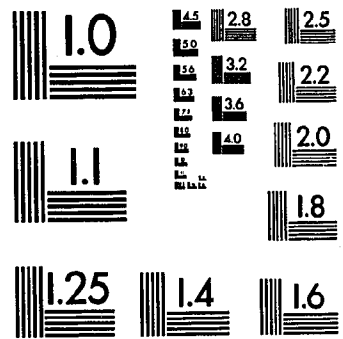
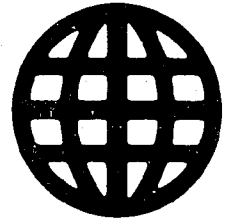


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SOUTH AFRICA AND ISRAEL 1973-1985**

City University of New York

PH.D. 1985

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REALPOLITIK AND IDEOLOGY IN INTERSTATE RELATIONS:
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by

BENJAMIN M. JOSEPH

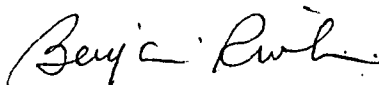
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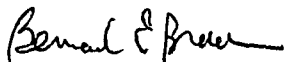
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date



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Abstract

REALPOLITIK AND IDEOLOGY IN INTERSTATE RELATIONS: THE
CASE OF SOUTH AFRICA AND ISRAEL 1973-1985

by

Benjamin M. Joseph

Adviser: Professor Benjamin Rivlin

A close relationship has developed between South Africa and Israel since the early 1970's. It consists of multiple forms of cooperation, ranging from investments in the South African "homelands" to highly probable nuclear cooperation with much in between. After introducing the broader theoretical issues, the study attempts to bring together and discuss all that is currently known about the background, benefits and extent of this cooperation on pragmatic grounds. It then proceeds to consider the need to go beyond pragmatism for a fuller understanding of the relationship, some of whose features cannot normally be found in alliances based on expediency alone. A second, distinct set of factors on the philosophical-ideological level is considered, e.g.

analogous political perceptions, prevailing myths and political values. The two countries, it is proposed, share characteristics which set them apart from the rest of the world. The findings provide a different perspective on the roles of pragmatism and ideology in relations between nations.

FOREWORD

This study deals with a manifold relationship most of whose aspects are either classified or deliberately played down for reasons of state. As might be expected, no official documents or sources of an archival nature are accessible to academics, with the exception of public relations materials. Even the records of the respective parliaments contain very infrequent references to the relationship. It is therefore not surprising to read a pledge by a former minister in the South African government that "there is a lot about South Africa and Israel that I will never speak or write about", (1) a relationship which he describes as an "alliance". In more than two years of full-time research, I did, however, attempt to examine most everything that is available and used much of it. Wherever possible, I relied on statements by civilian and military leaders which may, at least in part, make up for the scarcity of useful primary sources. Unlike most other writings on this subject

published in the West, this study relies to a considerable extent on Israeli sources in Hebrew. Such sources would have little incentive to publish distorted or exaggerated information, as might be suspected of sources from countries hostile to Israel. The same is true of South African Jewish sources or those translated from Afrikaans.

The search for sources began with computerized social science, history, public affairs and current periodicals data banks. These searches have since been updated several times. Many important materials were available in the research collections of the New York Public Library (including its Jewish division and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture), Columbia University, New York University, the Yale University Africana collection and the Library of Congress. New York Public Library staff assisted me in obtaining materials from other major research collections such as Northwestern University and Cornell. The United Nations Centre Against Apartheid provided me with many reports on South African-Israeli relations, while the American Committee on Africa and the African-American Institute allowed me to use their files which contain South African and African publications not available elsewhere in the area.

Israeli materials were available at the Zionist Archives in New York City, the New York Public Library Jewish division and at Hebrew Union College. Others were privately requested from Israel. Some non-indexed South African and Israeli military periodicals were searched issue after issue since the early 1970's.

The often-overlooked South African Jewish periodicals were among the most helpful sources of information. One would expect to find, and does find, that the relations between South Africa and Israel receive more coverage in such periodicals than in any other type of periodical. One of them, Jewish Affairs, published by the Board of Deputies, regularly reprints clippings from the South African press, including translations from Afrikaans.

A significant book, The Unnatural Alliance written by James Adams, a senior executive with the Sunday Times in London and that newspaper's defense correspondent, became available in the fall of 1984, when most of this research was already completed. The information in the book was accepted as generally reliable by most reviewers (see footnote #1 in the introduction.) Some of that information was added to the chapters dealing with the pragmatic side of the relationship.

