

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Rhoda Kadalie and Julia I. Bertelsmann

Rhoda Kadalie is a former anti-apartheid activist and South African Human Rights Commissioner. Based in Cape Town, she is currently the Director of the [Impumelelo Innovations Award Trust](#) and is a widely-published columnist for newspapers including *The Business Day* and *Report*.

Julia I. Bertelsmann (right) is the editor-in-chief of *New Society: Harvard College Student Middle East Journal*.

ABOUT ZWORD

Z Word is an online journal focusing on the contemporary debate over Zionism, anti-Zionism, antisemitism and related areas. Editorially independent, Z Word identifies and challenges anti-Zionist orthodoxies in mainstream political exchange.

Z Word is supported by the American Jewish Committee. To learn more about Z Word, visit us online at:

www.z-word.com

or contact the editors at:

info@z-word.com

CREDITS

© Copyright the American Jewish Committee (AJC). All content herein, unless otherwise specified, is owned solely by the AJC and may not be disseminated in any way without prior written consent from the AJC. All rights reserved.

ESSAY

Franchising “Apartheid”: Why South Africans Push the Analogy

By Rhoda Kadalie with Julia I. Bertelsmann

March 2008



Memories enshrined: the entrance to the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, South Africa. Photo: Gard Karlsen.

ON A COLD NIGHT IN Johannesburg last year, a bus pulled up outside the American consulate. It was the 40th anniversary of the Six Day War in the Middle East—June being a winter month in South Africa—and several dozen activists planned to mark the occasion by protesting U.S. support for “Apartheid Israel.” The protest was organized by the Palestine Solidarity Committee and most of the demonstrators were South African Muslims.¹ Among their number, however, were black South Africans who shared the organizers’ hostility to Israel.

Or so it seemed. A reporter discovered that some of the black demonstrators “were not pro-Palestinian activists, but homeless people bused in from the surrounding townships,” he told *Ha’aretz*. “[M]ost of them refused to protest, opting to sit on the warm bus. The organizers refused to allow it. When I asked one black ‘protester’ if he was for Palestine, he replied: ‘I am for nobody.’” The organizers soon ejected the reporter.²

Like the ‘protester’ on the bus, most South Africans feel indifferent about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, according to a study conducted by the Pew Global Attitudes Project in 2007. Of those with clear opinions on the matter, the majority sympathized more with Israel: 28 per cent of South Africans overall sided with Israel compared to only 19 per cent with the Palestinians.³

Nevertheless, South Africa has increasingly become the flash point of virulently anti-Israel demonstrations. Many of the country’s leaders routinely

compare the State of Israel to the apartheid regime that governed South Africa from 1948 to 1994 and imposed an oppressive system of segregation and discrimination on grounds of race. “End Israeli Apartheid” rallies are usually organized by radical Muslim organizations, but some black South Africans have also entered the fray.

Comparisons between Israel and apartheid South Africa were once a fringe phenomenon. Since the start of the second *intifada* in September 2000, however, they have become a staple of anti-Israel propaganda. The publication of Jimmy Carter’s book *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*⁴ in 2006 gave the analogy new legitimacy—though, oddly, the word “apartheid” only appears three times in the former US President’s text.

“However potent the Israel-apartheid analogy, few of those who directly suffered from apartheid directly have bought into it”

In South Africa itself, the analogy was something of a novelty when it emerged in August 2001, at the UN World Conference Against Racism in Durban (although it has been common currency on the extreme left for more than thirty years now and was a standard trope of Soviet-sponsored “anti-Zionism”). The NGO forum at the conference adopted a declaration that defined Israel as a “racist, apartheid state.”⁵ The document was rejected by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, but the analogy remained when the delegates departed.⁶

Senior members of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) began using the analogy to attack Israel and pro-Israel South African Jews. Ronnie Kasrils, a cabinet minister and communist stalwart, supported the comparison and relied on his “Jewish descent” (as he termed it) to lend credence to the claim. Nobel Peace Prize winner and former Archbishop Desmond Tutu also endorsed the analogy and began traveling the world encouraging people to isolate Israel much as they had apartheid South Africa.

Proponents of the analogy used it to appeal to black South Africans, drawing links between Palestinian suffering and their own. But most black South Africans dismiss the analogy. Outside the small Muslim community

(1.5 percent of the population),⁷ anti-Israel sentiment is largely an elite phenomenon. However potent the Israel-apartheid analogy, few of those who directly suffered from apartheid directly have bought into it.

