

The Organizational Structure of the *Toronto Native Times* (1968-1981)

Stephen Harold Riggins
Laurentian University

En retraçant l'histoire du *Toronto Native Times*, au cours de ses treize années d'existence, l'auteur de cet article analyse l'instabilité des structures de ce journal comme typique de nombreux journaux indiens publiés dans les villes. Bien que les éditeurs du *TNT* aient eu l'ambition de produire un journal dépassant le cadre du bulletin communautaire, ils n'ont pu, à long terme, réaliser ce projet faute de ressources financières. L'auteur examine également les préjugés politiques les plus courants qu'on peut trouver dans les articles du *TNT*.

This article describes the history of a native Canadian newspaper published in Toronto between 1968 and 1981 and appropriately titled the *Toronto Native Times*. An attempt is made to show how the operating environments of native periodicals generally hamper fulfillment of their optimal roles. As such, the article provides information which is potentially useful to policy makers. While its opening sections are purely descriptive, the latter sections of the article relate the organizational structure of the *Toronto Native Times* to that of other native publications in order to provide a general perspective on problems confronting the native Canadian press.

INTRODUCTION

In 1983, Toronto's so-called ethnic press included publications in as many as thirty-seven languages. These publications included such languages as Byelorussian, at least seventeen periodicals in Italian, and four daily Chinese newspapers (Reutl 1983). Then, as now, no newspaper or magazine of professional quality spoke for Toronto's estimated population of 25,000 Canadian Indians in either a native Canadian language or English. Today, nothing other than an amateurish, and sometimes handwritten newsletter notifies native Canadians in Toronto of the services, events, and issues of local community life. In 1984, a highly sophisticated native magazine titled *Sweetgrass* began publication in Toronto. Following two years of work and three issues of what was originally planned as a monthly magazine, there seemed to be no funding for a fourth issue. Furthermore, since *Sweetgrass* was designed as a national publication, it was never an adequate means of communication for native Canadians in Toronto.

Over the years, native Canadian periodicals have been published in an environment characterized by a high level of professional isolation, including tenuous social and occupational ties between native journalists. One symptom of this situation is an absence of histories of native Canadian periodicals. Reforms which might give native magazines and newspapers a longer lifespan than they have had in

the past cannot be implemented while practicing journalists, native politicians, and government bureaucrats lack a clear grasp of the reasons for the persistent failure of these periodicals.

Organizational structure has been defined as "the routine ways people coordinate their efforts in actualizing a symbolic product or service" (Peterson 1982:147). This concept stresses the ways organizational factors, such as competition or the source and amount of funding, restrain or facilitate the production and dissemination of knowledge. In this article, the use of the term organizational structure underlines the argument that the closing of the *Toronto Native Times* in 1981 was not due to personal failings of the staff, but to the constraining social and economic environment in which the employees were obliged to work.

It must be emphasized that despite being one of Ontario's longest-surviving native periodicals, the *Toronto Native Times* was quite a modest newspaper. During some years, it was not much more than a quality friendship centre newsletter. Because the paper kept no archives, its history is extremely poorly documented. One reason why it is worth attempting to trace the life cycle of the *Toronto Native Times*, despite scanty information, is that the newspaper was representative of native Canadian newspapers in general. Although it was published in a highly urban environment one block from the University of Toronto campus, its organizational structure resembles that of many native Canadian newspapers, regardless of their locations.

Information gathered for this article is partly based on the personal experience of the author, who worked as a "reporter" for the *Toronto Native Times* from October 1980 until the middle of 1981. By the spring of 1981, it was apparent that the paper would cease publication. While tracing the newspaper's history, the author wrote an article documenting its difficulties, and in the process was able to meet and talk with most of the previous editors (Riggins 1981b).

THE VOICE OF A COMMUNITY OR AN ORGANIZATION?

"It doesn't look like much yet but it's a newspaper," proclaimed the very first issue of the *Toronto Native Times* in an attempt to reassure its readers when it appeared in the summer of 1968.¹ Indeed, the first issue was an unpretentious, one-page, mimeographed, and rather amateurish newsletter which constituted one of the activities of a journalism course at Toronto's "alternative" educational institution, Rochdale College. A co-sponsor of this early version of the newspaper was a short-lived organization called the Institute for Indian Studies, which was also located at Rochdale College.

The aspiring journalists who produced this early newspaper were still uncertain about its name. Two possibilities were offered: (a) *Anishnabe Times*; and (b) an effective though overworked pun--*Red, White and You*. However, the name *Toronto Native Times* not only had the advantage of being more appropriate, but also of having the memorable and humorous initials, "TNT." One reason readers and employees savored this acronym over the years was its irony. Except for the strength of its commitment to native self-determination, the *Toronto Native Times* was anything but radical.

