

An 'Honorary Jew' fights to Present the Truth About Israel

BY MARY LOU AMBROGIO

LONDONER Mark Vandermaas is a Canadian civil rights advocate-educator who is the founder of the **Caledonia Victims Project and Israel Truth Week**. His parents suffered under Nazi occupation in Holland where they watched Jews taken away to be murdered, and his father escaped from a Nazi work camp. Mark earned the United Nations peacekeeping medal for his 1978 tour of duty in the Middle East where he saw, firsthand, the remnants of wars begun by Arab attempts to exterminate the Jewish state.

Mark founded Israel Truth Week and produced its first conference in 2012 after Jewish students at Western University in London, Ontario were intimidated into silence while campus police watched. Israel Truth Week events have been held in London, Hamilton, Toronto and Boston, raising more than \$17,000 for the ALYN children's hospital in Jerusalem and Israel's ambulance service, Magen David Adom.

In December 2011, Mark was a member of the 'Caledonia 8' who lined up to be arrested one-by-one for 'trespassing' when they dared to walk down a public road through the violent and racially-segregated Caledonia occupation at the Douglas Creek Estates. During the summer of 2011, Mark conducted a 26-day vigil at a London mosque to protest against its support (supplying finances and personnel) for the 'Canadian Boat to Gaza' which attempted unsuccessfully to break the Israeli blockade of weapons to the Hamas terror organization.

Mark received one of the greatest honours of his life when, in recognition of his contribution to the success of

the 2012 National Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony, the **Canadian Society for Yad Vashem** called him to the stage as part of the Zachor Coalition to light a candle. Mark was unofficially named an 'Honorary Jew' in 2014 at his third annual Israel Truth Week conference in Toronto by Goldi Steiner, co-founder of **Canadians for Israel's Legal Rights**.

Is there a common thread in your Caledonia activism and your activism with respect to Israel, and if so, what is that thread?

Perhaps 'rope' is a better metaphor for the commonalities. I see my activism as part of the civilizational struggle we all face today: the defence of free people against the forces of totalitarianism. Defending Israel is the same as defending Caledonia and vice versa because we share common values, and because we are facing the same enemies who use the same weapons against us.

#1 False accusations of stolen land by evil colonial settlers. Contrary to popular belief, modern 'Palestine' was formally established in 1922 with unanimous approval of the League of Nations when the Mandate for Palestine was approved. The Mandate's purpose was the "reconstituting" of the Jewish "national home". The Mandate explicitly recognized the "historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine" and said that the administration "shall encourage... close settlement by Jews on the land." A subsequent Memorandum gave all land east of the Jordan River promised to Jews, to Arabs instead in appeasement. This was the original two-state solution—voted into being by the world community, disproving the stolen land narrative. (*An original copy of the Mandate & the Trans-Jordan Memorandum can be found in the Resource section of Mark's*

website)

In Caledonia, every court in the Haldimand Tract has examined and completely rejected claims of stolen land. As with Israel, the truth is startling in its simplicity, and lies about stolen land by genocidal white settlers is false: Six Nations were never indigenous to Canada; they lived in New York, and only came here as refugees after the US Revolutionary War to live on land that a grateful Crown purchased for them from the Mississauga of the New Credit Indians in recognition of their service as allies in accordance with the Haldimand Proclamation of 1763. In each case, lies were used to justify violence against innocents and threaten the rule of law underlying democracy.

#2 The radical left is using native militants to undermine the rule of law and justify violence against innocents in order to serve their own anti-capitalist purposes, just as they use Arab militants against the only free-market country in the Middle East. Every group that hates Israel is, or was, in Caledonia: Marxists, Communists, anarchists, radical unionists, radical student groups and various Arab-Palestinian groups. In May 2006 the Niagara Palestinian Association raised the "Palestinian" flag beside the Mohawk Warrior Flag. Present at the flag raising was a Marxist-Leninist Party candidate named Jamila Ghaddar from McMaster University's Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights, who later said: "In the months following, through cold and moments of exhaustion and worry we would raise our eyes to the swaying of the flags and think, we are one, and the winds carry our colours together from Jerusalem to the Grand River." The Israel-Caledonia commonality couldn't be more evident.

