

Protest letter of Dr Hariz Halilovich for not request to proceed with the invitation of Mr. Michael Parenti (supporter of war criminal Slobodan Milosevic and genocide denier) as guest speaker for the Peace Center's 31 May fundraising event

Dear Dr Lin and colleagues,

As someone who lost many members of his family in the Srebrenica genocide and as a human rights scholar, I am deeply concerned with your decision to host Dr Michael Parenti as a guest speaker for the May 31st fundraiser. Dr Parenti, a self-proclaimed "Balkan Revisionist" and author of 'To Kill a Nation: The Attack on Yugoslavia' explicitly denies genocide, systematic rape of women and girls and 'ethnic cleansing' that took place in Bosnia during the 1992-95 war. Dr Parenti places the blame on Bosniaks for the Genocide in Srebrenica and other massacres that took place throughout the war of aggression on BiH. As a result of his denial, Dr Parenti has publicly disregarded that between 20,000 and 50,000 Bosniak women were raped during the three year war of aggression against Bosnia. The rapes were in fact used as an official Serb policy of 'ethnic cleansing'. To this day, his outrageous claims have only been supported and shared by other genocide deniers. His conspiracy theories are in direct conflict with the official rulings by the International Court of Justice, the International War Crimes Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia, as well as various declarations from the United States Congress and the European Parliament.

I acknowledge the importance of freedom of speech, however, you should know that falsifying facts and denying genocide is unacceptable and deeply traumatic for the survivors and their families. Hundreds of thousands of Bosniaks who survived 'ethnic cleansing' and the genocide in Bosnia have made the United States, Canada and Australia their second home; most of them having lost someone as a result of genocide and aggression. Dr Parenti uses his writing to purposely hurt those who have survived genocide, and having him attend this event will send the wrong message to all genocide survivors. In addition, it will send a message that San Jose Peace and Justice Center supports Parenti's genocide denial. I hope that you will agree that having Dr Parenti speak would be highly inappropriate and contrary to the mission of your organization which strives to promote peace and justice.

All genocide deniers directly undermine peace and justice because the only way to peace and reconciliation is to acknowledge the truth and punish those responsible. Dr Parenti's work and constant expression of denial is damaging to the healing process of the survivors of the genocide in BiH and I urge you to stand up for justice and truth and reject all affiliation with Dr Parenti and his work.

Sincerely,

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