

Your Ignorance and Lack of Empathy

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Tuesday, September 26, 2006

<https://politicsrespun.org/2006/09/your-ignorance-and-lack-of-empathy/>

To Mindelle Jacobs:

Your lack of empathy for structural abuse and discrimination against women is only superseded by your ignorance of the realities of the plight of millions of women in Canada.

Despite many reality-challenged "facts" you seem to believe, the fact that you believe Canada to be a nation that has moved beyond racism and colonialism means your qualifications to comment on Canadian society are completely lacking. I am ashamed of your ability to spout such ignorance in Canadian media.

http://www.edmontonsun.com/News/Columnists/Jacobs_Mindelle/2006/09/24/1888704.html

Despair over cuts to women's groups

By Mindelle Jacobs

The way critics are wailing over possible cuts to women's programs, you'd think the Harper government was preparing to force females into burkas.

One group, the National Association of Women and the Law, closed down earlier this month because it didn't get federal funding.

The little-known Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action thought it was going to have to close last week. But its grant application was approved on Thursday, it announced on its website.

So much for those women-bashing Tories, eh?

Still, the movers and shakers in the women's movement are waiting with baited breath to see if Status of Women Canada, a federal agency that bankrolls women's groups and promotes gender equality, is on the chopping block.

If it gets the boot, will the rights of Canadian women be in danger? Will their life choices be curtailed? Hardly. Women in this country are better off than ever before.

This endless quest for gender equality is quite tiresome at a time when virtually all the significant barriers to women's accomplishment have been smashed.

In my mind, the one major remaining roadblock in the path to women's equality is the lack of a national day-care program. But, given the Tories' unwavering opposition to such an initiative, that is a battle for another day.

That issue aside, the left-wing crowd is working itself into fits of despair at the thought of cutbacks to women's organizations.

"This government clearly has no interest in the status of women," bleated NDP MP Irene Mathysen on Wednesday.

That's right. The Harper government will be banning girls from school, prohibiting birth control and ordering up burkas any day now.

Get a grip. Yes, some women are having a hard time of it. And women's groups are quick to blame systemic societal barriers. Nonsense. Bad choices lead to miserable lives.

If a woman studies hard and goes to law school, she will have far more financial autonomy than most men. Her decision to challenge herself is the key.

A woman who gets pregnant, drops out of school and hangs out with losers has less opportunity in life. But that's not society's fault.

One of Status of Women Canada's main goals is improving women's economic autonomy. But do we need a federal agency to tell women to stay in school and make wise career choices?

The agency also puts out mind-numbing reports, like the recent one on gender equality.

The paper harps about the ongoing pay gap between men and women, without pointing out that men tend to choose higher-paying jobs because they're socialized to be the breadwinners.

It's disingenuous to complain that women working full time only earn about 70 cents for every dollar men make if you've deliberately chosen to work as, say, a low-paid restaurant hostess.

Status of Women Canada also supports the loony idea of placing "gender specialists" in federal departments to measure the impact of proposed policies on the equality of women.

I'd say that's not the best use of our tax dollars.

Before it lost its funding, the National Association of Women and the Law worked "to end racism and colonialism." Yeah, there's a lot of that happening in Canada.

Poverty, violence and discrimination "which still affect all too many women" require specific legislative measures, the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action wrote Bev Oda, the minister responsible for the status of women, recently.

The open letter was signed by 31 women's groups that supposedly represent Canadian women. But 22 of the organizations are from Quebec.

If we really want to help marginalized women, let's put money into concrete initiatives like Head Start programs, affordable housing and retraining grants. Enough of the gender-equality navel-gazing.

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