

**Seriously Free Speech
Committee Honourary**

Members Include:

Ali Abunimah
Tariq Ali
Dr. Federico Allodi
The Rev. Robert Assaly
Omar Barghouti
Michael Byers
Noam Chomsky
Libby Davies
Ivar Ekeland
Rev. Beverly Faust
David Fennario
Maurice J. Freedman
Dr. Qais Ghanem
Cy Gonick
Malcolm Guy
Tom Hayden
Edward S. Herman
George Heyman
Am Johal
Dorothy Kidd
Naomi Klein
Bonnie Klein
Joy Kogawa
Joel Kovel
Anton Kuerti
Avi Lewis
Tim Louis
Irene MacInnes
Dr. Sally Mahood
Ali Mallah
Michael Mandel
Gabor Mate
Linda McQuaig
Cindy Oliver
Barry O'Neill
Ilan Pappé
Nurit Peled-Elhanan
Dominique Peschard
John Pilger
Jean-Marc Potté
Badri Raina
Diana Ralph
Judy Rebick
Richard S. Rosenberg
Satinath Sarangi
Dr. Hari Sharma
Jim Sinclair
Sunera Thobani
Nettie Wild
Haifa Zangana

Supporting

Organisations Include:

- BC Civil Liberties Association
- BC Library Association
- BC Teachers Federation
- Canadian Labour Congress
- Canadian Library Association
- CEP Local 2000
- Federation of Post-Secondary Educators
- Ligue des droits et libertés (Québec)
- Vancouver District Labour Council

SERIOUSLY FREE SPEECH

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Canwest: Media Bully

VANCOUVER – In a direct attack on freedom of expression, media giant Canwest has launched an unprecedented civil lawsuit against Vancouver-area activists for "conspiring" to produce and distribute a June 2007 parody of the Vancouver Sun. The four-page parody satirised Canwest's well-known anti-Palestinian and pro-Israel bias with articles such as 'Study shows Truth Biased Against Israel' by Hy Poczary, and a weather report of 'occasional missile showers.'

In 2003, Canwest's founder, Izzy Asper, boasted "In all of our newspapers... we have a very pro-Israeli position...we are the strongest supporter of Israel in Canada." A 2008 editorial in Canwest's flagship National Post declared that "Israel is blameless" for the killing of Palestinian children by Israeli army shelling and referred to the "Palestinian people as one collective suicide bomber".

Canwest has misused the legal system by suing Mordecai Briemberg, Carel Moiseiwitsch and Gordon Murray who support the human rights of Palestinians and oppose Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territories. Canwest's action is a classic Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation (SLAPP), an attempt to intimidate and silence critics by forcing them to pay huge legal costs to defend against a politically motivated lawsuit.

Canwest's actions are a significant attack on all Canadians' right of free speech. The Seriously Free Speech Committee was formed to resist this bullying – demanding that Canwest drop their lawsuit and supporting an open public debate on Israel and Palestine.

In response to our international campaign, Canwest recently dropped their legal action against Mordecai. Calling it a "significant victory," Mordecai said Canwest's strategy has backfired. "Instead of silencing our voices, it amplified them." The Seriously Free Speech campaign will continue until Canwest also abandons their suit against Gordon and Carel.

Canwest's abuse of the courts to attack free speech highlights the need for anti-SLAPP legislation to ensure a free and open debate on contentious issues. Please join those listed on the left of this page in supporting the Seriously Free Speech committee campaign.

As the Supreme Court of Canada said in a June 2008 decision about freedom of expression: **"the law must accommodate commentators such as the satirist or the cartoonist who... exercise a democratic right to poke fun at those who huff and puff in the public arena."**

What you can do to help

- **VISIT** our website – www.seriouslyfreespeech.ca – to find out more about the case and get involved in the Seriously Free Speech campaign.
- **HELP** get this important information out to friends, family and networks.
- **WRITE** to Canwest to demand that they drop the suit (address on our website) and write to the mainstream media to ask why they are not covering the case.
- **ENCOURAGE** your organization to adopt resolutions or issue statements critical of Canwest's actions and in support of the Seriously Free Speech campaign. For examples, see the 'Support' page at www.seriouslyfreespeech.ca.
- **CONTRIBUTE** financially to support the campaign and help defray legal costs. Donate online from our website or make cheques out to 'Seriously Free Speech Committee' and mail to the address below.

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