

# CANADA PALESTINE ASSOCIATION

June 21, 2004

Position Paper on Canadian Elections 2004

Since the 2000 federal elections, many negative developments took place regarding official Canadian policy towards the Palestinian struggle for self-determination, the situation in the Middle East, and the systematic racism against Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims in Canada. The responsibility for these policies falls squarely on the shoulders of the ruling Liberal Party (see appendix 1).

At the level of the New Democratic Party (NDP), first there were positive developments during the leadership race and then negative developments the closer we came to the elections. Israeli agents represented by the Canadian Zionists succeeded in nominating some NDP candidates and in co-opting others, as part of a plan orchestrated by Israel and its supporters.

According to Ed Morgan, the new national president of the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC), the leading Canadian Zionist organization, “ ‘One thing that we are really hoping to do is to reengage the political Left and labor unions since Jewish politics has been divorced from that side of the political spectrum,’ ...Morgan explains that fewer and fewer Jewish advocacy groups are engaged with Canada's Left, where the landscape is becoming more and more dominated by anti-Israel groups. ‘In Canada, we have made a lot of progress curbing anti-Semitism in the Right, but sometimes in the Left, the Israel bashing is so harsh that it is clear they haven't been properly educated on the Middle East conflict’.” (Jerusalem Post, May 18, 2004)

In a letter to the NDP leader, we inquired about certain cases, where NDP candidates were supporting or propagating Israeli war crimes. Mr. Layton regrettably chose not to respond to our letter (see the full text of our letter in appendix 2).

On the same subject, however, Mr. Layton answered other letters sent to him regarding concerns over ‘Racist Comments at Vancouver Walk With Israel’ attended by an NDP candidate (see appendix 3).

Instead of denouncing the racist comments and reprimanding the NDP candidate, he basically reiterated official Liberal Canadian policy. This is a policy whose bias towards Israel we exposed a long time ago, such as the nonsense about Israeli security and giving Israel the power to veto the right of Palestinian

self determination including statehood (see Birthright Denied, A critique of Canadian complicity with Israel pages 30 – 37).

Mr. Layton's answer shocked, disappointed and angered us; in addition to the pain it caused us.

Since the last federal elections, many positive developments have occurred in labour, peace and Palestinian grass root support movements. They are our only hope for drastic and fundamental change in Canadian foreign policy, a policy that supports Israeli massacres, atrocities, war crimes and the numerous human rights violations of the whole Palestinian nation.

Fortunately, many Canadian parliamentarians from all parties are realizing that the cause of the problems in the Middle East is Israeli injustice and occupation of Palestinian lands. The report by the nine parliamentarians who visited Palestine in 2002 was a good example of the triumph of the human spirit over party loyalty and over pro-Israeli propaganda whose main objective is to cover up Israeli atrocities and characterize the Palestinian struggle with an evil dimension other than national liberation.

Last elections, we called for a block vote for the NDP. However, this elections we feel that the leadership of the NDP has regressed from representing the sentiment of ordinary Canadians against Israeli war crimes (supported by the U.S.). We do maintain though that most NDP candidates still deserve our support.

Also, when voting, people of good will in Canada should remember the many deplorable and shameful positions of the Liberal government, which support and encourage Israeli occupation and war crimes (see appendix 1). The positions of the new Conservative Party, formerly Alliance, are so slavishly pro-Israel as to be beyond the consideration of any concerned voter and mirror the increasingly fanatic Christian Zionist forces in the U.S. (see our letter to Stockwell Day just before last elections). There are other smaller parties, some with more informed positions such as the Communist Party of Canada, and we should take the responsibility of learning more about those who support us and those who stand for injustice and war crimes. A good start is learning about all MPs and where they stand on the Middle East (see the House of Commons Emergency Debate on the Middle East, April 9, 2002 while Ariel Sharon was committing his most vicious war crimes against the Palestinian civilian population).<http://www.parl.gc.ca/PDF/37/1/parlbus/chambus/house/debates/han164-E.pdf>

Our support and votes should go to all those who supported our people in these difficult days, where the war criminal Ariel Sharon is wreaking havoc on our people with not just the US green light but also with US planning, financing and participation. We should not let our people down, we should not let humanity down, we should vote against every candidate who supports Israeli war crimes.

