THE “SIEGE MENTALITY” WITH BLINKERS AND DENIAL OF SOUTH AFRICAN JEWS IN RESPECT TO THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION FOR LIBERATION FROM COLONIAL OCCUPATION, GENOCIDE AND ETHNIC CLEANSING

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ABSTRACT

The paper argues that there is a “siege mentality” among South African Jews in respect to the question of Palestine, as exemplified by the actions of the Netanyahu government in Israel. The state of Israel is committing crimes against humanity and against the people of Gaza and Palestine for decades, without any repercussions from the free world and in flagrant violation of international law. It is nothing short of genocide and ethnic cleansing against the legitimate demands of a people’s aspirations for a free and independent Palestine. A demand on the basis of colonialization and occupation by people (Zionists and Israelis worldwide and with the assistance of a host of Western nations including Great Britain, and the United States and the European Union) who stole the land through the processes of British colonialism and, under the Balfour Declaration of 1924. The irony of Israeli, self – righteousness and superiority because of the unprecedented support, it receives from the United States government and powerful European nations and allies, including the tyrannical governments of some of the Arab countries, are based on this so – called “superiority” it espouses on the world stage. The state of Israel is a single island of a Western imagined culture and value system amidst a sea of Arabs and Arab nations. Astoundingly it espouses this Western culture and value system in the heart of the Arab Middle East, and that to amidst an Arab culture, which is completely different in orientation to the Western way of life, in terms of its social system, its world view, and its values. A people that share equally with Jews, the Judeo – Christian ethic and religious beliefs, grounded and formulated tacitly in the Abrahamic faiths.

It is an indictment to the United Nations, to the United States under Barak Obama, successive United States Presidents and the entire world; they have all played a pivotal role, in aiding Israel to oppress the Palestinian people, for decades. It is an indictment to peace, morality and justice as, indiscriminate bombings by the Israeli military escalates with impunity, against men women and defenceless children, with a death toll of over 2000 people in a space of just over a month from, the beginning of July of 2014. This figure rises as each day passes. It’s a question of disproportionate use of power, by the use of superior modern war technology, against the almost harmless and insignificant “homemade rockets” being fired into Israel by Hamas on behalf of the Ghazzans (Palestinians). Legitimate demands for
freedom from the yoke of oppression has, gone unnoticed and paid scant reference to by the United Nations also.

The paper concentrates on the “siege mentality” and the continued denial of South African Jews of the legitimate demands of a people held in bondage. It explores the reasons as to why Judge Richard Goldstone (a South African Jew) refuses to participate in negotiations because of the adage once bitten, twice shy. It shows how people are jailed when exercising moral choice not to serve in the Israeli army, similar to when young white South Africans refused to join the apartheid army, to prop up and support the illegitimate South African apartheid state.

It shows how families are bound in grief because of the war and the loss of their children. It appears that peace is a dirty word during times of war and the Israeli apartheid against Palestinians will eventually be a no win situation for the people of Israel. It shows how international law fails to protect civilians from warmongers and outlines the crux of the salient issues that permeate the political discourse that encompasses the morality of the Palestinian question. This is brought to the fore in this article in an interview that Jewish historian, Ilan Pappe, gave to the media in South Africa. He is currently visiting South Africa talking to people, being interviewed by journalists and is giving a series of lecturers throughout the country. His basic thesis is that Israel must be isolated and declared a pariah state.

The paper essentially concentrates on the “Siege Mentality of South African Jews and does not pretend to capture all of the issues that might be relevant to the arguments put forward with regards the vexing Palestinian question in this paper. The authors categorically state that this effort is not geared towards impinging on the work of others and hopes that, in some ways, the paper will allow for greater discussion and debate based on the morality of the Palestinian question for a just and democratic nation state.

Key Words: Siege Mentality; War; International Law; War Crimes, Pariah State; Genocide; Ethnic Cleansing; Colonialism; Apartheid; Human Rights

RESEARCH METHOD

The paper does not use the classical research methods employed in research, but relies on the analytical approach of the writers and the use of newspaper articles that appeared in the South African press. In this regard the opinions expressed are those of the authors who synthesize analytical parameters used by an array of writers, concerning these issues.

LIMITATIONS OF THE PAPER

The limitations of the paper lie in the all-embracing fact that its main concentration is the analysis of the objective realities as expounded in the popular press in South Africa and therefore, this narrative might not be all inclusive. This paper is not all encompassing and, may be interpreted as a salient shortcoming. Another limitation is that it projects basically on the South African aspects and analytical parameters that have become a heated and emotional debate in South Africa, given the mayhem and carnage inflicted upon the Palestinian people by the Israeli government and its military apparatus. The limitations of the paper also lie in the fact that it does not encompass the Palestinian question from an historical perspective and therefore, does not project on the political nuances. These will require require greater understanding, in terms of this vexing and broader intellectual, political, social and other issues, that permeate the historic nature of the conflict and struggle for freedom and dignity by the Palestinian people. These limitations do not in any way dilute the main thrust of the article and is in keeping with the title of the paper.

FINDINGS

There are no finite findings emanating from the discussion and analysis undertaken in this paper. The findings are dispersed throughout the paper and refer to the South African Jewish
“siege mentality,” its explicit denial of Palestinian legitimate demands, and other findings in terms of international law. The analysis of Ilan Pappe the Jewish historian and other findings were applicable are spoken to in the discussion and dispersed and captured throughout the paper.

DISCUSSION
THE SOUTH AFRICAN JEWISH “SIEGE MENTALITY”
Gabi Falanga (2014: 16) reports that “analysts blame Israel for exporting fear and promoting an insular, right wing community and Wendy Khan claims security was beefed up for the pro – Israel rally in Johannesburg because of global threats to Jews, but Stephen Friedman says the paranoia is part of a historical mind – set, and that the South African media was given the third degree at the rally.” As expected there are opposing views to the conflict. The view expressed by Wendy Khan is expected because she represents the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. The view expressed by Stephen Friedman is more cogent, fair, rational and decisive. He is a respected political and business analyst in South Africa. (Both are South Africans of Jewish extraction). This is the state of affairs in democratic South Africa were Jews are citizens. It is this Jewish South African community that purports a holier than thou attitude when one considers that, they were partners and supporters of South Africa’s repressive apartheid regime. They were considered white, given privilege by the then apartheid state and looked down upon the black population (Africans, Coloureds and Indians). They were allowed to buy property, trade and school at White institutions and universities and controlled business within the mining belts of South Africa and were allowed to trade unhindered in South Africa. Many Jews own and manage large South African companies and have business interests abroad. Many also hold chief executive positions within large corporations in South Africa. They also hold academic positions at leading South African universities and engage within all walks of life. Many of them are outstanding jurists, physicians, engineers and professionals. They arrived in South Africa from many parts of the world, and because of the privileges accorded them, amassed large fortunes in essentially, a more than “Third World” country and economy, that was geared to consolidate white superiority over the majority black population of South Africa. In many instances their amassing of wealth and land, was due to the ill – gotten gains accrued through apartheid privilege and at the expense of the majority black population.

