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SEEK THE TRUTH AND SERVE HUMANITY

EDITORIAL

How do you write an editorial on state murder, which is what we are witnessing being practised by Israel against the people of Palestine? While the world watches, a nation, extensively funded and supported by the United States, uses sophisticated weaponry against a poorly armed and savagely contained neighbour whose right to defend itself and its people must be upheld. Despite its self-proclaimed and hypocritical concern for human rights around the world, the United States has been 'funding and supporting Israel's genocide' of the civilian population in Gaza for many years.

Soraya Sepahpour Ulrich, an independent writer and researcher, told Press TV in a phone interview on Thursday, 'The attitude here in the United States especially of political leaders is nothing short of supporting and funding genocide of mass scale ... This has been the attitude for a number of decades,' she added.

Ulrich pointed out that US support for Israel's 'genocide' in Gaza only reveals the 'hypocrisy' of Washington in its claims about human rights. The Palestinian territory that has been under a crippling Israeli blockade since 2007 is now suffering from a humanitarian crisis worsened by the latest violence. The US has been financially and militarily supporting Israel using American taxpayers' money. Under an existing 10-year aid agreement between Washington and Tel Aviv, \$30 billion of American money is flowing to Israel.

By their own questionable standards, the US, the UK and Australia should be imposing economic sanctions on Israel, calling for UN action and thundering abroad their opposition to what can only be called Israeli genocide in Palestine. Of course they won't do this because they have double standards, braying their hypocritical demands for 'democracy' in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria, but not requiring such 'democracy' among their Middle Eastern allies who practise medieval autocracy and vicious exploitation.

'We must defend ourselves' says Israel. Against what? Poorly armed, starving, physically contained people whose land was stolen and who were displaced much as were the Jewish people in Europe under Nazism who lost their land and property and were herded into ghettos.

It doesn't matter how powerful and influential the Jewish lobby is around the world, it doesn't matter that they attack and vilify anyone who dares to speak the truth about their appalling record of slaughter, exploitation and robbery against the Palestinians. It does matter that they use the weapon of 'antisemitism' against their critics, and constantly draw attention to the six million Jews who died in the Holocaust as if that justifies their criminal acts against the Palestinians.

Critics of Israeli government policies must not be silenced. Neither Israel nor the United States is beyond criticism. Indeed, we believe it is the responsibility of everyone to read, assess, draw conclusions and take whatever action is possible to prevent this ongoing Israeli terrorism against the Palestinians. We stress, however, that our criticism is not of the Jewish people, but their government, and that of the US. There is growing opposition to Israeli terrorism from inside Israel and the US. As such, a number of the articles in this special issue of *Beacon* are written by Jewish and Palestinian activists who recognise this. ■

SLAUGHTER AS THE WORLD WATCHES

SPECIAL PALESTINE EDITION

Australian Jews speak out against ‘slaughter of innocents’

164 Australian Jews have signed an open letter condemning Israel’s assault on Gaza. **Chris Graham** reports.

More than 150 Jewish Australians have signed an open letter urging their fellow Jews to ‘end the silence’ over the ‘slaughter of innocents’ in Gaza by Israel.

The letter, organised by Vivienne Porzsolt of ‘Jews against the Occupation’, calls on all Australian Jews to take a public stand against the ‘brutal occupation of the Palestinians by Israel’, which is ‘being done in our name’.

In a written statement accompanying the letter, Porzsolt said many Australian Jews were appalled by the actions of Israel.

‘The outrage that all people of humanity feel at the conduct of the State of Israel against the Palestinians can too easily be directed to Jews in general,’ Porzsolt wrote.

‘As we have seen with the ugly cartoon by Le Lievre and the antisemitic attack on the Jewish children on a Bondi bus, old antisemitic tropes re-emerge, fuelled by the atrocities committed by Israel.

‘No racism, including antisemitism, is ever excusable. However, the Jewish community leadership promotes the identification of Jews with Israel and all its actions.

‘They label Jewish critics of Israel as “self-hating” and “not real Jews”. They debase the charge of antisemitism by applying it to all criticism of Israel. It is not surprising then that some may hold Jews in general responsible for Israel’s actions.’

The letter is headed ‘An Appeal From Australian Jews to the Australian Jewish Community’ and the group includes doctors and professors, former politicians, writers, Order of Australia winners, educators, artists and academics.

