

ASSISTED SUICIDE PROMOTED

In 1972, the criminal offence of attempted suicide was removed from the Criminal Code on the grounds that it was a social or health problem rather than a matter for the criminal courts. An individual committing suicide, however, is quite a different situation from that of an individual assisting someone else to commit suicide. The latter is currently prohibited under the Criminal Code.

However, Bloc Québécois MP Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île) introduced a bill to allow assisted suicide in February 2009, entitled "An Act to amend the Criminal Code (right to die with dignity)". This is the third time MP Lalonde has introduced such a bill into the Canadian Parliament. Her bill, if passed, would allow any individual to "assist" someone to commit suicide with or without a doctor present. Fortunately, her previous two assisted suicide bills died when elections were called. Her current assisted suicide bill has not yet come up for debate. Seniors, who are especially vulnerable, should be deeply concerned about her attempt to legalize what, up to now, has been criminal – namely, assisting someone else's death by suicide.

Other pressure, too, has begun to take place to eliminate assisted suicide as a criminal offense. For example, as usual in Canada, when highly controversial issues are placed before Parliament, changes in the law are pushed by way of government funded agencies operated by appointed individuals. We witnessed this in the same-sex marriage issue, when the now, fortunately, disbanded Law Commission of Canada came out forcefully in support of same-sex marriage in 2001, with a document entitled "Beyond Conjuality: Recognizing and supporting close personal adult relationships." This paper was promoted, far and wide, as "the" final word on the issue in Parliament and, conveniently, in the courts at the time the same-sex marriage legal challenges were being argued. Judges quoted from this report in their judgements supporting same-sex marriage.

Today, we are witnessing our taxes being used to support assisted suicide by way of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). The latter organization was created in 2000 to fund health research in Canada. In the fiscal year 2008-09, it received \$928.6 million in funding from the federal government.

CIHR hosts an interactive discussion series called "Café Scientifique" or "Science on Tap", to engage the public in "informal discussions about scientific subjects" and provides \$3,000 in funding to host sessions on various topics. Canadians don't object to health research and informative discussions on science, but the public should be aware that its tax dollars, via CIHR, are being spent to promote assisted suicide, without providing, at the very least, both sides of this controversial issue.

Yet, on March 24, 2009, CIHR hosted a "Science on Tap" session, entitled "Whose Life is it Anyway? Assisted Suicide in Canada." The speaker was Dr. Joclyn Downie, Canada Research Chair, Health and Law Policy, and Professor of Law and Medicine at Dalhousie University, who has written a book called "Dying Justice: A Case for Decriminalizing Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide in Canada". In 2006, she co-authored an article in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, with Sanda Rogers, Faculty of Law, Ottawa University, entitled "Abortion: Ensuring Access," which caused an uproar of protest from Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ) readers for its blatant pro-abortion stance and some inaccurate statements. That article claimed that a health care professional, who fails to provide an appropriate referral for an abortion, commits malpractice.

Talk filled with misinformation and important omissions

Dr. Downie (who has a doctorate in law and is not a medical doctor) spent one hour building her case in favour of assisted suicide and giving only a feeble presentation of the other side of the issue. This was followed by one hour of audience questions and comments. Downie's presentation was one-sided, while the questioners almost exclusively

put forth reasonable objections to her dangerous message. Amazingly, organizers from CIHR denied that Ms Downie was an “advocate”, insisting that she was merely an “expert” (obviously one with a specific agenda).

Downie claimed she started her career in “care of the dying” and now has expanded her career to include assisted suicide, which, she pretends, is “not contrary to palliative care.” She also asserts that “assisted suicide can promote palliative care”; it's “all about a good death according to the wishes of the individual.” She claimed that assisted suicide today is being carried out in practice and should be decriminalized. That is, she alleges that, although there's a law against assisted suicide on the books, the law of the street thinks otherwise, as evidenced by the fact that few who assist suicides incur jail terms for doing so.

Downie based her case for assisted suicide on the values of personal autonomy, equality and self-determination, as exemplified in the Charter. The law permits suicide, she said, so on the basis of equality, it should permit self-determination in end of life issues. That is, she argued that it is discrimination under the Charter to allow those without disabilities to choose assisted suicide, but not to allow those who are unable to commit suicide themselves to commit suicide by preventing someone else from assisting them to do so. If we don't permit assisted suicide she argued, then we must recriminalize all suicides. Further, Dr. Downie insisted that assisting someone to commit suicide is so simple, that it does not need to be carried out by a medical professional! This position is exactly what MP Lalonde's bill promotes – namely, any individual could “assist” someone to commit suicide with or without a doctor present.

Ms Downie painted opponents of assisted suicide as basing their views on religious values. She stated that the sanctity of life is not grounds for prohibiting assisted suicide. She downplayed concerns about the “slippery slope” and claimed that there has been no increase in involuntary euthanasia in the countries where euthanasia has been legalized – a clear untruth. While claiming to use “science” to promote her views, she did admit that statistics are difficult to obtain because personnel don't easily admit to euthanizing and assisting at suicides. Withdrawing treatment and nutrition is as much an act of assisted suicide as direct action, she claimed. If we allow withdrawing treatment, we should allow positive, assisted suicide, according to her flawed logic.

