

Subject: Distortions galore.

Jan. 8, 2011.

The Editor,

The Halifax Herald.

Dear Editor,

Sean McCutcheon and Jim Trussler, [Letters, Jan.8], are making a series of falsehoods and factual distortions. Contradicting Judy Haiven, McCutcheon states: "the "activists" on board that ship [Mavi Marmara] were not unarmed... and attacked the Israeli commandos with bludgeoning weapons." Former US Marine, Kenneth O'Keefe, who was on the boat, stated: " A Turkish photographer was shot and killed [by Israeli commandos on the helicopters] before the first soldier landed on the boat." [Haaretz. Sept. 24, 2010]. He also stated that the peace activists ,when attacked on the boat, in international waters, used clubs and rods and threw chairs at the soldiers attacking them [Haaretz. Oct.1, 2010]. The UN Human Rights Council Report [Sept. 28, 2010] stated: " Israel committed grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law" and "The Council found the blockade unlawful."

Jim Trussler claims that Israel is a true democracy and "where citizens-Jew, Christian and Arab alike- and foreigners are free to criticize the state." Contrary to this, there are scores of Israeli laws that deny its Christian and Muslim citizens basic rights. A Haaretz editorial [Dec. 2, 2010.] is titled: "Israel can't be a democracy with two classes of citizens". An article, by Gideon Levy [Haaretz. Dec. 12, 2010] is titled: " The farce of a secular and democratic state", confirms that. He goes on to state: "It is time to admit that this approach can only be called racist." The recent declarations, by hundreds of Israeli rabbis calling on Jews not to rent their apartments to Arabs, is a manifestation of the racism there. The freedom to criticize the state that, Tussler claims, is not evident when you see the new Israeli legislation which is referred to in the article by Gideon Levy [Haaretz. Jan.6, 2011], where he reports: "In the Israel of 2011, it is no longer legitimate to belong to the Left. It is illegitimate to campaign for human rights or to oppose the occupation." An Israeli activist, Jonathan Pollak has been sentenced to three months in prison for participating in a peaceful protest, in Tel Aviv, against the Gaza siege. These are only few examples of what goes on in Israel.

It is time that the international community begin to see the real nature of the Israeli so-called democracy.

Yours sincerely,

Ismail Zayid, MD.