Dr. Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi of Haifa University, who has been following the relationship for even longer than I have, made many helpful suggestions. The contribution of his writings and advice will be readily apparent. My correspondence with Professor Noam Chomsky of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology helped finalize my decision to pursue this topic and formulate its theme.

The goal of this project has been neither to catalogue every single detail, visit or transaction in the decade in question nor to compete with investigative journalism in uncovering information which is currently a state secret. The focus is instead on trends and analysis. All along, I have tried to bear in mind that the topic is South African-Israeli relations since the early 1970's. The study does not attempt to do justice to issues such as anti-Semitism, colonialism, racism, Israeli domestic politics, ethnic divisions and many others which are only partially or marginally related.

In contrast to some of the other writings on South Africa and Israel, (e.g. Kreindler, Stevens, Osia), I do not regard the 119,000 strong South African Jewish community as having a central role in this relationship. It is difficult to point to many

cases where it can be proven that Israel allied or sought to ally itself with a government because of the Jewish community in that country (chapter 9). The Israeli attitude towards the Soviet Union seems to be a case in point. With respect to South Africa as well, other factors appear to account for the beginning and progress of the relationship.

I was genuinely privileged to have as sponsor and reader Professors Benjamin Rivlin and Thomas Karis, respectively. Needless to say, while they fully share any credit that may be due, I assume responsibility for all the rest.

And lastly, the reader is asked to bear in mind that some of the footnotes at the end of each chapter provide not only sources but additional information and commentary.

NOTE

(1) Rhodie, Eschel. The Real Information Scandal. Pretoria: Orbis, 1983 p. 110. Gad Yaakovi of the Israeli Labor Party, now Minister of Economics and Planning, was no more revealing when he hailed in a television interview Israel's economic and "other" [sic] ties with South Africa. (Yoav Karni, Yediot Aharonot, March 13, 1983.)

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INTRODUCTION

Soon after I began to research the topic of South African-Israeli relations, I became aware of an interesting pattern: When I would tell someone what I was writing about, the response would in many cases include an unsolicited defense or condemnation of the relationship. It is, of course, no major discovery to learn that the two countries, separately or together, are the subject of a wide range of convictions and emotions. This does, however, serve as a reminder from the very start that no imaginable thesis is likely to satisfy all objections from all sides. This project was then undertaken with full awareness of the inherent difficulty of avoiding charges, by one side or the other, that the end product is "polemical".

For many in the West, the burgeoning links between Israel and South Africa are highly "unnatural", as the

title of the important recent book The Unnatural Alliance (1) suggests. There are not only the obvious - and great - disparities in economic power and size; not only the geographical fact of being separated by the world's second largest continent. There is primarily the perceived irony of such close links between a state that has agencies for race classification, Nuremberg-style legislation and some of whose leaders have had an overt anti-Semitic record on the one hand, and a state whose existence is seen by many as an outcome of some of the most monstrous manifestations of racism in human history. (2)

Few world issues come as close to an international consensus as rejection of apartheid. For the Black majority this has meant race classification, pass laws, forced resettlement in artificial "homelands", police shootings, the lack of due process and in general a status of aliens in their own land. Hence the daily demonstrations in front of South African embassies, sit-ins at universities and persistent calls for sanctions and disinvestment. For African states in particular, apartheid has been a fundamental concern since the beginning of independence. For instance, the 1967 Kinshasa Resolution on Apartheid and Racial Discrimination adopted by the Assembly of

Heads of State and Government noted that "the continued existence of apartheid and racial discrimination constitutes an odious crime against humanity and represents a grave menace to peace and security". (3) The shadow of apartheid no doubt serves as a constant reminder that their independence is fragile and deficient as long as the status quo at the southern tip of their continent persists. Hence any alliance, assistance or cooperation with Pretoria which has the potential of making the prospect of radical change in that status quo more remote than it is will be met with concern and sharp condemnation.

Indeed, Israel's ties with South Africa have been repeatedly condemned by the General Assembly of the United Nations. The United Nations Centre Against Apartheid regularly publishes detailed reports about the progress of the relationship, as it does on occasion regarding the ties of other countries with South Africa. These ties have also been an embarrassment to many Jews in the United States who would like to avoid a further deterioration in Black-Jewish relations. Those who abhor apartheid but firmly support Israel are likely to insist that the relationship has been greatly exaggerated. Along with Israeli spokesmen, they charge, pointing to declared

statistics on trade, that a double standard is being applied: by comparison with other countries (including Black Africa) Israeli dealings with South Africa appear miniscule and certainly do not imply approval of South Africa's domestic policies. Condemnation and defense have been major themes in many of the available writings until recently. We return to these issues in later chapters.

