

## Zionism is a Theory of Ethnic Cleansing Racism

By Na'eem Jeenah

Apartheid South Africa and Israel caused the main discussions in the previous two world anti-racism conferences – 1978 and 1983. South Africa has since been liberated and anti-racism activists around the world are demanding Israel be discussed at the Durban anti-racism conference.

Why this clamour from activists, scholars and international civil society? Because Zionism *is* racism and Israel – Zionism in practice – is an apartheid state.

'There is no such thing as a Palestinian people.' – Golda Meir.

'There is no other way than to transfer the Arabs from here to neighbouring countries... all of them; not one village, not one tribe, should be left.' – Joseph Weitz, 1967.

'The only good Arab is a dead Arab... When we have settled the land, all the Arabs will be able to do about it will be to scurry around like drugged cockroaches.' – Rafael Eitan, Likud, 1981.

'It is forbidden to be merciful to them... Evil ones, damnable ones. May the Holy Name visit retribution on the Arabs' heads, and cause their seed to be

6

lost, and annihilate them...' – Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, Shas, 2001.

Israeli Interior Minister Eli Yehsa's response to Yosef: 'They reflected the overall state of thinking of the Israeli Jewish society.'

Clearly, Zionism is a theory of ethnic cleansing and racism. It's not *just* Jewish nationalism as often argued. It was created as political nationalism in the heart of Europe to grab land belonging to people far away. And it carried the European ideological view of non-Europeans as insignificant.

On the basis of this view, Apartheid Israel developed an elaborate system of discriminatory policies and laws to subjugate the natives.

One of the world's most discriminatory practices is Israel's policy of 'redeeming' the land by placing ownership exclusively in Jewish hands. Israel Shahak wrote, 'The land which has been redeemed is the land which has passed from non-Jewish to Jewish ownership... The land which belongs to non-Jews is, on the contrary, considered to be unredeemed.' The notion that land possessed by the other remains 'unredeemed' is the worst kind of national chauvinism. Racism?

Israel's Law of Return is another racist law. By it the state must accommodate any Jews from anywhere in the world that might, at any time, migrate to Israel. If four million Jews suddenly emigrate to Israel/Palestine, the Israeli government *will* accommodate them. In contrast, four million

Palestinians that were dispossessed of their land and forced into exile when Israel was formed have no right of return because – in Ehud Barak's words – it would be 'national suicide'. National suicide when the returnees are Palestinians wanting to return to the land of their birth but not when the immigrants are foreign Jews? Racism? (How foreigners to a land can 'return' to it is itself amazing.)

How many nations in the world today openly boast of segregation? A Barak campaign billboard in 1999 proclaimed: 'Peace Through Separation: Us Here Them Over There.' Racism?

Israeli apologists make much of 'Israeli Arabs' (Palestinians within the 1948 borders) being 'allowed' to vote. Yet they exist as third class Israeli citizens. They are discriminated against for housing, education, social services, welfare benefits and employment. Electricity, sewerage, roads and water are provided free to Israeli households while many Palestinian communities in Israel *still* do not have adequate services. But this cannot compare to the discrimination in West Bank and Gaza. Sixty percent of West bank land is 'owned' by Israelis in settlements regarded as illegal by international law. In Gaza, 6 000 settlers own 42 percent of the land. An Israeli settler in Gaza consumes 2000 cubic metres of water while a Palestinian is allowed only 120! Racism?

Israeli inhabitants are required to carry ID Cards. Shahak says these can list the official nationality of a person - Jewish, Arab, Druze... - but not 'Israeli'. When left-wing Israelis applied for ID cards identifying them as 'Israeli' or 'Israeli-Jew', the Interior Ministry rejected their requests. A 'democracy' that requires citizens' ID cards stipulating ethno-religious identity without mentioning nationality? Racism?

7

'I believe Zionism is racism,' said Rabe'e Sahyoun, 'because I am a Palestinian, and without recognizing the colonialist component in Zionism, I cannot explain its racist character, a western movement uprooting the native peoples of Palestine: Muslim, Christian, Jew, Samaritan alike... I believe Zionism is racism because it fails to admit that the minority indigenous Jewish community in Palestine that lived there for the last 2000 years was an indistinguishable people from its Christian and Muslim Palestinian brethren, and that the leader of the Jewish community of the Jewish quarter of Old Jerusalem, Rabbi Lamram Blau, stood on the side of his Palestinian brothers and sisters being exiled in 1948.'