We should show the courageous people who support us, whatever party they are from, that not only will we vote for them but also we will not forget their humanitarian and principled stand.

Hanna Kawas

Chairperson,

Canada Palestine Association [www.cpavancouver.org](http://www.cpavancouver.org)

## Appendix 1

Here are some examples, just since the last election, of the Canadian government complicity in supporting Israeli occupation of Palestine, and also in supporting US-Israeli war crimes against the Arab people.

Canada defeated a resolution at the UN Security Council in Dec/2000 that called for sending an international protection force to shield the Palestinian civilian population from Israeli war crimes. This Canadian position was in accordance with the dictates of the US-Israeli policy that opposed sending such a force. If the security of the state of Israel was really the issue, as they all claim, then why not agree to a force that will guarantee Palestinian and Israeli security and peace? The resolution got eight votes, but it needed nine member states out of fifteen to vote for it in order to be passed. Canada's abstention defeated the resolution, and accordingly made Canada responsible for the subsequent bloodshed and atrocities against the Palestinians.

Canada's position at the UN conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa, in Sep/2001 was hypocritical, and the main concerns of the Canadian delegates were to protect Israel from international condemnation and to cover up Israel's racism, atrocities and war crimes. "While some countries, including the United States, walked out of the Durban conference to protest against the anti-Israeli tone of proposed resolutions, Canada stayed to the end, working to take the sting out of some of the statements and to voice support for Israel, Mr. Graham said." (Globe and Mail, March 20, 2002, Print Edition, Page A15)

The enactment of the "anti-terrorist legislation"(Bill C-36) after Sep. 11, 2001, which institutionalized racial profiling of Arabs and Muslims in Canada, highlighted the increasingly racist practices against these communities. Some of the most glaring examples are:

The heavy handed treatment of Palestinian, Algerian and other Arab and Muslim refugees.

The handing over of Mohamed Jabarah and Mohammad Cherfi to the U.S. authorities where the latter was snatched from a church sanctuary and handed over to the US authorities. By doing so Canada set a precedent similar to the Israeli immoral behavior in the Nativity Church in Bethlehem.

The banning of the Palestinian resistance groups, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), as well as the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah, and the freezing of the bank assets of Hamas, Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, PFLP and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, all occurred under well-documented pressure and the instructions of Canadian Zionist organizations (see CPA website under statements Letter to Solicitor General of Canada).

On April 15, 2002, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva condemned Israel for mass killings of Palestinians and for "gross violations" of humanitarian law. Canada voted against this resolution. It was clear to the whole world what Canada was doing – being a proxy for Israel and protecting it from accountability for its atrocities and violations of the international human rights code. Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham did not hide this fact, he stated: “ ‘We will be working in close consultation with Israel’ to try to prevent a repeat of the pillorying the country took at a UN antiracism conference last year in Durban, South Africa, Mr. Graham said...Canada is picking up the slack for the United States, which has been Israel's traditional defender at the annual rights conferences.” (Globe and Mail article “Canada to protect Israel at UN session”, March 20, 2002, Print Edition, Page A15).

On May 8, 2002, following the Israeli reoccupation of Palestinian cities and the massacre at the Jenin Refugee camp, Canada abstained from supporting a resolution in the UN General Assembly that demanded an “IMMEDIATE END TO MILITARY INCURSIONS, VIOLENCE AND TERROR IN MIDDLE EAST”. The resolution was passed by a vote of 114 in Favour, 4 Against, 11 Abstentions. By abstaining Canada showed contempt for the so-called Oslo accords, which they claim they support, and also showed disregard for Palestinian lives and suffering (<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2002/ga10037.doc.htm>).

At the UN general assembly, Canada abstained on the December 8, 2003 vote seeking an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the legality of the Israeli Apartheid wall. Bill Graham, The Minister of Foreign Affairs, according to The Ottawa Citizen, explained the Canadian submission to the ICJ this way: "I will give the court a written opinion to the effect that we consider that it's not time for the court to take this as a legal question. It's better that it remains for discussion between the parties, as mandated by the Security Council."

