

Feb. 7, 2009

The Editor,

Dalhousie Gazette.

Dear Editor:

One must read with amazement the extraordinary statements made by Paige MacPherson, Alexandra Dezenhouse and Larry Riteman, trying to justify Israeli policies and the massacre committed in the attack on Gaza. These statements defy the facts on the ground. This vicious attack brought about the killing of 1350 people including 417 children, 108 women and 120 elderly, as well as 5450 injured. Four thousand homes were totally demolished and 21,000 homes damaged, leaving 100,000 people homeless. These figures are confirmed by international and UN observers, and reported in The Lancet Global Health Network, Feb. 2, 2009. In this attack, besides the use of hundreds of tons of explosives, Israel used white phosphorus bombs and an experimental weapon DIME [Dense Inert Metal Explosive], weapons that are banned by international law, when used in civilian habitations.

We are told that Israel, like Canada, is a democracy. I think that is an insult directed at Canada and Canadians. Israeli democracy is best described by the noted Israeli journalist **Maxim Ghilan** who wrote in an editorial in the Feb. 1983 issue of the Paris-based magazine, Israel and Palestine, titled "Israeli Democracy, Values & Limits." He stated: "Israel is a Western-type democracy for Jews only.....Arabs, who are citizens of the state, are less fortunate. By covert or overt means, they are arrested arbitrarily and may be held without trial according to emergency regulations; they are not granted equal economic privileges and are prevented from access to public housing and loans given only to those who served in the IDF and allied services, bodies into which most Arabs are not admitted."

Ms. Dezenhouse objects to describing Israeli practices as apartheid, and claims that this is insulting to the victims of apartheid in South Africa. I think Archbishop Desmond Tutu can relate to us the facts: **"I've been very distressed in my visit to the Holy Land; it reminded me so much of what happened to us blacks in South Africa.**

**I have seen the humiliation of the Palestinians at checkpoints and roadblocks, suffering like us when young white police officers prevented us from moving about" {Archbishop Desmond Tutu, The Guardian, April 29, 2002}. Shulamit Aloni, former Education Minister in Israel stated: "Jewish self-righteousness is taken for granted among ourselves to such an extent that we fail to see what's right in front of our eyes. It's simply inconceivable that the ultimate victims, the Jews, can carry out evil deeds. Nevertheless, the state of Israel practises its own, quite violent, form of Apartheid with the native Palestinian population" [Counter Punch, Jan. 8, 2007].**

On, [Nov. 29, 2006], the Atlanta Journal-Constitution ran the following op-ed, by John Dugard, a South African former anti-apartheid leader. He is currently the Special Rapporteur on Palestine to the United Nations Human Rights Council. He not only compares Israeli policies to apartheid, but says that in many ways Israeli policies are worse than South African apartheid was. Archbishop Desmond Tutu and John Dugard knew what they were talking about.

Israeli policies display blatant racism directed at its Muslim and Christian citizens. The late **Professor Israel Shahak**, a Holocaust survivor and Chairperson of the **Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights**, summed it up accurately in his statement: "**It is my considered opinion that the state of Israel is a racist state in the full meaning of this term. In this state, people are discriminated against, in the most permanent and legal way and in the most important areas of life, only because of their origin. This racist discrimination began in Zionism and is carried today mainly in cooperation with the institutions of the Zionist movement.**"{"The Racist Nature of Zionism and of the Zionist State of Israel", article published in *Pi-Ha'aton*, the weekly newspaper of the students of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Nov.5, 1975}.

It is time that Israel's apologists should come to see the facts as they are and so that all can work together to see that equality and justice is made available to the Palestinians, so that Israelis and Palestinians may be assured peace and security in this tortured land.

Yours sincerely,

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