge of First Peoples whose lands we've invaded. Of interest for the SCEA is the way that First Nations across the Americas were able to integrate universal Economic Democratic involvement for their citizens. This popular form of citizen determined decentralized political and economic participation across both male and female labours achieved a culture of involvement.

The inability of western imperial nations to understand or integrate economic and political decision-making has led us to a whole series of superficial accommodations over thousands of years that lead us from one disaster to another. We are part of an 'Exogenous' (derived from the Latin meaning 'Other-generated') economy. Yet we all come from indigenous roots in homelands around the world, which were very much organised around the synthesis of both Co-operation and Capitalism. Both are complementary. Both are essential parts of an 'Indigenous' (derived from the Latin meaning 'Self-generating') whole. We still have the obligation of formally immigrating to Turtle Island (North America), Canada and Quebec through respect of the heritage indigenous people have cultivated over eons.

COLLECTIVE 'ECONOMIC' IMPERATIVE

'Economic' (derived from the Latin meaning 'Care and nurture of the home') players are actually the determinants of this game because they have massive disproportionate collected resources to fund, lubricate or manipulate our system. In their own way and through the voting that each of us engage in every time we spend our retail dollars, corporations have become the default chosen (in the absence of alternatives) collective organisms to which we all belong (literally). Economic livelihood is a primal force that supersedes politics. Politics is funded and determined by economy.

All we see is the surface of this massive undercurrent. Politics paradoxically have no innate funding and that as a society; very few citizens have questioned this. Our political system doesn't have the time or resources to process information from "Grass-roots". Calculate any of our systems' parameters and you will find huge discrepancies in the ability to respond to the Grass-Roots. Get involved in any political party or social organisation and you will both understand the system's limitations and experience some of the undercurrents. 28,000,000 Canadians do not find a voice for their knowledge and their concerns in our political system.

INEFFICIENCIES INDUCE SCARCITY

The conflicts and inefficiencies of our system are enormous. We operate in a system of scarcity because we are unable to collectively or individually mobilise our resources for well being. Western nations siphon wealth from the rest of the world because we unable to mobilize our own. A primary cause of this inability to organise our own resources has been our collective demonization of economic investment and involvement in decision-making. Please consider a number of publications such as Economic Democracy by JW Smith, which document this siphoning of wealth through disenfranchising trade agreements from around the world. Most are available on line from The Institute for Economic Democracy <http://www.ied.info/> Please also consider Indigenous Welcome & Orchard Food-Production Efficiencies, Guidelines for Operating a Forested Earth by this author for understanding how historical choices have determined our world.

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ORGANISATION ARE ONE

Business represents a form of 'Tree-root' organisation and collection of human energy and information. Without this collective organisation of our energy in some form, we would not find the necessary critical mass and synergy to economically & effectively meet our needs. Most citizens don't realize that economic manipulation of the political system is normal, so we have a huge discrepancy between the public face of the system and its reality. It is unfortunate that; in our denial, business and industry are unable to openly engage citizens for investment into and management of our collective concerns and citizens are unable to publicly engage corporations in formal relations of mutual benefit. The Economic Democracy model of the American Confederacies including those of the Quebec territory, seamlessly integrated political and economic decision-making.

SUPERFICIALLY BLOCKING EXCESS

New legislation passed by the previous 2003 Canadian parliament provides funding to parties based on per-capita election results as long as a party reaches a minimum 2%. Quebec legislations is similar. If a party receives 15% of the vote then 50% of its expenses will be refunded by the state. If a party wins, then it can afford to pay back some of its past marketing expenses however this is a most random form of recovery. Legislation

as well limits open corporate gifts to political parties to a maximum of 2000\$. Legislating limits is an attempt to establish civil control for our system assuming that grass-roots democracy provides representation of citizens.

STRATEGIC COSTS & RELATIONSHIPS

However even winning is not enough to cover the kind of strategic costs & relationships that political battles entail. On the basis of their strategic mutual interests, political parties form relations with businesses, industries and even intelligence and strategic foundations of foreign governments. Important livelihood, corporate survival, economic and political decisions, both here and around the world are benefited-by election results. As long as the general public don't recognise the importance of the economic process, economic managers will secretly strategise and abscond the reigns of power to keep it alive.