#3 Refusal of police and government (OPP re Caledonia;

UN re Israel) to enforce the law in order to protect the innocent and their rights. As a former UN peacekeeper, I'm ashamed that the UN allowed genocidal Iranian leader, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, to speak to the General Assembly on the holiest day in Judaism, Yom Kippur, in 2012. When it voted—on the 65th anniversary of the November 29, 1947 vote to partition Palestine (again) which preceded the declaration of the State of Israel—to give observer status to 'Palestine,' it stained its hands with the blood of every victim of terrorism in the world by legitimizing the use of violence against the innocent. Rather than uphold truth and justice and the rule of law for the victims of a member state, it endorsed those who refuse to accept its existence and who still glorify and use terror against innocents.

In Caledonia, the OPP and the Ontario government effectively legalized native violence against innocents and intimidation of land owners by refusing to protect them or their rights. My bewildered Jewish friends, after witnessing the failings of police in Calgary, Toronto and London (where police left 13 of us, including a Holocaust survivor to cope with hundreds of pro-Hamas protesters who crossed the street to intimidate us), are starting to see they may no longer be able to trust police to protect them and their rights. This is the essence of our struggle in Caledonia: applying the lessons of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to dramatize the injustices of two-tier policing which neglected to protect innocent non-natives while fully enabling lawless native militants.

#4 In Caledonia the focus was on finding 'solutions' (i.e. appeasing those terrorizing the town) and ignoring inconvenient truths about the false

nature of land claims and racist policing practices that brought the town to a state of anarchy. The parallel with Israel is eerie: many well-meaning people think that a 'new' two-state solution is preferable to the controversial but honest action of holding up Israel's 'land title deed' from the Mandate to dispel the lies. It may well be that Israelis and Caledonians will give away part of their land for peace, but it should never take place until those who hate and lie admit the truth. If we can't have peace or a solution, let's at least walk in the light of truth. Truth before solutions.

The lessons we learned about mounting an effective campaign against our government's appeasement of violent native militants and their allies are transferrable. The biggest compliment we ever received was at an aboriginal-anarchist conference where a special session was held to find a way to counter our use of Dr. King's methods because, as they said, "They're making US look like the racists." The struggle to restore Israel's image is very winnable.

What's your take on the forthright support for Israel voiced by Stephen Harper and John Baird? Aside from simply being the right thing to do and incredibly courageous, is it politically advantageous in any way as some believe?

First, as a former member of the Canadian Forces and a Canadian, I'm so proud of our Prime Minister for his government's public position on Israel. It's obviously a moral position, not a political one, when you stand against critics with an unpopular friend who has been abandoned and betrayed. If the PM has a political 'strategy', it's likely to attract right-thinking Canadians through leadership and a strong moral position consistent with Canadian values. I can't imagine a Canadian prime minister who'd criticize Jewish victims for fighting back against evil people who fight with their children on their lap. But, if I could have the pleasure

of sitting with Stephen Harper to talk about my pride in his stand for Israel, I would ask him to remove one key weapon from the hands of those who are helping to whip up a climate of hatred against Israel; we need to revise Foreign Affairs' official position that condemns Israel for occupying the land that was promised by the world—including Canada—to

A: It's not your imagination, and I think this resolve is directly responsible for the more balanced coverage by some of the media. I believe it's because Israel's leaders gave the journalists nowhere to go by repeating that ending the violence was up to Hamas. I hope that they show the same resolve in resisting those pushing them towards a new two-state



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the Jews under the terms of the League of Nations Mandate For Palestine. The United Church, for example, uses this policy statement as justification for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS). That needs to be changed.

The war may be far away from us and yet we've seen many heated and violent protests here in Canada. What are your thoughts about those protests? I believe in free speech and rule of law. If leaders do their best to ensure their followers remain peaceful and within the law, and police enforce the law equally, I don't have a problem but that's not happening. Yet another comparable element with Caledonia is the arrogance and lack of respect for the law which makes them think they can beat people up, vandalize property and intimidate at will.

Have you noticed more resolve and determination from spokespeople for the Israeli government to stand up for Israel's right to defend itself this time? Assuming it's not just my imagination, where is this resolve coming from?

solution without having first destroyed the false occupation narrative.

