

Are eager beavers Jayded?

Back in junior high, I wrote an essay about the Canadian identity. At the time, I had never before contemplated the concept, nor did it seem had anyone else. My assignment was full of quotes from pessimistic social commentators and politicians bemoaning Canada's lack of pizzaz, let alone sense of unity.

It reminds me of my encounter with one unmistakably Canadian and undeniably charismatic character on the streets of Montreal, a few years ago. Meeting Pierre Trudeau was the highlight of my graduation day. Our conversation rambled on as I explained my failed four year attempt to formulate a profound question for him ... but was there a question he would like to be asked?

He ended up asking me a question: "Do young Canadians care about the unity of their country?", in keeping with the imminent controversy of the Meech Lake Accord. From talking to the citizens of Trois-Rivieres for the past two months, I had to answer negatively to his inquiry, and he seemed disheartened by this response.

So, I was perplexed when the ex-prime minister spoke out against the Charlottetown agreement a month ago. I knew he had no patience for Mr. Mulroney, but promoting a position which would break up the nation was blatantly irresponsible.

Now, the Day of Reckoning has passed, and Canada has not spontaneously self-combusted. The warnings of our country's instant dissolution lest the Charlottetown Accord fail have so far been proven unfounded. As it turns out, Mr. Trudeau was right. Canadians objected to their government's "blackmailing." They would not be rushed.

Ironically, the air is not thick with doom and gloom, but rather a sense of hope, a feeling that with time and further discussion, the answers will evolve. The situation is exemplified by a comment I overheard on Referendum Day. A woman was telling her friend of her vote against the accord, but "I really wanted to add, 'and this is why.'" Indeed, her desire to add the reasoning behind her decision showed the difficulty and seriousness involved in reaching a conclusion concerning the question at hand.

The split among special interest groups made the need for reworking the agreement very obvious and caused a lot of soul-searching within many a Canadian. People who supported certain aspects of the accord were torn by their disagreement with other parts. Our "no" vote told the government we would not be coerced into supporting their deal without more discussion.

In the end, the referendum was not all bad. It was expensive, complex and stressful but at least it got people talking about the issues at hand, as they sought answers in an effort to make a responsible choice. The Canadian population has finally begun to care about the problems facing their nation and is eager to provide input for Constitutional reforms. We were forced to think about what our values are and consider the benefits of being part the largest country in the world.

I cannot say I am a great advocate of nationalism, but recent times have given me a sense of what it is to be Canadian. The spirit fellow citizens took in understanding the seriousness of the implications of the choice set before them was encouraging. It showed we sincerely want to live in a nation which ensures justice and self-determination for all its inhabitants. Canada is changing...for the better.

Miriam Korn

editorial

When intolerance is intolerable

At the October 16 meeting of the DSU Executive Rueben Cohen, the chancellor of Dalhousie University, angered, outraged, defiled, degraded and debased many women, bisexuals, lesbians and gays, not to mention any student or person with a conscience, leaving them with a sense that they are not worthy as persons and not wanted as students on the Dalhousie campus.

Cohen indicated that he believes that the DSU has been infiltrated by disturbed people and that the DSU has done a great disservice to the university by addressing and making public the problem of sexual harassment on campus. How is it that when the rights of people are being neglected that he would think it is appropriate to ignore the problem or use covert action to deal with the issue? Is he not aware of the fact that harassment is not tolerated on campus and is illegal in this country? Who are these disturbed people that he talks about? Could it possibly be people who have a sense of morality and respect?

He continued to say that he has no concept of homosexuality, does not understand homosexuality and is not convinced that it existed in his day. He also said that he believed that gays should be called "SADS", defined as "deplorably bad" in the Collins dictionary. It is interesting to note that the Ku Klux Klan has laid claim to this term and uses it when discussing homosexuals. He also added that he does not approve of the AIDS awareness posters which

have been posted on campus. Does he think that people should be committed to death by ignorance? Does he have a political alignment with right wing extremist groups? Does he really believe that homosexuality is a new concept? What kind of mind calls homosexuals "deplorably bad"?