It reads: ‘As Australians of Jewish identity and background, we are appalled at the current mass killing in Gaza by Israel. We reject the official mythology that Israel is under existential threat and acting in self-defence,’ the letter reads.

‘Since July 12, the Israeli army has killed more than 1,900 people in Gaza. Hospitals, schools, beaches, playgrounds – even UN shelters have been attacked.

‘The whole world has reacted with horror and outrage.

‘In the face of the destruction of so many lives, we cannot remain silent while the official Jewish leadership gives such active support to Israel’s attack on Gaza.

‘Their decision to stand with the oppressor rather than the oppressed is a betrayal of our history and values, when authentic moral leadership is more important than ever.

‘Siege, occupation, the slaughter of innocents and collective punishment of an entire people are deeply wrong and unlawful.

‘Yet the Jewish leadership uncritically promulgates the propaganda of the Israeli government that this is self-defence.

‘They are failing to represent and serve the Jewish community.

‘Silence is consent and evil triumphs when good people do nothing.

‘We call on our fellow Jews to break their silence, to take a public stand, not just for an immediate cease-fire, but for an end to the underlying conditions of siege and occupation which defy elementary morality, decency and humanity, as well as international and humanitarian law.’

Below is the list of Australian Jews who have signed the letter. Porzsolt said other Australian Jews were welcome to attach their signature. You can get more details at the Jews Against The Occupation website.

Source: New Matilda

If readers would like a copy of the article with the signatures, contact the church office.



Surgeon Dr Mads Gilbert gives a powerful speech about Gaza after returning home to Norway

8 August 2014

In a powerful 25-minute speech on his return home to Tromsø, Norway from 15 days treating the wounded in Gaza, the Norwegian emergency surgeon Dr Mads Gilbert said: 'The heart of the Earth beats in Gaza now. It bleeds, but it beats.'

He went on to say: 'The Palestinian people's resistance in Gaza today is admirable, it is fair and it is a struggle for all of us. We do not want a world where raw power can be abused, to kill those who struggle for justice.'

Below is the first few minutes of the speech transcribed from the video that is subtitled in English. In an appeal to Norwegian citizens, he asks them to imagine what their country would be like today if they had not struggled for its liberation from German occupation.

The video follows and we ask you to listen and applaud this amazing man who once again volunteered his services to Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza while the bombs were falling. He not only selflessly risked his life to save others, but in the midst of all that chaos, Mads Gilbert continues to speak in defence of a shunned people and asks what we would do ourselves in such dreadful circumstances and to remember our humanity.

I know you applaud for Gaza. I know you applaud for those who are there, the heroes of Gaza.

This will be no easy appeal to make, because I am now overcome by the mildness, the warmth, the safety, the

absence of bombs, jets, blood and death. And then all that we've had to keep inside comes to the surface – so forgive me if sometimes I break.

I thought when I got home and met my daughters, Siri and Torbjørn, my son-in-law and my grandkids Jenny and Torje, that it is such a mild country we live in.

It is so good, with a kind of humanity in all relationships, because we actually built this country on respect for diversity, respect for the individual, respect for human dignity.

And imagine being back in 1945. And I beg to be understood when I say that I am not comparing the German Nazi regime with Israel. I do not.

But I compare occupation with occupation. Imagine that we in 1945 did not win the liberation struggle, did not throw out the occupier, could not see a bright future or believe our kids had a future. Imagine the occupier remaining in our country, taking it piece by piece, for decades upon decades. And banished us to the leanest areas. Took the fish in the sea, took the land, took the water, and we became more and more confined.

And here in Tromsø we were actually imprisoned, because here there was so much resistance to the occupation. So we are imprisoned for seven years, because in an election we had chosen the most resilient, those who would not accept the occupation.

Then, after seven years of confinement in our city, Tromsø, the occupier began to bomb us. And they began to bomb us the day we made a political alliance with those in the other confined parts of occupied Norway, to say that we Norwegians would stand together against the occupier. Then they began to bomb us.

They bombed our university hospital, then the medical centre, then killed our ambulance workers, they bombed schools where those who had lost their homes were trying to seek

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The Canberra declaration on Gaza

by **LEE RHIANNON**

The following letter has been signed by a number of Australian politicians. It has been covered by the ABC and SMH.

August 2014

We the undersigned members of Australian federal and state parliaments, call on all Australian politicians to condemn the ongoing Israeli military bombardment and invasion of Gaza.

