

## CHAPTER 1

# Birds of a Feather: Israel and Apartheid South Africa – Colonialism of a Special Type

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Victory over fascism in 1945 raised the hope of freedom throughout the world. The stage was set for the de-colonisation of Africa and Asia – yet 1948 proved to be an *annus horribilis* for both black South Africans and native Palestinians, with the hawks of war darkening their skies. For South Africans, May 1948 marked the election of the apartheid government, consolidating over three centuries of colonial conquest and subjugation, and the prelude to a forty-six-year maelstrom. For the Palestinians, 1948 opened a truly catastrophic era (*Al-Nakbah*) of brutal dispossession at the hands of a rampant Zionist project, resulting in expulsion from a land they had inhabited continuously for millennia, and the displacement by an exclusivist Jewish settler state whose unilateral independence was declared on 15 May that year. While apartheid was replaced in 1994 by a democratic, non-racist, non-sexist, unitary state of equal citizens, the suffering of the Palestinians only gets more excessive, and a just solution appears more distant.

While there are Zionist apologists who decry the likening of the policy and practices of the apartheid state with those of its Israeli counterpart, the blatant similarities of these two birds of a feather were vividly illustrated by the words of Dr Hendrik Verwoerd – former

South African prime minister and the architect of ‘Grand Apartheid’. In 1961, when expressing his deep admiration for Israel’s foundation and socio-political architecture – and, more especially, for its character as an exclusivist, ethnic state, with special privileges in law for Jews, and the displacement of native Palestinians by foreigners – stated that: ‘The Jews took Israel from the Arabs after the Arabs had lived there for a thousand years. Israel like South Africa is an Apartheid state’.<sup>1</sup>

Much has been written about the similarities between the legal and legislative framework governing Israel and Apartheid South Africa, the seminal work of which is Uri Davis’ *Israel: An Apartheid State* (which referred mainly to Israel itself).<sup>2</sup> The laws and measures adopted by Israel, whether civil or military, closely mirror those of South Africa before and especially during the apartheid period. Among these were the notorious nationality or race laws of both states which excluded non-Jews or non-whites, as the case might be, from the entitlement and privileges of full citizenship; the land and property laws that made it illegal for those same categories of people to own or lease land or own businesses, purchase or rent homes, except in specific areas; the issuing of identity cards based on strict racial classification and reinforced by obsessive Kafkaesque controls, which greatly limited the freedom of movement of Palestinians or black South Africans, including the right to live, work, study, play, relax, travel and be buried where they wished; and, scandalously, even laws affecting the rights of mixed-marriage couples, and so on.

The United Nations (UN) Convention Against Apartheid could have been written for Israel:

Any measures, including legislative measures, designed to divide the population along racial lines by the creation of separate reserves and ghettos for the members of a racial group or groups, the prohibition of mixed marriages among members of various racial groups, the expropriation of landed property belonging

to a racial group or groups or to members thereof [is apartheid and illegal].<sup>3</sup>

It is necessary to note that this legal framework relates to all Palestinians, whether they live within Israel as second-class, discriminated citizens with limited rights, or they are in the Occupied Territories, or they are refugees who fled abroad. The similarities with apartheid are remarkable and abundant, including the master-race psychosis engendered; the cruelty and race hatred generated; and the systemic trampling underfoot of the dignity of Arab or African. It is this colonial-type symbiosis on which this chapter will focus. Israel, from its very conception and inception, embodies similar features ascribed to 'Colonialism of a Special Type' (CST), the term coined by the South African Communist Party in 1962 in its characterisation of Apartheid South Africa. The thesis helped shape the strategy and tactics of the national liberation struggle and bears repeating here:

The conceding of independence to South Africa by Britain in 1910 was not a victory over the forces of colonialism and imperialism. It was designed in the interests of imperialism. Power was transferred not into the hands of the masses of people of South Africa, but into the hands of the White minority alone. The evils of colonialism, insofar as the Non-White majority are concerned, were perpetuated and reinforced. A new type of colonialism was developed, in which the oppressing White nation occupied the same territory as the oppressed people themselves and lived side by side with them.

