

# A SCHOOL BOARD GETS TAUGHT A LESSON BY AN 18 YEAR OLD MUSLIM ACTIVIST

by Howard Rotberg



The Canadian Broadcasting System (CBC) is government (taxpayer) supported and tilts to what I call the Leftist-Islamist-Globalist agenda.

CBC wrote on its website recently about the complaints by a student trustee at the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) about alleged acts of racism by the Trustees.

An independent investigation by a law firm into allegations of

racism at the Board found trustees made racist comments and singled out a student trustee.

The report says Ahona Mehdi, 18 years old, was, at times, silenced and singled out by members of the HWDSB. The report also states trustees made racist comments about Black and Muslim people and did not understand the concept of equity and did not understand that it is racist to state that "All Lives Matter".

The board voted to adopt all 12 report recommendations – which address governance as well as equity, diversity and inclusion – put together by Toronto law firm Koskie Minsky, hired to investigate Mehdi's allegations.

In the lead up to a Safe Schools Panel board meeting on Oct. 28, 2019, the report shows a trustee singled out Mehdi by editing a statement the teen had prepared, to remove any reference to Mehdi's personal experiences.

The CBC summarized the issues:

When Mehdi wanted to prepare a motion to terminate the police liaison program in mid-June 2020, she was asked to do so under the supervision of a trustee, as well as a staff member, which "is inconsistent with the autonomy the student trustee holds as a member of the board representing student interests," the report says.

The report set out other issues:

- When that motion was ready, despite insufficient governance, training or guidance provided to Mehdi, the trustee would not accept it because it was late, even though she would have had enough support to submit it, it says.
- The trustee, who the report refers to as chair of the board at the time, "acted deliberately and arbitrarily in denying the complainant's written notice of motion,

and in a manner that was inconsistent with past board practices, which allowed for late submissions,” it says.

- Shortly after that, during a subsequent meeting to discuss ending the police liaison program, two trustees were heard saying “comments to the effect ... all lives matter,” and another trustee dismissed community advocates as “Twitter trolls,” the report says. The investigators found trustees “knew or ought to have known that their comments were not only insensitive but expressions of anti-Black racism.”

At a different time another trustee was also found to have said “overtly anti-Muslim and racist remarks” and displayed “a problematic attitude toward “equity issues” during meetings, the report says.

A trustee also “lacked a basic understanding of equity diversity and inclusion principles” while speaking about creating an Indigenous student trustee position, saying the position would be inequitable.

Another finding from the investigation states trustees didn’t get sufficient governance training – on rules and protocols for tasks such as preparing motions – or equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) training.

At the end of her term with the board, Mehdi issued a tweet that said she felt she had served as the board’s “token for student voice & diversity.” She seemed to feel that the Board did not give her the power and respect she craved.

The Board recommended termination of one trustee of the HWDSB and upheld complaints against the rest by the former student trustee.

I think some context is in order. Mehdi waited until her term was up and then called a press conference where she spoke on her own behalf and on behalf of an organization to which she belongs, Hamilton Students for Justice.

Hamilton Students for Justice, on its website, states that it advocates for students and families experiencing “discrimination and injustices that are not being addressed by educational institutions.” So far so good. But then it states that it “operates within an anti-racist, anti-capitalist, anti-colonialist, anti-oppressive, and revolutionary framework.”

In my opinion, I think it is inappropriate to have a student trustee who is with an organization that is *anti-capitalist* and *revolutionary*. If our trustees want to make a revolutionary change, it should be approved by the voters. Would the majority of parents want their children being manipulated into being anti-capitalist and revolutionary?

It seems to me that this student and this organization have adopted tactics from Black Lives Matter in the U.S. which has a very different history than Hamilton and the rest of Canada does. One only has to look at the various articles carried by the (Hamilton) *Spectator* about the history of Blacks in our area, and the contribution of Blacks like the late Lincoln Alexander to our community, and the love and respect shown to them.

Who gave Ms. Mehdi the power to say that promoting the idea that “all lives matter” is racist? To me that is a nice sentiment which however has been hijacked by racist Black radicals in the U.S. to, as most “revolutionaries do, change the plain meaning of words. Perhaps our trustees can choose student trustees who have a greater knowledge of Canadian history including our long history of Human Rights legislation and commissions.

The “vision” of her organization, according to its website is as follows:

“Police-free schools are just one step toward a safer community. The ultimate goal of this work is abolition. It is

a world without prisons, which serve to separate people from their communities and create generational trauma. It is a world without policing, which acts as a tool of the state to surveil and criminalize Black and Indigenous peoples. It is a world without capitalism: a system that pits us against one another, and forces us to leave one another behind. It is reimagining from its roots a system that will care for every person in our society.”

So we must bear in mind that the complainant seems to be a proponent of de-funding police and prisons in some ill-defined “revolution”. It seems to me that she expected long-sitting Trustees to defer to her on account of her “victimization.”

As noted above, the HWDSB hired a respected Toronto law firm to do a report on allegations against Trustees. This report did not include a recommendation for sanctions against Trustees. Of course, the powerful anti-racism sector demanded, and got, penalties, even though the Board in response started an internal “expedited” code of conduct review and then had a seven hour meeting (in the midst of a pandemic which is creating all sorts of demands on trustee’s time) to discuss this. The Education Act limits what sanctions can be instituted.

The proper method to remove a trustee because of his/her opinions is to let the voters decide in the next election. The idea that “revolutionary” anti-capitalist and anti-racist organizations and their media cheerleaders get to decide is just plain anti-democratic.

The *Toronto Star* reported that at the press conference, Mehdi gave a message of how she was so qualified: She said, “as a racialized person and someone who has faced harm at the hands of colonial white institutions, I’m someone who people find palatable. “I’m someone who has academic knowledge and knowledge of policy and governance. My speaking skills and my writing skills are very aligned with whiteness in a lot of

ways.”

In my opinion terms such as “racialized” and “whiteness” are problematic and this student trustee had ample opportunity to work with the trustees, but it seems that she chose the path of most publicity for her cause.

Finally, her organization in its mission statement says that it wants to “hold educational institutions accountable for anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, Islamophobia, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of oppression.” Please note that the form of oppression – antisemitism – that murdered six million Jews in the Holocaust is not mentioned. Does the cancel culture cancel out concerns of Jews who are no longer “allowed” to request that our immigration policy vet immigrants for anti-semitic views?

B’Nai Brith’s 2019 Audit of anti-semitic incidents shows that there are six acts of anti-semitism in Canada every day.

It is my understanding that trustee Paikin-Miller is Jewish. If in the new environment where certain “isms” are allowed to be discussed, and certain are not mentioned, and political correctness and cultural relativism prevail, I suggest we cut Paikin-Miller and other trustees some slack, because for their \$5900 per year, they are forced to put up with a lot. The system is now slanted to young radicals with a loyalty to political correctness, not our traditional values, and that has dropped antisemitism from its list of concerns.

I can’t imagine the stress of working in this new radical culture. I can’t imagine being a trustee in an era when activists demand the censorship of Dr. Seuss books. I would remind Mehdi and her organization that respect and due process are for everyone. And I remind the Board that complex issues of racism in our current culture are probably best left to the next election. Only then can the people can decide if our historical values are to be tossed out by activists who want

“revolution”, abolition of police, capitalism, and prisons and want to be protected from every possible offensive comment and every “microaggression”.

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