In the main they were part of the apartheid machinery that contributed to white hegemony and the propping up of the brutal apartheid regime. Many Jewish youth served in the South African military and completed the two years of compulsory military training. By the same token, it must be appreciated that the Jewish community in South Africa hails partly from the same stock that was persecuted by Hitler’s Nazi Germany and faced the wrath of the holocaust. It is therefore astounding and unimaginable that Jews having confronted the holocaust entered the oppressive apartheid military apparatus and even more mind – boggling that, they find it justifiable to defend Israel’s actions of genocide and ethnic cleansing in Gaza and Palestine as a whole. There is no moral, ethical and rational basis or reasons whatsoever, for South African Jews or Jews around the world to do so and defend a despicable status quo of violence, intimidation, oppression, genocide, ethnic cleansing and the destruction of Palestinian life with continuing impunity, goaded on by United States and its allies in the European nations. In reality many of their leaders should be charged at the International Court of Justice at The Hague for crimes against humanity. This is an extreme failure of European and Western Justice, where the lives of people of colour, in reality mean nothing.
and justice therefore does not belong to such people. It is an indictment to human rights and fair play espoused by the United States and its allies.

On the other hand, it has to be acknowledged that among South African Jews there have been a number of them and even today, there exist among South African Jews a number of outstanding Jewish people, intellectuals and ordinary Jews, who have stood and still stand for justice, irrespective. Some of them have contributed significantly to all walks of life in South Africa and to the revolutionary struggle against apartheid. We salute these South African Jews for the courage of their convictions and their support for justice and basic freedoms in South Africa and many other parts of the world, including their support, for the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people for freedom and dignity from the yoke of suppression and oppression, from the colonial and occupying apartheid state of Israel. It is hoped that they will support progressive movements throughout the world, fighting for justice and equality. Having delineated some aspects of important variables that have a direct influence upon the discussion in this paper, it will now elaborate upon the “siege mentality,” and the denial, including other issues pertinent to the discussion in this paper.

**UNPACKING THE SOUTH AFRICAN JEWISH “SIEGE MENTALITY”**

Gabi Falanga (2014: 16) reports that “the stringent security measures at the pro – Israel rally a week ago appears to reflect what some have termed a paranoia experienced by South Africa’s Jewish community and asks the question, where does this alleged paranoia originate from?” Israel began its air and naval offensive against Gaza on July 8 following what it said was a surge of cross-border rocket salvos by Hamas and other guerrillas. Israel later also launched ground incursions. According to the Palestinian health ministry (in Falanga, 2014) by Thursday 1875 Palestinians had been killed during the conflict, including 430 children. At least 64 Israeli soldiers have been killed, and three civilians in Israel. Wendy Khan, the national director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, which supported the pro – Israel rally said “the heightened security was in line with the global threats against Jewish people, which have resulted in physical assaults against the Jewish people in Belgium, France, the United Kingdom and Australia. Their fears about safety were confirmed when police reported that they had arrested a Palestinian national near the rally carrying three firearms, one which was unlicensed, and three knives”. Avrom Krengel, the chairperson of the South African Zionist Federation, which organized the event, agreed with Khan’s sentiments and added that Jewish institutions in South Africa have always maintained a certain level of security. It’s not a secret he said that it’s a relatively high risk country. When there was a conflict in the Middle East the risk increased here, as it did everywhere else in the world. This time it was very noticeable. The level of threats, intimidation and hate speech on social media was very high. Having said that, there have been no physical attacks” (Statement by the South African Zionist Federation, 2014). This is the type of unnecessary rhetoric and fear syndrome being created in South Africa by Jewish organizations that want to capture the minds of not only South African Jews but people within other South African communities. It is a propaganda onslaught also against the state indicating that South Africa is a high risk country. It begs the question high risk for and from what? It is an attack upon the security apparatus of the state, when one considers that there was not a single attack upon a Jew in South Africa, upon their admission and confirmation. At the King David schools in Johannesburg, security guards man the gates and parents can be seen patrolling outside at drop – off and pick – up times. This is the school that castigated a Jewish student (17 years old) because he wore a Palestinian scarf in solidarity with the Palestinian people and because of Israel’s unacceptable behaviour against the innocent men, women and children being slaughtered by the Israeli military apparatus and their politicians. The student was forced to apologise for his stance (SABC News Report, 2014). So much for Jewish acceptance of academic freedom and expression. It appears that, any Jew in South
Africa that expresses an opinion against the Jewish state of Israel and expresses support for the Palestinians against the dastardly crimes being perpetrated upon innocent people in Gaza is considered an individual who is anti – Jewish and by implication is not a Semite. Such individuals must therefore be castigated and dealt with in terms of the Jewish interpretation of the Palestinian question.

“HATE ISRAEL” ROW AT KING DAVID SCHOOL
Monica Laganparsad (2014: 14) reports that another school ‘boy’ was wrongfully labelled an Israeli hater, has spoken out about being bullied by staff at the top Jewish school, King David, after he voiced his opinion about Israeli policies. The boy and his parents have lodged a complaint against the school and the South African Board of Jewish Education and with the South African Human Rights Commission.” The claim that he was victimized for comments he posted on a school Facebook page, KD Confessions, last year and want a public, written and personal apology. “In the complaint the family state that the boy had taken part in the online discussion and that remarks he made about Prisoner X, a Palestinian prisoner led to vicious bullying. The most appalling aspect is that the bullying and victimization campaign against him was led by a member of staff and a teacher at King David school namely Sacks, a member of the school’s executive board” (Sunday Times, 2014). The case follows that of fellow King David pupil Joseph Broomberg, who unleashed a furore after posting a picture of him and two other pupils at an international debating competition in Thailand wearing Palestinian scarves. Broomberg has since apologized to the school. In the case lodged with the commission, the boy says a participant on the forum asked him whether he was a Zionist. He replied “I do not like the way the term anti – Zionism is turned around. I have not stated anywhere that I hate Israel.” In the 20 page complaint, he says “he was raised in a liberal, non – racist, Zionist home to practice freedom of thought. But after his comments were made public, he was ‘summoned’ to the office of the school principal and told that his election as student leader had been vetoed as a direct result of his views expressed on Israel. This was eventually resolved and he was given the school’s blue blazer, reserved for leaders, which he then handed back. I could not morally represent the school when the current leadership at the school went in complete opposite direction from my moral compass. This matter has nothing to do with the Middle East. It has to do with Israel. I don’t think it should matter what my or the deputy head boy’s opinions are. We did have an opinion and we voiced it publicly and we were silenced, because it was an alternative opinion, to that of the school leadership” (Sunday Times, 2014: 15.