On one level, that of White South Africa, there are all the features of an advanced capitalist state in its final stage of imperialism ... But on another level, that of Non-White South Africa, there are all the features of a colony. The indigenous population is subjected to extreme national oppression, poverty and exploitation, lack

of all democratic rights and political domination ... The African Reserves<sup>4</sup> show the complete lack of industry, communications and power resources which are characteristic of African territories under colonial rule throughout the Continent. Typical too of imperialist rule is the reliance by the state upon brute force and terror ... Non-White South Africa *is the colony* of White South Africa itself.

It is this combination of the worst features of both imperialism and colonialism, *within a single national frontier*, which determines the special nature of the South African system and has brought upon its rulers the justified hatred and contempt of progressive and democratic people throughout the world ...<sup>5</sup>

If we were to replace the words 'South Africa' with 'Israel' or 'Palestine' depending on the periods; 'White South Africa' with 'the Jewish minority'; 'Non-White South Africa' with 'the Palestinian people'; and 'African Reserves' (i.e., Bantustans) with 'fragmented Palestinian territories', we find an uncanny resemblance between the colonial Apartheid South African model and that of Zionist Israel. The conceding of independence by Britain to the white minority in South Africa in 1910 is comparable to the 1947 partition deal that paved the way for the handing over of power in Palestine to the Jewish minority.

It is not at all difficult to demonstrate Zionist Israel's colonial agenda. Indeed, from the early so-called *political Zionists*<sup>6</sup> onwards, to Israel's first prime minister and the associated military strongmen, we learn straight from the horse's mouth about the true colonial nature and objectives of their project, which at definitive times they did not bother to conceal.

The founding father of *political Zionism*, Theodor Herzl, stated in 1896 that once a Jewish state was established the aim would be to: 'Spirit the penniless population [the Palestinians] across the borders and be rid of them'.<sup>7</sup>

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According to Vladimir Jabotinsky, whose outspoken political radicalism of the 1930s has triumphed in Fortress Israel:

Zionist colonisation ... must ... be ... carried out in defiance of the will of the native population. This colonisation can therefore continue and develop only under the protection of a force independent of the local population – an iron wall which the native population cannot break through. This is, in toto, our policy towards the Arabs. To formulate it any other way would be hypocrisy'.<sup>8</sup>

Israel's first prime minister, David Ben Gurion, who normally went to great lengths to conceal the true agenda, stated in an off-the-record discourse in the 1950s:

Why should the Arabs make peace? If I was an Arab leader, I would never make terms with Israel. That is natural: We have taken their country. Sure, God promised it to us, but what does that matter to them. Our God is not theirs. We come from Israel, it's true, but two thousand years ago, and what is that to them? There has been anti-Semitism, the Nazis ... but was that their fault? They only see one thing: we came here and stole their country.<sup>9</sup>

Moshe Dayan, as outspokenly hawkish as Jabotinsky, unabashedly explained:

Before [the Palestinians'] very eyes we are possessing the land and villages where they, and their ancestors, have lived ... We are the generation of colonisers, and without the gun barrel we cannot plant a tree and build a home.<sup>10</sup>

Such statements, consistently expressed by Zionist leaders from the time of Herzl, reliably contextualise Israel's expansionist objective and

provide the clues as to why it has not been interested in real peace terms. Given the consistency of such formulations, which are not simply isolated rhetoric since they have been realised in systematically consistent actions and serial aggression, it becomes obvious that Israel's existence has been based on colonial conquest, annexation (whenever the time is ripe), ever expanding settlement, and, in those words of South Africa's CST definition, 'constitute the reliance by the state upon brute force and terror'.

The question arises: does the CST analogy assist in understanding the Palestinian–Israeli situation and does it point to its resolution? We can examine this by referring to Shamil Jeppie, a South African academic, who has provided a useful analogy in the article 'Israel: A Colonial Settler State? What Kind of Decolonisation? Some Reflections from Africa'.<sup>11</sup>

Jeppie's starting point was the French historian Maxime Rodinson's celebrated essay on Israel, a 'colonial-settler' phenomenon, written forty years ago.<sup>12</sup> Jeppie writes that Rodinson's arguments 'remain persuasive and valid for scholars looking for conceptual language to understand the origins and practices of the Israeli state, and for activists whose sympathies lie with the cause of the Palestinians'.

I totally concur and am of the view that it is essential to grasp the colonial factor in understanding the Palestinian case: a national liberation struggle of the indigenous and uprooted Palestinians against a colonial-settler project whose community has come to acquire a *distorted* national identity within the same territory, i.e., the CST paradigm. It is Zionist Israel's racist, colonialist agenda that is the fundamental cause of the conflict, as was the case in the South African example. After dealing with the validity of this for analytical purposes, I will return later to the relevance for activism.