After three mimeographed issues of what was ambitiously promised as a weekly publication, the *Toronto Native Times* quietly folded. Two years later in September 1970, the fourth issue of Volume One appeared. For the rest of its existence, the *Toronto Native Times* assumed a tabloid format which varied in length over the years from eight to twenty pages. The main sponsor of the newspaper was the Canadian Indian Centre (now the Native Canadian Centre) of Toronto, and the paper was initially produced by the centre's youth group. Since the Canadian Indian Centre was already publishing a mimeographed newsletter called *Beaver Tales*, this was incorporated into the *Toronto Native Times*. Co-sponsors of the *TNT* during its early years included the Nishnawbe Institute (formerly the Institute for Indian Studies at Toronto's Rochdale College) and the United Church.

Throughout its lifespan, the *TNT* was always linked to a native association. Since its most significant sponsor was the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, the *TNT* must be viewed as one of the centre's many community services, several of which were given priority over the newspaper. Other services at the centre included job counseling, daycare, treatment for alcoholism and drug abuse, social activities for the elderly, an adult literacy program, and athletics for youngsters. Although each editor regarded the *TNT* as more than simply the voice of the Native Canadian Centre, there were never enough funds or staff to gather and publicize events outside of Toronto. The best indication of underfunding was that before 1977, the *TNT* rarely employed more than one person, and this lone staff member was generally paid on a part-time basis. In 1980, a professional journalist named Ken Armstrong suggested that an ideal number of staff for the *TNT* would include five employees: "a full-time editor, a full-time senior writer, a part-time junior writer..., a part-time office manager who is proficient in bookkeeping, and a full-time advertising and circulation manager" (Armstrong 1980).

Typically, the *Toronto Native Times* resembled small-town weekly newspapers throughout North America. Although its articles covered a diverse range of topics from women's fashion to prison reform, the editors rarely discussed their vision for the paper. One notable exception was the native editor, Beth Perrott, who headed *TNT* from 1973 to 1976. Perrott chose to emphasize community formation as her main objective:

The policy of the Toronto Native Times is to serve all native people living in Toronto or coming to Toronto and in this way be a cohesive force. The oft-repeated complaint is that we do not socialize enough among ourselves. Socialization means more than the annual dances that are held and more than congregating at the S.D. [the Silver Dollar Bar] important as these activities are in themselves....[Perrott 1973].

One of the few other presentations of the newspaper's goals was written by another editor named Anne Fitterer in 1980. In contrast to Perrott, Fitterer (who is not a native person) defined the *TNT*'s first objective as promoting "an awareness and understanding between the native and non-native communities." Other important goals stated by Fitterer included giving "the newcomer [to Toronto] the information necessary to acclimatize to a new environment," and the "pro-

motion of higher health standards and better nutrition." Fitterer promised that the paper would feature native artists, writers, and photographers who were looking for a suitable place to publish their work (*Toronto Native Times* 1980:3-4). In general, Fitterer placed exceptional stress on the *TNT* as an educational vehicle, a view which differentiated its content from that of the average small-town weekly that Alexis de Tocqueville so severely criticized in the 1830s (de Tocqueville 1964). Regarding the political direction of the paper, Fitterer wrote:

This newspaper will speak out fearlessly on controversial issues affecting native people. It will be the policy of this publication to do everything within the power of research and in the face of controversy to give a fair appraisal of issues. This newspaper is not a radical instrument designed to incite controversy, rather it is a sounding board for native expression (*Toronto Native Times* 1980:4).

A careful examination of back issues of the *TNT* does not give the impression that there is a clear relationship between an editor's ethnicity and the *TNT*'s content. At most, the paper may have taken a marginally "integrationist" stance whenever an editor was not a native person. If the native editors had been better funded, perhaps the relationship between the content of the paper and the ethnicity of editors might have been more noticeable. Native editors coincided with the less prosperous periods of the paper's history, and were thus more frequently obliged to reprint articles from other sources, including from such mainstream presses as the *Toronto Star*. This circumstance makes it more difficult to detect individualized editorial positions. Since the *TNT* never had an editorial board, content was solely the responsibility of the editor. Sometimes, non-native employees or volunteers presented topics simplistically because they were just discovering the "invisible minority." Although this was not the case for employees of native ancestry, their greater financial handicaps while working on the paper seem to have resulted in articles with surprisingly similar content. Other newspapers may have differed in this respect from the *TNT*, but it is likely that funding rather than the ethnicity of editors had the greatest impact on the paper's content. Nevertheless, in terms of representing the paper at a community level, native editors undoubtedly had a clear advantage.

In an authoritative review of native journalism titled *Let My People Know: American Indian Journalism, 1928-1978*, James and Sharon Murphy point out that American Indian publications are frequently dependent upon non-Indian editors (1981:75; see also the article by Sharon Murphy in this issue titled "Native Print Journalism in the United States: Dreams and Realities"). This was an impediment during the *TNT*'s last year, when the paper became exceptionally dependent upon non-native staff members and volunteers, and the positions of both editor and reporter were held by non-natives. The result was tension typified by the belief of one past editor, a member of the native communications association formed in 1981 to direct the paper, that it would be better for the *Toronto Native Times* to fold than to have this degree of non-native influence. Although it is not wise to justify the paper's dependence on non-native employees, it should be mentioned that a paper which is run as a "one-person show," even if that person is of native ancestry, cannot adequately reflect community diversity.