His family had initially hoped to resolve the matter with King David and the South African Jewish Board of Education, but their attempt to secure an independent enquiry failed. This case should never have escalated to the point it reached because the board had not made an attempt to end it. It shows a lack of willingness to compromise over a storm in a teacup. This case shows the lager and “siege mentality” of Jewish organizations in South Africa. It detracts from the basic issue that these Jewish organizations are paranoiac. The school is flouting the laws laid down by the national department of education, in terms of the freedom of expression guaranteed in the Constitution of the Republic. Incidents of this nature polarize South African society that has suffered to gain its own freedom. It is another form of apartheid being perpetrated upon young Jews in South Africa, who have a different opinion from these Jewish organizations in South Africa. This incident now places these young Jews outside their community and, they will be hounded and looked down upon by many Jews in South Africa of being anti – Semitic and, therefore by implication, do not belong to the Jewish community. The Jewish organizations by implication are putting tremendous pressure upon South African Jews to maintain the status quo and are fostering racist propaganda, in
the form of unnecessary fear that it is creating in the minds of South African Jews. It is nothing short of saying that either you are with us or with them, irrespective of the moral questions that need to be asked by the South African Jewish community.

It is indeed a sad day for democracy and freedom of expression in South Africa. The government of South Africa and the national education department must intervene and call these Jewish organizations to account for their behaviour and stance, in terms of freedom of expression, constitutional democracy and the rule of law. Nothing more and nothing less is now required by the South African government. The Jewish community in South Africa cannot be allowed to take the law into their own hands. They must not be allowed to advance a racist agenda in a country that endured apartheid racism and, dilute the agenda of a country that is striving to enhance democracy given its sad apartheid history. The South Africa project of a free, democratic and the anti-racist agenda of the state must not be allowed to be high jacked by, a narrow and parochial group (an absolute minority) that has been embraced by a country that has allowed the advancement of its rights in every aspect of South African life.

**CLAMP ON DISSENT BRINGS ABOUT HOSTILITY**

It must be recalled that history has shown that those who demand blind support for Israel and, illegitimate occupation, will turn South African Jews into targets because, the past few weeks with regards the Palestinian question of freedom, emancipation, and liberation from Israeli occupation and, the poor behaviour of Jews in general worldwide, coupled with the arrogance of the Netanyahu government and its non – adherence to international law and, thus not taking heed of the international condemnation and opinion that permeates this humanitarian issue must be of deep concern to all peace loving people. One such division is about the rightness or wrongness of Israel’s assault on Gaza. But the division that threatens to split the South African Jewish community is between those who believe that, it is a matter of debate, and those who believe that to criticize Israel at all is forbidden, incompatible with being Jewish. Sometimes it seems as if, it is fear that keeps the Jewish community going in South Africa. They are brought up with stories of the holocaust by the propaganda machinery of the Jewish state not only in South Africa but worldwide, of warnings about what happened to Jews when society turns against them. Fear is bred into their bones. And the fear is not delusion. According to Jessie Harber (2014: 5) “recent reports of European anti-Semitism, including violence directed against Jews, are appalling. After a blessed seven decades in which public anti-Semitism was largely unacceptable, if not forbidden, Jews are once again being made to feel like the targets of hatred. Scared people do ugly things. But fear is not always directed at a source of genuine security and actions taken out of fear are not always likely to reduce or eliminate the threat.”

The crackdown on Jewish dissent, on any and all Jewish criticism of Israel, is one such action. The insistence on Jewish unity, on a Jewish ‘party line’ in the South African Jewish community weakens the place of Jews in the country. Jews occupy a privileged place in post-apartheid South Africa. Jews benefitted as much as any group of whites from the former racist order, and the major Jewish organizations supported, at least tacitly, the Afrikaner nationalist racist project. Yet in the time since South Africa’s organized Jewry stood on the wrong side of our country’s history, Jews have got off lightly. In a country that might have been disposed to anti-Semitism, in which they might so easily have been caught between the races, not white enough for the whites, but certainly not black, they have been more often irrationally admired than irrationally hated. The reason is simple because from the first days
of apartheid, there were Jews who resolutely refused to assimilate into racist white South Africa and its ruling regime’ (Harber, 2014: 5).

In South Africa, Jews are disproportionately represented in every part of the struggle: In the Treason trial, for more than half of the Treason trialists were Jewish. These Jews were not in the South African liberation struggle for the Jews, but because of morality and were prepared to stand apart from their community. This was done with self – sacrifice but were has this all gone to today and why has this morality waned so drastically in South Africa? This is exemplified today by the all-embracing reality that “the most vigorous in terms of the recent attacks on dissenters insist that Judaism requires Zionism, and Zionism requires unconditional support for Israel. There can be no Jewish identity that does not embrace Zionism and there can be no Zionism that admits to Israeli aggression. No ‘true’ Jew would criticize Israel. This reasoning leads predictably to anti – Semitism. Those who abhor the killing of children, the bombing of United Nations schools and the wanton death and destruction that Israel has wrought on a trapped and beleaguered desperate people are forced by the hardliners’ own logic to conclude that to hate the actions of Israel is to hate Israel, to hate Zionism, to hate Judaism, to hate Jews. The dissenters have been accused of fostering anti – Semitism. The opposite is true: It is the debate that the dissenters provoke that shows South Africans that Jewishness is not one with Zionism or the killing of non-combatants. The louder and more vigorous the debate, the more difficult it is for those who hate Jews to paint them as one” (Harber, 2014).

The crushing of dissenters anywhere in the world is not only undemocratic and un – Jewish; it is bad for the Jews. It is the dissenters who are proving to the world that one can oppose the actions of Israel without turning to anti – Semitism. Opposition to Israeli aggression will not go away; in reality it will grow internationally and given South Africa’s apartheid history for liberation, opposition in this country will grow. “The Jewish community of South Africa must decide whether, it will force others to equate that opposition to anti – Semitism. A large number of South African Jews in the South African community have already made up their minds in the affirmative and that feeds both rising anti – Semitism and the growing number of people who refuse to be identified as Jewish” (Harber, 2014). They cannot cast out those who show compassion for Palestinian deaths of particularly children and women. It must therefore, not be surprised, if the world soon is not a sympathizer of its project of illegitimate independence. In South Africa and many parts of the world there are Jews who do not want to be identified as Jewish. This is a tragedy and is the making of right wing Jewish organizations and the state of Israel. The crux of the matter is that, if the Jewish community expels or drives out everyone who shows compassion for the Palestinian revolutionary cause and the deaths of Palestinian people, Israel and the South African Jewish community, must not be surprised when the world casts a dark eye on what’s left of it.

