

Opinion

Alan Small

Trade talk trite



Next to journalists, the occupation that has the worst reputation is any job related to politics. The stereotype of the lying politician duping voters for their support has never died down since Richard Nixon said "I am not a crook."

This federal election just adds to that stereotype. One side of the free trade issue claims that the free trade deal will totally wipe out our social programs. They also claim that the day after the Progressive Conservatives get elected, all the golf courses in Palm Springs will sign contracts to buy water out of Lake Athabasca. Heck, they may even get it for nothing, they say.

The proponents of the deal claim that this is a magnanimous treaty that will make North America the Common Market of the western hemisphere. They also claim it will lower prices of goods from computers to alcohol. Finally, they claim that it will totally protect Canadian exports from United States countervail legislation.

The pro side (Tories) refutes the con side's (Grits and Socialists) every move. The con side refutes the pro side's every move. As an average Canadian who just knows the basics about the free trade deal, I wonder why there isn't a non-partisan analysis of the free trade deal that everyone can relate to. I don't mean the countless debates between Mel Hurtig and Richard Lipsey. They are about as non-partisan as John Crosbie and Lloyd Axworthy. What I want to see, and I'm sure a lot of Canadians want to see, is a neutral observer (maybe a Supreme Court justice) who has a broad base of Canadian economic knowledge, who can tell Canadians that either this deal stinks or that this deal is the best since Canada took over Newfoundland.

When all of these politicians contradict each other, they aren't helping Canadians decide whether the deal is good for Canada. Hearing one side say that we will lose our Canadian culture (?) and the other side say that we won't, ends up something like a schoolyard fight between grade four children rather than an intellectual debate that could inform voters.

No, I don't think that the free trade deal will be the 1980's version of the Louisiana Purchase, with Canada being Louisiana. Nor do I think that it will make Canada's deficit evaporate overnight. All it will do is help Canadians choose the next exploiter, er, politician, who will have his way with the citizens of this country.

The Gateway

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Letters

The Gateway welcomes letters to the editor.

The name, faculty and year of study of the writer must be included for publication. The writer's phone number and University of Alberta I.D. number must also be provided, but will remain confidential.

Letters should be double-spaced, and typed if possible. They must not exceed 300 words.

The Gateway reserves the right to edit for length or clarity. Material of a racist, sexist, homophobic, or libellous nature will not be published.

Please submit letters to Room 282, SUB.

French rights equal

Re: Don't fight it: be Canadian (Nov. 1)

There is one kind of Albertan that really burns me up, and that is the misinformed patriot. Winston Pei is an extreme example of one.

Mr. Pei, in your editorial, you accused the Francophones (among other cultures) of fighting their Canadian identity. Quite simply, you have taken the word "Canadian" out of context, and you have misused it. The way you employ the word, it does not mean "Canadian"; it means "Anglophone". I was under the impression that this country was founded on two cultures; we maintain a linguistic (and cultural) duality that is quite unique. Why are you, and so many others, so intent on running French into the ground? The Francophones are vocal because they are constantly being challenged and put on the defensive. They are trying to protect their language and identity; they are NOT trying to shove French down people's throats. Quite the contrary, they are trying to keep it in their own throats. The governments are being very uncooperative in this area.

I hate to point this out to you, but a large part of Canada is its Constitution. Now, it appears that this document recognizes both the English and French community as being equal. You are choosing to ignore the Constitution, as well as the events that led up to it. If one of these two groups is a minority, and wants to stay alive, then, as Canadians, they should be encouraged and helped. A negative

reaction among the English is not going to help at all; it will only provoke strife, hard feelings, and hostility. By our Constitution, the French have just as much right to schools as the English do.

It's true that they went too far in Quebec with their road signs and such. But what is your problem with government-funded French schools in Quebec, a predominantly Francophone province? As long as there are English schools for your English kids, why are you crabbing at the existence of French schools for French kids? Heck, there are even English schools in Quebec. And, unjustly, there is still no Francophone high school in Alberta (J.H. Picard is immersion). Why on earth are you complaining?

I won't even comment on the ignorance of telling fifth-generation Canadians (a founding people, at that) to move to France.

Mona-Lynn Courteau
 Faculte St-Jean II

Principles swapped

Brian Mulrone was accused of changing his mind on the free trade issue during the course of debate on our upcoming election. His reply was that only idiots never change their minds.

I would like to address the neglected issue of whether or not politicians and their parties have principles anymore. I can understand anyone who changes their mind, but am highly dubious about anyone who changes their principles.

For over one hundred years of Canadian history the liberal element in our political system has been in favour of free trade. The conservative element has been largely in favor of protective tariffs. Today these "principles" have been "swapped" by the descendents of Canadian political tradition. Given the general state of political activity, one can understand that principles often take a back seat to being elected.

I am, however, profoundly disturbed when those politicians of the Marxist-Leninist persuasion are "profoundly disgusted at the arbitrary and undemocratic method" by which they were excluded from the candidates forum held on campus. Have even the Marxist-Leninists given up their cherished principles? Political activists of this persuasion are supposed to use arbitrary and effective means to overthrow our intellectually moribund, morally degenerate and thor-

oughly bourgeois capitalist system.

Is nothing sacred? How will the resolution ever occur with Marxist-Leninists who want to participate in such a charade (election)? Marxist-Leninists who "ask" to be included have no principles whatsoever. The revolution will occur at the barricades, not the ballot box. Poor Lenin must be disgusted as well. He knew us capitalist. He would scarcely recognise his modern "disciples".

Kevin Byrne
 Arts

Admin admired

There have been quite a few letters published in *The Gateway* recently which criticized the University's recent decision to shut down Subway, a food outlet in SUB.

I personally would like to support the University on this matter. Students often complain about the rising costs of education and how it is affecting them. Now it was no secret that Subway had been losing money over the past three to five years. The amounts involved were by no means negligible. It involved thousands of dollars in losses. Now who is to pay for this? The University does operate on a limited budget and if it takes on the responsibility of making up for these losses, obviously other more important areas, which affect the quality of our education more directly, are going to be adversely affected. But all of us do want a decent standard of education as we have been getting in the past, so what is the alternative? You cannot get something for nothing!

I am proud to be a part of the Canadian system which does believe in making Education a priority and an affordable one, and I would like to see things remain that way. I am glad that my fees aren't going up and I think the University has made the right decision.

Dilip J. Prabhu
 Science IV

Med class apologizes

The Faculty of Medicine Class of 1992 would like to apologize to all the ticket holders who were turned away from our Halloween Bash. Due to circumstances beyond our control, a large number of people snuck in without paying. Consequently we were way over capacity and were forced to lock the doors. We sincerely regret the inconvenience.

Med Class of 1992