Even though Dr. Downie claims she is concerned with palliative care, she appeared to have a poor knowledge of how to relieve pain – just allow individuals to kill themselves was her only solution.

She also made the questionable claim that assisted suicide legislation could contain restrictions to limit abuses: Dr. Downie has ignored the liberal law in Switzerland, where a large number of non-terminally ill men and women are now seeking suicide because they are “tired of living”. That is, once assisted suicide is permitted, it inevitably broadens in practice. For example, the prestigious bioethics journal *The Hasting Center Report*, (January February 2008), included an article written by two Dutch bio-ethicists, who defended the practice in the Netherlands of openly killing newborns with severe disabilities. According to this article, babies who have no chance of living past infancy, or who have disabilities that leave them in chronic pain, paralysis or inability to communicate, are “better off dead than forced to endure”. This deliberate killing of newborns is a vast extension of the Netherlands' initial law on euthanasia, which was to apply to terminally ill patients only.

Downie, by the way, has drafted a bill, too, which could be tabled and become law, with “protections built in” she claims. This issue must be confronted she asserts, otherwise “many Canadians will continue to suffer and we will all collectively fail.”

The Audience Objected to Downie's Theories

Fortunately, an Alert notice about Downie's talk on assisted suicide went out through the pro-life network so that many well informed individuals were in the audience to counter the misinformation presented by Downie. The audience also questioned why the format of the tax funded discussion only presented the distorted views of Downie on assisted suicide. Why were there not presenters covering both sides fairly? More questions: Does Downie's position represent the general views of the sponsor of the event, the Canadian Institutes for Health Research?

Apparently not, although the presenter sat in front of a backdrop plastered with CIHR logos.

One member of the audience, a psychiatrist, told Downie that "it is easier to kill rather than give comfort"; that if suicide is OK what does that say about us as a people; the choices we make affect other people, and the effects don't just end at the hospital. He stated that patients often change their minds about suicide; they may suffer from depression for 2 years, 5 years, and then come out of it. And why should a health professional want to kill somebody? He said that palliative sedation is able to relieve pain completely.

Downie responded to the psychiatrist by stating that the "vulnerable" are not the ones who use assisted suicide where it is available: she asserted that only "competent patients" would decide. But the psychiatrist viewed competency over time, and recognized the different psychological states of the patient. And who would decide competency?

One Member of Parliament present was concerned that state endorsed suicide would send the wrong message to young Canadians who are at high risk for suicide, such as aboriginal youth. It would be difficult to convince teens to choose the more difficult path of life. Downie was reminded that the rate of suicide among Canadian youth has increased 400% to 500% in recent years. Another MP objected to the blurring of terms related to pain relief, relief of mental and physical suffering, and the direct act which causes death. Suicide cannot be prosecuted because the person is dead, whereas with assisted suicide, there is another person involved still present and alive. He stated that euthanasia is not private, as suggested: it is a public act and involves others. It is dangerous to give someone the right to take another's life. Safeguards can come and go.

Another questioner stated that safeguards could be placed in the bill, but Parliament could make amendments which would remove such so-called safeguards. The blurring of the term "withdrawal of medical" treatment was also criticized, since it could mean withdrawal of extraordinary treatment, which is permissible, or, alternatively, withdrawal of essential care, such as food and water, which is not permissible.

Conclusion

It was encouraging that, during question period, light was shed on Downie's questionable statements, but disconcerting that our taxes, intended for research and education, are being used to misinform in a very unscientific way, and to promote acts which are criminal.

Please see accompanying article in the Montreal Gazette, April 14, 2009, by columnist Hugh Anderson. It tells another story about assisted suicide.

SAFEGUARDS ON EUTHANASIA? DON'T COUNT ON THEM

Language is as vague as the protection offered

By Hugh Anderson Reprinted from Montreal Gazette, April 13, 2009

Ludwig Minelli, founder and director of Dignitas, told BBC News a couple of weeks ago that suicide is "a marvelous possibility." Dignitas is the Swiss assisted-suicide organization that helps so-called "suicide tourists" to die, for a fee. It's not relevant whether those who seek its services are terminally ill, according to Minelli.

The Dignitas director advocates death on demand. He says his organization is preparing a test case on behalf of a healthy British Columbia spouse who wants to be helped to die with her husband, who has a serious heart condition.

Many bereaved seniors undoubtedly have felt that we cannot go on living without a much-loved spouse, and some have died by their own hand. Offered convenient assistance, others might well overcome their natural fear of death. That is why in Canada it is a crime to assist somebody else to commit suicide, punishable by up to 14 years in jail.

It may not be a crime for much longer, though. Legislation to legalize assisted suicide is heading for Parliament. It is similar to legislation already in force in such places as Washington state, Oregon, Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg. Advocates say not to worry. The legislation contains safeguards against abuse, supporters say. Let's look a little closer.

Our longest experience with how legal euthanasia and assisted-suicide actually works is in the Netherlands. Despite the so-called safeguards, the Dutch government acknowledged in 2007 that a 2005 study by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport showed 550 people died at the hands of a doctor without having given an explicit request. Anecdotal reports suggest that the actual number of these unasked-for deaths is considerably higher. Language obscures the fact that these 550 people were killed. Given that it is legal for a doctor to euthanize patients with dementia or suffering from depression, the statistics are not surprising. The same study said that a few cases of deliberate termination of life involved elderly people who were "tired of life."