Rabbi Craig Kacev, the general director of the South African Board of Jewish Education, said that “this level of security is normal. Parents do voluntary duty, and can spot someone who should and shouldn’t be in the environment. We have not had any incidents during the time period of conflict in Israel. We have just remained vigilant and are keeping security at top level” (Statement of the South African Board of Jewish Education, 2014). On the other hand Rabbi Shmuel of the Glenhazel Shul said that “the threat to Jewish people and institutions has increased and that the Shul has taken precautions. There is more focus, greater awareness and a greater encouragement from Jewish members of the community, the Community Security Organization and to make sure that they do their shifts for security. As at the schools, volunteers patrol the Shul, especially during services.” (Statement by the Glenhazel Shul, 2014).
According to many reports in the press the Community Service Organization (CSO) is mandated by the Jewish community to watch over communal organizations and events and that all threats are taken seriously. We do not monitor through the board of deputies. If necessary, where required we do increase the level of security. We have to take them (the threats) seriously because we have learnt from the past that, when people start saying things, it’s followed by action. You only need one crazy person and then disaster,” reports Falanga, (2014: 16). It is strange that Wendy Khan and Krengel said that “anti – Semitism is relatively low in South Africa. Khan added that 72 anti – Semitic incidents, none of them physical, had been reported in South Africa in July this year, compared to 52 incidents in 2013.” It thus can be observed that the “Jewish mentality” has moved toward an internal persecution of a “siege mentality” and technically, there is no justification for these actions in South Africa. It is paranoia without justification.

Steven Friedman (Himself a South African Jew) an academic and political commentator, “laughed off the Jews as paranoid, which he said is “absolutely central to the community. The way in which the Israeli government ensures support around the world is to create an atmosphere of fear. Jews over the centuries were persecuted in many countries. It’s become part of the Jewish memory. Essentially what they have managed to do is to create a mind – set where the only possible explanation of anything that happens in the Middle East, is that people must be trying to persecute Jews” (In Falanga, 2014: 16).

According to Friedman (2014) “even the slightest retaliation from Palestine on an Israeli attack will be framed as Jewish people being under attack. There weren’t any rockets being fired before Israel invaded Gaza. How many people in Israeli cities have actually being under threat? Zero, he said. He continued by stating that “if you read mainstream Jewish media, their understanding of what is going on there is that people who hate the Jews are now attacking them. The Israeli government blows sirens and forces people into bomb shelters, so that they have a real sense of terror and feeling besieged. He further added that “mainstream South African Zionists are right wing and a very insular community, which could be attributed to the fact that much of the community grew up during apartheid. A person supporting the Israeli state in Britain or Western Europe would have at least been exposed to democratic ideas and people talking about rights. Here they haven’t been, he said.”

According to Falanga (2014: 16) many Jewish organizations in South Africa and South African Jews “confirm that the approximately 80 000 Jews living in South Africa tend to be in cohesive, united communities, with very low assimilation rates. They are very pro – Israel and according to many commentators the Jews in South Africa are a staunchly Zionist community. It has its origins in Lithuania, a Jewish community that very early on was very Zionist and brought that in their cultural heritage as baggage and consolidated it here in South Africa because, it was a comfortable environment in which to express one’s Zionism. There was a space under apartheid for Jews in South Africa’s divided and racial society and ethnic mosaic reinforced by the apartheid Afrikaner dominated government.” Friedman (2014 in Falanga) states that “the only other Jewish community similar to South Africa’s is in Mexico. Historically, this is because in both countries Jews were accepted as citizens but were not welcomed into the ruling group. In Mexico Jews were welcomed to settle but, it was a very Catholic country. Here in South Africa, the racist apartheid state decided very soon after 1948, they were going to let Jews in but they were only allowed to join the National Party until the late 1970’s.” It is because of this that in both countries we find that they were not assimilated in spite of the fact that they had rights but were not welcomed into the mainstream of these societies. This speaks volumes about the South African Jewish communities’ psychology and paints them as a group that is only concerned with their own preservation and most opportunistic, even if trampled upon and humiliated by the system that they engage within. They are therefore insular and very proud that the rates of intermarriage
between Jews and non-Jews is much lower than in other countries and they are happy to identify in public as Jews. This cannot be used as an excuse for their poor behaviour in respect of serious public issues and affairs and, their expression in the media, their unnecessary paranoia, their sanctioning of the crimes committed against the innocent people of Palestine and the crimes against humanity being perpetrated by the Israel government. This leads to strong unacceptable nationalist sentiment in a country like the new democratic South Africa that has welcomed them and accorded them every human right as citizens. It is nothing but an expression of right wing sentiment and this has to be opposed and stopped in its tracks, in true South African revolutionary fervour.

SOUTH AFRICAN JEWS MUST REMOVE THEIR BLINCKERS

The horrific behaviour of South African Jews in respect to the Palestinian question and the pro-Israel rally held by them in Johannesburg saw reactionary behaviour in the extreme by the conservative elements of the South African Jewish community. The question why has to be asked? In other words according to Tymon Smith (2014: 5) “Conservative Jews cannot be allowed to stifle criticism over Israel and further states that “Even though, I have a Greek first name, a Christian middle name, an English surname, can’t speak Hebrew, never had a bar mitzvah, never went to a Jewish school, have never been to Israel and still have a foreskin – I’m Jewish.” He goes on to say that his mother’s family are King David School raised, my grandmother was a president of the Union of Jewish women and her family came to South Africa from the shtetls of Lithuania in the early 20th century. I’ve been called everything from self-loathing to anti-Semitic and told by many more Zionist and religious members of the community why I shouldn’t be allowed to either call myself Jewish or dare to comment on anything related to the Jewish community.

Tymon Smith (2014: 5) goes on to state that “It’s exactly this kind of backward thinking, kneejerk emotional rubbish that leads people in the South African Jewish community to victimize a teenage schoolboy for daring to disagree with Israel’s actions against Gaza, even though he’s explained that he believes in Israel and recognizes the country’s right to exist. It is deeply worrying and frankly disgusting that adults, who should know better, think it’s OK to tell Joshua Broomberg, the deputy head boy of King David school, that he should be shot with an M16, is the most extreme reaction, or stripped of all the honours he has earned, including his position as deputy head boy. It is the same tunnel-vision and aggressive response that conservative Jews have used against anyone who ventures an opinion on Israel and Zionism contrary to theirs that they have used for decades. It needs to stop. The fights that erupt every time the Middle East explodes and, are characterized by an inability to listen to the views of others and ever increasing evidence that, there is a plurality of views in the Jewish community of South Africa, over the fraught question of the Jewish state.”

