



Canadian Student Review

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Cashing in on Cachet: How Private Market Advertising Can Provide Improved Funding for Canada's Education System

By *Brittney Bogyo*

Public school systems across Canada are in a constant struggle for funds from cash-strapped provincial and local governments. Despite the need for increased funding, school boards seem universally reluctant to accept funds from one of the most ubiquitous activities of our private-enterprise based economy: advertising. Product promotion is nothing new in our schools. Sometimes blatant, often subtle, schools are full of the logos and brand images that are part of our market-driven economy. Recognizing the fact of "brand

marketing" in our schools could improve the educational well being of the next generation of Canadians.

Ask any advertiser about the concept of "brands" and you'll get a lesson in mass marketing. Markets are all about matching consumers with producers; branding helps consumers identify the quality and allure of a particular product or service in markets crowded with producers. Advertising is a big part of brand marketing. It helps a producer deliver his messages to a specific target audience. Providing

opportunities to reach that target audience is worth something and producers are willing to pay a premium for such opportunities. Like it or not, marketers already find ways to reach the lucrative teenage audience in our schools.

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Welcome!

We are happy to bring you the final edition of *CSR* for 2001. It contains more great articles written by Canadian students, including the winner of the high school category in this year's Student Essay Contest. There are also provocative articles on Canadian campus media, student unions, and overpopulation.

Also enclosed is the 2002 student intern program information. The application deadline for this exciting program is January 31, 2002.

Many thanks to the Lotte & John Hecht Memorial Foundation who sponsors this newsletter and enables it to be distributed free of charge on campuses across the country.

– Vanessa Schneider, Editor

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The Fraser Institute is an independent Canadian economic and social research and educational organization. It has as its objective the redirection of public attention to the role of competitive markets in providing for the well-being of Canadians. Where markets work, the Institute's interest lies in trying to discover prospects for improvement. Where markets do not work, its interest lies in finding the reasons. Where competitive markets have been replaced by government control, the interest of the Institute lies in documenting objectively the nature of the improvement or deterioration resulting from government intervention. The Fraser Institute is a national, federally chartered non-profit organization financed by the sale of its publications and the contributions of its members, foundations, and other supporters.

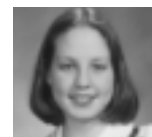
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Paul Beaudry est présentement à sa première année de cégep au Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf à Montréal. Il aimerait étudier en droit et est un passionné de philosophie politique. Paul a participé au Colloque étudiant de l'Institut Fraser tenu au mois de mai dernier.



Student Leaders Colloquium participants, May 12, 2001 in Vancouver.

Bill Emmott, editor of The Economist magazine, talks with a journalist and student Aidan Johnson at the Fraser Institute Round Table Luncheon in Toronto on November 14, 2001.



Recognizing the value inherent in these marketing transactions and effectively managing them could improve the quality of Canada's education system.

Brand marketing is already rampant in our schools. Dairy marketing boards sponsor "Moo-la" promotions and soft drink manufacturers offer incentives for schools to become exclusively Coke or Pepsi markets. Yet when the issue of "advertising" is discussed at school board meetings, it is often the source of heated debate. Brand images such as GAP, Nike, Coke, Sony, IBM, the NHL, Voit, and a hundred others pervade the halls of our schools each day without comment or concern. From the clothing the students wear, to the computers used in Information Technology classes, to the Starbucks coffee mugs everyone carries through the halls, brand marketing is an everyday part of educational experience. For the most part, the opportunity to deliver marketing messages to the target audience of young adults is achieved at low cost to advertisers and with little or no direct benefit to the students who are their billboards. Nor does the community, which funds the education system and provides the venue for these marketing activities to take place, derive any direct benefit from them. Why shouldn't students and taxpayers receive something for their participation in brand marketing? After all, the only real difference between the Nike "swoosh" parading through the halls on a student's shirt and the

same image on a billboard on a bus shelter across the street is who derives the benefit and how much.

We derive direct benefits from marketing and advertising activities in our everyday experience. Advertising pays for the television entertainment we consume; marketing provides community events from the Molson Indy to the Benson & Hedges Symphony of Fire. Even school theatre productions solicit and print programs with advertising in them to subsidize these worthwhile efforts. The delivery of brand-marketing messages to target audiences is a fundamental market transaction.