It stems from the Zionist world view: its belief in a perpetual anti-Semitism that requires that Jewish people around the world – a faith group – usurp as a national home the territory of another people. The

biblical narrative was evoked to proclaim Palestine as the 'Promised Land' reserved exclusively for God's 'chosen people' and their civilising mission. It sounds all too familiar, as the vision of the South African colonial settlers and exponents of apartheid was similar. In history, this has consistently given rise to racism, segregation and a total onslaught on those who stand in the way, whether Africans or Arabs, native Americans, Asians or Aborigines. As with those whites who joined in the struggle for South Africa's liberation, many Jews, within Israel and even globally, reject the Zionist world view, and declare that being anti-Zionist and critical of Israel does not equate with anti-Semitism – any more than the accident of possessing a white pigmentation meant one was a proponent of apartheid.

Far from being a land without people, as Zionist propaganda falsely proclaimed, to attract and justify colonial settlement, the fact was that an indigenous people – the Palestinians – lived there and had developed agriculture and towns from Canaanite times over 5,500 years ago. In South Africa, too, colonial and apartheid mythology taught generations of schoolchildren that, when the Dutch colonists arrived on the shores of the Cape in 1652, the 'Bantu tribes' in their migration from the north had barely arrived to cross the Limpopo River<sup>13</sup> into what later became South Africa.

Undermining the Zionist claims on Palestine, a delegation of sceptical Vienna rabbis travelled to the Holy Land in 1898 to assess the Zionist vision and cabled home: 'The Bride is indeed beautiful but already married'.<sup>14</sup> This did not deter the Zionists, who plotted to forcefully abduct the bride and do away with the groom by whatever means necessary; and then to defend what they had stolen at all costs by creating a supremacist 'Fortress State' (as best described by Jabotinsky).

This exactly sums up the bloody and tragic fate that befell the Palestinian people, and their Arab neighbours, at the hands of a predatory, expansionist Zionist project that has been the source of war and untold suffering in the Middle East for sixty-seven years or

more (when we include the pre-1948 Zionist settler violence against the indigenous Palestinian population). This colonial dispossession inevitably has regional repercussions for it threatens the entire Middle East, in much the same way that Apartheid South Africa constituted a threat of destabilisation and aggression to the entire Southern African region and beyond with its invasions, use of proxy forces, destruction, assassinations and massacres within and across its borders. From the start, Zionists such as Herzl made no bones about placing a future Jewish state at the disposal of imperialism. Such a state, he promised, would constitute for Europe in Palestine 'a part of the wall against Asia, and serve as the vanguard of civilization against barbarism'.<sup>15</sup> This prophetic racism was amply demonstrated within eight years of Israel's independence, in the joint invasion of Egypt in 1956 with Britain and France, and in the temporary seizure of the Suez Canal. Little wonder that back in 1921 Winston Churchill, then Britain's Colonial Secretary, had observed: 'Zionism is good for the Jews and good for the British Empire'.<sup>16</sup> For the many years of the South African liberation struggle against apartheid, the West similarly saw in the Pretoria regime a bulwark and ally against Soviet communism. And Apartheid South Africa played that card – 'the red peril' – for all its shabby worth.

After the Suez fiasco, America soon demonstrated its willingness to become Israel's chief backer. The late Egyptian scholar Abdelwahab Elmessiri pointed out that Israel had become a 'functional' client state for US interests.<sup>17</sup> It is well documented that it was through America's more than generous assistance in developmental and military aid that Israel became a regional superpower. America has been providing approximately \$5 billion in aid annually – \$3 billion per annum for military requirements alone since 1967 – and sees Israel as its strategic ally of choice with regard to keeping the oil-rich Middle East under control. An American organisation, Jewish Voice for Peace, has pointed out that US military aid to Israel since 1949 'represents the largest transfer of funds from one country to another in history'.<sup>18</sup> It is



estimated that this military aid had amounted to \$100 billion by the end of the twentieth century.

