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January 10, 2011

The Editor
Maclean's News Magazine
One Mount Pleasant Road
11th Floor
Toronto, ON M4Y 2Y5

Dear Editor:

The shock waves and tumult produced by your November article "Too Asian?" continue to resonate on university campuses and in the wider community. Your story has resulted in new tensions and ultra-heightened awareness for Asian Canadians, on campus and off. In Ontario it has only been a scant two years since dozens of Asian Canadian anglers were threatened and assaulted in Ontario's Georgina area – some even thrust into life-threatening situations.

Notwithstanding the continued consequences of the Maclean's story and the community's requests for an unreserved apology, it has simply not been forthcoming. What you did offer in no way reflected the sense of responsibility or error in judgment that scores of organizations have called to your attention as necessary.

In your half-hearted apology, you noted that you expected the article "would be provocative, but we did not intend to cause offence." And it is this idea that I would like to deal with because when one stokes the fire of race hatred, it always has negative and very real consequences. Provocation is not only unnecessary as a catalyst for meaningful dialogue on racism, it is an impediment to it. The effects of raising this timeless specter cannot be managed or contained. In Europe and globally, we are witnessing the rise of right-wing movements whose words and ideologies are resulting in death, deprivation and fear for thousands of immigrants and others who have been cast as outsiders. Your article was premised on the same thought: that "real" Canadians are the Europeans and the rest of us are "the others".

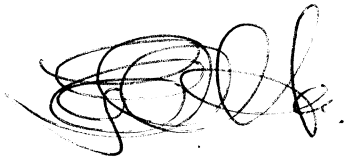
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The story also spurned any celebration of some of our best and brightest students. The power of education cannot be overstated. In today's economy, where over 75 percent of new jobs require a college or university education, it is no wonder that many low and middle-income Canadians are willing to endure all manner of hardship to provide higher education to their children. New Canadians, no doubt, place the highest premium on education, as they struggle to secure an economic foothold for their families, in spite of economic disparities and systemic racism.

The Ontario Federation of Labour applauds the acumen and diligence of all students who have earned their way into college or university. We believe that a truly diverse and representative student body provides the best educational environment for all students. On behalf of our one million members, we are adding our name to the hundreds of organizations and individuals requesting your long overdue and unequivocal apology.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Ha', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Elizabeth Ha
OFL Vice-President representing
Workers of Colour
Ontario Federation of Labour