Among U.S. states, the longest experience of legal assisted suicide is in Oregon - 14 years. Despite the publication of 10 annual reports by the Department of Human Services, there is no way to know whether the official number of deaths by physician-assisted suicide is anywhere close to the actual number. State officials who compile the numbers told a visiting British House of Lords committee studying the Oregon system that they cannot say whether additional deaths remained unreported by doctors. That was because the department "has no regulatory authority or resources to ensure compliance with the law." One state witness told the committee: "For that matter, the entire account (received from a prescribing doctor) could have been a cock-and-bull story. We assume, however, that physicians were their usual careful and accurate selves."

Oregon's Death with Dignity law contains no penalties for doctors who do not report prescribing lethal doses for the purpose of suicide. Sometimes those doses turn out not to be lethal quickly, causing great suffering to the patient, and a few patients do not die from the dose.

Campaigners for legal assisted suicide seem not to be above some degree of disinformation. A brochure and website published by supporters during last year's successful campaign for Washington's Death With Dignity Law said a patient's written request for a lethal prescription must have "two objective witnesses." As Seattle lawyer Margaret Dore points out, the actual wording of the law allows one of those witnesses to be an heir or otherwise related to the patient who may well benefit. Again, the campaigners promised that no one but the patient can legally administer the lethal dose. Dore again points out that the law now in force doesn't say that. It says that an eligible patient may self-administer the dose, and defines self-administration merely as the act of ingesting medication. "So greedy son putting a lethal dose into dad's mouth qualifies as self-administration," she says. In any case, there is no requirement in the law that requires a witness to the death, independent or not. "Greedy son force-feeding dad the lethal dose could be the perfect crime."

It remains to be seen what safeguards Francine Lalonde's third attempt at getting a similar law through Parliament will contain. The Bloc MP's two previous versions were not reassuring. We shall have to look closely at the actual language of her new bill.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

When I first became involved with REAL Women, issues of concern came to the forefront about once every 3-4 months. Then, by the 1990's, the frequency of issues we needed to address had increased to at least once every week, or, if we were lucky, every two weeks. While extremely exhausting, this frequency was somewhat balanced by the advent of the internet and email, so we could keep contact with our members and supporters on a more timely basis.

We now live in a world where almost daily multiple issues of concern come before us. Mostly this glut of information comes via the internet, which is perhaps one of its more challenging side effects.

So what can we do? I quote now an ancient sage who once said, when all is done that can be done, stand firm. The best way to do that remains to be involved in the electoral process at every level of government. Help to elect the candidate of your choice — don't just leave politics to others. For example, last year, I ran for school board, and received 1880 votes. But I needed almost 3770 to get elected from a field of 15 vying for five spots on the board. Many adults from my own church didn't get out to vote for me or anyone else, and all the local churches were completely aloof from the political process. Sadly, I have found churchgoers to be mostly unlikely to volunteer to help get a candidate who shares their values, elected. Is it any wonder that elected officials ignore our Judeo-Christian values and Christians' input once they get elected into office without help from the Christian community?

This is my last National President's Message. I am retiring for health and family reasons, though, of course, I will continue to be a member of our organization. I will always appreciate this organization as the one which taught me how to express my values effectively in my sphere of influence. It has been a pleasure to serve you, and an honour to get to know those of you with whom I have corresponded. Many thanks for your ongoing support and dedication to the work of REAL Women of Canada.

Dios te bendigo. Que le Seigneur te bénisse. May God richly bless you.

Your servant,
Laurie Geschke

A TIMELY ORGANIZATION OF LAWYERS - FAITH AND FREEDOM ALLIANCE

REAL Women of Canada, together with the Catholic Civil Rights League, the Christian Legal Fellowship, Focus on the Family, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and the Home Schooling Legal Defence Association of Canada formed an organization of lawyers called Faith and Family Alliance (FFA). (See REALity, January/February 2003, "Faith and Freedom Alliance Formed in Canada.") The purpose of the organization is to promote and defend the Christian faith in our justice system, especially in the areas of freedom of religion, conscience and opinion, the sanctity of life and promotion of the natural family. The FFA was incorporated in 2003 and was finally granted charitable tax-exempt status in April 2007.

This undertaking is a great relief to REAL Women, which has been involved in over 20 court cases over the years. These court interventions have been a heavy financial burden on us, since we do not have tax-exempt status. Consequently, we are grateful for the formation of FFA.

One of FFA activities is to host the Christian Legal Intervention Academy (CLIA), which trains lawyers and legal students in regard to arguing the pro-life, pro-family perspective before Human Rights Tribunals, as well as in the courts. FFA, through CLIA has already organized three previous training sessions – held in Montreal (2001), Ottawa (2004) and Calgary (2006).

FFA is now organizing another training session to take place in New Westminster, British Columbia, from September 26 – 28, 2009. At this training academy, some of the nation's top legal experts will teach about Canadian constitutional matters, religious freedom and various Charter issues. FFA will pay the travel and accommodation costs for lawyers who attend the training program on the provision that they will provide 300 hours of pro bono (free) legal services in the areas of pro-life, pro-family and faith litigation over a three year period. This pro bono work will be provided to churches, public policy organizations and not for profit organizations that are active in the areas of sanctity of life, promotion of the natural family, and religious freedom.

