

## CJC Chair Misleads Public

Statement by Canada Palestine Association and Arab Palestine Association

June 12, 2003

Recently, in an article titled "Still much on CJC's Plate", the chair of the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC), Pacific Region, Nisson Goldman was quoted as saying:

"Congress has done a good job of meeting with the leadership of the Palestinian and Muslim communities in British Columbia, he said, though he regrets that more members of those communities have not attended some of the events organized to bring them together with Jewish British Columbians." ([Jewish Western Bulletin](#) JWB, June 6, 2003)

We in the Palestinian community and in the Palestinian support movement would like to clarify the following points.

We are not aware of any meetings (official or otherwise) between either the leadership of the Palestinian community and the CJC or between any of the Palestinian support organizations and the CJC. If an individual Palestinian met with the CJC, then it was nothing more than that - an individual who represented only him/herself and not our community. We cannot speak for the leadership of the Muslim community, although we think if such meetings do occur they should be public, especially to the communities of those involved and should not be kept secret behind closed doors.

Furthermore, to claim that the purpose of some of the events the CJC had organized was to bring Palestinians and Muslims together with "Jewish British Colombians" is totally misleading. It implies that there is a problem between Palestinian and Muslim Canadians on the one hand, and "Jewish British Columbians" on the other. We in the Palestinian community and in the Palestinian support movement have never had a problem with Jewish Canadians. Actually more "Jewish British Colombians" than Palestinian and Muslim British Colombians are involved in Palestinian support activities locally.

What we do have a problem with is Israeli occupation, Israeli war crimes and Israel's Apartheid policies and practices against the Palestinian people. We also have a huge problem with Canadian Zionists (Jewish, Christians, Muslims or non believers) who support Israel financially, politically and militarily, including sending Canadian assassins to participate in war crimes against the Palestinian civilian population.

Zionism has been using Jews and Judaism to carry on its settler colonialist project in Palestine and has been trying to dispossess the Palestinian people from their homeland, identity and dignity for the past 100 years. By attributing to all Jews everywhere, every crime and atrocity the Zionists commit against the Palestinians, the Zionist movement is guilty of contributing to the growth of anti-Semitism, which in the final analysis serves the Zionist project.

In a crude attempt to justify his personal failure as a regional chair of the CJC and the failure of Zionism as an ideology, Goldman blames his woes on the Canadian left whom he accuses of alienating "Jewish people". As if the left does not include Jewish Canadians or as if Jews are not Jews unless they are Zionists and support Israeli Apartheid practices!!

He also blames his failure for not having a "more effective Israel campaign within the general population" on the lack of "the necessary resources"; and "Pro-Palestinian activism is well organized and well funded , he said, and that has had a very effective impact on the discussion here in Canada (our emphasis)." JWB June 6/2003

While we are flattered by his testimony to our organizational skills and his admission of our "very effective impact on the discussion here in Canada", we would like to state that we do not receive any money from any government (including the Canadian government), institution, company or trade union. Our finances come solely from our Canadian supporters and our strength lies in the righteousness of the Palestinian cause and its internationalist and humanist dimensions.

Finally we would like to state our position:

- We will not meet, hold a dialogue with, or communicate with any kind of Zionist representatives (except in certain cases and then only publicly to debunk their bankrupt arguments).
- Those who support Israel should realize that they are directly responsible for every atrocity, human rights violation and act of dispossession that has been carried out against the Palestinian people.
  - We feel that to meet with them at this point in history is a betrayal of the aspirations and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. It also absolves Israel's supporters from their responsibility in the crimes against humanity and reduces the conflict to "just another point of view".
- Nobody should ask us to endorse our enslavement, legitimize our oppression and accept our dispossession.

It is imperative on the Zionists to change their inhumane ways towards others and especially the Palestinians who have been the direct target of their chauvinist, exclusionist and supremacist project. To save their humanity, Zionists need to admit and recognize:

1. The original sin committed against Palestine and the Palestinians in 1948.
2. The Palestinian right of return to all of historic Palestine, as per U.N. Resolution 194.
3. The necessity to treat Palestinians as equal human beings inside Palestine, Israel and wherever they reside.
4. And abolish all discriminatory and racist laws in Israel that exclude Palestinians with Israeli citizenship just because of their religious background.

Only then can the healing process begin.

Whatever reason prompted Mr. Goldman to claim that he had "done a good job of meeting with the leadership of the Palestinian" community, we affirm that his claim is neither factual nor honorable.

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