Outside the hallowed hallways of learning, the delivery of branded messages helps pay for rapid transit, bus shelters and even the newest pedestrian overpass in New Westminster, BC. This novel concept saw New Westminster City Council approve a twenty-year agreement with Mediacom, Canada's outdoor advertising leader¹. The ratepayers get a fully built and landscaped bicycle and pedestrian overpass linking a new school and subdivision. Mediacom gets the rights to erect seven poster panels, one of which is designated for public announcements and community events.

While the messages students see must meet prescribed standards, there are few who would suggest that young consumers must be shielded from all forms of branded advertising. On any given weekend, local softball, soccer and rugby

teams—sporting jerseys with the Tim Horton's, Payless or Costco logo—play on school and community fields. Why then, during the rest of the week should the *same* kids playing the *same* sports often in the *same* venues, be considered vulnerable to advertising simply because they are in school? Why not recognize the situation for what it is: a marketing opportunity that could provide funds for functional sports equipment and protective gear that fits?

Products that highlight a single brand already dominate technology courses. Many schools have "Mac" or "IBM Labs" and are served by a single internet service provider. Bureaucrats make their selections on the basis of economics, consistency and efficiency. Their choices, however, present to audiences of young consumers the messages marketers pay dearly for in any other venue. The very fact that specifically branded products have been selected for use in education facilities, places these products in a more favourable light. Students are repeatedly exposed to the brand logo from the moment they walk into the IT classroom. If the objection to advertising in schools was sincere, then brand logos would be stripped from hardware and branded software like Microsoft Word, Corel Draw, AutoDesk's AutoCad and Simply Accounting would be outlawed. Learning generic word processing on clone computers may protect students from an effective form of brand marketing, but it does

¹ "Mediacom Funds Building of New Cyclist and Pedestrian Overpass in New Westminster", news release dated June 21, 2000 as viewed at, http://www.mediacom.ca/Mediacom_funds.html, May 19, 2001

nothing to prepare them for jobs in the real world.

School boards use competitive bids processes to keep prices down; market forces (the various manufacturers vying for market share) help achieve that objective, but the potential for an ongoing revenue stream is often overlooked. School boards typically consider computer equipment tenders under their capital budgets. Why not consider renting out the start up screen, screen saver or space on the keyboard or monitor to the providers on an on-going basis?

Certain advertisements (ads for cigarettes, political parties, or alcohol for example) in or near a school are clearly inappropriate. Ads promoting good health, exercise, summer jobs and a host of social marketing causes from safe sex to WorkSafe² have important messages for students. Why not improve the well being of Canadian students and the effectiveness of these ads at the same time? Why not recognize school-based markets as an opportunity to promote local, regional, or national products to the benefit of all? If advertising in schools is sanctioned, it can be regulated. If a school is already a Pepsi or Coke location, why shouldn't school trustees look for opportunities to extract greater benefit from that relationship? The only difference between a Pepsi billboard in the hall that generates income for the school district and the same image on the front panel

of a vending machine is that one dispenses product (at least occasionally).

Academic courses are not immune from marketing efforts. Actual photographs of the Texas Instruments' TI-83 calculators appear in British Columbia's Grade 10 Math textbooks. Clearly, at least one manufacturer has found a way to successfully promote their branded product in our ostensibly advertising-free education system. Hewlett Packard, Texas Instruments, Casio and many others make graphing calculators but many teachers or schools will state a preference and gear their Math or Physics instruction to the keyboard, techniques or displays specific to one line of equipment—and rightly so. The consistency of equipment provides efficiency in instruction and learning. The fact that proofs of purchase donated by the students can provide the school with free calculators, accessories or transparent ViewScreen calculators for overhead projectors³ is not widely publicized but is yet another example of effective marketing existent in our public schools today.

