

Anti-semitism: an insidious disease

What is really being denied to them is purely and simply the right to exist.

by *Walid Abdul-Massih*

Is the post-World War II honeymoon with the Jews over? This is the question that Jewish communities around the world are asking today with increasing frequency.

For most of the nearly 50 years since the end of the war, and especially since the Allied liberation of the Nazi concentration camps and the world recognition of the enormity of the crimes committed there by a "civilized" state, anti-semitism — the defa-

mation, subjugation and persecution of Jews as Jews — was swiftly condemned wherever and whenever it appeared. Anti-semitism is an insidious disease. It can linger in the body politic almost invisibly for years without erupting.

In this sense, I would like to bring to your attention the anti-semitic jokes told by Premier Bill Vander Zalm of British Columbia at the Social Credit Party's annual convention. Vander Zalm's apology took two pages, but it was not an apology for telling a joke or an admission that anti-semitic or racist jokes are not acceptable. B.C. politicians should be doing much more to foster good will, instead of perpetuating stereotypes of minority groups. I don't think he is mean-minded and I don't think he is a bigot, but he does not understand the sensitivities of Jewish people. I assume that this is a case of stupidity and ignorance and thoughtlessness. B.C. is being governed by a person who, more clearly than any other person in his position in Canada, doesn't understand the nature of the enterprise of governing.

in Canada as a white Protestant party that was mostly anti-Catholic, and then it became a white Christian party with roots of anti-semitism and anti-anything that wasn't Christian. This view became outmoded in the past two decades among moderate socreds, but some fundamentalism like that shown by Vander Zalm still exists.

The so-called political anti-semitism employs a set of arguments which have no rational validity, but which have great emotional force, and which slip furtively over into racial anti-semitism. The Jews, it is said, crowd into a certain number of lucrative professions, notably the so-called liberal professions. So let them be driven out. That will mean a certain percentage of competitors out of the way. In other words, wherever there are Jews, they will be considered superfluous.

How can a man in his position be so dead to the necessity of bringing a special kind of circumspection to his treatment of issues of race and ethnicity?

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As I mentioned earlier, the Premier belongs to the Social Credit Party. Major Clifford Hugh Douglas, the party's founder, often warned about Zionists, Jewish financiers and bankers conspiring to create a World Empire. Anti-semitism cropped up among some rural factions of Canada's first Social Credit Party after it was founded in Alberta in 1932 by evangelist school principal William Aberhart. Social Credit began

What is really being denied to them is purely and simply the right to exist. We know moreover that the great mass of Jews is made up neither of bankers nor of financiers, but of a population struggling against every form of urban poverty.

I do not underestimate the gravity of the great economic difficulties of our epoch, and of the general economic crisis of civilization. I think that it is not by hounding the Jews, but by transforming the economic and social structures, which are the real cause of those difficulties and of that crisis, that we can effectively remedy them. Anti-semitism merely diverts people from the real tasks confronting them. It diverts them from the true causes of their woes — which lie simultaneously in our egoistic and hypocritical hearts and in the social structures causally interrelated to our moral poverty. Anti-semitism diverts people from the true causes of their sufferings to an innocent multitude, like a worthless crew which, instead of combating the tempest, would throw overboard some of their companions until finally all are attempting to cut each other's throats and set fire to the vessel on which humanity lost in dreams has taken passage.

The most curious fact, moreover, is that many anti-semites declare that they have only praise for Jews they have known personally, but nevertheless feel that it is a sacred obligation to hate the Jews.

For me, anti-Semitism is one of the sinister symptoms of the general deterioration of our civilization, a raging against the unfortunate and suffering.

The Human Condition

Excalibur offers its space for submissions which promote a better understanding between people. We will accept typed, double-spaced copy up to 500 words.

The topic of lesbianism is certainly one that people shy away from in the presence of others. It is a lifestyle that people are curious about for one reason or another, yet will not admit to for fear of accusation and isolation. I am not writing this to request that a tear be shed for every lesbian who has ever been subjected to discrimination. Instead, my purpose in writing this is to shed some light on lesbianism — not from the viewpoint of a professor, a tutorial leader or a textbook, but rather a genuine lesbian.

As the end of my first year at York draws to a close, it remains

evident that many students are ignorant, close minded, defensive or simply out of touch with reality. Believe it or not kids, lesbians are everywhere. I am a lesbian. I do not hate men, I do not shave my head, I am not a victim of sexual assault or tragedy, I am not a phys ed major, I cannot stand hairy legs or armpits and my wardrobe does not contain one piece of leather — with the exception of my penny loafers. Furthermore, I cannot be described as androgynous. Being a lesbian is not a "waste" of my attractiveness or feminine qualities. I do not fit into any of society's stereotypical roles.

Nobody "turned" me into a lesbian — I simply fell in love with another woman. Without a doubt, someone reading this is thinking, "She just hasn't met the right man yet" — the right man being, of course, someone who can satisfy a

woman sexually. The foundation of a lasting relationship is not sex — hell, you can satisfy yourself if that's all you're after!

I am not on a mission to "transform" every heterosexual woman I meet. I respect the choices that other people have made, although they may be different from my own. I do not shove my personal life into the faces of others. I am not militant. I am hardly the one-eyed scary monster hiding in your bedroom closet.

I am me. I am the person you would least suspect. I accept myself for who I am, thus I have a positive outlook on my lifestyle. My heart belongs to a woman — so what? I am a real person. As the Skin Horse said to the Velveteen Rabbit: "Once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

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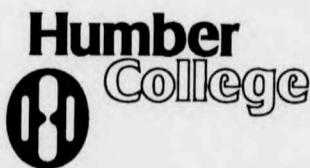
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letters

cont'd from p. 5

fraudulent election

other candidates. Strike three. But it's not over.

I would like to state, for the record, that I ran a clean campaign.

Whether it was "Unite to Fight" sweatshirts at polling stations, which I witnessed, or vicious backstabbing at the expense of other candidates, these incidents represent what I believe is an election which was not only fraudulent, but a slap in the face to democracy lovers everywhere.

Ron Kelly
Chair, York Council on the Prevention of AIDS

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