He goes on to state that “In light of this, how – to turn to King David, how can it be correct to make students sign an honour code that includes fidelity to Israel and her policies? It is obvious that the idea of what Israel is and where the country is going has changed and if the Jewish community, which somewhat unjustifiably likes to commend itself on its contribution to alternative voices in the struggle against apartheid, wants to remain part of a democratic South Africa, it needs to include space for different opinions on this issue. We saw recently Israel wannabes who ran security for the recent pro-Israel rally in Johannesburg, need to check themselves because, we are all in this country together, for better or for worse. Keeping a woman in a headscarf in a van while her press credentials are checked is unacceptable. This is unfounded paranoia which is used to run Israel, not South Africa. No checkpoints please in the middle of Johannesburg. Yitzak Rabin, the greatest chance for positive change in the Middle East, was not killed by a suicide bomber; he was shot by a rabid right-wing member of his own people. Under no circumstances must it be interpreted that passionate support for Israel should not be allowed, we live in a free country. Neither do I agree that anyone should
be allowed to say “Hitler got it right.” There has to be middle ground where we can all meet and allow freedom of expression, a diversity of opinions and the right for no one to feel that their lives or futures are in jeopardy because they do not agree with you. He further adds that we Jews pride ourselves on the fact that debate has always been an inherent part of our tradition, but when it comes to Israel, I’m not seeing that. Getting along with other human beings is better than trying to destroy them.”

**MEDIA GIVEN THE THIRD DEGREE AT RALLY**

The Mail and Guardian (2014: 16) states that “On Sunday’s pro – Israeli rally in Johannesburg a reporter who happened to be an Indian South African was being harassed by security officials. Despite having his press card with him, the security officials would not grant him entry because they said it expired in August, although it did not specify a specific date in August. The security officials took photographs of our identification cards and faces after permission was granted, once the Mail and Guardian verified their credentials before reluctantly letting us into the venue. After the event it was established that a number of journalists experienced similar treatment in varying degrees. “Gabi Falanga (2014) reports that “journalists for the Times and the Daily Maverick were questioned about what they planned to report on and what their views were on the conflict in Gaza before being allowed in. Qaanitah Hunter, a journalist from the New Age who wears a head scarf, experienced “severe problems.” She waited for almost an hour at a metro police van before security officials took photos of her and her press card and then let her in, but was under constant supervision. Once inside she had to endure insults from the people attending the event.” This is the state of play, in a democratic South Africa were an insignificant minority of about 80 000 Jews, in a population over 50 million can do what it wants at a public event, pay scant reference to the constitutional imperatives and humiliate fellow South Africans, give the third degree to the media and no action is taken against them by the government and its police apparatus. These cases and the actions of South African Jews clearly exemplify their “siege mentality”, a mentality clouded by blinkers. It is time that South African Jews remove their blinkers and embrace South African people and humanity as a whole.

**ON RICHARD GOLDSMITH – RETIRED SOUTH AFRICAN JUDGE**

In June 2009 retired South African Judge Richard Goldstone (A South African Jew) led a four person team to investigate the allegations of war crimes after Israel launched an intensive three week operation in Gaza the previous year. He is a prominent figure in the local Jewish community, and possessed a history of similar work. “In 1991 he had led a commission to examine allegations of political violence leading up to South Africa’s first democratic elections. The main findings of the United Nations backed report of 2009 showed clearly that Israel deliberately targeted civilians, saw him ostracised. Jewish communities around the world lambasted him for what they called a biased report. Threats of a protest forced him to stay away from his grand – son’s Bar Mitzvah” reports Sipho Kings (2014: 10). When the Mail and Guardian approached him for comments on the current conflict, he refused to comment. According to Kings (2014) “his 2009 mandate came after 1400 people were killed in Israel’s campaign to destroy Hamas rockets in late 2008.” These actions were condemned by the United Nations for violations against human rights. Goldstone’s report clearly indicated that it was a part of a continuum of action to weaken any democratic movements in Gaza and the West Bank. His report for various reasons was rejected by both Israel and Palestinian forces, including Hamas. He said in his report that leaders from both groups should be charged at the International Criminal Court. Goldstone later retracted some of his findings against Israel and accused the Human Rights Council for bias against Israel. This clearly shows the power of Jewish lobbies, that place pressure upon so – called intellectuals and human rights activists such as Judge Goldstone, who was forced to retract his statements against Israel (Was this done because he is Jewish?)
and his actions have therefore tarnished his reputation among jurists, South Africans and the international community. Sipho Kings (2014) states that “his three co–authors condemned him for softening his stance and said that the contents of the report stood. It is such action and back tracking that dilutes justice and makes a mockery of human rights and compromises people like Judge Goldstone who was forced to exhibit Jewish and Israeli solidarity. It also shows clearly the lack of international action, emboldens Israel and her conviction of being untouchable. It appears that a peaceful solution is now more distant than ever before. On the other hand Israel’s back is against the wall and it is now possible that, it will go the same way South Africa went in 1994, when the apartheid regime saw the writing on the wall and began the process of negotiations with the African National Congress. The time has come for Israel to negotiate a one state solution with Palestine and, live with Palestinians under one roof in a lasting negotiated settlement under a Palestinian controlled government and state. This will be in their long term interests and will in no way negate their Jewishness and will not compromise their security, religion and culture in a free and united and democratic Palestine.

JAILED FOR A MORAL CHOICE
The war is 6000 kilometres away, but the war has repercussions in South Africa, where it has divided the 80 000 – strong Jewish community. The attempt in this paper is to show and report on how South Africans are responding to the conflict. The paper in no way undermines Jews in South Africa or for that matter in any part of the world where they reside. The Mail and Guardian (2014: 11) states emphatically that “there is more than a passing similarity between the stories of conscientious objectors in Israel and the old South Africa and, where there is war, there will always be those that refuse to serve in the military because of very plausible reasons; whenever the Israeli army drafts the reserves, which are made up of ex – soldiers, there are dissenters, resisters and awolers (absent without official leave) among the troops called to war” (Asmal, 2014: 11). Yael Even Or (In Asmal, 2014) wrote in a recent Washington Post article, “Now that Israel has sent troops to Gaza again and reserves are being summoned to service, dozens are refusing to take part.” A purposeful scan and survey of the literature shows that there is a tradition of conscientious objection in Israel. In 1970 a group of high school seniors about to be drafted sent a letter to then Prime Minister Golda Meir, objecting to the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. This is 44 years ago in terms of the moral imperative against Israel’s illegal occupation of Gaza and Palestine. In 1987 another group of students also refused to serve in the occupied territories. Thousands of Israeli high school students are now part of this movement called shministim (Hebrew for 12th grade students). For many of these young people the price they have had to pay as conscientious objectors, is a jail sentence, which in itself is dehumanizing Their stories are horrendous in respect of the brutality inflicted upon the innocent Palestinian people. Their pleas to the military were never responded to by the government. Many young Jews indicate that they do not regret their decision and are prepared to go to jail because, serving as part of the occupation is immoral in their eyes and therefore, any form of opposition to the occupation is extremely important. The occupation is sustained by people who disagree with it serving in the military in Israel and is funded internationally.

