

Feb. 17, 2011.

The Editor,

The Chronicle Herald.

Dear Editor:

Gerald E. Mennie [letter, Feb. 17] is right in stating that democracy has different definitions. But his inclusion of Israel amongst the states that are exemplified by principles of peace, tolerance, social justice etc., defies the facts on the ground. Israel practices selective democracy, for Jews only. Its Muslim and Christian citizens are denied the rights that are available to Jews only. Its laws clearly discriminate against its non-Jewish citizens. These non-Jewish citizens are not entitled, by Israeli laws, to buy, lease or till 92% of the land in Israel. "A number of leading rabbis who signed on to a religious ruling to forbid renting homes to gentiles – a move particularly aimed against Arabs – defended their decision on Tuesday with the declaration that the land of Israel belongs to the Jews. Dozens of Israel's municipal chief rabbis signed on to the ruling, which comes just months after the chief rabbi of Safed initiated a call urging Jews to refrain from renting or selling apartments to non-Jews." [Haaretz. Dec. 7, 2010]. This racist practice and discrimination against the Muslim and Christian citizens of Israel is confirmed in the statement made by the late Professor Israel Shahak, a Holocaust survivor, who stated:

"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 out today mainly in cooperation with the institutions of the Zionist movement. [The Racist Nature of Zionism and of the Zionist State of Israel Pi-Ha'aton (the weekly newspaper of the students of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem) 5 November 1975].

There are many other manifestations of this selective democracy in Israel.

Your sincerely,

Ismail Zayid, MD.