FFA is a very crucial undertaking at a very critical time in our history. Please pray for its success.

CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS RIGHTS AT THE UN

By Ginger Malacko, REAL Women of Canada, Representative at the UN

The UN Declaration on Human Rights provides that everyone has the right to ‘freedom of thought, conscience and religion’. However, believe it or not, the United Nations is trying to screen our thoughts and faith-based beliefs, and even to change them. To be clear, we are not speaking of member states, which are individual sovereign nations, but, instead, we are referring to the UN itself and its large, bureaucratic body made up of career activists who are people who promote collectivist ideologies by twisting a reasonable argument to their own purposes. It also includes anti-family/life feminist NGO’s (non-government organizations) who are using the UN as their tool to bring about a revolution worldwide.

This is being done by raising objections to some nations refusing to comply with international treaties and agreements because of their religious and cultural concerns. Obviously, religious and cultural concerns should not be used to justify the violation of human rights. However, let’s consider this situation carefully.

Defending Religious, Ethical and Cultural Traditions

Customarily, when nations are nervous about language proposed in UN documents, they insist on adding words to protect their sovereignty such as “with full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of each country’s people”. This allows governments to interpret UN language in a way that does not undermine existing laws and traditions. This is a good thing.

If you examine the negotiations at the UN, you will observe that nations that might, for example, be considered oppressive to women, such as some Islamic countries, don’t raise religious objections because they oppose desirable things, such as women’s participation in the government or the marketplace, or literacy and education. Rather, these nations submit language to defend religious and cultural rights in response to language that proposes radical moral changes, such as to sexual activity, homosexuality, marriage and abortion. Their concern for defending religious freedom is just like our own, and is most definitely legitimate.

Then, there are groups who use religion to justify oppression and violence. As long as there are people who need an excuse for their actions, there will be people who hide behind this handy scapegoat. Likewise, the UN is not really targeting human rights violators when it targets religious and cultural rights, but is actually waging a war against traditional moral values, using religion as its reason for doing so.

That is, the reality is that the UN both defends and attacks freedom of religion, depending on which position serves its purpose, but always with a view to disparaging any opinion but their own, especially in regard to sexual, family and other moral values.

Weakening Religious Freedom

Why, for example, did the UN Human Rights Council adopt the Resolution on Defamation of Religions, which calls for censorship of the media and internet, using the ‘plight’ of Islamic nations as justification? In this resolution, the UN demands that Islam be considered off limits for political and theological criticism, but the UN never comes to the defense of Jews, Catholics, or, most recently, the Mormons in this regard. We can conclude that the UN isn’t really concerned with defending Islam at all, but is using this religion of choice as a weapon against freedom of speech: this impacts religious freedom across the board.

Attacking Western Religion

Consider that China, easily one of the greatest human rights violators of the world, is never chastised by the UN (only by member states, particularly the US). Why? Because China does not use religion to “oppress” its people, according

to the UN. The UN organization supports collectivist ideals, so they overlook crimes against humanity, and even praise China for its 'great strides' in human rights. The UN recognizes the single greatest opposition to its agenda as the religious right. In effect, the UN is using its opposition to religion as an attack on the religious right.

The UN will demonize any religion that questions its authority or disagrees with its platform. The UN hosts many seemingly pro-religion meetings that encourage attendees to forget differences and embrace a global spiritualism – a disorganized religion. The UN does appreciate and espouse the teaching that we are all children under a Supreme Being, because the UN aspires to be that Supreme Being! It picks and chooses which beliefs or teachings of each faith it can use, and forgets that people already have the inherent right to believe whatever they want to, without discrimination or interference, as long as the law is not broken.

This war of words has nothing to do with whether any religious law, code or creed is good or bad. Because at the end of the day, countries where the worst human rights violations are being perpetrated will not change because of anything the UN has said or done. However in the western world, where the war against religion is being fought and won daily in schools, the media, and the courts, every time the UN successfully strikes down language that protects religion and culture, we lose more ground.

Canada is Complicit

So how does the UN get away with this attack on one of our most fundamental human rights – freedom of religion? Simply because many of the powerful member states are on board, particularly the European Union, Australia, New Zealand, and the US, depending on who sits in the oval office. Sadly, most of the nations who are brave enough to stand against the UN and the western powers are either human rights violators, who are easily discredited, tiny developing nations, or strongly Catholic countries, such as Poland and Malta. Those nations are treated like ignorant children. And do we dare ask where Canada stands? Well, if you ask the Canadian delegation which nations they align themselves with on this issue (and most other issues), they will tell you straight up: the European Union, Australia, New Zealand, and the US, depending on who sits in the oval office. The war against religion is very real and we are engaged in the fight internationally at the UN. Canada is fighting on the wrong side.

