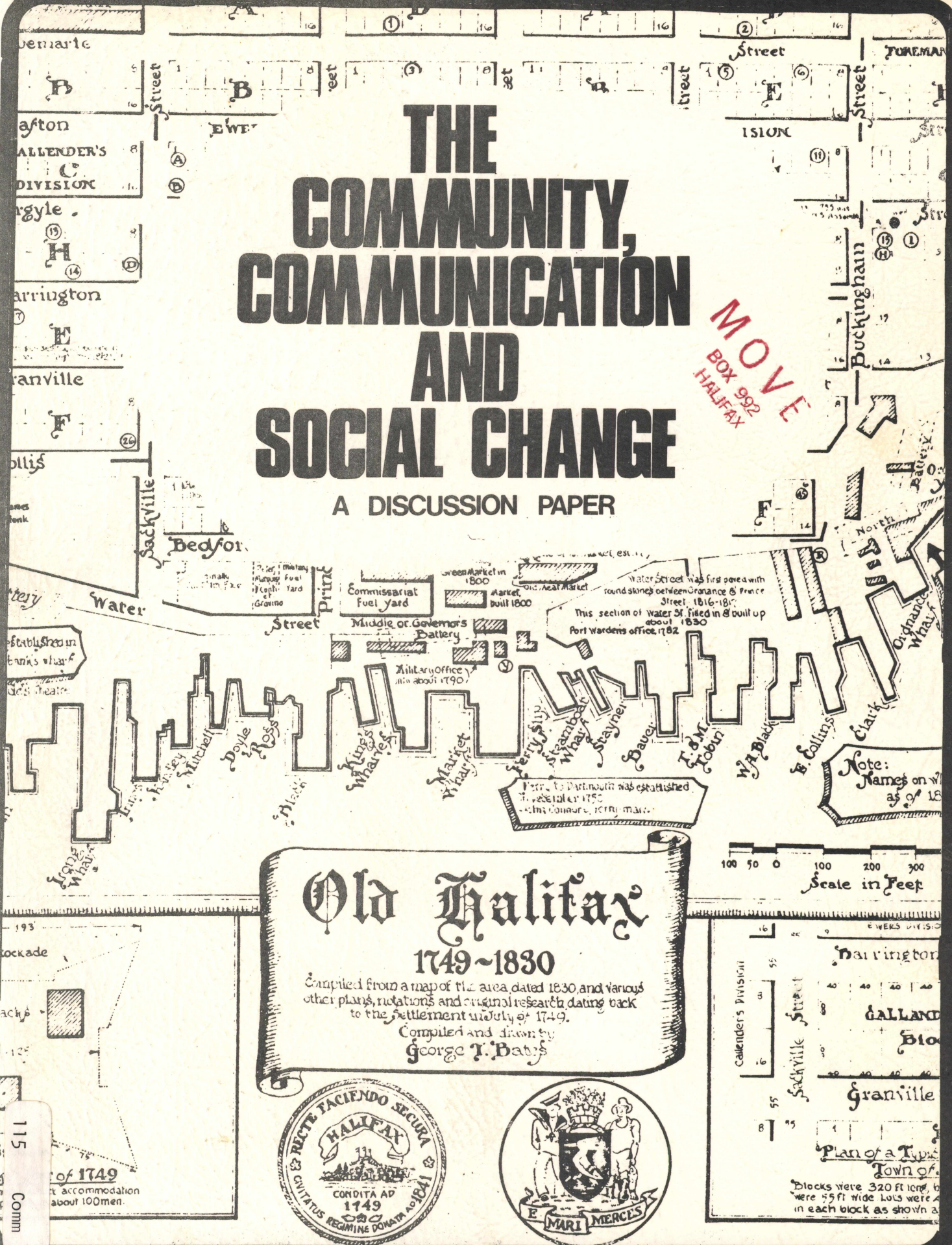


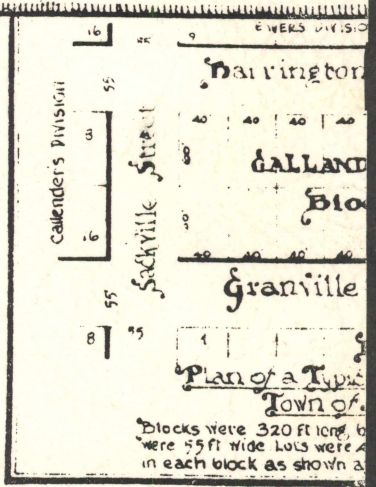
THE COMMUNITY, COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

A DISCUSSION PAPER

MOVE
BOX 992
HALIFAX



Old Halifax
1749-1830
Compiled from a map of the area, dated 1830, and various other plans, notations and original research dating back to the settlement in July of 1749.
Compiled and drawn by
George T. Babes



115
Comm

MOVE
BOX 992
HALIFAX

THE COMMUNITY, COMMUNICATION, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

a discussion paper

Prepared for Teled Video Services Association,
Halifax, Nova Scotia, by Norman Peterson. (May, 1974)

CONTENTS

Introduction	1.
Part I	5.
Part II	17.
Part III	30.
Part IV	52.

INTRODUCTION

In 1971, Teled Video Services established a Community Media Resource Centre in Halifax "To provide programmes and projects to educate members of the community generally in the uses of communications technology as a means of increasing public understanding and awareness of the issues facing the community, and in so doing to provide a greater degree of understanding of those problems, and of a variety of possible solutions ..." (Teled's Memorandum of Association, 1971)

The Media Resource Centre has worked with a variety of organizations and individuals involved in family, children, and youth services, rehabilitation and community correctional services, community development, welfare rights, services to the aged, churches, theatre groups, and other community organizations.

This winter, after two years of operating the Media Resource Centre, Teled decided to review the original assumptions about the community which led to the development of the Media Resources Centre; and the services which Teled has been able to provide to the community in general and to community organizations in particular. In order to do this, Teled proposed to contact a variety of organizations and individuals, with whom Teled has worked, to obtain their assessment of the services available through the Media Resource Centre; to explore with them, and with potential

users, the need for, and the desirable form of, an active out-reach programme; and to discuss, with both users and non-users the possibility of developing alternate or additional resources to meet the information and communications needs of the community, or at least those needs most associated with the goals and activities of community organizations.

These proposals were submitted to the Welfare Grants Division of the federal Department of Health and Welfare, who agreed to support the research to be undertaken over roughly a two-month period. This paper is the result of research carried out over the months of March and April.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This is not a statistical report. The reader will find no lists of equipment bookings, hours logged in the darkroom, or the number of posters or slide shows produced in Teled's graphics division. The report is subjective (not to suggest that a statistical approach would be more "objective"), impressionistic and analytical.

The research followed these basic steps. First, conversations with the staff of Teled at the Media Resource Centre on Argyle Street, a look at the resources of the Centre, a review of all the documents associated with Teled's development, programmes, services, philosophy, and plans, and an analysis of the "equipment user receipts" to discover just who in the community has used the Media Centre and their purpose for coming to Teled. Second, a series of interviews with

individuals involved with a variety of community organizations who have used the resources of the Media Centre, as well as interviews with active individuals in organizations that have not had contact with Teled. Third, interviews with a number of individuals employed professionally by the mass media, both electronic and print, in the Halifax metropolitan area. Fourth, a comprehensive reading of the literature associated with communications, mass media, communication and community, media and social change, and a variety of related questions.

ONE FURTHER OBJECTIVE

In addition to the purposes for the research already outlined above, there is one objective we believe to be more important than the others. It is the objective which most influenced the form of this report. This report will not be filed away at Teled, or in Ottawa. The report is to be reproduced by Teled and circulated to organizations and individuals in the Halifax-Dartmouth metropolitan area. We hope that the report will provoke some discussion of the whole question of communication, but more specifically of those aspects of communication most relevant to the concerns and activities of the social change organizations in Halifax and Dartmouth. This paper is our attempt to provide a framework for that discussion.

We are grateful for the cooperation and the patience of all those who had to bear with us during the preparation of this paper.

N.E.P.

PART 1

TAKING ROOT ON A ROCK

either

1.

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."

Matthew V11: 25

or

2.

"They who have lands, and safe bank stock,
With faith so founded on a rock,
May give a rich invention ease
And construe scripture as they please."

Matthew Green, before 1737

"Little individuals can by no means
Struggle alone with the difficulties
they have to encounter; Opulent and
great Grantees can alone furnish the
means and gather the Numbers necessary."

Governor William Campbell to Secretary
of State, from Halifax, Nova Scotia,
1768 (N.S. Archives 82, 163)

HALIFAX

The England of 1748, the England of George the Second, is described by Thomas Raddall in his book Halifax, Warden of the North as "... an England ruled not by king or people but by nobles and gentry of the Whig party, powerful, patriotic in their fashion, but corrupt in every practice from the election booth to the last least commissary contract... It is the England of a wealthy, brilliant, idle, rakish upper class, a pious and steady-going middle class rising but impotent still, and a vast wretched impoverished populace whose only pleasure is cheap gin." This was also the year of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. The treaty signed by the English and French on April 18, 1748, returned the fortress of Louisburg to the French in exchange for a gift to the anxious English merchants - a trading post in India.

Less than three years before the signing of the treaty, American colonials, struggling with the French for supremacy over the Atlantic trade routes and domination of the vast natural resources of Acadia and the coastal waters, had captured the French fortress of Louisburg. The terms of the Aix-la-Chapelle agreement understandably angered the New Englanders. They demanded protection from England and found that they had considerable support for their demands. The American colonies were completely surrounded by the French, in a great arc that curved from Louisburg around through Quebec and down to the Gulf of Mexico. The request was simple.

