

HOW TO CELEBRATE "LA FÊTE NATIONALE."

Statement by William Johnson, President of Alliance Quebec.

June 22, 1999. MONTREAL - Last year, I attempted to participate in the Saint-Jean parade, as a representative of English-speaking Quebec. I was spat upon, had my cap knocked off my head three times, and people tried physically to block me from walking in the parade. Eventually the police removed me by force, against my will, supposedly for my protection. That speaks volumes about the nature of the "*fête nationale*."

L'an dernier, la preuve a été faite par l'absurde que nous n'avons pas actuellement une fête nationale, mais plutôt une fête nationaliste. Quand on crache sur le président d'Alliance Québec qui déambule paisiblement dans le défilé, quand on l'enlève de force de la marche populaire, soi-disant pour sa sécurité, il y a clairement quelque chose qui ne tourne pas rond dans cette célébration soi-disant pour tous les Québécois.

The celebration of the feast of Saint-Jean-Baptiste goes far back in the history of New France, and it was celebrated by French Canadians right across Canada, and in the United States. St-Jean-Baptiste was the patron saint of *all* French Canadians everywhere.

In 1977, the newly elected government of the Parti Québécois, preparing to hold a referendum on secession, co-opted the traditional feast day for its own separatist purposes. It renamed it "la fête nationale." It thereby excluded other French Canadians from a common celebration.

In theory, *la fête nationale* is for all Quebecers. The reality is quite different. *La fête nationale* divides Quebecers between themselves because it has been subordinated to the divisive and destructive objective of secession.

Look at what organizations were chosen to organize and preside over the so-called "*fête nationale*": The Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, which has been officially committed to separatism since 1970. The Mouvement National des Québécois, also separatist. A scattering of other associations committed to separatism, such as Impératif français in the Outaouais.

To have given millions of dollars of the tax-payers' money to overtly separatist movements to organize the so-called *fête nationale* is an insult to every federalist in Quebec. It is rather as if, in Ireland, the celebration of St. Patrick's day were entrusted to the Orange Order. Ce ne sera jamais la fête nationale, ce sera plutôt la fête

nationaliste, tant que le gouvernement confie l'organisation de la fête à des mouvements aussi sectaires, officiellement séparatistes et aussi extrémistes, que la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, le Mouvement national des Québécois, et Impératif français. Les Québécois dans leur majorité ne sont pas sécessionnistes. Pourquoi, alors, mettre la fête nationale sous le sceau et le contrôle des séparatistes? C'est un peu comme si, en Irlande, on confiait l'organisation de la fête de Saint-Patrick aux Orangistes!

In addition to being separatist, these groups organizing the major celebrations are also committed to unilingualism, to denying and restricting and erasing the historical and constitutional dimension of English as an official and common language of Quebec. So they are repellent, not only as separatists, but also as anglophobes.

The hypocrisy of the entire fête nationale scam is made manifest in the ad which Premier Lucien Bouchard has placed in many weeklies: "Our National Holiday is both a time for demonstrating our willingness to live together, sharing a land and a history, whatever our origins, and a time for expressing our joy in doing so."

Yes, we do have a truly *national* holiday, where we show "our willingness to live together, sharing a land and a history, whatever our origins..." But that National Holiday is not June 24, nor is the land and history we share limited to the territory of Quebec. We have a much larger and more inclusive inheritance: it is all of Canada. We are willing to live together, share a land and history, with all our fellow citizens. We do not exclude three quarters of them as does Premier Bouchard, the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste and the wrongly name "fête nationale." Our fête nationale is truly national.

We will feel excluded from most festivities of the fête nationale for as long as a Canadian flag is not welcomed in the celebrations. The flag of Canada was adopted in 1965 following legitimate demands from Quebec. It is an important part of the inheritance of all Quebecers and should be prominently present at all major celebrations of June 24.

So we urge the Royal Highland Regiment of the Black Watch not to march in tomorrow's fête nationale parade unless they carry the Canadian flag. To do otherwise is to let themselves be used for separatist propaganda purposes by Guy Bouthillier, the SSJB and Premier Bouchard.

Alliance Quebec also recommends that people take part in celebrations which are not under the control of anti-Canadian, anti-English organizations. In many places, the community really comes together peacefully and amicably, without making a political statement: that is to be encouraged.

Alliance Quebec has its own way of celebrating. It will be holding a dinner in Montreal on June 24 that will be aimed at making Quebec a better society for all. It will be held at La Maison Egg Roll, 3966 Notre Dame West. There will be no hate or hostility there, no rejections or exclusions. The speeches will bring people together, not separate citizens from citizens. Our hearts will be lifted, our spirits raised.

So, make a statement on June 24. Send a message to the government and to all Quebecers. Join us at Maison Egg Roll at this dinner (\$35 a plate) that will raise funds to ensure justice for all children in our school system. Avonelle Titus will be there, on behalf of all those who have fallen more than two years behind their age in French school, such as Sheean Shomar Johnson, a 14-year-old black boy who, like Avonelle, has been shamefully and cruelly mistreated by our educational system, subordinating the welfare of the child to the glories of the French State of Quebec. He, she and they should have been evaluated and transferred to English school as the law requires, but weren't. Alliance Quebec is launching a class action suite to bring justice and mercy to these hundreds of children in French schools suffering a similar fate. We are also raising money to get the courts to recognize the right of the children of the « illegals » to go to English school, as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms allows, but Quebec law forbids.

June 24 is a symptom of the nationalist sickness that infects Quebec. We must all work to create a society which truly includes everybody and excludes none. Nous devons transformer la fête de la Saint-Jean pour qu'elle reflète réellement tout ce qui unit les Québécois plutôt que ce qui les sépare. Nous devons créer, avec le temps et l'effort une vraie fête nationale qui soit fidèle à notre passé et ouverte à notre avenir dans notre pays.

For tickets : phone (514) 875-2771, OR 696-5973. Cocktails at 6 p.m., dinner at 7, speeches begin at 8 p.m.