

OPINIONS

Osgoode African association disgruntled with Obiter Dicta

by the Pan-African Law Society

We do not know the origin of the proverb: "when in Rome, do as the Romans do." However, as the recent battle for Oka has conclusively demonstrated, the world is still fighting to overcome the madness of the ethnocentric assertion that there must be only one way to do things.

Here the strategy is to subordinate competing claims made by other cultures under what is conceived to be the master value.

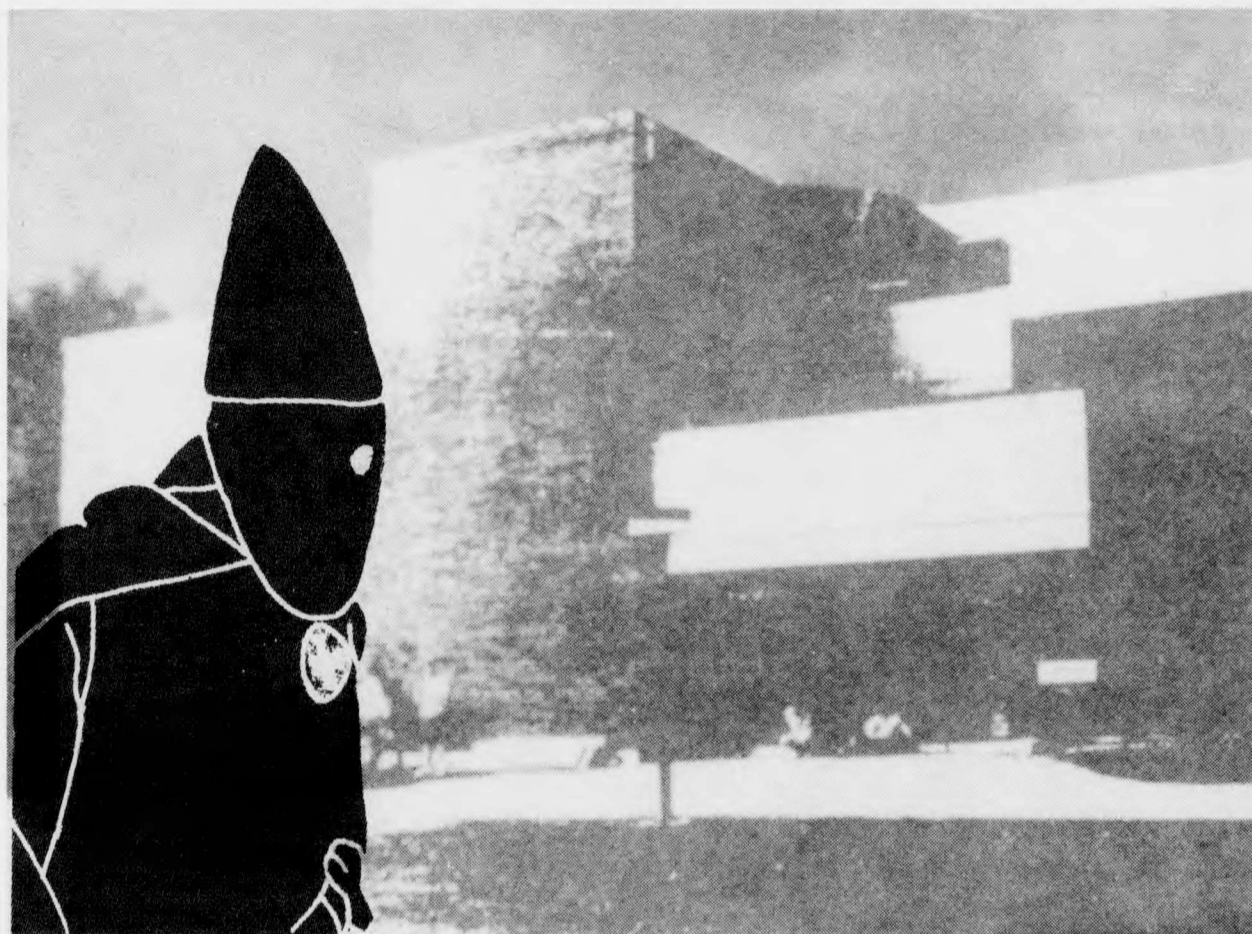
If the conflict cannot be fully resolved this way, it can usually be kept under "control" by adopting a compartmentalized style of thinking in which the "rebel" cultures are treated as anomalies-problems which will one day be resolved in the context of the dominant culture.

The theme is typical of the Western unilinear concepts of "progress", "development" and "modernization". Here the European peoples (in Europe and the so-called "New World") are constantly depicted as possessing some "superior" kind of structure and culture for others to emulate.

The assumption with respect to other cultures is that maximum negative impact on them is in fact *desirable*, in order that "primitive heathen" either be incorporated as rapidly as possible into the dominant society or exterminated — it does not matter which one.

So far this one-track mind has seen the willingness to cut down the last redwoods, pollute the most beautiful beaches, invent machines to injure and destroy plant and human life, and institute apartheid laws which rob humanity of the richness of racial and cultural diversity.

Before the diffusion of this madness, no piece of earth could be seen in terms of personal property; we must now abandon the concept of land (for example), as a source of all life on earth and therefore



incapable of being alienated.