On March 11, 2004, the UN Commission on the Status of Women passed a resolution on Palestinian women that called for “tangible improvement of the difficult situation and living conditions of Palestinian women and their families”. Canada was the only abstention with 39 countries in favour and 1 against (United States). The Canadian representative at the commission stated that the "text did not reflect the current situation". Svend Robinson, former NDP MP for Burnaby-Douglas commented on this by saying “I find this action disgraceful and deeply troubling.” (See <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/wom1446.doc.htm>)

## Appendix 2

-----Original Message-----

From: hanna kawas [mailto:hkawas@email.msn.com]

Sent: Wednesday, June 09, 2004 8:59 PM

To: Jack Layton

Cc: Joe Comartin; Charley King; Davies, Libby - M.P.; Robinson, Svend - Riding 1; Alexa Mcdonough

Subject: Voting in the upcoming elections

Dear Mr. Layton:

In the federal election of 2000, in a public position paper, our group stated:

"We, in the Canada Palestine Association, call on all Palestinian and Arab-Canadians, Moslem and Arab Christian-Canadians, and all our supporters, to cast a vote for justice for the Palestinian people by voting for the New Democratic Party (NDP) in the next federal election. The NDP is the only party that is supporting the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people." (See [www.cpavancouver.org](http://www.cpavancouver.org) under statements position paper and appeal)

We even argued against voting for candidates that supported our causes if they were from other parties, parties that were "condoning Israeli slaughter against our people."

We realized later that this was a principled position, but not fair to the other parties' candidates who supported the Arab and Palestinian peoples and opposed the war crimes carried by the US-Israeli alliance. Since then eight Parliamentarians from other parties joined Libby Davies in a fact finding mission to Palestine/Israel and issued a well documented report recognizing the main cause of the conflict in the area, that is the Israeli occupation.

Since then we also found out that some NDP members of Parliament and recent NDP candidates either support Israeli war crimes, or are "neutral" on the issue.. We think that silence on Israeli and US atrocities in the Middle East is complicity in these war crimes.

We would like to draw your attention to two instances and we would like an explanation, because it will help us finalize our stand on the elections.

\* On the website of Joe Comartin, NDP MP from Windsor-Tecumseh, there are many links <http://www.joecomartin.ca/links.htm> that publicize the main pro-Israeli Zionist organizations in Canada such as the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, B'nai Brith Canada and the Canadian Jewish Congress, and no links to any major Palestinian, Arab or Muslim websites. Actually this is a shocking development coming from Joe who used to claim that he supports our causes.

\* The Port Moody-Westwood-Port Coquitlam NDP candidate Charley King invited people "to Walk with Israel on Sunday, May 16, 2004, 12 noon. The 2004 Walk with Israel —Loud and Proud" under Charley King to Walk with Israel on Sunday May 16th <http://www.charleyking.ca/pressreleases.htm>

This position was doubly painful to all Palestinians, as the date marked the establishment of the state of Israel, when over 400 Palestinian towns and villages were wiped off the map of the world and two thirds of the indigenous Palestinian population were forced out of their homeland. That is why the Palestinians call this day alNakba or the catastrophe.

We would appreciate a response by Friday June 18, 2004, when we will issue our new position paper on the current elections.

Best regards and good luck to you and the NDP in general in this coming election.

Hanna Kawas

Chairperson, Canada Palestine Association [www.cpavancouver.org](http://www.cpavancouver.org)

Host, Voice of Palestine, Vancouver Coop-Radio [www.voiceofpalestine.ca](http://www.voiceofpalestine.ca)

Appendix 3

From: "Jack" <[Jack@fed.ndp.ca](mailto:Jack@fed.ndp.ca)>

Dear Friend:

Thank you for your correspondence about the Middle East.

The NDP's policy on the Middle East is based on two fundamental positions:

(1) The NDP has consistently supported Israel's right to exist, and its people's right to live, safe from violence, within secure, recognized, established borders. Over the years this commitment has not wavered.

(2) The NDP also believes in the right of the Palestinian people to a national homeland of their own, whose shape and status must be acceptable to the Palestinians and their neighbours, and which must be achieved through peaceful negotiations.

