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### Canadian journalists aid demonization campaign

Thursday, 07 October 2010

On July 1, the Globe and Mail published a major story (1,100 words) by correspondent Patrick Martin on the Arab-Israeli political advocacy NGO group, Mada al-Carmel.



Gerald Steinberg

After the Canadian government's International Development Research Centre ended its funding of the group, Mada al-Carmel initiated a lawsuit alleging that this decision was taken "under pressure from the Israeli government" and blamed NGO Monitor for triggering the de-funding. Before the review, Canada gave it more than \$800,000, which was 40 per cent of Mada's budget, with the rest from European governments and the New Israel Fund.

It wasn't a research article and had no detailed analysis or quotes from the numerous documents showing how governmental officials help political NGOs get large grants used to wage political warfare against Israel. These documents illustrate the major defects in the IRDC's approval process and selection of reviewers for political advocacy NGOs.

In contrast, Martin's article relied on quotes from selected individuals. It accepted Mada al-Carmel's self-presentation as a "social research centre" and repeated claims that the IRDC grants were for a study of "the marginalization of women in Arab-Israeli society."

The reality, however, is that Mada's main activity is to promote anti-Israeli propaganda. Martin could have quoted from Mada's "Haifa Declaration," which calls for a "change in the definition of the State of Israel from a Jewish state," and the implementation of a Palestinian "right of return," a euphemism for the end of Israel.

The declaration's authors also accuse Israel of "exploiting [the Holocaust] and its consequences in order to legitimize the right of the Jews to establish a state." They take pride in "the resistance to the military regime put up by our people" and refer to "massacres" committed by the "Zionist movement" and Israel's "policies... in excess of those of the apartheid regime in South Africa."

Instead, Martin's lengthy article centres on Mada's role in an inflammatory NGO campaign called "My Land, Space, Body and Sexuality: Palestinians in the Shadow of the Wall." This activity and accompanying posters had no connection to the "social research" that was the basis for IRDC funding.

Martin admits "that the poster depicts an Israeli soldier with his hand in front of a Palestinian woman's chest and the provocative caption: 'The occupation penetrates her life every day.'" Instead of publishing the image and allowing readers to judge for themselves, the Globe and Mail misleadingly told readers that the insinuation of Israeli sexual harassment was incorrect.

In addition to justifying IRDC funding and Mada's activities, Martin's article also includes a highly distorted presentation of the role and activities of NGO Monitor, which I head. Our standard letter of inquiry to the IRDC requesting clarification of the published information regarding Mada funding reportedly triggered the Canadian government's belated review and the subsequent funding cut-off. But in Mada's version, the process is far more sinister.

Regarding the activities of NGO Monitor, the use of documents would have presented a far more accurate picture, in comparison to the problematic quotes from individuals seeking to protect the NGO network. In addition to misrepresenting the Mada al-Carmel/IRDC case, the Globe article repeated the false claims regarding NGO Monitor's role in changes in the Rights and Democracy organization in Canada, as well as Ottawa's funding for KAIROS. (Under the cover of development assistance, this church group has a radical political agenda, including backing divestment campaigns targeting Israel.) In the conspiracy fantasy, these decisions are part of "all-out assault on legitimate human rights groups" being promoted by the Netanyahu government.

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These distorted reports aren't limited to the Globe and Mail. On April 9, Radio-Canada's television magazine Une heure sur terre presented an outrageously distorted story, also without any documentation or research. The pattern is also reflected in articles in the Toronto Star and Maclean's.

The story of the IRDC's highly problematic funding process for radical NGOs such as Mada al-Carmel is still emerging, and, in addition to the court case, NGO Monitor will soon publish detailed documentation. The Globe and Mail and the rest will then have another opportunity to get the details right.

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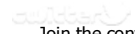
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