We must now see land in individualistic terms grounded in economic imperatives geared to commodify everything including human relations.

The so called "Unalienable Rights" mentioned in the American constitution with which all "MEN" (read white men) are endowed by *their Creator* soon became abundantly available only to paying customers. The African was given the option of purchasing his/her freedom.

Whereas before, history never saw *colour-based human cultures*, the white supremacist constructed one in order to affirm not only his supremacy, but also to maintain comparative advantage over those who essentially shared his culture but were not white.

Henceforth, we must all submit to colour-coordinated reality. We must submit to the reality of one supreme colour, one God, one master culture, one everything including the "Rule of Law".

In short, when in Rome...! But you know the greatest hypocrisy of all? The compulsion to assimilate is done by the very people who have argued in theory and in deeds that when in Rome you need not do what the Romans do.

Everywhere the Europeans went, they vehemently refused to assimilate into the host culture. On the other hand, these are the same Europeans who go around teaching the African that it is evil to worship dead ancestors while they themselves glorify their dead by erecting their statues in and around their centres of power such as the church, parliament, courts and educational buildings.

What the European is really saying is that we all must worship his ancestors. Only he knows the law, therefore, whenever we are weak in mind and spirit, we must go to his courts, his church or some similar institution where, we worship his dead ancestors.

One would think that the mul-

ticultural approach in Canada points to the lesson learned about the evils of an ethnocentric approach to world issues.

Don't be fooled. Ethnocentrism thrives in this country.

At every level of Canadian society it rears its ugly head. This is the same context under which we must place a recent treatment of the Pan-African Law Society (P.A.L.S.), by the editors of *Obiter Dicta*, the Osgoode law school newspaper.

A few weeks ago, the Pan-African Law Society collectively submitted its article intended to make the Osgoode community aware of its birth and purpose. P.A.L.S. requested that the article be published in the name of the collective in accordance with fundamental African cultural principles which it reclaims.

The article was rejected under the reductionist policy requirements designed to reduce everything into a single value system.

Furthermore, the editorial staff collectively and individually sought to marginalize our concerns by refusing to acknowledge, even minimally, that there was a problem that needed to be dealt with. Despite cultural reasons clearly argued by P.A.L.S. verbally and in a memo hand-delivered on Nov. 1, the editors could not visualize the relevance of anything except the dominant way of doing things.

Therefore, in accordance to the editors' fully developed tunnel vision, there was no reason to be concerned with heavily outnumbered but proud Pan-Africanists determined to express themselves in the fashion they saw fit. Drunk in this narrow mindedness, the editors thought they could silence P.A.L.S. by making up ridiculous demands no reasonable person could ever accept.

Now, for future African lawyers the first thing to do is to remove the hangover about someone doing you a favour by admitting you to the legal profession. If anything this is a grossly inadequate compensa-

tion for past injustices committed against us.

We have always had the *right* to enter the legal profession, but it was denied under racist exclusionary laws. We cannot turn a blind eye now.

Those of us who are inside have a special responsibility to expose the built-in injustices and to "right the wrongs". We simply cannot sing "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah" in the midst of all this hypocrisy. If docility is what is intended by the legal profession, then they can take it and shove it.

P.A.L.S. has no deference to pay to ethnocentric perspectives disguised as objective legal education. We have heard of the preaching for "civilization:" for peace when they mean war, for freedom and equality when they mean enslavement, domination and dependency.

We have studied the hypocrisy and exhibitionism of the so-called Western civilization. We have formed our judgement in remarkably cold, sober, passionate rationality.

We are sick and tired of Africans shouting, "we want freedom and equal justice" without being precise about what we mean by such demands. These are vague and ambiguous terms with as little meaning as wearing the African map on our chest and ears since we are demanding these rights from the "white man" as if he was some kind of god.

We forget that the "lord giveth and he also taketh away".

Only when we are able to give our own independent meaning about who we are, can we say we are wearing the African map for more than just style.

As Pan-Africans, we will never lose sight of the goal of reunification and liberation.

We will utilize the power of communication to its fullest. *Obiter Dicta* does not have the power to silence this spirit. P.A.L.S. can never be extinguished. Every attempt to silence us can only strengthen our resolve.

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behind a wall of anti-Western rhetoric... This is partially correct — my purpose was to criticize the West as well as Israel.

Nevertheless, it was not my intention to hide the criticism of Israel, as it was evident from the tone. I am not afraid of criticizing injustice, wherever it may be.

What surprised me the most was that none of the writers expressed any grief for the massacre of the innocent Palestinians at Haram-el-sharif.

Lastly, since the letters gave me a lot of advice, I would like to conclude by giving some of my own.

I would advise that we all spend some time pondering what South African archbishop Desmond Tutu said concerning the treatment of Palestinians, "... I cannot myself understand people who have suffered as Jews have suffered, inflicting the suffering of the kind that I have seen upon the Palestinians."

Sincerely,
Faisal Kutty

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DARTS & MUSIC & MORE DARTS

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2 FOR 1 CHICKEN WINGS AND CHEAP TALL BOYS!!

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nick loogan & the hard rock beef injection will not be playing here this year

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