



## The Tyranny of Human Rights Commissions

If you want to know what lies just a little ways further down the rabbit hole of political correctness, go north, Western man. If you do, you'll wind up in Canada, where the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal (OHRT) has given us what columnist Margaret Wenthe calls "The case of the smelly lunch." But it smells more like tyranny.



The saga started when Maxcine Telfer, owner of a Mississauga-based operation that helps immigrant women find jobs, Audmax Inc., hired a gal named Seema Saadi as an "intake worker." But finding a job and keeping one are two different things, and Miss Saadi went on the outtake line after only six weeks. This is, of course, when the trouble started.

Saadi went to the OHRT and, writes Wenthe, "complained of discrimination and harassment because of her race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, disability (she is legally blind), creed and sex," an eight-category discrimination cocktail that would make Telfer champion bartender of the bias-raised bar. What was Saadi's specific complaint? Wenthe tells us:

One day, when she [Saadi] warmed her lunch in the microwave — it was a curry — her boss complained about the smell. After that, she was afraid to use the microwave again....Then one day her boss called her in to criticize her religious dress as "unprofessional." She told the arbitrator that she'd have been uncomfortable "dressing for success" in the secular style that Ms. Telfer recommended to her clients.

Saadi says that she started to feel targeted and was worried she would lose her job. And she should have been worried, as Telfer tells us that Saadi was a troublemaker, committing transgressions that included snooping in other employees' desks. Moreover, although British "researchers" have told us that toddlers who say "yuck" to foreign foods may have "racist" tendencies, Telfer wasn't curry-phobic. The other Audmax employees had to stop microwaving their lunches as well, as their supposedly insensitive boss has an über-sensitive nose.

None of this mattered to the OHRT, however. Writes Wenthe:

[Saadi's] case was heard by tribunal vice-chair Faisal Bhabha, who found in favour of Ms. Saadi. He ruled that the company's dress code and its policy for staff microwave use were discriminatory against her, and that the employer failed to properly accommodate her religious attire. He slapped Ms. Telfer with a whopping \$36,000 fine and ordered her to take sensitivity training.

I suppose Telfer needed to learn to be sensitive to pious Muslims, which is what Saadi claimed to be. I mean, we can just imagine how Saadi was dressed, right? Perhaps not. Wenthe tells us that the ensemble



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evoking Tesler's criticism was "a jingling ankle bracelet, open-toed slippers, a tight short skirt and leggings, and a self-selected head covering described as a 'cap,' " which is more Burning Man than the Taliban. And here's the kicker: This woman who sought aid from a company that helps "immigrants" is of Bangladeshi descent — but Canadian born. She also has a degree in *sociology and environmental studies* from York University, which I hear combines the academic rigor of Sesame Street with the activist rigor of the Southern Poverty Law Center on steroids. In other words, Saadi may not know much, but she knows how to work the system.

And the system is being worked to death. When the Canadian Islamic Congress filed an Islamophobia complaint against *Maclean's* magazine, the entities sitting in judgment were the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC), the British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal and the Ontario Human Rights Commission. When Canadian journalist Ezra Levant was charged with hate speech, he was interrogated by the Alberta Human Rights Commission. And when Reverend Stephen Boissin sent a letter to the editor of the *Red Deer Advocate* warning about homosexuality, he was fined \$7000 by the very same entity. Clearly, the Canadian chill now affects lips as well as bones.

Why should you care about across-the-border lunacy? Because this climate change is poised to head south. You see, these tongue-stifling "Human Rights Commissions (or tribunals)" aren't just a Canadian phenomenon.

They exist in the United States as well.

It's almost a given that your state has one, and your county, and maybe even your locality do as well. They have metastasized all throughout the Anglosphere, even present in heartland states such as Kentucky, Oklahoma and Kansas. Toto, I've got a feeling we're not in America anymore.

Of course, our commissions aren't yet guaranteeing our human right to not say anything that might offend a privileged group. At least for the moment, they have to limit themselves to combating workplace discrimination, real and imagined, and "racial profiling" (sex and age profiling are okay).

But the mechanism for tyranny is in place; we just need to venture a bit further down the rabbit hole. I explained quite thoroughly how this could happen in my piece, "How We Will Lose Our Freedom of Speech." In a nutshell, however, just as our courts have read the separation of church and state into the First Amendment, they may read freedom of speech out of it. And our Canadian friends may provide precedent. After all, we have judges — such as Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who spoke of looking abroad for wisdom — who believe in citing international law in their rulings. And what kind of "wisdom" will we find abroad?

Aside from the obvious, the problem with Orwellian human-rights commissions is that they don't punish hate — just speech and people the left hates. As Ezra Levant, who is Jewish, pointed out, "100% of the CHRC's targets have been white, Christian or conservative." So who is really guilty of discrimination here?

And human-rights commissions' yoke falls disproportionately on the poor as well. Levant and *Maclean's* had means and fame and were successful in getting their cases dismissed. Rev. Boissin had Levant on his side and escaped his oppressors after going to court. Others, however, are not so fortunate. Canadian Mark Harding suffered punishment that included forced indoctrination at the hands of the Islamic Society of North America, and countryman Hugh Owens was forced to pay \$4500 to three homosexual men who were offended by his beliefs.

As for Maxcine Telfer, her fine was overturned by the Ontario Superior Court. But she now must head



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back to the OHRT to be judged by someone else, which itself is a punishment. Even if you ultimately win your case, you must spend time and money defending yourself and endure the heartache of the process. As for “victims” such as Saadi, they are provided lawyers paid for with the “oppressors” tax money.

If we don’t want an iron burka to descend over discourse in the U.S., we must experience a civilizational shift. We can start by pressuring politicians to eliminate state human-rights commissions —and vote them out of office if they refuse. No people that actually cared about human rights would do otherwise.

*Photo: CN Tower, Toronto*



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