Rather than renew efforts to ban advertising or maintain the sham that marketing is not allowed in our public schools, it is

time to recognize and embrace the reality of brand marketing in our education system. It is time to re-think the value proposition inherent in our modern classrooms. Students, particularly in high school, have an enormous value to marketers. School locations and the routes traveled by students have value to marketers. The Mediacom example shows that marketers are willing to invest significantly for the good of the community in exchange for appropriate and responsible access to these markets. Rather than denying the marketing that already exists, its time to recognize it and develop responsible ways for our education system to cash in on the transactions already taking place. ☺

Let me tell you how it will be
There's one for you, nineteen for me
'Cause I'm the taxman, yeah, I'm the taxman
Should five per cent appear too small
Be thankful I don't take it all
'Cause I'm the taxman, yeah, I'm the taxman
If you drive a car, I'll tax the street,
If you try to sit, I'll tax your seat.
If you get too cold I'll tax the heat,
If you walk, I'll tax your feet.
Don't ask me what I want it for
If you don't want to pay some more
'Cause I'm the taxman, yeah, I'm the taxman
Now my advice for those who die
Declare the pennies on your eyes
'Cause I'm the taxman, yeah, I'm the taxman
And you're working for no one but me
George Harrison, from song 'Taxman' on
The Beatles album Revolver 1966

² WorkSafe is a trademarked term of the Workers' Compensation Board of British Columbia for initiatives to promote safety, health and prevention activities in the workplace.

³ The Texas Instrument website contains a list of accessories that may be obtained with varying numbers of proofs of purchase. For details see <http://education.ti.com/global/vppgraph.html> [valid as viewed on May 19, 2001].

Things Folks Know That Just Ain't So:

Overpopulation Part III: Population Density

In past issues of CSR, we looked at the overpopulation concerns related to food production and scarce resources. In both cases, the evidence overwhelming shows that we are not running out of food or resources. Another factor that doomsayers use to prove overpopulation is overcrowding.

This argument simply says that we are running out of space for the ever-growing population on Earth. Predictably, the predictions are quite gloomy. Humans will crowd themselves to the point where they will start to die off. If this is true, why haven't humans begun to die off in densely populated areas such as Hong Kong and London?

It is useful to look at just how crowded humans are. Certainly, flying over most areas of the world will reveal vast unoccupied territories. Cities cover a small percentage of the earth. World population is just over the 6 billion mark. How does that translate into tangible terms? If the world's entire population moved to the state of Texas, the population density per square mile would be 20,705, which is about the same as that of Toronto.

It is then argued that it is not land itself that is valuable, but arable land. This argument denies the other economic benefits of land. Oil-rich land in the Middle East is certainly not very useful for farming, for example, but has great value. Basic economics tells us that if farmland became scarce enough to threaten human survival, its price would increase and farmland that

had been paved over for shopping malls would be converted back into farmland.

Another important point is that the majority of people live in densely populated areas, by choice. Worldwide, people tend to move from less populated to more populated areas. The reasons are understandable. Because of a larger number of individuals, there exist a greater number of possible trade transactions, which creates a wealthier community. More densely populated, urban areas tend to be wealthier than rural areas, think of Hong Kong and India, for example. Economies of scale also provide certain technologies much more cheaply in cities, like subways, highways, electricity and sewage systems. Moving the city dwellers to the less-dense rural areas would make everyone poorer.

In fact, there is a considerable environmental argument for living in cities, as well. City dwellers generally live in smaller homes, and travel shorter distances to work. High population density leaves large tracts of land open for recreational, agricultural, and conservation endeavors.

Current demographic trends show that much of the world has in fact reached stable or diminishing populations. In fact, the Total

Fertility Rate has declined everywhere in the world except Africa, from 5 children per woman in 1950-55 to 3.6 in 1980-1985. (2.1 is needed for zero population growth.)

In fact, the world is becoming less overpopulated every year. As nations become prosperous, and the incomes of families rise, the cost of having additional children increases. When nations become healthier and have longer life expectancies, it is no longer necessary to have several children as a "retirement plan" for the parents' old age. Economic development, more than any other strategy, has and will continue to gradually bring about population control.

So, we're not running out of food, our resource supply is stable, and living closely together may actually be a good thing. Is the world overpopulated or is it another widely accepted myth? ☹

Next issue: Does More Health Care Spending Result in Better Care?

This report was excerpted primarily from *Exploding Population Myths* by Jim Peron, Critical Issues Bulletin (The Fraser Institute: Vancouver, BC) October 1995, pp. 19-26. Full text available on-line at: http://www.fraserinstitute.ca/publications/critical_issues/1995/exploding/

Big Government 101: Canada's future state planners are honing their skills at a campus near you

✎ *By Ray Novak* ✎

Deficit financing, debt servicing payments, tax increases, subsidized monopolies, interventionist social programs, and government cronyism – a nightmare from not-so distant Canadian political history? In fact, for today's university students this grim scenario is a familiar reality.