Please write to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lawrence Cannon, and your MP objecting to Canada's failure to protect religious rights at the UN. Their addresses are as follows:

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2
Fax: 613-941-6900

The Honourable Lawrence Cannon
Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2
Fax: 613-992-6802

Your MP
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

FEMINIST "EQUAL VOICE" BALLOONS WITH MORE STATUS OF WOMEN FUNDING

Political parties in Canada have youth groups and internship programs to mentor young Canadians who want to pursue a political career. High schools educate for political awareness and involvement. Political Science courses and Women's Studies abound. All this is not good enough for feminist activists in Canada. Instead, they have managed to obtain a \$1.2 million grant for 38 months, from Status of Women Canada, to develop their own special mentoring programs called "Experiences" for thousands of young girls. This program is to be operated by the feminist organization, "Equal Voice," which already receives about \$70,000 annual funding from Status of Women. This special project grant increases its annual funding from Status of Women six-fold.

The Board of Directors for "Equal Voice" includes the former Prime Minister (for a brief few months) Rt. Hon. Kim Campbell, the Hon. Judy Erola (former Liberal Minister for the Status of Women), the Hon. Audrey McLaughlin, (former federal NDP leader) and Pat Carney, a feminist Progressive Conservative Senator, now retired. The "Experiences" project is supposedly non-partisan, but there is no doubt that it will be a virtual feminist party with existing feminist supporters within the political parties. "Equal Voice" claims (with taxpayer funding) that it is "poised to become the most active voice for Canadian women." But as no one group can ever represent the views of all men, no one group or ideology, such as feminism, can ever speak for millions of educated, informed Canadian women. Such pompous self-congratulation, however, is not surprising for a feminist organization.

"Equal Voice" hosted a cocktail reception in Ottawa in February to launch the "Experiences" project, attended by several Conservative MPs, Helena Guergis (Simcoe-Grey) the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Rona Ambrose (Edmonton Spruce Grove) Minister of Interprovincial Affairs, and newly-elected Conservative MP Lisa Raitt, (Halton – Ontario) Minister of Natural Resources. Conservative MP Sylvie Boucher (Beauport – Limoilou) calls the "Experiences" project an "exciting new partnership" (Hansard February 5, 2009, p. 442). For whom?

Ms. Boucher continued: "Our commitment to women's equality and their participation in our dynamic democracy is clear: we were the first government to appoint a female minister of state for the Status of Women, we have the highest percentage of female cabinet ministers in Canadian history, and we are working with women's groups."(Hansard, February 5, 2009, p. 442). What women's groups? Certainly not REAL Women.

Governor General Michaëlle Jean strongly supports this feminist project. At the request of "Equal Voice," she held a youth dialogue on March 3 at Rideau Hall as part of International Women's Day events. Governor General Michaëlle Jean recently addressed a gathering, while she was visiting Liberia, to promote equal rights for women, stating:

I'm telling you: Give women the means to react and you will see less violence, you will see the end of sickness and illiteracy because women never forget that life is the most precious thing. Exclude women and you will fail.

Such simplistic naïve remarks only indicate Ms. Jean's limited knowledge and understanding.

It is significant that at this year's meeting of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) International Women's Day event in Ottawa, on March 6, research field workers did make the comment that women can be just as corrupt as men in abusing government funding, that there was no moral superiority based on gender. Shocking information to give to the feminists!

Big Sister Gets More Federal Money

One would think that elected conservatives would be able to resist the feminist ideology, which is a very leftist, Marxist, anti-family movement (see "Feminism in Canada" on our web site.) With the emotional appeal of portraying women as perpetual victims, the sisterhood seems able to convert even Conservative MP's who were elected to combat the nanny state as embodied by Liberal and Socialist NDP enthusiasts. For example, on the occasion of International Women's Day, March 8, 2009, the Minister for Status of Women Helena Guergis (CPC) confirmed that "Our Government increased funding to Status of Women programs by 42%, bringing it to its highest ever level....". In

response to a question from radical feminist MP Irene Matthyssen (London-Fanshaw, NDP) Guergis stated "I think the member will be pleased to know that the number of organizations now receiving funding through Status of Women has increased 69% (Hansard, February 2, 2009, page 223). In her address to the 53rd Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, Minister Guergis stated, "I would like to commend the Secretary-General for his report and appreciate that he has recognized the multiple dimensions of the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, both in the home and outside of it." What's the United Nations doing in the home?

Legislated or Voluntary Quotas are "Needed", Feminists Claim

"Equal Voice" and proportional representation support groups are forever counting heads and using the tired feminist tactic of bemoaning that women are once again suffering from discrimination because Canadian elections have not resulted in 50% women in the House of Commons. They claim that women are not represented by male parliamentarians. Gullible women jump to the bait and demand affirmative action and quotas, to counter the democratic process which they believe is not functioning for Canadian women. But Canadian voters, men and women, do not base their vote on the candidate's anatomy but rather on his or her political platform. Feminists, on the other hand, regard a candidate's gender as crucial in their gender wars and the establishment of the femocracy.

"Equal Voice" Backed by International Feminists

"Equal Voice" has international support through IDEA (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) www.idea.int, which tracks female quotas in parliaments around the globe, offers gender resources and updates "advancement" under "Getting the Numbers Right." Originating in Sweden, IDEA praises legislated and voluntary quotas as necessary to get women in office at all levels of government and especially praises women's quota successes, which are: Rwanda 56% women in Parliament, Angola 37%, Mozambique 36%, and Tanzania 40%. The 1995 United Nations Beijing Conference on the Status of Women set the target at 30%.