Despite limited funding, published letters to the editor show that the *TNT* was widely read outside of Toronto. Throughout the paper's erratic history, its subscribers varied greatly in number over the years. During the *TNT*'s final year in 1981, its number of paid subscribers climbed to 500, probably the maximum it had ever had, and certainly an exceptional figure considering its resources. However, the paper's paid circulation for 1981 did not compare favorably with several other well-known contemporary native publications, including 2,500 paid subscribers for the *Wawatay News* of Sioux Lookout, Ontario; 1,600 for the *New Nation* of Thompson, Manitoba, 3,700 for the *Kainai News* of Standoff, Alberta, and 1,200 for the *Native Ensign* of Edmonton, Alberta.² In an effort to increase its circulation, three thousand copies of the *TNT* were printed and widely distributed in Toronto each month in 1981. Although this campaign to rebuild *TNT* subscriptions was rather successful, the paper had less than two years to recover between its first bankruptcy in 1978-1979, and its last in 1981. According to a submission from the *TNT* to the Native Community Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation in July 1980, the paper was being mailed to thirty Ontario reserves, thirteen provincial friendship centres, fifty media representatives, and a number of local politicians (*Toronto Native Times* 1980:2).

In summary, the history of the *TNT* was marked by a continual changeover of staff, which in turn caused the paper to be highly variable in quality. For most of its lifespan, the *TNT* was run by amateur journalists with limited opportunities to improve their skills. As an information bulletin for the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, the *TNT* was overfunded. However as a community newspaper, it was underfunded. In addition, it was never clear which of these two roles the *TNT* was supposed to be performing. According to Talcott Parsons, an orientation toward the attainment of specific goals is one of the defining characteristics of any formal organization (1969:33). Thus, the *TNT*'s lack of goal definition was a significant issue.

EDITORS AND VOLUNTEERS AT THE *TNT*

Combined with low salaries, the exceptionally demanding and sometimes thankless tasks required of employees of native newspapers inevitably results in a high rate of staff turnover. For the *TNT*, this can be illustrated by examining the relatively brief careers of the paper's eight editors (a few early issues credit no one with direction of the paper). In estimating the average length of time editors remained with the *TNT*, there is no alternative but to assume that the date printed on the newspaper's cover is the actual date when an issue appeared. Although this was sometimes unlikely, there are no other accessible records. This slightly inaccurate procedure indicates that most editors were employed for about thirteen months, and that the longest time any editor remained with the paper was exactly three years. The impact of this instability was naturally heightened by the fact that the paper's staff was so small. In reality, the rate of staff turnover for the *TNT* was somewhat higher than the present rate for native publications. By contrast with the *TNT*, a recent survey of native periodicals by Enn Raudsepp (1984) found that out of a sample of eighteen editors, only five had worked for their last employer for less than one year.

Four of the *TNT*'s eight editors were males; however, male editors tended to work for shorter periods of time than females. Salaries at the *Toronto Native Times* typified the low income generally offered female employees throughout Canada, and the *TNT*'s salaries were far below those for similar jobs elsewhere in Toronto. In 1981, the editor of the *TNT* received \$12,000.00 annually, while the reporter received \$9,000.00. The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs offered far more desirable working conditions for persons with the experience and educational background to work as journalists. As a marginal and underfunded newspaper, the *TNT* naturally tended to draw employees who were not committed to journalism as a career. Of all the native editors, only one is currently pursuing a career in journalism five years after she left the paper.

The founding editor of the *TNT*, Jim Dumont, was at the time a theology student at the University of Toronto. Dumont edited the *TNT* from the fall of 1970 until the summer of 1971. Following his editorship, there was a period when the paper appeared irregularly and several people apparently assumed brief editorial responsibilities. The second major editor, Art Sinclair, was also a student at the University of Toronto and edited the paper from the winter of 1972 until March 1973. Then, between April 1973 and April 1976, the paper was characterized by continuity and stability due to the permanence of its third editor, Beth Perrott. Lorne Keeper, a Métis from Manitoba, was the fourth editor and had previously been employed by *The Native Perspective*, a magazine published by the National Association of Friendship Centres in Ottawa. Keeper edited the *TNT* from May to November 1976. The fifth editor, Lorraine Peltier, was originally from the Cape Croker Reserve in the Bruce Peninsula of Ontario and had worked for insurance companies for several years. Peltier edited the *TNT* from December 1976 to April 1977. Angie Grossmann, the sixth editor, was a British immigrant who was both the first non-native and the first editor of the *TNT* with professional training in journalism. Grossmann headed the newspaper from June 1977 to August 1978, and then left to head *Ontario Indian*, a publication of the Union of Ontario Indians. She was followed by Juanita Rennie, a non-status Ojibway, who headed the *TNT* for two months from September until October 1978, at which time the paper was forced to close due to bankruptcy. With the help of other people, Rennie managed to re-establish the *TNT* a year later. She remained with the paper until May 1980, when she resigned in order to enroll in a professional journalism course. The final editor, Anne Fitterer, served from June 1980 to June 1981 and was the second non-native with professional training to serve as editor of the *TNT*. This editorship was Fitterer's first position upon graduation in journalism from Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Toronto.