The relationship with which this study deals, most of whose aspects are classified, was described by the editors of The Times of London in a review article as a "major new force on the world scene". (4) In many of the writings cited here it is described as an "alliance", as a glance at the bibliography can reveal. As noted, at least one minister, former South African Secretary for Information Eschel Rhoodie readily and repeatedly uses the term "alliance with Israel" or "high-profile alliance" in his most recent book. (5) Further, Frederick Shiels notes in a discussion of alliances in his book Tokyo and Washington that "to limit a discussion... to formal alliances, those sanctioned by a treaty in which the parties in effect say 'we are allies', would be to miss out on much of the action of committed nations throughout history." (6) That South Africa and Israel

are important allies of each other will become quite clear later on. Nonetheless, following the traditional usage of the term as involving a formal treaty or other commitments for defense assistance, I chose to use it very infrequently in the following chapters.

Overview

The balance of this chapter introduces the broader political science issues which this study hopes to address, primarily the interaction between ideology and interests in the international conduct of nations. In the next chapter we turn to important milestones in the links between Zionism (before 1948; thereafter the state of Israel) and South Africa until the early 1970's when the relationship entered its highest phase. After the war of October 1973, policymakers in both countries apparently reached similar conclusions, or saw previous conclusions reinforced, as to the desirability of closer ties. The circumstances and some of the major arguments in favor of increased cooperation between the two countries are considered next, in the third chapter. The evolving ties

culminated in the historic visit of Prime Minister John Vorster to Israel in April 1976, when important agreements for cooperation were signed. The main aspects of the relationship in its pragmatic dimension namely, the commercial, conventional military and nuclear ties are discussed in chapters 5-7. The economic and military ties with Israel, it will be suggested, play a significant role in the fortification of the South African white-minority regime. This, however, raises the aforementioned question of double standards, under which Israel is said to be singled out, as supporters constantly complain. This question, and how the Israeli ties compare with those of other countries with South Africa is considered next (chapter 8). That concludes the discussion of the pragmatic dimension of the relationship. It is followed by a chapter assessing the role of the South African Jewish community on the domestic scene in South Africa and in the relations between Jerusalem and Pretoria.

Turning to the second part of the study, its central theme is that the South African-Israeli relationship cannot be fully understood without going beyond the pragmatic and the quantifiable. There

clearly appears to be a second driving force to the ties based, in essence, on the effects of a sense of solidarity, empathy and kinship between major segments of the two societies. This, in turn, appears to be the outcome of analogous backgrounds, political perceptions and the special places occupied by the respective societies in contemporary history. The study does not merely assume that such a driving force exists and that the similarities between the states have explanatory power regarding the strength of the ties: Chapter 10 presents the indications that the South African-Israeli interaction indeed departs from what can reasonably be regarded as pragmatism and expediency. Most of that information, collected from Israeli and South African sources, has not appeared in any of the previous works on this relationship. In chapter 10 we also look at how policymakers and other influential South Africans and Israelis perceive the relationship and the status of their country in the world. The final chapter considers the philosophical-ideological commonalities shared by the two societies, the everyday consequences for subordinate groups and, in the process, where and why South Africa and Israel differ. The study then proposes that the overwhelming similarities are not merely interesting footnotes to a "realpolitik" relationship but rather that they have a discernible effect on the way these countries

interact.

Ideology and Realpolitik

The term ideology is often used in more than one sense. A detailed dissection would likely carry the discussion far afield as well as into other disciplines. It often refers to a highly systematized pattern of beliefs as to the way the world functions and how the defects, either on the national or international level, can be remedied. When used in the sense of Weltanschauung, ideology revolves around pre-eminent values such as salvation, equality or race purity. It is a comprehensive explanation of the outside world and offers a program of political and social transformation which requires a struggle if it is to be brought about. Naturally, it is more likely to be associated with anti-establishment forces than with rulers. Ideology thus involves alienation from existing society and a strong conviction that the elites have failed. Consequently, the society is seen as corrupt, unjust and in general a sham. (Some of the ideological propositions may well be true and previously not noticed or acknowledged by those intellectuals who are not alienated.) In order to effect change, however, large numbers of people must

be persuaded, at least some of whom should become committed. Once the ideology is carried out, even many of those who remained uninvolved are said to benefit. Ideology is resistant to change in the beliefs of its followers, who are required to accept it in full.

