



APARTHEID

**From South Africa
to Israel/Palestine**

Making the Connections

SOUTH AFRICA 1948

APARTHEID becomes official government policy.

“**Apartheid**” is the Afrikaner word for “apartness.” It reflected the racist belief that certain people are less human than others. White colonial rulers in South Africa set aside 87 percent of the best land for themselves. They wanted the labor of the majority indigenous Black population, but viewed Black Africans as a “demographic problem” whose numbers and movements had to be strictly controlled.



Under Apartheid people were separated by race.



Apartheid consisted of hundreds of laws that allowed the ruling European minority to segregate, exploit and terrorize the vast majority. The system was maintained by military repression.

In Apartheid South Africa, people were classified as either “White” or “Non White” (Black, Colored or Asian). This classification determined where people could live, what kind of jobs they could get, what schools they could attend and what kind of rights they would have. As under “Jim Crow” segregation in the American South, the best of everything was reserved for “Whites Only.”



A “Whites Only” bench.

ISRAEL 1948

The State of Israel is established on the land of Palestine and ETHNIC CLEANSING is made unofficial Zionist policy.

In May 1948, the State of Israel was established on 78 percent of what had been the land of Palestine. Zionist settlers wanted the land, but not the people. In March 1948, Zionist leaders decided to expel them. Within six months, more than 750,000 Palestinians – half of the indigenous population - had been forced to leave their homes, and some 500 Palestinian villages had been destroyed.

In the words of Israeli historian Ilan Pappé, “The story of 1948...is a simple but horrific story of the ethnic cleansing of Palestine, a crime against humanity that Israel has wanted to deny and cause the world to forget.”



Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were again driven from their homes when Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the 1967 Six Day War. It has maintained that occupation in defiance of the world community for more than 42 years.



Today, four and a half million Palestinians are registered as refugees with the United Nations. Many more are displaced persons and a million and a half still live in densely-crowded refugee camps. Israel has defied international law and refused to allow them to return to their homes.

APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

White Settlers Control the Land and People.

European settlers wanted the land of South Africa for themselves, but they needed the labor of the indigenous population. Black workers were forced to live in “townships” or labor camps and earn only a fraction of the wages paid to White workers. The government controlled the movement of Black people and eventually “Coloreds” by making them carry passes which determined where they could live, work and travel. If they were found in the “wrong place,” they would be arrested.

In the 1950s, laws divided the 13.6 percent of the land that Whites had reserved for Black people into ten African “homelands” or Bantustans. A goal of the Apartheid system was to deprive Black Africans of South African citizenship and force them to be “citizens” of these fragmented and impoverished “homelands.” More than four million Black people were expelled from “White” areas and made to live in the desperately poor Bantustans.



A worker shows his passbook.

In 1976, South Africa declared that the Bantustans were now “independent states.” But the world refused to recognize them as such. In the eyes of the international community, the people who were forced to live there remained South Africans.



African laborers in a mining camp.



Whites dealt with their “demographic problem” through expulsion.

STATE OF ISRAEL

Zionists Want the Land but Not the People.



Like Black South Africans, Palestinians were viewed as a “demographic problem” by European colonizers. In Israel, there are two broad categories of “nationality.” “Jews” and “Non Jews” have different birth certificates, identity cards, residence requirements and very unequal access to land, education, employment and rights. Palestinians who remained within Israel were granted citizenship, but Israel is not a state for all its citizens. Palestinian Israelis face ongoing discrimination in all aspects of life.

When the World Zionist Organization was founded in Switzerland in 1897, more than 500,000 people lived in the area of the Ottoman Empire known as Palestine. Only five percent of them were Jewish. The slogan “a people without a land for a land without a people” was a Zionist myth.

On May 14, 1948, acting Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the State of Israel. He wrote in his diary on that day: “To maintain the status quo will not do. We have set up a dynamic state, bent upon creation and reform, building and expansion.” The expansion was to be at the expense of the indigenous Palestinian population.

Israel has always been a state without official borders. During the 1967 War, it expanded into the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Following the pattern established during the ethnic cleansing of 1948, the Israeli army destroyed Palestinian villages, turned hundreds of thousands of Palestinians into refugees, and seized more land.

From 1967 until today, Israel has continued to confiscate Palestinian land and dispossess the Palestinian people.



Former South African Prime Minister **Hendrick Verwoerd** (left) saw close similarities between Israel and South Africa. In his words, “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.” (*Rand Daily Mail*, November 23, 1961)

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID



Throughout the 20th century, Black people fought for justice in South Africa. The African National Congress (ANC), founded in 1912, used strategies of nonviolent resistance to campaign for equality, citizenship and full democracy for 50 years.

