

SPECTRUM

Metanoia by John Walk

An Open Letter To Mr. Newell:
CEO NOVA Corp

With great interest I read in the Globe and Mail (Michael Valpy, "The Real Threat to Canada", Nov. 2/95, A21) of a speech you gave back in April to the Business Council on National Issues. I was impressed by what you identified as the greatest contributions members of the Council collectively made to Canadian society.

You list these contributions as including the ability to identify "the really critical issues which will impact Canada's future," the ability to "assemble the best brains from the academic world" to focus on those issues, and the ability to "help Canada's leaders shape a consensus for action." Then you state that "what separates winners from losers is the ability to anticipate the future, to recognize the major trends and to act today to shape ourselves to succeed in the new environment."

What impressed me also, Mr. Newell, were the two key issues you identified which needed to be moved "on to the front burner." Your highlighting of the second key issue gave new renewed encouragement and hope. You state

that the most urgent matter facing us is "poverty in Canada and our lack of a national game plan to cope with it."

Mr. Newell, you have recognized clearly that poverty is "a time bomb just waiting to go off." You mention that "in 1993, when our economy once again outperformed most of the developed world, Statistics Canada reported that an additional 348,000 Canadians had income which put them below the poverty line. More than three million Canadians are on welfare or social assistance. By some definitions, more than 20 per cent of our citizens are below the poverty line. ... Make no mistake, real poverty is our largest unresolved problem in Canada." You go on to state that "our educational system is failing to deliver results. Our social support systems are failing to target the massive funding they receive to deliver effective support to those most in need."

What impressed me most, Mr. Newell, is your clear recognition that poverty is a problem with which we must all wrestle, and no less business leaders: "Let there be no misunderstanding. We business leaders will be judged to have failed in meeting our responsibility to Canadian society if we do not help

Canada address this issue effectively."

Mr. Newell, I would like to know what NOVA Corp., and you as its Chief Executive Officer, are doing to meet its "responsibility to Canadian society" in helping curtail the increasing poverty in Canada. Would you inform me, as well as the public, of the specific steps you are taking, or plan to take, in this area. What are you doing to ensure that NOVA Corp. is part of the solution, and not a cause, of poverty in Canada.

Mr. Newell, I am a shareholder of NOVA Corp. I am also very concerned about poverty in Canada. As a shareholder I would like you to take the initiative on my behalf in proposing to the Board of Directors that NOVA Corp direct a tithe (10 %) of its annual profits to programmes, local and national, that directly and actively alleviate poverty in Canada.

This action would make NOVA and its shareholders leaders in tackling one of Canada's major issues. It would also indicate that NOVA has great concern for Canada's future. Mostly, Mr. Newell, it would be one small step in making yourself, NOVA Corp, and all of its shareholders, responsible and caring corporate citizens (Matthew 25:34-40).



The Left Jab What Socialists Say About the Family by Nik Carrier

Conservative politicians of all parties never cease singing the praises of 'the family'. This phenomenon reflects the fact that 'Defend the family' has always been a key slogan and rallying cry for the ruling class. In view of these people's attitudes to such things as child benefit, cuts in education, health and social services, housing provision and the rest, all this pro-family propaganda could easily be dismissed as monstrous hypocrisy.

It is important to recognise that there is an element of sincere class interest involved here. The ruling class recognises, and has always recognised the family as a deeply conservative institution. They know they can get working-class men and, above all, working-class women to view the world exclusively from the perspective of their individual family unit they can create a powerful counterweight to class identification and class consciousness. They know that 'protecting my family' was ever the alibi of the scab; that in so far as women remain mentally imprisoned in the home (even when they do go out to work) they will not develop a perspective of changing society; and that 99 times out of 100 the first authority confronted by the young is the authority of the family. Consequently the ruling class has carefully nurtured a mythology of the family. This mythology has two main elements. First, the family is projected as a universal, eternal unchanging institution reflecting fixed biological and psychological drives. The family is 'normal'; the family is a matter of human nature. Anyone not living within the accepted family structure or challenging this structure (by being gay, for example) is therefore labelled 'abnormal', 'unnatural' and 'deviant'.

Secondly, the family is presented as an idyllic haven of harmony, love and

security; an institution which is perfectly adapted to the needs of both society and the individual. Anyone outside the family is therefore not only 'abnormal' but also 'deprived'.

Marxism rejects this reactionary nonsense. The family is not a natural but a social institution. Like any other social institution it has historical origins, roughly coinciding with the emergence of private property and the division of society into classes between five and ten thousand years ago. It has since undergone a long process of historical development in which it has assumed widely differing forms.

The result of this development is that the contemporary nuclear family is a structure adapted primarily not to the needs of men, women and children but to the needs of a particular form of society, namely capitalism, and to its overriding aim, the accumulation of capital.

In the capitalist class it is a mechanism for the maintenance and inheritance of private property and class position. In the working class it serves to produce and reproduce supplies of proficient labour power at very little cost to the employers or their state.

This makes the reality of family life (in all social classes but especially the working class) bear little or no relation

to the idealised image. On the contrary, the family constitutes a major arena of oppression in which innumerable unhappy couples are bound together by economic and social dependence; in which half the working class, women, are confined and confirmed in the socially subordinate role of housewife.

The family is also, far more often than is generally acknowledged, an arena of appalling physical and psychological violence, of wife beating and child battering, of father-daughter rape, of repression, inhibition and victimisation of its own members. Of course, despite this most people still do choose to live in families. The social pressures on them to do so are considerable and the alternative under capitalism can be grim—loneliness and isolation in most cases.

This brings us to the Marxist attitude to the family in the future. Marxists are opposed to the family as it is presently constituted. But the family cannot be banned or simply abolished. It must be replaced and what replaces it must be experienced by the vast majority as something better, more liberating and more fulfilling.