South Africa also has a history of individuals willing to go to prison rather than serve in an army, whose cause they found unjust and, in 1970 four young men were jailed for publicly refusing to obey the apartheid army call – ups to the South African Defence Force (SADF). By 1983, 13 objectors had been jailed. In the same year the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) was formed, opposing the conscription of all white South African men into military service. It gained so much momentum that the defence minister described it as the country’s third biggest enemy after the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP). The ECC was banned in August 1988, but unbanned itself in 1989 after a national defiance
campaign. Conscription was reduced from two years to one and, in effect was phased out after 1990 officially ending in 1993, as South Africa’s apartheid government, entered an intense negotiation political settlement with the revolutionary ANC, for a free and democratic South Africa and, prepared itself for black rule and to live in South Africa under the majority black population. This fate awaits Israel also. Many said that the SADF was being used as a tool to uphold apartheid, and putting on a SADF uniform was aligning with the apartheid regime in oppressing the majority of South Africans” reports Fatima Asmal (2014: 11). In other words, this in an indication that in all situations similar to the Israeli occupation of Palestine, it is essential that non – punitive alternatives to military service should be offered to those who refuse to serve in the military for reasons of conscience. Many have indicated that the Abrahamic faiths share a common destiny. In reality, it is a call for pacifism that should be permitted, but how far can pacifism go, because we saw in South Africa that eventually the violence of the police and state had to be met by the violence of the people, in order to secure an acceptable democratic order from the shackles of apartheid oppression and brutality.

FAMILIES BOUND IN GRIEF
Asmal (2014: 12) reports that when “Robi Damelin heard that her son David, while serving as a reservist, had been killed by a sniper at an Israeli Defence Force (IDF) checkpoint, the first thing she said was “you may not kill anybody in the name of my child.” Damelin was born in South Africa, where she fought against apartheid, before moving to Israel in 1967. She is a spokesperson for the Parents Circle – Families Forum (PCFF). It is a joint Palestinian Israeli organization comprising more than 600 families who have close family members during the Israeli – Palestinian conflict. The forum tries to convey the message that reconciliation between individuals and nations is possible, and engages in activities such as dialogue between families, public meetings, educational programmes and media campaigns. She says In Asmal, (2014) that “the PCFF needs your help to share our message and lead the anti – war movement.” She joined the movement after her son’s death in 2002. She said her son was reluctant to serve in the occupied Palestinian territories. She further adds that “it was the most senseless killing and that David was killed because he was part of an occupying army” (In Asmal, 2014). All of this has not deterred her from working for peace in the region through reconciliation. Hatred must become a thing of the past, she said. The sadness of this case and many other cases on both sides of the divide indicates the futility of war.

PEACE A DIRTY WORD IN TIME OF WAR
It is a truism that even those Israelis who are secretly against the military assault in Gaza are cautious about voicing their opposition openly and what is different this time around is the anti – democratic spirit coupled with zero tolerance of any kind of criticism, opposition to any kind of sympathy with the Palestinians,” states Giles Fraser (2014: 28). There are many Israelis and Jews who have opposing views to the Israel establishment that are shunned and looked down upon by pro – Israel nationalists and religious fanatics. Many have had to employ bodyguards because they are soft targets by rabid right wing supporters of Israel. They are confined to their homes. Yitzak Rabin’s death in 1995, by orthodox Jewish right wingers must serve as a reminder to many Jews of the personal cost of peace making in Israel. Many Jews throughout the world, including some South African Jews cry out for Israeli empathy and compassion towards the suffering of the Palestinians. It is difficult for many Jews to voice their opinions about the injustices of crimes, perpetrated by the Israeli government and reinforced by right wing Jews in general. Jews in Israel call on the government to charge citizens for high treason who go against the tide of Jewish sentiment to preserve Israel, in spite of its racist and colonial mentality of hounding Palestinians and killing them for any form of resistance against illegal occupation. Such despicable phenomenon cannot be and must not be tolerated by peace loving people
anywhere in the world, including Israel. Any vocal opposition to Israel attacks upon innocent people is not tolerated and they bear the wrath of the government. All Jewish peace organizations, avoid participation in peaceful protests and the group Peace Now “was successful to mobilize at least 400 000 people to turn out against the 1982 war in Lebanon, but it is now a shadow of its former self. What is different this time is the anti – democratic spirit. Zero tolerance of any kind of criticism, opposition to any kind of criticism, opposition to any kind of sympathy with the Palestinians. Giles Frazer (2014: 28) states that “one should not be surprised at the 95 percent in favour of the war; you should be surprised at the 5 percent because this is almost a miracle and the media has an enormous role to play. Given the decades of demonization of the Palestinians, the incitement and hatred. What then is the use of a peace movement if it refuses to condemn a war like this? The former secretary for Peace Now has shown that in South Africa about 6000 came out into the streets and were taunted as “dirty Israelis” by the right wing counterdemonstration by Jews. The tide is turning given the opposition to these right wing South African Jews and this is an achievement. “

During the time of war opposition is seen as disloyalty, as siding with the enemy. Amos Oz (in Giles Fraser, 2014) who is Israel’s literary conscious, explains that “the peace movement was dealt a harsh blow eight years ago when Ariel Sharon pulled the army and the settlers out of Gaza only for the situation to get worse. Since then there has been rocket fire from Gaza and everyone lost hope that you can swap land for peace. Giles Fraser (2014) captures the scenario as follows: “the history of warfare has made Europeans see things in black and white, like a Hollywood movie with good guys and bad guys. It’s more complicated than that and the Netanyahu government must be condemned and so must the catalogue of inaction and missed opportunities because the action in Gaza has been disproportionate. It looks like a David and Goliath story and the world, especially the United States and its allies including the European nations have the audacity to state that Israel has the right to defend itself. Defend itself from what, given its illegal occupation of Palestine.

It is against the grain of humanity and the great Judeo – Christian ethic that that the media and television channels in Israel and many parts of the Western world of delusion, toe the government line as simple cheerleaders, offering a constant diet of fear and fallen heroes with little evidence of the atrocities going on in Gaza. The problem, like it was in South Africa under apartheid is that ordinary Israelis have little idea about what is going on. It is manipulation at its highest and ordinary people are not expected to be critical. This is the objective reality. Many young Israelis, like it was in South Africa under apartheid have been brain washed by the propaganda machinery of the Israeli state and right wing Jewish organizations; they remain ignorant and many have not met a Palestinian in their lives. Many cannot connect with social issues, like poverty in Israel and the vast financial cost of occupation, let alone empathy with the Palestinian predicament.

Peace is therefore, a dirty word in times of war but there can be no justification what so ever in terms of the legitimate demands of the Palestinian people for an independent Palestinian state and the Israeli people living under a Palestinian state and government. In reality there can be no argument and discussion or political settlement under a two nation theory of settlement supported by the West. The land, all of it belongs to the Palestinian people historically and to this end there must not be any compromises and accommodation with the racist, apartheid colonial settler that Israelis are in Palestine.