We call on Australian politicians to support an immediate cessation of hostilities and a ceasefire deal that includes an end to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories and to the blockade of Gaza.

We call on all Australian politicians to also support the United Nations Human Rights Council's decision to launch an independent inquiry into purported violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

Over 1 200 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed, since Israel started its military attack on Gaza three weeks ago. The United Nations says at least 75 per cent of the dead are civilians, including an estimated 1 68 children. In the last two days, Palestinian children have been killed at a rate of one per hour.*

The rockets fired from Gaza are not in any way justified and insofar as they threaten and harm civilians are illegal under international law. However, these imprecise rockets cannot be compared with the broad-scale bombing of Gaza by Israel that has one of the world's largest military forces.

Collective punishment is not permitted under the Geneva conventions and is a war crime.

Hospitals, places of worship, and a centre for people with disabilities have been among the Israeli military's targets.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is providing shelter to more than 1 02,788 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

The international community including Australia has a vital responsibility to put pressure on Israel to end its current military attack on Gaza and broker a solution of justice and peace.

If readers would like a copy of the article with the signatures you can go the website – www.gazadeclaration.com or contact the office.

DID YOU KNOW...

ISRAEL, ONCE A BEACON OF HOPE TO JEWISH PEOPLE, IS NOW A FAILED STATE.

AN EXTRACT FROM A BOOK: *THE HISTORY OF US-ISRAEL RELATIONS* BY ALISON WEIR

The Israel Lobby in the US is just the tip of an older and far larger iceberg known as 'political Zionism,' an international movement that began in the late 1800s with the goal of creating a Jewish state somewhere in the world. In 1897 this movement, led by a European journalist named Theodor coalesced in the First Zionist Congress, held in Basle, Switzerland, which established the World Zionist Organization, representing 117 groups the first year; 900 the next.

While Zionists considered such places as Argentina, Uganda, the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, and Texas, they eventually settled on Palestine for the location of their proposed Jewish state, even though Palestine was already inhabited by a population that was 93–96 per cent non-Jewish. The best analysis says the population was 96 per cent Muslims and Christians, who owned 99 per cent of the land.

After the Zionist Congress, Vienna's rabbis sent two of their number to explore Palestine as a possible Jewish state. These rabbis recognised the obstacle that Palestinians presented to the plan, writing home: 'The bride is beautiful, but she is married to another man.' Still, Zionists ultimately pushed forward. Numerous Zionist diary entries, letters, and other documents show that they decided to push out these non-Jews – financially, if possible; violently if necessary. ■

shelter. Then they cut the power and bombed our power plant. Then they shut off the water supply. What would we have done?

Would we have given up, waved the white flag? No. No, we would not. And this is the situation in Gaza.

This is not a battle between terrorism and democracy. Hamas is not the enemy Israel is fighting. Israel is waging a war against the Palestinian people's will to resist. The unbending determination not to submit to the occupation!

It is the Palestinian people's dignity and humanity that will not accept that they are treated as third, fourth, fifth-ranking people.

In 1938, the Nazis called the Jews 'Untermenschen': subhuman. Today, Palestinians in the West Bank, in Gaza, in the Diaspora are treated as Untermensch, as subhumans

who can be bombed, killed, slaughtered by their thousands, without any of those in power reacting.

So I returned home to my free country – and this country is free because we had a resistance movement, because we said that occupied nations have the right to resist, even with weapons. It's stated in international law.

You are permitted to fight the occupier even with weapons. One should of course respect international law ...

Nobody wants to be occupied! ■

Watch the video by copying and pasting the following link into your browser

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOk_KaaXc9E

Source: Australians for Palestine

Two Jews, two Palestinians:

An open letter on the simple truth

By **Michael Brill**, Samah Sabawi, Peter Slezak and Randa Abdel-Fattah

The enduring international silence around Israel's assault on Gaza has prompted a passionate plea from four prominent human rights activists.

We are writing this letter, Jews and Palestinians together, in the hope of making a simple point: the fighting between Israel and Gaza right now is not an even-handed clash.

Both sides are not equally to blame.

The Israeli army is committing mass murder against an overwhelmingly innocent and mostly defenceless population in Gaza.

There are 1.8 million people in Gaza. Most of them are children, and two-thirds of them are refugees.

