

letters & e-mail

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Québec Solidaire supports First Nations in Caledonia

We reprint below a letter sent by leading members of Québec Solidaire to the federal Tories and Ontario's Liberals, expressing solidarity with the First Nations in Caledonia.

Québec Solidaire wishes to express its support for the Haudenosaunee people in their effort to secure sovereignty over the Haldimand tract in Southern Ontario.

In fundamental agreement with the right of self-determination for all nations in Canada, Québec Solidaire asks that both the government of Canada and the government of Ontario pursue negotiations in order to achieve a just agreement that respects international and human rights law.

Québec Solidaire is a political party concerned with issues of justice, equality and international solidarity. We reiterate that peaceful, non-threatening, good-faith negotiations must become the way all governments in Canada and Quebec deal with the legacy of colonialism.

Apologies do not suffice; we must begin with a commitment to restoring the relationship between our nations grounded in a spirit of respect and partnership.

We believe that governments and First nations' leaders should commit to transparency in negotiations and to hold meaningful consultations with all stakeholders. And then these commitments



must be put into practice.

We urge you to begin today.

The present negotiation could offer a signal that governments in Canada have entered into this new era, one in which the wrongs of the past are repaired, in part, by respectful, nation-to-nation negotiations over land claims and issues of self-determination.

We urge you to play a peaceful role for we are concerned about the extensive police presence in

the area and about the safety of the Native protesters.

One immediate way to mark a fundamental shift in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations is to remove the police presence and to drop the charges against the Native protestors, who were peacefully defending their land.

Sincerely, Alexa Conradi, president, François Larose, chair of the Commission on Aboriginal issues

NDP's Martin wrong to attack CUPE

Pat Martin, the NDP MP for Winnipeg Centre, publicly slammed CUPE for its resolution in solidarity with Palestine. Here we print a response to Martin from the new president of the Canadian Arab Federation.

Dear Mr. Martin: Your criticism of the CUPE decision to boycott the Israeli apartheid regime is misplaced and unwarranted.

Israel defines itself as a Jewish State, which reflects racism, since that definition fails to recognize the indigenous Christians and Muslims who make up about 20 per cent of the population. Imagine the outcry if Canada defined itself a Christian state even though non-Christians comprise 10 per cent of the population!

Once the State of Israel was established in 1948 it began enact-

ing laws that discriminated between Jews and non-Jews, reminiscent of the apartheid laws of South Africa. By such illegal "apartheid" measures, land belonging to native Christians and Muslims was confiscated, leading to their political repression, ghettoization and their destitution.

South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who was a leading opponent of apartheid in South Africa, has accused Israel of practicing apartheid in its policies towards the Palestinians. The Nobel peace laureate said he was "very deeply distressed" by a visit to the Holy Land, adding that "it reminded me so much of what happened to us black people in South Africa".

Michael Ben-Yair, Attorney General of Israel from 1993 to

1996 stated "In effect, we established an apartheid regime in the occupied territories immediately following their capture. That oppressive regime exists to this day."

In the words of Shulamit Aloni, Former Israeli Minister of Education and Culture, "Israel, in fact is no different from racist South Africa."

Canadian labour unions were in the forefront of those who called for divestment, boycott and sanctions against apartheid South Africa. Arab Canadians are disappointed and anguished that an NDP MP, who is also a union member, acts as an apologist for Israel by resorting to the National Post to publicly attack the largest union in Canada.

Khaled Mouammar, President, Canadian Arab Federation

SAY WHAT?

"Zarqawi felt my son's breath on his hand as held the knife against his throat. Zarqawi had to look in his eyes when he did it. George Bush sits there glassy-eyed in his office with pieces of paper and condemns people to death. That to me is a

real terrorist."

Michael Berg, father of Nicholas Berg who was one of two US citizens allegedly beheaded by al-Zarqawi in 2004.

"To defeat evil, we may have to traffic in evils: indefinite detention of suspects, coer-

cive interrogations, targeted assassinations, even preemptive war."

Michael Ignatieff, New York Times magazine op-ed piece, May 2, 2004

"I'm in politics to speak up for a Canada that takes risks, that stands up for what's right. A Canada that leads."

Michael Ignatieff, University of Ottawa, March 30, 2006

A writers' notebook

Blood for oil

First I check the CNN Iraqi War casualty list – 2,483 US soldiers officially dead in Iraq with at least 18,254 wounded.

Private First Class Brett L. Tribble, 20, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, Lake Jackson, Texas – died on June 3, 2006, of injuries sustained when a roadside bomb detonated near his Humvee during combat operations in Ramadi, Iraq, June 2, 2006.

Brett, in the CNN Casualty List photo, has the big grin of a boy who would have been popular in high school.

And somehow his military cap sits on his head like it was placed there by accident.

Then I check what's on the news.

An early morning press conference held by George W. Bush in the Rose Garden of the White House announcing that the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq is dead.

Those good old boys hit him with two made in the US of A 500 pound bombs.

"He won't be murdering no more," said George W.

Neither will Bush if we get it right.

No Blood for Oil.

Lessons learned

Two thousand four hundred and seventy US soldiers officially dead in Iraq and at least 18,184 wounded.

The documentary "Marching Into the Sunlight", contrasts two events that took place in October, 1967.

A bungled military assault in Vietnam led by an ambitious officer resulting in one of the worst defeats of US troops in that war, is compared to an anti-war protest that went violent in Madison Wisconsin, when a liberal dean, under pressure from various authorities, let the cops run riot on the University of Wisconsin campus.

In the documentary we see the cops, about 30 of them, marching in formation to the Commerce building occupied by the student protesters. There the cops begin methodically beating the students who are trapped in the corridors.

Outside the building other



students, not involved in the protest, are stunned to see fellow students staggering, bleeding and bruised onto the campus grounds.

Soon more and more bystanders are rallying around the cops en masse arguing in defense of the protesters – and then the first rock gets thrown and then another and another and the cops, surrounded by thousands of students, are forced to vacate the campus.

The students and soldiers have been taught a lesson.

The soldiers that they could not trust their officers.

The student protesters that they could not trust even the most liberal of administrators.

By 1970 rank and file soldiers in Vietnam were refusing to go into the jungle on patrol. Officers that tried to force them to perform their duties were threatened and often assassinated.

A grenade would suddenly roll into a tent.

It was called fragging.

By 1970 student protesters were no longer prepared to practice a passive form of civil disobedience on a limited scale because the University of Wisconsin assault had taught them there is safety in numbers.

Radicalized by the violent attempts by university administration and government to suppress dissent, students proceeded to shut down campuses all across the US through mass occupations and mass strikes in protest against the war.

Shut them down and then negotiate.

David Fennario, Montreal

AFGHANISTAN

The link in the chain

You are absolutely right about pushing the NDP to call for withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan.

I showed a friend the article in a recent *Socialist Worker*, which described how the Burlington NDP riding association had passed a motion for troop withdrawal, which then had to be discussed at the national level of the party.

I wondered aloud to my friend about whether the riding association in Victoria would do the same. I am not a member of the NDP, but she

is. Today I received a note from her indicating that she had been successful in getting the federal NDP riding association annual general meeting here in Victoria to pass a motion calling for the withdrawal of troops. Again, this will need to get discussed at the national convention coming up.

So, thanks to Burlington NDP for "creating the facts", and thanks to SW for letting us know about the created facts!

Valerie Lannon, Victoria