

*National Post*, 1 July 2009.

**Barbara Kay: It is Time for the (Anti) Canadian Arab Federation to Fold Its Tents**

As Canada Day 2009, our 142nd birthday, draws to a close here in Montreal, I suppose it's just as well I didn't plan to attend any fireworks display, because — surprise! — it's starting to rain. Of course, one needn't attend fireworks displays, or march in parades or hang huge flags out one's window in Canada to prove one's patriotism. Indeed, our lowkey attitudes — even phlegmatism — with regard to outward signs of patriotism distinguish us from our more flamboyant neighbours to the south.

Nevertheless, like so many of my fellow citizens, no Canada Day passes without my spending a good deal of it in reflection on how blessed I and my family are to live in this great, peaceful country, as benign and well-meaning a nation as one is able to find on this troubled globe. No country is perfect, but what unmolested Canadian could fail to feel blessed in his or her good fortune?

Well, one springs to mind. Vancouver-based Omar Shaban is the Vice President for western Canada of the Canadian Arab Federation, and he is definitely not feeling the gratitude vibe. Quite the opposite. Shaban has labelled Canada a “genocidal state” and described our national holiday on Facebook as “F\*\*\* Canada Day,” adding, to be sure he had made his point, “It's finally Canada Day... Couldn't be more ashamed to be Canadian.” Shaban is no aberration in the CAF. As staunchly anti-Islamist Tarek Fatah reported here: “While one VP of the Canadian Arab Federation was throwing insults at Canada, another Vice President of CAF was on cable TV showering praise on the discredited leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Appearing on a Muslim cable TV show, Ali Mallah endorsed the election of President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad as valid, and echoed the official line of the Tehran regime, claiming Western governments and Western Media were to blame for the current unrest in Iran. “

You will recall that in February of this year Immigration Minister Jason Kenney announced he would slash federal funding to the Canadian Arab Federation (CAF) after its president, Khaled Mouammar, called him a “professional whore” for supporting Israel. This was not a one-off. During the 2006 Liberal leadership campaign, the CAF initiated a smear campaign against Bob Rae solely on the grounds that his Jewish wife was active in her community. The CAF are also 9/11 conspiracy theorists, and last year sponsored an essay contest on “The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine,” in which it urged high school students to channel the group's own fervid hatred of Israel for prizes.

As Jonathan Kay noted February 17 here, “Last year, the National Post editorial board hosted Mouammar and a CAF colleague for an editorial board meeting. To our collective shock, they laid blame for virtually every problem the world faces on Israel — including the alienation of Arab-Canadian children in Canada's public school system. (One explained that he had sent his daughter for education overseas — because the inclusion of Israel in Canadian textbooks was too traumatic for her to endure.)”

Many liberals reflexively rose up to challenge Jason Kenney's announcement that the government would no longer fund the CAF. The wonder to any objective observer of this hateful group is how they ever came to get a red cent from the government in the first place. Nobody in this country is forced to celebrate Canada Day, but it's a bit much, even for us phlegmatic types, to witness the alleged spokesman of a cultural community spewing hatred against a democracy they had no part in making, and whose freedoms and security, so unlike the countries they come from, they apparently take for granted. To bite the hands of one's benefactor on the most symbolic day of the benefactor's year is a provocation that must not go unchallenged. There is tolerance and there is masochism. We too often confuse them in this naive and well-meaning nation. It is past time that this intolerant and subversive organization folded its tents and retreated from the public forum. It is a disgrace to all Arabs, and it is, by the way, past time that we heard the same from a sizable number of Arab-Canadians. Loud and clear.