PEACE AND REASON – ILAN PAPPE

The discussion and analysis in this paper in many ways is crystallized by the Jewish academic, historian and, human rights activist Ilan Pappe who recently visited South Africa and gave a series of lecturers and interviews. An interview with him in a question and answer session by Shaun de Waal (2014: 14) is reproduced in its entirety hereunder. The idea is to understand the equation in historical terms, and in terms of the human rights issues that
permeate the conflict between apartheid Israel and the Palestinian cause and demand for freedom from the yoke of oppression under Israeli occupation.

Ilan Pappe is most famous for his book “The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine (2006).” He spoke at the ever increasing popularity of the rising Boycott, Disinvestment and Sanctions (BDS) organization in South Africa. He was the guest of the Cape Town publication, Muslim Views. Pappe taught at the University of Haifa in Israel where he was born. He left Israel in 2008 because the authorities had made his life increasingly difficult and he now teaches at the University of Exeter in Britain, where he heads one of only three Palestine studies units in the world. He was a leading member of the Israeli party Hadash, the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality and stood twice for the Knesset. The full interview is provided hereunder:

**Question:** You characterize Israel as a settler – colonialist state, and you speak of the difference between colonialism and settler – colonialism. Basically, in settler – colonialism, the settler does not go home, right? This is what we South Africans have called “colonialism of a special type.”

**Response:** Yes. Early Zionism used the word “colonialism” to describe what Zionism was all about, because the image of colonialism in the late 19th century was very good. They were proud to brand Zionism as a successful colonial project. Then in the 1930’s, and after the founding of the state of Israel, they found then the image of colonialism had changed. The early scholars of Zionism invented a new word, I can’t even say it, a kind of misspelling of “colonization: in Hebrew, to show that the project was unique. Zionism began to speak instead of the return to an ancient homeland, the redemption of an empty land. This meant that you could not describe the Palestinian anti-colonialist movement as such, but rather as terrorists trying to destroy a modern democratic state.

**Question:** Israel and its supporters use the argument that Israel is a beacon of democracy, the only democratic state in the region.

**Response:** There are two Israels, the non-occupied Israel, which is a democracy, and then there is Israel plus a temporary occupation. It’s as though Israel says: “you can’t judge us according to that occupation, because it’s temporary.” But it has been going on since 1967. And, of course, Arabs in Israel were subject to military rule until 1967, then that military rule was extended to the occupied territories. Israel defeats any definition of a democratic society, just by its attitude to the indigenous people. This argument that it is a democracy didn’t work for apartheid South Africa so why should it work for Israel? You know, there was a moment in the Arab spring when it looked very promising, very democratic, but this was most worrying for Israel, as was reflected in the Israeli media. The possibility that there could be an alternative democracy or a real; democracy in the Middle East seemed to shake the strategic foundation of the state of Israel.

**Question:** Israel also points out that Hamas, which is now the governing party in Gaza, says in its charter that it wants to wipe out the state of Israel. This is a powerful ideological weapon for Zionists mobilizing support for Israel, because it can accuse Hamas of wanting another Holocaust.

**Response:** Yes. I see that. But you can’t use human rights to assess anti-colonialist movements at the height of the struggles against colonialism. Hamas is a certain Palestinian reaction to a specific historic moment. I can’t go to the people of Gaza, strangulated as they are by Israel, and tell them stop launching rockets into Israel, to just die there in Gaza. I need to have a meaningful conversation with them, in an environment that will allow them to see the options. This is why the BDS movement is so important. You need to give people an option. As I often say to my friends who propose more radical action against Israel, 100 000 missiles from Gaza would not have the effect of one government in the world that would be willing to sever relations with Israel. This would be far more effective, and it would be non – violent. It would enable us to build something new, without the legacy of violence in the
background. I say to my Palestinian friends: the age of nationalism is over. We have to galvanize around human rights.

The Israeli government did not have emergency meetings on the occupation for many years, until it seemed the BDS movement was having some successes. And this is why the South African government’s reaction to the latest crisis in Gaza has been so disappointing. It could at least have asked the Israeli ambassador to go home. The founder of the Hamas, who was assassinated by Israel, said that if his oppressor was a Muslim or an Arab or even a Palestinian, he would have fought them in the same way. The Fatah Charter used to say that Jews who arrived after 1918 should go back to their home countries. But the moment Fatah thought there was a chance of dialogue, at the time of Oslo, they admitted this was absurd. They said they wouldn’t even demand that the Russians go home, the Russians who arrived yesterday. I’m not a Hamas person, but we need a long dialogue between people of different faiths and backgrounds, because eventually we will find a dialogue state. I’m dying to start this journey with my Muslim friends.

Question: And what of the recent American initiative led by Secretary of State John Kerry?

Response: The two state solutions have been dead for years. The body is in the morgue. Every now and then you get an enthusiastic American secretary of state who takes the body out of the morgue and resuscitates it and pretends that it is alive. But when it doesn’t work, he returns the body to the morgue. I think we should have the funeral already. I don’t think we yet have an idea of how we could develop a new state of Israel – Palestine, but we can’t even begin this dialogue if everyone is captivated by a false paradigm. The two state solutions shrink what is Palestine to 20 percent of the land. You can’t say Palestine is only the West Bank and Gaza. And you can’t shrink the Palestinian people into the people in Gaza and the West Bank. If you’re not going to cater for 5.5 million refugees, however you work it out; the two state solutions will be hot air. Political elites are much more creatures of inertia than they admit. A paradigm shift requires study and learning, and they are lazy. It means risking popularity. It brings with it a lot of uncertainty. We need this paradigm shift, and we have to prepare the ground for that moment.”

The moment is not far off and when it comes, it will be swift, as we saw in South Africa, in terms of a democratic revolutionary government that took power at the ballot box after a negotiated settlement was reached with the oppressor. This did not see the end of the world in South Africa and Afrikaners and whites now live under a black majority government. The end of Israel as a state is near given world opinion and once the United States realizes that, it can no longer support an illegitimate, oppressive, racial and apartheid state in the form of colonialism, couched in the most offensive brutality; the end will be nigh for Israel. Ilan Pappe in his tour of South Africa has laid bear some of the issues in his interview and has also stated emphatically that, Israel should be isolated and declared a pariah state and that sanctions against Israel must become a moral imperative, in order that, it begins a negotiated settlement with Palestinians, not on its terms alone, but by means of a consensus with all important role players including Hamas.

It has to be realized by the world and in this regard they must call the bluff of the United States in that, the unequal wars and attacks upon the Palestinian people is premised largely on the armaments industry of both nations (The US and Israel). Their arms companies make billions of dollars in arming the Israeli military with sophisticated military technology and also with component parts and, also supplies arms to the the US military throughout the Middle East and conflict ridden Arab countries and other parts of the world. This is a fact that cannot be denied and therefore, maintaining the status quo and fuelling war every now and then suits their capitalist imperatives and greed (There is more than sufficient literature
available on this aspect and readers must reference, scan and research this issue very seriously).