Canada is seen as backward, with 22% female MP's. IDEA lists the Liberal Party and the NDP as enforcing gender quotas, but not the Conservative Party. Red Tory Senator Hugh Segal is on IDEA's Board of Advisors, as was uber feminist Maureen O'Neill, former coordinator of the Status of Women under the Liberals and former head of IDRC (see March/April 2009 REALity, "More Feminist Nonsense Paid by the Taxpayers – IDRC").

Thus, to meet leftist global demands, our taxes are diverted to the advancement of feminism via Status of Women, "Equal Voice" and "Experiences", even when we elect a Conservative government. When REAL Women made inquiries to the Prime Minister's Office about this, we were told that the "Experiences" project is a "great idea", it's a "good project" to help young women get involved in politics: the Prime Minister's Office seems totally oblivious to the global thrust behind such projects to use feminism to advance leftist control of free democracies.

The Feminist Sisterhood

The ever-watchful sisterhood keeps close tabs on gender ratios. Parliamentary Cabinets are chosen with a keen eye to skin color and gender. Criticism of feminists is neutralized via a sympathetic feminized media. The sisterhood claims Canada is not living up to its United Nations commitments on equality for women. Canadians elected 143 Conservative MP's, 16.1% of whom are women. Yet enough women have managed to get catapulted into Cabinet to make up 28.9% of the present Cabinet, leaving behind many more experienced male MP's. The sisterhood's voracious appetite for power has seemingly been placated, for now. This is not what Canadians want, however. They expect positions of responsibility to be held by the most experienced and meritorious, whether male or female, not by those who satisfy the demands of extreme left, unelected, feminist activists dissatisfied that Canadians don't vote to suit the feminist agenda.

Even though Canadian female party organizers admit that they have difficulty getting women to run for office because of the devastation this causes to their families and their marital life, the sisterhood insists on determining the gender makeup of parliament, with generous dollops of tax dollars to assist them in this enterprise. Certainly there is no

public demand for this sort of gender obsession.

Please write to the Prime Minister, The Right Hon. Stephen Harper, The Hon. Helen Guergis, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and your own MP. Tell them to stop this funding and promotion of the feminist agenda that gives women preferential treatment in the election process or appointments to the Cabinet. This is not why a Conservative government was elected!

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2
Fax: 613-941-6900

The Hon. Helena Guergis
Minister of State, Status of Women
733 Confederation Building
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
Fax: 613-992-2164

Your MP
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION AND HOMOSEXUALS

Homosexual activists have long enjoyed the free flow of money handed to them by the now defunct Court Challenges Program. They have used this taxpayer money to bring court challenges, that have given them such gifts as same-sex benefits and same-sex marriage by left-leaning judges.

Now that these funds have dried up – the Conservative government shut down the Court Challenges Program in September 2006 – homosexual activists have turned to other faithful friends, namely those working in the 14 Human Rights Commissions across the country.

Homosexual activists' latest request for assistance to protect them from so-called "discrimination" is a complaint laid before the federal Human Rights Commission, in February 2009, by six homosexuals and lesbians. They claim that Canada's health care system is discriminating against them and causing premature deaths of members of their community because of "homophobia," particularly in Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

The Complaint

The activists argue that the health issues affecting homosexuals/lesbians are not being addressed. These issues include lower life expectancy than the average Canadian, a high suicide rate, and high rates of substance abuse, smoking, and depression, inadequate access to care and HIV/AIDs treatment – cancer, both anal and those caused by the exposure to human papillomavirus which leads to head, throat and neck cancers – violence and bullying and problems with blood donations, which prevents a homosexual or bisexual male from donating blood if he has had sexual intercourse with another man since 1977, (which policy they claim has "no basis in science"). They allege these problems have all been caused by discriminatory policies by health officials.

In effect, these activists are claiming that it's all the government's fault that they are facing health problems and that their health problems have absolutely nothing to do with their own behaviour. In short, these homosexual activists

want to continue their harmful behaviour and lifestyle. They expect the government (i.e., the taxpayers) to give them, as their entitlement, special funding to deal with these resulting medical problems. Naturally, no one should expect them to change their behaviour.

In their complaint, the activists recount how they formed a national organization in 2002, called the Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition, to focus on their health issues. They had approached politicians and bureaucrats to favour them with money. The then Minister of Health, Liberal Anne McLellan, set them up to meet with officials in four departments under her jurisdiction: the Assistant Deputy Minister, Population and Public Health Branch; the Executive Director, Women's Health Bureau; a representative of the Director, HIV/AIDS Division; and a Senior Policy Advisor of the Mental Health Promotion Unit. These representatives assured the Coalition that they would investigate their concerns.

When nothing happened, the Coalition then wrote to the next Liberal Health Minister, Ujjal Dosanjh, who obligingly set them up with a meeting with two representatives from his office. Nothing happened.

In August 2005, the Coalition then met with Carolyn Bennett, Minister of State (Public Health). However, the government fell the following week and again nothing happened.

In February and August 2005, the Coalition met with Dr. David Butler – Jones, Chief Public Health Officer, who was “aware of the many health issues endemic in their community,” but expressed no willingness to do anything to address the issues.

