

Repeal hate laws

Letter to the Editor
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Re: Written attacks on Muslims cannot be tolerated (25 June 2008).

In his *Insight* page article, Mohamed Elmasry wrote, "In these two cases there were no critics of the human rights commissions," the two cases being *Catholic Insight* magazine and columnist Doug Collins.

Many of us who love freedom of expression and are outraged at the tendency of human rights commissions to suppress and punish expression were criticising human rights commissions long before the *Macleans*' case. Collins ought not to have been persecuted for his views, I said years ago, vile though those views are.

Elmasry writes that reconciling two potentially conflicting rights poses a challenge—the principle of freedom of expression and the right to be free from hate propaganda. But there is no moral right to be free from hate propaganda, and any society that institutes a legal right to be so free is an authoritarian society. Canada would be a better society were it to have no laws against hate propaganda or group vilification. That is the end to which we free speech advocates are working.

Our task is to learn to respond properly to expression we find wrong-headed or even hate filled. We must respond to it with words and with the example of the generous and loving ways in which we live our lives. We do not respond appropriately to it when we seek to silence people or to punish them for what they say.