The *Toronto Native Times* was, of course, much more than simply the distillation of its editors' policies. As is the case with any community newspaper, the *TNT* was a collective creation, and its content was strongly influenced by the enthusiasm and interest of the native volunteers whom various editors were able to gather. Perhaps this small group of volunteers, more than the editors, gave a sense of continuity to the paper. For example, numerous articles were provided without charge by Basil Johnston, author of *Ojibway Heritage* and *Moose Meat*

and Wild Rice, as well as by Big White Owl (Jasper Hill), a Delaware Indian who was originally from Moraviantown, and who generously sent copies of his unpublished articles to many magazines and newspapers. The popular singer and songwriter, Paul Ritchie, was also an early contributor.

Two writers deserve mention for the consistency with which they helped the *TNT* during the last five years of its existence. At that time, native writers such as John McLeod and George Kenny were just beginning to establish careers, and probably would have benefited from the exposure offered by a small newspaper. McLeod wrote subtly humorous, partly autobiographical short stories, and was an outstanding cartoonist whose work should be known to a larger audience. He found humor in such topics as misunderstandings due to cultural differences, the self-assurance of youth, the bureaucratic mentality, and the ways in which native people can subvert non-native institutions when these institutions work to their disadvantage (Riggins 1982). George Kenny explored the more tragic aspects of contemporary native life, both on the reserve and in cities. Although sometimes somber, his work still had an element of optimism (Midnight Sun 1982). On many occasions, staff members at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto provided articles for the *TNT*, especially on sports activities and alcoholism. These same staff members also furnished some of the best humor.

THE FINANCIAL IMPASSE

Due to two grants which were exceptions rather than the rule, the *TNT*'s history was marked by two brief periods of relative prosperity. Not surprisingly, the paper achieved its most polished look during those periods. The first grant was received in 1978 from the Federal Labour Intensive Program, and provided salaries for five staff members which, as pointed out earlier, were approximately the number of staff that the paper needed to be efficient. With this grant, the *TNT* expanded to 20 pages, the longest it had ever been. In May 1980, the *TNT* received another grant of \$25,000.00 from the Native Community Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation. This subsequent grant made it possible to hire three full-time employees.

The 1980 grant was sufficient to keep the *TNT* functioning for approximately one year at monthly operating costs of about \$3,500.00. The aim of this grant was to assist the *TNT* to become "self-reliant"; hence no long-term aid was ever promised. By May 1981, the grant was exhausted. Although the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto continued to provide free office space and telephone services for the *TNT*, new funds had to be obtained beginning with that month. The Ontario Ministry of Correctional Services and the Native Inmate Liaison Program then sponsored the production costs of a final issue of the *TNT* on the penal system. Ironically, the in-depth coverage of this last issue corresponded best with what the final editor had hoped to accomplish. As is typical of other native publications, the end of the *TNT* was marked by a special issue which was the product of a one-time financial grant with no future. Although it was proposed that a native communications association which would be independent of the Native Canadian

Centre of Toronto could direct the paper, this committee proved to be ineffective, in part due to some of its members' apparent lack of commitment. A second reason the committee was ineffective was that one of the native people who was thought to be most capable of assuming managerial control of the *TNT* discredited himself in the eyes of other committee members by publicly campaigning for the abandonment of the reserve system during an unsuccessful bid for the Ontario Parliament in the spring election of 1981.

Because their circulations are too small, and their readers are financially poor and scattered over an area which is too wide to attract profit-minded advertisers, all native periodicals face the same economic plight regarding insufficient advertising. The *TNT* was no exception to this rule. Unlike a typical small-town weekly, the *TNT* never made a profit. During its last year of operation, only about ten to fifteen percent of its income came from advertising. From the very beginning, the paper could not have existed without government support, both in the form of direct and indirect grants. The latter consisted of advertisements placed by government agencies.

Roger Obonsawin, the Director who managed the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto during the longest period of the *TNT*'s existence, stated during an interview that he personally accorded the *TNT* a "fairly high priority" among all the activities which the centre provided (Obonsawin 1984). Nevertheless, Obonsawin found it easier to raise money for programs he considered to be less significant, and referred to the two grants awarded to the *TNT* as "make work projects." One negative result of these grants was that readers' expectations were briefly raised, only to be later frustrated by the lack of stable funding for the paper. This raising and lowering of reader expectations was in some ways more detrimental than simply maintaining the paper on a modest scale.

Because the Native Community Branch of the Ontario Provincial Ministry of Culture and Recreation required that grant applicants specify future sources of income, the financial situation of the *TNT* was investigated in 1980 on behalf of the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto by two people with extensive experience with small-circulation newspapers, Norman Browne and Ken Armstrong. Following this investigation, Norman Browne, the former managing editor of a Toronto newspaper called *Ward 7*, concluded that:

Requiring the paper to be self-sustaining through advertising revenue alone is to limit its potential sources of income and doom it completely....Very, very few community-owned and/or community-controlled, non-profit newspapers subsist on the revenue they get from advertising. They accept the reality that advertising revenue will only provide a percentage of their monetary needs and they actively seek money (and/or its equivalent in free labour) from any and every source....

