

# MUGWUMP

## Heads will roll.

by Allan Carter

Don't you just love all this constitutional talk? A bunch of politicians get together in an attempt to bring Canada closer together and they end up fighting among themselves. This country has more constitutional committees than the United States has guns. When everyday citizens are called to participate in what is termed "public input" they are attacked by the committee members. Jean Chrétien just recently stated that his party wants the co-chair of the national unity committee, Dorothy Dobbie, to resign. In fact, Chrétien publicly demanded her head. Goodness knows what he wants to do with Dobbie's head, but someone should remind the man he is a Liberal party leader and not a dictator.

To make matters worse, Liberal MP's are stating they won't participate in the committee's hearings until Dobbie is ousted. And to add more fuel to the fire and more newscasts for Lloyd Robinson and Peter Mansbridge, some officials are predicting the collapse of the committee could result in a committee formed where there would be only two or three members. Great, then the committee members would have less people to fight with. Less fighting means disinterested media which results in less people actually knowing what the heck is going on. Hmmmm. Maybe a smaller committee would be a good idea at least for Joe Clark's sake, anyway. I'm not sure about the country's sake, but then I'm not sure if any of these politicians are sure what is important for the country's sake. Maybe we all should just take a breather for awhile and try to figure that one out, without any foolish "deadlines". Heck, maybe Chrétien had a point when he said Canadians should travel the country to get a better scope of each other's problems and advantages. In fact, Canadians deserve it. The government's committees have been doing all the travelling. I think it's our turn and Mulroney should foot the bill. Any takers?

The Red and Black Revue was fantastic. I don't know how anyone could even say one nasty word about these performers and risk bursting their big, fat "martyr attitude" egos. Beverly White is such a nasty person. We should burn the woman at the stake. After all, who could say the show was bad? It was beautiful, breathtaking, awesome. A performance fit for a King and Queen. Actually, I didn't even go. However, I read White's review. She is an excellent writer. She can slap down a sentence describing something that would take me a paragraph. Yeah, she goes to High School. So what? We all did at one time. In fact, White could write rings around some of these upset Red and Black Revue martyrs who wrote into Blood and Thunder this week. Furthermore, the martyrs made quite a stink about White's review but said nothing about a letter from a concerned audience member which also appeared in last week's issue. Selective, aren't we?

Our hope has been lost. Jon Lazar "your student at large" introduced Samantha Ferlatte last week in his weekly column which is on the Student Union Page. Ferlatte, "your other student at large" remarked on how positive she has found the Student Union meetings so far and explained how councillors vote at meetings. Yes, they are quite the watchdogs.

Did you know we had fruit flies in the SUB? In a warning notice (who knows who wrote it) us Brunswies were told to check our hair and Beaver lunches. Apparently, the building was fumigated and someone was concerned about our safety. In a concerned remark the writer of this bizarre notice said:

During the morning this chemical fog may not have completely disappated (sic); therefore, if you happen to begin coughing, choking, hacking up lungs or generally feel nauseated this maybe (sic) why.

A notice like that just warms a person's heart.

I hate motorcycles. There is nothing more frustrating than frantically searching for a parking spot. Suddenly, you see a spot in the distance and you are so happy you are sure you hear trumpets blowing and angels singing. But just as you slow down and proceed to turn into this parking spot, lo and behold what is there? A motorcycle. I try to remind myself that they too are vehicles and have every right to park there. I hope they can't drive those blasted things in the winter.

# OPINION

The opinions found in Opinion are not necessarily the views of The Brunswickan

## On Being Called a Jew

by Thomas S. Kuttner

I am a Jew as have been my forebears from time immemorial, as are my children and as will be theirs from generation to generation. Ours is a proud tradition full of much accomplishment. In our greatest legacy - the Hebrew Scriptures - is rooted not only our own faith but also that of the two later monotheistic traditions of the Mediterranean world, Christianity and Islam. But there has been much more, indicative of a culture which continued to thrive well after the appearance of these younger siblings. I mention here the great Jewish legal compendium - The Talmud; an ongoing tradition of biblical exegetes from the eleventh century Rashi to the twentieth century Steinsaltz; an equally strong tradition of philosophers from Maimonides in the twelfth century through Spinoza in the seventeenth and onto Buber in our own era.