In response, the Apartheid government prohibited meetings, shot protesters, detained activists without trial, and tortured many of them in prison. In 1960, after the government banned the ANC, its leader, Nelson Mandela, formed a military wing for armed resistance.

After Mandela and other leaders were sentenced to life imprisonment in 1964, the struggle against Apartheid within South Africa was carried forward by all sectors of civil society, including women's groups, trade unions, and students.





While the world turned against Apartheid, Israel remained a faithful ally of South Africa. As tourism to South Africa from the rest of the world declined, tourism from Israel kept growing. Israelis ran businesses and invested in and looked after security matters in the South African Bantustans. Through its close diplomatic, economic and military ties, Israel helped sustain the Apartheid system.

This intimate collaboration was described by Israeli professor Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi as “a unique alliance...the most comprehensive and the most serious Israeli involvement anywhere in the world.”



An international **Anti-Apartheid Movement** had emerged in London in 1960 to work for the total isolation of the Apartheid state by boycotting South African products, ending all academic, cultural and sports contacts, breaking all military and economic ties, and divesting from all companies operating in or investing in South Africa.

When over a thousand South African students were killed and thousands arrested during the 1976 Soweto uprising, the world began to pay close attention to what was happening within South Africa. International support for boycott, divestment and sanctions dramatically increased when South Africa proclaimed a State of Emergency in 1985 and intensified its already brutal repression. There was widespread censorship as tens of thousands of people were detained and many were subjected to torture.



PATTERNS OF REPRESSION: SOUTH AFRICA AND PALESTINE



By the late 1980s, connections were being made between repression in South Africa under the State of Emergency, and the “force, might and beatings” with which Israel responded to the unarmed Palestinian uprising of the entire population to throw off the military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

As the South African anti-Apartheid leader Archbishop Desmond Tutu told a New York synagogue in 1989, “If you changed the names, the description of what is happening in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank would be a description of what is happening in South Africa.”

During the first uprising or intifada, some 1,200 Palestinians were killed by the Israeli army, including at least 300 children. Tens of thousands of Palestinians were arrested and prisoners were systematically tortured.

SOUTH AFRICA THROWS OFF APARTHEID

Apartheid remains a “Crime Against Humanity.”

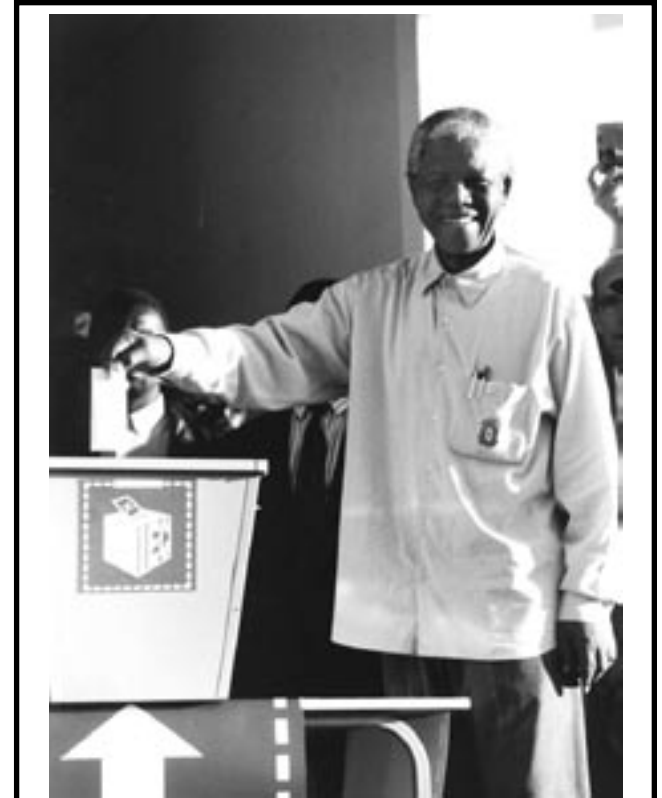
On November 30, 1973 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the **International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid**. It entered into force in 1976. Earlier in the same year, South African Prime Minister John Vorster, who had been imprisoned for pro-Nazi activities, paid an official state visit to Israel.

The Convention emphasized that the **“Crime of Apartheid”** – which it defined as a “crime against humanity” – was not exclusive to South Africa. Instead, it applied to policies and practices “similar” to those identified with the Apartheid state of South Africa. The Convention defined the Crime of Apartheid as “inhuman acts” that were committed to establish and maintain domination by one racial group (what Israel calls a “demographic group”) over another group which was systematically oppressed.

