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POV - Point of View

EDITORIAL

Stop these attacks on free speech

It's time governments across Canada reined in the power of human rights commissions.

As Alan Borovoy, general counsel for the Canadian Civil Liberties Association wrote recently, "during the years when my colleagues and I were labouring to create such commissions, we never imagined that they might ultimately be used against freedom of speech."

Censorship, he said, "was hardly the role we had envisioned for human rights commissions."

Sadly, censorship is increasingly the role they envision for themselves.

The Canadian and B.C. human rights commissions are investigating complaints from some Muslims about the 2006 decision by Maclean's to publish excerpts from Mark Steyn's book America Alone. And the Alberta commission is investigating Ezra Levant's decision two years ago to publish the controversial Danish cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed in his now-defunct Western Standard magazine.

That these probes are even taking place is dangerous to a free society.

Better for both men had they been charged criminally for spreading hatred or inciting violence - which didn't happen because they didn't do that - than to have fallen into the

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General Comments

human rights bureaucracy.

In criminal trials there are prosecutors, defence lawyers, judges and juries of one's peers, clarity about the wrongdoing alleged. Human rights commissions often appear to act as complainant, prosecutor, judge and jury rolled into one. Their findings tend to be subjective, illogical - relying more on perception than evidence.

Ironically, these commissions fit perfectly into the nightmarish world of Franz Kafka, whose novels depict citizens overpowered by government bureaucracies running amok.

This is not what Canadians were told these commissions were for when politicians created them, ostensibly to provide redress for people unfairly denied such things as employment and housing due to colour or gender. Back then, nobody said anything about prosecuting "thought crime."

Our politicians, who work for us, must stop this nonsense. Now.

POSTED BY: Lorrie Goldstein, london
POSTED ON: January 27, 2008

EDITORS NOTE: As published in The London Free Press on Jan. 28 2008.

Comments

Stop attacks on free speech There are two complaints being investigated by the Human Rights Commission (HRC) initiated by the Canadian Islamic Congress. They both deal with freedom of the press and freedom of expression. One is investigating Macleans Magazine for publishing Mark Steyn's essay on the future of Islam and the other is investigating Ezra Levant for publishing the controversial Danish cartoon depicting the prophet Mohammed. Just the fact that the HRC is willing to accept these frivolous complaints is astonishing. What is even more surprising is the lack of an outcry in our "free" press objecting to this blatant attempt to erode and silence the freedom of expression that our country enjoys. Coming to Canada as a political refugee from a country of totalitarian communistic dictatorship, I know only too well the danger of censorship. Our journalists, who rely on freedom of expression, should roar and object vehemently to these happenings. They should inform all the citizens as well as Salim Mansur did in his article "Sapping freedom inside job? "Sat. 26.01.08" People should be on the phone calling their elected representatives to demand limited powers of

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the Human Rights Commission (read correctly: A kangaroo court behind closed doors).

POSTED BY: Helen Weiner

Free speech for all Canadians Canada is for all Canadians. Free speech is for all Canadians. Constructive criticism is for all nationalities and religions--Christian and non-Christian. It is important to remind human rights commissions (and human rights activists) that it is through our differences that we are able to discern what is right and what is wrong. Censorship attempts to conceal our philosophical, political, social and religious disputes for the sake of social harmony. Peaceful debate and our democratic right to question the statements of others is a fundamental element of democracy. We should not impose our views on others; nor should we passively allow our cherished Canadian democracy to be rendered impotent by a handful of radicals. If injustice does occur, then justice should be pursued, swiftly, by Canadian courts, not bureaucratic bodies.

POSTED BY: John V

Post your Comment to this Letter

Please note: Your comments will not go live immediately. All comments are vetted prior to being confirmed for posting.

In response to: Stop these attacks on free speech

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POV - Point of View

POV-Point of View

As published today in the London Free Press

Council, LEDC must work together (Jan. 31, 2008)

When it was set up a decade ago, the whole point of the London Economic Development Corp. was to ensure it had an arms-length relationship with the city. Simply put, the city engaged the LEDC in a ...

Bush league president's days wane (Jan. 30, 2008)

There he was this week, the 43rd president of the United States, rambling on about America's strengths and making rosy prognostications about the economy and the war in Iraq. But was anybody listen ...

Stop these attacks on free speech (Jan. 27, 2008)

It's time governments across Canada reined in the power of human rights commissions. As Alan Borovoy, general counsel for the Canadian Civil Liberties Association wrote recently, "during the y ...

