



# REPORT

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## EDITORIAL

## Striking Out

Gallup polls during the past five years show that, on average, 36% of those interviewed see Big Labor as "the biggest threat to Canada" — compared to 29% for Big Government and 20% for Big Business.

There are, however, two kinds of unions: those whose members work in private industry and those whose members work for the various levels of government.

Members of the first kind who are called out on strike put up with hardship in the expectation of getting a better settlement than the employer offered. The hardship they suffer is their affair. The public can buy a similar product or service from the employer's

competitors.

Members of the second kind suffer hardship also. But it is shared by the public. Because government services are monopolies, the public has nowhere else to go. If the air traffic controllers strike, the public doesn't fly. If post office employees strike, there is no mail. If schoolteachers strike, there is no school. If public transport is struck, the public has to walk or thumb rides.

Competition, then, is the factor that distinguishes the two kinds of unions. Private employers are subject to it. Governments are not.

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## FIRMING THE HALT PRODUCT

### The HALT Supporter

If you live in an area where there is a HALT chapter, someday soon you will receive a phone call inviting you to become active. Your response will determine your status as a HALT supporter. These are your options:

#### Subscriber

If you decline the opportunity to become active, you are considered to be a *subscriber*. It means you want to be kept up to date on what HALT is doing; it means you do NOT want to invest your time and energy.

Note that the price of a HALT Report subscription is going up — as of January 1, 1981 — to \$12.00. There are several reasons for this increase. For one, the price has not gone up for a year and a half in spite of inflationary pressures. For

another, the decision has been made to put the Report out monthly, thus increasing costs. And finally, since chapter canvassing will be responsible for most new subscriptions, \$2.00 of each subscription will go to local chapter bank accounts.

#### Client

A second option is to become a HALT client. You like what HALT is doing enough that you are willing to pay more for it. In return, you expect someone else to do the legwork — you are, in effect, contracting out the job of "freedom fighting". To this end we offer, in addition to the HALT Report, the Client Update, a detailed monthly report of head office and chapter activities.

Client status costs you a minimum of \$100 per year. Nothing prevents you from becoming active in your municipal chapter, but it is not expected of you.

#### Member

If you tell your caller you will indeed become an active member, you are placed in the ironical position of *paying extra to do extra work*. The chapter membership has now been set at \$24 a year — a mere \$2 a month if you use the Pre-Authorized Chequing form. With this contribution, you are supporting your local chapter to the tune of about \$14, helping to cover such expenses as printing, postage and advertising. (When the size of the chapter justifies it, you will also be supporting some full-time personnel.)

As far as the work goes, as an active member you will become a HALT-A-BLOCK representative. (The HALT-A-BLOCK plan is detailed in the November HALT Report.) That means on the average about an hour a month of polling, petitioning, and informing your neighbours.

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Their relative strength is reflected in the membership. According to the latest figures available (1978), private sector workers outnumber public sector workers seven to one. But more than a third of unionized workers are in the public sector.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees is the largest union in Canada. The Public Service Alliance of Canada is pressing the Steelworkers for second place. The National Union of Provincial Government Employees is neck and neck with the United Automobile Workers for fourth. With many public service union memberships pushing 100% of eligible workers, government in Canada has become a closed shop that is far too easily shut.

In the private sector, union power is considerable. Often the cost of capital equipment is so great that companies are forced to settle strikes rather than face the cost of long shutdowns. But union leaders know that it is in their interests to keep the companies going. Even if domestic competition is limited, there is still the threat from foreign competitors. If the combined costs of labor disruption and higher wages make the product uncompetitive, the business will decline and jobs will disappear.

Government business, on the other hand, faces no such decline. Government goes on. When the strikes are over, the jobs will still be there. Nor is there any risk for the politicians and senior civil servants who do the "bargaining". The public's wrath will be directed towards the unions.

Union leaders, after all, are natural targets. It is very easy to dislike the petty dictators who, without even a pretence of consulting their members, will declare the government's offer unacceptable and force a strike upon the helpless public.