He went into detail about the role of C.D. Howe as the first Chancellor of Dalhousie and continued by stating that Lady Beaverbrook, the second Chancellor of Dalhousie, neglected her position while serving. What does he think he was accomplishing by minimizing the abilities

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of women? Is this the low value he places on women?

Cohen also said he was proud to have recommended a policy at Dalhousie that gives priority to children of alumni and further he thinks it is horrendous when children of alumni are not accepted into the university. He also indicated that too many law students are concentrating on issues such as human rights instead of important issues such as property. Why would anyone be proud of recommending a policy of elitism? Why should children of alumni be given special attention and privilege? Are the rights of people less important than the deed for a

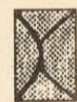
piece of property?

He also said that the members of the DSU would do better to find themselves wives or husbands and further that he adored his wife and she worshipped him. How can he have such a low opinion of the choices of others? Why does he patronize the members of the DSU? Why does he suggest that men should have dominance over women? Does he feel comfortable in the role of oppressor?

Much of what was said at this meeting may lead one to believe that this man has a warped and disturbed sense of reality and morality. Do we want this sort of person to represent the students of Dalhousie? Does this person have a conscience? Why did the president, who is ultimately responsible for upholding the sexual harassment policy of the university and who attended part of the meeting, not indicate that what Cohen was saying was not to be tolerated? Is Clark the sort of person we want in a position of responsibility?

We must ask ourselves these questions. If we continue to tolerate this sort of behavior many people will be left without a sense of security, pride or self. Instead they will be left with a feeling of helplessness, insecurity and lack of value. These effects can ultimately destroy the very lives of people. We must work to annihilate this sort of behavior as it can not be tolerated for it jeopardizes the very existence and lives of many people who deserve the right to live without abuse, neglect, indifference and oppression.

Anthony Roberts



LETTERS

The *Dalhousie Gazette* welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should not exceed 300 words in length and should be typed and double-spaced. The deadline for letters is Friday noon before publication. Letters may be submitted on Mac or IBM-compatible 3.5" disk.

DSU double standard

To the editor:

I am writing in regards to the incident covered in Metro newspapers that dealt with Mary Clancy's assault by Jack Roberts at the National Student's Day rally held outside the Dal SUB. Although his behavior was intolerable, the way that it was dealt with by DSU Council last Sunday was equally intolerable.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate these concerns is to draw an analogy between the incident with Chancellor Cohen during last spring's Convocation. Chancellor Reuben Cohen was accused of sexual harassment by the DSU, and attempts were made to bring this to his attention and prevent the harassing behavior from continuing. The difference between the two cases is that Reuben Cohen was given the option of either agreeing to attend

educational workshops, or to not attend Convocation at all. Jack Roberts, on the other hand, in spite of his attempts to apologize and reassure both Mary Clancy and Council members that his behavior would not be repeated, was effectively silenced and given no choice but to be barred from future DSU Council events.

What this indicates is that here is a double standard when it comes to the DSU's stance on cases of sexual harassment. In the case of Reuben Cohen, the DSU felt that the behaviour could be corrected by sensitization workshops. Their main objective was not to punish, but to educate and to ensure that the harassment would not occur again. When a student committed a similar offense, however, the DSU radically changed its agenda. Instead of education, immediate punishment was handed down, with questionable power to do so. Not only was the option of education unavailable to Jack, but neither is his membership in the DSU an optional choice. What does the DSU expect to achieve by trying to make

one of its members invisible? Will this solve the problem of harassment on campus?

This double standard must be seen in light of the existing power structures at this university. The DSU spent much time discussing what the best approach to deal with the Chancellor would be, including undue concerns over the possible ways he might retaliate. Jack Roberts, a lowly student and member of the union, presented no threat to the DSU's credibility, and so punishment was handed down with an iron fist.

By pointing out the DSU's inconsistencies, I am in no way suggesting that harassment is tolerable. However, equally disturbing are measures that silence people without addressing the issue. I am severely concerned that the DSU plays into the hands of the establishment, promoting the inequalities of power on this campus even further. Is our union only concerned about providing education for those

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