The colonials insisted on a fortress at the protected harbour of Chebucto, and the colonization of the surrounding lands by English or German Protestants to counter the Acadians already located in Nova Scotia. The combined pressure of the American colonists and the English trading interests brought about an early plan for the fortification and settlement at the chosen site of Chebucto.

Raddall tells us that "The plan for the new settlement was drawn up by the Board of Trade and Plantations, whose president, Lord Halifax, submitted it to the government in the autumn of 1748. In the following spring an advertisement appeared in the London Gazette, dated at Whitehall, March 7, 1749. It began: 'A proposal having been presented unto His Majesty for the establishing of a civil government in the Province of Nova Scotia in North America, as also for the better peopling and settling of the said province, and extending and improving the fishery thereof by granting lands within the same, and giving other encouragement to such of the officers and private men lately dismissed from His Majesty's land and sea service as are willing to accept of grants of land and to settle with or without families in Nova Scotia....' "

Every qualified settler was promised fifty acres of land plus ten acres for every member of his family. On the other hand, "Every officer under the rank of ensign was to have eighty acres, ensigns were to have two hundred acres, lieutenants three hundred acres, captains four hundred acres.

Every officer above the rank of captain was to have six hundred acres, with an additional thirty acres for each member of his family. All were promised rations for one year after their arrival in Nova Scotia. All were promised 'a civil government...whereby they will enjoy all the liberties, privileges and immunities enjoyed by His Majesty's subjects in any other of the Colonies and Plantations in America under His Majesty's Government.'"

Raddall goes on to say that "Apparently the Lords of Trade and Plantations had some doubt about the qualification of soldiers and sailors for pioneering in the wilderness, and so they added a paragraph offering the same grants and advantages to 'carpenters, shipwrights, smiths, masons, joiners, brickmakers, bricklayers and all other artificers necessary in building or husbandry.' The prospective settlers were to apply by letter or in person to the Plantations office in Whitehall or to the commissioners of the Navy at Portsmouth and Plymouth..."

The expedition was scheduled to sail for Nova Scotia on April 20, 1749. The deadline for application from prospective settlers was April 7, exactly one month from the date of the original advertisement. As Raddall notes, "This was very short notice at a time of year when the English highways were at their miserable worst. Few of the common people were scholars enough to read the advertisement, much less to write a letter of application to the Lords of Trade. No doubt the advertisement passed by word of mouth, but even this was slow

in the England of 1749, where public conveyances were few."

As a direct result of these communication problems, there were few applicants from rural England, and "The people who swarmed into Whitehall to register themselves with their wives and children were largely the poor of London, a rabble of cockneys wholly unfit for a life in the American wilderness, attracted simply by the promise of free victuals. Among them were fifty or sixty former officers of the army and navy, unable to resist the generous offers of land, and a few gentlemen volunteers in search of adventure."

The expedition was well planned, for its time, and well equipped. Raddall tells us that "The ships were loaded with everything from fire engines to fishing gear, bricks, seeds, blankets, woolens, and shoes, not to mention stores of salt beef, pork, and ship biscuit. There were French Bibles for the enlightenment of the Acadians and hatchets and gewgaws for the good will of the Indians. There was a hospital complete with instruments, drugs, surgeons and surgeon's mates, apothecaries, and a midwife. There were field guns, swivel guns, muskets, powder and shot. There were surveyor's instruments. There was stationery. There was a sum of nearly £ 4,000 in gold and silver for the governor's use. There was everything but a printing press."

But there wasn't much need for a printing press. This new fortified settlement at Chebucto was no social experiment, no utopia in the wilderness. The intent was clear enough. The English were to build a fortress at Chebucto that would counter the French fortress at Louisburg, and they intended

to settle the surrounding countryside with a community that would counter the Acadian settlements elsewhere in Nova Scotia. It was also intended that the new colonists would "extend and improve the fishery" already important to the colonists of New England, not to forget the French to whom this resource was of some importance.

The expedition was late getting started. There was such an unexpected number of passengers, that more ships had to be chartered, more supplies had to be provided. When the ships finally sailed from London, stopping to pick up other settlers at Portsmouth, they carried close to 3000 passengers for Chebucto.

The expedition sailed to Chebucto under the command of Colonel Edward Cornwallis (whose statue now stands in the small park facing the CN's Hotel Nova Scotian). His warship entered Chebucto on June 21, 1749, a day that has been celebrated, in one form or another, through all the years since, as Halifax's "Natal Day". The settlers arrived, somewhat less heroically we may assume, about a week later.

In spite of the plans and promises, things went poorly. And those who suffered most were, predictably, those least prepared for the unexpected rigours of their new home, the very poor of London who only months before had rushed to the docks in search for a better life. Nevertheless, Cornwallis chose his council and established his idea of the promised "civil government" of Nova Scotia; ordered the construction of a planned town on the eastern slope of the hill that dominated

the rocky peninsula; and generally set about establishing English presence in Nova Scotia from his base in Halifax, as the new town was called after the president of the Board of Trade.

The streets of the new town, and some of the geographic features of the area, were named after the patrons of the expedition and English politicians and royalty. But these names and plans did little to inspire the common settlers who were not only not equipped for the task of building a new community from scratch but who didn't really want to work. Cornwallis finally resorted to paying the settlers to work at building the townsite and its surrounding fortifications. The money went to buy rum and to contribute directly to the development of the drinking houses of Water Street - the beginning of one of Halifax's finer traditions. The community was disorganized and generally unruly. Very few suitable houses were built, and at the approach of the first winter probably more than half of the settlers were faced with the prospect of spending the winter months aboard ship anchored in the harbour. The poor conditions were perfect for the incubation of typhus. At least one third of the cockney settlers died. Raddall, in a rather Darwinian observation, suggests that, although it may seem "brutal" to suggest it, "all this was for the best". The argument being, that since "Typhus, no respecter of persons, lays a particular hold on the unclean, the drunken, the shiftless, the physical dregs of a populace... Halifax was purged of its worst human element..." Happily,

"the loss was neatly offset by an influx of New Englanders, tough, resourceful scions of the Pilgrims and Puritans, accustomed to making a living in a stony land. Thus quickly changed the human face of Halifax."

Cornwallis, good servant of the Board of Trade that he was, didn't bother to upset them with the news that over one thousand of his colonists had died. With a bit of book-keeping he managed to balance his ration lists with the total number of settlers, a third of whom were new arrivals quickly incorporated into the books.

(N.B. This account of the first few months of the history of Halifax, particularly of the typhus epidemic, is challenged by George T. Bates in his article "The Great Exodus of 1749 or The Cornwallis Settlers Who Didn't" in "Collection of the Nova Scotia Historical Society", volume 38, 1973.)

With a better class of colonists, Cornwallis could get on with his plans. He sent to Boston for the timber to build St. Paul's Anglican Church, still standing where it was built next to the Parade Square. Although he permitted nonconformist prayer meetings to be held in the settlement, he did not allow the Roman Catholics either to build a church or have a priest. The Governor requested, and got, new colonists for Nova Scotia. Many hundreds of the new arrivals came from Germany, called themselves 'Deutsche', and settled out along the rough paths christened 'Gottingen' and 'Brunswick' roads, and further out in 'Dutch Village'. These settlers were later moved down the

shore to build a town which they called Lunenburg. The other arrivals came mostly from the American colonies, and for more than a century, thousands more came from Great Britain. The character of Halifax was set from the earliest years.

Building on the growing population, Halifax's importance to trade and the military ambitions of England was soon demonstrated. In 1755, it was decided that the presence of the Acadians could be tolerated no longer and the English solution was a general expulsion of the Acadian population. In 1758, a fleet sailed from Halifax under orders to take the fortress at Louisburg. Following their victory there, some of the soldiers wintered at Halifax and joined Wolfe for the attack on the French at Quebec. All of this was good business for Halifax. The military and the merchants established a relationship, and positions in Halifax, that were to continue to the present day. Halifax has always prospered in time of war.

Although the merchant class prospered from the earliest years of the settlement, the real power resided in the person of His Majesty's Governor and the small council which he chose from among the leaders of the colony. The first governor, Cornwallis, had been given the power to call together a "General Assembly of the Freeholders and Planters", but, like his successors in the first years, he wasn't a believer in civilian government. It wasn't until 1758 that the first General Assembly of Nova Scotia was held in Halifax. Pressure

to hold the Assembly came from New Englanders who took the governor at his word when he promised them political privileges if they would settle in Nova Scotia. The powers of the Assembly were limited, and the power of the governor remained until the first responsible ministry was formed in February, 1858.

After the American Revolution, Halifax's importance, as a centre of commercial activity in British North America, was greatly increased. The Loyalist aristocrats who came to Halifax were completely at home with the government officials, and wealthy merchants, who, together with the military officers, formed a petty aristocracy. Halifax was the centre of the financial, trading, and commercial activity of the whole province. The General Assembly was composed mostly of Halifax merchants and wealthy bankers. It also included the Chief Justice and the Bishop of the English Established Church. This powerful elite, together with their families and friends, was known as the "Family Compact".

This was not a society that favoured popular democracy. Halifax was an Establishment town. It was the centre of trade, commerce, and finance; the seat of the government; the headquarters of the military; it was the seat of religious authority; it soon became the site of the principal institutions of higher learning; and the centre of transportation and communication for the region. The social stratification of Halifax has been defined, and relatively rigid, from the earliest decades of the settlement. Social relationships,

the way we communicate, have been highly structured. And that structure has been hierarchical - the decisions have been made by those in authority. Under such conditions, obedience has been an important value in our society. Community leadership has rested with the authorities, with the official leaders in the community. The beliefs and value systems of the leaders have dominated. Under such pressure, the community has tended to be conservative, the social goals directed to the maintenance of the status quo. In other words, the community has not been change oriented. Changes in any community disturb vested interests. And no power elite, whether it's political, religious, commercial, or otherwise, is likely to favour surrendering any of its power or influence.