They have lived under Israeli occupation since 1967, and a brutal siege since 2006 that limited the amount of food, medicine and other supplies entering the city.

This siege is a form of criminal collective punishment directed at the entire population and described as the 'civilian levers' by the Israeli security cabinet.

Ariel Sharon's chief advisor, Dov Weisglass, described the siege as 'an appointment with a dietician. The Palestinians will get a lot thinner, but won't die'.

This official Israeli policy has resulted in the devastation of Gaza.

According to Oxfam, over 40 per cent of Gazans are unemployed. According to UNRWA, 80 per cent of the population is dependent on international aid.

The siege on Gaza has 'decimated lives and livelihoods, resulting in the impoverishment and de-development of a highly skilled and well-educated society'.

According to UNRWA over 90 per cent of water in Gaza is unfit for human consumption. The former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, observed of the siege: 'Their whole civilisation has been destroyed. I'm not exaggerating ... It's almost unbelievable that the world doesn't care while this is happening.'

As for the issue of Israel's security, it is worth noting that even as Israel grinds the people of Gaza into the ground, the Palestinians have delivered Israel greater levels of security and peace than Palestinians themselves have ever known under Israeli rule.

It was Israel that breached a ceasefire with Hamas in the lead up of the war on Gaza in 2008.

According to the Israeli government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hamas had upheld the ceasefire effectively, except when in response to attacks by Israel on Gaza.

After that war, in which Israel killed 1,400 Palestinians in Gaza, Hamas observed another ceasefire with Israel which also held for years until Israel once again intensified its killing of Palestinian civilians ... and so on, a deadly pattern that seems to repeat itself every time.

The lead-up to Israel's latest attack on Gaza was similar to previous attacks.

In response to the murder of three Israelis by unknown parties, Israel launched raids throughout the West Bank, arrested hundreds of Palestinians, and engaged in what a



My plea to the people of Israel: Liberate yourselves by liberating Palestine

By **Desmond Tutu**

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, in an exclusive article for Haaretz, calls for a global boycott of Israel and urges Israelis and Palestinians to look beyond their leaders for a sustainable solution to the crisis in the Holy Land.

The past weeks have witnessed unprecedented action by members of civil society across the world against the injustice of Israel's disproportionately brutal response to the firing of missiles from Palestine.

If you add together all the people who gathered over the past weekend to demand justice in Israel and Palestine – in Cape Town, Washington, DC, New York, New Delhi, London, Dublin and Sydney, and all the other cities – this was arguably the largest active outcry by citizens around a single cause ever in the history of the world.

A quarter of a century ago, I participated in some well-attended demonstrations against apartheid. I never imagined we'd see demonstrations of that size again, but last Saturday's turnout in Cape Town was as big if not bigger. Participants included young and old, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, agnostics, atheists, blacks, whites, reds and greens ... as one would expect from a vibrant, tolerant, multicultural nation.

I asked the crowd to chant with me: 'We are opposed to the injustice of the illegal occupation of Palestine. We are opposed to the indiscriminate killing in Gaza. We are opposed to the indignity meted out to Palestinians at checkpoints and roadblocks. We are opposed to violence

perpetrated by all parties. But we are not opposed to Jews.'

Earlier in the week, I called for the suspension of Israel from the International Union of Architects, which was meeting in South Africa.

I appealed to Israeli sisters and brothers present at the conference to actively disassociate themselves and their profession from the design and construction of infrastructure related to perpetuating injustice, including the separation barrier, the security terminals and checkpoints, and the settlements built on occupied Palestinian land.

'I implore you to take this message home: Please turn the tide against violence and hatred by joining the nonviolent movement for justice for all people of the region,' I said.

Over the past few weeks, more than 1.6 million people across the world have signed onto this movement by joining an Avaaz campaign calling on corporations profiting from the Israeli occupation and/or implicated in the abuse and repression of Palestinians to pull out. The campaign specifically targets Dutch pension fund ABP; Barclays Bank; security systems supplier G4S; French transport company Veolia; computer company Hewlett-Packard; and bulldozer supplier Caterpillar.

Last month, 17 EU governments urged their citizens to avoid doing business in or investing in illegal Israeli settlements.

We have also recently witnessed the withdrawal by Dutch pension fund PGGM of tens of millions of euros from Israeli banks; the divestment from G4S by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; and the US Presbyterian Church divested an estimated \$21 million from HP, Motorola Solutions and Caterpillar.