There are many giants in nineteenth and twentieth century thought - political, sociological and scientific; Marx, Freud, Einstein, Levi-Strauss, Marcuse, Laski, Arendt. In literature the great medieval poet, Ibn Ezra, and in the nineteenth century the incomparable Heine; the extraordinarily prolific Yiddish writers Asch, Scholem Aleichem, the Singers, father and son; the constellation of American Jewish writers Malamuc, Bellow, Roth, Miller, Potok; and in modern Hebrew the Nobel Laureate, Agnon. Of contributors to music, one thinks immediately of Mendelssohn, Bloch, Mahler and Schoenberg. Interpreters of music abound. Of conductors, in the twentieth century giants such as Walter, Klemperer, Horenstein and Szell towered over the orchestral world. Of violinists Joachim, Heifitz, Oistrakh, Stern, have left audiences spellbound; and pianists? - Rubenstein and Horowitz were larger than life and dozens have shred their glory: Schnabel, Gillels, Serkin, Gould - the list goes on. Jews all, although in most cases, *The Encyclopedia Britannica* conveniently suppresses that fact.

Which brings me to my main point. In the special news feature *Discrimination at the University of New Brunswick. Does it Exist?*, (The Brunswickan Vol. 126, Issue 9, November 8, 1991, p. 8) the subheading reads:

"Pakie, nigger, honkey, gook, chink, spic, jew, limie, bohunk.

These are only a few slang words used to discriminate against members of the human race."

Something is wrong here, terribly wrong. Why is "Jew" included in that list of racial epithets and slurs? Why is "Jew" described as a discriminatory slang word? To call a black "nigger" or a Puerto Rican "spik" or a Pakastani "paki" is meant to objectify and demean that individual and every member of his or her particular ethnic community. It is to assert dominance and assumed superiority, to disburse an entire people. But do you do the same when you call me a Jew? This is what I am. It is what my family is, parents, wife, children. It is what my people are. Rashi, Spinoza, Marx, Freud, Bernstein. Call us Jew, for that is what we call ourselves. Proudly, with heads held high. At home. At work. In the synagogue. In the lab. In the concert hall. In Fredericton, Montreal, Toronto, New York, London, Paris, Berlin, Moscow, Jerusalem; and in other places too: Auschwitz, Maidanek, Babi Yar . . . Ours has been a history full of accomplishments. But not an easy history. The destruction of the Temple and exile from our Land, 63 c.e. The Crusades from the 11th to 13th centuries. The Inquisition from the 12th to the 17th centuries. The Expulsion from Spain 1492. Pogroms in the Pale of Settlement in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The Holocaust in the 20th. "In every generation, in every age, some rise up to plot our annihilation. . . ." (Passover Seder).

No, the word Jew is not used to discriminate against us. Of that we have much experience. The ghettos, the *numerus clausus*, the restrictive covenants. The society in which we live need not coin a term to insult and demean us, though of these there are many - "kike", "hymie", "hebe". Rather, our very essence and being becomes a generalized term of opprobrium. It is not me you insult when you call a Jew but you who are incensed when you are called Jew. My identity has been used by the dominant Christian culture to describe all that is grasping, extortionate and crafty. Look at the definition of the word "Jew" in any standard dictionary and you find it used as a name of opprobrium and reprobation, especially applied to one who engages in sharp business practices. Someone haggles with you over the price of your second-hand car? You've been "Jew'd down". I can think of no other national group whose very identity continues to be used as a generalized term of insult in the common parlance of the dominant society.

I have no doubt that decent people abjure the use of such degrading colloquialisms. Unfortunately, so deeply embedded is the negative image of the Jew in Christian culture - even as secularized as that of late 20th century Canada - that well meaning people continue to perceive the word 'Jew' as negative in connotation. It may be that during Vatican II, the Catholic Church finally absolved (!) us Jews of deicide (although apparently not all of those contemporaneous with Jesus); it may be that it is now fashionable to speak of our common 'Judeo-Christian' heritage. Yet the fact remains that in the popular mind, to reproach someone with the epithet "Jew" is to insult and cast aspersion as to character and conduct. The Christian world must root out this deeply racist abuse of language, for this is anti-semitism at its most insidious.

To the reader I say, call me a Jew. This is what I am. Do not use the word Jew to insult others. For when you do so, you injure and demean us who are Jews.