TNT will never become self-sustaining through the sale of advertising. There is room for improvement in advertising sales but too much emphasis in this field can become self-defeating in terms of time and labour involved (Browne 1980:1,5).

Ken Armstrong, the former publisher of the *Mississauga News*, also produced a similar report. He was more optimistic than Browne, claiming that the *TNT* could become an economically viable enterprise. However, even Armstrong thought that it would take several years to achieve this goal (Armstrong 1980). In all probability, the *TNT* never had a professionally-qualified staff member in charge of advertising. And, because the paper's equipment was too old-fashioned, it was also impossible to raise money by selling typesetting services.

An important barrier to raising money through advertising for Native publications is that their readers are rarely surveyed, something which advertisers require in order to know if a paper reaches potential buyers. Such surveys must be properly conducted; simply inserting a questionnaire in a copy of a paper is not enough. In February 1981, a survey of reader preferences conducted by the *TNT* in this manner netted only about a dozen responses.

Following Norman Browne's advice, the *TNT* made serious efforts to find volunteers. The results of this search were mixed, and most volunteers recruited in this manner were non-natives. Although this showed the degree of concern which many younger non-natives felt about native issues, few of the volunteers had more than a superficial familiarity with native people. At the more important level of providing editorial content, volunteers were of little help, although they could easily assist in assembling the paper. The most motivated volunteers were likely to be attached to a person of native ancestry.

A LIMITED MENACE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT

Typically, the *TNT* avoided printing articles which were critical of the operation of its sponsor, the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto. When one of the most successful directors of the centre resigned in 1981, the occasion was marked by the publication of personal profiles of both the director and his replacement in the *TNT*. Each article was exceptionally laudatory, and carefully avoided in-depth discussions of potential conflicts over how the centre might allocate its budget of five hundred thousand dollars. Rather than presenting detailed and sophisticated coverage of contentious issues, controversial possibilities were glossed over by a reporter who wrote the following remarks about the new director:

[He] is definitely a grass roots man who feels more comfortable close to the people than to Ottawa bureaucrats although he knows how to play their game. [He] is fond of "building up ideas and selling them" but believes it is too early to discuss publicly his plans and aspirations for the Centre...Ontario Natives will certainly benefit from [the new director's] whole-hearted commitment to the community cause and will welcome the appointment of a man who has a strong record of personal stability and steady management (Riggins 1981c).

With respect to the former director, the *TNT*'s editor commented, "looking back...it is obvious that the right decisions were made" (Fitterer 1981).

Although extreme flattery such as this was unusual for the *TNT*, it is obvious that occasional flattery did occur, and that criticism of employees of the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto was consistently avoided. On the occasions

when the *TNT* provided public relations for either the centre or for specific individuals, the paper lost credibility within the native community. Whenever the *TNT* could not fearlessly discuss problems which were vital to the centre, it failed its own sponsor.

A couple of years after the *TNT* folded, there was strife at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto over which segment of the population should be the major recipient of the centre's activities. Some people felt that the centre's major responsibility lay with the more prosperous and permanent native residents of Toronto, while others felt that more transient and less established native people should be favored. Although the seeds of this conflict were planted long before the conflict erupted in 1984, it is revealing that the *TNT* never seriously dealt with the controversy. Even *Now*, the Toronto entertainment guide, produced a more explicit presentation of the controversy than ever appeared in the *TNT* (Crombie 1984).

THE ROLE OF SELF-CENSORSHIP

It must be emphasized that during the last year of the *TNT*'s existence, there was no occasion when employees of the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto attempted to manipulate the newspaper in order to create favorable coverage for themselves. Due to excessive self-censorship on the part of both the editor and the reporter for the *TNT*, this tactic was unnecessary. However, the editor was under pressure to devote more coverage to centre activities than she felt they deserved.

Pressures on the *TNT* staff for self-censorship were especially apparent in an article by Riggins on the teaching of native languages in Ontario schools (1981a). The pessimism which Riggins personally felt about the likelihood of the survival of native languages in Ontario was deleted from the final version of this article, as were some of the interviewee's more severe criticisms of current language instruction. On another occasion, after attending a lecture by a visiting "spiritual" leader who impressed him as being a charlatan modeled after the popular image of a guru, Riggins chose to let the lecture pass unnoticed in the *TNT* rather than to write what he actually felt.

As a reporter, Riggins arrived at the *TNT* knowing practically nothing about Canadian Indians. He was then required to write articles on every conceivable topic from Indian education and hunting to changes in the Canadian constitution. At the same time, he was always expected to take a position strongly in favor of native control. The irony of this situation, which was by no means atypical given the structure of the native media, was that the only realistic adaptation to these expectations was to appeal to an idealistic notion of community. Thus, Riggins found himself presenting native people as generally constituting a unified community or implying that under normal circumstances, such unity characterized native social and political views. This outlook reflected both naïveté and a conscious decision to bolster native pride by writing only about the positive, even where such optimism was occasionally exaggerated to a point approaching fiction.