It is a movement that is gathering pace.

Violence begets violence and hatred, that only begets more violence and hatred.

We South Africans know about violence and hatred. We understand the pain of being the polecat of the world; when it seems nobody understands or is even willing to listen to our perspective. It is where we come from.

We also know the benefits that dialogue between our leaders eventually brought us; when organisations labelled 'terrorist' were unbanned and their leaders, including Nelson Mandela, were released from imprisonment, banishment and exile.

We know that when our leaders began to speak to each other, the rationale for the violence that had wracked our society dissipated and disappeared. Acts of terrorism perpetrated after the talks began – such as attacks on a church and a pub – were almost universally condemned, and the party held responsible snubbed at the ballot box.

The exhilaration that followed our voting together for the first time was not the preserve of black South Africans alone. The real triumph of our peaceful settlement was that all felt included. And later, when we unveiled a constitution so tolerant, compassionate and inclusive that it would make God proud, we all felt liberated.

Of course, it helped that we had a cadre of extraordinary leaders.

But what ultimately forced these leaders together around the negotiating table was the cocktail of persuasive,

nonviolent tools that had been developed to isolate South Africa, economically, academically, culturally and psychologically.

At a certain point – the tipping point – the then-government realised that the cost of attempting to preserve apartheid outweighed the benefits.

The withdrawal of trade with South Africa by multinational corporations with a conscience in the 1980s was ultimately one of the key levers that brought the apartheid state – bloodlessly – to its knees. Those corporations understood that by contributing to South Africa's economy, they were contributing to the retention of an unjust status quo.

Those who continue to do business with Israel, who contribute to a sense of 'normalcy' in Israeli society, are doing the people of Israel and Palestine a disservice. They are contributing to the perpetuation of a profoundly unjust status quo.

Those who contribute to Israel's temporary isolation are saying that Israelis and Palestinians are equally entitled to dignity and peace.

Ultimately, events in Gaza over the past month or so are going to test who believes in the worth of human beings.

It is becoming more and more clear that politicians and diplomats are failing to come up with answers, and that responsibility for brokering a sustainable solution to the crisis in the Holy Land rests with civil society and the people of Israel and Palestine themselves.

Besides the recent devastation of Gaza, decent human beings everywhere – including many in Israel – are profoundly disturbed by the daily violations of human dignity and freedom of movement Palestinians are subjected to at checkpoints and roadblocks. And Israel's policies of illegal occupation and the construction of buffer-zone settlements on occupied land compound the difficulty of achieving an agreement in the future that is acceptable for all.

The State of Israel is behaving as if there is no tomorrow. Its people will not live the peaceful and secure lives they crave – and are entitled to – as long as their leaders perpetuate conditions that sustain the conflict.

I have condemned those in Palestine responsible for firing missiles and rockets at Israel. They are fanning the flames of hatred. I am opposed to all manifestations of violence.

But we must be very clear that the people of Palestine have every right to struggle for their dignity and freedom. It is a struggle that has the support of many around the world.

No human-made problems are intractable when humans put their heads together with the earnest desire to overcome them. No peace is impossible when people are determined to achieve it.

Peace requires the people of Israel and Palestine to recognise the human being in themselves and each other; to understand their interdependence.

Missiles, bombs and crude invective are not part of the solution. There is no military solution.

The solution is more likely to come from that nonviolent toolbox we developed in South Africa in the 1980s, to persuade the government of the necessity of altering its policies.

The reason these tools – boycott, sanctions and divestment – ultimately proved effective was because they had a critical mass of support, both inside and outside the country. The kind of support we have witnessed across the world in recent weeks, in respect of Palestine.

My plea to the people of Israel is to see beyond the moment, to see beyond the anger at feeling perpetually under siege, to see a world in which Israel and Palestine can coexist – a world in which mutual dignity and respect reign.

It requires a mind-set shift. A mind-set shift that recognises that attempting to perpetuate the current status quo is to damn future generations to violence and insecurity. A mind-set shift that stops regarding legitimate criticism of a state's policies as an attack on Judaism. A mind-set shift that begins at home and ripples out across communities and nations and regions – to the Diaspora scattered across the world we share. The only world we share.

