

## Conquistadors

*This is the fourth article on Election Financing, this the most ghastly of interferences with the election process. If you have missed the previous three articles, please backtrack and read them, for they are constructive to the present one.*

The next article will end the discussion of Election Financing. It will present some ideas, some of them original, for an honest and fair financing of elections.

Privatized elections are incompatible with democracy. Indeed, the purpose of the influence bazaar is to raise funds with which to tilt the playing field in favour of consenting buyers and sellers. Politicians go there aiming to outbid their opponents, so that they may outspend them in purchasing the services of more and better spin doctors and assorted other mind-manipulators.

In more direct language, the ultimate purpose of election spending is to subvert democracy, in the sense of affecting election results different from what they would be if the field was level. Euphemisms aside this amounts to subversion.

No, definitely no, it is not that "we the people" know no better, it is not that we approve of this racket. But, as I mentioned earlier, we have no choice but to vote for bribed politicians, or abstain from the ballot, which many of us do. Politicians call it "apathy" and readily dismiss it, but it is not apathy but disgust with the system that keeps many people from visiting the polls.

Democracy can function only when citizens are adequately charged with information. The reality is that not all citizens have the time or the inclination to study politics in depth. People study medicine, ditch digging, engineering, commerce, music, transportation, etc, and otherwise have to apply much of their time to earning a living and pursuing personal inclinations. A physician does not know much engineering, an engineer does not know much about song-writing, and so on. Citizens are neither political scientists nor journalists with the facility to ferret out the information they need to function as voters. This reality is what the interloper exploits. Their money buys professional mind-manipulators and spin doctors and unleashes them upon the people. The people have as much chance as I would have had if put into a ring to face Muhammad Ali while he was in his prime.

The money flowing into the election purses of the politicians and the parties from the influence bazaar are spent to alter the appearance of politicians, make them appear better than they really are, make them look good vis-à-vis their opponents. Electioneering politicians are sold to the electorate often by the same people who move pizza, condoms and soap on television. These "handlers" package the politician so tightly that the voters hardly ever see what really matters in deciding how to cast their ballots.

Information is power and the information the spin doctors and mind manipulators shade from the people is power in the hands of those who operate the system. In turn, power in the hands of special interests translates into corresponding oppression of the people, that is the nature of power.

Elections thus run result in power-addicts ruling the society for the benefit of those who finance their habit, which, naturally, detracts substantially from the well being of society. This is true everywhere, it inevitably causes hardship in any society where it occurs, but the pain it causes is not universally the same. In our case, in Canada and British Columbia, the consequences of bought elections are very large, perhaps greater than in any other society free of overt colonial rule.

The aspect of the influence bazaar that makes the consequences to us harsher than it is in other societies, is the foreign ownership of the Canadian economy. The "Canadian Establishment" is not "free-standing", its backbone is made up of American Branch Plant Managers whose mission is to make as much money for their head offices as they may extract from their operations. This means that the buyers of influence are mainly foreigners and this makes the situation much worse than if those who pull the strings were locals.

It was one thing to be governed by politicians sponsored by H.R. Macmillan of MacMillan Bloedel and Power River Company, who sponsored the politicians in the W.A.C. Bennett era. And it is quite another thing to be ruled by politicians sponsored by those who were anxious to buy out MacMillan, Bloedel and Powell River Company and who eventually bought it. W A C Bennett would never let Americans buy up MacBlo, he would never sell out BC Hydro, he would not cast loose the BC Ferries to drift into privatization and eventually to Americanization. Bad as it is for a society to be governed by sponsored politicians, it is much worse to be ruled by politicians indebted to foreigners anxious to extract as much as they may from the society and siphon it away, into their own country.

There is no other country in the world, this side of overt colonialism, whose economy is foreign owned anywhere as much as the Canadian economy is. Much of the "Canadian" establishment is foreign and its local component is substantially controlled by the foreigners in its midst. Together the local and the foreign components of the Establishment are financing politicians who will sell to private interests whatever has not as yet come under the control of the establishment - once privatized, it is on its way to be Americanized.

John Foster Dulles, the venerable American Secretary of State, recognized that it is easier to occupy countries by economic means than by the force of arms. George Bush is now as uncomfortable as he is only because he did not heed Dulles' wisdom to restrain his yearning for military glory.

Under such circumstances, when foreigners control the election of politicians by making it virtually impossible for anyone to get elected unless sponsored by them, the society is no longer self-governed, it becomes foreign ruled. Let us say that we are heavily "colonized", for "occupied" is harder on self esteem.

If some degree of democratic self government is to be preserved, politicians must be liberated from the stranglehold of foreigners. If some semblance of independence is to be preserved, foreigners must be kept at a distance from the government of the land. If the economy is to be in the service of society, if the will of the people is to prevail over the greed of the corporations, the society must regain control of the electoral system. We have no future unless we cut the rope to free ourselves, unless we drive the traders in influence out of the Temple of Democracy. We must eliminate private election financing, we must free politicians from the temptation to sell themselves, we must spare them having to sail their careers between the rock of bribe and the hard place of failed careers.

For unless we cut these ropes to make the politicians free, our well-being will keep on declining, our future will become increasingly bleak. Not at all unlike in times past when it became recognized that the Church ought to be separated from the State, so it is now time to recognize that Megabusiness must be separated from the State. As it was then necessary to cut the ties between government and church, so it is now essential that we separate megabusiness from the state.