

Hanna Kawas, Chairperson
Canada Palestine Association
P.O.Box 3255, Vancouver, B. C., Canada, V6B 3X9
www.cpavancouver.org

September 25, 2003

Larry Campbell
Mayor of Vancouver

Dear Mr. Mayor:

We received your invitation to participate in the nomination process for the 2003 Cultural Harmony awards; we regret that we will not be able to participate due to our opposition to one of the signatories on the invitation, Mr. Erwin Nest, Chair of Special Advisory Committee on Cultural Communities.

Mr. Nest is a well known advocate of hard-line Zionism, which discriminates against the Palestinian people inside and outside Israel. When he was the Executive Director of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Pacific Region in 1987, he tried to "muffle" the Voice of Palestine on Coop Radio 102.7 FM, the community radio station in Vancouver (see www.voiceofpalestine.ca under history, Province Article). He also sent an official letter of complaint to the CRTC. All of his allegations were baseless, and the proof is that Voice of Palestine is still on the air and celebrated its 16th anniversary just this month.

To build united communities, the city should look for people (from all faiths) who promote understanding, peace with justice and treat all fellow humans as equals.

If you are interested in people that promote such concepts (again from all faiths), we can supply you with many names.

We think it is offensive and outrageous to have a Zionist that advocates and supports Israeli racism and war crimes against the Palestinian people as a chair for a committee on cultural communities. We fail to comprehend how the presence of such a person on any city committee "promotes cultural sensitivity" and we feel you may not realize the immediate alienation this appointment invokes amongst many Arab and Moslem Vancouverites.

We, along with many peace-loving Canadians including Jewish Canadians, oppose Israeli apartheid practices and all those who support them, because they contribute to prolonging the suffering of the Palestinian and Arab people and also because they stand as an obstacle to a just peace in the Middle East.

If you want to know why we strongly oppose dealing, dialoging or associating with such representatives, please see our website www.cpavancouver.org ,follow "statements" and check the following two articles: CJC Chair misleads the public, and Is it Liberalism or Normalization?

We regret that a progressive city council, such as yours, still has Mr. Nest as an advisor. We are sure that council would be outraged if an advocate of South African Apartheid or any other kind of racist proponent was in any capacity associated with Vancouver. We urge you and council to reconsider the appointment of Mr. Nest, and to take into account the chilling effect his appointment has on other

cultural communities.

Yours truly,

Hanna Kawas
Chairperson, Canada Palestine Association
Host, Voice of Palestine, Vancouver

C.C. Heather Deal
Chair, Vancouver Board of Parks & Recreation