

CIJA, B'nai B'rith Smear Palestine Activist Instead of Racists, Anti-Semite

Part two on the smear campaign against Dimitri Lascaris.

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Like British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn Canadian lawyer Dimitri Lascaris is the victim of a "Big Lie" slander campaign. Defenders of the most aggressive ongoing European settler colonialism have once again smeared a "[proud](#), anti-racist advocate for human rights."

In [this article](#) I offer some important context regarding the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs' (CIJA) and B'nai B'rith's (BB) absurd "anti-Semitism" accusations against Lascaris, which were echoed by the leaders of the four main federal political parties. But, looking at the run up to his 'offending' tweet suggests that Lascaris was targeted in an unprecedented smear campaign because he was exposing CIJA and BB's soft underbelly, notably their dalliance with racist extremists. In the week before he was denounced Lascaris repeatedly challenged CIJA, BB's and Liberal MP Michael Levitt's association with individuals making anti-Muslim remarks, death threats against politicians and promoting a book denouncing the "Jewish menace".

The immediate background to CIJA and BB's campaign against Lascaris was an August 29 demonstration opposing BB's smears against the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW). CIJA, BB and Levitt tarred that rally as being racist and threatening. Two days before the display of solidarity with CUPW Levitt issued a statement saying he was "[deeply concerned](#)" and "disturbed" by the planned protest, announcing that he had contacted the police. Afterwards CIJA Vice President for the Greater Toronto Area, Noah Shack, thanked the police and stated: "[What the Jewish](#) community of Bathurst Manor witnessed today is a failed attempt at intimidation by a hateful group of protesters."

But in reality, it was the counter rally of BB supporters that was racist and threatening. In the week after the rally Lascaris repeatedly called on CIJA, BB and Liberal MP Levitt to publicly repudiate the Islamophobia of the pro-BB counter protesters. Prior to his 'offending' tweet, Lascaris posted [video](#) of protesters making anti-Muslim comments and tweeted "[B'nai B'rith can't](#) bring itself to condemn the white supremacists, racists & Islamophobes who support its organization and who stood at its doorstep last week screaming hatred at supporters of CUPW. Instead, it hurls baseless claims of 'bigotry' at its critics."

VIDEO: On August 29, at our rally in support of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, a male [@BnaiBrithCanada](#) supporter hurls obscenities at a female supporter of [@CUPW](#). She continues to call him 'sir' as he heaps abuse on her. Yet B'nai Brith claims we were the aggressive ones. pic.twitter.com/wYWtL3BAAh

— Dimitri Lascaris (@dimitrilascaris) [September 3, 2018](#)

Via twitter and Facebook Lascaris also called on them to criticize two BB supporters who called for a number of Muslim and brown politicians to face the death penalty. In a [video detailing](#) their participation in the counter protest, Mary Forrest and a friend called for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, NDP leader Jagmeet Singh and several Muslim MPs to receive the “guillotine” or be “stoned” to death. Lascaris tweeted:

“If a supporter of Palestine called for Israel’s criminal PM Benjamin Netanyahu to be put to death, B’nai B’rith and CIJA would become apoplectic and call that person a ‘terrorist’. But when pro-Israel fanatics call for Canada’s PM Justin Trudeau to be killed, they say nothing.”

In another tweet before the supposed “anti-Semitic” comment, Lascaris criticized Levitt’s trip to Israel during which he met the COO of Sodastream. He wrote,

“[while Michael](#) Levitt showcases Israel’s apartheid regime, supporters of his close ally B’nai B’rith called for the death penalty to be imposed on Justin Trudeau and Levitt’s Liberal colleagues Iqra Khalid, Omar Alghabra and Maryam Monsef. Shamefully, Levitt has said nothing.”

In their [video](#) about protesting in support of BB, Forrest and her friend talked about campaigning for former Rebel Media host Faith Goldy, who is running for mayor of Toronto. In fact, the white supremacist mayoral candidate [attended the rally](#) in support of BB. In April Goldy [promoted a book](#) by Romanian fascist leader Corneliu Codreanu titled *For My Legionaries*, which the Southern Poverty Law Center describes as one of “the canonical works of global fascism.” Published in 1937, it repeatedly attacks Jews and calls for eliminating the “Jewish threat”.

Here’s Goldy posing for a photo with the women that threatened the PM and MPs?
They must be known to police, as they organize plenty of hate rallies.
pic.twitter.com/StRkrRzKK8

— fleur delis♥ (@fleurdelis30) [September 3, 2018](#)

Lascaris repeatedly called on BB to denounce their supporters’ association with Goldy. He tweeted, “White supremacist Faith Goldy promoted fascist propaganda calling for eliminating ‘the Jewish menace’. Goldy was warmly received by B’nai B’rith supporters last week. And B’nai B’rith expects us to believe it speaks for Canadian Jewry?”

BB, CIJA and Levitt refused to disassociate themselves from protesters they aligned with before and after the August 29 protest. Instead they distorted an innocuous tweet about their two main allies within the Liberal Party caucus and sought to portray themselves as the victims. To the political establishment’s shame, the leaders of four political parties, as well as numerous other MPs, joined the smear of Lascaris.

Egged on by the politicians, CIJA and BB took their 'we are victims' silliness to embarrassing heights. CIJA CEO Shimon Koffler Fogel put out a statement implying that Lascaris' tweet was somehow connected to Rosh Hashanah. In an attack on the activist-lawyer titled "[An Urgent Note Before Rosh Hashanah: Fighting Antisemitism in 5779](#)", Fogel wrote: "Those who seek to demonize and ultimately dismantle the Jewish State, through BDS and other toxic forms of advocacy, are becoming bolder and more aggressive. They are letting the veil slip on the false distinction between anti-Zionism and antisemitism. And some of them openly seeking to undermine our rights as Jewish Canadians to be accepted as equals in Canadian politics, democracy, and civil society. It's clearer than ever that the fight against the anti-Israel agenda is a fight to preserve the future of the Canadian Jewish community."

B'nai B'rith CEO Michael Mostyn made the connection to the Jewish New Year more clear, tweeting "[Two days](#) before Rosh Hashanah, one of the holiest days in Judaism, Dimitri Lascaris hurled an antisemitic trope at Canadian leaders that was even promoted in the 'Elders of the Protocols of Zion.'"

Mostyn followed this shameful tweet by revealing the direct political objective of the attacks against Lascaris. BB's head tweeted, "[Canadians expect](#) ALL their elected officials across the political spectrum to refuse to interact with CJPME [Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East] until it apologizes and removes Dimitri Lascaris as their chair - this would certainly include Niki Ashton", who Lascaris supported in the NDP leadership race.

Comparing the Left's response to the attacks on Lascaris and activist-author [Nora Loreto](#) six months ago is informative. While both faced unprecedented backlash for publishing relatively innocuous tweets, only one of the social justice campaigners received substantial support from radical leftists.

This doesn't bode well for the Left's ability to respond to the accusations of anti-Semitism certain to follow Niki Ashton or someone with similar politics taking the reins of the NDP or another Left party coming close to governing. Israel lobby groups' [spectacular campaign against](#) Corbyn in Britain and their smears against Lascaris suggests that anyone serious about building a movement for climate justice, economic inequality, indigenous rights, etc. needs to think carefully about the best ways to counter CIJA, BB, etc. smear tactics.

We need to be prepared for the next Big Lies.

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