

The Liberals prefer punishing Christians to confronting the abortion issue

This is intellectual fraud, on the state and the Church. This government should do what the Harper government would not do and legislate abortion

by Conrad Black



A cross glistens in the sunlight at a church in Etobicoke, Ont. *Peter J Thompson/National Post*

It is reasonable to assume that the sociopolitical disease of oppressive political correctness will become more constricting and life-threatening to the human capacity for deductive reasoning and liberality of mind until it is forcefully

attacked by a widely applied cultural germicide. Instances are regularly reported of steadily more virulent outbreaks of this affliction, which is now so pernicious and widespread, millions of Canadian adults are carriers of it. A particularly alarming recent outburst was when the federal government decreed that applicants for the Canada Summer Jobs Program check off (not sign, but the effect is the same) an "attestation" that "the job and" (the applicant organization's) "core mandate respect individual human rights in Canada, including the values underlying the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well as other rights. These include reproductive rights and the right to be free from discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression."

In an Applicant Guide, it is further stipulated that "The government recognizes that women's rights are human rights." (Surely no one now contests that and the point need not be laboured.) However, "This includes sexual and reproductive rights – and the right to access safe and legal abortions. These rights are at the core of the Government of Canada's foreign and domestic policies." No application would be considered without the attestation being checked as agreed to by the summer job program applicant.



Minister of Employment Patty Hajdu speaks to reporters at a Liberal cabinet retreat in Calgary on Jan. 23, 2017. Jeff McIntosh/CP

The attestation was added to requirements this year when the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada complained last year that some grants were made to anti-abortion organizations. This was declared by the federal Employment Minister, Patty Hajdu, to have been an "oversight," and the attestation was added as obligatory for any application under the program to be considered this year. Many churches, secular organizations and people do not agree that the right to an abortion should be so

absolutely entrenched. Both the prime minister and the employment minister claim that the rights of such groups and individuals are not infringed because the right to an abortion is deemed by the government not to be in any organization or person's "core mandate."

The government has no standing to tell any Canadian citizen or resident or group composed of citizens or residents what their "core mandate" is. The attempt to do so is already being litigated by the Toronto Right to Life Association as an infringement of the Charter, which does guarantee an almost unlimited freedom of opinion and very broad freedom of expression. The government has also taken unto itself as an executive prerogative of junior officials of the ministry of employment to determine arbitrarily what the "underlying values" of the Charter are. They have no such jurisdiction, and they should not be bandying about this obnoxious misnomer "reproductive rights."

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The right to an abortion is not a right to reproduce; it is not even a contraceptive right; it is a right to extinguish life. I am not an abortion enthusiast, but I accept that the state does not have and should not aspire to have the right to inflict childbirth on a woman who does not want to have a child. Abortions occur and they must be sanitary and unstigmatizing, and on this subject the full range of views must be respected. The argument is when the unborn attain the rights of a person that supersede the rights of a woman over her own physical person, and a good argument can be made for any point from conception to end of term. There is no need to pursue that terribly vexed subject further here.

Our federal government has been afraid to address this issue

directly, and it cannot rightfully require people eligible for a government grant to amend their conscientious and religious views to preserve that eligibility. Such a course is an official infraction of the Charter. The recourse to telling those uncomfortable with the attestation that their views on abortion are not their core beliefs and that the “underlying values” of the Charter are whatever the government officials say they are, is simply an outrage. Responsible mature people make those decisions for themselves. This government should do what the Harper government would not do and legislate abortion. That is the sort of thing Parliamentarians do for a living. The best method, as in the U.K, is to have a completely nonpartisan debate and a free vote on a series of bills stating the date at which the unborn attain the rights of a person, after which, apart from specified extraordinary circumstances, abortions are not legal, even if that time is not until the baby is born and it is not a matter of abortion but of infanticide. (In the U.K. the date selected was after five months of a pregnancy.)

The government is operating a vast national abortion clinic while telling those in conscientious opposition that the issue is not important to them. This is especially irritating coming from senior officials, including the prime minister, who profess to be Roman Catholics and follow the Teddy Kennedy-Joe Biden-John Kerry liturgy of a strong faith that doesn't mean imposing their beliefs on others. Instead, they impose by government fiat what they claim to regard as immoral on all society.

This is intellectual fraud, on the state and the Church. In this as in other activities, you can't suck and blow at the same time. It is fatuous for the government to announce on a relatively minor issue like this that an unlimited right to an abortion is “at the core of the Government of Canada's foreign and domestic policies.” These are not characters out of the novels of Franz Kafka, Arthur Koestler, and George Orwell, but

Hajdu sounds like the spokesperson (to “peoplekind”) of Orwell’s Ministry of Truth. This is the humbug, and amateurism of make-believe government by people in office but not in power.

The plague of political correctness is all about, as an update on the travails of Lindsay Shepherd illustrates. She is the Wilfrid Laurier University graduate student who was interrogated in camera and accused of creating a “toxic atmosphere” and of committing an act comparable to playing, uncritically, to her discussion group, a speech of Adolf Hitler, when she aired extracts of a debate between the distinguished University of Toronto philosopher and clinical psychologist Jordan Peterson and another academic. Prof. Peterson is now one of the Western world’s leading humanities intellectuals and is a best-selling and much acclaimed author in the United States and the United Kingdom. Only in a Canadian politically correct backwater would he be compared with Hitler.



Faith Goldy, who was supposed to speak at Wilfrid Laurier University but was interrupted by a fire alarm, speaks outside the university on March 20, 2018, in Waterloo, Ont. Hannah Yoon/CP

Shepherd recently set up a campus group called “Laurier Students for Free Speech,” and invited the conservative and Christian television journalist Faith Goldy to address interested students about “Ethnocide: Multiculturalism and European-Canadian identity.” The posters announcing the talk were torn down, the conveners were threatened, presumably because Faith Goldy has been falsely labelled as a white supremacist because of her completely impartial reporting of the Charlottesville disturbances last August, and her defence of herself in an unexceptionable interview with, unknown to her, a white supremacist podcaster. I know Faith Goldy well and she believes unreservedly in the principles espoused by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and has never hinted in my

presence at any of the prejudices condemned in the Charter and defamatorily imputed to her by the campus ruffraff at Wilfrid Laurier on March 20. (This, despite her alarming subsequent misread of an anti-Semitic book, as was reported this week. Faith is a Philo-Semite and led Rebel Media's trip to Israel in 2016.) The civilized listeners at WLU outnumbered the hostile disrupters by more than three to one, though the opposition included Antifa thugs. Special police were provided, the university did its best, but one of the opponents pulled the fire alarm and the occasion was cancelled.

The Charter was not written by this prime minister's father to stifle opponents of abortion or frustrate free speech and facilitate the antics of street thugs discriminating against Caucasian Christian Canadians. The federal government cannot dictate values but it can and should do all it can to encourage elemental freedoms and to ensure that officially enunciating freedoms does not degenerate, as it did at Wilfrid Laurier, into the suppression and demonization of decent people exercising freedom of expression, which everyone in this country has taken as their birthright for more than 250 years.

First published in the