

Stolen-Culture Issue in Canada Flares Up - MabuhayRadio

Written by

Thursday, 29 July 2010 08:04 - Last Updated Thursday, 29 July 2010 08:10

JGL Eye

By JOSEPH G. LARIOS

(Journal Group Link International)

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CHICAGO (*jGLi*) – When the Canadian government apologized and offered a \$2-billion compensation fund for Canada's equivalent of Australian "stolen generation" two years ago, I thought a favorable ruling last April by Quebec Human Rights Tribunal over the complaint of a Filipino-Canadian mother against a teacher and her principal for teaching her son the Canadian way, instead of the Filipino way of eating, was going to find universal acceptance.

I was wrong.

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A columnist of a right wing newspaper, *National Post*, in Canada, instead, called for the abolition of the Quebec Human Rights Tribunal while the

National Post

's editorial suggested because "human rights" have become meaningless, it questioned the Quebec government – or any Canadian government –

"to continue bankrolling (the Tribunal) with our tax dollars."

Tasha Kheiriddin suggested that when the school teacher/monitor described Luc Gallardo Cagadoc "like a pig" for eating with "fork and spoon," instead of the Canadian norm of "fork and knife," she said, the "monitor's manner was not as gentle as it could have been, but telling a child that most Canadians eat with different utensils is hardly a human-rights offence."

She asked: "Where does this end? While the boy's eating habits were no doubt acceptable in the Philippines, they are not the prevailing norm in Canada. If later on in life, this boy goes for a lunch interview with a prospective employer, and the employer doesn't hire him because he eats "like a pig", will he be able to take the employer to the human-right tribunal for discrimination?"

DEMANDS ARE OVERBOARD

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Tasha Kheiriddin continued to say, "Indeed, I would say that this latest incident teaches us this lesson: Demands for cultural sensitivity have gone completely overboard when an issue of table manners winds up in front of a publicly-funded administrative body."

Fair enough?

I doubt it if Luc Cagadoc or his mother, Maria Theresa Gallardo, should take it against his prospective employer if the employer doesn't hire him because he eats "like a pig." Since it is not the last prospective employer, Luc should just move on and find another prospective employer.

It's a good thing Ms. Kheiriddin admitted that "(w)hen Canadians and other westerners travel to foreign countries, they are expected to comply with local cultural norms, such as women covering their hair and not driving in Saudi Arabia." This is just according to their hosts' hospitality.

But for Luc and his mother, who are now both naturalized Canadians, if they bring into Canada cultural traits from the

Philippines

, it should not be taken against them because it is very hard for them to shake them off.

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But treating them in a disparaging manner by calling their eating habits as “eating like a pig” is not the proper way to introduce the Canadian culture of eating with “fork and knife.”

Look at it this way, if Canada will impose on numerous Chinese restaurants the use of “fork and knife,” instead of chopsticks, do you think Chinese restaurants will flourish in Canada
?

NO CHOPSTICKS IN CHINESE RESTAURANTS IN CANADA?

By allowing chopsticks into Canada, Chinese and other Asian restaurants are able to contribute to the robust economy of Canada.

If they will ban those chopsticks because it is eating like a pig, I don't think Chinese and other Asian restaurants will be encouraged to put up business in Canada.

When Luc visits the Philippines, Filipinos will not mind if Luc speaks in his adopted French for

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as long as Luc translates it to English or Tagalog.

What Canada needs is inclusion of diverse cultures if it wants to be a major player in a global economy.

They need to strengthen, not abolish, its human-rights tribunal, where immigrants can find ways to air their grievances.

They should support the tack taken by Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper who went beyond public apology by approving the government's \$2-billion compensation for "sexual, physical and psychological abuse" to indigenous peoples who were removed from families and communities in the last century by government and churches so they can assimilate to Canadian's mainstream society.

While Australia's former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologized to "100,000 members of Australia's a stolen generation," his apology was symbolic and was shallow when he ruled out a national monetary compensation scheme. Mr. Rudd instead asked them to work for it by asking them to "litigate to gain compensation or rely on the generosity of state governments to accord them justice."

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No wonder, Prime Minister Rudd did not get widespread sympathy when he was replaced by Julia Gillard while Prime Minister Harper is still very much in office.

Messrs. Rudd and Harper had both apologized as a result of the policy of assimilation that had the same objective in Australia as it did in Canada – to wipe out the aboriginal race. # # #

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