As US President Ronald Reagan explained in 1981:

With a combat experienced military, Israel is a force in the Middle East that is actually a benefit to us. If there were not Israel with that force, we'd have to supply it with our own.<sup>19</sup>

President George W. Bush demonstrated Washington's support for Israel with a \$30 billion dollar military aid programme announced in 2007<sup>20</sup> – within a year of Israel's barbaric onslaught on the Lebanon. Then, of course, we have witnessed the scandalous manner in which Washington, with EU complicity, rallied to Israel's support, immediately replenishing its arsenal, after the onslaughts on Gaza from 2009 to 2014.

Israel's partnership with the Western powers ran in tandem with that of South Africa's apartheid state, which loyally proclaimed its service in the anti-communist, Cold War crusade and – like the Zionist state in relation to Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan – sought to destabilise the perceived Sino-Soviet threat in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe. In fact, an unholy alliance between the two emerged when almost the entire world was boycotting South Africa as a leper state – and Israel became its closest ally. The two rogue states connived in secret arms deals and Israel enabled the apartheid state to upgrade its jet fighter squadrons, naval fleet and weapons systems, and helped in the development of seven nuclear devices. The arms industries of the two states became closely intertwined, with billions of dollars' worth of profits generated. It has taken some time for a democratic South Africa to cut this Gordian knot – but, unfortunately, not entirely and not as far as should be the case, ensnared, as a democratic South Africa is, in the grip of a neoliberal paradigm where rhetoric is one thing and action quite another.

During the heyday of the Jerusalem–Pretoria axis, following apartheid arms supplies to an Israel reeling after the reversals of the 1973 October War, the two states exchanged military advisers and training specialists in respect of both conventional and unconventional warfare, and mutually encouraged the many terrorist excesses they both perpetrated.

Oliver Tambo, African National Congress leader at the time, addressing the UN General Assembly in November 1982, stated:

The parallels between the Middle East and Southern Africa are as clear as they are sinister. The onslaught on the Lebanon, the massive massacre of Lebanese and Palestinians, the attempt to liquidate the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Palestinian people, all of which were enacted with impunity by Israel, have been followed minutely and with unconcealed interest and glee by the Pretoria racist regime which has designs for perpetrating the same kind of crime in Southern Africa in the expectation that, like Israel, it will be enabled by its allies to get away with murder.<sup>21</sup>

The November 1947 UN Partition Plan accorded 56 per cent of the Palestinian Mandate territory to a Jewish homeland, although the Zionist movement had by then acquired less than 7 per cent of the land (purchased from absentee Arab landlords over the heads of tenant farmers) and comprised one-third of the population (many of whom had recently arrived as Holocaust refugees from Europe). The indigenous Palestinian majority were allocated 44 per cent and were never consulted, nor had they had anything to do with the horrific suffering of the European Jews. The Zionists accepted partition with alacrity but never intended to honour the decision. The Palestinians understandably rejected a plan that ripped their homeland asunder.

According to the Zionist strategy, which has become public record with the declassification of many telling historical documents (but not

the most sensitive), the intention was to roll out a systematic reign of terror, massacre, dispossession and expulsion. This drove out the Palestinian population in a diabolical episode of ethnic cleansing that saw over 750,000 Palestinians – two-thirds of the indigenous people at that time – becoming penniless refugees, exactly as Herzl had anticipated. By the 1949 Armistice, the Israeli state had expanded to 78 per cent of the territory. This *fait accompli* was accepted without a murmur of protest outside Arab countries. The Western world largely ignored the ethnic cleansing despite the graphic testimonies of UN and international Red Cross observers, who independently confirmed the heart-rending Palestinian accounts.

That was sixty-seven years ago. Israel's June 1967 war of aggression, a direct and dramatic extension of 1948, resulted in Israeli military occupation of the remaining 22 per cent of the former British Mandate territory of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, without any meaningful opposition in the West. While apartheid shocked Western sensibilities, Zionist colonial conquest was accepted as payback for Holocaust suffering and because of the absurd argument, still vociferously peddled by biblical fundamentalists, that Israel constitutes a mere two-hundredth or 0.5 per cent of the vast land a 'God of Real Estate' allegedly promised the ancient Israelites!<sup>22</sup>

Palestinians within the West Bank and Gaza Strip are besieged and imprisoned under the most onerous conditions, suffering hardships and methods of control that are far worse than anything black South Africans faced during the most dreadful days of apartheid. In fact, any South African with integrity, visiting what amounts to enclosed prison ghettos under brutal military occupation, siege and collective punishment – imposed on behalf of a Jewish people who, ironically, suffered the Nazi Holocaust – will find a stark similarity with apartheid immediately coming to mind, and, even more shockingly, comparisons with some of the methods of collective punishment and control devised under tyrannies elsewhere.