University students in Canada are suffering from a chronic case of parasitic big government. Not only must students labour under the weight of federal, provincial, and municipal administrations, they must also contend with a dizzying array of entrenched student-run bureaucracy. From umbrella students unions, to faculty councils, independent residence councils and a myriad of paid lobby groups, students have no shortage of 'leaders' who self-righteously claim to speak on their behalf. The simple fact is, university students are the most over-governed demographic in Canadian society today.

These student 'governments' have moved well beyond their traditional roles of keeping an eye on administration, planning the odd keg party, and generally trying to make newcomers feel at home. The student unions of today hire full time salaried managers, run

their own monopolistic corporations, pay lobbyists to communicate with other levels of government, repeatedly run budget deficits, and of course, tax their citizens freely to pay for it all. The state planners of tomorrow have indeed found a lucrative niche in which to hone their skills.

This scandal is perpetuated year after year because these organizations have the power to levy taxes in the form of annual 'student fees' that must be paid along with tuition. Most students are taken for anywhere between \$50 and \$350 dollars a year depending on the institution.¹ The total haul for a student government at a large university can be four or five million dollars in a single year², a figure that does not include income from sources beyond base student fees.

With this money, student unions embark on a variety of different adventures. A popular option is to subsidize perpetually money-losing student-run businesses. This practice tends to drive away competition and leave students to pay for deficits racked up in the name of interventionist economics.

Student unions also pour money into social spending. At the University of Western Ontario, my

alma mater, students are hit with not one, but two separate levies to subsidize different daycare facilities. At the same institution a mandatory bus-pass was initiated, forcing students to cough up \$96 a year whether they needed the pass or not. After complaining to officials that I didn't want the pass (because after three years of university I finally had access to a vehicle) I was told that since I had a car, I could obviously afford to help pay for everyone else's transport to school as well. Little had I realized that a rickety ten year old sedan would suffice for membership in the bourgeoisie.

Financing narrow political agendas with money expropriated from others, a practice popular at the highest levels of Canadian politics, is also prevalent on campuses. For instance, tens of thousands of Canadian students are forced to pay fees to the notorious Canadian Federation of Student (CFS), a radically left wing lobby group.³ Boasting affiliates such as the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and the American Steelworkers Union, the CFS campaigns for 'free' tuition and helps send students rioting against the World Trade Organ-

¹ Non-academic fees paid by undergraduates at the University of Western Ontario exceeded this ranging, at more than \$400 for the 2001-2002 academic year.

² For instance, the 2001-2002 UWO student council budget forecasts over \$8 million in gross student fees, with a net \$2.5 million remaining after transfers out.

³ I was forced to become a member of the CFS after a referendum last spring among graduate students at the University of Calgary that saw only 14% voter turnout.

ization, among other equally dubious causes.

But isn't all of this just democracy in action? Student governments are, after all, elected. Well, barely anyway. Student union elections last spring at the University of Calgary witnessed a whopping 14% voter turn-out. Typical turn-out ranges anywhere between 5% and 25% of eligible voters. These levels of apathy are not surprising given the high stress atmosphere and high population turn-over rate that is the university norm.

Indeed, who can fault the poor

first year student who, in his haste to purchase the correct textbook and find the right classroom, doesn't have time to slap the grubby hands of a greedy student union away from his pockets? University students, distracted with the challenges of succeeding at post-secondary education, have become the unsuspecting victims of parasitism on a massive scale.

It is time to blow the whistle on the organized thievery taking place at the hands of campus big governments. Students should have the power to withhold fees, and student

unions should be forced to balance their books. Perhaps bloated student governments can be starved into accountability.

With shockingly weak mandates from their citizens, many of these organizations have come to resemble little more than student juntas run by the well connected few, rather than democratic governments with a reasonable claim to levy taxes. Canadian university students need to reclaim their voices and their dollars, and tell the state planners of tomorrow to train somewhere else. ☹

Bulletin Board

CALGARY STUDENT SEMINAR ON PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

Saturday, January 26, 2002

The Westin Calgary

MONTREAL STUDENT SEMINAR ON PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

Saturday, February 9, 2002

Renaissance Montreal Hôtel



CALGARY HIGH SCHOOL SEMINAR

Friday, March 1, 2002

Telus Convention Centre

SASKATOON STUDENT SEMINAR ON PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

Friday, March 8, 2002

Radisson Hotel Saskatoon

WINNIPEG STUDENT SEMINAR ON PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

Saturday, March 9, 2002

Holiday Inn Winnipeg South

Full program details and registration form at www.fraserinstitute.ca.