A False Analogy

One reason is that the equivalence simply isn’t true. Israel is not an apartheid state. Israel’s human rights record in the occupied territories, its settlement policy, and its firm responses to terror may sometimes warrant criticism. And Prime Minister Ehud Olmert himself recently warned that Israel could face an apartheid-style struggle if it did not reach a deal with the Palestinians and end the occupation in the West Bank.⁸

But racism and discrimination do not form the rationale for Israel’s policies and actions. Arab citizens of Israel can vote and serve in the Knesset; black South Africans could not vote until 1994.⁹ There are no laws in Israel that discriminate against Arab citizens or separate them from Jews. Unlike the United Kingdom, Greece, and Norway, Israel has no state religion, and it recognizes Arabic as one of its official languages.

Whereas apartheid was established through a series of oppressive laws that governed which park benches we could sit on, where we could go to school, which areas we were allowed to live in, and even whom we could marry, Israel was founded upon a liberal and inclusive Declaration of Independence. South Africa had a job reservation policy for white people; Israel has adopted pro-Arab affirmative action measures in some sectors.

Israeli schools, universities and hospitals make no distinction between Jews and Arabs. An Arab citizen who brings a case before an Israeli court will have that case decided on the basis of merit, not ethnicity. This was never the case for blacks under apartheid. Moreover, Israel respects freedom of speech and human rights. Its newspapers are far more independent, outspoken, and critical of the government than our newspapers in present-day, *post*-apartheid South Africa, let alone those of old.

Israel is the only country in the Middle East rated as “free” by Freedom House.¹⁰ The apartheid label is more appropriate for many of Israel’s neighbors, which have appalling records when it comes to the treatment of minority groups, political dissidents, and women, and which have explicitly discriminatory policies in

operation, ranging from the Saudi ban on non-Muslim religions to the suppression of Kurdish activists in Syria, Turkey and Iran. It is telling that Israel has done more for black Muslim refugees from Darfur than has any Arab or Muslim country, granting hundreds citizenship. By contrast, Egypt's government has persecuted and killed Sudanese refugees, with little international censure.

In the West Bank, measures such as the ugly security barrier have been used to prevent suicide bombings and attacks on civilians, not to enforce any racist ideology. Without the ongoing conflict and the tendency of Palestinian leaders to resort to violence, these would not exist.

Even so, Israel must bear some of the blame for the apartheid analogy. Its not-so-secret military alliance with South Africa from 1973 to 1987 cemented the two countries in the minds of a generation of anti-apartheid activists. But the relationship is often blown out of proportion and considered in isolation; Arab states carried out billions of dollars in sanctions-busting trade with the apartheid regime during the same time,¹¹ as did several European nations. Furthermore, Israel never endorsed South Africa's apartheid policies and frequently criticized them at the United Nations, even if it belatedly joined sanctions only in 1987.

Like those who demonize Israel by exaggerating its ties to the old South Africa, proponents of the Israel-apartheid analogy often bend the facts to fit their propaganda. In March 2001, Arjan El-Fassed, founder of the anti-Israel website *Electronic Intifada*, published a "memorandum" purportedly from former president Nelson Mandela, comparing Israel to apartheid South Africa.¹² The fake memo was reprinted around the world, including in the Arab media, and passed off as Mandela's words. Carter even cited it in a speech at Brandeis University in 2007.¹³

In fact, Nelson Mandela had many positive dealings with Israel. He was encouraged to start Umkhonto weSizwe (MK), the military wing of the African National Congress (ANC), after learning about Israel's liberation movement from his reading of former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin's memoir, *Revolt*. When he decided to set up MK, Mandela received considerable assistance from former *Palmach* fighter Arthur Goldreich. (The *Palmach* was one of the predecessors of the Israel Defense Forces).

The ANC has re-written much of its own history, however, and removed positive references to Israel. In 1953, ANC secretary-general Walter Sisulu visited Israel on an historic tour that included China, the USSR, the UK and Eastern

Europe. The trip was transformative, leading him to moderate many of his black nationalist views and embrace multi-racial opposition. When Sisulu died in 2003, however, the ANC's obituary omitted his visit to Israel, while mentioning the other stops.¹⁴ Such manipulation threatens to degrade the legacy of the anti-apartheid struggle.

The Prophets of Prejudice

Not only has the ANC begun to distort the history of its relations with Israel, but several former anti-apartheid activists in the party have joined a cottage industry that exploits the Israel-apartheid analogy for personal and political gain. Troublingly, their anti-Israel diatribes are sometimes barely distinguishable from antisemitism. Foremost among these prophets of apartheid is Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who has energetically supported the campaign to demonize Israel as an apartheid state.