Because it is concerned with truth and behavior, ideology may be seen as a secular religion, although it addresses itself to a group such as a class or a nation. For Karl Marx, ideology had a negative connotation as a set of beliefs with which people were being deceived into accepting the class structure and social order. The result was, in short, a false consciousness. He developed these themes in The German Ideology. The German sociologist Karl Manheim also viewed ideology as the expression or outcome of certain interests, but sought to improve on the earlier approach to ideology as merely a deliberately-constructed deception and a facade. He suggested that it is instead a product of certain objective conditions, such as the bourgeois interests reflected in Adam Smith's theories. If the latter is the case, ideology would come closer to being a rationalization of certain dominant interests. Manheim himself distinguished between revolutionary ideologies ("utopian"), which attempt to create a situation that

never existed, as opposed to those ideologies aimed at preserving the status quo or returning to a situation which presumably existed in the past but no longer does. He used the term ideology to denote the latter.

(7) Like Plato, Mannheim saw the intellectuals as a special class which might be able to rise above the ordinary class-based ideology (an apparent departure from his own earlier usage of the term) and acquire pure, independent knowledge.

Depending on the context, however, the term ideology can have narrower applications. Sometimes a distinction is made between ideology, creed, outlook, movement of thought and program. At other times, some or all of the above are used interchangeably. (8) In the case of Israel and South Africa, I use the term in a special but related sense to refer to prevailing themes, political values and myths as to their struggle for existence, the justice of their cause, reactions to the state of being in protracted conflict with indigenous populations within and without and their lot in the community of nations. This is associated with a sense of kinship and empathy with asymmetrical manifestations (chapter 10).

The case study looks at the effects of similar ideologies within the parameters of political

realism. (9) The central concept of political realism is that the pursuit of the national interest and advantage best explains how and why nations act on the international scene. Developed by Hans Morgenthau in the post-World War II years, this popular theory sees the very essence of politics as a struggle for power and security in which the national interest (defined in terms of power) is the driving force, akin to a large-scale chess game where the chessboard is the entire surface of the world of nation states. Under these circumstances, the only constraint is the power of other states. "The political realist asks: How does this policy affect the power of the nation?" (10) Collaboration, when it occurs, is according to political realism a result of parties' interests coinciding. Conversely, when these interests clash, the result is competition, rivalry or war. Ideology has little or no explanatory power other than to justify and rationalize policies so as to make them more palatable to the public and, indeed, to the leaders themselves.

International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. Whatever the ultimate aims of international politics, power is always the immediate aim. Statesmen and peoples may ultimately seek freedom, security, prosperity or power itself. They may define their goals in terms of a

religious, philosophic, economic or social ideal... They may also try to further its realization through non-political means such as technical cooperation with other nations or international organizations. But whenever they strive to realize their goal by means of international politics, they do so by striving for power. (11)

Morgenthau did not argue that ideology is merely a propagandistic addition to foreign policy. It is, rather, an organic element of it. Ultimately, however, its role is to disguise the real, calculated pursuit of national interest and advantage. Thus we can expect a nation to claim that "we are acting to right a wrong or prevent one from taking place" when it in fact seeks to dominate, expand and influence. The benign language and the profession of virtue rationalize this desire for self-aggrandizement.

Despite its general acceptance, political realism has appeared simplistic to some, cynical to others and contradictory to others still. For instance, in Stanley Hoffman's critique, one objection was that "realist theory combines a Hobbesian image of naked power politics" with an attempt to show that states are nevertheless not condemned to a life that is "nasty, brutish and short." (12) (It is worth noting that Hoffman did not distinguish in this statement between political realism and realpolitik or among

various levels of cynicism ascribed to such concepts elsewhere.) Raymond Aron proposed a refinement: The search for security (survival) and power is supplemented by the search for glory, for spreading one's ideas and way of life and being number one. (13) The race to be the first in space is one example of this search for glory. Unlike prestige, which is a dimension of power, Aron suggested that glory has no visible connection to the striving for power in itself. Thus in the minds of leaders, the triumph of an idea may be sincerely regarded as the goal of an action. When a state seeks to regain areas it previously controlled, this may often be a goal in itself because it is "right" from the perspective of its leaders. In such cases no additional justification would be needed.

