

*field trip.*  
IMPRESSIONS FROM THE ARBVITARNEQ

- 1984

1. People are worried.

Some people are worried over the loss of culture,  
over the loss of language;

Some people are worried about the animals and hunting;

Some old people are worried because the young don't  
obey anymore;

Some young people are worried because the old people  
don't seem to be able to understand them;

Some people worry over lack of jobs

Some people worry about aboriginal rights;

Some people worry about the splitting up of families;

Some people are worried because even though there is  
no more famine, the real Inuk is fading away;

Some people worry about drugs, booze, violence and  
suicide;

Some people suffer from the rift between husband and wife,  
between father and son, between mother and daughter,  
between lovers;

Some people are worried that should things in the outside  
world go much worse, the Inuit would be left once more to  
fend for themselves;

Some people are worried about the future;

Some people are worried about their souls;

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2. There is no unanimity in Norther Quebec as to the causes and the cures to these worries.

CAUSES:

- for some people it is the fault of the qadlunaat;
- for some it is all the fault of the James Bay Agreement;
- these things just happened because of history, because the world has changed;
- some people say that the Inuit should stop blaming others and look first at their own faults;
- some people say that this has happened because real values have been replaced by a desire for money;
- some say it is all due to a lack of respect for the old;
- some say it is all due to a lack of goodwill;
- some say it is all due to a lack of education;
- some say it is all due to a lack of development; and money;
- some say it is all due to a lack of power;
- some say it is all due to a lack of coordination;
- some say it is all due to the fact that leaders and organizations don't listen to the people and that they don't fulfill their mandates;
- some say that these problems are due to the fact that people forgotten about God and that they don't follow the teachings of Christ;

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CURES:

- some people propose a return to the true Inuit ways;
- some say that with more AUTHORITY & OBEDIENCE these problems could be cured;
- some propose more education;
- some propose more goodwill;
- some propose more development;
- ~~some propose more coordination;~~
- some propose more programs, services and funding;
- some propose more coordination;
- some propose better leaders;
- some propose more power;

(Cont'd.)....

## CURES (Cont'd)

- in the face of these problems some remain indifferent;
- others say "ajurnamat!" *reflex* *turn*
- under the weight of these problems some to booze and drugs;
- some, especially the young, commit suicide;
- some propose more prayer and faith in God, and the following of the teachings of Christ;

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3. There is much talk about the "culture".

Just about everyone wants to save and develop it. But outside of some suggestions that the schools should be doing more in this regard, or for the creation of a language commission, or that Inuktitut be made the working language, people seem at a loss as to how the true Inuk culture can be fostered in the day to day activities of life in the context of today; some people seem even to suspect whether traditional culture has any pertinence to the problems of today: e.g., it is one thing to teach how to use dog teams and an other to use the "traditional" Inuk ajurituiseq for the teaching of chemistry or algebra, or how is traditional Inuit culture to be used in a situation where the task at hand is to arrive at a decision whether apartment buildings should be built instead of renovations or duplexes.

It was suggested in Ivuyivik: " People have been talking about saving the culture so much and for so long, it's perhaps time we made a list of all the items contained in the traditional culture and then decide what we want to hold on to, what can be held on to and how it can be held on to! "

It is difficult to ascertain what is the exact conception of "culture" that prevails in Northern Quebec; it is important to determine this more clearly, because since just about everybody wants to save it or do something about it, we have to know more clearly what is the prevailing idea of culture:

- Is "culture" equivalent to the traditional culture which is invoked as a soothing reminder

(Cont'd)

of times past when life was harsher but simpler and happier?

- Has the concept of "Culture", of "Inuit Culture" become, as "Québécois Culture" has for many PQ nationalists, just another political argument to wring more funding and concession from Southern Governments?
- Is "Culture" a word that is used to refer to the thousands of daily acts and gestures that people make and carry out with each other in tackling the problems that life presents then with in whatever corner of the globe that they find themselves in?
- Is "Culture" an "essence" that one must strive to "conserve" or is it rather something that is in perpetual movement and continuous transformation?

From the worry surround the issue of culture it is clear that the traditional culture has been undermined in its ability to "explain", to give sense and meaning to the world in which the Inuit are living today. They have to build their own new meaning.

4. Whenever dissidence occurs in Northern Quebec it very often leads to awkward and unpleasant situations.

This is perhaps due to the fact that fundamental differences are rather new, that most people know each other personally so that disagreements are difficult to de-personalize, or it again may be due to the fact that there yet there is no method or tool to settle and harness disagreements other than to repeat that "we must all work together for the good of the Inuit", "we must communicate better with each other", "we must coordinate our actions better", etc....

The disagreement concerning the James Bay Agreement was of course very traumatic. Declarations of happiness that the rift is finally healing are so numerous and warnings that it must not be allowed to happen again are heard so often, that one can't help but feel that at the bottom of all this is an unverbali- zed fear that perhaps the roots of the conflict have not been eradicated;...an unverbali- zed fear that it took after all the initiative of an outside person's promise (René Lévesque) to bring the people together, and that had it not been for that outside initiative then perhaps.....