MAINSTREAM PARTIES

Consider the 'Sponsorship Scandal' as a small part of a permanently hidden battleground and you can understand the scale of war that the Bloc, Conservatives and the Liberals are engaged in. These parties do represent some different approaches to economic and political management, but definite agreement on means of organisation towards these aims. When an electoral campaign war chest is full, consider that there are many operating costs and relationships entailed in this filling of coffers. Open public donations appearing on the balance sheet are only a small part of the total. Hidden relationships, transactions and bank-accounts are the norm.

RED AND GREEN PARTIES

The NDP receives its campaign funds from public donations and relationships with social organisations, unions and the occasional business and industrial-based socialists. The NDP has never been proficient in developing relations with corporations nationally, because its programs are government-centered as far as delivery of services and decision-making.

The CCF and NDP have been around long enough but are clearly 'out-financed' not just at every federal election, but particularly in the preparatory stages between elections. Part of the change from the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) name to the NDP (New Democratic Party) name concerned the difficulty that millions of Canadians and immigrants coming from Socialist countries had experienced with Co-operatives.

SEED FINANCING

That election results are determined by funding is obvious. It takes all political parties 'seed' money to raise money if winning is a goal. Seed money can be understood as strategy and preparation. The incentives for electoral manipulation for livelihood and economic well-being are enormous. Hidden seed financing is, de rigueur, the standard without exception. Economics are an essential part of our political system. How can we welcome the kinds of organisation, economics and governance by which our economic life is governed and maintain a fair, balanced and valorizing political system?

COUNTER INTUITIVE SOLUTIONS

The Green Party of Canada, which I have been part of as a candidate (LaSalle-Emard, Quebec, June 2004 election) and Shadow Cabinet member (May 2004 to May 2005) is similar to the NDP in that it raises funding by membership donations almost exclusively.

When it is suggested that GPC prepare portfolios for promoting, working with and receiving funding from Green (Best-practice) businesses and social-environmental organisations as our natural allies & collective community voices, the notion violates many principles of both organisers and the public's conscious understanding of how our political system is "supposed to" work. Over thirty-five years, I've also volunteered for the NDP and Liberals, enjoyed friendly relations with the Conservative and Bloc Quebecois and been involved at the municipal, provincial and federal political work.

PROBABILITY

It's beyond probability that the Green Party has grown to such national prominence so quickly in a body of some thirty political parties nation-wide. The vote splitting for the progressive voice (Liberals + Greens + NDP + Bloc-Quebecois = 65% of the electorate) will leave Canadian power in the hands of the Conservatives.

We know that the Conservatives have a stated alliance with the Neo-conservative George Bush who has been abandoned by many allies, worldwide. Harper has publicly stated his allegiance for the Iraq war and other US policies. Although I believe in the best intentions of all involved, I don't believe in accidents. Although there are many social factors, which contribute to electoral success, the hidden hand of economy is always with us.

While NDP or Greens generally don't violate electoral financing laws, voters won't elect them because they deeply violate deeper laws about the primal importance and nature of effective and timely economic organisation for community livelihood. Citizens instinctively understand livelihood as 'common-sense', even if institutional-based Social-scientists don't.

ECONOMIC 'DEMOCRACY' (derived from the Greek meaning 'Power of the people')

Our real power is based in the work that we do and recognition for our work and our knowledge. Our work has the greatest impact on community ecology and economy. Political democracy can be understood to represent a form of 'Straw vote' at any time in order to quickly survey collected opinions. But we should never replace respect for our deep individualized professional knowledge and the quick survey.

IMPERIAL ROOTS

Our present expectations for 'Democracy' are long formed from our imperial roots in the British, French and other European empires. We long ago gave up the specific practices that enabled 'Power of the people' to be an integral part of our lives as autocratic business, organisations and governments became firmly established in our cultural matrix. However if we revisit our heritage we find that; the First Nation Political Democratic models Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, Marx and Engels were all inspired by, actually were founded in Economic Democracy. This is not the dysfunctional form represented by co-operatives today but by the guild tradition in which progressive ownership developed over the course of a lifetime.