Turning to interaction between states, the primacy of the national interest (14) is widely accepted by political scientists. When cooperation takes place, the goal is often to achieve common or coinciding objectives such as technological development, exchanging defense secrets or dividing up military functions. Each state assumes the role for which it is best fitted. (15) When the cooperation is formalized by a treaty, it assumes the form of an alliance. Yet

interests and power do not exist in a pure form, and they are inevitably connected to the ideas and pictures in the minds of policymakers. In any given state, the ideology serves as a lens through which reality is observed and plays a significant role in influencing the long-range goals of the state, including the way power is approached and used. In addition, there remains the aforementioned rationalization function. The short-term policies of a state with a given ideology cannot be predicted since expediency often takes precedence in such a case. (16) (In fact, since any decision can be rationalized on ideological grounds, in most cases it is difficult to point to the precise explanation of a policy. It is as difficult to separate between the words and deeds of a nation as it is to make the distinction for an individual.) Arthur Schlesinger may have captured the essence of this difficulty when he noted that "if nations must act in terms of power, it does not necessarily follow that they will think in terms of power, and it certainly does not follow that they will talk in terms of power." (17)

Power and interests, not ideology, seem to be the primary motive when nations enter into alliances: Even a cursory examination suggests that not only can

states with different ideologies have good relations, at least temporarily, but those with similar ideologies can have poor relations. Similar ideologies did not prevent or end the conflict between the Soviet Union and China. When this conflict began to worsen in the 1950's, and to a large extent today still, they shared the same ideological convictions and long-range visions. The leadership in both countries believes in the principles of the Communist Manifesto and the greatness of Marx, Engels and Lenin. (18) By contrast, the United States and Britain are particularly close allies. It is difficult to find two other countries, either now or in the past, which have more in common--from language and culture to economic and political institutions. Their closeness is ideological as well as political.

Once states enter into an alliance, we can expect that the grounds for the alliance itself would be the subject of rationalization. As George Liska notes in Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence (19), nations may display a selective memory of the past which minimizes conflicts and emphasizes joint interests at present, downplay remaining disagreements, exchange visits of dignitaries, sign

cultural agreements and encourage favorable press commentary. This helps maintain the alliance and cushions the impact of possible setbacks.

For ideologically incompatible ad-hoc alliances, Liska's analysis seems to have much merit. When the compatibility already exists, the issue of rationalization does not arise, and in fact similar ideologies may have contributed to similar definitions of the national interest. Does the fact that the allied states have similar ideologies have any noticeable effect on the way they interact? The answer, at least in this case, appears to be affirmative: since the study suggests (in chapter 11) that there are indeed grounds to view major aspects of the ideologies of South Africa and Israel as compatible, their relationship can serve as a test case. This question is related, but not interchangeable, with one often asked by political scientists (e.g. Holsti, Duchacek, Frankel, to name a few): whether the conduct of a given country, such as the Soviet Union, is determined more by ideology than by pragmatism or vice-versa. The issue this study deals with has received far less systematic attention. The answer may shed additional light on the sources of

state behavior and motivation.

NOTES

(1) Adams, James. The Unnatural Alliance. Quartet Books, London, 1984. Some sections of the book, especially those dealing with military and nuclear cooperation, are based on information Adams gathered in Israel, South Africa and other Western countries where he conducted private conversations with military officers and intelligence officials. It is readily apparent to the reader that Adams's goal is to provide an impartial description rather than prove a particular point.

Although The Unnatural Alliance has not been reviewed extensively in the United States, the reviews I have seen regarded Adams's information as reliable. Despite occasional inaccuracies, the thrust of his findings was accepted by reviewers of varying political stripes. (This acceptance does not necessarily extend to Adams's political analysis, the final conclusions he draws or even the title of the book.) In the National Review, Kathleen Christison wrote that "Adams's sources are in general numerous and reliable enough to give the book credibility" and that "the accuracy of the picture he draws of the little heralded alliance between these two nations is undeniable." (April 5, 1985.) A review in Resister, journal of the Committee on South African War Resistance finds that "Adams' forte is fact, and his book is full of it." (October-November 1984.) Another review in the International Herald Tribune by Dennis Herbstein reported Adams's findings about the "extraordinary alliance between these two outcast states" without comment, objections or criticism of the book. (June 19, 1984.) The warmest endorsement could be found in Adams's own newspaper, the Sunday Times of London in a full page report. (April 15, 1984.) The book did not go unnoticed by the Israeli press. Its major findings were reported, often in detail but without comment either by journalists or officials.

The Unnatural Alliance became available in New York in the fall of 1984, when most of the research for this dissertation was already completed. The book is cited here in the chapters dealing with military and commercial ties (some of the information is not

available elsewhere.) Adams's investigation and contribution, however, are limited to the pragmatic aspects of the relationship.

(2) Bishop Desmond Tutu, who is very critical of Israel's ties with South Africa and would not visit there "chided the Israeli government for collaboration with South Africa, calling Apartheid 'so reminiscent of Hitler's Aryan madness'" and deplored certain other Israeli policies as "totally inconsistent with who she is." The Jewish Week, November 30, 1984.

