

A Call for a Public Apology and Retraction

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On October 15, 2020, the Vancouver and District Labour Council (VDLC) released an open letter “about the ‘Freedom Rally’ and ‘Freedom Convoy’ coming to Vancouver” on the weekend of October 17 and 18, 2020.

Stephen Von Sychowski, President of the VDLC, is reported to have authored the letter which was signed by a list of notable signatories including: David Suzuki, The Green Party of Vancouver, a number of Vancouver and North Vancouver City Councillors, labour and union organizations, and other social justice activists. The signatories endorsed its contents without any evidence to substantiate the stated claims.

The letter was targeted at the event organizers, speakers, as well as the prospective rally attendees and included malicious and defamatory accusations such as:

- *“White supremacist, Neo-Nazi, conspiracy believers, anti-vaxxers, and extremists”*
- *“Covid deniers, bigots and haters”*
- *“A far-right threat using paranoia and misinformation to attract fringe groups”*
- *“A dangerous movement”*
- *“A violent neo-fascist movement who pose a threat to society”*

http://www.vdvc.ca/open_letter_regarding_freedom_rally

In addition to the above baseless claims, Mr. Von Sychowski purported that the attendees of the event would instigate violence, a claim that was proven false.

Sychowski’s fear-mongering and baseless allegations were directed at peaceful citizens exercising their constitutional right to assemble, free speech, associate, and even pray.

In addition to the VDLC’s letter, Anthony Hughes, the chair of the Vancouver Green Party, wrote an equally defamatory letter fully supporting the VDLC’s pernicious rhetoric. Mr. Hughes emailed the letter to their Green Party members and published it publicly to their website.

A top constitutional lawyer described the letters as maliciously defamatory and a libellous offence for inciting hatred.

Rather than unify Canadians, the authors and endorsers of these letters used name calling and venomous words in an attempt to intimidate, threaten, and silence citizens. This is unlawful and a violation of the Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The signatories claim to be “stalwart defenders of the rights of assembly and free speech”, however, given the vile, malicious and defamatory accusations and the unlawful attempt to

intimidate, threaten, and silence citizen, it is clear that these individuals and organizations are not stalwart defenders of the rights of assembly and free speech.

These attacks have, unfortunately, become common place from those within trusted positions, whether in the political arena or otherwise. These attacks and attempts to polarize and pit citizens against each other.

Mr. Von Sychowski is a known supporter of the BC New Democratic Party and a member of the Young Communist League of Canada. (https://keywiki.org/Stephen_Von_Sychowski)

We demand the VDLC, the Green party of Vancouver, the BC NDP and all signatories publicly apologize, disavow this reprehensible letter, and provide a press release retracting the message of division, hateful rhetoric and call to provoke and incite violence.

We further demand the immediate resignation of Mr. Stephen Sychowski, President of the VDLC, and Mr. Anthony Hughes, Chair of the Vancouver Green Party.

Failure to do so will result in legal action.

Regards,

Event organizers, speakers, and rally attendees

Action4Canada
Vaccine Choice Canada
Liberty Network
Ryan Kulbaba
No New Normal
CLEAR
Hugs Over Masks
Mark Friesen
Robert Ascot
Avacado Wolfe
Mikki Willis