PART 11

THE MACHINERY BY WHICH WE HAVE BEEN MOVED

"Unlike puppets, we have the possibility of stopping in our movements, looking up and perceiving the machinery by which we have been moved. In this act lies the first step towards freedom."

Peter Berger in "Invitation to Sociology"

The voluntary obedience to authority in a democratic society is possible because individuals either willingly subdue their appetite for freedom, or they are instructed to believe that one particular social system is good for them. Their faith in the system is preserved only so long as the system matches their expectations. Since it is blatantly clear that the present system meets the expectations of those in authority, it should come as no great surprise that they are in favour of keeping things more or less the way they are. As for those in obedience to authority, you might expect that when their expectations are not met that they might do something to change the social order. Oddly enough, this isn't true. It is the peculiar response of the mass of society that they respond with apathy. This conditioned response to authority, in any form, is the ultimate expression of powerlessness, the proof of alienation, the rejection of freedom. What are the reasons for this? How did the social order evolve to this state?

We have already reviewed the history of the early years of Halifax from its founding in 1749 through to the point, sometime in the last century, when it had evolved into a relatively rigid social order. We know the more immediate factors that shaped the community, but larger forces were taking shape during the same period.

The very year that Cornwallis' cockney settlers died of typhus, in the holds of his chartered transports anchored

in Halifax harbour, is the same year we mark as the beginning of the English Industrial Revolution. The period 1750 to 1850 was a time of rapid change that moved England from an agricultural and commercial society to a modern industrial society dependant on complex machinery. (The timing of the two events - the founding of Halifax and the beginning of the industrial revolution - is more than coincidental. The 15th and 16th centuries were the years of the European voyages of exploration. The primary benefit, for the Europeans at least, was the acquisition of enough precious metal to stimulate industrial development, trade, foster a money economy, and support the development of the early institutions of finance and credit. By 1700, institutions of credit and finance were well established in England. The resulting wealthier population began to demand more and better goods. Soon coal, steam power, and more complex machines were put to work to meet the demands of the new consumers. The economy of England became dependant on shipping, markets, foreign trade, and resources from abroad. Halifax was founded to secure England's trade and fishery in New England, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia, and to ensure that the French would not threaten the inter-dependence of these areas.)

The private ownership of the means of production gave power to fewer and fewer individuals. The promise of a better life for the majority of society did not come so quickly. The uncontrolled (unexpected?) growth of towns and factories created major social problems which the various governments failed to deal with, no doubt due to the fact

that the industrialists, financiers, and parliamentarians were members of the privileged class, if not one and the same person. The misery suffered by the industrial workers and their families is indelibly associated with the history of 19th century England. Reforms were a long time coming, but they came soon enough, and effected a large enough number, that the worst predictions of 19th century socialists weren't realized. The result, of the industrial society's evident capacity to bring the greatest benefit to the greatest number, with the seemingly endless capacity to improve the material well-being of mankind, has been a reinforcing of the values and methods of the capitalist system.

Along with the quantitative, the material, changes evident in Western industrial societies, there have been a number of developments that have modified our social organization, or, more correctly, the way some of us see (or interpret) the social organization. The complexity of society has increased to the point where the average individual has only a fuzzy idea of his place in the scale of things. Social relations no longer seem as rigid as they once did. The individual's place in the modern occupational structure involves degrees of status, of power, and of obedience, that seemingly replace the more rigid power relationships. The myth of 'mobility', the chance to move up the scale, is kept alive in a system that seems to offer so many possibilities. The fact that an individual may not ever get to the lofty heights, is countered with some dictum to the effect that 'not everyone has what it takes', even with the equal opportunity

open to everyone. A little over a century ago, trade unions, coming directly out of the working conditions of the industrial revolution, began to gather enough strength to counter the more blatant abuses of the industrial masters. There has been a general amelioration of the working conditions of the factory workers, and a trend to unionization at other levels of the occupational structure.

The industrial states have evolved various welfare programmes, that have contributed to the general impression of the worth, workability, flexibility, and humanitarianism of the capitalist system. The quantity of the welfare programmes has grown almost beyond comprehension, since the days of the charitable societies and the poor houses, but they're little more than handouts in the context of the larger capitalist industrial society. How much difference does the old-age pension really make? And the childrens' allowance? Some larger programmes, especially on the scale of medicare, have been steps in the right direction, but to see them as enlightened, humane, or generous products of the capitalist industrial system is stretching the truth. We need it, we can do it, and we certainly can afford it.

The nineteenth century also saw the creation of the early public education system - a system that was essentially sectarian in origin - and the rising tide of liberalism and political democracy. We are still experiencing the impact of the eighteenth century French and American Revolutions, as well as those of the nineteenth century in Europe, and the century of turbulence in Russia that began with the Decembrists in 1825.

Another factor that has contributed to the general impression of the success of the capitalist industrial system, is the rapid growth of our larger urban centres. There has been so much growth, so much evident labour, so many jobs, new products, new life-styles, new wealth, improved utilities, new transportation and communication systems; and much more, directly related to the growth of the major urban centres in the last century, generally, and over the last quarter century particularly in North America. The cities have been the new frontiers, the new lands of promise. They have been the ultimate expression of our materialistic values.

It's beginning to dawn on us that we may have paid a high price for the benefits of urban life. We're beginning to see that while our cities are undoubtedly a product of the capitalist industrial system, they clearly are not much of an expression of non-material values, of a qualitative change in our social system. We have looked at various factors that have modified the earlier, more blatant, face of capitalist exploitation, but we can easily see that there has been little change in the basic power structure of our society. Power is still held by a privileged few. And any research into the power structure of our society indicates that, with the constant growth of corporations and bureaucracies, true decision-making positions are limited to fewer and fewer individuals.

Since the decision-making positions are filled from the

upper levels of our social structure, our social values and goals tend to reflect those of the more privileged segments. Standards and styles of living tend to be set by elites. This leaves the vast majority of us out in the proverbial cold. Bourgeois values are so all-pervasive that we've reached a level of standardization that rejects diversity. We've evolved a mass culture that doesn't suffer voices arguing against the prevailing outlook. The value of obedience is encouraged.

The mass media, linked as they are with the power structure, are powerful instruments in the shaping of our society. The technology necessary for the development of the media of mass communication is a product of the industrial revolution. In turn, the use to which we have put the new media is also a product of the capitalist industrial system.

By the early years of the last century, the mass-produced "penny" papers began to appear in the larger cities of the eastern United States. This innovative idea soon spread to Europe and the rest of North America, and flourished in a period of rapid political, social, and industrial change, then affecting most of the western world. The American industrial revolution occurred later in the 19th century. There was considerable industry in the United States in the first two-thirds of the century, but after the Civil War the U.S. entered a period of industrial expansion that has continued almost unabated. By the end of the century, new technology and new demands had brought the beginning of

the electronic age. The invention of the telegraph, the telephone, and the electric light was soon followed by the development of the early technology of motion pictures. The first commercial radio station went on the air in 1920. Television was first viewed in the 1930's in England, but the development of a network was interrupted by the war. The beginnings of the modern networks, both in England and the United States, emerged immediately after the war ended. The Canadian networks began in the early 1950's and within a decade there was hardly a person beyond the reach of one signal or another.

The media of mass communication have become the universal and necessary partners of the industrial and commercial interests. In his book, "Communications", Raymond Williams argues that "The ownership of the means of communication, old and new, has passed or is passing, in large part, to a kind of financial organization unknown in earlier periods, and with important resemblances to the major forms of ownership in general industrial production. The methods and attitudes of capitalist business have established themselves near the centre of communications. There is the widespread dependence on advertising money, which leads to a policy of getting a large audience as quickly as possible, to attract and hold advertisers. From this it becomes one of the major purposes of communication to sell a particular paper or programme. All the basic purposes of communication - the sharing of human experience - - can become subordinated to this drive to sell... The organization of communications is then not for use, but for profit, and we seem to have passed the stage in which there has to be any pretence that things are otherwise.

This emphasis inevitably extends into the substance of communication. It is bound to remain a human world, in some form; it can never be only the production of things. But methods learned from the selling of things can be applied to persons. There can be a kind of manufacture and marketing of personalities, as in the powerful and expanding world of publicity. There can also be a kind of packaging of experience: putting it out with the right gloss, or even making the gloss a substitute for the experience. The human effects of such tendencies are bound to be serious, but attention to them can be dismissed as 'idealism' while the emphasis on selling is seen as normal and practical. The irony is that the only practical use of communication is the sharing of real experience. To set anything above this is in fact quite unpractical. To set selling above it may seem normal, but is really only a perversion to which some people have got used: a way of looking at the world which must be right and normal because you have cut yourself down to its size."

While it is true that the mass media are businesses, and businesses exist to make money, the media have other functions. The media bring us news of our world, they carry information about that world, and they entertain us. Beyond these more evident functions, we also know that the media give us some sense of ourselves as a society - the media have a social function.