Six decades ago the world watched as Jews were humiliated, despised, projected as unworthy of respect, dignity or legal protection and faced state terrorism. By the end of the holocaust, the world said 'Never Again!' Today the world watches as Palestinians are humiliated, despised, projected as unworthy of respect, dignity or legal protection and face state terrorism. Again?

'It is extraordinary,' said Lord Yehudi Menuhin, how nothing ever dies completely. Even the evil which prevailed yesterday in Nazi Germany is gaining ground in that country (Apartheid Israel) today.'

*Na'eem Jeenah is a spokesperson for the National Consultative Forum on Palestine and the Palestine Solidarity Committee and President of the Muslim Youth Movement*

## **Statement of the Palestinian NGOs to Government Delegates at the World Conference Against Racism**

***Durban, South Africa  
6 September 2001***

Palestinians like other victims of racism at this Conference have been seeking an opportunity to have their daily sufferings from racism discussed, understood and combatted at this Racism Conference. Instead, all attempts have been made to delete any and all references to their actual experiences of racism and methods to combat that racism, and now to replace them with watered-down and politicised language that bears little relevance to this particular Racism Forum.

**8** Israel's on-going gross violations of Palestinians' rights under human rights and humanitarian law are not perpetrated in a vacuum: it is important for governmental and civil society to understand the root causes of these violations - namely racial discrimination towards Palestinians including on the basis of their differences in descent and national origin (as defined under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination).

Palestinians acknowledge that they are not the only victims of racism in the world, and stand united in full solidarity and support of all other victims of racism, including those seeking reparations such as the Africans and African descendants and indigenous peoples, the Roma, the Tibetans, the indigenous peoples, those combatting caste discrimination including the Dalits, Bhuraku, Osu and Rodiya and all others seeking a platform and voice that is otherwise being denied to them. The Caucus also supports demands made by others to have their victimisers named.

However, the fact that other countries have not been named in the governmental document does not provide a basis for precluding reference to Israel and its racist practices adopted towards Palestinians. It is in the interests of the world community to tackle expressly Israel's perpetration of on-going violations and racist systems for two key reasons: world peace and security and the nature of the system.

no substantial power, where Palestinians can be exploited, controlled, restricted and confined in reservations. A dependent Bantustan alongside an apartheid state is a mockery of self-determination-as it existed in apartheid South Africa and now in apartheid Israel. In Israel, no less than in South Africa, minimum justice requires dismantling the apartheid state and replacing it with a democratic secular Palestine, where Jews and Arabs, Christians and Muslims, live together with equal rights and opportunities.

We observe the stone throwing children of Jabaliya, the Beach Camp, Balata, Khan Younis and Dheisheh and we see the response to over five decades of outrageous tyranny and occupation. It is echoed in those Israeli Jews who resist the oppression of others, like Mordechai Vanunu who, in 1986, was sentenced by a secret security court to 18 years in prison for exposing Israel's nuclear plans and indirectly Israel's nuclear collaboration with apartheid South Africa.

We reject the calumny that to condemn Israeli apartheid or Zionism's 'ethnic cleansing' implies animus against Jews; or that it attempts to diminish the Holocaust. The opposite is true. As the famed violinist Lord Yehudi Menuhin told the French newspaper Le Figaro: "It is extraordinary how nothing ever dies completely. Even the evil which prevailed yesterday in Nazi Germany is gaining ground in that country [Israel] today".