Mosab Hassan Yousef, eldest son of the founder of Hamas, wrote a book called The Son of Hamas telling the story of how and why he started working with Shin Bet (Israel's Internal Security Service) to stop suicide bombers before they could commit acts of terror. You're familiar with his story so can you explain what motivated him and what his opinion is on the current situation with respect to Israel? *Son of Hamas* tells the story of how, after a chance meeting with a Christian in Jerusalem, he started studying the Bible where he learned a very strange ideology that was completely antithetical to the one he grew up with: the idea of loving one's enemies. It had a profound effect on him, motivating him to reject the culture of hate in favour of helping the Israelis stop terror. I had the pleasure of hearing and meeting him when he came to Canada, and I'll never forget his pithy, but stunningly-clear observation regarding the root

cause of the Arab-Jew conflict: "The problem with the West is that it's trying to find a political solution to a religious problem." He, more than anyone, realized that the root cause of the conflict is Islamic supremacism and its culture of death. This, of course, is in perfect harmony with the Hamas Charter which calls for jihadist genocide against Jews and rejects all peaceful solutions. When the Palestinian Authority - which also glorifies the killing of Jews to its children - partnered with Hamas it admitted, in effect, sharing Hamas' mission to rid ALL of Israel of Jews. Abbas has already said no Jews will be allowed to live in 'Palestine.'

We've heard a lot about the casualties of the Israel/Hamas war but nothing from the left or mainstream media about the number of Syrians and Christians murdered during this same period. In terms of sheer numbers, those numbers dwarf the casualties of the current conflict in Israel. Why don't we see protesters taking to the streets to raise awareness of these atrocities and the brutal acts being committed against Syrians and Christians?

People often ask why, for example, some gays are willing to help terrorist groups destroy the only safe country for gay people - which happens to be the only free-enterprise, democratic country in the region. I tell them it's quite simple: they obviously care more about destroying capitalism than they care about their gay brothers and sisters who are being persecuted in Islamic countries. Otherwise they'd be trying to delegitimize the countries who murder gays. If your ideology is focused on destroying capitalism why speak out for Christians, Jews or even Arab victims in un-free states?

Those who protest the casualties in Gaza might have more credibility if they showed concern for Arabs killing other Arabs, and Muslims killing other Muslims, Christians and Jews, etc. Why does the violence

committed by some Muslims against their own people and other innocents get a pass from these groups?

When I spoke to over 2,000 people at a recent Queen's Park rally for Israel, the first thing I did was ask the crowd to observe one minute of silence for Jewish AND Arab victims of Hamas... and they did, with open hearts. I'd really like to see the people who claim to care about Gazans do the same but that's hard to do if you actually believe in the Hamas mission of killing Jews and driving them out of the region.

Jonathan Halevi, an expert on the Middle East, recently expressed concern about a growing Islamist presence in the West Bank with groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir, Islamic Jihad and even ISIS becoming more active. Do you think that people in the west understand what this could mean for Israel and the west if these radical elements are allowed to keep growing?

Mr. Halevi is a former IDF intelligence officer who has spoken at two Israel Truth Week conferences where he has given insight to the hate and terror machine in places like Gaza. Most people couldn't find Israel on a map, so I think it's probably safe to say most people don't understand the threat to Israel or us if the world continues to push Israel to the point of being unable to protect us from them.

I recently read an article in Time magazine about the reliability of casualty figures reported in mainstream media. After providing the evidence and rationale for his conclusion, the author said that numbers should be viewed with suspicion both with respect to total numbers and the breakdown of combatants versus non-combatants. Since the figures used by the media form the basis of the public's view of whether or not Israel is using excessive and indiscriminate force, accuracy is critical and yet, many people continue to take those numbers at face

value. Why is this and do you have any suggestions for a reliable news source that people can check with?

He's right. It astounds me that any credible news agency actually reports as fact numbers from a totalitarian, terror-based regime whose founding document is as close to the Final Solution as you can get. This is an organization with a track record of fabricating atrocities and tweeting out pictures of dead children killed in Syria. One need only ask why no journalists were reporting the number of Hamas terrorists killed. Either Hamas was hiding the numbers; or journalists had the numbers and refused to report them; or they had them and were told they could only report them if they wanted a bullet in the head. If this was 1945, CNN and the CBC would be interviewing Joseph Goebbels and using his numbers to cause doubt about whether or not Winston Churchill should stop bombing the German war industry machine because too many German civilians were dying. As to where to get numbers, I'd be more inclined to get them from the army that doesn't hide behind women and children: the Israel Defense Forces. Predictably, it now appears that about 900 Hamas terrorists were killed which is about 50% of all casualties.

Anything else you'd like to say?

In response to the angry letters and hate mail *The Yodeller* is about to receive to this interview, I suggest readers first read the complete **Mandate For Palestine** document so they understand that they've been lied to about Jews stealing land, and then read the **Hamas Charter**. Then, before putting pen to paper, they should ask themselves why they're so eager to aid today's Nazis. How about doing something morally right, instead: like holding a vigil for Arab and Jewish victims of Hamas. I'll be there.

Mark's website and more information can be found at www.israeltruthweek.org