People united in pursuit of a righteous cause are unstoppable. God does not interfere in the affairs of people, hoping we will grow and learn through resolving our difficulties and differences ourselves. But God is not asleep. The Jewish scriptures tell us that God is biased on the side of the weak, the dispossessed, the widow, the orphan, the alien who set slaves free on an exodus to a Promised Land. It was the prophet Amos who said we should let righteousness flow like a river.

Goodness prevails in the end. The pursuit of freedom for the people of Palestine from humiliation and persecution by the policies of Israel is a righteous cause. It is a cause that the people of Israel should support.

Nelson Mandela famously said that South Africans would not feel free until Palestinians were free.

He might have added that the liberation of Palestine will liberate Israel, too. ■

<http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.610687>



The Last and First Temptation of Israel

What is one to make of the fact that the deputy speaker of the Knesset has called for ethnic cleansing in Gaza?

by **Norman Finkelstein** 5 August 2014

He's not an obscure blogger for the Times of Israel. He is a luminary of the Likud – a man who got 23 per cent of the vote in a contest for the Likud Party leadership. He was appointed to his current high position by Benjamin Netanyahu. And this is his proposal for Gaza:

a) The IDF [Israeli army] shall designate certain open areas on the Sinai border, adjacent to the sea, in which the civilian population will be concentrated, far from the built-up areas that are used for launches and tunneling. In these areas, tent encampments will be established, until relevant emigration destinations are determined. The supply of electricity and water to the formerly populated areas will be disconnected.

b) The formerly populated areas will be shelled with maximum fire power. The entire civilian and military infrastructure of Hamas, its means of communication and of logistics, will be destroyed entirely, down to their foundations.

c) The IDF will divide the Gaza Strip laterally and crosswise, significantly expand the corridors, occupy commanding positions, and exterminate nests of resistance, in the event that any should remain.

You read that right. There will be temporary 'camps' where the Gaza population will be 'concentrated'; they will be expelled with subsidies; basic supplies of water and electricity will be cut off for those who remain. The war-

time ethics he recommends are: 'Woe to the evildoer, and woe to his neighbor.' He backs the 'annihilation' of Hamas and all their supporters. His strategic goal is to 'turn Gaza into Jaffa, a flourishing Israeli city with a minimum number of hostile civilians.' (Modern Jaffa, of course, was built on the ethnic cleansing of most of its Palestinian inhabitants in 1948.)

The usual response to this kind of thing among the lockstep pro-Israel community is that it is a tiny fringe opinion. And I can only hope they're right. But what concerns me is that this racist, genocidal bigot was appointed deputy speaker of the Knesset by the current prime minister. What concerns me are the statements of Ayelet Shaked, the telegenic young protege of Naftali Bennett, who is touted as a future prime minister. This is from a Facebook post she wrote the day before the gruesome lynching of an Arab teen who was forced to drink gasoline and then burned to death by Jewish extremists. Note that her call for war came before any Hamas rocket was fired:

Behind every terrorist stand dozens of men and women, without whom he could not engage in terrorism. They are all enemy combatants, and their blood shall be on all their heads. Now this also includes the mothers of the martyrs, who send them to hell with flowers and kisses. They should follow their sons, nothing would be more just. They should go, as should the physical homes in which they raised the snakes. Otherwise, more little snakes will be raised there.

Again, she and Feiglin dispense with the distinction between civilians and militants in Gaza. So too did the president of the New York Board of Rabbis, David-Seth Kirshner, at a recent 10,000 strong rally for Israel in New York. Kirshner's precise words?

When you are part of an election process that asks for a terrorist organization which proclaims in word and in deed that their primary objective is to destroy their neighboring country and not to build schools or commerce or jobs, you are complicit and you are not a civilian casualty.

In Israel, this theme is intensifying:

The statements of Ovadia Yosef, whose recent passing was met with flattering memorials both in Israel and the US, are legendary. The former Chief Rabbi of Israel and spiritual leader of many Middle Eastern Jews, said, among other things, that Palestinians 'should perish from the world' and that 'it is forbidden to be merciful to them'; of non-Jews in general, he declared that 'Goyim were born only to serve us.' Despite comments like these, his funeral last October was the largest in the country's history, with 800,000 Israelis attending.