Libérons-nous de l'emprise de l'État!

✎ Par Paul Beaudry ✎

La liberté s'avère la valeur à laquelle je tiens le plus. Je crois fermement que les droits individuels supplantent les abstraits droits collectifs et je suis un fervent opposant à toutes sortes d'interventionnisme gouvernemental, autant sur le plan social qu'économique. Je préfère Ronald Reagan à Franklin Delano Roosevelt et j'approuve davantage les politiques économiques prônées par Maurice Duplessis que par Jean Lesage. Je crois également, comme l'a si bien démontré Charles Murray dans son livre *Losing Ground*, que la majorité des programmes sociaux devraient être abolis ipso facto, car, par principe, il ne revient pas à l'État de les maintenir. Le rôle de l'État devrait se limiter au maintien de la sécurité publique et de bonnes conditions économiques. Plusieurs penseront que je suis un «dangereux néolibéral»...eh bien oui!

La deuxième moitié du vingtième siècle ayant été caractérisé par l'établissement et la propagation de l'État providence, les néolibéraux se font très rarement entendre et leurs idées sont souvent mal acceptées par la population, facteur souvent lié à l'intolérance des médias. Il s'avère peu étonnant de constater que le Canada n'échappe pas aux courants de gauche, et tout spécialement le Québec, qui est historiquement ancré dans une

tradition nationaliste, que ce soit de droite avant les années 1960 et de gauche (quasi socialiste) après 1960.

Pourquoi le gouvernement dépense-t-il tant l'argent de ses citoyens? Il veut souvent créer ou maintenir des services à la population, tel que le gouvernement du Québec le fait en matière de santé, d'éducation et d'aide sociale. Mais est-ce le rôle du gouvernement d'assumer de tels projets? Évidemment pas.

Premièrement, l'État providence ne fonctionne tout simplement pas. Plusieurs Québécois croient que la prise en charge de programmes sociaux par le gouvernement est nécessaire, particulièrement afin d'aider financièrement les moins bien nantis. Le Canada, selon une recherche effectuée par l'Institut économique de Montréal (IEDM), investit annuellement environ 60% des deniers publics dans les programmes sociaux (en 1997, cela représentait 227 milliards de dollars)¹. L'IEDM réalise qu'une petite partie de cet argent bénéficie aux pauvres, et que plusieurs programmes sociaux sont même conçus pour les mieux nantis! De 1980 à 1997 les dépenses réelles per capita consacrées aux programmes sociaux ont doublé et le pourcentage de personnes vivant sous le seuil de la pauvreté a augmenté! Les programmes sociaux s'avèrent

injustes, car ils confèrent aux politiciens un pouvoir décisionnel qui serait bien mieux placé entre les mains des communautés, des églises ou des familles. On peut même avancer que les programmes sociaux se révèlent nuisibles à la population. La création et le financement de programmes sociaux par l'État provoquant inévitablement une hausse de la taille de l'État, il en résulte une baisse du taux de croissance du PIB. L'économiste Robert Lawson, s'est penché sur la taille de l'État et la richesse des nations et a prédit que si les gouvernements fédéral et provincial avaient conservé leur taille de 1971, le PIB de chaque Québécois en 1998 aurait été de 39 158\$ plutôt que de 26 746\$². Charles Murray, de l'*American Enterprise Institute*, croit que l'État providence encourage la naissance d'enfants issus d'unions hors-mariage. Murray a conclu que le gouvernement devrait cesser de récompenser financièrement les adolescentes ayant des enfants en dehors des liens du mariage. Également, il a noté, comme plusieurs autres experts, que l'enfant issu d'une famille monoparentale est davantage susceptible de commettre des crimes et d'échouer à l'école que celui issu d'une famille traditionnelle³. À la lumière de ces faits, le gouvernement n'a aucun

¹ *L'État-providence et les pauvres*, Institut économique de Montréal, octobre 2000.

² Lawson, Robert, *Taille de l'État et richesse des Québécois*, IEDM, février 2001

³ Murray, Charles, *Losing Ground* (1984)

avantage à jouer au père de famille en donnant de l'argent aux familles monoparentales.

