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September 29, 2008

Editor, Jewish Tribune
Toronto, Canada

Editor,

After the New Israel Fund rejected invitations to hold an informative public debate with me during my recent trip to Toronto, it is unfortunate that the head of the NIF's operations in Israel, Eliezer Yaari, attempted to make his case in a highly misleading way ("New Israel Fund director responds to criticism", September 25). In his comments to the Jewish Tribune, Yaari claimed that the NIF gives large sums to Arab NGOs "because Arabs are citizens of Israel". This is not at issue, but rather, the problem is the way in which massive NIF funding empowers the most radical Arab groups such as Adalah that refer to Israel as "racist", use terms such as "apartheid", and actively campaign for the dismantling of Israel as a Jewish democratic state. This has nothing to do with equal rights, and is the antithesis of the Zionist objectives that NIF tells donors that it supports. NIF-grantees such as Adalah and Mossawa frequently submit documents to the United Nations as part of the anti-Israel demonization campaign (as detailed on www.ngo-monitor.org). There are many legitimate causes in the Israeli-Arab sector for NIF to support, such as health care and education, but Yaari and others that control the large NIF disbursements in Israel have chosen to fund the most radical groups, many of which are also part of the Durban process.

In addition, in promoting NIF's funding for "education", Yaari failed to mention the investigation opened by the Israeli attorney general into the activities of New Profile, which is closely linked to Coalition of Women for Peace – a major NIF grantee. New Profile's main "educational" activity is to encourage Israeli youth to avoid serving in the armed forces – another example of anti-Zionism. And there are many other examples in NIF's list.

Perhaps Yaari and officials from NIF can provide reasonable explanations, particularly to their donors, that go beyond very general and misleading statements. But in order to do this, they will have to face informed critics and research organizations such as NGO Monitor directly.

Prof. Gerald Steinberg

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