We, South Africans, extend our hands to the heroic people of Palestine. Theirs is the struggle, slingshots in hand, of David against Goliath. **5** Theirs is the vision of a country shorn of racist dominion. Theirs is the passion for life without oppression. Theirs is the struggle, Arab and Jews to be free from discrimination and injustice. As South Africans we understand these struggles, visions and passions. We pledge ourselves to be part of a new International Anti-Apartheid movement against Israel and we support the demand for :

1. Immediate and Urgent International Protection for the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank
2. Dismantling of all Jewish Settlements in the Occupied Territories
3. Withdrawal of all Israeli Troops from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank
4. The right of return and reparations for 4,5 million Palestinian refugees
5. The establishment of a sovereign independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital
6. The establishment of a secular democratic state in historic Palestine

***Issued by the Palestine Solidarity Committee.***

free movement but restrict Palestinians have lost 100 000 workers their jobs. Some roads are for settlers only. The Israeli government issues identification cards and car number-plates, colour coded, which restrict travel for non-Jews. Palestinians in the West Bank are routinely prevented from travelling to the Gaza Strip because they have to travel through 'Israeli' territory. No significant industry has been permitted to develop in the West Bank or Gaza. Consequently, Palestinians are concentrated in the lowest paying jobs and form a super-exploited labour force for Israeli capital. The occupied territories import 93% of goods but export a mere 7% of what they produce. Palestinian exports to Western Europe are banned so as not to compete with Israeli exports. Ninety percent of Palestinian workers must travel to Jewish towns for employment.

Israel is, simply, an Apartheid state. Apartheid laws, such as the pass system and influx control, bantustans, job reservation, bantu education and laws resulting in unequal resource allocation live on. As one South African journalist wrote after visiting Israel: "In both countries [apartheid South Africa and apartheid Israel] 'subordinate races' were dispossessed of their land and crowded into marginal, drought-stricken ghettos; their movement was restricted; access to education and skilled jobs limited so that they inevitably sank into a pool of low wage labour. In both societies, bans on inter-marriage and daily lives segregated by race did little to dispel the fear and ignorance that feeds racial bigotry."

#### **4 Globalisation's Watchdog**

Israel is the highest recipient of US support. In return, it makes its own contributions to maintaining the imperialist world order and stability for transnational corporations, particularly oil companies. In the '70s it supplied the military dictatorships of El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua with more military hardware than the US. It supports adventures and trains personnel of unpopular regimes the US does not openly want to be identified with. The latest regime is Turkey, which brutally suppresses its trade unions, workers' organisations and the Kurds. In its illegal blockade of Cuba, the only support for the US now comes from Israel. Of course, we will never forget the support Israel provided to apartheid South Africa. While the world condemned apartheid in South Africa as a crime against humanity, Israel happily cemented trade, cultural, military and nuclear links with the white minority regime.

#### **A Bantustan or a Democratic Secular State?**

We realise that the 'peace plan' brokered by the US at Oslo, Camp David, and the Wye River were recipes for continued misery and poverty for millions of Palestinians. Rather than promise a future of peaceful co-existence they virtually guaranteed a continuation of conflict and violence. They proposed a Bantustan, a 'state' with a dependent economy, no contiguous territory and

As in the case of Apartheid South Africa, Israel's institutionalised system of racism, apartheid and colonialism is destabilising the entire region and poses one of the greatest threats to world peace and security. Recently this threat has become more acute and the need for international action more urgent because of Israel's escalation of its unilateral war on civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Secondly, our common humanity demands that these forms of extreme racism, including Israel's own form of apartheid, a crime against humanity - be combated.

Just as expressly referring to South Africa and tackling racist apartheid systems in the 1978 and 1983 World Conferences Against Racism was not being anti-white South Africa, naming Israel and its racist practices is not being anti-Jewish.

Israel's racism towards Palestinians includes institutionalised and systematic methods of racism. As regards Palestinians inside Israel, racism is prevalent in many institutions including the government, legislature, judiciary, army and religious bodies, and institutions that emphasise the State's national-religious character as being exclusively Jewish, to the exclusion of its non-Jewish inhabitants. Discriminatory laws and policies have been adopted encompassing issues such as land and housing, citizenship, political participation, culture, language, education, religious rights, and other social, economic and employment rights. It has involved the denial of crucial services to the so-called unrecognised villages.

**9**

Palestinians within the Occupied Palestinian Territories have suffered from a form of colonial Israeli military occupation. According to the principles of CERD, and UN General Assembly Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries, an occupation characterised by an alien subjugation, domination, and exploitation leading to denial of fundamental human rights including rights of self-determination, with continuous disruption of national unity and territorial integrity, amounts to a form of colonialism, which is an inherently racist system.