At the end of 2007, Tutu was the keynote speaker at a conference on "The Apartheid Paradigm in Palestine-Israel" at Boston's Old South Church. Tutu addressed his remarks entirely to Jews (few of whom were actually present, since the conference was held on the Jewish Sabbath.) He warned Jews: "Don't be found fighting against the God, your God, our God who hears the cry of the oppressed." Tutu made no appeal to Arabs or Palestinians to do their part. Nor, in fact, did he refer to Israelis. He referred only to Jews, eschewing the standard distinctions made by anti-Zionists who want to avoid accusations of antisemitism.¹⁵

Ronnie Kasrils has similarly exploited his anti-apartheid credentials to achieve celebrity status in the anti-Israel movement and send his self-serving memoir, *Armed and Dangerous*, into a second printing.¹⁶ He was embarrassed by reports last year in the Palestinian press that he had told an audience at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank "that the guns should be pointed towards the enemy,"¹⁷ though he disputed the accuracy of the quote.

Another South African who has staked his reputation on the Israel-apartheid analogy is John Dugard. Dugard, who carries considerable weight in certain human rights circles, serves as the UN special rapporteur on human rights in the occupied territories. He was appointed in 2001 by the widely-condemned UN Commission on Human Rights, which has since been replaced by the Human Rights Council. Despite initial optimism about the Council among democratic member states, it has repeated some

of the mistakes of its predecessor by remaining fixated on Israel while ignoring truly malevolent dictators.

Last year, Dugard told the Council that Israel's policies resembled those of apartheid South Africa and that its aim was to secure "domination by one racial group (Jews)."¹⁸ He admitted, however, that the terms of his investigative mandate prevented him from considering human rights violations by Palestinians—whether against Israelis, or against each other.¹⁹ These limitations did not prevent him, in February 2008, from issuing a report which declared that Palestinian terrorism was a consequence of Israeli policies.²⁰ Dugard also said that a distinction had to be made between acts committed by Al Qai'da and those by Palestinian terrorists, leading Israel's UN Ambassador to retort angrily that both sets of terrorists were united by their intent to kill civilians.

“Tutu, Kasrils and Dugard... behave as though human rights violations and terror do not matter unless there is an Israeli nearby on whom the crime can be blamed”

These three detractors—Tutu, Kasrils and Dugard—share two traits. One is their neglect of human rights elsewhere. They behave as though human rights violations and terror do not matter unless there is an Israeli nearby on whom the crime can be blamed. Indeed, Tutu was present last year when Carter declared that the word “genocide” had a narrow “legal definition” which the Sudanese government-sponsored onslaught in Darfur did not meet.²¹

Just as Carter lost his sense of moral indignation when talking about horrors perpetrated in Darfur, so did Dugard when talking about Palestinian suicide bombings. Speaking to students at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, he declared: “Without justifying it [suicide bombing], I think one can understand it.”²²

Kasrils is similarly hypocritical on the question of human rights. In his book and speeches, he frequently glorifies Josef Stalin's Soviet Union—one of the most repressive and murderous regimes in human history. As Intelligence Minister, he signed an agreement to cooperate with Zimbabwe on defense

and security matters and crudely scolded a journalist who raised questions about Zimbabwe's record on human rights under the regime of Robert Mugabe.²³

The second trait common to these self-appointed prophets of apartheid is that they have been sidelined in the new South Africa. Kasrils, for example, was recently voted off the ANC's national executive. His anti-Israel activity is the only way for him to preserve his diminishing political relevance. Nobel laureate Tutu has similarly used the issue to maintain his political relevance on the international scene. He has been sidelined in South Africa ever since President Thabo Mbeki publicly questioned his anti-apartheid credentials and accused him of dishonesty in comments made in 2004.

Responding to criticisms Tutu had made of the ANC, Mbeki wrote in his weekly online letter: “The Archbishop has never been a member of the ANC, and would have very little knowledge of what happens even in an ANC branch. How he comes to the conclusion that there is “lack of debate” in the ANC is most puzzling. Rational discussion about how the ANC decides its policies requires some familiarity with the internal procedures of the ANC, rather than gratuitous insults about our members . . . The Archbishop proposed what our nation needs to do to determine its agenda. But as we have said in this Letter, to succeed in this task, all of us must educate ourselves about the reality of South Africa today, internalise the facts about our country, and respect the truth.”²⁴ Tutu responded: “Thank you Mr President for telling me what you think of me, that I am—a liar with scant regard for the truth, and a charlatan posing with his concern for the poor, the hungry, the oppressed and the voiceless. I will continue to pray for you and your government by name daily as I have done and as I did even for the apartheid government. God bless you.”²⁵ (The ANC, on Mbeki's behalf, apologized soon thereafter, but added: “[W]e do recognize that even someone like yourself has the capacity to err.”²⁶) For Tutu, then, the Israel-apartheid analogy may partly be an attempt to sustain an international profile.