The nature of the media, at least as they have evolved in the context of the Canadian society, has been - continues

to be - influenced by a variety of forces. In addition to being businesses, (marketing the products of the capitalist system, and controlled by a small number of people), the media are greatly influenced by the national trend toward urbanization. With some room for interpretation, statistics suggest that more than 75 percent of the population of Canada can be said to be urban dwellers. In large part, this is also true of the mass media. The cities constitute a ready market for the papers, radio and television programmes, films, magazines, and books that are the mass media of communication in Canada. The mass media also tend to draw their personnel from the urban centres. An individual living in one of the Pubnicos is not likely to have the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to be of use to any of the mass media. If there is such a person, he's likely to have left the Pubnicos far behind him and gone off to seek his fortune in Upper Canada. This need for 'professionalism', especially in the electronic media, makes most people shy away from participation in the media, and re-inforces the mystery (therefore, respect) surrounding the newer media.

Since the cities represent the greatest concentration of power, wealth, resources, institutions, and cultural forces, among other things, they also tend to be the source of the dominant values and attitudes carried out across the country by means of the transportation and communication networks. The life-style that influences the greatest number of Canadians is more and more the life-style adopted by the growing urban-based population. This trend is not easily countered by

powerless, voiceless minorities who aren't necessarily all that keen on surrendering their own life-style, and who prefer to maintain their own values and attitudes. In a country that legislates in support of multi-culturalism and bilingualism; professes to prefer the cultural mosaic to the inferred inferiority of the American melting pot; congratulates itself on the lack of racial violence and discrimination; romanticises its vast wilderness areas; respects the rugged individualism of its farmers, miners, woodsmen, and fishermen; and generally professes a respect for diversity, the larger cities, with their concentration of human, financial, and technical resources, are threatening to crush any and all forces acting against the trend to uniformity - uniformity of everything.

Another important consideration, at least in the Canadian experience, is the fact that the mass media, particularly television and radio, have relied heavily on the American model. So much has been said about the obvious consequences of this action, that it's hardly necessary to repeat them here. It should be sufficient to say that such a practice can hardly be expected to reinforce a unique Canadian, or regional, or local identity.

The allegiances demanded of us, the forces crowding in on the individual, are alien to the wider range of social, cultural, religious, and philosophical principals to which he previously owed allegiance. The political, social, cultural, etc., structure of Canada is based on the premise that we are a pluralistic society - a collection of people

living in widely diversified geographic regions; and representing or reflecting a variety of origins, values, attitudes, histories, economies, and needs. In such a complex system, with so many choices for the individual as well as the society, we value the freedom to choose the direction and nature of our lives above all other principles.

The realities of Canada, as we experience them and as we have reviewed them here, are not quite what we sometimes profess them to be. The consequence of the growth of governments, cities, corporations, and the mass media, with the concentration of power in the hands of fewer and fewer people, is that individuals have less and less to say about the decisions that affect their lives. Decisions are made by anonymous individuals, at points far removed from the average citizen. The increasing complexity and sophistication of bureaucracies has set up barriers through which few can penetrate.

Most of the lines of communication from these bureaucracies are one-way. Information comes from the top down. The individuals inability to make contact with the decision-makers obviously doesn't contribute to the creation of an open and free society. A free society is impossible without the free flow of information.

The political process has been modified by the mass media, particularly television and radio. We know our politicians as images on a screen or as disembodied voices on the radio. They have to compete for our attention (and willingness to buy their product) right up there with the

spray deodorants, shampoos, latest cars, furniture, and cereals. At times, they all (the politicians and the deodorants) come off sounding surprisingly (disturbingly?) similar, with the universal promises of 'the good life' that'll be yours if only you believe what they say. Our politicians are constantly before us on television and radio and in the newspapers. For most of us, that is the closest we will ever get to the political process. The politician is in great demand as a 'media performer'. He is the focus of a great deal of the media's attention, but his performance is protected from interference, from voices which may wish to argue against the prevailing attitude. Political leaders can, and generally do, deliver a ready-made consensus on issues of critical importance to the community; a community that may be as large as the nation, or as small as a neighborhood.

"A healthy society ought to have within it many voices arguing in different ways, including especially voices arguing against the prevailing outlook...(and the) society ought to be able to stand such a strain direct rather than to prohibit or employ elaborate cancelling-out and corralling devices so as to drain criticism and counter-arguments of any force. Societies, like people, have a natural skill at reducing irritants; they have complicated ways, not all of them deliberately decided upon by the authorities, of trying to ensure that free speech is made futile; and sometimes it seems as though they have succeeded. But that is not so. In some places from time to time, something gets through: the law defies the government to give what seems the just judgement; the broadcasters defy the authorities and say exactly what did happen; and the Press, against its own commercial interests, does the same; some teachers refuse to put out a line they know to be biased. Keeping up that pressure on all fronts is one of the best and hardest things we can do."

Richard Hoggart in "Only Connect."

The social system that we have been describing - whether at the national level, or closer to home in the Halifax area - obviously is not one in which there is much sympathy for other voices. And yet there are those who have spoken out against the prevailing outlook. There have been individuals who have believed in other routes to a better society; individuals who have argued in support of other methods, values, and social goals. In other times they argued for charity, for 'good deeds', to relieve the lot of the 'less fortunate'. They sought reforms that would relieve the more obvious social ills. A few, a very few, argued for fundamental social change, for changes in the structure of society.

The 'service' approach has dominated. The aid, or welfare, system has moved beyond the 'good works' of the churches and the concerned citizens, to such a level of importance to the society that we often speak of our society as a "Welfare State". The cost of the welfare system is calculated in billions of dollars. A very small percentage of that money goes to community-level groups engaged in projects concerned with the correction of social problems that lead to welfare dependency. Is it too exaggerated to see the present welfare system as little better than a welfare maintenance scheme? How much does the system contribute to the removal of the causes which led to the need for welfare in the first place?

Ninety eight years ago, in 1876, Halifax had a population of 31,000. The city was in its ninth year as a provincial

capital of the new country, Canada. The first two-thirds of the century had been boom years for the city. The port itself was busier than it may ever be again. The era of free trade created an unprecedented need for ships. And Nova Scotia launched and sailed them at a remarkable pace. Many of the goods required by the population were acquired in Europe, the Caribbean, and the United States. The resources of Nova Scotia were carried off to the centres of growing population. Some manufactured goods were produced in Halifax and Dartmouth factories. By about 1875, the goods produced here included: furniture, various woodenwares, boots and shoes from two factories, tobacco, carriages from several factories, brushes, rope from the Dartmouth ropeworks, flour from several mills, iron products from foundries on both sides of the harbour, fittings of all sorts for the ships that plied the harbour and the oceans beyond, steam and gas equipment, and the iron and steel works of the Starr Manufacturing Company in Dartmouth, the inventors of spring skates.

At about this time, Halifax went into a period of decline which was to continue well into this century. The reasons for the change are complex. But the downhill slide from the heights of Nova Scotia's Golden Age (as some were to label it) really resulted from a number of fairly obvious factors. After about the 1830's, immigrants chose to go to the more fertile lands of the new territories west of the original 13 American colonies, and the inviting lands of the valley of the St. Lawrence and the shores of the Great Lakes. People wanted food, and you couldn't grow much on the rocky coasts of Nova

Scotia. The 1830's also saw the beginning of the age of steamships. The wooden ships of Nova Scotia couldn't compete. Ironically, the man generally given credit for proving the commercial worth of the new steamships was Samual Cunard of Halifax. The railway between the Great Lakes and Halifax was completed in 1876. Instead of providing new markets for Halifax, the opposite was true. Ontario and Quebec manufacturers sent their goods east on the train. Immigrants took the train from Halifax to the growing cities on the other end of the line. Nova Scotians went west to find work in the expanding economy. Many of them went south-west to the eastern seaboard, especially to the 'Boston States'. A telegraph station was established in Halifax in 1849. The original purpose of the station was to get the financial news from the London papers, arriving in Halifax by ship, through to New York. The service was started by James G. Bennett, publisher of the New York Herald and founder of the telegraph-press service which he called the Associated Press. Bennett, too, had lived in Halifax. The act of confederation in 1867 also contributed to the decline of Nova Scotia. The new tariff walls, with the United States, quickly curbed the formerly vital links with the American economy. Before the end of the century, most of the manufacturing industries that we listed above were either bankrupt or had sold out to interests from central Canada. The financial houses, the banks, were soon moved to new bases in Ontario and Quebec. The other damaging aspect of confederation was the fact that many of the decisions that most affected the

lives of Nova Scotians were being made outside the confines of the province.

By 1876, the charitable nature of Haligonians was finding expression in a number of good causes. The Poor House is reported to have given food, shelter, and clothing to more than 500 residents at a time (that's approximately one in every sixty inhabitants). And with a population of 31,000, the city also supported 6 free schools, 3 orphanages, 1 asylum for the deaf and dumb, 1 asylum for the blind, 1 home for Aged Ladies, 1 Insane Asylum in Dartmouth, 1 Soldiers' and Sailors' Home, 1 Home for Fallen Women (just about across the street), 1 Home for Inebriates over in Dartmouth, 1 Temperance Hall, 1 YMCA, 1 60-bed civic hospital, and, not surprisingly with all of those services, 33 churches.

The decline of the Nova Scotian economy had one other far-reaching impact on the leaders of Halifax society. Raddall describes it in these words: "...after confederation the funds of Nova Scotia began to go inland, and there appeared in Halifax a whole class of 'rentiers', rich or merely well to do, who had ceased to take an active part in commerce and were content to leave their money in the hands of solid investment trusts. Their quiet mansions, concentrated chiefly in the rectangle bounded by South Street, Tower Road, Inglis Street, and Barrington Street, made the South End an equivalent of Boston's Back Bay.

