

Disgrace in Canada

written by David M. Weinberg | 22.12.2024

Last week I wrote about the antisemitic and anti-Israel lurch of Australia. The situation in Canada is no better. In fact, the parallels to Australia are chilling, with the two governments coordinating their progressive distancing from Jews and Israel.

In recent testimony before the Canadian Senate Committee for Human Rights and Justice, Shimon Koffler Fogel described the alarming rise in antisemitism in Canada in excruciating detail.

According to Fogel – who this month concluded 36 stalwart years at the helm of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), the main Canadian Jewish community advocacy agency – there has been a 93 per cent rise in hate crimes in Toronto since October 7, the majority of which have been directed at the Jewish community. In Vancouver, reports of antisemitism increased 62 percent in 2023 over 2022; 70 per cent of those occurred after October 7. In Montreal, antisemitic incidents are up by 250 percent.

Two young Canadians recently were charged with terrorism offenses for planning to bomb a Jewish event on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Jewish-owned businesses have been defaced, damaged, boycotted, and vandalized. Jewish schools in Montreal and Toronto have been shot at and hit with bomb threats. Synagogues across the country have been picketed and vandalized. This week, Congregation Beth Tikvah in Montreal was firebombed for a second time (a synagogue where I was scholar-in-residence a few years ago).

Demonstrations glorifying terrorism and violence are taking place in Jewish neighborhoods for the sole purpose of intimidating residents.

In Montreal police have instructed Jews to silently skunk out the back doors of community centers so that antisemitic rioters won't have to be confronted (– just like the Sydney police did).

The situation on campus for Jewish students is especially disturbing. Hate symbols deface Canadian universities; kippa-wearing students have been attacked; and there have been discriminatory remarks in lectures claiming Jews

harvest the organs or blood of non-Jews. Students and faculty say that they avoid reporting incidents due to fear of retribution from both their professors and peers.

“Where there was once nuance and obfuscation, there is now brazen, explicit promotion of terrorism and jihadist violence,” *The National Post* (Canada) noted. “Terror groups are being named and praised. Violence against Canadian Jews is being encouraged. Demonstrators are showing up to rallies in full militant garb: military fatigues, face coverings and even body armour. What’s more, all of this is occurring with direct police supervision and even assistance.”

In writing about “The Explosion of Jew-Hate in Trudeau’s Canada” (*The Free Press*, Dec. 11, a 7,000-word investigation), journalist Terry Glavin sums up the situation as follows: “Despair has become a feature of everyday life for Jews across Canada who are experiencing open hatred – and yet are living under a government that appears either blind to it, paralyzed by it, or indifferent to it.”

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau repeats with platitudinous regularity that antisemitism has no place in Canada. But his law enforcement authorities have stood by as immigrants and others harass Jewish Canadians with only the weakest, limpest police response. The police and government ministers appear afraid of anti-Israel and antisemitic rioters. They are not afraid of the Jews.

Last week, a parliamentary committee on justice and human rights released a bold report, *Heightened Antisemitism in Canada and How to Confront It*, with concrete recommendations that align with Jewish community advocacy efforts.

These include prioritizing the safety and well-being of Jewish students, faculty, and staff on campus; adopting the IHRA definition of antisemitism across educational institutions and government bodies; strengthening hate crime legislation and law enforcement; and the protection of Zionist expression in Canada, reiterating that it is unacceptable to target or deny rights to individuals because of their Zionist beliefs.

Following up on this, CIJA has demanded that Ottawa convene a national forum on combating hate crimes, terrorism, and antisemitism; enhance judicial and law enforcement training; bolster community safety programs; and most importantly, fight radicalization and extremism. Trudeau’s government (which is tottering) has yet to act on this agenda.

WORSE STILL, Trudeau and his foreign minister Melanie Joly dramatically have shifted Canada's stance away from Israel.

In my mind, it is undeniable that that the diplomatic pitch away from Israel has fueled and given legitimacy to the ugly street protests. As my friend Father Raymond de Souza of Ontario has written: "Canada's response to the Hamas massacre has been feckless in government and frightening on the streets."

The desertion of Israel includes Canadian voting in favor of one-sided resolutions relating to Gaza and the West Bank that condemn only Israel without even mentioning Hamas or Israeli hostages. This is a flagrant violation of the long-standing Canadian policy principle of standing against the relentless anti-Israeli bias and corruptness of the UN in connection with the Mideast.

Trudeau's excuse: The need to reemphasize Canada's belief in the "two state solution," on which Canada has doubled down to loudly defy Netanyahu governments.

Worse yet still, Trudeau is threatening to unilaterally recognize Palestinian statehood at "a time of Canada's choosing," irrespective of Palestinian behavior and "not held back" by Israeli defense realities and diplomatic concerns.

This is classic Trudeau chutzpah. He wants to reward the October 7 assault, and ongoing Palestinian support for this assault and for future aggressions against Israel, by unilateral recognition of Palestinian statehood? That is morally indefensible.

Recognition of a Palestinian "state" that does not really exist and which cannot be founded without pursuit of real peace with Israel through direct negotiations - distances real peace. It would reinforce rejectionism and extremism among Palestinian leadership.

Such a move would amount to a naked diplomatic attack on Israel, at a time when Israelis are still fighting for their lives against radical forces in the region. And it would indeed give tailwind to the increasingly violent and progressively more openly antisemitic street riots in Canada.

Note that this past year, Trudeau and Joly made Canada the first Western country to impose arms export restrictions against Israel. Joly even denied military export

licenses to Canadian companies that were sub-contracting for American defense companies with munitions and weapons system contracts relating to Israel.

Joly's Global Affairs Canada ministry has been one of the first to sanction not only "malign" settlers but a broad range of right-wing Israeli civil society organizations such as Regavim and Tzav 9 – just because they have different views on land and humanitarian matters than Joly's ministry. In so doing, Canada has served as somewhat of a stalking horse for the nastiest aspects of the Biden Administration.

Trudeau also is the only leader of a G-7 country who has not bothered to make a solidarity visit to Israel since the October 7 Hamas assault.

Joly visited Israel once and shed the required tear or two when visiting the Gaza border communities and meeting with hostage families. She then went to Ramallah to hug and kiss the October 7 massacre apologist Mahmoud Abbas (yes, literally hug, kiss, and grin from ear to ear), and returned to Canada to immediately announce the arms export ban against Israel.

And let us not forget UNRWA, to which Canada swears fealty with messianic zeal, adding financial support for that deleterious organization despite unmistakable evidence of its collusion with Hamas and its support for never-ending Palestinian national conflict with Israel including the annihilationist-toward-Israel so-called "right of return."

I write all this in anger directed at Trudeau but also with significant sadness, because it upends seven decades of magnificent Canadian support for Israel across Liberal and Conservative political lines. Who can forget the pro-Israel leadership of Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin or the ardent global defense of Israel from Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper?

"Through fire and water, Canada will stand by Israel!" Harper thundered in his famous 2014 Knesset speech, drawing 15 standing ovations. Those were the days.

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