This saga, if nothing else, points out the remarkable access that homosexual activists had with government officials under the Liberals. The Coalition finally did hit the jackpot when it received a one-time contribution of \$2.3 million from the Health Department's Primary Health Care Transition Fund, Rainbow Health-Improving Access to Care, to address their care issues. This funding ended after two and a half years, and no further funding was made available to the Coalition. The complainants stated that this mere grant of \$2.3 million was inadequate, as it was a “one off” initiative, rather than the strategic funding they've demanded in order to address their issues methodically and systematically.

In their complaint to the Human Rights Commission, the activists also demanded that Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada prioritize effective programming and sufficient levels of funding to meet their “needs”. They also demanded that these agencies apply “a sexual orientation lens” to all future policy and program development and ensure a broad and meaningful consultation with them.

What these activists lack in common sense, they certainly make up for in gall. What will the federal Human Rights Commission make of their complaint? Don't ask!

BOOK REVIEW: SHAKE — DOWN

By Ezra Levant, Publisher: McClelland & Stewart, Cost: \$28.99

Canadians owe a lot to Ezra Levant. He has almost single-handedly exposed the monstrosity that our Human Rights Commissions have become. He has made them a top political issue, at last.

REAL Women was aware of the problems with our Human Rights Commissions twenty years ago, as far back as February 1989 (See REALity, Summer, 1989). This occurred when a panel set up by the federal Human Rights Commission concluded, in all its limited wisdom, that it was only “female stereotyping” that prevented women from serving in combat duty in the Canadian military. This, despite extensive studies by both the U.S. and Canadian Armed Forces that surprise, surprise, indicated that women were different from men, both physiologically (smaller hearts to

pump blood and smaller lung capacity), as well as psychologically. These carefully controlled studies were contemptuously dismissed by the human rights panel, in its obvious enthusiasm to further the feminist revolution. In doing so, the commission ignored the serious matter of the consequences to our national security as well as to women combatants.

This incredibly obtuse decision motivated REAL Women to further investigate Canada's human rights commissions. We exposed the fact that they followed no legal procedures, provided no protection for the accused, who have to pay their own legal expenses (whereas the complainant's entire costs were covered by the Commission), and were, for the most part, operated by non-lawyers who were representing their own special interest biases.

Over the decades, REAL Women has continuously written about these outrageous tribunals. However, our statements about these tribunals never reached the mainstream media. As a result, these commissions continued to work their mischief, undeterred and undetected. This all changed, however, in 2006 when Syed Soharwardy, head of a small mosque in Calgary, laid a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission against Ezra Levant, the publisher of a magazine called *Western Standard* (now published on-line). Ezra had published the infamous Danish cartoons which depicted Mohammed in various innocuous situations and which led to numerous organized riots – and even deaths - around the world. Mr. Levant stated that he had published the cartoons, not as a political statement, but rather, as news, believing that his readers would want to see what had caused these riots.

On the basis of Mr. Soharwardy's complaint, Ezra was ordered to appear, on January 11, 2008, nearly two years after the cartoons were published, before an Alberta human rights officer, Shirlene McGovern. The latter barred the media from the room, but did allow Ezra to videotape the proceedings. That was her big mistake. When asked by Ms McGovern what was the intent of his publishing the cartoons, Ezra vented his views on freedom of speech, starting with a reference to the Magna Carta of 1215 and going right through to the Charter of Rights, 1982.

After the interrogation on January 11, by Ms McGovern, Ezra loaded clips of his interrogation onto the Internet, using the video site YouTube. He thought the clips would get 1000 viewers but, as the days passed, the hit count grew. Within 10 days, 400,000 had watched the videos. Bloggers then got to work. With new Internet technology, Ezra also raised funds to pay for his \$100,000 legal fees, caused not only by the human rights complaint against him, but also by the subsequent defamation suits and law society complaints, placed by both radicals and the human rights industry in order to intimidate him. In short, the Internet saved Ezra and spread information far and wide about the horrendous human rights commissions: this information was eventually covered in the mainstream media. As a result, the human rights commissions have become a hated symbol of government censorship – well deserved.

In short, the politically correct accuser, Soharwardy, and the 15 "human rights" bureaucrats, working on Ezra's case, became widely perceived as the enemy of free speech, rather than Ezra as a promoter of hatred.

In his book, Ezra also gives examples of other incredible decisions of human rights tribunals across the country. Heretofore, these commissions were able to carry out their absurd mission in secret to intimidate Canadians with politically incorrect thoughts. But thanks to Ezra, these star chambers have been exposed.

As Ezra points out in his book, Human Rights Commissions were established in the 1960's and 1970's to assist disadvantaged minorities in areas of employment, accommodations, services (e.g., in a restaurant) and membership in an organization. Seldom today, however, does such discrimination occur. Therefore, the human rights industry has had to branch out to find new work to justify its existence. As a result, it has dressed up any desire, entitlement or grievance as a "human right": usually the right is being claimed by representatives of politically correct groups in order to further their agenda, but rarely by individual citizens.

The book *Shake Down* is a must read for anyone who values justice and freedom in Canada.

WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION AT THE UN?

