

An Arab Israeli Asks ‘What Apartheid’?

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Yoseph Haddad is an Arab Israeli who is fed up with being told he lives under an “apartheid” regime. He recently expressed his particular anger with B’Tselem, a left-wing Israeli NGO that spreads this baseless claim of Israel “apartheid” around the world. He takes the NGO eloquently to task here: “What apartheid?,” by Yoseph Haddad, [here](#). Haddad writes:

Last week, I woke up one morning in my Nazareth home and was astonished to discover I was living under a racist apartheid regime whose only purpose is “the promotion and perpetuation of the superiority of one group of people – the Jews.” I rubbed my eyes, read the story in greater depth, and calmed down as soon as I realized the reports were based on yet another report by the left-wing NGO B’Tselem.

The problem is that this report has spread like wildfire around the world, and the propaganda is working. B’Tselem,

which presents itself as a human-rights organization, is in fact known as an organization with a clear political stance that is in contrast to Israel's position. As it turns out, people have no boundaries. How dare they say that I, an Arab Israeli who served along with Jewish soldiers in the Israel Defense Forces and managed hundreds of Jewish employees, live under an apartheid regime?

How can anyone say our society is living under an apartheid regime when among us you will find doctors, judges, and even lawmakers? How can you say Samer Haj-Yehia lives in an apartheid regime when he is the head of the biggest bank in Israel? B'Tselem has already broken the record for hypocrisy, but to compare Israel to an apartheid regime for its racial laws is not only a distorted lie but an insult to all those South Africans who actually lived through apartheid. It is contempt for and cynical exploitation of the concept.

I am not here to claim that everything in Israel is perfect. Some things need to be fixed, and how. But show me a country where everything is perfect...

When B'Tselem director Hagai El-Ad, who is Jewish, decides that I, my Arab family, and my Arab friends are all living under an apartheid regime, he and his organizations are basically telling us they see us as second-class citizens. B'Tselem, don't push your agendas at our expense...

This is an eloquent response by an Israeli Arab who hits back at B'Tselem, furious at its falsehoods, not only by denying its charge that Israel is an "apartheid" state, but offering his own story, as someone who both served in the IDF, and as a civilian directed "hundreds of Jewish employees," as counter-evidence to B'Tselem's preposterous claims. And he hits back where it hurts at B'Tselem, an organization of far-left Israelis whose reason for being is to undermine their own country's image, by noting how the group manages to exploit

and diminish real examples of “apartheid” for, as Yoseph Haddad says, “to compare Israel to an apartheid regime for its racial laws is not only a distorted lie but an insult to all those South Africans who actually lived through apartheid. It is contempt for and cynical exploitation of the concept.”

He mentions that there are Arab “doctors, judges, even lawmakers” in Israel. He might have added that those Arab “doctors” include specialists who run departments at Israeli hospitals and work side-by-side with Jewish colleagues, as their equals. He could have noted that those Arab “lawmakers” include members of the Arab Joint List, which is the third largest political bloc in the Knesset. He could have observed that Arab Israelis are not just “judges” at the municipal level, but sit on Israel’s Supreme Court. He could have said that Israeli Arabs are sent abroad as ambassadors for their country. There is complete legal equality of Arab and Jew in Israel. In only one thing do they differ, and it is to the Arabs’ advantage. Israeli Arabs, unlike Israeli Jews, are not required to serve in the IDF, though they may – like Yoseph Haddad – do so if they wish. There are Arab majors and lieutenant colonels though, as yet, no Arab generals, but that’s only a matter of time. And as Haddad notes, there is no glass ceiling for Arab Israelis in business, either: the head of Israel’s largest bank – Bank Leumi – is an Arab.

B’Tselem, take note. Don’t force Mr. Haddad to hold you up for ridicule yet again.

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