(3) See for instance Cervenka, Zdenek. The Organisation of African Unity and its Charter. New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968.

(4) "Strangers and Brothers: The Unlikely Alliance Between Israel and South Africa." The Sunday Times, April 15, 1984. Such references are not uncommon; In a report on South Africa's military machine, the New York Times correspondent in South Africa referred to Israel as "an ally of South Africa" (September 13, 1984). Similarly, Yoel Marcus, a senior columnist for Haaretz, described South Africa (in passing) as "our second most important ally after the United States." (October 1, 1982).

(5) Rhodie, Eschel, op. cit. pp. 110-122.

(6) Shiels, Frederick. Tokyo and Washington. Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath & Co., 1980 p. 5.

(7) Manheim, Karl. Ideology and Utopia. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co. 1949.

(8) International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences. New York: The Macmillan Co. and the Free Press, 1968 vol. VII pp. 66-67.

(9) Political realism, realism in politics and realpolitik are used here interchangeably. The latter is defined in Webster's Third New International Dictionary as "Practical politics; politics based on practical and material factors, on political realities or on the realities of national interest and power, esp. as distinguished from theoretical, ethical or moralistic objectives; politics considered as an end in itself rather than as a means to objectives." In other contexts, it may be useful to go farther and distinguish among various degrees of cynicism in the

pursuit of such policies. For further discussion see Raymond Aron. Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966 especially pp. 591-596.

(10) Morgenthau, Hans, Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace. New York: Knopf, 1973. 5th edition, p. 11.

(11) Ibid, p. 27.

(12) Stanley Hoffman in Duchacek, Ivo D. Conflict and Cooperation Among Nations. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960 p. 264.

(13) Aron, op. cit. pp. 73-75.

(14) A detailed dissection of this concept, such as that found in Joseph Frankel's book National Interest, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970) reveals that there are more issues, dimensions and complexities involved than may appear to be the case at first sight. It is not even always clear whether the term is descriptive (what a state does) or prescriptive (what it should do). Nor is it clear who determines and how what the "national interest" is, a matter which may elude consensus and definition except on the most basic level of self-preservation. In this context, the national interest will be regarded primarily as the pursuit of power and security. See also K. J. Holsti, International Politics: A Framework for Analysis. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1972 pp. 130-131.

(15) Holsti, op. cit. p. 494.

(16) Ibid, pp. 366-368; Frankel, Joseph. International Politics: Conflict and Harmony. London: Allen Love The Penguin Press, 1969 pp. 111-112; Frankel, National Interest. op. cit. pp. 116-117.

(17) Schlessinger in Schwab, George. Ideology and Foreign Policy: A Global Perspective. New York: Irvington, 1981 p. 124.

(18) Zagoria, Donald S. The Sino-Soviet Conflict 1956-1961. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962 p. 8.

(19) Liska, George. Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962 p. 61.

Chapter 2

THE FORMATIVE PERIOD: A "STRANGE NONALLIANCE"

The origins of the Israeli-South African partnership are traceable at least as far back as 1917, when a famous friendship began between General Smuts, head of the Anglophile South African Party, and Chaim Weizmann, president of the British Zionist Federation and later Israel's first president. (1) As a Christian and white South African, Smuts could easily relate to Zionist ideas and aspirations: Europeans settling in an ancient homeland promised in the Bible while remaining under the British empire umbrella; making distant deserts bloom as they bring the blessings of civilization to primitive natives; Themes such as these sounded pleasantly familiar to Smuts. As a member of the Imperial war cabinet and the British war cabinet, he had access to British policymakers and was in a position to add his own

influence in favor of the landmark Balfour Declaration. In the 1917 document, Great Britain made it known it would view with favor the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, whose indigenous population was referred to only as "non-Jewish communities". In subsequent years Smuts continued to apply his considerable influence to keep the principles of the Balfour Declaration on the agenda of the British government. Upon his death, the South African leader was eulogized by acting Israeli Prime Minister Yosef Sprinzak as someone who "is written on the map of Israel and in the heart of our nation."