MALE-FEMALE PARTNERSHIP

Indigenous economic structures included accounting, valorization and empowerment for the labour of women & community service as well as its representation in Production Society economic and political democracy. Longhouse (apartment) and pueblo (townhouse) styles of living where work in the home and many common spaces were collectively shared, were as well destroyed and couldn't support the home-keeper. The isolated nuclear-family

home-keeper has lost recognition for the most essential of labours. With the spread of empires, we know that traditional indigenous knowledge of these systems was lost or destroyed. While economy means 'Care and nurture of the home' we have degraded its meaning to it's opposite. Our political system has been part of this degradation.

INDIGENOUS CONFEDERACIES

The strength of the Confederacies across North, Central and South America was based in the universal practice of progressive member ownership of Production Societies PS. Women grouped into specific PS according to their labour specialty and men were as well represented in this fashion. Young apprentices grew into ownership over the course of a lifetime and eventually to the wisdom of the Elder.

The String-bead Value systems such as Wampum, Wahbung, Esnogway, Seewant, Kayoni, Ote-ko-a, Asurgy and Quipu were integrated systems of ownership and decision-making that everyone had involvement in, both men and women. Most economic and political decisions and implementation was made in the PS. This Economic Democracy model was common in much of Eur-Asia and Africa in pre-imperial times. Our understanding of Guild traditions today is quite limited and negatively transformed as far as our cultural memory recalls, from the friction and tarnishing of the imperial period.

CAUCUSING

This economic control by corporations is the same as we experience today, only our corporations aren't democratic. Co-operatives or social organisations, as well do not distinguish member contributions and particular sets of member knowledge acumen. One member / one vote systems have never been able to take a place in the successful organisation of livelihood. First Nations were able to distinguish contributions by grouping of skills in Production Society specialties and through a continual process of caucusing (derived from the Iroquois meaning, 'Grouping of like-interests') in order to evolve skills and cultivate diversity based in free-association.

PARTICIPATORY CORPORATIONS

There are modern businesses and industrial corporations that are founded in Economic Democracy based in progressive ownership. Tembec Forest Products www.tembec.com, Defasco Steel or Tom's Toothpaste are examples of Participatory multi-national corporations. In Europe the Associative Economic corporations, in Japan the Keiretsu, in Korea the Chaebol. These enterprises are successful, but lacking in many indigenous balances that would allow them to become an international standard.

LEFT - RIGHT COMPLEMENTARITY

Economic democracy opens the door for the natural complementarity of Left and Right. The livelihood generation that mainstream parties are devoted to, complements the inclusive participation that reds and greens wish to see. Accounting for worker investments in ownership is a foundation of capitalism, but both the exclusive monetary ownership implemented during imperial times and the reaction of co-op or union centered (one-member/one vote) Reds has left our society in a deep dysfunction that left and right haven't been able to work together. Each party contradicts their own message in the processes that they use among themselves. In order to fly, we need both wings. 'PARTY' (derived from the Latin means to 'Share')

Our present political parties are 'cause' and power oriented and unable to share. We unite to win an election, to get a piece of legislation passed or to influence public opinion or actions but we don't unite our particular strengths as members of each party to create nuclei of social-economic organisation for ourselves and our communities. Rather than waiting for the exclusive capture of power in the exclusive and competitive electoral system, we can join our forces together in economic livelihood.

SUBJECTIVE CARING

We can balance social 'objectives' with caring for our economic subjective. Translated subjective means caring for ourselves and each other in the process of getting our goals accomplished. We have been at odds with ourselves because of our fear of selfish gain. Good social-economic accounting helps us to distinguish contributions and to make this an open part of our interactions and our celebration for what we create together. When celebration is coupled with recognition for the work we are and have accomplished then we have reason to dance, sing and engage in pure joy.

IMPLEMENTING ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY

The reader can understand that implementing economic democracy in our work places, homes and communities is our only real choice for a democratic society. The seed of implementation is through our accounting systems and the core is in forms of governance. What we account for becomes the foundation of what we can consider and valorise in our world. In order to understand the complex balances needed to restore an integrated economic and political system, it is important that we revalorize our indigenous traditions from around the world. Everyone has indigenous roots that are particularly important for understanding our present contradictions and dilemmas.