"The South End Haligonian became, in fact, very much a Brahmin of the Boston sort, urbane, well educated, generous in

many ways but prone to haggle over ten cents with the grocer, familiar with London, New York, Boston, or Montreal but puzzled on Gottingen Street and lost on Chebucto Road. Marriage was always within the tight little circle or a matter of finding a wife or a husband among the right sort of people somewhere else, bringing up the children in the paths of righteousness and gilt-edged bonds, with summers at Chester and now and again a winter in Bermuda, but finding real contentment only in town behind their own trees and lawns or their bulky brick or brownstone fronts. With their treasure locked and guarded by these charming and well-feathered griffins Halifax went into an unhappy trance for forty years."

The city prospered again in the years of World War I. Or at least some segments of the community prospered again. The population grew by 25 percent in the ten years between 1911 and 1921. But 1921 was the year of the great post-war economic slump, and it affected most of the world. The 1920's saw the beginning of a major exodus of the young who left to try their luck elsewhere, most of them going to the United States. The departure rate was so great that by 1931 the census showed that the population of the city was the same as it had been in 1921. Poverty increased alarmingly, and noticeably, to blight sections of the city which are yet held in its grip. In the 1925 provincial election the electors threw out the Liberal government that had held on to power for nearly forty years. Maritime Conservatives went to Ottawa to demand 'Maritime Rights'. The result was the Duncan Commission. Among other recommendations, the report recommended the creation of a port commission

for Halifax. The Halifax Harbour Commission was created in 1928. This was the first step toward the reorientation of the port, away from its long-standing dependency on the military function of the harbour, to a more commercial function. Of course, the whole undertaking was dependent on a good dose of federal funds. Many of the piers, and related services, built at that time, are still in use. By 1936, the federal government had changed its mind and created the National Harbours Board, with planning, funding, and administration, based in Ottawa. The depression that staggered the world in the 1930's didn't do much harm to Halifax, since it was already experiencing bad times. By the end of the 1930's the automobile was bringing more rural customers to Halifax. The city was beginning to experience a period of growth that expanded with the coming of the Second World War in 1939.

The expanding population of the post-war years, spread out beyond the former natural limits of the old town, with the help of the automobile and its by-product, an improved highway system, causing problems which the city has yet to solve.

By the end of the 1940's, Halifax and Dartmouth had spilled out into the lands along the shores of the Dartmouth lakes, Bedford Basin, and the Northwest Arm. Both cities eventually incorporated these suburban communities into their jurisdictions. The wisdom of this will be debated for years to come. The two cities allowed themselves to be molded, to be reshaped, by the automobile. The downtown cores deteriorated as quickly as the suburban areas expanded. Shopping areas sprang up miles away from the former main streets, in both

cities. And what was the solution to the problem? What did the cities need to do in order to restore the core areas? By some perverse reasoning it was believed that an improved road system would do the trick. If cars caused the deterioration in the first place then why shouldn't they solve the problem? This fighting-fire-with-fire solution apparently held that if you could move people into the downtown area quickly, and efficiently, and find room to park them while the driver went about his or her business, then the older commercial areas would rebound with new vigour. We have two bridges to carry cars between Halifax and Dartmouth. New feeder-roads deliver thousands of cars to the very heart of both communities. Major new arteries are scheduled, or at least planned, for construction in the near future. Coupled with this, we are witnessing the rapid development of major, high-density buildings, or even complexes of buildings. Putting the two phenomena together, one can only doubt the wisdom of the 'solution'. These two thrusts have constituted the 'planning' philosophy of the city. Lost somewhere in the shuffle are the human needs of the community. In function, structure, scale, and purpose, the city is planned for the automobile. There is a school of thought that suggests that even 'modern' architecture itself is geared to the automobile. The next time you drive past one of the new downtown highrises take a quick look at what you can see from your vantage point behind the wheel. Then park your car and walk past the same building. Chances are you'll remark how much better it looked as you snatched a glance at it from inside your car travelling at thirty miles an hour.

The social cost of this approach to 'community' planning is predictably high. The social goals, the social values, take a beating on such a scale of priorities. But we have seen in our discussion, that social justice, humanitarian values, don't stand much of a chance under our present social system, guided as it is by the profit motive and its necessary power structure. The by-product of this system is waste - human, material, emotional, spiritual, and so on. And there's nothing very attractive about a garbage dump, sewer ditch, or scrap heap, or slum. They're all eyesores. The slums, the deteriorated areas, of Halifax and Dartmouth, were eyesores; they had to come down to make way for the new roads, bridges, and buildings. With barely a thought of the consequences, the direct and indirect cost to the people affected, and to the community at large, the bulldozers leveled and continue to level the old buildings. One wonders how much better off each of the dislocated individuals is as a result of all that progress. Have the former residents of Africville become fully socially integrated into the community? Are the public housing islands socially integrated into the larger community? How much recreational ground has been freed in the reconstructed areas of the city? How many walking paths are there left for the pedestrian? How much green space have we integrated into the new developments? What about the human scale? How much reasonably priced housing has been built to replace the condemned buildings, and the homes required by a growing population? Or is the solution to build out further and further? Whatever

the solution (s) to this, and a thousand other problems, it appears that the average citizen isn't going to be given much of a chance to participate in the decision-making process. A few make the decisions and the rest have to cope as best they can with the consequences. Those who have the skills, the necessary time, the inclination, the confidence, the knowledge, and the conviction that it's worth a try, have even been known to speak out against the decisions, plans, values, attitudes, and actions of the few.

But if you have a right to speak, but not the right to have a say; the right of free assembly, without the right of power to act on you concerns, what hope is there of new directions? Why think of social change? Why bother to think of changing anything? And that is precisely the attitude of most people.

Of course, given the forces at work in our community, that's a fairly reasonable response. But the question does have an answer, or, no doubt, a number of answers. If first we remember that we are not talking about abstract ideas, about imaginary problems, about pretend people, or about someone else's community, we can see why the question must have an answer. Unless we deal with the social problems of our community, unless we find ways of having an active say in the decision-making process, then we cannot expect to evolve a society that tolerates dissent, fosters creativity, is life-affirming, just, or encourages diversity; in short, a society of free human beings.

The mass media are often blamed for many of the world's problems. The litany of charges is probably endless. (We're

referring to television, radio, and newspapers when we speak of the 'the mass media'.) The media alienate us, bore us, dehumanize us; they corrupt our values, our morals, and our children; they make us powerless, illiterate, and stupid; they appeal to the lowest common denominator (in everything); they turn us into passive receivers, consumers, and citizens; they weaken our bodies, because we don't exercise, and our spirits, because we don't create; they weaken our judgement, and feed us pre-packaged ideas; they crush freedom, and force alien philosophies down our throats; and the list goes on and on. But the mass media are also held to be powerful forces for good, for growth, for change, for creativity, for a new enlightenment, and a new freedom. Barry Schwartz, in his essay "Humanism and the New Media", says that "The new media (by 'new media' he means the basic media of television, radio, and newspapers plus the developments in cable television, colour television, satellite communication, videotape, cassettes, electronic high-speed printing, electrostatic reproduction techniques, data banks, time-sharing computers, an increasing range of media hybrids, and other very new advances in the area of human communication.) do have enormous potential for democratising the decision-making apparatuses of society. They are capable of instantly dispelling misconceptions which otherwise would mold our history. They are capable of leaving nothing to the imaginative powers of fear, distrust, and false conception. They render reality in greater focus and contribute to human understanding. They are communication media, and... the ability to communicate has a direct

relationship to mental health, well-being, and humanness. Thus, while the world polarizes itself into noxious nationalisms and its points of view into many discrete and often violent factions, while inequity grows and awareness of it diminishes, the new media come to us as a real hope for the improvement of earth communication, the potential for nothing less than total community communication and the cessation of violence because awareness and understanding ultimately minimize conflict."

That may be looking a very long way ahead. But there are many who share Schwartz's 'science fiction' dream. There's no reason why it won't, in Schwartz's words, "be possible within fifty years to receive a laser communication at a single terminal within the home enabling the citizen to gather information from radio, teletype, microfilm, telephone, televideo, libraries, satellites, and perhaps even interstellar communication." How will we ever move to a position where the potential of the media can be realized, and the destructive implications held in check?

The potential lies with the value system, the use to which we choose to put the media. Our value system is also the source of the problems which we're experiencing. The existing value system, as we have seen, hangs on the profit motive and the drive to power. If the media continue to be directed by the existing value system, then we cannot expect the media, current or future, to solve, or help us solve, anything. Improving the media tools themselves, within the present value system, just makes it easier to do what we already do, but more efficiently, with more sophistication and with more destructive results.

How can the potential of the media be realized? If we accept that our general objective is a society composed of equals, or potential equals, in true communication with one another, cooperating to create a community which provides the optimum opportunity for individual creativity and growth, then we must accept that all must have the opportunity to learn to communicate - to express themselves and to listen to others - and the opportunity to learn about and use the most appropriate media of communication.

Of course, to suggest that we desire the society we've just described (in the roughest of terms, we agree), implies a value system obviously at odds with the present system. Individuals committed to finding new ways to solve the problems we face in society, to exploring new options that will encourage individual growth, and to democratizing the decision-making structures of our society, must immediately begin to learn everything they can about the media (mass and otherwise) of communication, and the need for, and the process of true communication between people.

So media information itself must be democratized, and made accessible. But the key to the desired change is not cold, neutral, information. There is no potential for change unless the informed individual then chooses to act, unless he is motivated to believe that by taking action he can produce a change. In the context of our discussion, the minimum action most appropriate to the change-oriented, media-skilled individual is the analysis and communication of both the

present social problems, and the alternatives which might be open to us.