A Shifting Foreign Policy

The advent of the Israel-apartheid analogy coincides with a shift in South Africa's foreign policy towards the Middle East. Since 1994, South Africa had backed a two-state solution and supported the Oslo peace process—an even-handed approach, despite

occasional demonstrations of solidarity with old ANC allies like Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi.

After the outbreak of the second *intifada* in 2000, South Africa crept away from this policy toward one of open hostility to Israel. While still advocating a two-state solution, South Africa began issuing one-sided condemnations of Israel, often attacking Israeli responses to terror without mentioning Palestinian terror itself. It openly backed Kasrils and other ANC leaders who participated in anti-Israel campaigns.²⁷

In May 2007, the government appeared to extend an invitation to Hamas²⁸ (though it backed away on the grounds that the invitation had been conditional on Hamas forming a national unity government with Fatah, which quickly became moot as Hamas seized control of Gaza).²⁹ At its 52nd national conference in December 2007, the ANC endorsed the Israel-apartheid analogy, declaring that the “Naqba”—the Arabic word for catastrophe widely used in the Arab world to describe the events of 1948—led to “a systematic policy of colonial expansion, ethnic cleansing and military occupation of the most brutal kind, which as South Africans we readily recognize from our own experience of apartheid.”³⁰

“South Africa’s growing hostility towards Israel reflects a return to the anti-Western fulminations of the Cold War era”

A document circulated prior to the conference suggested re-examining the ANC’s support for a two-state solution, and advocated “forging strategic links with Iran and Syria, and others towards developing common approach on the matter, for just solutions.”³¹ Indeed, recent evidence suggests that Hezbollah used night-vision goggles provided by South Africa during the 2006 Lebanon War.³² And over the past few years South Africa has emerged as the chief defender of Iran’s nuclear ambitions at the UN Security Council.

In 2004, South Africa signed a trade deal with Iran that was rumored to allow uranium sales.³³ South Africa also tried to prevent the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) from referring Iran to the UN Security Council, where as a non-permanent member South

Africa continues to oppose sanctions on Iran. In 2007, Kasrils visited Iran, where state news reported that he praised its nuclear program (he later denied doing so).³⁴

South Africa’s growing hostility towards Israel reflects a return to the anti-Western fulminations of the Cold War era. South Africa has, after all, protected the tyranny of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, and opposed Security Council resolutions on Darfur and Myanmar. These positions appeal to a nostalgic ANC elite, though not to most black South Africans, only 14 percent of whom approve of Mugabe, for example.³⁵

“The government still wishes to play both sides of the divide... the ANC is wary of taking actions that will result in economic retaliation by Israel”

The real reason for South Africa’s shift, however, may simply be material. When Saddam Hussein was in power in Iraq, ANC leaders allegedly sought illicit oil deals for the party, in violation of the UN’s oil-for-food program.³⁶ The ANC has admitted its involvement in one such deal, and the government refuses to release the findings of an official investigation.³⁷ Some have speculated that similar deals may be at stake in the relationship with Iran and Syria.³⁸ Thus, despite the diminishing political relevance of Kasrils and other champions of the Israel-apartheid analogy, the ANC is finding independent, self-serving reasons to support it.

The government still wishes to play both sides of the divide: President Mbeki has been known to attend local Israel Independence Day celebrations, for instance. And the ANC is wary of taking actions that will result in economic retaliation by Israel. In 2004, Israel closed its trade office in Pretoria, citing budgetary restrictions, though acting Israeli ambassador Daniel Pinhasi was quoted as saying that South Africa’s position on Israel was “more hardline than some members of the Arab League.”³⁹ The South African government responded to this rebuke obsequiously, inviting Israel’s Likud Party and then-Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to visit. Indeed, South African critics of Israel were taken aback by the government’s sudden return to even-handedness.⁴⁰ In 2007, the ANC advertised

and supported an “End the Occupation” campaign, but specifically declined to join its call for an economy boycott of Israel.⁴¹ South Africa’s policy on Israel does not reflect the fulminations of Kasrils and those like him, but is based upon the ANC’s own political and economic interests—including the desire to be taken seriously by the democratic world while profiting from its enemies.

