

HERTZOG: the man and his views

The Gateway presents an exclusive interview with Raymond Lloyd Hertzog, teacher suspended from Ardrossan High School in Strathcona County Nov. 12 because of his alleged atheistic beliefs and the use of EDGE in one of his classes.

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By Janet Orzech, Don Sellar and Bill Miller

Chaput Would Die For Freedom

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to fight for, and I sympathize with them."

Quebec is the only province whose constitution ensures schools, universities and communications to the minority, he said.

"And what is crucial in all this," he said, "is that the majority and the minority groups in Canada are always the same. By definition, that is the negation of democracy."

French-Canadians are asked, "why don't you merge and become Canadian like the other minorities have done?"

"This remark is outrageous to a French-Canadian," he said. "We may be a demographic minority, but constitutionally, never."

"We were the original settlers and since 1760 have tried to be Canadian against your will." If you are only hearing about it now, there is something wrong with your press."

It was the French-Canadians who proposed freedom from English Parliament, the hymn, Oh Canada, and a distinctive Canadian flag.

"Don't tell us to become like the Hungarians, Ukrainians, Poles or East Germans," he said, "what do you suppose is their answer to the occupant who invites them to merge and become Russians."

"Or," he continued, "what was Churchill's answer to Hitler when he asked the British to live under German domination for the next thousand years."

French Canadians want to be masters in their own house but Dr. Chaput said, "not in the manner of Jean Lesage."

"We want an independent country, like the other 115 nations in UN," he said.

"There is no legal or constitutional right for succession," he continued, "but we have a politically moral right. Article I of the United Nations Charter states all peoples have the right of self-determination."

"We will be successful," he said, "because we are the only actors on the Canadian scene who know where we are going."

"No one is ready to sacrifice his life to keep Canada as it is," he said, "whereas thousands of French-Canadians are ready to die for independence of their nation."

"However, Quebec must decide by democratic means whether we want," he said. "I have no wish to be shot in the street. I want to live to see independence."

Dr. Chaput said he does not represent all the people in Quebec. "But," he said, "Do not believe Jean Lesage and a few others who speak of a negligible minority of separatists."

"If we were negligible, Jean Lesage would not have to speak about us constantly. We are his real opposition."

"I am losing my time speaking to you," he said, "and you are losing yours by listening."

"Our job is to convince French-Canadians about the need for se-

paratism, not to help you understand us. You have not understood us for 200 years, why should you now," he said.

"Quebec separatism will result in violence," Dr. Chaput continued, "only if there is ruthless suppression by the English majority."

"Independence will not solve everything," he said. "After independence and only then will we be



DR. MARCEL CHAPUT
... 'wasting my time'

able, in mutual respect and good neighboring to sit down at the same table and solve our common problems."

"I do not think independence will destroy us economically," said Dr. Chaput. "The 50 countries that gained independence in the last 20 years have received more financial aid after achieving nationhood than before."

"Independence," he continued "will allow us to join various alliances which we could not join before because of the decision of the English majority."

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Q. What led to the discussion of religious beliefs in your classroom?

A. Much of our discussion in the class (Grade IX Guidance) was philosophical . . . why should we believe in Christianity; what set of values should we have; what should we do when there are so many differences of opinion? I asked how many members of the class are Christians. I said, 'you don't have to be—this isn't important.'

O. What was the reaction of the class to your question?

A. Most of them acknowledged the fact that they are Christians, and far from ridiculing them, I congratulated them . . . I said, now this is a difficult thing to do, you should be proud of the fact that you had enough courage to get up and declare you believe thus and thus. Action is required and if you don't act upon what you believe, then I see no sense in believing anything.

Q. How did you come about to express your own religious beliefs?

A. This was a superior class of girls. So when the discussion was all over, they asked me what I believed. I said, 'You probably won't understand, but I am an a-hyphen-theist.'

'I should have the right to give my version'



Q. Would you explain this, Mr. Hertzog?

A. This is a belief in which one does not accept the concept of a personal god. This is not to be taken that I do not believe in the existence of a god. I just think he has more important things to worry about than me.

Q. Did you think declaring your beliefs would cause any trouble in this province, the so-called "Bible Belt"?

A. I'm quite willing to let Mr. Manning and all preach their gospel. I have no qualms about it, but I think I should have the right to be able to refute what they say, and also give my version . . . When students ask me what I believe, I'm sure as hell not going to back down. Now people may say this is injudicious, unwise and indiscrete. But then of course most of the world's progress has been made by people who were considered injudicious, unwise and indiscrete. If you want to get anywhere, like a turtle, you have to stick your neck out.

Q. Do you think the parents involved in this case had any malicious intent?

A. I don't think so. They didn't come to see me on parent-teacher night, though one set of parents, from looking at me at parent-teacher night, I gather didn't like me.

Q. What are your impressions of the principal of Ardrossan High School?

A. Mr. Jensen is a very efficient administrator—possibly the best administrator I have ever known. He is a very fine person with an excellent reputation. He had to be a very understanding individual, of course, to work out in that area.

Q. Is he in sympathy with you?

A. I believe so.



'we need diversity'

Q. Are you acquainted with any school board members in Strathcona County?

A. I don't think I've ever met any one of them. They usually get in year after year by acclamation because no one else really wants the job.

Q. What is the religious structure of your Grade IX class?

A. Very few of them go to church. No more than 10 out of the 32 attend regularly every Sunday.

Q. Does any one religion predominate?

A. No, there is a real mixture of affiliation.

Q. The Alberta School Act specifies that Alberta teachers should be Christians. In Alberta there are many teachers from other countries who are not Christians. Should we have them?

A. I think we need the diversity.

Q. Is there anything special about Strathcona County and its sociological make-up which is significant in your case?

A. Strathcona County is a very delicate area. There is a great sociological diversity there which takes in the extremely poor and the extremely rich. They have the whole continuum out there.

Q. What kind of teachers are being produced at U of A?

A. I've taught them—I know what kind are going out. The 250 education students I've taught are fine people. Don't misunderstand me, but I don't know if they can think. I don't think that they think over in arts either.

Q. Is the U of A beginning to develop into a fertile ground for radical thinkers?

A. How much controversy has ever come out of this university? Up until a year or so ago, you never knew that it existed other than the fact that it took \$50 million a year. It gobbled up the money and that was it!

Q. Are you a good teacher, in your opinion?

A. I feel that I am a good teacher. If I meet my own standards then I am not too concerned how others might evaluate me.

'I must meet my own standards'



Q. Could this whole affair have been settled easily?

A. It has been blown up out of all proportion and could have been settled quietly in the principal's office.

Q. Did the suspension have any relation to recent political events in Edmonton?

A. No.

Q. What was your religious background?

A. I was brought up in a rather fundamental denomination and I had to do some thinking rather early.

Q. Has this particular set of circumstances ever arisen before under the Alberta School Act?

A. There have been many cases involving this section (Section 350A), but the act has never been invoked for this particular set of circumstances. I don't see how the act covers this.

Q. Do Alberta teachers have much freedom?

A. Teachers here have a considerable amount of freedom in the classroom. Here we have a case where two sets of parents have objected.

Q. Do the inhabitants of Strathcona County care what happens to you?

A. These people still remember last year's teachers' strike. Relations between them and the teachers are still rather touchy. Why should they care just because one of their teachers has lost his job? But I haven't lost it yet!

Q. Do you intend to go back to the classroom if your suspension is lifted?

A. Yes.