An Israeli cabinet minister, Aharon Cizling, stated in 1948, several months after the Deir Yassin massacre: 'I often disagree when the term Nazi was applied to the British ... even though the British committed Nazi crimes. Now we too have behaved like Nazis and my whole being is shaken'.<sup>23</sup>

If any lingering doubts remain with regard to what the 1948 and subsequent so-called pre-emptive, defensive wars were about, listen to Ben Gurion, who predicted in 1938: 'After we become a strong force, as the result of the creation of a state, we shall abolish partition and expand into the whole of Palestine'.<sup>24</sup>

The following words of Moshe Dayan in 1969 clearly give the game away too:

Our fathers had reached the frontiers which were recognized in the UN Partition Plan of 1947 [56 per cent of the land]. Our generation reached the frontiers of 1949 [78 per cent of the land]. Now the Six Day Generation [of 1967] has managed to reach Suez, Jordan and the Golan Heights. This is not the end.<sup>25</sup>

Indeed, the saga of Palestinian and Arab agony continues with the 2006 aggression against Lebanon, the incremental genocidal onslaught against the Gaza Strip through the serial massacres of 2009–10, 2012 and 2014, and the rising racism and brutality of the Netanyahu regime. The result of such horrendous suffering caused by Israeli state terror is the inevitable creation of insecurity for Israelis as well: as has been seen in South Africa and in other historical experiences, injustice and repression generate resistance. It is no good blaming the victims when they stand and fight, fire retaliatory rockets and dig tunnels from which to launch combat operations. That retaliation is, in fact, a form of defence and is more understandable than the ignominy of living on one's knees and legitimising one's suffering. As in the struggle for South African liberation, the blame must be placed squarely on the

state perpetrators responsible in the first place for the repression that makes noble human beings rise up. When the Israeli people and their supporters internationally cry about Jewish suffering and fear, it is Netanyahu and his cohorts at whom they should be pointing the finger.

The Palestinian people's fate clearly reflects that of South Africa's indigenous majority during the colonial wars of dispossession of land, property and rights, and the harsh discrimination and suffering of the apartheid period that were classified as crimes against humanity. Israel is as guilty according to international and humanitarian law as the apartheid regime was. Israel's illegal conquest and occupation, with the avaricious land grab of its monstrous 'Apartheid Wall' and relentless expansion of its illegal settlements (in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention), have reduced the West Bank to several disconnected pockets amounting to a mere 12 per cent of former Palestine. No wonder that Jimmy Carter, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and others compare the situation with apartheid and the infamous Bantustans – which gave 13 per cent of the land to South Africa's indigenous people.

There is, however, one key difference here. Apartheid's grand masters, while initially seeking to keep black South Africans strictly confined to those Bantustans, recognised that the development of the apartheid economy was dependent on the sweat of cheap, landless black labour. This dependence led to the rapid growth of a burgeoning urban black proletariat, which, while severely restricted in its movement and rights, was nevertheless ever present in the mines, factories, farms and kitchens of 'white South Africa'. Temporary residence in the sprawling black dormitory townships alongside the exclusively white cities was allowed, while surplus labour was kept in reserve in the Bantustan homelands.

Israel, however, has sought to rid itself of the Palestinian workforce on its doorstep, and, in an age of globalisation, is able to draw upon cheap labour from as far afield as Thailand and Romania. This becomes apparent on entering the Gaza Strip through the Erez Crossing, with

its huge but underutilised reception centre, originally constructed to process the daily movement of 20,000 Gazan workers who are no longer sought by Israel.

This makes for a situation in which segregation in Israel and its 'Palestinian' appendages – prison ghettos enclosed within Greater Israel – is far more severe but, in essence, no different from the apartheid example. Apartheid South Africa needed black labour. Israel reduces as far as possible its dependence on a Palestinian workforce and applies all means at its disposal to stifle the economy of the Occupied Territories with the intention of completely driving out the remaining inhabitants. This is a merciless and ghastly process, which can be reversed only through the resilience of a beleaguered people reinforced by international support.