In the past month, Rabbi Noam Perel, head of Bnei Akiva, the largest Jewish religious youth group in the world, called for the mass murder of Palestinians and for their foreskins

to be scalped and brought back as trophies, alluding to an episode in the Book of Samuel; and a Jerusalem city councillor, in charge of security, encouraged a crowd to mimic the Biblical character of Phineas (Pinchas in Hebrew), who murdered a fellow Israelite and his Midianite lover for the 'crime' of miscegenation ...

One local chief rabbi ruled that bombing Palestinian civilians is permissible, while another, considered a 'liberal' by Israeli standards, declared the assault on Gaza to be a holy war mandated by the Torah – one which must be merciless.

Today, the former head of Israel's National Security Council, Giora Eiland, called for treating all Gazans, including women, as enemy combatants:

We are seeing now that despite the IDF's impressive fighting, despite the absolute military supremacy, we are in a sort of 'strategic tie.' What would have been the right thing to do? We should have declared war against the state of Gaza (rather than against the Hamas organization), and in a war as in a war. The moment it begins, the right thing to do is to shut down the crossings, prevent the entry of any goods, including food, and definitely prevent the supply of gas and electricity ... why should Gaza's residents suffer? Well, they are to blame for this situation just like Germany's residents were to blame for electing Hitler as their leader and paid a heavy price for that, and rightfully so.

I suppose someone will claim that the deputy speaker of the Knesset, and the former head of the National Security Council or the former chief rabbi in Israel or the head of the largest Jewish youth group in the world are fringe figures. But I note that, so far as I have been able to find, there have been no consequences for their statements for

any of them. And I have to ask a simple question: which leader of another American ally has appointed a man who favors genocide and ethnic cleansing as the deputy speaker of the legislature? Which other democracy has legitimate political parties in the governing coalition calling for permanent occupation of a neighboring state – and deliberate social engineering to create a new demographic ethnic reality in that conquered land? Putin's Russia has not sunk that low.

And we are not merely talking about a hypothetical situation. The grotesque death toll from Gaza is a distillation of this mindset – revealing at best a chilling contempt for Arab life and at worst, with the shelling of schools and shelters, a policy of indiscriminate hatred and revenge. Yes, killing women and children in shelters is about as low as you can get in wartime. As the State Department, in a rare moment of public candor, noted, it is appalling and disgraceful.

To see in front of one's nose is a constant struggle. But I see evil in front of noses here – and evil that is gaining strength because of willful American blindness. ■

From the official website of Norman G Finkelstein

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He backs the 'annihilation' of Hamas and all their supporters. His strategic goal is to 'turn Gaza into Jaffa, a flourishing Israeli city with a minimum number of hostile civilians.'

coalition of 11 human rights organisations called ‘collective punishment’ against Palestinians.

Since then, the fighting has flared up again.

By fighting, we mean Israel has dropped over 1,500 tonnes of bombs on a tiny strip of land, which is densely populated, primarily by children.

Their borders with Israel and Egypt are closed: Gazans have nowhere to go. While Hamas shot thousands of its primitive rockets indiscriminately into Israel.

It must be noted that over the years, Israel has bombed schools, hospitals, homes, UN shelters, and just about any target one could think of.

Hamas has offered a 10-year truce to Israel.

Its 10 terms are entirely reasonable: they include freeing the Palestinians arrested in the mass raids that human rights organisations condemned in June.

They include ending the brutal blockade on Gaza, and posting international monitors on the border, to help prevent future ceasefire violations by Israel, and easing the conditions Israel imposes on Palestinians who want to pray at the al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem.

If Israel accepted it, it could guarantee for its citizens far greater security than could be achieved by its military onslaught.

Instead, Israel has ignored this offer.

It is true that Israel has offered a ceasefire to Hamas: its condition is that the Palestinians continue to accept the blockade and Israel’s right to continue attacks on the West Bank at will.

We do not think that the Palestinians in Gaza should have to accept their subjugation, in order for Israel to stop bombing them.

Israel’s rejection of Hamas’s ceasefire offer means that all of the dead and suffering – on both sides, though the dead are always overwhelmingly Palestinian – should be attributed to the Israeli government.

If the Israeli government was willing to limit aspects of its oppression of the Palestinians, and take meagre steps to remedy their desperate situation, it would simultaneously guarantee the safety of its citizens, as shown by the many ceasefires it has accepted in the past with Hamas, and which Israeli leaders have openly agreed have been effective.

What makes the current situation shameful is not only are atrocities being committed, but there is a conspiracy of silence in the international community about Israel’s war crimes.