This involves complete equal pay and job opportunities for women in a context of full employment. It involves socialising the burden of housework by means of good communal restaurants and laundries in every neighbourhood. It involves sharing child care through nursery places for all children. It involves a lot of other far-reaching changes in the organization of society. So far-reaching, indeed, that they are inconceivable without a total transformation of society, a social revolution.

WOMYN

"...if men do not flood equality into the unpaid labour force of child-rearing and homemaking. Women will just continue to do two jobs at once, while men only do one. Children will continue to have too much mother and too little father, and the cruel guilt-producing impossibility of being super woman and super mom will keep on robbing the country of talent and women of peace of mind."

Gloria Steinem

Pride by Raphael

Hate Crimes and All that Jazz

Hate crimes come out of homophobic responses to a person's sexual orientation. To reiterate, homophobia is "...the fear and hatred of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals, and the possible fear and hatred of same-sex feelings in oneself and others, both of which are encouraged in our society." (NSPIRG Report 1993, Nova Scotia). As a result of homophobia, one may be subjected to verbal insults and harassment, discrimination, destruction of property and physical violence.

In response to this and other forms of violence against minority groups, Canada has passed several Hate Crimes bills that are being debated and discussed throughout the nation. Nova Scotia has recently passed Bill C-41, amending the criminal code to consider whether a crime was motivated by hatred; hatred based on sexual orientation is part of this amendment. Canadian statistics have identified eleven percent of hate crimes as against persons of same-sex/ dual-sex orientation. A good example of a hate crime against homosexuals/bisexuals in Fredericton, are the recent fires that have been set in this city. Apparently, many of the buildings that were targeted by the arsonist(s), were either owned, occupied by, hired and/or had positive attitudes toward homosexuals and bisexuals. In terms of physical violence, in New Brunswick alone, sixteen percent of homosexuals and bisexuals who have suffered physical violence, were beaten because their attacker(s) knew or presumed the victims' sexual orientation. It takes very little it seems, to trigger people to perform irrational acts of violence against homosexuals and bisexuals; often just the mere rumour that a person "may be a faggot", or behaves in what society considers "gay" behaviour, would make her/him a target for a hate crime. Of recent concern, is the targeting of people who are supportive of, or have friends/family

who are gay or bisexual. Most of the time, gay-bashers move and attack in large groups (what better way to beat a "hapless homo"). They target people who they know or assume are, gay or bisexual and wait until that person is alone or with one other person, before striking with surprise.

Yet, despite the violence that they are subjected to, some people who have been the victims of a hate crime seldom report the crime. For example, gay/bisexual men being bashed may be seen by police as "You should have been able to defend yourself" (against several people with weapons, it sure is a fair fight - NOT). For women, it is not often mentioned, because the attack may have been due to them being women, rather than as an attack against lesbians. Perhaps the most important reason for the lack of reporting, is the fact that victims of gay-bashing (or other hate crimes) may not want to reveal their sexual orientation, due to what they perceive as society's persisting negative attitudes to a person who is gay or bisexual. Many people are still being subjected to discrimination and harassment from all walks of life, and this often forces victims of hate crimes to remain silent.

It is of prime importance that we overcome the obstacles that dissuade us from reporting hate crimes, especially gay-bashing. Working to overcome negative (mis)perceptions of homosexuals and bisexuals, promoting the positive aspects and talking as a community about gay-bashing, harassment and so on, are just a few things we can do. In terms of personal action, travel in groups if you can. Be aware of your surroundings when walking around the city. Report any discrimination, harassment or violence done to you, no matter how small it may seem. Be up to date on what is going on in the city and your communities, with regard to possible areas of danger, people who have been known to be gay-bashers, areas of safety and police action. We've come a long way, and we still have many obstacles to overcome.



More than Road Apples by Geoff Peters

Forest Breeze

Horse logging has deep roots in New Brunswick. It goes back to the early 1800's when oxen were also used as a method of removing felled trees from the woods. With the invention of the steam powered crawler tractor, and eventually the early version of the modern day skidder, the use of the horse in the woods had almost disappeared. However, with the resurgence of interest in "green friendly" harvesting, the horse has found its own little niche in the forest industry. The pro's of using a horse are numerous.

A horse requires as much maintenance as any machine, but on a cost scale minute compared to that of a skidder. A horse requires a much smaller area to travel on (i.e. a skid trail), generally no wider than about four feet, compared with up to twenty feet for the average skidder. A horse will usually start in cold weather, although some machines, especially diesels have been known to require magic to start them in extreme cold. On the other hand, there are some con's of using a horse as well. Generally, only a very small volume of wood per day can be removed - (I once heard two old timers arguing - one was claiming ten cords of 8' studwood at roadside in a twelve hour day). Compare this to up to 100 cords of anything a day in a totally mechanical operation. Obviously you aren't going to get rich quick. But you can make a living. A friend of mine runs his own small business, specializing in horse logging, custom sawmilling (with a portable sawmill), and marketing of value added products. He is overwhelmed with the demand for both his horse and sawmill, and is considering expansion.

Many older people, especially in rural areas, own large amounts of land which was left to them by their family. They realize the need to harvest some of their land, before it becomes old and dies, but they have a bad image of forestry. They think of harvesting, and they think of big orange machines flattening their woodlot. Usually nothing is farther from the truth, but opinions often rule decisions. When they see a guy with a horse looking for wood to cut, their thoughts turn to "the good old days", and often allow this person on their land to cut stumpage. What I am saying is that there is a large, relatively untapped market out there for small time operators with a little cash and a lot of ambition. Horse logging is on its way back up the ladder, and I believe it will be noticed in the next few years more than ever.