

TO VANCOUVER SUN

Re Dutch Black Peter (Nov. 26, 2011)

In a day when people are very sensitive about racism, we are on the lookout for it and very quick to “recognize” it. So with the Dutch Zwarte Piet or Black Peter.

I don't know where the story about his being a Black man came from. There seem to be different versions. Black, no; black, yes. The version I and others in different parts of The Netherlands were brought up on is that he was black because he had to go through the chimney to stock the pre-Sinterklaas Day socks hanging on the mantle in the living room. The black that we saw on him was soot. It had nothing to do with racism.

People need to lighten up, quit looking for stuff and build up resentment over nothing. The organizers seem to have caved in to false propaganda raised by the ignorant. Also it seems they themselves are not aware of other equally valid Zwarte Piet stories.

The constant cry of “Racism!” is tiring. Our public space for fun is steadily shrinking. Let's make sure we don't lose it altogether.

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