South Africa's colonial apartheid order – its CST – lasted almost 350 years following Dutch and British intrusion, with many ebbs and surges of conquest. The Zionist colonial-settler project stems from the 1880s and therefore has been violently crammed into a relatively shorter time frame with its shock waves of mass repression over the last seven decades. The Israeli ruling class, corrupt and bereft of vision, like the diehard proponents of apartheid in its ailing years, are finding that they can no longer rule in the old way. The Palestinians are not prepared to live under the old conditions. Here, indeed, the CST thesis could provide the Palestinian national liberation movement, and all activists, with the inspirational analogy of the anti-apartheid experience and lessons from the strategy and tactics of that struggle as referred to by Shamil Jeppie earlier. Historical experience requires:

- unity in the actions of the Palestinian masses of all classes and strata – within Israel, Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza and the diaspora;
- determined leadership from the grassroots up, capable of winning mass support and trust;

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- the correct theory and practice, with clear objectives and appropriate methods of struggle, reinforced by popular mass actions embracing progressive Israeli Jews;
- a powerful international solidarity movement based on BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) that exerts pressure on Israel and the states that support that country.

Such a strategy – as was applied against apartheid – is waiting to crystallise and will emerge with the growing BDS movement and the renewed energy that the Palestinian national liberation movement will undoubtedly generate for as long as *sumud* and resistance persist.

As former beneficiaries of selfless international backing, South Africans – with an anti-colonialist and anti-racist heritage – have a duty to lend a supportive hand to encourage the international campaign and press for genuine negotiations for a hopeful peaceful solution in the interests of all Muslims, Christians and Jews living in the Holy Land. South Africa's experience bears testimony to the fact that previous adversarial groups, once locked in a seemingly intractable struggle, can find a way to cross the Rubicon, talk to one another and reconcile in a mutually beneficial solution of equals as a consequence of a just struggle that emancipates all.

In taking this process forward, South Africa's position remains clear. We join with freedom-loving people across the globe in calling for Israel's immediate withdrawal from the Occupied Territories, including Syria's Golan Heights and East Jerusalem – lifting the physical, economic and financial blockade and siege of Gaza and the West Bank; removing the impediments to the freedom of movement of Palestinians, including the monstrous 'Apartheid Wall' and over 500 checkpoints; utterly dismantling the illegal settlements; releasing thousands of political prisoners (women and growing numbers of children among them); negotiating a just solution with the elected representatives of the Palestinian people; and implementing the various UN resolutions,

including Resolution 194 of 1948 concerning the inalienable right of return of the refugees. These are necessary steps to create lasting peace, justice and security for Palestinians and Israelis alike, reinforced by international guarantees, so that all may live in harmony.

The importance of the CST characterisation is that it demolishes the dangerous charade that Zionism is itself a national liberation movement, and that the claims of both Israel and the Palestinians should be treated by the international community in a balanced and even-handed manner, on a par with one another.

The CST thesis cuts to the bone. It lifts the veil on the true nature of this historic struggle for land and national rights, which requires full national determination and independence for the colonised people – the Palestinian people – before all else. This is fundamental: after this, all else will follow, for this is the basis for solving the national question. It is only based on the freedom and independence of the colonised nation that the settlers – those who are prepared to stay – will find security.

While the acceptance by Yasser Arafat's PLO of a state based on the 1967 borders (East Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza) certainly limited the outright struggle for the whole of former Palestine, Israel's reluctance (with US support) to accept the Oslo compromise (some would say 'trap') has come to threaten the two-state option. Indeed, owing to Israeli prevarication, and downright sabotaging of the Oslo agreement – initially by Sharon and then by Netanyahu – many have come to see negotiations as a charade and the two-state solution as being as dead as the proverbial dodo. This has consequently seen a revival of the full national demands of the Palestinians, not only in the support Hamas has received but also in the fact that Palestinian and some Jewish intellectuals and progressives (few in number but symbolically important) are revisiting the original unitary, bi-national or single-state option of equal citizenship and security for all, as in the example of a democratic South Africa.