Indeed, among some countries, including our own, it is worse than that. Israel’s war crimes – the slaughter and maiming of children, the bombing of hospitals, and the destruction of homes – are justified as ‘self-defence’.

Palestinians in Gaza are penned in like lambs to the slaughter, unable to flee the bombs.

Nowhere is safe, not even hospitals.

Children are either being murdered or watching their parents be murdered.

Do the world’s leaders not see that an entire population is being psychologically traumatised and terrorised?

How many murdered Palestinians will it take to evoke the compassion and conscience of our government?

At what point will our government recognise that its unqualified support for Israel is akin to providing Israel with a licence to kill?

This senseless massacre cannot be allowed to continue.

With over 565 Palestinians dead, mostly civilians, and 27 Israelis killed, 25 of them soldiers, it is crystal clear who the victims in this conflict are.

We appeal to the Australian government to take a constructive role in bringing this conflict to a just resolution by calling on all parties to abide by international humanitarian law.

This would mean that all parties adhere to a ceasefire that at a minimum addresses the basic rights and needs of the civilian population by ensuring the lifting of the inhumane crippling siege of Gaza.

It would also mean ensuring all human rights violations are investigated by relevant United Nations bodies, and that perpetrators of war crimes finally be held accountable for their actions.

This letter has been provided by Australian Jews Michael Brull and Peter Slezak, and Australian Palestinians Randa Abdel-Fattah and Samah Sabawi. All four are prominent activists against the atrocities committed by Israel. ■

Source: New Matilda

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from our readers



Dear Editor

Justice for Palestine

What country would put up with rockets being fired at it, Israel asks? Well, what nation would put up with its people being dispossessed, displaced, disinherited, occupied, oppressed and massacred without resisting and using rockets, bullets, bombs, rocks and fighting back by any other means necessary. It is the right and duty of the occupied people to struggle against the repressive Israeli system and the massive military might of the occupying power. Security and peace for Israel cannot ever come without justice, security, and peace for Palestinians and the acceptance of the legitimate human, national, civil, social and political rights of the Palestinian people.

Steven Katsineris, Vic

Cheaper solar technology

In June 2014, *Unsworld Magazine* of the University of New South Wales reported that Professor Stuart Wenham's team at the University's School of Photovoltaic (PV) and Renewable Energy Engineering has pioneered an ingenious 'Hydrogenation Process' that increases the efficiency of silicon PV cells in solar panels from 19 to 23% and more whilst halving the costs for materials. The British Institution of Engineering and Technology has applauded this technological advance and awarded Wenham's team the prestigious AF Harvey Engineering Research Prize, worth \$560,000.

Approximately 1.6 million Australian homes are already equipped with conventional rooftop solar panels, attesting to their popularity. Customers report that the initial installation costs are generally paid off within 3 years. Thereafter, electricity costs are either minimal or credits payable by electricity providers accrue over an anticipated 23–25 year period, corresponding to the life expectancy of the panels. The Wenham technology has the potential to make PV solar panels significantly cheaper and therefore even more popular.

A mere \$15 million over 3 years are now needed to commercialise this new technology. Some private companies have pledged support. But will the Abbott government, despite its blinkered obsession with promoting dirty fossil fuels for electricity generation, assist in bringing the Wenham invention to market? An appropriate federal government grant for this project would boost Australian manufacturing, open up domestic markets, provide opportunities for export and significantly reduce pollution levels and thus combat climate change. If financial support is not forthcoming then this excellent Australian technology could disappear offshore where foreign entrepreneurs would reap the rewards.

F Neumann, Vic

Dear Beacon Editor

Please find enclosed a cheque for my annual subscription and a donation towards the funding of the People's Commission of Audit.

The inspiring editorial and articles in the *Beacon* encourage your readers to overcome despair and fight on for a better world.

With thanks

K McEwan, ACT

Dear Friends

When I saw the article on Paul Craig Roberts in your latest issue I thought I had sent it but here is what I was going to send still here in my drafts! Great minds, eh?

Anyway, I just hope you remember it's World Peace Day on the 21st September. Hardly anyone knows the story of Jeremy Gilley and how he went to a lot of trouble to get one day allocated to peace.

Especially as the propaganda that knows no end on our TV stations clouds the real consequences of war. Are those megalomaniacs in the US really wanting war with Russia? They are quite mad despots.

A Jurrjens

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