Mass mobilization against Apartheid both within and outside South Africa finally led to the release in 1990 of Nelson Mandela and other leaders, and negotiations for a peaceful transformation. In 1994, Nelson Mandela was elected President of a democratic South Africa.

After Apartheid ended in South Africa, the Crime of Apartheid was included as one of eleven recognized crimes against humanity in the 2002 Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court.

The “inhuman acts” listed in the Convention as constituting the Crime of Apartheid have long been inflicted on Palestinians. **The following pages illustrate how the Crime of Apartheid applies to Israeli practices.**



“We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of Palestinians.”

**President Nelson Mandela
December 1997**

THE CRIME OF APARTHEID

“Denial of Right to Life and Liberty of Person”

MURDER

Over the last quarter century, Israel has used death squads, bombs and missile attacks in “targeted assassinations.” In the process, it has killed hundreds of bystanders, many of them children. More than a thousand Palestinian children have been denied the “right to life” since September 2000.



The Gaza Strip has been attacked with impunity, despite the fact that half of its residents are children. On July 22, 2002, the apartment building pictured above was flattened by a one ton bomb as Israel attempted to kill a Hamas leader. Instead, fourteen civilians were killed, including nine children. Hundreds of children were among the dead during Israel’s three-week military attack beginning in December 2008.



THE CRIME OF APARTHEID

TORTURE



In 1970, Amnesty International wrote a report about the systematic torture of Palestinians. The *Sunday Times* of London on June 19, 1977 reported that Israel used torture routinely to induce people to “confess” and “to persuade Arabs in the occupied territories that it is least painful to behave passively.” In 1999, the Israeli human rights group B’Tselem estimated that 85% of Palestinians were tortured during interrogations. In that year, the Israeli High Court outlawed torture but permitted physical pressure for reasons of “necessity.” According to the Israeli Public Committee against Torture, the practice of torture is no longer routine, but it still occurs during some interrogations.

ARBITRARY ARREST



The Israeli *Koteret Rachit* reported on February 25, 1987 that one in three Palestinians had spent some time in an Israeli jail. Since 1967, more than 40 percent of Palestinian adult males have been imprisoned on “security grounds.” Children as young as 13 have spent up to four years in prison for throwing stones.

THE CRIME OF APARTHEID

Like Black Africans under Apartheid, Palestinians have faced the destruction of their homes and communities.

More than 20,000 homes have been demolished by Israeli authorities since the occupation began in 1967. When a house is destroyed, the land on which it stood often becomes “state land” and the family cannot rebuild.



During the April 2002 invasion of Jenin refugee camp (above), 140 buildings were destroyed and 200 other houses made uninhabitable.

An Israeli bulldozer driver was quoted in *Yediot Ahronoth* on May 31, 2002: “For three days, I just destroyed and destroyed. They were warned by loudspeaker to get out of the house before I [would] come, but I gave no one a chance. I didn’t wait. I would just ram the house with full power, to bring it down as fast as possible. I wanted to get to the other houses. To get as many as possible....”

DESTRUCTION OF HOMES



This family in the Gaza Strip is sheltering in a school after the destruction of their house during an Israeli invasion of the town of Rafah in 2004. More than 45,000 children had their homes destroyed between the years 2000 and 2006 according to Save the Children, and the number has risen rapidly since then.

THE CRIME OF APARTHEID

NO FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

More than 500 army checkpoints and roadblocks have strangled the West Bank, preventing the flow of people, goods and ambulances. Students cannot get to their schools and people who are ill often cannot get to hospitals. Women have given birth at checkpoints and their new born babies have died there. East Jerusalem, once the center of West Bank life, is now off limits to most Palestinians. Below is the “transit terminal” at the entrance to the West Bank town of Bethlehem.



Like Black South Africans under Apartheid, Palestinians must carry an ID card or “pass” and show it at checkpoints.



The Gaza Strip is an open air prison, surrounded by walls, an electric fence, and locked gates. Students cannot reach their West Bank universities or take up scholarships to study abroad, patients cannot get to well-equipped hospitals, farmers cannot export crops and economic life has ground to a halt. Since 2007, Israel has blocked all but a handful of basic necessities from entering the Gaza Strip.

THE CRIME OF APARTHEID

"Creation of Separate Reserves and Ghettos"

In defiance of international law and hundreds of United Nations resolutions, Israel has appropriated and colonized more than half of the West Bank. It has fragmented the territory with Jewish-only by-pass roads and more than 200 settlements and military bases. Palestinians are imprisoned in emerging Bantustans behind high walls, high tech fences and hundreds of checkpoints and "transit terminals."