But union leaders are as much prisoners of the system as the politicians and officials they confront. They owe their power to monopoly and to the "employer's" bottomless purse.

Government unions have become too strong because governments have become too big. The cure is plain: introduce competition to government services and reduce the size of governments. But who will apply it? HALT

**Kenneth McDonald** is a Toronto freelance writer.

In other words, you pay twice: in dollars and effort. But the dollars are worth it if you regard it as an investment, one on which you expect to get ample return in the not-too-distant future. And the effort is worth it because you're doing enjoyable work: talking about your ideas and locating others who agree.

Let's step back a moment to look at the big picture. Your freedom is not something you can order through the mail—or by filling in a coupon to support HALT. If you want your freedom, ultimately it is going to have to be you who takes some action to achieve it. HALT's function is to become the lens that focusses your activity, combining it with the actions of others to create a clear picture that government will not be able to ignore.

How will it work? Change is created by people who are well-informed and willing to take action. Your job as a block rep is to be on the lookout for other people who are offended by their tax load and are willing to do something about it. All we need is one such person out of every hundred. Imagine the impact on all levels of government when we have found those people—one person on each block of every town and city in the country, one person willing to poll, petition and inform his neighbours.

This concept of integrated education and action is the special realm of the

HALT-A-BLOCK representative. He will inform his neighbours about the long-term consequences of both political and HALT activity. He will poll them to get a reading on their thinking. He will petition them on issues, thus applying direct pressure to politicians and bureaucrats. He will become the official representative for a group that has gone too long without one—the taxpayers of this country.

If you decide to become a block representative, you must realize that you will not reach everyone. You will, however, reach the people who are capable of thinking long-term, and these are the people who will join us.

Albert Schweitzer defined the situation clearly:

"A new public opinion must be created privately and unobtrusively. The existing one is maintained by the press, by propaganda, by organization, and by financial influences which are at its disposal. The unnatural way of spreading ideas must be opposed by the natural one, which goes from man to man and relies solely on the truth of the thoughts and the hearer's receptiveness for new truth . . ." HALT

#### ANNOUNCEMENT

With this issue, HALT Report goes monthly. Initially, we will be publishing four-page issues, expanding as soon as resources permit.

## BOOKS Restoring the American Dream

by Robert Ringer

There have been a number of books published in the last two years which have attempted to explain the economic and social malaise gripping North America. *Restoring the American Dream* is the cream of the crop. Ringer states his purpose in the first few pages: "All that is required to understand the effects of government on one's life is the willingness to reject beliefs that cannot stand toe to toe with facts and logic. That part is up to the reader. My job is limited to cutting through the intellectual aura surrounding government . . ." No one has ever done it better.

Ringer's American Dream, which is also the Canadian Dream, is about "individualism and the opportunity to achieve success without interference

from others." Conversely, government, as it presently exists in North America, is about extracting by force the wealth of those who produce and giving it to those who do not.

These two ideas are at opposite poles. The attempt to mix them has led to all the problems we presently face. With surgical precision, Ringer blows away the smokescreen of wishful thinking which is used to justify every government rule, regulation and redistribution policy. And he does it with an entertaining style and pungent wit.

Ringer's great power as a communicator comes from the fact that he refuses to compromise. He will not close his mind to the way things are.

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# LRT: Boon or Boondoggle?

By Marco den Ouden

## Part 2

The Greater Vancouver Regional District has always taken a cautious approach to rapid transit. Since the 60's, various studies were completed on transit for the metropolitan area. Each time, rapid transit was rejected as too costly.

In 1975, the subject was again broached and the Rapid Transit Project was undertaken. This year, the results of the Project studies were released in three reports, one on regional transit strategy, another on preliminary design for rapid transit and the third on short term bus improvements.

The reports are impressive documents, particularly Report 2 which describes in detail the proposed routes and stations for an LRT system for Vancouver. But the report that bears investigation by taxpayers concerned about the possibility of a new heavy tax burden is Report 1, the Regional Transit Strategy.

