

Preface

This volume contains the final versions of a set of papers that were presented and discussed on October 6th and 7th, 1995, at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. The theme of the conference, "Media Policy, National Identity and Citizenry in Changing Democratic Societies: The Case of Canada," addresses a set of related issues that have increased in importance throughout this fading century and promise to be even more important in the 21st century. As readers will see, the issues are increasingly universal. The fact that cultural products had to be removed from the table before the U.S.-Canada Free Trade, NAFTA, and GATT agreements could be concluded, and the increasing geographic scope of those agreements, are indicative of their centrality to the future of all countries and their economies. In a sense, then the focus on Canada is only a device to address such subjects as nationalism, national identity, citizen identity, national culture, and the media, and the relations among them.

In an equal sense, the focus really is on Canada. Canada is the first of the OECD (i.e., advanced industrial) countries in which contention over and concern about a national culture has been continuous since its creation, with dismemberment always a possibility. Its leaders and its people have identified these problems explicitly from its moment of birth and have worked, successfully and unsuccessfully, at resolving them. Breakup is a real possibility. The conference, then, addressed particularistic and general concerns simultaneously.

From the general perspective, the passage of seventeen months between the conference and the time that the papers are ready for publication is not consequential. From the perspective of Canada, some of the material might seem dated. However, a close monitoring of the situation indicates that, though some of the details may have changed, the actors, the issues, the tactics and strategies remain the same. Were we to hold the meeting today, only a few of the numbers and names referred to in the papers might change. The issues, analyses, and conclusions would remain the same.

The conferees were all distinguished experts in the field. A draft of the introductory paper was prepared to provide a context in which to prepare their individual contributions. The conferees were to provide drafts of their papers in advance and to offer brief summaries and comments at the meeting; the papers themselves were not read. The conferees and audience members, then, discussed the issues raised and positions taken. Conferees were to revise their papers in light of the discussions. The actual conference adhered to the plan as closely as ever happens at such events. Consequently, because I could anticipate the content of the revisions in only the most general sense, the last part of the introductory paper has been revised and updated several times to accord with the final versions of the papers.

One of the features of the Conference was the use of observers to assess the papers and proceedings at the conclusion of the meetings. Richard Collins and Paul Rutherford, eminent scholars who have devoted much of their careers to these matters, were invited to serve in this role. Accordingly, there is no reference to their reflective papers in the introductory paper. However, I found their comments and the discussions so stimulating that I succumbed to an irresistible urge to comment further and those reflections appear as the final paper in the volume.

The draft of the introductory paper was based on a brief conference prospectus which was provided with the invitations to participate. That prospectus also served as the core of various proposals for financial support. The success of those proposals reflects the importance of the issues in the contemporary world. I want to take this opportunity to thank those who saw the merit of the proposal and responded by providing