

# north shore news

## LETTER: Diatribe lacks compassion

North Shore News

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**Dear Editor:**

**[Re. Burkas Pose Unsettling Questions, Aug. 3 \(http://www.nsnews.com/news/carolan-burkas-pose-unsettling-questions-1.1274094\)](http://www.nsnews.com/news/carolan-burkas-pose-unsettling-questions-1.1274094)**

Several aspects of Trevor Carolan's latest diatribe against virtually "all things wrong in the west" reveals a limited knowledge of world events, both contemporary and historical, coupled with his evident rancour at issues that exceed the simple reductive solutions he appears to favour.

His revisionist comments on the First World War attempt to place the rallying cry of universal freedom over top of a war itself set solely within the imperial ambitions of "old tyrannies." The war "to be over by Christmas" was begun not to bring freedom to anyone anywhere, but simply to enforce hegemony of rival empires of Germany, Britain, France and Turkey over other countries, few of whom experienced the actions or participation of those main players as being directed to their freedom and liberty. At its height, none of the main belligerents could themselves arrive at an understanding of why they had actually begun the blood-drenched futile sacrifice of their own young.

The solution mandated by Britain and France (overseen by American naivety) and forecast by T.E. Lawrence (of Arabian fame), saw the outcome of the 1919 Paris "peace talks" that guaranteed there would be another, and even bloodier, replay twenty years later. Carolan's attempts to now equate the First World War debacle with freedom at its core, is to misidentify folly with design.

Of more concern, in the contemporary context, is Carolan's aversion to the appearance of a burka-wearing new immigrant. While advocating for "rocking in the free world," Carolan appears ready to dictate the boundaries of that freedom to only that which is familiar to him. Surely the same ideals of freedom that Carolan maintains are at the core of his culture - I'm not sure it is the same as mine - has sufficient capacity to anticipate the personal uncertainty and vulnerability that any immigrant experiences.

It has been repeatedly shown that immigrants (aren't we a nation of immigrants?) demonstrate high degrees of adaptability, and in Canada at least, quickly meld into the broad fabric. That transition is accelerated when the immigrant is greeted with acceptance and compassion, rather than being shunned and isolated. Carolan needs to remember that while we may get the immigrant, it is Canada that gets their children. Who do we want those children to be?

Such sentiments can be found in the lyrics of a '60s ballad that Carolan, as a child of that era himself, should be able to identify with; "Teach your children well, their father's hell did slowly go by, and feed them on your dreams, the one they fix, the one you'll know by."

**Douglas Curran**

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