Muslim Antisemitism

Another important reason for South Africa’s pro-Middle East foreign policy and stance on Israel is its 800,000-strong, vocal, and well-organized Muslim community, which is radically anti-Israel. Muslim organizations, such as the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC), Islamic Unity Convention (IUC), and the militant group *Qibla* openly back Hamas and Hezbollah, frequently broadcast antisemitic diatribes over the radio, and organize numerous protests and boycotts against Israel each year.⁴²

Other influential organizations with heavy Muslim involvement include the Palestine Solidarity Committee and the Pretoria-based Media Review Network (MRN), which promote the Israel-apartheid analogy and call for the boycott of Israeli products and the ultimate dissolution of the State.⁴³ The MRN also propagates Holocaust denial.⁴⁴

Muslim organizations have considerable access to the ANC leadership and have found influence in many NGOs, including the Freedom of Expression Institute. They also have influence within the ANC Youth League and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), a large umbrella organization for trade unions and the ANC’s leftist alliance partner.

Kasrils is a regular speaker at demonstrations orchestrated by pro-Palestinian groups. In 2002, he attended a *Qibla* march in Cape Town where demonstrators shouted “Death to Israel, death to Sharon” and “One American tourist, one bullet.” Protesters burnt American and Israeli flags and carried two boys dressed up as suicide bombers.⁴⁵

Members of COSATU, the ANC Youth League, and even the South African Council of Churches have frequently participated in marches organized by the Palestine Solidarity Committee and *Qibla*. Several have signed memoranda calling Israel an “illegitimate, terrorist state, racist, expansionist and chauvinistic, [with] no right to exist” and made progressively more anti-Israel statements over the past years.⁴⁶ COSATU’s president,

Willie Madisha, declared in 2006 that the “apartheid Israel state” was worse than apartheid South Africa.⁴⁷

The most striking example was the wave of mass anti-Israel protests during the Durban World Conference Against Racism in 2001. Several months ahead of the conference, UN Human Rights Commissioner Mary Robinson allowed the last of the preliminary meetings to be held in Tehran, Iran. This meant that no Israeli delegates could attend, due to Iran’s discriminatory visa policies, allowing the Muslim states a free hand to rewrite the agenda for the event.

“One faction of the ANC in the North-West province which supports Jacob Zuma, the current ANC President, calls itself the Taliban to present a more radical image”

In the run-up to the conference, COSATU and the ANC held local “conferences against racism” which closely followed the anti-Israel agenda. At the start of the conference, anti-Israel groups organized a 15,000-person march through the streets of Durban. Radical Muslim groups handed protesters from the Durban Social Forum and local anti-privatization groups free flags, kaffiyehs, antisemitic literature, signs of Stars of David dripping with blood, and T-shirts with slogans such as “Free Palestine.” In this way, they hijacked the South African left as well as the conference.

Islamist radicalism is also a rallying cry for leftists and populists in the ANC. One faction of the ANC in the North-West province which supports Jacob Zuma, the current ANC President, calls itself the Taliban to present a more radical image. On several occasions, COSATU has marched against privatization and other ANC policies carrying “Viva Arafat” placards. Elements of the ANC have therefore been able to incorporate anti-Israel motifs into the context of domestic opposition towards, and protests against, government policies and its poor service delivery record.

Overall, pushing the Israel-apartheid analogy has, politically, served Muslim groups well. It has also suited the ANC because it is one of the only inroads to the elusive “colored” vote (a term which refers to those of mixed-race background and also includes Muslims of Malay descent). It has drawn them closer to the ruling

ANC and offered them the chance to present their religious struggle as a just cause. Meanwhile the ANC stands to gain from antisemitism in closely contested local elections against the Democratic Alliance, a party which was until recently led by a Jew, Tony Leon.

It is perhaps no accident that recorded acts of anti-semitism have risen dramatically as South Africa has shifted its policies toward Israel. As recently as 2005, Jewish community leader Zev Krenkel could boast that South Africa had “significantly lower rates of antisemitism than exist in...other Diaspora countries.”⁴⁸ Yet 2006 set a new record for antisemitic incidents in South Africa.⁴⁹

Bullying Minority Groups

In contrast to the way the government treats the Muslim community, it tends to bully other minorities that vote for opposition parties in greater proportions. One example is the Portuguese community, which was excoriated by Minister of Safety and Security Steve Tshwete for marching to the Union Buildings to protest against crime in 2000. Rather than promising to do more for victims of crime, the minister wrote the community an acrimonious letter, stating:

Some among the Portuguese community you claim to represent came to this country because they did not accept that the Mozambican and Angolan people should gain their freedom and independence from Portuguese colonialism...These came here because they knew that the colour of their skin would entitle them to join ‘the master race,’ to participate in the oppression and exploitation of the black majority and to enjoy the benefits of white minority domination. It is perhaps because you have not outgrown these white supremacist ideas and practices that you wrote your memorandum.⁵⁰

The letter crudely blamed Portuguese South Africans for complicity in apartheid and disloyalty to the new South Africa. The effect of the letter was to warn all organized minority groups that they did not belong and had no right to oppose ANC policy.