"It is a grave situation when a people resign their citizenship or when a resident of a great city, though he may desire to take a hand, lacks the means to participate. That citizen sinks further into apathy, anonymity, and depersonalization. The result is that he comes to depend on public authority and a state of civic-sclerosis sets in."

Saul Alinsky in "Rules for Radicals."

One channel for citizen action - "the means to participate"- is a community organization. But, as we have argued, a good many community organizations march in a lock-step with the dominant values, the dominant elements, of the present social system. These organizations reinforce the present values, the present structure. They obtain their "power" from their links with the power structure. They take their lead from the public authorities, with whom they are linked in a variety of ways ranging all the way from family ties to professional commitment to financial dependence. Their attitude to social problems is essentially one of charitable good works, of service, of appeals to the nobler sentiments, leisure time and loose change of the "more fortunate". These organizations "care" a great deal. These organizations don't threaten the power structure; they don't treaten to change society. They want to relieve the suffering of the "less fortunate."

Of course there are a good many organizations, in a community the size of the Halifax-Dartmouth metropolitan area, who make no claim to having "social" concerns. Many of them exist for very different reasons: entertainment, special interests, skill development, sports, crafts, etc. Although in the

broadest of terms such groups are not so far removed from social goals as to be unimportant - they are very important to the development of any free society - they are not primarily concerned with social development, with social change, as we understand it in the terms of this discussion. The community organizations that most concern us here, the ones to whom this paper is primarily directed, are those organizations who are first and foremost concerned with tackling real problems, and who are attempting to analyse, and seek solutions to, the social problems of our community.

Such organizations are relatively new to this community. Their history goes back just barely ten years, for the earliest organizations, and barely five for many others. The stimulus for many of them came from outside the city, even outside the country. The 1960's, for reasons which may not be understood for a long time, were years of great social upheaval. Everybody seemed to want to change everything. That's not true, of course, but all the media flooded everybody with reports on riots, marches, sit-ins, love-ins, occupations, teach-ins, anti-war protests, campus troubles, political assassinations, minority causes, poverty projects, international volunteer programmes, domestic volunteer projects, fund raising stunts, seminars, conferences, guerilla action in the cities, mountains, and jungles, and a thousand and one other expressions of revolt, change, and discontent.

The impact, of the information carried by the mass media, was far reaching. The 1960's was also a time of media saturation. More people were able to receive television and radio

signals, and read magazines, books, and newspapers than ever before. And the most powerful of these media was television. The 1960's was also the time in which a new generation - the first in three to reach maturity without fighting in a world war - reached the early years of adulthood and cast about for some "moral equivalent to war" (a phrase that was popular in the 60's). (World War 1, 1914-18; 21 years later, World War 2; 21 years later, 1966 and a peak year of action for many in Europe, Asia, and North America.) The sixties have even been characterized as the era of the Youth Revolt. The "war" of the young was directed, in large part, against social injustice, against inequities. The causes evolved, overlapped, ballooned, exploded, fizzed out, ended in disillusionment, or moved on to other targets, but, always, they were aimed at inequities of one sort or another. Race, and the inequitable results of a racist society, was an issue; a cause many died for. Poverty, and the inequitable results of a plutocratic society, was also an issue; but something that people have died from for a long time. Perhaps a lot of people just got tired of waiting for all the things that they'd been promised, but didn't get.

The fact that the mass media told a lot of people that a lot of other people were experiencing this or that problem, made a lot of people realize how much we have in common. These reports, this information, became our common experience. Problems took on common features. Urban problems began to look and sound remarkably alike, whether the problem was experienced in New York, or Montreal, or Liverpool, or Halifax. A lot of

people who saw what was happening to some of the urban centres decided that they didn't like what they saw and moved elsewhere. Some went to "better" cities, but many went out into the country, or even the remote wilderness areas. It was during the sixties that the Halifax area began to receive new citizens - some completely new, and others who had gone away to the U.S. or Upper Canada, but who returned when the urban problems began to outweigh the pleasures.

Blacks in Canada began to realize that their experience with racism in this society wasn't something to gloat over in the face of the experience of American blacks. Perhaps they'd come to think that they lived in a discrimination-free society because they were constantly told how "lucky" they were. And it was true, as long as they didn't expect the same opportunities that most of the whites seemed to have, or as long as they didn't expect to have a decent home, or a university education, or a high-paying job, or water and sewage services in their communities. The mass media probably made some of them wonder just how lucky they were, since it seemed that they had a lot in common with blacks in the U.S. In the late sixties, American black activists even came to Halifax to tell them just how much they did have in common.

And the media told us about hundreds of other problems, too. The massive flood of information, and the media themselves, became, in Jean-Francois Revel's phrase, "the energy source of a revolution.." A voice had been given to the

previously voiceless whose plight had existed in the midst of glut, waste, and an atmosphere of benevolence toward the less fortunate. To remind us of just how many of the "less fortunate" there really are, even the crudest, and most conservative, statistics tell us that something like 60 million Americans are poor. The Canadian figures are equally appalling: somewhere between 5 and 6 million Canadians - that's out of a population of approximately 22 million! - live below the official poverty line.

The stimulus of information, describing the problems of people in communities far removed from Halifax and Dartmouth, combined with the sudden rush of redevelopment, which the, so-called, twin cities embarked upon in the middle years of the last decade, and the arrival of new people, who had come here believing that this community was less plagued by problems than the larger urban centres of Ontario, or the United States, gave impetus to the embryonic citizen organizations already growing in Halifax and Dartmouth.

But the best of intentions, and the strongest desires, don't always guarantee success. Halifax and Dartmouth are still poorly organized communities. There is still no single, strong, organizational base - no network of citizen organizations - from which people will have the power, and resources, and the opportunity to meet the problems, and the potential, of the community. This is not surprising, given the nature of our communities, the social structure that we have evolved. Saul Alinsky, who came to Halifax about four years ago, sums

up the problem in these words: "The Have-Nots have a limited faith in the worth of their own judgements. They still look to the judgements of the Haves. They respect the strength of the upper class and believe that the Haves are more intelligent, more competent, and endowed with 'something special'. Distance has a way of enhancing power, so that respect becomes tinged with reverence. The Haves are the authorities and thus the beneficiaries of the various myths and legends that always develop around power. The Have-Nots will believe them where they would be hesitant and uncertain about their own judgements. Power is not to be crossed; one must respect and obey. Power means strength, whereas love is a human frailty the people mistrust. It is a sad fact of life that power and fear are the fountainheads of faith." (Rules for Radicals)

Since people tend to think of themselves as powerless, ("You can't fight city hall", etc.), then it's a natural step to the argument that there's no point in talking about the problems, ("If you can't do anything about it, then don't waste your breath."). Most of us resort to vague complaining, to moaning about our plight. But once people are organized so that they have the potential, the power, to make changes, then, when they're faced with problems, they can begin to ask questions about how to make changes.

It is organization, the development of the potential for power, that provides the reason for knowing. (When we speak of "power", we are talking about the ability to act.) So, a

prerequisite for communication, for education, is having a reason for wanting to know. There is nothing very revolutionary about that, but it can be revolutionary if people really understand the link between these two elements. If you want to organize your community, you must be able to communicate with the people in the community. Without communication, without access to the means to communicate, you are silent, voiceless. And silence is equated with assent, with obedience to the dictates of authority.

In a conservative community, such as ours clearly is, the fear of organizing, the natural fear of change, acts as a barrier to action. But, this attitude can, in turn, be used as a means of organizing. A good many people think that this is a fine community; and, to a point they're correct. Many of the new arrivals like the cities because they're relatively free of pollution, traffic, crime, etc. And many want to keep Halifax essentially as it is. Predictably, then, the "issues" that have received the greatest support from citizens, and the fullest coverage from the media, have been those issues concerned more with keeping Halifax as it is (or even going back to the city as it was). The most "successful" (this does not mean that the groups necessarily got what they wanted.) organizing has been accomplished around blocking the construction of high-rise buildings and roads that threatened to destroy the character of a neighborhood, and around a concern for preserving a healthy environment. So, while people can be organized around such issues, organizers can then work to show the relationship between these less disturbing problems

and the larger, more frightening, social problems. Initial concerns for more open space, litter in the streets, or smokey chimneys, can evolve into concerns for environmental law, urban planning, energy resources, public transit, and so on. This is only one small example of how individuals can organize around an issue that is within the range of experience of a potentially large audience, and one which, of itself, is not likely to provoke immediate hostility from authorities - at least not until the issues evolve to a higher level - and is likely to receive sympathetic treatment from the mass media.

You can activate people only if you find a way to tell them what you're doing in the community. In order to do that you need a free press, through which you can appeal to public opinion, (the notion of a free press must include the electronic media of television and radio), and access to all other means necessary for true communication between people - that includes meetings, workshops, the telephone, copying machines, word of mouth, and all other means known or imaginable.

While people build institutions and organize for power, to take action for the purpose of changing their community, knowledge, and the ability to communicate that knowledge to others, is also power. The development of new technology for the gathering, storage, and distribution of information naturally raises serious questions, that have considerable political and social implications, because any change in the control of information threatens the present distribution of

power in our society. This is so because improved information services are the principle means by which the previously uninformed can find out such things as where and how to best apply political pressure against the system. The mechanics of organizing are vitally important skills, but organization is also communication. By communication, we mean the process by which values, ideas, attitudes, knowledge, and information are transmitted and received. And by Communications we mean the structures or means by which values, ideas, etc., are transmitted and received. Our social structure is a form of communication. The institutions of society are part of the process by which our values, ideas, attitudes, knowledge, and information, etc., are transmitted, molded, shared, or perpetuated. The power relationships in our society are part of the communication process, too. They define who says what, to whom, and under what circumstances. Obviously, those individuals actively concerned with social change must learn all they can about both the nature of the process of communication, and the means of communication, (mass and otherwise), if they are to have any hope of success.

