Advocating for Palestinian human rights is not anti-Semitic

Andrew Caddell suggests that anyone who does not support Israel’s right to exist, is ‘an idiot, or worse, a bigot’—again an attempt to deride human rights advocates and those who challenge the structural disenfranchisement of approximately half of those under its control.

Andrew Caddell

Opinion

Montreal—In January of this year, Israeli human rights organization B’tselem released a groundbreaking report detailing the ways in which Israel enacts an apartheid regime in all the territory under its control (Israeli sovereign territory, East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip).

The report stressed that there is but “one organizing principle” that lies as the basis for a large number of core Israeli policies: “advancing and perpetuating the supremacy of one group—Jews—over another—Palestinians.”

Juxtapose this conclusion—and everything else we already knew about Israel’s abhorrent treatment of Palestinians—with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s glowing praise of Israel and the ties that bind us on the occasion of Israel’s Independence Day, Yom Haatzmaut last week. Canada and Israel are “steadfast allies,” united in “our commitment to freedom, democracy, and the rule of law.”

Canada’s relationship with Israel is based on the tokenization (or instrumentalization) of “the” (in French) the Canadian Jewish community. “Canada’s relationship with Israel is based on the tokenization (or instrumentalization) of the Canadian Jewish community,” wrote the Coalition of Canadian Palestinian Organizations in a statement.

Whether intentional or not, Caddell’s argument, Caddell crosses the line when he claims that our video included comments such as “Canada and Israel’s relationship is due to manipulation by the Jewish community.” In fact, the text, written in French to match Trudeau’s code-switching, said the opposite: that Canada’s relationship with Israel is based on the tokenization (or instrumentalization) of the Canadian Jewish community, i.e., to justify its own strategic interests such as weapons and security contracts.

Whether intentional or not, Caddell’s misinformation fits with much larger efforts to unfairly malign and delegitimize those who advocate for Palestinian human rights as simply anti-Semitic.

Andrew Meade

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pictured April 13, 2021, posted a video to commemorate Israel’s Independence Day, Yom Haatzmaut, last week, but the Independent Jewish Voices Canada was critical of the video’s message and ran a parody of it. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

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