

EDITORIAL

Robbery, ALCB style

Why does the Alberta government have a strangle hold over the province's liquor industry?

In some cases, there are legitimate reasons for a government to control a monopoly. For example, governments can provide necessary services that are not profitable enough to attract private investors, as is the case in telephone service to rural communities. Or governments can regulate an industry that, left to the open-ended structure of a supply and demand market, would ravage the country's natural resources, as in Canada's fishing industry.

But what is the Alberta government's excuse for excluding competition from the liquor distribution industry? There is certainly a profitable market in even the most remote communities, and there is no danger of depleting any natural resources.

The rationale behind government control of liquor distribution is not economical, it is moral. The government is saying, in effect, that liquor is evil, but that since someone has to sell it, it might as well be the government.

But is it really for our own good that liquor distribution is tightly controlled by the Alberta Liquor Control Board? Or are there other motives behind the government's monopoly? Last year, liquor consumption in the province was down, yet the ALCB's profits were up. With 60% of every liquor dollar spent in the province already going directly into government coffers in the form of taxes, the Alberta government also has the power to arbitrarily impose whatever prices they want on liquor products, and these prices are obviously not determined with fairness to the consumer in mind. The prices are determined solely by the government's greed.

Yes, there is a shred of validity to the moral argument. Abuse of alcohol is a problem, and if left to the open market, liquor distribution could augment abuse. But the grossly disproportionate profits the ALCB reaps from the industry speaks very loudly against any moral argument they propose to justify their continued strangle hold on liquor distribution.

D.J.

Creeping religionism

The battle of the long knives continues in India after the death of Indira Ghandi last week. Religious zealots from both the Hindu and Sikh religions are bringing death tolls into the thousands.

The whole incident illustrates that religion and politics don't mix.

Lessons learned over hundreds of years are easily forgotten in the political arena and even the U.S. presidential election is falling prey to mixing the two areas which are supposed to be so sacredly separate.

Mondale and Reagan haven't sparked beheadings, but recent debates between the two candidates have brought out how predominate religion has become as an issue.

Mondale criticized the Reagan plan to make Supreme Court judge candidates take religion tests and mentioned during the recent television debate on domestic issues that Jerry Falwell, leader of the infamously political Moral Majority, claimed this was a victory and the Moral Majority will be able to have three members appointed to the court.

This met little response from President Reagan, who also wants to bring prayer back to school - an issue which was brought to the U.S. Supreme Court and turned down. What has happened to the separation of church and state when religious leaders have started to wield so much influence over the election of probably the most powerful seat in the World?

Religion is sacred and the practice of it should not be interfered with, but when it becomes a hot political issue and will help rule in court decisions, the line of separation has to be redrawn. Freedom of religion also means the freedom to not practice religion or have it shoved down your throat.

By allowing religious testing of judges and maybe enforcing prayer, dangerous precedents are being set. Thousands of years of trying to get religion out of politics will be lost if this trend continues in the democracies of the Western hemisphere.

Greg Owens



"Last minute campaigning"

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Atrocities ridiculed

I can't quite figure it out. How on Earth can a person try to ridicule someone who simply speaks out against the world's most inhumane atrocities?

Two weeks ago, Andrew Rodoman wrote a letter saying Ken Shipka makes an "utter fool" of himself because he criticizes such "trivial" events such as the communist genocide in Cambodia, the half-million refugees who died trying to fell communist rule in Vietnam, the Soviet-made Ukrainian Famine, and, more recently, the five million refugees who have fled the Soviet-made war in Afghanistan.

Because Mr. Shipka's statements are well documented, Mr. Rodoman is at a loss to debate the issues and therefore attempts to discredit the person.

Accusing him of being a "Moonie", a "Keegstra Supporter," or even a "KGB agent" is not an example of intelligent arguing.

It would seem, Mr. Rodoman, you feel the Soviet-supported genocides should simply be ignored. After all, the Russians did a masterful job in hiding the truth about the five to ten million Ukrainians they starved to death in 1933.

Furthermore, the U.S.S.R. prohibits reporters from entering Afghanistan to report on the Soviet use of toxic chemicals, Napalm, and the mass murder of civilians.

Mr. Rodoman also said that millions of starving people in the Third World are the fault of the Americans. That is a common misconception.

In fact, the Russians are more to blame because they send no food or economic aid to the Third World.

They only send arms to the military dictatorships they support. The Americans, on the other hand, annually give five billion dollars in economic aid to the Third World.

To be sure, the American record on human rights in countries like Nicaragua and Chile is disturbing, to say the least.

Nevertheless, one can only wonder how many more countries the Soviets would invade, and how many more genocides would follow, if the U.S. were to completely and unilaterally withdraw from the world scene.

The "utter fool" is not the person who publicly condemns the Soviet Communist government (which has been described as the most brutal in all history), but is instead that person who refuses to learn from history in hopes that such events will never again be repeated.

Blaine Manyuk
Engineering II

Love letter

Oh thank you, thank you messers Stamp and Alpern, for so zealously watch-dogging my student rights. If I didn't have you to tell me better, I would assume that was a part of your job and would therefore fail to express well-deserved gratitude to you for your efforts.

Love, love. Hugs and kisses.

Say, rather than letting ignoble engineers, or gutter-mentality med students, or radical, left-wing militant feminists, brow-beat you into submission, why don't you have a campus-wide referendum on

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Gilbert's away and the staff's at play. Greg Owens and Jens Andersen seek Warren Opheim and Don Teplyske in the studio next door, while Jim Herbert and Bosco Chang play at dice. Kevin Kaardal passes Bernie Poitras a wee brew while feeding Mike Evans peanuts. Hans Beckers, Sheila Barry and Shane Berg draw upon their reserves to finish the keg. Timothy Hellum, Bruce Alton, and Doug Olsen continue their negative view upon the events, but Ron Hackett and Linda Derksen hang around to see what develops. Ann Grever and Bill Doskoch discuss their common hero - Boy George. Kent Cochran reads from the Brunitarian Handbook, as Janine McDade and Algard go to tea with Brenda Waddle.