(2)

Nonetheless, in South Africa itself relations between Jews and the authorities were not nearly as smooth in the decades prior to the establishment of the state of Israel. Struggles over immigration restrictions were a regular feature of Jewish life there in the first half of the century. Most noteworthy was a 1930 law popularly known as the "Quota Act" which was introduced by Daniel Malan. It set numerical ceilings on immigration from southern and Eastern Europe and reduced Jewish immigration to a trickle. The "Aliens Act", which gave an immigration board authority to refuse admission to South Africa

for reasons such as "assimilability" followed seven years later. Despite the need to increase the white/Black ratio in South Africa, the flow of Jewish refugees from Europe was reduced further to as few as 50 a year. (3)

From the early 1930's when Nazism was on the ascendancy in Germany through the end of World War II, South Africa was the scene of severe anti-Semitic agitation, much of which focused on "Jewish capitalism" and "Jewish democracy". The Protocols of the Elders of Zion were being freely disseminated and Johannes Strijdom, who succeeded Malan as Prime Minister spoke of the cancer of "British-Jewish capitalism". (4) In 1937, the platform of the then-Opposition National Party demanded that the "Jewish question" be handled by a ban on immigration and by setting numerical quotas on the participation in the South African economy of those Jews already in the country. The party itself was closed to Jews in the Transvaal province. (5) White South South Africans were then likely to favor Zionism but disliked Jews.

The National Party was officially "neutral" during World War II. The activities and sympathies of its leaders, however, suggested otherwise. John Vorster was a "general" in the extremist wing of the already

militant organization Ossewa Brandwag ("Ox-Wagon Guard"). The organization opposed the Allies' war effort against Nazism and indeed saw Nazism as an ally against Britain. It opposed parliamentarism, favored a one party state under a strong leader and stood for racial purity. Ossewa Brandwag had, according to an account of the war period, the appearance of an "organization designed to effect a putsch at the appropriate moment". (6) O.B. members wore swastikas and gave the Nazi salute. Although opposed by Malan, whose policies were more pragmatic and who did not want to put all eggs in the basket of Nazi victory, "these doctrines [of the O.B.] were not without effect on the political theory of the Afrikanerdom as a whole, which for a while showed a tendency to move gradually in their direction, even in purely Calvinistic circles." (7) Vorster himself would later maintain that he was only anti-British, but in 1942 he explained that

We stand for Christian Nationalism which is an ally of National Socialism... In Italy it is called Fascism, in Germany National Socialism, and in South Africa Christian Nationalism. (8)

John Vorster was interned for 20 months because of his activities against the war effort of the Jan Smuts government. After the war he said in retrospect: "I am

quite satisfied that what I did was right. I was against the war and I campaigned against it. I would do it again." (9)

The record of Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd, his predecessor as Prime Minister, was also one of pro-Nazi sympathies and opposition to Jewish immigration. In 1936 he organized a group of professors at the University of Stellenbosch where he was teaching and campaigned against the admission of Jewish refugees from Germany. As editor of Die Transvaler, organ of the National Party, Verwoerd continued this campaign and gleefully reported each Nazi advancement. (10)

Daniel Malan, regarded as a relative "moderate", accused Jews of "disruptive activities" in trade unions and urged that Jewish immigration be opposed by a "Nordic Front". In 1940 he charged that Smuts was allowing South Africa to become a "Jewish-Imperialistic war machine". (11) In addition, Malan reportedly agreed to a German proposal during World War II to divide control over Africa between the two countries. This information is said to have been found in German Foreign Ministry documents from the war. (12)

State President P.W. Botha was a full-time

political organizer for the National Party in Cape Province between 1936-1946. Although he too was regarded as moderate by comparison to Vorster, Botha reportedly used "strong arm tactics". (13) Donald Woods, the South African political exile and former editor of the Daily Dispatch noted as follows in an open letter to him:

How ironic that you visited Britain and France last week during commemoration of the Normandy D-Day landings, which insured the Allied victory in World War Two - during which conflict you and your colleagues in the Afrikaner Nationalist Party fervently hoped that victory would go to the Third Reich.

Considering how bitterly you attacked Jan Christian Smuts' Government for supporting the Allies at that time, and how openly your party admired Hitler, it was in character when you Afrikaner Nationalists took power in 1948 to pursue your own Herrenvolk theory of apartheid- and today, under your leadership, the cause of racial purity flourishes more strongly than ever before. Since January, more than 50,000 blacks have been arrested under the Pass Laws, one of your thriving 317 racial statutes that make apartheid First cousin to Hitler's Nuremberg Laws against the Jews.