PART 1V

TELED AND THE COMMUNITY

When Teled Video Services was organized, in the fall of 1971, it was with the expectation that it would help citizens' organizations, in the Halifax-Dartmouth metropolitan area, to make the best possible use of the community cable stations that were coming to both cities. That explains why the organization is described as a "video service". "The spirit behind the group was the desire to make the community channel not only an interesting experiment in human communication, but also an important catalyst in the process of social change - in particular, community development - that was already taking place in the area". (TELED report, 1972) Well, the cable companies went into operation, but the emphasis has not been one of community service. Both companies are licenced to provide alternate programming to the CBC and CTV stations in Halifax. They were also supposed to provide a community channel. Neither station really provides alternate programming to the other outlets, and what's offered as a community channel must surely meet the very minimum conditions of the licences. Teled's organizers believed that if citizen's organizations were familiar with the equipment used at these stations, if they had some knowledge of the type of programming that could be done, and if the organizations could learn what programming best suited their needs and the needs of the community at large, then this would be a powerful means of increasing public understanding and awareness of the issues facing the community. Under the circumstances, this didn't work out.

The other problem was that Teled's organizers had begun with the assumption that the citizens' organizations in metro were strong, well organized, and ready to take advantage of the services Teled had in mind. After several months of work, it was evident that many organizations were, in the words of a Teled report, "...too fragile and overworked to put any amount of time and resources into communications systems such as cable T.V. or internal process work with video." As a result, Teled's staff "realized that any information or communications system (they) used would have to be readily accessible, easy to use and inexpensive. Also (they) began to work with the information-communications needs of organizations as a whole, rather than with video or cable alone. (Their) orientation began moving towards content rather than form. Slide shows, printing, community radio and newsletters were produced by different groups, and soon a photographer, a graphic designer, and a radio free-lancer were added to the staff." (Teled, 1972)

The first contacts that Teled made with the citizens' groups in Halifax and Dartmouth came as a result of Teled staff going out into the community, literally with their video equipment in hand, and offering to work with the groups. This 'outreach' approach was the most direct way to make contact with community groups. And it was the most direct way to introduce video skills to the community. Of course, video has its limitations. It's a tool, a medium of communication, and it's only as good as the use to which we put it, no matter what awe we might feel for the camera, tape, or

anything else about it. Video is not magic. The glamour quickly wears off when groups find that their expectations aren't met. A video emphasis is limited, if it's the only medium employed and if the group isn't ready to use it. As Teled discovered this, and other things about itself and the community organizations, it retreated from the outreach approach and turned to the resource centre concept.

The Media Resources Centre has been funded by eight departments and agencies of government: Manpower, Health and Welfare, the National Film Board, the Department of Communications, the Department of the Secretary of State, Urban Affairs, the Nova Scotia Department of Education, and the Nova Scotia Youth Agency. The Centre has been able to develop a broad range of services, but has felt hindered by the lack of a government policy on community media. Without policy, without a federal funding programme, Teled feels that it may not be able to continue.

The services of the Media Resources Centre include equipment, work or production space, information, and training. The equipment, much of which Teled loans out free to any non-profit community group, includes: video equipment, cameras, tape recorders, projectors, and related supplies. The work areas include: a black and white darkroom, a graphics section, meeting space, a sound studio, video editing equipment, a slide show production area, a photocopier, and facilities for the production of everything from newsletters to slide/tape shows. The information service is composed of a small library of books, magazines, tapes and reports relevant to Teled's

objectives. The training function is more or less limited to ensuring that individuals who borrow equipment from Teled, or who use the work areas, know how to use the equipment.

The weakness of the Media Resources Centre, of a service approach, as compared with the outreach concept, lies in the fact that the clientele served, the groups who get to use the equipment and develop the skills, tend to be different in each case. The outreach approach allows the media workers, the animators, to work with the groups most actively involved in social change, those most concerned with social problems, and those most in need of media skills. This approach reaches people who ordinarily have little or no access to any of the media, especially the mass media in the community. The Media Resources Centre, (at least as it has evolved), on the other hand, has a tendency to be more passive, more of a here-we-are-you-come-to-us attitude. The equipment is located in one place, and even though some of it can be borrowed and taken out, there's still a feeling that it's somebody else's. Access, either in reality or in the minds of individuals, is limited. The majority of the people who come to the Media Resources Centre are, predictably, those who already have some idea of what they need media for, and of how to use the media tools. They are, generally, from those segments of the community who already have access to the mass media. These groups tend to be middle class, professional or semi-professional people, generally better educated, possess more self-assurance, and operate on funding other than that available from government programmes. They represent more the community service

organization, than the citizens' action group. As we noted in the introduction, Teled has worked with a variety of organizations and individuals involved in family, children, and youth services, rehabilitation and community correctional services, community development, welfare rights, services to the aged, churches, theatre groups, and others. The service organizations are in the majority.

Admittedly, Teled has attempted to counter this by developing an "equipment priority policy". This policy, which Teled recognizes won't be needed under "normal circumstances" - i.e. there isn't usually a need to choose which of two or more groups, wanting the same equipment at the same time, gets the nod - ranks groups on the following scale of priorities:

1. citizen action group,
2. church group,
3. social agency,
4. voluntary association,
5. students without institutional access,
6. government agency,
7. students with institutional access,
- and 8. others.

Groups, whatever their base in the community or their orientation, have come to the Media Resources Centre for a variety of reasons. In spite of Teled's effort to retreat from the video emphasis, many groups come to the Centre to borrow video equipment. Most of these groups use video for internal purposes - training, exploring a specific problem, information sharing, education, entertainment, etc. Few groups use video as a means of communicating with other groups, or the community at large. Another reason for coming to Teled is to borrow or use equipment that the group either doesn't have, or what they do have is either being used for

something else, or it isn't as good as the equipment at Teled. Groups borrow cameras, several different kinds of projectors, cassette recorders and tapes, or related sound and video equipment. Others come to Teled for meeting space. The Teled boardroom and other open areas can be used during the day and the evening hours. The recently completed sound studio will meet the needs of a variety of groups and individuals, and can be used to tape public service announcements, sound tracks for video tapes, and slide shows, among other things. Groups use the graphics area to produce newsletters, posters, pamphlets, video titles, brochures, layouts for reports, signs, and so on. The darkroom (black and white) can be used to print photographs that can be used in conjunction with video or graphic productions. A Photo Co-op also operates out of the darkroom. Many of the groups use the production resources of the Media Centre to produce material and information for the purposes of public relations, that is, telling people what they do; and some public information, that is, telling the public about one thing or another that concerns the group.

These groups, in turn, seem to have ready access to the newspapers, and the radio and television stations. Undoubtedly, this is because these media perform a "community service" function of their own that requires, and invites, easily digestible public service information, announcements, etc. The majority of these groups are not viewed as disruptive, or provocative, so they tend to get a sympathetic response from the media. But this is a very limited use of the media. Surely

this is not an acceptable goal for community organizations or for a media resource centre. It, clearly, is not acceptable to anyone interested in social change.

What are the alternatives? We have tried to provide a context in which that question might be put into perspective. We've tried to understand the social structure of our community, and something of the nature and function of the mass media. And we've suggested that anyone interested in social change cannot ignore the role of the media of mass communication in the molding, reinforcing, and perpetuating of that social structure. The mass media, any media of communication, are tools. We must learn all we can about them and how to use them. We must learn to use them to analyse our problems, and to seek solutions, solutions that must be found in communication with others. And we mustn't be limited to the communications tools controlled by vast bureaucracies and corporations - they won't turn over their equipment, so you mustn't wait for that. We have to learn that communications includes drama, speech, mime, puppetry, libraries, poetry, newspapers, radio, television, conversation, records, tapes, film, cassette recorders, music, seminars, workshops, magazines, books, posters, art, the community, the neighborhood, and life itself. And above all, we mustn't wait for someone else to do the learning and the acting for us. The people who will make the difference are the people who want things to be different. They're the ones whose values tell them that things must be different, that they cannot accept things as they see they are, that they

cannot accept injustice, inequity in our society. If we want a more open society, we must open the means by which we communicate. If we want a truly democratic society, then we must find the ways to guarantee the citizen the right to the information and the means of communication by which he can participate in the decisions that shape his life. We have suggested that, in the context of our discussion, the minimum action most appropriate to the change-oriented, informed individual is the analysis and communication of both the present social problems, and the alternatives which might be open to us.

The two groups of people who are in the best position to meet this challenge are: first, those who are committed to a vision of a better world, whose values demand a radically alternative society oriented to meeting the real needs of people, and who seek to confront the problems openly and creatively; and, second, individuals who are already part of the media systems, who have the skills required to communicate the reality of a rapidly changing world, who see the media as a new way of understanding that world, with all of its problems, hopes, potential and disappointment, who see the media as more than just a way to sell soap, but who respect the audience as individuals capable of acting creatively to reach the right decisions, to shape a better world. How can this second group play its part?