Later that year, white left-wing activists close to the ANC launched an initiative called the “Home for All” Campaign. The centerpiece of the Campaign was “The Declaration of Commitment by White South Africans.”⁵¹ Whites were asked to sign the declaration

to admit collective “responsibility for apartheid” and “commit ourselves to redress these wrongs ... through individual and collective action.”⁵²

“The subtext of the campaign was to offer Jews a deal: give up on Zionism and you can become part of the new South Africa”

The ANC launched another similar initiative the following year. Ronnie Kasrils wrote up a declaration arguing for a two-state solution but rejecting Zionism and blaming Israel solely for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He encouraged Jews to sign it, pronouncing that most Jewish anti-apartheid activists “were in fact anti-Zionists and rejected Zionism because they believed in a common humanity and that there should not be an exclusive state...”⁵³ The subtext of the campaign was to offer Jews a deal: give up on Zionism and you can become part of the new South Africa.

The Tshwete letter to the Portuguese community, the “Home for All” campaign, and Kasrils’ declaration all implied that minority groups were collectively responsible for apartheid and that they would have no place in the new South Africa until they made amends. The campaigns put pressure on minority groups to demonstrate their loyalty to the ANC by suppressing their complaints and stepping in line with ANC ideology and policy.

“The past is still present in South African political discourse, on Israel and on many other issues as well”

Although the vast majority of Jews still vote for the centrist opposition, the Democratic Alliance, the ANC’s cooption of the organized Jewish community has been largely successful. The Board issues the occasional statement criticizing the ANC, but for the most part it has become the ANC’s spokesperson on Jewish affairs and often defends the ANC’s stance to the Jewish community.

Partly because of the supine position of the Board, the ANC feels it has a free hand to propagate the Israel-apartheid analogy ever more ardently. Most Jews reject the analogy and several individuals are outspoken critics of the government's stance on Israel, but there is little effective organized Jewish opposition.

No Answer

On the one hand, the use of the apartheid metaphor is hardly unusual in the South African political context. Almost every political debate is framed in terms of apartheid. The ANC routinely accuses its opponents, often without justification, of having supported apartheid, and opposition parties retort by comparing the ANC to the National Party which designed the intricate apartheid system and ruled the country for five decades. The past is still present in South African political discourse, on Israel and on many other issues as well.

On the other hand, Israel is different. The ANC devotes more attention to Israel than to many domestic issues and conflicts closer to home. It denies that anti-Israel protest is often antisemitic, but on no other issue has the party been more willing to abandon its supposedly non-racial ideals. Party leaders have addressed openly antisemitic rallies; radical sectors of the party have made blatantly antisemitic statements; and ANC election posters have featured blood-drenched Israeli flags.⁵⁴


In truth, the Israel-apartheid analogy is not entirely new. It was first used not by anti-apartheid activists, but the apartheid regime itself, protesting Israel's stance against South Africa at the UN in the 1950s and 1960s. Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd, the chief architect of apartheid, threatened South Africa's Jews with a tide of rising antisemitism should they fail to dissent from Israel's foreign policy.⁵⁵ The Afrikaans press supported Verwoerd, with many writers and correspondents comparing Zionism with apartheid and complaining that Israel's opposition to the latter was hypocritical.⁵⁶

What the white nationalist right and the black post-colonial left share is distaste for opposition and difference combined with envy of Israel's success. Afrikaners viewed Israel, falsely, as a state of "whites" that had thrived in a sea of "non-white" nations, but which unlike South Africa had largely escaped global condemnation. Today's far-right remnant envies Israel's persistence when Afrikaners

have had to give up their own national aspirations.

The ANC looked to Israel as an example of an oppressed people that had overcome racial persecution, enormous political obstacles and military weakness to build a successful, thriving nation. Israel's continued economic achievements, scientific innovation and vibrant culture in the face of terror stand in stark contrast to the ANC's mismanagement of the state and economy, which it still blames on the past.

