CNN fires contributor accused of "anti-Semitism" for defending Palestinian rights

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1 December 2018

Corporate news giant CNN fired one of its contributors, Marc Lamont Hill, on Thursday. While CNN has not provided a full explanation, the firing came one day after Hill made public statements in support of Palestinians and critical of Israel, which were falsely presented as anti-Semitic.

Hill is an academic, digital journalist and media personality who has engaged in political activism in support of various racial and social equality causes. He voted for Green Party candidate Jill Stein in the 2016 presidential elections, criticizing both the Democratic and Republican Parties.

In addition, he has long spoken out against Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people. Hill gave a speech at a United Nations meeting on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which convened on Wednesday. He condemned the occupation of the Palestinian territory since 1948, pointed to state violence and the denial of basic democratic rights of Palestinians, and urged UN member-nations to boycott Israel.

"We must advocate and promote non-violence," he said, "[but] we cannot endorse a narrow politics of respectability that shames Palestinians for resisting, for refusing to do nothing in the face of state violence and ethnic cleansing." He also called for a "free Palestine from the river to the sea," and defended equal rights for both Israeli and Palestinian citizens.

The comments were painted as anti-Semitic by pro-Israel groups such as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the National Council of Young Israel (NCYI). They claim his use of the phrase "river to the sea" is a call for the destruction of the Israeli state and the people living in it.

"It is a shame that once again, this annual event at the United Nations does not promote constructive pathways to 'Palestinian solidarity' and a future of peace, but instead divisive and destructive action against Israel," a vice president for the ADL said.

Hill rebutted those allegations in a series of posts on Twitter, stating, "I do not support anti-Semitism, killing Jewish people, or any of the other things attributed to my speech. I have spent my life fighting these things." He continued, "My reference to 'river to the sea' was not a call to destroy anything or anyone. It was a call for justice, both in Israel and in the West Bank/Gaza. The speech very clearly and specifically said those things. No amount of debate will change what I actually said or what I meant."

The attempt to equate criticism of Israel or Zionism with anti-Semitism is longstanding. The aim is to suppress opposition to the Israeli state and defense of the Palestinian people, as well as to push for stronger military and diplomatic support of Israel.

The argument has been recycled by various political and media figures. In July of 2017, at a ceremony commemorating the Nazi deportation of Jews from Paris in 1942, French President Emmanuel Macron declared, "We will not surrender to anti-Zionism, because it is a reinvention of anti-Semitism."

More recently, the right wing of the Labour Party in Britain launched a campaign to drive out party leader Jeremy Corbyn based on accusations of "anti-Semitism." This is a frameup that cites his relations with various opponents of the state of Israel and his past condemnations of its crimes against the Palestinians.

CNN's firing of Hill on a right-wing basis is just one expression of the mainstream media adapting to and bolstering the far right. American news stations have also rejected contributors for criticisms of right-wing politics and regimes. In June, the *Pittsburgh Post-*

Gazette fired long-time cartoon artist Rob Rogers after a new editorial team rejected multiple pieces that criticized Trump and his anti-immigrant policies.

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