To compensate for the negative manner in which the mainstream press dealt with native topics (Singer 1983), Riggins chose to provide consistently supportive coverage of every native endeavor regardless of his own feelings on the matter. Thus, the social problems of native people were never portrayed as in any way resulting from generalized difficulties of human communication, or from the reluctance of a large and diversified group of individuals to cooperate. On the other hand, there was complete freedom to question both provincial and national levels of government. For readers of the *TNT*, the implication of this one-sided perception may have been that all significant native problems were the fault of non-natives.

To a certain extent, journalistic fears of criticism and censorship can be overcome by carefully choosing the topics to be covered. For example, since art is rarely controversial, reporting on native achievements in the arts is one of the most effective tactics for avoiding conflict. Although native achievements in the arts have been impressive over the last decade, it is possible that one of the reasons that the native media has provided extensive coverage of art is the need for journalists to avoid antagonizing their supervisors.

In the long run, an exaggeratedly positive tone regarding the situation of native people is self-defeating. In the first place, this viewpoint confuses priorities and inhibits readers from forming consistent political views. Everything, including right or left wing solutions to native problems, the revival of traditional practices, and the embracing of modernization seems equally plausible and equally desirable. Although constant positivism may encourage native self-determination, political eclecticism of this type will contribute little to the future direction of policies once native people gain further possibilities for self-determination.

Norman Browne, the former managing editor of the Toronto newspaper *Ward 7*, believed that the decision to continue publishing the *Toronto Native Times* should have been based solely on the question of whether or not the newspaper could provide a service which was unobtainable anywhere else (Browne 1980:1). Although flawed, the *Toronto Native Times* clearly fulfilled that function to the extent that nothing has ever replaced it.

It is no exaggeration to state that the *Toronto Native Times* was organized to fail, and that its failure was not purely accidental. Due to an unstable and poorly conceived structure, the *TNT* was simply unable to operate as a proper advocate for native causes. As a limited menace to the establishment, the *Toronto Native Times* was also unable to rise above its limited success.

CONCLUSIONS

In an article surveying native periodicals, the anthropologist John Price listed all native magazines and newspapers in Canada in the early 1970s (Price 1972). A comparison of Price's list with one compiled by the Canadian Secretary of State of all native Canadian periodicals being published as of January 1, 1984 (see Notes, below) reveals that the number of these publications declined sharply from thirty-seven in 1972 to twenty-seven in January 1984. Raudsepp (1984:12) suggests that

the current number of native Canadian periodicals may be in the range of thirty-six, but that seven of these are "peripheral publications (academic journals, friendship center newsletters, etc.)." This overall decline in the number of native Canadian periodicals has been caused by changes in governmental policy rather than by a loss of readers. Significantly, only one publication, *The Native Voice* published by the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia, is found on both Price's list and that of the Canadian Secretary of State. Between 1972 and January 1984, all other publications on Price's list disappeared. Typically, most of these had existed for considerably less than twelve years.

During the early 1970s, all Toronto-based native periodicals were affiliated with organizations such as the Union of Ontario Indians, the Indian-Eskimo Association, and the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto. By 1982, no publication represented Toronto's native community. Similarly, in both 1972 and 1984, no publication represented Montreal's native community. Between the early 1970s and 1984, the number of native publications in the province of Ontario declined markedly from eleven to three. At the same time, the number of native publications in the Yukon and Northwest Territories doubled from four in 1972 to eight in 1984.

At present, support for native periodicals among the native population as a whole is low, both in terms of an interested readership and of paid subscribers. To some extent, this reflects the historical insensitivity of educational institutions toward native peoples. Paradoxically, rather than increasing interest in print media, modernization has sometimes reinforced a cultural preference for oral forms of communication. Thus, native print media journalists in some parts of Canada are becoming increasingly pessimistic about their future while television and radio gain ever-increasing audiences at their expense (Raudsepp 1983).

In the future, better funding for native publications is unlikely to come directly from native citizens. Furthermore, although native associations could represent an alternative source of revenue, most native leaders have thus far seemed uninterested in raising money for periodicals. In reality, lobbying for the support of native periodicals places native leaders in the position of aiding publications which, if amply financed, could pose a considerable threat to their own political activities. Thus, it is unrealistic to expect this degree of altruism from anyone. For this reason, even though native leaders have not explicitly blocked the development of a viable native press, they have failed to see this as a priority. Although most native leaders probably share the perspectives of their communities on this matter, their disinterest, especially among politicians, is partially self-serving.

A third potential source of funding for native periodicals might be national and local levels of government. However, motivation among government officials to help restructure the native press is generally low. The reason for this is that government officials are in the same position as native politicians, since both groups see the printed media as a potential menace. Thus, native periodicals are caught in a vicious circle vis-à-vis funding which seems almost impossible to break.