Israel's planned 450-mile long "Separation Barrier" - which Palestinians call the Apartheid Wall - cuts deeply into the West Bank along more than 80 percent of its route, taking the best land and water resources. It has separated Palestinians from their families, their fields, their schools, hospitals and jobs. More than a quarter of a million people are imprisoned in walled enclaves.



In July 2004, the International Criminal Court ruled that the Wall was illegal where it was built on Palestinian land and ordered it to be dismantled. Backed by the US Congress, Israel immediately denounced the Court's ruling and has continued to build the Wall.

“The people within the West Bank and Gaza are literally imprisoned under the most unjust conditions, suffering hardships and methods of control that are far worse than anything our people faced during the most dreadful days of Apartheid. In fact any South African visiting what amounts to enclosed prison-ghettos – imposed by a Jewish people that tragically suffered the Nazi Holocaust – will find similarity with Apartheid immediately coming to mind.... Israel is as guilty as the Apartheid Regime. Israel’s conquest and occupation, with the latest land grab caused by its monstrous Apartheid wall and continued construction of illegal settlements, has reduced the West Bank into several disconnected pockets amounting to 12 percent of former Palestine. No wonder that Jimmy Carter, Archbishop Tutu and others compare the situation to Apartheid and their infamous Bantustans – which gave 13 percent of land for South Africa’s indigenous population.”

Former South African Freedom Fighter Ronnie Kasrils addressing the South African Parliament on the 40th anniversary of the Israeli occupation, June 6, 2007



Top left: a West Bank settlement with its many swimming pools. Nearly half a million settlers now live in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. They consume as much water as they like while Palestinians are not permitted to dig new wells and have to buy water from Israel at inflated prices.

Top center: a Jewish-only by-pass road. Top right: armed West Bank settlers often attack Palestinian villagers and prevent them from working in their fields.

Left: the Wall cuts off the residents of Abu Dis from nearby East Jerusalem, long the center of Palestinian economic, cultural, educational and religious life.

THE CRIME OF APARTHEID

Denying "Basic Human Rights and Freedoms"

Palestinians, who are stateless, have been denied their most basic civil, political and human rights. They have not been permitted the right to leave, and return to, the land of their birth. Families have been denied the right to live together.

For decades, thousands of military decrees controlled every aspect of their lives. It was a crime to raise a Palestinian flag and express opposition to the occupation. In July 1989, a four-year-old child appeared in a Jerusalem court for the "crime of incitement." He had raised his fingers in a V-sign.

In the mid 1990s, many Palestinians hoped that their lives would be improved by the "Oslo peace process." But Israel used this time to seize more Palestinian land and double the number of its settlers. It offered Palestinians a "state" consisting of disconnected islands of land resembling small Bantustans.

The Oslo process established a Palestinian Authority with limited powers in a tiny fraction of occupied land. Israeli military orders remain supreme and the Israeli army frequently conducts raids in the areas governed by the Palestinian Authority.





Under international law, Palestinians have the **Right to Self-Determination** and the right to resist illegal military occupation. Terrorist acts - defined as acts of political violence directed against civilians - are not permitted under international law. States as well as individuals can be guilty of terrorism and occupying states are legally and morally obligated to refrain from collective punishment and violence against civilians.

While Palestinian suicide bombings and Gaza's crude rockets have received world attention, less well known are the daily acts of non-violent resistance which Palestinians engage in with their Israeli and international supporters.



From the first intifada to the current weekly demonstrations against the Apartheid Wall, Palestinians have a rich history of nonviolent protest activity.



ENDING THE CRIME OF APARTHEID

The Way Forward...

In July 2005, 171 Palestinian civil society organizations called upon the international community “to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives” against Israel similar to those applied to Apartheid South Africa. Measures of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) should be maintained, they said, until Israel ends the occupation, dismantles the Wall, recognizes the fundamental rights of Israeli Palestinians and respects the rights of Palestinian refugees.

With South Africans in the lead, churches, trade unions, universities and other organizations in North America, Europe and around the world have responded to the Palestinian Call.



“If Apartheid ended, so can the occupation, but the moral force and international pressure will have to be just as determined.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu
July 2002



*American taxpayers subsidize Israel at a rate of \$8 million **every day**. Our government has put Israel beyond the reach of international law and world opinion by vetoing more than 40 UN Security Council resolutions and preventing scores of others from coming to a vote. Israel's Apartheid practices are our responsibility, and we have a key role to play in bringing the Crime of Apartheid to an end.*



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