Le rôle du gouvernement est de protéger nos droits. Parmi ceux-ci figurent le droit à la vie, à la liberté et à la propriété. Le gouvernement ne peut adéquatement respecter la liberté de ses citoyens en s'infiltrant dans l'économie et les services sociaux. Plusieurs diront alors que le gouvernement est élu démocratiquement et que si la majorité des citoyens désire une intervention quelconque du gouvernement, elle est alors justifiée. Cette prétention se révèle hautement dictatoriale, car elle affirme que la majorité peut contrôler la minorité à sa guise. Le vol est universellement considéré comme un vice répréhensible; un individu commettant un vol contre un autre individu sera, en général, arrêté et sera puni par la justice (sauf au Québec, où il sera envoyé dans un centre de réhabilitation

cinq étoiles, mais c'est une autre histoire...). Ce type de vol étant interdit dans notre société, il est néanmoins possible pour un individu de s'associer à un groupe d'individus (en l'occurrence, du gouvernement) pour voler quelqu'un d'autre. Il ne serait pas concevable d'imaginer une situation semblable, où, par exemple, un enfant de maternelle ne possédant pas de jouets s'allierait avec son professeur pour voler les jouets d'un autre enfant. En imposant des taxes si élevées à la population, le gouvernement peut être comparé à un bandit qui, brandissant une arme envers une personne, lui demande son argent: la personne donne volontairement son argent, mais elle n'y consent pas. Frédéric Bastiat, homme politique français du dix-neuvième siècle, explique bien ce principe dans son pamphlet *La Loi* en parlant de spoliation extra-légale (le bandit) et de spoliation légale (le

gouvernement).

Alexis de Tocqueville, auteur de *La démocratie en Amérique*, avait prévenu ses contemporains du despotisme démocratique qui les affligerait dans le futur, un despotisme qui "dégraderait les hommes sans les tourmenter" et qui serait caractérisé par une "sorte de servitude, réglée, douce et paisible" de la population. Ces sages paroles reflètent très bien le contexte socio-politique actuel au Québec. Le gouvernement devrait éliminer les programmes sociaux contre-performants et laisser d'autres organismes plus spécialisés s'en occuper. Il est grand temps que l'État regagne son dessein original: protéger les droits des citoyens et cesser de faire du *social engineering* en imposant des vertus et des idéaux à la société. On ne peut acquérir ni liberté ni égalité en dépossédant quelqu'un de ses avoirs. ☹



STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST



1st Prize: \$1,000



2nd Prize: \$500



High School Category: \$250

Topic: Market-Based Solutions to Environmental Problems

Students may analyze a specific environmental problem and suggest ways that private property and market principles could be employed in providing a solution; or compare the effectiveness of market-based environmental policies with policies that rely more heavily on government regulation.

To get full contest details and for submission or other information, call: 1-800-663-3558, ext. 571 or e-mail: student@fraserinstitute.ca or visit www.fraserinstitute.ca

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JUNE 3, 2002

Canadian Campus Papers

✎ By Aidan Johnson ✎

Canadian university newspapers and the U.S. lumber industry have a lot in common, besides their mutual dependence on pulp: both are fighting for shelter from the free market. While the so-called “lumber war” is costing jobs in Canadian forestry, a protectionist crusade currently being led by the Canadian University Press (CUP) is costing the credibility of national student journalism.

The lead press release on the web site of CUP (Canada’s only national federation of student newspapers) identifies a new menace to intellectual freedom in the form of the *Toronto Star*: “They are dumping free papers into the student market [at the University of Toronto and York University] to prop up their falling circulation... CUP is concerned this action will undermine the advertising and circulation base of small democratic student newspapers that provide a vital service to students and survive on volunteer staff and small budgets.”¹

The irony, of course, is that the *Toronto Star* is more sympathetic to CUP’s lefty-liberal pet causes – which range from tuition abolition to the stamping out of private sector academic research funding – than any other major paper in Canada.

But an enemy is an enemy. The rogue gallery at the heart of CUP’s “concern” goes well beyond the *Star*: This fall, the national student news-wire service will be undergoing a coast-to-coast review of the cam-

pus served by its 61 member-papers to ascertain which of the big dailies are “dumping”, and where.