Obviously, anything that we can say in a few words won't do justice to the question, but there are a few points that we can raise. First of all, when we refer to 'media people' we're

not including every last person employed at a radio or television station or everyone on the staff of a newspaper or magazine. The people we're referring to will most likely be part of the public affairs and news departments of radio and television stations, or the writers and editors of the newspapers and magazines. And, given the nature of the media, you can assume that the kind of media person we've described above will form a very small nucleus in that larger group. There is probably a great deal more freedom and flexibility (don't expect too much!) in most media than the majority of reporters, writers, announcers, broadcasters, etc., are capable of seeing, let alone exploiting. This is due to a variety of factors, only one of which is the nature of the medium itself. Naturally, radio broadcasting calls for some skills not required in the magazine industry, and vice versa; or television's ability to take the viewer to the scene of an event gives it powers outside the scope of a newspaper. But we're talking about the individual who uses the media to analyse, interpret, and communicate the changes taking place in our society. The individual who seeks to find out why such and such a thing happened; who tries to place it in some sort of context; who seeks to explore the relationships between personalities and issues; who allows alternate views on public issues; and who provides a forum for the expression of opinions that wouldn't normally be given access to the media. We're talking about the kind of reporter or broadcaster or editor who actively seeks to learn all he or she can about the community in which

he works, including the groups working for social change, the formal and informal power structures in the community, the services and programmes of the various levels of government, the history of the community, the economics and politics of the community, and so on. Without the freedom to develop along these lines, the reporter or broadcaster is merely an agent for someone else's opinions and values. The choice is critical. Richard Hoggart (in "Only Connect") argues that "If broadcasters, then, are to avoid being merely reflectors (which in most countries means reflectors of someone-in-power's idea of what the culture should look like), if they are to express the movement towards change in their societies, if they are to widen our options, if they are to carry out their inescapable making of choices thoughtfully and independently, if broadcasters are to do all this they will be critically involved, a sort of yeast in society. They will be active agents of change (emphasis added). This disturbs the conventionally minded and angers many politicians. It is not popular in any country. Of course, in some countries there is no real problem; the broadcasters are not allowed to risk being risky. Elsewhere, they can hardly settle for less, if they are to meet the mediums possibilities."

The role of the first group described above, the people working for social change in the community, is more complex, more difficult to describe. There are many possible ways to use the media of communication (mass or otherwise) to analyse and communicate both the present social problems, and the alternatives that might be open to us. We've argued above,

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that a prerequisite for communication, for education is having a reason for wanting to know. Organizing is a form of communication, a way of getting your message to other people, some of whom you will want to join with you. The simplest use of the media at this stage, is for basic public relations, publicity. The traditional approach to public relations is to use the existing mass media - the newspapers, radio, and television. They normally have space or time for public service announcements, and groups can usually get a sympathetic response (for simple announcements) from all the media. Frequently, groups can get a few minutes 'on air' for more important events, or they might hold a press conference, hopefully attended by representatives of the various media, if the group has a big announcement or an important issue to raise. The more basic publicity objectives can also be achieved by using other media besides the mass media. Here, the possibilities are almost unlimited. You can use posters, buttons, pamphlets, newsletters, bulletin boards, bill boards, bumper stickers, mailing campaigns, rallies, slide/tape shows, the telephone, and many other tools and techniques. But public relations is as far as many groups go. This is so because most individuals think of themselves as powerless, they fail to see the connection between information, research, involvement and politics, including the politics of media. And as we have suggested: if you want to organize your community, you must be able to communicate with the people in your community. Without communication, without access to the means to communicate, you are silent, voiceless. And silence

is equated with assent, with obedience to the dictates of those in authority.

But organizing is also an educational process as well as a communication process. And these two activities are highly interdependent. Saul Alinsky has argued that "The organization has to be used in every possible sense as an educational mechanism, but education is not propaganda. Real education is the means by which the membership will begin to make sense out of their relationship as individuals to the organization and to the world they live in, so that they can make informed and intelligent judgements (emphasis added). The stream of activities and programmes of the organization provides a never-ending series of specific issues and situations that create a rich field for the learning process. The concern and conflict about each specific issue leads to a speedily enlarging area of interest. Competent organizers should be sensitive to these opportunities. Without the learning process, the building of an organization becomes simply the substitution of one power group for another." (Rules for Radicals")

Alinsky's arguments regarding the purpose of education are the same arguments we've raised concerning the purpose of communication; that is, that communication is the means by which the individual will begin to make sense out of his relationship as an individual to the organization and to the world he lives in, so that he can make informed and intelligent judgements.

This paper has been drafted in this format because we believe that social change people, organizers and active members

of organizations, must come to realize that, before they can ever hope to accomplish anything in this community, they have to analyse the realities of the social structure, the context in which people live and act, in order to be able to consider any alternatives that might be open to us. This analysis, the information acquired from the process - which must continue - is the foundation for change, the building blocks for organization and action. This knowledge gives us the ability to act, the power to make decisions that affect our lives. The acquiring of this information, and the process of communicating it, must become the central thrust of those organizations concerned with social change. Organizations are strong not because they have complex administrative structures, or large grants, or fancy equipment, or any other largely superficial attribute, but because they have substance, a solid grasp of the social, political, economic, etc., realities of the community; and the capacity to communicate this to the larger community so that people may begin to act, to explore alternatives, to creatively confront the problems of the community. The power to analyse the problems of the community, the ability of an organization to challenge the actions, attitudes, policies, and priorities of insensitive governments and/or corporations is the only way to ensure the creation of a society based on human values that will rearrange our priorities.

Social change people must acquire the skills to analyse the problems of the community and the skills necessary to communicate this information. Organizers must find the ways

to extend these capacities throughout the organizations. They must reject the old habit of hiring one or two "experts" to run the whole show. "Experts" are frequently elitists and middle-class, and as such they seldom reflect the values and goals of the legitimate social change organizations. The experts, individuals with special skills, have their role, however, but they should be employed for specific purposes to help in the work of the organization, and not be allowed to take control. Many groups have as much trouble bridging the communication gap between themselves and their "experts" as they do between themselves and governments and institutions. Organizers, and the active members of organizations, must learn to stop feeling inadequate or insecure because they don't have the gloss and jargon of the "experts", they should concentrate on communicating within the sphere of experience of the membership and the community at large. We're always looking for models, for proven standards, when we should be looking for new methods, for imaginative solutions, to our problems. It's true that we can gain confidence by seeing that others have succeeded, but we miss the point if we fail to see that often people have found solutions, new directions, because they were innovative. We need to know that people have succeeded, because we need to be reminded that we are not powerless to change things. This information is reinforcing. Organizations should be communicating this information to their membership and to the community. As important as that information is, the most important information is that obtained by, in, and about the community itself. The traditional mass

media cannot be depended upon to fill this need - for reasons which should be obvious. Individuals, and organizations must support alternative media, print and broadcast, in so far as the new media provide a forum for analysis, discussion, and the free debate of possible solutions to the problems of the communities which they serve. But, here again, individuals and organizations cannot expect even the most sympathetic alternative media to carry the load for them. Nothing can replace the impact, the power, of an informed citizenry. Individuals and organizations must take the initiative and must accept the responsibility of analyzing the problems of the community, and communicating this information to the community at large. Without this, any claim to a concern for social change will only make a mockery of the real problems and needs of the community.

For the most part, the information and communication needs of organizations is still rated low on their scale of priorities. Perhaps organizations should soon consider redirecting some of their time, energy, and resources to the gathering and communicating of information. Perhaps they should set aside a portion of their budgets specifically for this function, even if they start small. They might even consider seeking funds specifically for information and communication, from agencies and departments of government, and other sources of grants. However, it must be obvious that any action by individuals and organizations seriously seeking to change the power structure, or the priorities and programmes of agencies and departments of government, cannot expect to depend on those very same bodies for their funding. New sources of funding must be developed;

new ways must be found to discover the resources available to the community. Self-help projects might be the only alternative.

Organizations directed to social change will have to find new ways to best use the limited resources that will be available to them in a community that is basically unaware of its problems. Some consideration might have to be given to forming a research, resource, and development centre, from which unified action could be initiated. Individuals and organizations concerned with social change will have to decide if such united action is appropriate and feasible.

Teled, and its Media Resource Centre, will have to re-evaluate its role, if it is to have any part to play in the new directions that we've been discussing. Teled cannot expect to be any sort of a resource or catalyst to action if it continues to operate as it has. First of all, Teled is yet another organization, another structure, in a sea of organizations, institutions, agencies, etc.; and, as such, is viewed by some as more a part of the problem than as part of the solution. The Media Resource Centre is controlled by a small board of directors primarily chosen more for their specific skills with communications media than for their participation in community organizations concerned with social change. This is not to suggest that such individuals are not needed in, what is after all a media resource centre, but an emphasis on media skills, and limited participation from the community organizations tends to isolate a potentially powerful resource. Secondly, the relatively passive you-come-to-us approach

severely limits the access of those individuals and organizations who could benefit most from the resources of the Centre. To correct this, Teled should return to the "outreach" approach. The emphasis should be on serving the needs of the organizations, as they are defined by the organizations. In turn, the resources, human, technical and financial, of Teled will better reflect the legitimate needs of community groups, rather than those of a small group of 'specialists'. Thirdly, Teled shouldn't try to be all things to all people - of course, if more people from the community had more of a say in the operation of the Centre, this would change - but it should choose to work with a limited range of organizations and individuals, especially those most concerned with social change. Teled should also seek to develop only those resources most appropriate to the information and communication needs of these groups, and the limited funding that such groups are likely to have. Teled should begin immediately to work with these groups to set priorities to best meet these needs. The basic decisions about an outreach programme should be made in cooperation with representatives from community organizations.

Cover: My thanks to Mary Kenny for the design and to George Bates for the use of his map "Old Halifax, 1749-1830".

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