

# Speakers at Odanak UVM event had no authority or support

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The Odanak symposium held last weekend at UVM was an interesting event. The first half was mostly of a historical context about Odanak members coming to Vermont and New Hampshire to sell their baskets.

The most noteworthy statement from the first half of the event came from Mr. Daniel Nollette, who openly stated that Odanak has plans to pursue recognition and more importantly land claims in Vermont.

The second half of the event took on a completely different feel — what appeared to be three bitter individuals airing their personal grievances.

Mr. Jacques Theriault, who changed his last name to Warso to sound more Abenaki, came across as crass and vulgar. He did, however, openly admit that he is speaking only on his own behalf and noted the Odanak leadership and overall Odanak community have specifically asked him not to talk about the Abenaki of Vermont. He also noted that in his community of Odanak he is considered a radical.

Next was Mali Obamsawin, who is a non-status member of Odanak who resides in Maine. She was very well spoken and played on the emotions of those in attendance by using victimization language. A very important note in her speech was that she openly stated that she and Jacques tried to discuss this same topic with the Wabanaki Confederacy and were quickly shot down and asked not to bring it up again at Confederacy meetings.

These are individuals speaking their own minds and opinions, who by their own admittance have no authority or support from either the Odanak First Nation leadership or community, or the greater Wabanaki Confederacy,

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