THE FAILURE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

International law has failed the Palestinian people and many other countries of the world. Not so long ago there was optimism which reigned about the role of international law in limiting the impact of war on civilians and even beginning a process of more meaningful international governance. Recent events throughout the world have shown that international law in general and humanitarian law in particular are no more than forms of convenient discourse. It is a talk shop with no real muscle to make individuals and offending countries accountable for their actions and crimes against innocent people. It is the reality of pontificating and sharing the agendas for competing sides, whilst the masses suffer with the increasing impunity of war, goaded on by tyrants who have their own agendas or scores to settle in a world that increasingly has become polarized. It is an indictment to the goals of governance and the aims of the 21st century.

United States president Barak Obama invokes international law against Russia and Ukrainian rebels, but is silent about Israel’s action and conduct in Gaza, which is a fragrant violation of international law and many say little about events in Syria, in Egypt, in the Central African Republic, Iraq, South Sudan, about Boko Haram atrocities in Nigeria, the issues in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The world is replete with such examples, and the international community says and does nothing. The United States, Great Britain, Germany and many other European nations allow this trampling of international law and yet constantly invoke rhetoric about human rights. The United Nations, the African Union and other similar political organizations have become tooth less bulldogs and insignificant on the world stage, as they pander to the whims and fancies of powerful Western nations. The world has lost its way and the future of the world in the 21st century looks all the more bleak, as hope diminishes with every passing day. In all these cases and many more (Serjeant at the Bar, 2014: 34) states that “recent events show that international law and in powerful countries, there is an egregious disregard for this law, which has thus achieved nothing when it comes to safeguarding civilians.”

Israel according to (Sergeant at the Bar, 2014: 34) says that “it is in breach and is singled out because it clams to respect the canons of international law. Hence the despair, if Israel is in manifest breach of international law, what hope is there for other war – torn regions? Of course the organized Israel lobby in the United States denies that Israel is in any such breach. But examine the legal position. Briefly there are two cardinal principles of international law expressly designed to protect civilians – distinction and proportionality.” The first is codified in the first protocol of the Geneva Conventions of 1949. It states that “at all times in an armed conflict that combatants and civilians must be distinguished and that efforts must be directed as operations against military objectives only. The principle of proportionality requires that even military objectives may not be attacked, if it is likely to cause civilian casualties” (Geneva Convention, 1949).

The International Court of Justice holds that the obligation to distinguish between civilians and combatants is one of the cardinal principles of international humanitarian law and an immutable principle of international customary law (ICC, 2009). Sadly, the US and its other supporters in respect to the genocide and indeed ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people by Israel, rationalize this. The question is most simple are people’s lives in one nation more important than those in another? How can there be any hope with international law when, it is used in so partisan a manner? No wonder then that international law is seen as no more than a convenient political tool to be employed against one’s enemies and foes. It is a mockery of justice and favours those with immense power and, their allies at the expense of the weak, as is seen in Palestine and other conflict regions of the globe.
CONCLUSION

This paper attempted to clearly show the siege mentality of South African Jews in relationship to the Palestinian question of freedom from occupation and oppression. It underscored the point that there is a right wing emergence and the time has come for Israelis, South African Jews and Jews worldwide to remove their blinkers once and for all. It showed that this issue straddles human rights and therefore, the time has come for Jews throughout the world to now acknowledge the rights of a people held in bondage and slavery and, being massacred with impunity by the apartheid, occupying and colonial state of Israel.

In the 50 days of war, the world saw 2138 Palestinians lose the lives and more 11 000 of them injured with 577 children massacred and 68 Israelis that also perished in the war. The question arises for what did these innocent men, women and children die for, as the world stood by and watched? Israel, the United States, Great Britain, Germany, the European Union, the United Nations, the world political leadership and a host of others need to be held accountable. In reality many political leaders including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu must be hauled to the International Court of Justice and tried for crimes against humanity.

As of the 26 of August a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas including the Palestinian freedom movements agreed to an Egyptian plan to halt aggression and the war. The greatest loss in this war was experienced by Israel because; it failed to annihilate Hamas and moreover failed to distance the Palestinians from resistance. It has agreed to open the borders and allow aid, goods and services to resume. There were ecstatic celebrations in Gaza while the response was muted in Israel because people are still afraid that the war will again resume. Many community leaders in Israel are urging communities not to go home near border towns and not to open schools in September. The war has caused a psychological trauma upon Israeli citizens and is an indication that the superior military might of the Israel military in reality counts for nothing. Aljazeera commentators and a host of others on the 7.30 pm (South African time) news bulletin on the 26th of August, 2014 commented as follows:

Al Jazera news (2014): states as follows: “The war has damaged the credibility of the United States in terms of being an honest broker. Its human rights record has been dented and, it was in their interests to back the cessation of hostilities with the aid of Egypt and Qatar. The war has clearly shown that the popularity of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu which stood at 80 percent at the beginning of the war now stands at 30 percent, because the war did not meet its objectives of annihilating Hamas. Commentators have indicated that Netanyahu must be asking himself as to why he did this? In reality he consolidated the defeat of Israel internally and in the eyes of the Palestinian people including world opinion. Hamas has proved its resilience and it is now certain that they cannot be wiped out easily by Israel and that, this war which was the most fierce of all the wars now places Hamas as a player on the world stage. This realization has now come home to haunt Israel. The tragedy of United States negotiations is the fact that the United States does not negotiate with Hamas. It accuses Hamas of wanting to wipe Israel from the face of the earth. This is not only puerile behaviour on the part of the United States. In reality it supports genocide and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people by an illegitimate occupier. Its justice therefore, is a figment of its imagination. The chickens are coming home to roost. Mahmud Abbas, the President of Palestine in a press statement indicated that, the ceasefire will be useless if a time limit for the conclusion of negotiations is not put into place soon. The first negotiations after the ceasefire will begin in a month’s time to discuss a host of issues, independence and the various blockades imposed by Israel including Israeli settlements on Palestinian land. In spite of the issues being complex, freedom is near for the Palestinians.” (Mark Perry; Sami Abu Zuhri;
Jane Ferguson; Jacky Rowland and others, Aljazeera News, August 26, 2014 at 7.30 pm, South African Time).
The racial prejudices couple with Israeli aggression, occupation and colonialism must be stopped by the international community. Humanity requires all who harbour these prejudices and side with injustices and the crimes being perpetrated upon a people who are helpless, is an indictment to the international political order. In reality, it is affront to the Judeo – Christian ethic and morality. It is an indictment to the so – called civilized world. Plainly put, it is a question of a human rights issue and its overarching consequence is the question of land that has been usurped by Israel in collusion with the forces of Western colonialism. It is nothing more and nothing less.

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