Although underappreciated, the social benefits of a healthy native press are considerable. First, native periodicals keep people informed and create publicity

which generates community involvement in a cross-section of activities. According to the previously-quoted former director of the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, social activities among native people in Toronto have continuously declined since the closure of the *TNT*. This is to be expected because a flourishing mass media is probably necessary for ethnic survival. In a study of ethnic persistence and change, the sociologist Raymond Breton considered the existence of an ethnic press to be one of the most essential factors for involvement in ethnic communities (1964).

As a second point, media dialogue between native organizational leaders and their native publics is a fundamental step in policy-making. Whenever the debates of native leaders are stifled and these leaders are not publicly obliged to justify their decisions, the possibilities for mistakes in judgment are accentuated. Because the mainstream, non-native controlled media is only superficially concerned with, and usually unable to discuss issues affecting native people, the native media is the only viable forum for political dialogue on these issues.

Thirdly, a 1976 survey by Ponting and Gibbins demonstrated that although the Canadian public is generally sympathetic to many native causes, the average Canadian is uninformed about native people. Ponting and Gibbins concluded that: "On balance the Canadian public is not hostile to many and perhaps most Indian interests, and public opinion can potentially be exploited by Indian organizations in order to bring public pressure to bear upon the government" (1980:93). Thus, since the native press in Canada has always been read by people of non-native ancestry, it will remain an important factor in correcting non-native stereotypes and misinformation, and is an essential vehicle for presenting native causes.

A final contribution of the native media is indirect and takes the form of benefits derived from the community activities of ex-journalists. Although most people who are presently working as native journalists will eventually establish careers in other fields, what they have learned will always remain with them. Through personal involvement in journalism, native people often gain social and intellectual skills which they might not have acquired otherwise, and which in many instances are of direct benefit to native associations and communities.

The failure of the *Toronto Native Times* demonstrates that even in the largest Canadian cities, the contributions of a healthy native press to the social life of the local native community are not sufficiently appreciated. This further emphasizes Robert Rupert's point that we are approaching a time when native people in urban areas will become less well-informed about both their heritage and contemporary native problems than their rural counterparts who have remained in a better situation to use the services of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (1982 General Recommendations: VI; see also the article by Rupert in this issue titled "Native Broadcast Journalism in Canada").

NOTES

Acknowledgements. I wish to thank the following editors of the *Toronto Native Times* for their comments, either in 1981 or in 1984: Jim Dumont, Lorne Keeper, Lorraine Peltier, Juanita Rennie, and Anne Fitterer. Additional interviews were conducted with Roger Obonsawin, Past Director of the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, and with Norm Opperman of the Native Community Branch of the Government of Ontario.

¹Issues of the *Toronto Native Times* published from 1970 to 1978 are available on microfilm from Micromedia Limited, 158 Pearl St., Toronto, Ontario M5H 1L3.

²These statistics were taken from a 1982 report by Robert Rupert titled "Native Communications in Canada. Report to the Interdepartmental Committee on Native Communications." Ottawa, Ontario: Secretary of State, Native Citizens Directorate. The specific page numbers are: Report on Wa-Wa-Ta Native Communications Society, Sioux Lookout, Ontario, p. 8; Report on Native Communications Inc., Thompson, Manitoba, p. 3; Report on Indian News Media, Standoff, Alberta, p. 7; Report on Alberta Native Communications Society, p. 15.

Canadian Native Publications as of January 1, 1984. Compiled by the Canadian Secretary of State, Native Citizens Branch. Ottawa, Ontario: Unpublished manuscript in the possession of Stephen Riggs (although this list was compiled by Gordon Big Canoe, he is not credited anywhere in the document):

Agenutemagen, 35 Dedham Street, Fredericton, New Brunswick E3A 2V2.

Akana/Inuvialuit Magazine, Committee for Original Peoples Entitlement Communications, Post Office Box 2000, Inuvik, Northwest Territories X0E 0T0.

AMMSA, 10123-107 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5H 0V4.

D.O.T.C. News (Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council News), Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council, 702 Douglas Street, Brandon, Manitoba R7A 5Z2.

First Citizen, 274 Garry Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 1H5.

Gigmanag, 33 Allen Street, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island C1A 2V6.

Inuit Ublumi (Inuit Today), Post Office Box 417, Frobisher Bay, Northwest Territories X0A 0H0.

Inuktitut, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H4.

Inuvialuit, Post Office Box 2000, Inuvik, Northwest Territories X0E 0T0.

Kahtou, Native Communications Society of British Columbia, 119 West Pender Street, Room 320, Vancouver, British Columbia V6B 1S5.

Kainai News, Indian News Media, Post Office Box 58, Standoff, Alberta T0L 1Y0.

Kwandur, Council for Yukon Indians, 22 Nistulin Drive, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 3S5.

Le Journal Alliance, Métis and Indiens sans-statut Inc. du Québec, 21 rue Brodeur, Hull, Québec J8Y 2P6.

