

March 17, 2011.

Dear Mr. Chris Saulnier,

President, Dalhousie Student Union.

Dear Mr. Saulnier,

I am writing to express my respect and strong support for the Dalhousie Student Union facilitating NSPIRG's role in the events of Israeli Apartheid Week [IAW].

We understand that there are groups objecting to this activity and applying to it descriptions as racism and anti-Semitism. These charges are baseless. The activities that university students, supporting this IAW activity, all over the world, display accurate statements, as to the nature of the Israeli government policies and practices against the oppressed Palestinian people under illegal Israeli occupation. These activities are not directed against the Jewish people, many of whom, honourable peace and human rights activists, support the IAW activity in Israel and internationally.

The opponents of IAW make false charges, against the application of the term "apartheid" to these Israeli government practices. These charges are false and contradict the facts on the ground and the testimonies of internationally respected and recognised authorities on this subject, including Former President Jimmy Carter, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela and many Israeli intellectuals and Israeli human rights groups like B'Tselem. The following are two of many such established testimonials:

"I've been very distressed in my visit to the Holy Land; it reminded me so much of what happened to us blacks in South Africa. I have seen the humiliation of the Palestinians at checkpoints and roadblocks, suffering like us when young white police officers prevented us from moving about.." {Archbishop Desmond Tutu, The Guardian, April 29, 2002}

On, [Nov. 29, 2006], the Atlanta Journal-Constitution ran the following op-ed, by John Dugard, a South African former anti-apartheid leader. He is currently the Special Rapporteur on Palestine to the United Nations Human Rights Council. He not only compares Israeli policies to apartheid, but says that in many ways Israeli policies are worse than South African apartheid was.

Be that as it may, Universities long have been places that promote free inquiry and debate, a value that is codified in the commitment they make to the concept of academic freedom. Universities want our

students to explore differences, understand them and learn from them. To think freely and consider alternatives. To listen.

Allowing students to organize and hold events that explore controversial subjects may not always be comfortable, but is a reflection of what universities are about. In Canada, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees four fundamental freedoms, including freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, and freedom of peaceful assembly.

Finally, I thank you all for your concern and support for maintaining this legitimate activity in our distinguished university.

Yours Sincerely,

Ismail Zayid, MD.

Professor [Ret.] Dalhousie University Faculty of Medicine.