REAL Women of Canada is an NGO in SPECIAL consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

In this capacity, we have attended approximately 35 UN Meetings held around the world since 1994.

We have been deeply concerned that nothing appears to be changing with regard to the Canadian position at the UN since the Conservative government assumed power in January 2006.

It is significant that one of our colleagues approached the Canadian delegation after the Conservatives were first elected to power, and asked whether the new government would require a change in the way Canada negotiates at the UN. Members of the Canadian delegation responded by saying that nothing would change and they would not be receiving instructions from Ottawa, but would deliver instructions to Ottawa. From REAL Women's observation at the UN, this appears to be the case, especially in regard to so-called "women's" issues that are continuously injected into UN documents by Canada – always supporting the left-wing, feminist position.

For example, at a meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), immediately following the Conservative party's election in 2006, when a call was made for gender quotas for electoral candidates, the Canadian delegation was quick to voice its support. At this year's meeting of the CSW (March 2-13, 2009), the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, the Hon. Helena Geurgis, presented a general statement highlighting "universal childcare", as well as enforced gender quotas by the government of Quebec.

The Canadian delegation at the CSW meetings works exclusively with "like-minded countries," that is, leftist governments. Further, the Canadian delegation does not appear to take a position on an issue without first hearing from the liberal EU delegation. In essence, Canada appears to be working to impress the feminists at the UN by supporting their issues, and by lobbying other nations to follow left-wing feminist policies.

An example of such advocacy recently occurred at the forty-second session of the Commission on Population and Development, held March 30 – April 3, 2009. Although Canada proposed some positive amendments to the document, it also proposed that "sexual and reproductive health", which are UN code words for abortion, be included. Not even the EU would be this daring! The inclusion of these code words would remove the taboo on the word "abortion" in all future UN negotiations and then the term would tacitly be interpreted into all treaties and conventions. The UN would then be well on its way to making abortion a human right.

The fact that "sexual reproductive health" means abortion rights was confirmed by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, when she testified before the US House Foreign Relations Committee on April 22, 2009.

New UN Women's Entity

Canada is a strong supporter of the proposed new woman's composite entity now being promoted at the UN, which, by the way, is also being advocated strongly by Stephen Lewis. In fact, Canada is referred to as one of its strongest supporters. Those in support of this campaign are the same individuals and NGOs who have lobbied hard for the decriminalization of prostitution, gender quotas, universal child care, and the elevation of abortion rights and sexual rights to the status of human rights. (See Reality, November/December, 2008, "The Gear Up Campaign — The UN's Radical New Entity For Women Only," page 3.)

When REAL Women raised concerns about the new women's entity at the UN, we were given the simplistic explanation that it will only serve to "unify" the several women's agencies at the UN. This is far from the reality of the situation. The new entity would be both normative and operational, giving it power to create policy and control its implementation at the grassroots level, with national compliance.

The purpose of this new entity is to circumvent the impasse faced by feminist NGOs and bureaucrats at the UN by those member states that refuse to accept the feminist agenda because much of feminist ideology is in direct conflict with the religious and cultural rights of sovereign nations, and their existing national laws.

The proposed composite entity will report to the General Assembly, but it will only be accountable to its own Under Secretary General. Women's rights experts would be assigned to each UN country team (UNCT) and create a global presence in 150 countries. The entity would have an independent budget and the authority to direct the other team members with regard to "gender" issues and hold UN agencies and member status accountable to implement them. The power of this feminist entity would flow, unbroken, from policy makers at the top, right down to policy implementers at the grassroots level. Given the history of feminists at the UN, this means a clearer path to the adoption of their ideals, bypassing the difficult negotiation process of the General Assembly (GA) or the commissions. This composite feminist agency, as thus proposed, will be stronger and more autonomous than any other UN body.

In short, this feminist entity would be in a position to create policy, by contributing to the development of international customary law, which would undermine the sovereignty rights of nations, as the latter would be subject to international customary law established by this new UN women's entity.

It should be remembered that the feminist bureaucrats and NGOs at the UN represent a special interest group, not "civil society" as they claim. Should they succeed, the vast majority of individuals, who are not feminist supporters, will be unrepresented or at the very least misrepresented at the UN.

While it is good and necessary that reform take place at the UN, this should not occur without serious consideration. There is, however, now a sense of urgency and a great deal of pressure to rush member states into an agreement with the women's entity campaign before too many questions can be asked. Canada should insist that all reforms of the UN be implemented via due process: and this is not happening.

REAL Women, therefore, is deeply concerned about the Canadian delegation at the UN – particularly as it relates to the issue of equality of women and the women's entity campaign. It is a truism to state that all women support equality – but there are different ways of approaching equality. It would appear that the Canadian delegation is unwavering in its support of the special interest feminist approach to issues, while ignoring the views of the majority of Canadians, especially women.

This raises the question of just who is responsible for determining the policies of the Canadian delegation at the UN? Is it the Conservative government or the Status of Women agency? It is our observation that the government has had little, if any, input in the development of Canada's position at the UN.

Please write to the following requesting that the Canadian delegation represent the Canadian taxpayers, not the Status of Women.

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2
Fax: 613-941-6900

The Honourable Lawrence Cannon
Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2
Fax: 613-992-6802

Your MP
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6