

Censorship doesn't protect Canadian values—it kills them



PIERRE LEMIEUX

On July 13, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission ruled that "Broadcasting by CHOI-FM must . . . cease by 31 August 2004." The Quebec City radio station is guilty of violating state-imposed, politically correct language and ideas. The Radio Regulations of 1986, state "a licensee shall not broadcast . . . any abusive comment that, when taken in context, tends to or is likely to expose an individual or a group or class of individuals to hatred or contempt on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age or mental or physical disability."

Sex is also a no-no. "[D]uring the morning show of 3 September 2003, CHOI-FM contravened the provision of the code that prohibits the broadcast on radio of all content that is unduly sexually explicit," charge the learned CRTC kangaroo judges. "The code" is the code of ethics of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, obviously a minion of the state.

I don't know if CHOI's hosts are libertarians, as some argue, or rather populists, as some of their behaviour described in the CRTC ruling suggests. But then who is to believe what censors say? And, at any rate, what CHOI's opinions are do not matter. Most of the press, radio and television in this country talk nonsense, anyway, and free speech remains the only means of searching for the truth.

CHOI-FM is a popular rock

station, with many young listeners. Between 35,000 and 50,000 people participated in a demonstration in the streets of Quebec City against the CRTC's July 13 diktat. However, the station and its iconoclastic hosts have long been under attack by the local and nationalist establishment, including His Excellency the

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Quebec City mayor himself. Cogeco, the company that owns two other Quebec City radio stations, formally asked the CRTC not to renew its competitor's licence. Kapitch, Ivanov?


Let me be prudent here. Perhaps the feds can find a way to charge the *Western Standard* and me under hate literature laws. Moreover, I have recently decided that I will become more serious, write more academic stuff, hide my hate for tyrants, and try to stay clear of jail.

The Montreal Economic

Institute has been among the defenders of CHOI-FM's freedom of speech and right of existence. Indeed, from an economic point of view, there is no more reason for a state bureau to allocate frequencies on the electromagnetic spectrum than to distribute forest acreage to those who need wood to make newsprint to publish magazines.

The CRTC invokes "Canadian values" as a basis for its censorship. The censors want "to ensure that Canadian values are respected for all Canadians." Canadian values, *mon cul!* Except if they are the tyrant's values (remember the "tyranny of the majority"?), Canadian values cannot be anything but the values produced by the free interaction of millions of Canadians over a few centuries of history in this part of the free world. There can be no Canadian values if some Canadians are forbidden to express theirs.

Read these imitations of judges dissenting about whether comments pertaining to "the physical attributes, and sexual attributes in particular" of a television host, Sophie Chiasson (someone referred to "her incredible set of boobs" on-air), were part of a comedy context or if they violated "Canadian values." Chiasson complained to the CRTC. "The Commission considers that the remarks made about Ms. Chiasson were abusive and tended to expose her, and women in general, to contempt on the basis of sex." Moreover, add the learned inquisitors, "such remarks do not safeguard, enrich or strengthen the social fabric of Canada," including the "equality between men and women." Indeed, no man could have Mme Chiasson's *nichons*.

Let me express some Canadian values: Long live freedom of speech! Long live CHOI-FM! Long live Mme Chiasson's social fabric! Death to the CRTC! 

Pierre Lemieux is a professor and writer based in Montreal.

The CRTC invokes "Canadian values" as a basis for its censorship of CHOI-FM. How can there be "Canadian values" if some Canadians are forbidden to express theirs?