Le Journal de Montreal has been sighted by the *McGill Daily* and its francophone counterpart *Le Delit*, while free copies of the *National Post* at Simon Fraser University have incited the rage of the *SFU Peak*.

The National Post also came under criticism for its free campus distribution last year from the *Manitoban*, official student newspaper of the University of Manitoba, but withdrew from the Winnipeg campus market for economic reasons before the criticism became too high-pitched. (Free copies of the *Post* have been distributed for free at U of T’s Rotman School of Business since the paper’s launch, but CUP only started to freak out about dumping at U of T when the *Star* moved in. Apparently those corporate student types at Rotman are beyond the help of edifying leftist student media.)

What started last year as a campaign of front-page stories about the evils of big daily dumping, published in CUP newspapers across the country, will step up this year into a significant lobby effort focused on university administrators, governors, and student councils.

The charge against the big dailies by the Canadian University Press is one of stupid, irrational fear. The availability of more free papers on campus means that students will simply read more, rather than

switching papers.

Or, if they stop reading their campus newspapers in favour of the big daily with a box of freebies by the library exit, it means that student journalists aren’t putting out sufficiently cool and plugged-in papers.

CUP would never admit that its members need to improve relations with the student market, of course. Most CUP types are convinced that student readers want (or at least should want) exactly what federated campus papers dish up every issue: boring stories about anti-globalization protests, drenched with socialist rhetoric like Wonder Bread slices dipped in old mayonnaise.

Unfortunately, the customers disagree.

A quick stroll around your local university campus will reveal stacks and brimming boxes full of unread campus newspapers. This isn’t because of big daily dumping – it’s because students feel left out and poorly reflected by their own media outlets.

The CUP press release attacking the *Toronto Star* juxtaposes the “corporate press” to the “democracy” of campus journalism. Some democracy: on almost every campus, the newspaper editors are elected by a clique-ish in-group of regular writers and contributors (“the staff”), rather than by the student body, in the manner of the campus council executive elections. Mandatory student fees pay for campus newspapers, and the

¹ “Toronto Star distribution plans threaten student press,” News Release, Canadian University Press, September 29, 1999.

Maude Quixote: That Which Befell the Noble Activist-Errant Before the Big M, and other notable transgressions

↻ By Michael Gemmiti ↻

It is the full parking lot of popular fast food chain Mancha Burger that we find in this History our hero, activist-errant Maude Quixote and her unionized and dutiful squire Buzzy Pancho. As usual, Maude Quixote, in full armor, sat astride her horse Gravy Train and Buzzy was upon his donkey Solidarity, trailing slightly behind his master.

Upon surveying the scene of what was to be her next great adventure, Maude Quixote, the scourge of corporatism, began lamenting to her squire. "Forsooth Buzzy, observe how these citizens stuff their faces

and fill their stomachs with this fast, so-called food, containing criminally high levels of cholesterol and fat! Obesity is *our* punishment!"

"With respect madam activist," quoth Buzzy, "are you not in err by saying 'our punishment?'"

"By no means Buzzy," replied Maude Quixote somewhat testily. "*Health is not a private matter!* As these citizens simultaneously expand their waistlines and narrow their arteries, the related health effects shamefully burden our precious limited resources in the public health care system.¹ What is more, these citizens cannot dutifully

do the bidding of the State when called upon! As I've clearly shown, these people have no right to become obese! One wonders if they even realize their selfish behavior!"

"Noble activist," exclaimed Buzzy with pride, "your commitment to communitarian values and egalitarianism are beyond reproach. What is more, I think I sense your solution. We must change the system so that the costs of an unhealthy lifestyle are felt by the individual. The current system where people are compelled to contribute to the common pot in proportion to their income and

¹ 1999 Canadian Medical Association Journal estimates that the direct total cost of obesity in Canada in 1997 was more than \$1.8 billion. Source: Terence Corcoran, "The sick rise of health fascism," *National Post*, August 4, 2001.

Canadian Campus Papers *continued*

campus newspapers in turn fund CUP. The system is about as friendly to democratic shake-up as Myanmar.

Student newspapers have a vital role to play, both practically and patriotically: practically because there is a market demand for campus information from campus sources, and patriotically because the university media serve to create culture, community, and debate in our centres of so-called "higher learning."