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Let me conclude with the words of noted South African professor John Dugard, special rapporteur to the UN Human Rights Council, in a 2007 report on the situation in the Palestinian territories. His statement underpins the very reason for South Africa's commitment to and support for the just demands of the Palestinian people:

For years the occupation of Palestine and apartheid South Africa vied for attention from the international community. In 1994 apartheid came to an end and Palestine became the only developing country in the world under subjugation of a Western-affiliated regime.<sup>26</sup>

Sixty-seven agonising years after the 1948 Nakba, it is high time that justice prevails; that the suffering Palestinians achieve, together with their fellow Jews, the freedom that all South Africans now enjoy – emerging as freed birds of a democratic feather based on fraternity and equity in a liberated context. The formulation of a particular state structure must finally be worked out by the Palestinian and Israeli people without outside interference. They have to live together in justice and peace. The stampede to the right by the Jewish electorate of Israel, and the racist fearmongering of Netanyahu and his cronies, is ultimately doomed to failure.

There are rising Jewish voices in Israel and worldwide, just as there were whites in Apartheid South Africa, who see this as the sane hope for the future. While this might not be the primary factor for change, the contradictions within the settler 'nation' are important. The struggle and determination of the colonised people are, of course, the key to bringing about change.

### Notes

- 1 *Rand Daily Mail*, Johannesburg, 23 November 1961. Verwoerd was hitting back at Western countries' criticism of apartheid while they supported Israel and overlooked its dispossession of Palestinian land and rights. Of course,

- he erroneously calculated Arab settlement from Islamic times, ignoring indigenous Palestinian settlement from time immemorial.
- 2 Uri Davis, *Israel: An Apartheid State*, London: Zed Books, 1987.
  - 3 International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3068 (XXVIII) of 30 November 1973, which came into force on 18 July 1976.
  - 4 Later to be termed Bantustans, with sham independence. There were ten such 'homelands' comprising 13 per cent of South Africa.
  - 5 South African Communist Party, *The Road to South African Freedom*, 1962.
  - 6 The term dates from the late nineteenth century and denotes a political agenda to establish a Jewish national state as a homeland for all Jews. This contrasts with spiritual or cultural Zionism's view of Jerusalem: that is, Zion as a place of pilgrimage.
  - 7 Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, New York: Herzl Press, 1961.
  - 8 Nur Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians*, Washington, DC: Institute for Palestinian Studies, 1992, p. 28.
  - 9 Nathan Goldmann, *The Jewish Paradox*, New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978.
  - 10 Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, *Original Sins: Reflections on the History of Zionism and Israel*, Northampton, MA: Interlink Publishing, 1998.
  - 11 Shamil Jeppie in Aslam Farouk-Alli (ed.), *The Future of Palestine and Israel: From Colonial Roots to Postcolonial Realities*, Midrand and Johannesburg: Institute for Global Dialogue and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2007.
  - 12 Maxime Rodinson, *Israel: A Colonial Settler State?*, New York: Anchor Foundation, 1973. First published in French as 'Israel, fait colonial' in 1967 in a special issue of *Les Temps Modernes* devoted to the Arab–Israeli conflict.
  - 13 The Limpopo River forms present-day South Africa's northern border with Zimbabwe.
  - 14 Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2001.
  - 15 Uri Avnery, 'America's Rottweiler', *CounterPunch*, 26–27 August 2006: [www.counterpunch.org](http://www.counterpunch.org).
  - 16 David Schafer, 'Triumph and catastrophe', *The Humanist*, November–December 2002: [www.thehumanist.org](http://www.thehumanist.org).
  - 17 Abdelwahab Elmessiri, 'The Role Of Philosophy and Ideology in the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict: An Outsider's Perspective'. Paper presented at the Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD) conference, September 2006.
  - 18 See [www.peacenow.org](http://www.peacenow.org).
  - 19 Nasser Aruri, *Dishonest Broker: The US Role in Israel and Palestine*, Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2003.

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- 20 'US and Israel in \$30bn Arms Deal', BBC News, 16 August 2007: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/6948981.stm>.
- 21 Statement at the plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly, New York, 9 November 1982.
- 22 Rabbi Warren Goldstein, South Africa's Orthodox Chief Rabbi, argued this point in an article in the *South African Sunday Times* newspaper on 17 June 2007.
- 23 Tom Segev, *1949: The First Israelis*, New York: Henry Holt, 1998.
- 24 Goldmann, *The Jewish Paradox*.
- 25 *The Times*, 25 June 1969.
- 26 UN Human Rights Council Report A/HRC/4/17 by Professor John Dugard, special rapporteur on the situation in the Palestinian Territories, 29 January 2007.