

LETTERS

Gulf guffaw

To the Editor:

In your editorial "Canada Shouldn't follow U.S." (Gazette, Nov. 1, 1990), you question whether Canada has fashioned its own policy in the Persian Gulf or submitted to the prodding of American policy-makers and business interests. Denying the successes our foreign policy has achieved in the past decade, you admonish External Affairs Minister Joe Clark for "suggesting Canadians sacrifice themselves so American oil companies can hold onto their virtual monopoly of the oil industry."

For six years Joe Clark has worked to build an independent foreign policy for Canada through membership in international organizations and active participation in world affairs. Foiling Margaret Thatcher's opposition to Commonwealth anti-apartheid sanctions, Canada led the world in combating state-sponsored racism. Defying U.S. opposition to the communist regimes in Cuba and Nicaragua by sustaining diplomatic contact with them, this country successfully challenged U.S. supremacy in that 'American lake', the Caribbean. This does not sound like an External Affairs minister eager to forfeit our independence in foreign policy.

Canada has two good reasons for being present in the Gulf. First, it is our duty as a responsible nation to deter aggression anywhere it appears in the world. Second, there are three dozen Canadian nationals being detained by Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Our military mobilization in the Gulf demonstrates our anger over the hostage takings and our determination to fight the military domination of the region by Iraq.

Canada fought for independence from the British Foreign Office after World War I in order to be able to act in an independent manner in responding to issues such as the Gulf Crisis. Now you criticise our government for taking its duty as a nation of the world seriously. You continue a xenophobic tradition in this country that refuses to recognise our contributions in the field of foreign policy. It is time we stop fearing invasion from the United States and start seriously voicing our opinions in the world community.

Michael Noonan

In a word - oil

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to Kevin McDonald's Ed/Op piece entitled "Canada needs to be in the gulf". One must avoid the patriotic jingoistic abyss which Kevin has wittingly buried his head in. Regurgitating government propa-

ganda and denying the truth is a very dangerous position.

Kevin, the Persian gulf is not about opposing Iraqi aggression. Where was Canada when the aggressive armies of Israel bombed southern Lebanon under the watchful eye of the United Nations, killing 20,000 civilians? Yes, Saddam Hussein is "a dictator" and his actions are deplorable; however, four months ago western countries smuggled up with Saddam while he used horrendous chemical weapons (made and supplied by Western multinationals) to kill tens of thousands of Kurdish Iraqi citizens. Why did Canada turn its head during these obscene crimes against humanity? Simply put, Saddam served their needs within the Middle East.

The Persian Gulf is not about defending the "democratic" state of Kuwait. Kuwait is one of the most repressive and anti-democratic regimes in the Middle East. In fact, only 18 months ago a genuine democracy movement was violently repressed by the Kuwaiti government.

What the Persian gulf is about can be put in one word...OIL. It is obscene to tell our young soldiers to die for multinational oil profits, but it is doubly obscene for the Canadian government to tell us that we must pull together and tighten our belts with the elimination of needed social programs, cuts to education, university tuition hikes, the GST, and worker lay-offs, while the Canadian government

dumps million into a Persian gulf offensive where big business profits.

It is essential for all of us - student, faculty and staff - to think about laying the groundwork in Canada for opposition to the pending war in the gulf. Anyone who would like to get involved in an anti-war coalition, please watch for meeting announcements in the Dalhousie Gazette and posters on campus.

Frank Jones
International Socialist Club

Pity for all

To the Editor:

Speaking of 'defying credibility', as Dr. Zayid says in his article "Trela la la" (Nov. 22), HIS letter is definitely beyond credibility (don't be fooled by his degree).

"Palestinian children do not need or want pity," says Dr. Zayid. He must think we're all idiots! The intifida is all about pity. Children throwing stones is the key to the whole issue. If it were adults throwing stones, do you think that their demonstrations would be as effective? In fact, Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's ambassador to the UN at the time, received complaints from Palestinian school teachers that Palestinian children were being kidnapped by the PLO and forced to throw stones at sol-

diers in front of the media's cameras.

Zayid also speaks of destruction by Israelis and speaks of them as "an occupation that has uprooted trees". The truth is, a year ago, Palestinians in the territories burned down trees as an act of terrorism, and the JNF (Jewish National Fund), an organization dedicated solely to planting trees in Israel, replanted the areas that were destroyed.

As for Israel "closing their universities and schools for three years", nearly all the institutions in the West Bank and Gaza were closed because they served as centres for agitation against Israeli authorities. The universities had been literally seized by local youth who turned them into centres of unrest. As time passed, student councils, ruled by different factions of the PLO or by Islamic fundamentalist organizations, took over the universities. As of mid-September, 216 community colleges and three universities in the West Bank and Gaza have been reopened, and if everything goes well, the rest will be reopened. The fact is, before Israel occupied the territories when the West Bank was under Jordanian rule, no universities existed. It is Israel that established the universities in the territories. This is hardly the oppression that Dr. Zayid seems to believe.

Amir Nevo

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