But when student journalists are so doubtful of the quality of their work that they fear competing in the university market with newspapers that don't even specialize in university content, a person has to wonder if exclusively reading the *Toronto Star* would be so bad after all. ☹

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then are at liberty to consume in proportion to their need is ineffectual!"

"My heart," cried Maude Quixote upon hearing these slanderous words come out of the mouth of her squire. "The solution you proposed, dunderhead, is like treating a scraped knee with iodine when what is needed is a Band-aid or two or three regardless of expense. One need not destroy the spirit behind public health care for such a trifling fundamental inconsistency."

"My humblest apologies dear Madam," pleaded Buzzy, "but it is hard to avoid the propaganda being put out by the Black Media Baron. What I meant to say, with my free unpolluted mind, is that we should impose a fat-tax, like a G.S.T., on unhealthy foods. This would surely curb consumption and offset health costs."

"Better Buzzy," quoth Maude Quixote, "but you are still wrong. A tax that is not tied to income will always fall disproportionately upon the already burdened poor. Are you suggesting that only those who can afford to pay the tax should be able to eat such foods?"

"Then I am lost," whimpered Buzzy. "My ignorance knows no bounds. Please madam activist-errant, enlighten me."

"Fortune smiles upon you!" cried Maude Quixote, "as enlightening the uneducated masses is my very lifeblood! To save those who seem unwilling to save themselves, what is needed is the total elimination of fatty and unhealthy foods!"

Oh dear reader, the reaction of Buzzy, a squire prone to gluttony, was almost tragic. Upon hearing these impassioned words, Buzzy

paled and almost fell from Solidarity into the path of an oncoming vehicle. Luckily he recovered in time and listened to Maude Quixote continue her exclamations.

"After banning smoking in such 'public' places as restaurants, it is time, if the laws of logic hold, to go after the next public health problem: obesity.² Total suppression is required, as giving people choices has always proven to be problematic in implementing progressive public policy. Furthermore, a great man has already identified the diet for an ideal society:³ feasts of dry bread, seasoned with salt and maybe olives and cheese, and country stews of roots and vegetables. And there will be succulent desserts of figs and peas and beans. A banquet for enlightened minds!"

"How will people be persuaded to support such an unsavory switch in diet?" asked Buzzy as his mouth was salivating heavily at the smell of french fries.

"Citizens will, in the name of democracy, support this initiative once the shadow has been lifted from their minds. Presently, profit-seeking necromancers have clouded the mind of the community through the spell of advertising! The presence of worldwide advertisements and logos has corrupted the citizenry from holders of communitarian values into automatons consuming anything thrust before them—changed from global citizens to global consumers! But once this spell is broken, the majority of citizens will again hold progressive views that are innate to most Canadians.⁴ Then, like lightning, fatty foods and obesity will be

legislated out of existence! And that is only the beginning!"

With that, Maude Quixote repositioned her horse so that about 30 meters directly in front of her stood the Big M—the sign that let people know that they were at Mancha Burger. "It's here and now faithful squire, where I shall save the nation's heart. This symbol must be brought down!"

"Madam," quoth Buzzy, "art thou resorting to violence?"

"No, merely property damage. I am justified because I am right."

"But what do you plan to do?"

"Bricks thrown through windows have been to no avail in stopping this monolithic monster's terror. It is time for a new approach—a debate that begins and ends at the point of my lance!"

Without any further adieu, Maude Quixote carefully positioned her unbreakable lance of self-righteousness and charged at the Big M fully believing that its destruction would break the spell of advertising and begin the liberation of Canadians.

But the Big M held firm. Upon contact, Maude Quixote was jolted off the end of Gravy Train and under the wheels of an approaching car. Though her life was saved because of her armor, our noble activist-errant required a lengthy hospital stay to mend damaged bones and organs. Her hospital stay was just another way Canadians had to pay for Maude Quixote's activist-errantry. And it seemed that the 'plague' of fast food existed on a base beyond the realm of enchantment—some might say it existed on freedom. ☹

² Journal of the American Medical Association called obesity "the second leading cause of preventable death in the United States after smoking." Source: "Hide the ham: Health fanatics want to slap a 'fat tax' on your favorite foods," The Libertarian Party, Release 8 December 1999.

³ Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), 60.

⁴ "The values of what we normally understand as civilization are swept aside by the new corporate imperative and its accompanying ideology." Murray Dobbin, *The Myth of the Good Corporate Citizen*, (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Company Limited, 1998), 1.