VALORIZING INDIGENOUS TRADITION

The Great Law of Peace by Deganawida and Hiawatha founders of the Iroquois League of Nations is based in the establishing of economic democracy and the role of Wampum.

Wampum as a system of Economic Value integrated many diverse functions including:

1. Consideration – Time-based accounting acknowledgement record of contributions.
2. Compensation – A full cycle of giving and receiving for individual and community well-being guarantees that no one is overworked and everyone has the opportunity to contribute.
3. Capital – Progressive ownership of means in Production Societies.
4. Currency – Exchange value for goods and services.
5. Condolence – Social Security for Production Societies and Community members.
6. Convivial Adoption – A policy of community and economic inclusion for everyone including members of warring enemy nations.
7. Diplomatic Conveyance – Asset-based negotiation for shared resource harvesting and economic compensation among individuals, Production Societies, Communities and Nations.
8. Collegial Apprenticing – Guild-based training and accreditation for knowledge and skills as well as vision determined individually through the Vision-quest.
9. Cataloguing of Knowledge – by event, domain and affiliation.
10. Communication – of quantity (inventory) and quality (controls) integrated with graphic character writing system.

11. Costume – Public exhibition of earned and inherited (family-based system) labour and knowledge status.
12. Celebration for the gifts of each personality in community.
13. Caucusing and Consensus as ways of respectfully separating and uniting, distinguishing and composing forces for community well-being.

INTEGRATING ECONOMY BACK INTO POLITICS

It is important that we learn how to reintegrate economy into our political process. Its been about 400 years since the first European colonies first invaded Canada. We've continued the imperial pattern of trying to reinvent ourselves ever since without considering First Nation democratic heritage. Our chauvinism and genocidal policies towards First Nations are still as strong as when we began. We haven't tried to support First Nations in a systematic collection of their heritage or convened hearings of truth and reconciliation.

To readers: Do you believe that:

1. The Sponsorship Scandal is an isolated event typical of only one political party?
2. Economics do not have a determining role in political governance?
3. Our system operates untampered and is determined only by the vulgarities of the electoral system?
4. Massive tampering of computer voting results(no paper trail for verification) in the USA is an accident?
5. Capturing of economies, resources and political processes is not a major competitive concern worldwide?

First Nations have been telling us for a long time that real democracy is quite different from what we have imagined and that as well our system is deeply manipulated and flawed.

Those who have become involved in 'Satyagraha' (Hindi word used by Mohandas Gandhi meaning 'Truth-force') recognise that Economic Democracy is the foundation for Sustainable Peace. We recognise that making peace is more an economic than a political process. M. Gandhi wrote, *"Live simply, so that others may simply live"* and *"Regard human labour as more even than money and you have an untapped and inexhaustible source of income, which ever increases with use."* 1945 to a British governor in India.

My own hope is for understanding for the traditional indigenous system, a public acknowledgement of our Western paradox and a cultivation for the Economic Democracy that it takes to heal our system of Political Democracy. My desire is that we can disengage from the war machine that our present economy of scarcity represents in the world.

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COMMENTS ON MEDIA CONTROL

Dear Douglas, Your text was very fine reading and I thought I might add some comments which, I believe, support your statements. Marcus Macdonald

CANADA ELECTION 23rd JANUARY 2006

Naturally no one was surprised by the results of our last election. The only surprise in elections these days is the percentage of abstention, which is, invariably, a fascinating figure, well worth contemplation. What grabbed my attention was not the results, but, how those results were created. Anyone, following the media coverage of the elections, could have noticed the way our various leaders were portrayed; without the benefit of the figures that emanated from numerous polls, it was obvious that the Tories would win, that none of the others even had a fighting chance, just by observing the looks on their faces, their attitudes, body language, and other visual vectors that the medias carefully presented to us; there was no room left for doubt. Harper was always shown confident and calm, the opposition in various attitudes of panic, anger, and confusion.