This report gives the data on traffic flows and costs which purportedly justify LRT. But a justification of LRT is *not* one of the six objectives adopted by the GVRD Board for the project. Nor is it one of the three objectives added by the Board after the project was underway. Notably absent is any consideration of alternatives to rapid transit.

Anton Kuipers, a transit planner with the GVRD, says that paratransit alternatives such as jitneys, car pools, and taxis are not mass transit and can only effectively operate within local communities. He says the mass transit system must be able to carry 20,000 persons at peak volume and paratransit could not cope with that. Yet in Caracas and Buenos Aires, "over half of all daily travellers ride either jitneys or larger jitney-buses called *collectivos*". (A jitney is a small 8-12 passenger vehicle). Conventional jitneys "play a major role in Santiago, Chile, and Lima, Peru." Further, paratransit provides 25% of all mass transit in Manila, 15% in Seoul and 100% in Tehran.

The main points that the report makes to justify LRT are that the current bus system is loaded to capacity during peak periods, that traffic flows are increasing, and that a combination of LRT and buses will be cheaper in the long run than a bus only system. The increase in

traffic has been entirely outside of the Downtown Vancouver area, with the largest volume increase being between Burnaby and the areas surrounding Downtown Vancouver. The largest rate of increase of traffic volume has been across the Fraser River from Surrey to the Burrard Peninsula.

Based on these figures, the study developed two priority routes for LRT. The first is a line from downtown to New Westminster with branches to Surrey and Lougheed Mall. The second priority is a line from downtown to Richmond. The study estimates that ridership on the Surrey-Vancouver line would be between 12 and 19,000 during peak two-hour periods. Kuipers says buses would be routed to carry passengers from within local communities to the nearest LRT stations. The number of bus routes between outlying area and downtown Vancouver would be substantially reduced. Thus, he is confident that the LRT line would carry the expected volume of traffic.

What about costs? The report argues that a combined LRT-bus system "would cost about 12 million 1979 dollars *less* per year to operate" in 1986 than a bus only system. But if you add in the capital costs, i.e. the annual cost of interest and depreciation for the construction of LRT, "transit in Greater Vancouver with both lines would cost 18-29 million 1979 dollars *more* in the mid 1980's than a Bus Only system."

The report mitigates this by arguing that bus operating costs will escalate faster than LRT operating costs and that somewhere between 1994 and 1999 the accumulated cost of a combined LRT-bus system (including capital costs) will reach a break-even point with a bus-only system. The long run outlook for LRT based on the report's assessment is lower cost.

But the fidelity of these cost estimates is certainly in question. It is commonplace nowadays for public projects to have huge cost overruns. Moreover, the Rapid Transit Project's estimates are based on capital financing by bond issues at 10½%. An inflation rate of 9% for operating costs was assumed, and one of 7% for construction costs until 1982 when it was expected the bonds would be issued. Already these figures are out of date.

Currently the GVRD is looking at an Automated Light Rapid Transit (ALRT) system as an alternative to LRT. The system is being touted in various circles because it is Canadian designed and made. So far only one has been built, in Kingston, Ontario. It remains to be seen what bugs have yet to be ironed out.

Newly elected Mayor Mike Harcourt is keen on getting rapid transit built for Vancouver as soon as possible. During the election campaign he opposed consideration of ALRT saying "enough studies have been made, let's have some action." Now he has flipflopped and decided to take a closer look at ALRT. (The smell of Federal money for a Canadian built system must have attracted him!)

Anton Kuipers says a fourth, highly technical report comparing LRT and ALRT will be forthcoming. He is skeptical of ALRT, fearing it may turn into another BART, San Francisco's notorious money eating Bay Area Rapid Transit.

Clearly, if the taxpayer is to be saddled with either a combined LRT-bus system or a large Bus-Only system of transit, the least costly alternative is preferable. But perhaps we, as taxpayers, ought to urge the investigation of private paratransit alternatives. The claim that paratransit would be unable to cope with mass volume is quite possibly mistaken. And the dubious nature of outdated cost estimates that predict an additional tax burden until 1999 make the investigation of alternatives imperative.