Gaza's woes not the fault of Israel (Jan. 27, 2008)

Israel again faces a sorry one-sided flow of hypocrisy, vilification and double standard, this time regarding the situation in Gaza. At the UN, Israel's foes want to condemn its intermittent cut-of ...

Coming to terms with the 'tombstone' (Jan. 26, 2008)

Charles Landry, the esteemed author of such books as *The Creative City* and *The Art of City Making*, took one look at London's downtown courthouse during a visit several years ago and remarked: "If ...

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Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor

As published in today's London Free Press

City needs call centre as it grows, diversifies (Jan. 31, 2008)

I was disappointed to learn council had failed to support a proposal to put into place and support an action plan for the creation of a 311 call centre. As a person who moved to London five years a ...

comment (Jan. 31, 2008)

In the heat of the moment and a time of need, I didn't properly thank a kind mother who gave me an

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extra pair of toddler pants while in the emergency room of Children's hospital Wednesday afternoon wi ...

general (Jan. 31, 2008)

reading the letters to the editor every day, i find some of the topics that writers find important, not so. to those who find garbage blowing in the wind, stop and pick it up, and be happy for the lux ...

LEDC's strategy for downtown questioned

(Jan. 31, 2008)

Growing up in the tropics we had a rule of thumb; one shouldn't swim in cloudy water. If the water wasn't transparent you couldn't see the snakes. I believe a similar theory can be applied to the LEDC ...

Long Shifts Questioned (Jan. 31, 2008)

Kenneth J Henry made an excellent point when he questioned the wisdom of the long hours medical residents are expected to work . I would like to add that the problem of fatigue is further compounde ...

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Reader to Reader

Reader to Reader

As published in Sunday's London Free Press

event (Jan. 30, 2008)

CULTURAL FAMILY DAY CELEBRATION
FEBRUARY 15TH Bring your family for dinner and cultural entertainment! WHEN: February 15, 2008
TIME: 4:30-7:00pm Dinner will be available from 4:30-6:30pm Entertainm ...

My Sisters' Place says thanks for 'wonderful' year (Jan. 27, 2008)

We would like to extend our most sincere thanks to the people of London who helped give the women of My Sisters' Place another wonderful year and a very special Christmas. The love and support offered ...

Bus driver brightens day (Jan. 27, 2008)

On Jan. 16, I had the pleasure of taking the No. 11 Southcrest bus that left from Dundas and Richmond streets at 7:55 a.m. heading to Westmount Shopping Centre. I take the bus on a daily basis and ...

Long hair for cancer (Jan. 27, 2008)

Do you have long, untreated hair? Are you looking for a funky new look? Do you want to help others at the same time? If so, please consider volunteering to have your long hair (at least 10 inches) ...

This life's journey takes unexpected detour

(Jan. 27, 2008)

We have all heard or said that life is so precious and it can end in an instant. In November that almost happened to me. While I was walking near St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital (STEGH), a car co ...

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Sports Fanfare

NHL All Star Game (Jan. 28, 2008)

The NHL All Star Game is the most soporific spectacle in professional sports. The 'Stars' appear affronted that they had to be bothered with the media's questions and give their monotone cliché respon ...

Simmons should miss Ferguson the most

(Jan. 25, 2008)

Now that John Ferguson Jr. has been fired as general manager of the Toronto Maple Leafs, a bigger question arises. It's not 'who will take his place', but 'what will Steve Simmons write about now day ...

Ontario Great Lakers (Jan. 25, 2008)

This is not about the Toronto Maple Leafs, far from it. - God knows we've heard enough about the continuing ineptitudes of this forgettable sports franchise. I'll only draw upon a few observations ...

Mail BAG (Jan. 23, 2008)

I think mr Fletcher is the wrong guy to lead the leafs. If my memory serves me right,back when Wendel Clark or Dough Gelmour were captains for the leafs it was before christmas and the maple leafs ...

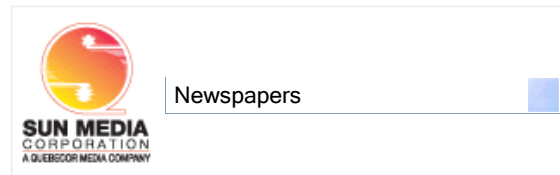
Mapale Leafs (Jan. 22, 2008)

The Maple Leafs have made history. Not many Canadians know this but the Leafs are responsible for a staggering find within the scientific community. A sight unseen by man. What was discovered is a rea ...

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