DEFINING THE VILLAIN

Much in the same way Hollywood movies will define the villain long before we discover his misdeeds, or the victim (prior to succumbing to losses), or the hero (before proving himself) our trusted journalists portrayed the competing candidates based on projected results. Using carefully chosen images, our emotions, biases, and even our hopes, can be subtly (and often crudely) manipulated. Our various emotional reactions (which have to power to over-ride our intellectual understanding) at the conclusion of a film, are invariably those intended by the film makers. The best films can surprise, amaze, provoke and stimulate us, leaving us free to interpret, and guide us to a path of personal and collective evaluation.

TURNING TENDENCIES

The most exploitative films take no risks; they cannot afford to unleash the unpredictable minds of their viewers; these films prey on our subconscious, and ruthlessly lead our minds like cattle to slaughter (sorry about that metaphor). The commercial exploitation film closely resembles propagand-a, the goal is to control, rather than liberate, the spectator. Turning our natural tendencies against us, playing with our fears, desires and egos, we're easy targets for these highly trained manipulators. In the case of many contemporary cinematic endeavours, financial gain, at any cost, is the primary motor. The pitiless market pools, where these media sharks hunt, seem to lack in community intelligence; in their feeding frenzy they are capable of exterminating the very source of their nourishment.

VACUOUS BANALITY

A prominent film producer recently complained that the film industry was suffering because the young generation was less and less apt to remain concentrated for the required duration of a film projection; ten to fifteen minutes was already taxing the patience of their young minds (conditioned, more and more, by exposure to television and computer technologies). One typical reaction of film makers is to bombard the viewer with an onslaught of violence, explosions, gratuitous sex and gore, vacuous banalities, and confusing noise, in a pitiful bid for the audiences attention.

Somewhere along the line, the young viewers capacity to discern and expose themselves to stimulating, enriching, entertainment has been eroded; their natural tendency to

energetically explore the world, exchanged for a new, more passive, virtual exploration of contrived digital universes. While developing certain novel capacities (joy-stick dexterity, knowledge of the intricacies of celebrity intrigues, and other valuable skills...) we are sacrificing many of the tremendous qualities that make the human creature so adept at surviving (not to mention adding joy to our lives). Alarmed educators at every level are anxious about where these tendencies might be leading, as they observe the diminishing ability of students to be creative, have personal incentive, and think independently, as well as a marked decline in social skills (inability to form lasting bonds etc.). The general erosion of communication skills is, for a social animal, an unmistakable sign of decay.

In the case of our withering democracies the role of the media is unclear. We rely on our journalists to inform us, however, journalists are influenced by the media they watch. Even a journalist, who can freely voice information gathered, is biased as to which information is gleaned and from which source. The chicken or the egg dilemma; Is the influencer influenced? Humans have always depended on each other to unravel the story of their shared existences.

STORYTELLER

The age old method, oral story telling, was so much more than words; the truth, born in our sweat glands, was smelt, in the twitches of the body, read, in the gaze of the eyes, felt, in the timber of the voice understood; a myriad of indices spoke to us of an event encountered and related. The event itself was "real" & left its imprint on our bodies with as many devices as we have senses. What information can be gathered by viewing a 2-dimensional screen which spews out its message so frenetically that the individual can hardly be expected to contemplate and analyze the impoverished (however abundant) information? Just 5 minutes spent with any politician would be more telling than hours of televised campaign coverage.

By diminishing our senses, I believe, we are losing our ability to judge, which, in turn, paralyzes us into inaction. If we cannot evaluate our choices we have none. Growing apathy, passivity, and alienation, are the sad fruits of our current "leaps of progress". The computer, with its promise to free people from the tedium of certain tasks, has many chained to its seductive screens. Television, with all its potential to unite and inform large populations and share culture is, instead, deadening and debasing our spirits. It is obvious that these tools are here to stay; they are important valuable resources which, like so many of our resources, are being vilely wasted.

CULTURAL ECOLOGY

We need to be more ecological concerning our cultural resources. The concept of sustainable development is making inroads in many important fields, especially in the domains concerning economy, industry, and urbanism. I believe that it is essential for our future that sustainability and ecology (hence economy) be guiding principals for all human endeavours. Allowing cultural engines such as television and computers to develop without guidance is irresponsible and ultimately suicidal. We need to return to our ancestral roots in the same steps we take as we stride towards new technologies. By rediscovering our sensual natural state we will be more apt to make the important decisions we face each day, as individuals, and as a collectivity.