

Canadians All, in spite of Armageddon

“What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or in the holy name of liberty or democracy?” –Mahatma Gandhi, 1946.

At the time of writing this essay, since the start of the new phase of war in Palestine on October 7th 2023, already more than 4,000 casualties have been reported both in Israel –as a result of the surprise attack by Hamas– and in Gaza –as the result of the Israeli punitive retaliation. The United States and other NATO allies have already declared their unequivocal support for Israel –Canada included.

The Canadian government’s support for one of the parties in this conflict has worrisome implications for certain ethnocultural diasporas or expatriates who could be perceived as sympathetic to the other party –particularly those Canadian citizens of Muslim religion or whose mother tongue is Arabic. Although the RCMP, all provincial police departments, and all ministries of Justice and Public Security have promised to enhance security measures to protect vulnerable institutions, such as mosques and synagogues, there already are massive public demonstrations in progress, supporting either side in the conflict, and aggressively confronting each other in our streets.

There is a troubling geopolitical climate change going on. Since October of 2022, two separate groups of Canadian citizens have been negatively affected by accusations of engaging in espionage for, or been victims of assassins allegedly directed by, foreign powers –in both cases identified as authoritarian regimes suspected of subversive activities, in the eyes of “friendly” allied nations sharing “intelligence.” The Prime Minister relied on information supplied by C.S.I.S. (the Canadian Security Intelligence Service) to accuse both China and India of carrying out said illicit activities –thereby launching major diplomatic crises –which have yet to be resolved.

It is worrisome in the eyes of those of us who have studied the history of the deterioration of human rights in times of war, to witness the treatment of the various diasporas concerned (i.e., the Chines-Canadian, the Indo-Canadian, the Muslim and/or Arab-Canadian, the Jewish and/or Israeli-Canadian communities) in the light of what happened to other diasporas in the past. We recall the internment of Japanese-Canadians and Italian-Canadians during World War 2. We remember the impact of Antisemitism on Canadian hesitancy to help those fleeing the Nazi Holocaust.

At this point, it seems relevant to cite the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms’ Section 7: **“Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.”** Similar provisions may be found in the following Canadian laws and international instruments binding on Canada: section 1(a) of the *Canadian Bill of Rights*; articles 6 and 9 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*; articles 6 and 37 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*; articles 14 and 17 of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Section 7 of the Charter

requires that laws or state actions that interfere with life, liberty and security of the person conform to the principles of fundamental justice — the basic principles that underlie our notions of justice and fair process. *

It is important to emphasize that, although most members of the various diasporas are Canadian citizens, none of the words in Section 7 or other provincial human rights charters refer only to citizens, but to **all human beings in Canada, regardless of status.**

Furthermore, as the bloody Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been going on sporadically for more than 75 years, almost four generations of Canadian citizens of either Jewish or Arabic extraction have earned the right to be treated humanely as Canadian human beings, regardless of whether the present conflict –God [Adonai or Allah] forbid– degenerate into a full-scale World War.

* <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/rfc-dlc/ccrf-ccd1/check/art7.html>

Written by Pascual Delgado, October 13th 2023.