

*The Right is Wrong
and The Left is Right*



Cutting Through the Neoliberal Bafflegab

Ed Finn



CCPA
CANADIAN CENTRE
for POLICY ALTERNATIVES
CENTRE CANADIEN
de POLITIQUES ALTERNATIVES

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[FOREWORD 7]

[TRUTH OR PROPAGANDA]

- Know your enemy: Understanding neoliberalism 13
The revival of fascism 18
Filling the mental concentration camps 23
Consumers: "A herd waiting to be led" 26
How to brainwash a population 33
Right is wrong, left is right 36
No news is bad news 41
First clash in Corner Brook 47
Informed and misinformed 50
Lies, damn lies, and political promises 53
Conformity and dissent 58
The war on dissent 60
Revoluting 64
Most "anti-Americans" are Americans 67

Down to Earth 70

[DEMOCRACY OR PLUTOCRACY]

- THE "BIG BUSINESS BANG" THEORY
I. One cause, many effects 73
II. What's the solution? 79
III. A Scandinavian-style Canada needed 86
Challenging the aristocrats 92
The corporate Frankenstein monster 95
A threat of biblical proportions 100
Integration or disintegration? 103
NGOs vs. terrorism 106
The Alternative Federal Budget 109
Let's learn from F.D.R. 115
The menace of Bills C-35, C-36, and C-42 118
Guiding principles 122
Education first, then mobilization 124
Harnessing our power as consumers 127

Tapping the power of the Internet 130
Seeds of democracy sprouting 133

Child labour today and yesterday 140

[EQUALITY OR INEQUALITY]

Want in a world of plenty 143
Inequality and Icarus 145
Rags and riches 148
Open Gates 151
There's no excuse for poverty 153
Sharing the wealth 156
Bigger crumbs from the élite's table 158
Unlimited corporate greed 161
The limits of greed? 164
The corporate cancer pandemic 166
Structurally adjusted 170
Cracks in the corporate ramparts 173
Lives lost 176
The spOILs of war 179
The Ugly Canadian 181
Taxing our credulity 184
"Good corporate citizenship" 187
Of human bondage 189
The economic costs of poverty 191
Governments, too, depend on charity 194

If only the angels had a union... 198

[PUBLIC HEALTH OR PRIVATE WEALTH]

Medicare's birth: The fateful summer of '62 201
The Father of Medicare 206
Minimizing cancer vs. maximizing profits 209
Health and bankruptcy 215
The suicidal cult of individualism 218
Profits get priority over health 221
Blaming the victims 224

A weighty matter 227
Height of folly—and foresight 230
What about prevention? 233
Mending—and extending—Medicare 235
An apple a day 237

Teachers learn a lesson 240

[“FREE” TRADE OR FAIR TRADE]

NAFTA’s false promise 243
“Free” trade keeps us shackled 245
Tackling the NAFTA challenge 248
Let’s scrap NAFTA 254

The Price of Silence 258

[ECOLOGICAL COLLAPSE OR GLOBAL RENEWAL]

On a collision course 261
Sea of troubles 264
On an oily downhill slope 266
Chicken Little 269
Trapped on the galactic prison-planet 271
Poisoning ourselves 274
What’s your poison? 277
Cancer is preventable 280
The (Pesticide) Empire strikes back 283
“High and mighty” in their SUVs 285
3/12/84 289
Will our “civilization” survive? 291

[A FEW REMINISCENCES]

The circle of life 301
Reflections on longevity 304
On becoming an octogenarian 310
Epilogue 314

[Ed Finn]

is the editor of *The CCPA Monitor*, the monthly journal of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Formerly, as a journalist, he worked at *The Montreal Gazette* and for 14 years wrote a column on labour relations for *The Toronto Star*. He also served for three decades as a communications officer for several labour organizations, including the Canadian Labour Congress and the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

Foreword

THIS is the third collection of my essays that I have had the immodesty to compile over the past 20 years. My dubious assumption has been that their collection and publication in book-form had some merit and that the books would find an appreciative readership. That we still have a few hundred unsold copies of the first two anthologies in storage should have deterred the production of a third, but obviously it hasn't. I'm one of those writers who is satisfied if his scribblings reach only a few discerning readers — and this time we aren't publishing as many copies.

Most of the essays in *The Right is Wrong and The Left is Right* — like those in the two previous books — were first published in the CCPA's monthly journal, *The CCPA Monitor*. They appeared in the issues of *The Monitor* that have come out since 1999. Like the first two collections, they focus on the economic, social, political, and environmental devastation caused by excessive corporate power, and the efforts of progressive groups and individuals to end corporate rule and build a better world.

This is the struggle that “civil society” has been engaged in for a long time, and especially since the spread of neoliberalism and “free trade” around the globe. The CCPA is not an activist organization itself, but it does the research that underpins many of the campaigns against corporate wrongdoing. As editor of *The CCPA Monitor*, my job is to popularize, summarize, and promote the results of the research conducted by our gifted and dedicated researchers and research associates. Most

of the columns and editorials I write are inspired by their investigative achievements.

One of the reasons I decided to compile this third batch of my pieces is because our collective efforts to topple corporate rule are now showing positive results. In the first two books, I had difficulty mustering much optimism. Challenging the awesome power of business giants that spanned the globe, along with their political, academic, and media acolytes, was a formidable undertaking. The obstacles at times seemed insurmountable. My dismay was perhaps evident to some extent in essays that reflected more choler than confidence, more frustration than uplift, more heat than light.

Over the past seven years or so, however, we have been making headway on several fronts. The main pillars of corporate globalization — the World Bank, the IMF, and the WTO — are starting to crumble. Opposition to privatization and deregulation, the chief tenets of neoliberalism, is rising. Awareness of the social and economic inequities spawned by corporate rule — especially poverty and homelessness — is spreading. Environmentalists have succeeded in exposing the link between industrial pollution and global warming. Public tolerance of the widening gap between the rich and the rest of us is fading.

It's far too early, of course, to hail victory in the struggle for social justice. That celebration is still many years, even decades, in the future. But we can take a great deal of encouragement from the battles progressives in Canada and around the world have effectively waged so far in the new century. Some of that hope and elation and pride suffuse many of the essays in this book. Apart from some minor editing, I've retained the original wording, even though the passage of time has in some cases impaired the relevance; but a surprisingly large majority of the pieces retain their pertinence and topicality. They're not placed in chronological order, but in groupings that reflect their commonality and interconnection. The writings on health care, for example, are all in one section, as are the ones on corporate rule, on communications, on poverty and inequality, and so on.

I've tried to remain editorially positive. Believing as I do that it's not enough to berate the misdeeds of our right-wing opponents, I also offer

what I hope are useful suggestions for countering them and devising fair and viable alternatives.

Perhaps a few of my ideas may even inspire some activists or provide them with ammunition in their front-line skirmishes. If so, that alone will justify their publication.

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My thanks to all my colleagues at the CCPA for their support and collaboration. I should again make it clear, however, that they do not necessarily agree with all my arguments and opinions, and that responsibility for the views expressed in this book is mine alone. ✎