Neither the far right nor the ANC's left can tolerate or even comprehend the economic success of South African Jews, which was largely achieved in spite of—not because of—both governments. Nor can they come to terms with a strong, successful, *and* democratic Israel. It goes against the dualism between strong oppressors and the weak oppressed according to which every political issue is framed in South Africa and every government failure is justified.

South Africa tells Israel that it only has a right to exist—if at all—as a victim of Nazi oppression, just as the ANC bases its claim to legitimacy, power and privilege on apartheid. But Israel has moved beyond its past, while South Africa has failed to use the memory of apartheid to motivate positive national unity and achievement. No false analogies and no re-writing of history can mask that. 

- 1 About half of South Africa's Muslim population is of Malay descent and the other half is of Indian descent. There has been a significant Muslim population in the region since the late 1600s.
- 2 Liphshiz, Cnaan. "Anti-Israel Picket in South Africa: Protestors for Hire?" *Haaretz*, 9 June 2007.
- 3 "Pew Global Attitudes Project: Spring 2007 Survey of 47 Publics," *Pew Global Attitudes Project*, 2007. <<http://www.google syndicated search.com/u/pewglobal?q=spring+2007&x=0&y=0>>
- 4 Carter, Jimmy. *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*, Simon and Schuster: 2006
- 5 "World Conference Against Racism NGO Forum Declaration." Durban, South Africa. 03 Sep 2001 <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~hfc/mideast/NGO_WCAR.htm>.
- 6 Braun, Elihai. "The UN World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Durban, South Africa." <<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/UN/durban1.html>>
- 7 "South Africa." *CIA World Factbook*. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sf.html>>
- 8 McCarthy, Rory. "Israel Risks Apartheid-Like Struggle if Two-State Solution Fails, Says Olmert." *The Guardian*. 30 Nov 2007.
- 9 Pogrud, Benjamin. "Israel is a democracy in which Arabs vote." *Focus* 40 (2005). <<http://www.hsf.org.za/publications/focus-issues/issues-31-40/issue-40/israel-is-a-democracy-in-which-arabs-vote/?searchterm=pogrud>>
- 10 Freedom House. *Freedom in the World 2007*. <<http://www.freedomhouse.org/>>
- 11 Klinghoffer, Arthur Jay. *Oiling the Wheels of Apartheid: Exposing South Africa's Secret Oil Trade* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1989).
- 12 El-Fassed, Arjan. "The Mandela memo." <http://arjansweblog.blogspot.com/mandela_memo/>
- 13 Brandeis University. "Full coverage of the historic Jan. 23rd visit by former President Jimmy Carter." <http://my.brandeis.edu/news/item?news_item_id=7816>
- 14 "Walter Sisulu: A giant of the liberation struggle." *ANC Today* 9 May 2003. <<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/anctoday/2003/at18.htm#art1>>
- 15 Tutu, Desmond. "Palestine and Apartheid." Speech at Friends of Sabeel Conference, Boston, 27 Oct 2007. <<http://www.boston.com/news/daily/29/102907speechtext.pdf>>
- 16 Kasrils, Ronnie. *Armed and Dangerous: From Undercover Struggle to Freedom*. Updated ed. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2004.
- 17 Baruch, Ilan. "SA Needs to Know Too," *Cape Times*, 3 July 2007. <<http://www.intelligence.gov.za/MediaStatements/Israel/Letter>>
- 18 Dugard, John. "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967." 29 Jan 2007. <http://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?Open&DS=A/HRC/4/17&Lang=E>
- 19 Ibid, p. 6.
- 20 International Herald Tribune, "UN Expert Calls Palestinian Terrorism 'Inevitable Consequence' of Israeli Occupation," 26 Feb 2008.
- 21 BBC News. "West 'pandering to Darfur rebels.'" 4 Oct 2007. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7028267.stm>>
- 22 Speech at the Kennedy School of Government, moderated by Prof. Duncan Kennedy, 25 Oct 2007.
- 23 "SA to Work with Zimbabwe's Spies," *BBC News*, 18 Nov 2005.
- 24 Mbeki, Thabo. "Aluta continua." *ANC Today* 26 Nov 2004 <<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/anctoday/2004/at47.htm>>.
- 25 "Tutu: I'll pray for Mbeki." *News24.com* 29 Nov. 2004 <http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/News/0,6119,2-7-1442_1628402,00.html>.
- 26 BBC News. "ANC seeks to calm war of words." 30 Nov. 2004 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4054273.stm>>.
- 27 "Declaration of Conscience Challenges Roots of Mistrust." *ANC Today* 7 Dec. 2001 <<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/anctoday/2001/at46.htm>>.
- 28 Keinon, Herb and Associated Press. "South Africa Invites Haniyeh to Visit." *Jerusalem Post* 3 May 2007 <<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull&cid=1178096601801>>.
- 29 Kasrils, Ronnie. "Bigotry on Israel." *Business Day* 15 May 2007 <<http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/opinion.aspx?ID=BD4A463046>>.
- 30 ANC 52nd National Conference Resolution 52. Polokwane, 2007 <<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/conf/conference52/resolutions-f.html>>.
- 31 "International Relations: A Just World and a Better Africa is a Possibility." ANC Discussion Document, Polokwane Conference 2007 <<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/conf/conference52/index.html>>.
- 32 Moorcraft, Paul. "South Africa: 'Allah's Bomb' and Other Nuclear Nightmares." *Business Day*, 14 January 2008. <<http://allafrica.com/stories/200801140078.html>>
- 33 Alon, Gideon. "Iran may get uranium from S. Africa following cooperation deal." *Ha'aretz* 18 Aug 2004. <<http://nucnews.net/nucnews/2004nn/0408nn/040818nn.htm#021>>
- 34 PressTV. "S. Africa says Iran visit positive." 18 Apr 2007. <<http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=6515§ionid=351020101>>
- 35 "Harare Regime Scores 'Universally Low' Approval Rating." *The Star* 8 Dec. 2004.
- 36 "SA Oil-for-Food Hearing to Start in May," *Mail and Guardian*, 21 April 2006 <http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=269783&area=oilgate/oil_latest/>
- 37 Hamlyn, Michael. "DA Presses Protector Over Oilgate." *I-Net Bridge* 24 Jan 2008 <<http://iafrica.com/news/sa/821180.htm>>.
- 38 Pollak, Joel. "South African Foreign Policy For Sale?" *Guide to the Perplexed* 15 Jul. 2007 <<http://guidetotheperplexed.blogspot.com/2007/07/15-july-2007-south-african-foreign.html>>.
- 39 "Diplomacy: Israel Closes SA Trade Office." *African Business* 1 Jul. 2004
- 40 Holiday, Anthony. "Has Mbeki changed line on Israel?" *Cape Times* 10 Jan. 2006.
- 41 "Call to mobilize against Israeli occupation." *ANC Today* 20 May 2007 <<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/anctoday/2007/at20.htm#art1>>.
- 42 See "South Africa Annual Country Reports" 1997-2006, *The Stephen Roth Institute for The Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism*, <<http://www.tau.ac.il/Antisemitism/CR.htm>>
- 43 Ibid.