It is sad to notice that the very issue of Makivik's Taqralik magazine which celebrates the reconciliation of the Inuit after the long separation concerning the James Bay Agreement, reports an incident where a issue, of a nature perhaps as if not more fundamental than the JBA, where an issue of dissidence was dealt with in a most dishonourable and undemocratic way; (see the article by Malee Saunders in Taqralik, p. 47, February 1984 issue).

What is needed is that the notion of "difference" be recognized and given its rightful place in the scheme of human affairs.

All the worries, differences, disagreements, etc..., are the expressions of the tensions existing in any normal society.

Only under an oppressive totalitarian dictatorship (political and governmental as in Russia; religious and governmental as in Iran) can these be made to disappear.

This can also be tried in Northern Quebec.

But if people don't want to take this road, then some way will have to be devised to harness these tensions so that instead of trying to eradicate them they would instead be fertile ground for producing constructive solutions to allow people to lead relatively happy lives.

5. People have a yearning for order in their lives, they want the world to make sense once more.

In order to achieve this people,

- A. some would want to use their piusitoqait as a guidance;
- B. others want to rely on the teachings of the Bible and faith in God for guidance;
- C. some would want to rely on the will, on the desire of the PEOPLE as a guideline;
- D. some want to take control of themselves individually and put order in their own lives;
- E. others want to take control and put order in their collective lives;

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Naturally for some people it is a mixture of all the above.

"E" means of course having your own government. But for those who want government, it is not clear what "government" means. For most, "government" seems to mean the tool by which the solutions generated by A, B, C, and D would be applied in life. This interpretation seems to be supported by the many comments and criticisms made concerning leaders and the various organizations to the effect that they don't listen to the people, that they don't carry out their mandates properly, that they fight amongst each other, etc.... If this is the case, then in accordance with this interpretation "government" is the "pigujjiyit" that carries out either the direction laid out by the piusitoqait, or the teachings of the Bible, or the personal beliefs of each individual, or again, the desires of the PEOPLE.

#### IS GOVERNMENT THE "CARRIER OUT" (sic!)

if this is the case then government is synonymous with "government services" that should be of benefit to the people. In this case better government means better and more services, more funding, better coordination. Problems, as Mr. Sinclair of the Métis said at the Constitutional Conference, are defined in technical and not political terms. And as Mr. McIvor, also of the Métis said, politicians start to speak and act as bureaucrats.

Problems are defined in technical terms, and therefore the cures are seen in terms of more money, more expert knowledge, more consultants, "think tanks", etc...

This is directly related to the question of Responsibility vs Minaomitsineq: When problems are defined in technical/dollar/expert-terms, it becomes difficult for the common person to exercise his individual responsibility instead of handing over the solution to more "knowledgeable people."

#### IS GOVERNMENT A FORUM

a place with its rules where different ideas, different interpretations, different convictions as to goals, priorities and means of solution are discussed in a manner so that differences can blossom in a creative fashion instead of degenerating into sterile conflict.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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N. That at the coming meeting in Povungnituk discussions should be undertaken on the following topics:

- What is government: Government as purveyor of services  
 Government as means to harness conflicts

*the father*  
 the ACC<sup>cb</sup>-notion of government as  
 against the *under* <sup>under</sup> notion of govern-  
 ment.

Government by the people, for the  
 people, through the people.

- Leaders and the led:

Who leads whom and who follows whom?

Do leaders follow the wishes the  
 desires of the people, or should  
 they lead the people?

- Representativity

Who speaks for the PEOPLE?  
 How do we choose those who are to  
 speak for the PEOPLE?  
 How do we know that the positions  
 of all the elements of the PEOPLE  
 will be able to air their position  
 when we choose those who are to re-  
 present the PEOPLE?

-do we give representation to indivi-  
 duals ? to municipal corporations ?  
 to regions? to men? to women? to the  
 old? to the young? to cripples? to  
 blond-haired blue eyed people? to  
 residents only? to Inukness? etc...  
 to dissidence?

- Synthesis: How do we assure the cohesion of society?  
Through state religion?  
Through concerted government action through which social direction is assured?
- Responsibility: Relationship between the individual and the state, the government.  
  
Rights vs Duties approach .  
  
The limits of governmental action  
The limits of individual action.  
  
Rights.  
  
- What the Bible has to say about all these matters.  
- Relationship between political autonomy and economic self-sufficiency.

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- N. While the process of achieving true self-government in Northern Quebec cannot be rushed, a timetable for these discussion should be discussed, keeping in mind that the PQ's mandated will soon be over. It should be discussed whether this matters or not; whether things could go on just as well under a Liberal Government in Quebec or not.
- N. Because of the importance of financial questions , not only for any negotiations that might eventually take place on the question of the funding of a future government, but also in view of getting a reliable picture of life in N!Q., the following studies should be undertaken:
  - a. An evaluation of what it costs both the Federal and Quebec Governments to "run" Northern Quebec. This study should of course cover a sufficient span of time so that patterns and trends can be discerned.



b. At the same time, a study of consumption patterns and of the use and circulation of money in Northern Quebec should also be undertaken. It would be important that this study be undertaken as action-research; individuals and families could be shown how to go about doing this research themselves: the idea being not just to collect information but to use the research process itself as a means that would contribute to everyone's understanding of economic relationships.

N. Inukness: What is specifically Inuk, what is it that constitutes Inukness?  
What is universal in Inukness?