The federal NDP is committed to Canada playing a leading role in the international community with like-minded nations. We want to work for peace and justice in the Middle East within a framework of respect for UN resolutions and international law.

Please see attached our policy resolution adopted at the NDP 2003 FEDERAL CONVENTION which reinforces this position.

The NDP believes that intolerance and hatred are not Canadian values. As NDP Leader, I will continue to speak out against acts of violence that find root in these beliefs. I recently condemned both the recent hate crime perpetrated against the Jewish community in Vaughan, Ontario and the violence perpetrated Sunday evening in Montreal against the United Talmud Torahs & Herzliah High Schools of Montreal.

As federal NDP leader I aim to bring Canadians of diverse ethnic backgrounds together to create an open and constructive dialogue on how best to foster a society where no citizen is harassed or marginalized. The New Democratic Party will continue to build bridges between communities and facilitate open channels of communication.

We appreciate the complexity of this issue but would like to reiterate that the only place to find a lasting peace is at the negotiating table.

Once again, thank you for writing. I am hopeful we will continue to agree to defend the interests of all Canadians.

Sincerely,

Jack Layton and today's NDP.

New energy. A positive choice.

Jack Layton et le NPD.

Une force nouvelle. Un choix positif.

4 B3

BE IT RESOLVED that the Federal Council endorse the following resolution passed by the Socialist International Council:

The Socialist International hereby announces that its member parties - the Israeli Labour Party, Meretz and Fatah - agree that the mutual recognition of the state of Israel and the state of Palestine, as two states to live side by side, should be the initial commitment before negotiations start between the two peoples.

The main elements of a final settlement have long been clear to most involved parties: implementation of Security Council resolution 242; establishment of a Palestinian state living side by side with Israel under irreversible security guarantees for both sides; borders ensuring that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are part of the Palestinian state, but opening the possibility of negotiated land swaps; both states to have their capital in Jerusalem, and a just solution to the refugee issue.

The Socialist International and its above-mentioned member parties stress that negotiations have to be opened immediately and handle all outstanding issues. A cease-fire cannot be a condition to the start of negotiations. Extremists cannot be given the upper hand. The above parties renounce violence and will refrain from participating in any violent activity that harms civilian lives. Firm measures must be taken against such acts. We ask the parties to pay particular attention to the protection of the civilian population.

The Israeli Labour Party, Meretz and Fatah will immediately engage in confidence-building activities together, with the help and support of the Socialist International and member parties. Joint groups will be established to discuss and prepare specific issues that will come up within the framework of final status negotiations.

The Socialist International will work with the aim of encouraging the United States, Russia and the European Union to find a common stand on final status issues. This stand must be consistent with international legality, and enjoy the support of the UN Security Council. It must also allow concerned Arab states to adhere to it. Particularly, it must take into consideration the parameters included in the recent Saudi initiative.

This basic common position should be elaborated before an international peace conference with the participation of Israel, the Palestinian Authority, relevant Arab countries, the U.S., EU, Russia and the UN.



The parties to the conflict should be invited to the Conference on the basis of basic principles: land for peace, 242, and an agreement on the establishment of two states and security for both. The Conference should set a timetable for final status negotiations.

The Socialist International also encourages our member parties who are parties in conflict to prepare their respective public opinions for a compromise. Israel may not have peace and at the same time keep settlements, while Palestinians may have to accept an internationally supported compromise on the refugee issue.

The Socialist International supports the idea of building an international Fund for the Palestinian refugees, which the UN could administer once a permanent political settlement has been achieved on this issue. The Fund should ensure compensation for the losses and the suffering of the refugees, and provide them with the opportunity to start a new life on the basis of the conclusion of a final peace agreement. The better we can show that solutions are within reach, the more likely people will start working for a political settlement rather than a military one.

Urgent recovery and reconstruction programs for the Palestinian Authority are needed, including the recovery of taxes, customs and other fees still withheld. Development and security are dependent upon developing democratic institutions and establishing a centralized security authority.

The Socialist International insists on the need for international guarantees, international monitoring of implementation of any agreements, international political follow-up of negotiations, and the presence on the ground of a multinational peace-keeping force patrolling borders