Mal-I-Mic News, New Brunswick Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians, 390 King Street, Suite 2, Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 1E3.

Metis Newsletter, Metis Association of the Northwest Territories, Post Office Box 1375, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories X1A 2P1.

Micmac News, Post Office Box 344, Sydney, Nova Scotia B1P 6H2.

N.A.F.C. Newsletter (National Association of Friendship Centres Newsletter), National Association of Friendship Centres, 200 Cooper Street, Suite 3, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0G1.

Nation's Ensign, 10619-109 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5H 3B5.

Native Press, Native Communications Society of the Western Northwest Territories, Post Office Box 1919, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories X1A 2P4.

Native Voice, Native Brotherhood of British Columbia, 788 Beatty Street, Vancouver, British Columbia V6B 1A2.

Native Women's News, Native Women's Association of the Northwest Territories, Post Office Box 2321, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories X1A 2P7.

New Breed Journal, Wheta Matowin Saskatchewan Native Communications Corporation, 2505-11th Avenue, Suite 210, Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 0K6.

Rencontre, Sagmai, 875 Grande-Allée est, Québec, Québec G1R 4V8.

Tansi, Saskatchewan Association of Friendship Centres, 1950 Broad Street, Regina, Saskatchewan X4P 1X9.

Taqralik, Makivik Corporation, Communications Department, Post Office Box 179, Kuujuaq, Québec J0M 1C0.

Wawatay News, Wa-Wa-Ta Native Communications Society, Post Office Box 1180, Sioux Lookout, Ontario P0V 2T0.

Yukon-Indian News, 22 Nistulin Drive, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 3S5.

REFERENCES CITED

- Armstrong, Ken
1980 Letter to Roger Obonsawin, Director of the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, dated June 28, 1980. Toronto, Ontario: Unpublished document in the possession of Stephen Riggins.
- Breton, Raymond
1964 Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants. *American Journal of Sociology* 70:193-205.
- Browne, Norman
1980 Evaluation Report of the *Toronto Native Times*. August 1980. Toronto, Ontario: Unpublished manuscript in the possession of Stephen Riggins.
- Crombie, Stuart
1984 Centering in on Native Contentions. *Now* (the Toronto entertainment guide) August 16-22, 1984 3(48):7.
- Fitterer, Anne
1981 A Rewarding Seven Years for Director of Friendship Centre. *Toronto Native Times* March 1981 12(3):1,3.
- Johnston, Basil
1976 *Ojibway Heritage*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
1978 *Moose Meat and Wild Rice*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- Murphy, James, and Sharon Murphy
1981 *Let My People Know: American Indian Journalism, 1828-1978*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Obonsawin, Roger
1984 Interview by Stephen Riggins, September 28, 1984. Personal Communication.
- Parsons, Talcott
1969 Suggestions for a Sociological Approach to a Theory of Organizations. In *A Sociological Reader on Complex Organizations*. A. Etzioni, ed. pp. 32-46. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- Perrott, Beth
1973 A Community Paper. *Toronto Native Times* June 1973 4(6):2.
- Peterson, Richard
1982 Five Constraints on the Production of Culture: Law, Technology, Market, Organizational Structure and Occupational Careers. *Journal of Popular Culture* 16:143-153.
- Ponting, J. Rick, and Roger Gibbins
1980 *Out of Irrelevance: A Socio-Political Introduction to Indian Affairs in Canada*. Toronto, Ontario: Butterworths.
- Price, John A.
1972 US and Canadian Indian Periodicals. *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 9:150-162.
- Raudsepp, Enn
1984 The Native Press in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 12:10-23.
- Reutl, Rita
1983 The Presses Roll—in 37 Languages. *Toronto Globe and Mail* December 22, 1983:15.
- Riggins, Stephen
1981a Bilingual Indian-English Schools—A Reversal of Past Practices. *Toronto Native Times* January 1981 12(1):6.
1981b History of Our Paper Shows Common Financial Problems. *Toronto Native Times* April 1981 12(4):1,8.
1981c New Director, Ed Buller, Enjoys Work at Local Level. *Toronto Native Times* March 1981 12(3):1,3.
1982 A Lighter Look at Life. *Ontario Indian* 5(2):26-30.

Rupert, Robert

1982 Native Communications in Canada. Report to the Interdepartmental Committee on Native Communications. Ottawa, Ontario: Secretary of State, Native Citizens Directorate.

Singer, Benjamin D.

1983 Minorities and the Media: A Content Analysis of Native Canadians in the Daily Press. *In Communications in Canadian Society*. Benjamin D. Singer, ed. pp. 226-236. Don Mills, Ontario: Addison-Wesley.

Sun, Midnight (Claire Dineen)

1982 George Kenny: A Rebel Against Cute Indian Books. *Ontario Indian* 5(5):34-37.

Tocqueville, Alexis de

1964 *Democracy in America*. New York: Washington Square Press. Originally published in 1840.

Toronto Native Times

1980 Submission to the Native Community Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation dated July 15, 1980. Toronto, Ontario: Unpublished manuscript in the possession of Stephen Riggins.