We condemn the application of discriminatory laws of return that have denied the rights of Palestinians to return to their homes and lands and the denial of compensation for losses or damages suffered, and crimes committed against them.

Israel's racist crimes, in particular in relation to Palestinians living within the Occupied Palestinian Territories have included acts of genocide, systematic perpetration of grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention 1949 (namely war crimes), methods of ethnic cleansing, and the crime of apartheid. These racist crimes have been comprehensively documented and established according to international human rights standards and norms.

The Palestinian Caucus is dismayed and shocked at apparant statements made by Mrs. Robinson rejecting the use of the term "acts of genocide" as regards Palestinians in the NGO document as being "hurtful". Specific acts of genocide have included the massacre of 3,500 Palestinian civilians of Sabra and Shatila in Lebanon of 1982, in respect of which the Israeli Kahan Commission found the then Defence Minister, Ariel Sharon indirectly responsible. The UN General Assembly itself in UN Resolution 123 (A/RES/37/123) and the UN Commission of Human Rights in a resolution (E/CN.4/RES/1985/4) have both described the massacre as an "act of genocide" and imputed responsibility to the State of Israel. Likewise, references of "acts of genocide" in the NGO Forum Declaration impute genocidal intent to those perpetrators of, or those responsible, for such acts, who have included individual Jewish Israelis and the State of Israel. These references do not impute genocidal intent to all Jews or all Jewish Israelis. No individual or State should enjoy impunity for their crimes - references to "acts of genocide" are an accurate reflection of specific historical incidents on the basis of the Genocide Convention of 1948. Accordingly, Palestinians should not be precluded from using such terms. The rejection of this term also preempts the outcome of any future prosecutions including the current investigation in the Belgium courts in which victims of the Sabra and Shatila massacre are seeking the prosecution of those responsible.

There has been evidence of the use of ethnic cleansing methods to drive out  
**10** Palestinians including during the 1948 war, and since 1967 to date from the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Ethnic cleansing methods used have included uprooting by military attacks; arbitrary arrests and detention/unfair trials; attacks on specific vulnerable groups including women and children; destruction and confiscation of property, land and homes; and harassment designed to make life so unbearable that people leave.

Israeli practices fulfil the elements of the crime of apartheid as defined by the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, including by racial segregation and discrimination, and inhuman acts designed to establish domination of one group over the other. In addition, South African governmental and civil society representatives have drawn clear parallels with the system of apartheid practiced in South Africa with that used by the Israeli apartheid regime. Methods of apartheid have included the dispossession and denationalising of Palestinians, with forcible expulsions of hundreds of thousands, ongoing expropriation and destruction of land and homes, military attacks on civilians; separation with restrictions on land access. Palestinians inside Israel amount to 20 percent of the population but through legislation and measures have been restricted to about 4 percent of the land. Palestinians inside the Occupied Palestinian Territories amount to more than 90 percent of the inhabitants and have access to 18 percent of the land. In the whole of the historical area of Palestine, Palestinians amounting to about 50 percent of the population but

believing the world community does not care, more and more young Palestinians see empty futures, aborted hopes and feel unbearable frustrations. The great African-American poet, Langston Hughes, asked: "What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun...or does it explode?" The shocking suicide bombings answers this rhetorical question. Apartheid Israel has created a situation in which people feel they have nothing to lose. This dangerous situation could be reversed, if the Israeli state and the one country that funds and supports it unconditionally- the US, as well as the world community, act in a moral and just manner.

### **It's Apartheid Again!**

We note how the Israeli state rests on overt repression, a system of structural violence and institutionalised discrimination that dehumanises one group to the advantage of another. Apartheid Israel has developed an elaborate system of racial discrimination, embedded in its legal system-even surpassing Apartheid South Africa's laws. These laws include the Law of Entry, the Law of Return, Citizenship Law, legally sanctioned discriminatory rabbinical rulings and the Military Service Law. Palestinians are denied various welfare benefits, access to many jobs, and the leasing of homes and land controlled by government bodies. We realise that while Palestinians within the '48 borders may vote, they face these discriminatory laws and are treated like third class citizens. Electricity, sewerage, roads and water supplies are provided free to Israeli households whereas many  
**3** Palestinian communities in Israel, let alone the occupied territories, have existed for decades without adequate services. The Israeli education system is racist in practice and in content. Almost no Arab history is covered and there are no Arab textbooks in the Israeli curricula. Palestinians also face significant barriers in gaining access to universities. In South Africa similar factors contributed to the Uprisings in 1976 and the 1980s.