**UPDATE — As we go to press, the B.C. government announced approval of the Ontario government-produced ALRT system. The multi-billion dollar project will start with an ALRT line between Vancouver and New Westminster at a cost of \$650 million, to be completed by 1986.** HALT

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# HALT ACROSS CANADA

**Halifax** — HALT Halifax continues to attract new members and exposure in the media. President David Morgan has been proposing a HALT alternative to the taxpayer funded Nova Scotia Place Convention Centre. His efforts have included letters to the editor, correspondence with Premier Buchanan, and a radio interview on CBC's "Afternoon Show".

**Saskatoon** — Bernard Janzen reports that an interview with Mike Little was published in the Star-Phoenix Newspaper. That same day an advertisement was run by the chapter, criticizing government monopolies in water, power and telephone for raising their already profitable rates.

HALT Saskatoon is planning a meeting to prepare a presentation to city council outlining their objectives and proposals.

**Edmonton** — Grassroots activity in recent months has been absent because the 50-odd members have been functioning without leadership. This problem was overcome in October when Bruce Vaughan agreed to take on the position of president. Bruce, a junior high school principal, and his wife Betty are expected to provide zeal and integrity in getting the chapter down to basics.

**Vancouver** — The HALT-A-BLOCK network is expanding through city neighbourhoods. Paul Miniato, Eileen Sorensen, Paul Geddes, Bernice Davidson, and Tim Evans have been knocking on doors, selling HALT's ideas first hand to community members. A meeting on December 8 will be held for interested taxpayers who have been contacted during the door to door campaign.

**Head Office** — On November 26, Rick Bolstler spoke with representatives of West Vancouver ratepayers groups. They are upset with exorbitant increases in property taxes fuelled by rocketing school costs. Because most of their efforts to date have proved frustrating, they approached HALT for assistance in planning and organizing a campaign. Early in December Rick will present them with a plan of action for their consideration. Prospects for a first rate chapter with a hot issue look promising.

Head Office is hosting its first training course for new personnel interested in becoming involved with HALT. The two-week seminar includes sessions in sales and chapter development. Participants are Norm Lalonde of Calgary, Morley Evans of Regina and Paul Geddes of Vancouver. (Marilee Haylock from Toronto had to cancel due to illness.) The successful conclusion of this course should see it expanded and offered on a regular basis. **HALT**

## BOOKS

(Continued from page 2)

From his exposure of "the four great political realities" to the "expediency factor" which lies behind every action taken by politicians and bureaucrats, to the "incredible inflation swindle", Ringer demolishes government and makes his case for the American Dream.

The last chapter, "Taking Back America", brings the book into focus. "Whether a totally free society is ever possible is an academic question at this time; *taking the first steps toward it is not*" (italics his). These steps all include

taking the blinkers off and looking our political realities right in the eye. They are:

— Demystify and desanctify government — both in your thinking and in your conversations with others.

— Never go out of your way to co-operate with government.

— Make an unwavering commitment to become fiercely independent.

— Never ask for or accept government favours, handouts or benefits of any kind.

— If you are a businessman, do not run to government for special favours, monopoly protection, price fixing, or other forms of intervention.

The importance of these actions to any individual or group who is serious about stopping the growth of government power cannot be overemphasized. They are the bedrock upon which HALT is built. In Robert Ringer's own words,

"For you and me, the picture is pretty clear: we either restore the American Dream, right here and now, or we most certainly will never live to experience it again." **HALT**

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## Boytinck Appeal Denied

The Supreme Court of Canada refused to hear Walter Boytinck's application for leave to appeal a decision of the B.C. Court of Appeal denying him the right to be tried by a judge and jury in his pending income tax cases. Boytinck told the press on December 1 that the Magna Carta, a document hailed by the great

jurist Blackstone as the glory of English law, guaranteed this right. He said this right should be especially guaranteed in a case where the government is a party to the dispute, implying that a trial judged by an appointee of the plaintiff can scarcely be considered impartial. **HALT**