

Censorship, here?

The idea of an all candidate public forum is a vote for democracy and the democratic process. Unfortunately, what actually took place on Thursday in SUB Theatre proves that none of those ideals really exist. Even here at the University, home of ideas and free thinking, the talons of prejudice and censorship have taken hold.

When one of the candidates for the Marxist-Leninist party did finally get recognized it was only through her own courage and humility to line up with the rest of the students at the question mike and appeal to the moderator from the floor. Apparently, her request to take a seat on stage with the rest of the candidates had been

rejected by the Students' Union Executive, our University's so-called controlling body. What's even worse, is that even after she got up to the floor mike, she wasn't given the opportunity to be heard, instead of being pushed away and escorted out of the theatre. McCarthyism? Censorship? Here, in Canada? Never...

It was evident that few, if any, of the students present recognized the incident for what it really was. Aside from the typically narrow minded Tory jeers, none of the rest of us stood up against the actions taking place, not one cry of appeal went out on her behalf. What happened was an insult, not just to the candidate who wasn't allowed to be heard, but to the rest of us who weren't allowed to hear her. Someone,

namely our SU executive, have taken it upon themselves to decide what's best for us, to protect us from the woes of mental exercise.

Whether we're left or right of center, we might have learned more from one extreme position from the Marxist-Leninist, than from the rest of the middle-of-the-road candidates put together. As the moderator himself exclaimed earlier during the candidate's speeches, there are those here who have clearly made up their minds on this election, but there are many who haven't, and to them we must show some consideration in allowing them to hear the candidates out. It's too bad he couldn't back up his own words.

B. Howe
Arts II

Don't fight it: be Canadian

commentary by Winston Pei

Ever wonder why so much energy is spent pondering the elusive "Canadian identity." It is not the lack of a distinctive culture. Canada is made up of myriad cultures, like neapolitan ice cream: separate parts that work sooooo well together. Each individual Canadian is ideally a mix of everything. The problem is that some want their "mix" to be only one flavor. The fabric of our culture is constantly being attacked from within by citizens and their perceived "rights" to maintain a "separate" culture! But you cannot be Canadian while fighting to be someone else.

A recent Journal headline stated that "Canada's Chinese demand [the] refund of [a] racist head tax." Firstly, the request was not made by, or even on behalf of, "Canada's Chinese" but by a group called the Chinese Canadian National Council. Who chose this group over duly elected Members of Parliament to represent (Chinese) Canadians? And why are they making themselves out to be a group seemingly owed something by the rest of Canada? They are only perpetuating the segregation between "Chinese" and "Canadian" established by the original head tax.

The Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed not because any Chinese group lobbied for it but because the Canadian people, through their MPs, decided that the law was unfair to other Canadians. And after 41 silent years out of the public eye, why does the demand come now? (What? Did the Japanese internees really get money this year? Why don't we ask? It is an election year!) Let's analyse the claim... in 1941, the Japanese became non-citizens... in 1947, the Chinese became full

citizens. Who got the raw deal? You figure out who deserved reparations! We are all Canadians now. We all benefit from the sacrifices of our founding families.

On to the BIG debate: the Francophone community. The province of Quebec, to the panic of its residents, is becoming less Quebecois and more Canadian all the time. (But this is *Canada*, not Quebec!) Are they really that insecure that it should warrant so much fear of contamination by the *onslaught* of Canadian culture? They want their own French schools (government funded, of course), French language-only signs, French in everything except English dictionaries! They even offered financial incentives to Quebec residents to have more French children, preserve the French gene pool, and maintain a French-speaking (voting) population!

They *do* have another option. There is a country called France, right? Ah, but they (separatists excluded) want to stay in Canada? This is *their* home? Let no one forget, Canada adopted *us*. We are all *her* people. Take language for example. For all practical purposes, English has become the principal language of Canada. French language education really has no more right to funding or privileges than any other heritage language. Why succumb to the threats of (shiver!) separation or (God forbid!) loss of political support just to keep that one minority happy and voting appropriately? Why do they deserve any better than any other nationality? If Francophones really want to preserve their culture they should separate! If not, here's an idea: accept being Canadian!

There are many ethnically linked community groups that

merit respect for their contributions to Canada. They exist as vital foundations for our culture and were not designed to set their associated "race" apart or against anyone else. But there are those groups that force segregation upon themselves. There is no talk of the coexistence of diverse Canadians. There is no talk of Canada. (Remember, "our home and native land"?) All that is heard is the trumpeting of the native Frenchman or the native Anglo-Saxon or some other "live in the past, preserve the homeland" community member protecting themselves from contact and integration with one another. It is one thing to respect tradition and remember your heritage. To isolate yourself because of it is quite another: it is racism. One's heritage is not some sort of holy truth measure of who to associate with or an automatic qualification for special treatment. It is merely a part of being a Canadian.

Canada has always been viewed as the "New World", a land of opportunity, a place for fresh starts. Why be exactly the same as the old world? Why use the same "race" distinctions? Be proud of who you are, be that German Canadian, Swedish Canadian, Ukrainian Canadian, any old sort of Canadian. But a Chinese Canadian is no longer Chinese. If he is, call him Chinese! Once you are a Canadian, you are a little bit Russian, a little bit Spanish, a little bit British... and more than all of them combined. Just remember that "Canadian" is the most important part of the label.

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