Laws governing land ownership such as the Law of Acquisition of Absentee Property and the Law for Acquisition of Land blatantly discriminate against Palestinians. Although settlers constitute a tiny minority in the West Bank, they own 60 percent of the land. Many of these settlers come from the US, the ex-Soviet Union and South Africa. In Gaza, 6000 settlers live among a population of one million Palestinians yet they own 42 percent of the land. Land ownership in Palestine is more unjust than it ever was in South Africa. At the height of apartheid black people nominally 'controlled' 13 percent of the land; in Israel the oppressed control only 2 percent. The Israeli government also pursues a grossly discriminatory water policy. In Gaza in 1985, for instance, settlers consume about 2000 cubic meters of water per person; Palestinians are allowed to consume only about 120.

Despite the terminology, we recognise segregation when we see it. The policy of 'closures' is a policy of segregation. Blockades which allow settlers

## Declaration by South Africans on Apartheid Israel

The Palestinian rebellion has been a long time coming. Over three decades of occupation is but one dimension of their tragedy. Driven from their original homes, villages and land by sustained atrocities, condemned to miserable camps, dispersed in a far-flung Diaspora, subjected to massacres like the Sabra and Shatila slaughter of over 2000 refugees, and unending persecution.

The suffering in the West Bank and Gaza is the continuation of the colonisation of all of Palestine. Zionist militias seized 75% of the land and drove out 800 000 Palestinians through a series of massacres between the partition of Palestine in 1947 and the formation of Israel. With the declaration of the state of Israel, 531 Palestinian cities, towns and villages were razed to the ground, dsappearing from the map. Those remaining were denuded of land, confiscated without compensation.

We acknowledge the theft of the land and realise how today the Jewish National Fund, a member of the World Zionist Organisation, administers 93% of the land of Israel. To live on land, lease it, sharecrop or work on it, one must establish four generations of maternal Jewish descent. In Israel, such a lineage is necessary in order to enjoy elementary rights. We cannot mistake the quintessentially racist character of such a state. Israel is an apartheid state, founded on pillage and predicated on exclusivity. Rights flow from ethnic and religious identity.

2

We, South Africans who have lived through apartheid cannot be silent as another entire people are treated as non-human beings; people without rights or human dignity and facing daily humiliation. We cannot permit a ruthless state to use military jets, helicopter gun-ships and tanks on civilians. We cannot accept state assassinations of activists, the torture of political prisoners, the murder of children and collective punishment.

We, South Africans who lived for decades under rulers with a colonial mentality see Israeli occupation as a strange survival of colonialism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Only in Israel do we hear of 'settlements' and 'settlers'. Only in Israel do soldiers and armed civilian groups take over hilltops, demolish homes, uproot trees and destroy crops, shell schools, churches and mosques, plunder water reserves, and block access to an indigenous population's freedom of movement and right to earn a living. These human rights violations were unacceptable in apartheid South Africa and are an affront to us in apartheid Israel.

We South Africans faced apartheid and exploitation, bullets and prison, not with bouquets of flowers, but with resistance. We are proud of this, our history. This is the history of all oppressed people. Why should it be different for Palestinians? Born in squalid refugee camps, living in poverty and

have only access to about 6.8 percent of the land. Separation has also included through use of identity cards similar to the pass books; with system of checkpoints, curfews, total and partial closures. Since March 2001 trenches have been dug preventing villagers from leaving village to village or to urban centers. Iron gates have been erected with keys held by soldiers.

Contrary to claims made the Palestinian and Arab Caucuses have condemned in the strongest terms any and all anti-Semitic and anti-Jewish materials including any that may have been circulated during this conference. Those materials that condemn the State of Israel for its systematic violations of international human rights and humanitarian law or condemn those racist practices conducted in the name of zionism are not anti-Semitic or anti-Jewish.