WORD

- 44 “South Africa 2002,” *The Stephen Roth Institute for The Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism*, <<http://www.tau.ac.il/Antisemitism/CR.htm>>
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 “South Africa 2006,” *The Stephen Roth Institute for The Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism*, <<http://www.tau.ac.il/Antisemitism/CR.htm>>
- 47 South Africa Press Association. “‘Apartheid Israel’ Worse Than Apartheid SA.” 10 Ju. 2006 < http://www.mg.co.za/articlepage.aspx?area=/breaking_news/breaking_news__national/&articleid=276860>.
- 48 Krengel, Zev. “A letter from a South African Jewish community leader.” *Ha’aretz* (27 Apr 2005).
- 49 “South Africa 2006.” *The Stephen Roth Institute for The Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism*. <<http://www.tau.ac.il/Antisemitism/asw2006/sth-africa.htm>>
- 50 Tshwete, Steve. “Where was the Portuguese community when the majority of South Africans suffered the crimes of apartheid?” <<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/anctoday/docs/portuguese.htm>>
- 51 Nathan, Laurie. “The Declaration of Commitment by White South Africans.” Presentation to Harold Wolpe Forum, Cape Town, 20 Feb 2001. <<http://www.wolpetrust.org.za/show.asp?inc=forums/2001/debate20.htm&menu=forummnu.htm>>
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Kasrils, Ronnie. *Debates of the National Assembly*: 6852.
- 54 Barrell, Howard. “Rasool’s brothers linked to anti-Semitic poster.” *Mail & Guardian* 24 Nov 2000 <http://www.mg.co.za/articledirect.aspx?articleid=162924&area=%2farchives__print_edition%2f>.
- 55 Shimoni, Gideon. *Jews and Zionism: The South African Experience 1910-1967*. Cape Town: Oxford UP, 1980. 310-1.
- 56 Shimoni, Gideon. *Jews and Zionism: The South African Experience 1910-1967*. Cape Town: Oxford UP, 1980. 312-13.