Finally, we call for the Governmental plenary to accept, and implement the document endorsed at the NGO Forum as the voice of the victims of racism from around the world, and to implement all the specific recommendations made for a plan of action, including for the Palestinians. The victims of racism cannot be blamed for the ultimate success or failure of the World Conference Against Racism by seeking to have their daily suffering from racism addressed, whomever they may be, including the Palestinians and those seeking reparations. The responsibility lies with the Governments to hear the victims, and ensure that the Conference is a success by genuinely and effectively tackling the racism issues. Failure at the World Conference Against Racism will be a white-washing and politicising of racism issues and denial of the voice of the victims. We ask all Governmental delegates to not allow certain governments from continuing to seek to derail the Conference in order to avoid responsibility for their racist practices.

11

Notes: Mrs. Robinson made a statement on 7 September 2001, explaining her reservation of the document namely to paragraph 418 that calls for the acknowledgement that racist practices conducted in the name of zionism are racist; and secondly paragraph 419 calling for the establishment of a war crimes tribunal "to investigate and bring to justice those who may be guilty of war crimes, acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing and the crime of apartheid which amount to crimes against humanity that have been or continue to be perpetrated in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories". We express further dismay at this stance, which reinforces the Israeli government position seeking to prevent the State and individuals from being held to account for crimes and undermines the current and future investigations and prosecutions of such crimes. Furthermore, we are dissappointed and surprised that in spite of the agreement of the International Steering Committee to allow a Palestinian representative to respond to Mrs. Robinson's criticisms, that she instead refused to acknowledge the speaker and left the room before the speaker had finished.

## Profile of the Palestine Solidarity Committee - South Africa

- ?? The PSC was formed in 1998 as a secular initiative to promote the Palestinian cause in South Africa and to lead an international anti-apartheid movement against Apartheid Israel.
- ?? PSC members are well-known political and trade union activists, cultural workers, sports and religious personalities and former anti-apartheid activists from a number of political tendencies.
- ?? PSC declaration focuses on the parallels between South African and Israeli apartheid and the parallels between the liberation struggles. It calls for an end to Israeli occupation, the return of the Palestinian refugees and for the establishment of a secular democratic Palestinian state.
- ?? PSC members are also members of the Political and Media Committee of the National Consultative Forum on Palestine (NCFP). (The NCFP is a forum where various organizations working in different ways on Palestinian support could liaise with each other, share ideas and develop common programs).



**“Apartheid.” –Botha, in other words,  
“Us Over Here, Them Over There.” -Barak**

**PSC website:** <http://mandla.co.za/psc/Default.htm>

**Subscribe to the PSC email list:** [join-psc@igama.mandla.co.za](mailto:join-psc@igama.mandla.co.za)

## Pamphlet distributed locally by:

@nti-copyright 2002

This pamphlet may be downloaded,  
printed, copied, and distributed for free by  
organisations seeking to promote justice in  
Palestine. Download from:  
[www.justiceinpalestine.org](http://www.justiceinpalestine.org)



**A Black South African shows his passbook issued by the Government. Black South Africans were required to carry passes that determined where they could live and work.**

**These passbooks were one of the many tools the South African Government used to enforce its Apartheid policies.**

**After years of demonstrations, strikes, militant activism and international pressure, including a divestment campaign led by student activists, Apartheid in South Africa was dismantled as official policy.**



**An Israeli Soldier keeps Palestinians waiting at the checkpoint between Bethelhem and Jerusalem. Palestinians must show IDs to pass through checkpoints like this one. The artificial borders, prevalent in the West Bank and Gaza, keep Palestinians separated from family, friends, and work.**

**This policy of collective punishment subjects a whole population to daily harrassment, turning ten-minute trips into hourly ordeals at best. Much of the Bethelhem-area Palestinian population has not been to Jerusalem in years, as their homes and towns have been turned into virutal prisons by these instruments of Israeli Apartheid.**

# FIGHTING ISRAELI APARTHEID



**From  
South Africa**



**To  
Palestine**

**AMANDLA**

**INTIFADA!**