Speaking of Jews, it is also ironic that your Government is so friendly with Israel, considering that in 1943 you were chief organizer in Cape Province of the party that tried to stop General Smuts' allowing Jewish refugees into South Africa. Not to mention the "Hoggenheimer" cartoons in your party press then- those caricatures of a greedy Jew who was supposedly behind every conspiracy against the Afrikaner Volk...(14)

By an accident of history, the year 1948 marked

both the establishment of the Jewish state and the change in government in South Africa where the National Party took office. Daniel Malan, its first Prime Minister, promptly recognized the newly-proclaimed Israel. South Africa was among the world's first countries to do so. (15) Since the new state was already fighting its first war, the South African government made an exception and allowed volunteers to join and fight alongside the Israeli army. Currency transfers were also permitted. Several years later, in 1953, Daniel Malan was the first head of state to visit Israel. (16)

The remainder of that decade was relatively uneventful. Trade ties began to develop, primarily the purchase of diamonds for the new industry Israel was developing. At the same time, the Israeli government was on record as opposing apartheid as a matter of principle. In 1952, for instance, Israel voted in favor of establishing a United Nations commission to study the internal policies of South Africa. (17)

The progress of the relationship was arrested, and indeed deteriorated somewhat for much of the 1960's. The era of decolonization, which was being met with concern in South Africa, led to an expansion in the membership of the United Nations and turned that

country into a "pariah" on the world scene. Beginning with Ghana in 1957, the colonial era was virtually over by 1964. Not only was apartheid under fire from the international community, it also had to cope with continuing and mounting domestic unrest. At that difficult time for Pretoria, Israel chose Black Africa as the focus of her diplomacy. The new African states possessed substantial natural resources and, more importantly, it was believed in Israel that they could help her overcome political isolation, especially in the General Assembly of the United Nations. In those days the General Assembly was regarded as an important political arena. The veto power, which could be used by Western countries in the Security Council was of no help in the General Assembly. Furthermore, Egypt's Gamal Abd-El Nasser was competing for Black Africa's friendship himself. Israeli overtures towards Black Africa were, in a sense, a way of jumping over the fence of international isolation and the Arab boycott. That isolation had been particularly noticeable since 1955 when Israel was excluded from the conference of Afro-Asian non-aligned countries in Bandung.

In 1961 Israel voted in favor of the first major United Nations resolution calling for sanctions

against South Africa as well as for the motion of
censure against Eric Louw's attempt to defend
apartheid before the General Assembly. The November
resolution described apartheid as "reprehensible and
repugnant to human dignity". (18)

Israel's African policies paid off for most of the
decade. African states were reluctant to support
anti-Israeli United Nations resolutions. They resisted
pressures to unseat Israeli representatives at such
fora as the 1962 U.N. Economic Commission for Africa
in Leopoldville and at the 1964 Colloquium on
Socialism in Dakar. Israel sent thousands of experts
to Africa and trained African students in Israeli
universities. Numerous African leaders visited Israel
between 1958 and 1965.

But South Africans found Israel's stance at the
United Nations highly ungrateful as well as
hypocritical. After the 1961 votes Pretoria restricted
the transfer of contributions to Israel. The South
African press, including the Jewish press, were very
critical of the Israeli votes. Die Transvaler asked

Is there any real difference between the way
that the people of Israel are trying to
maintain themselves amid non-Jewish peoples
and the way the Afrikaner is trying to
remain what he is? The people of Israel base
themselves upon the Old Testament to explain
why they do not wish to mix with other

people; the Afrikaner does this too. (19)

Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd concurred. The Israelis, he noted

took Israel from the Arabs after the Arabs had lived there for a thousand years. In that I agree with them. Israel, like South Africa, is an apartheid state. People are beginning to ask why, if Israel and its rabbis feel impelled to attack the policy of separate development, the policy of separate development in Israel is not wrong in their eyes as well... If differentiation is wrong on one score, it is also wrong on another. (20)

The resentment against Israel was not long-lasting and did not supersede her generally favorable image in South Africa. It was not difficult to understand that

In the same period, Israel was developing close ties with Black Africa and some circles in her government foolishly believed that this meant taking sides against South Africa. (21)

And Similarly,

Several years ago... the relationship was not so cordial. Israel then tried to obtain Black Africa's support in the United Nations and a swipe at South Africa was a small price to pay for that support. Today Israel herself is a victim of a prejudiced majority in the UN. She knows what unfounded accusations are like and how a country can be reduced to the pole-cat of the world. (22)

The 1967 war further strengthened pro-Israeli sentiments in South Africa and served to highlight the potential for future cooperation by showing Pretoria

the way a Western-oriented country can deal with troublesome Third World neighbors. South African whites felt inspired by the Israeli victory; it was a major psychological boost which proved that highly unfavorable numerical odds could be overcome with superior technology and the proper motivation. The Vorster government relaxed the stringent currency regulations and allowed South African Jews to transfer \$20.5 million to Israel to help the war effort. (23) Hundreds of volunteers flew to Israel, some actively joining the army. Spare aircraft, military equipment and supplies from the blood bank were reportedly sent to Israel as well. Die Burger, organ of the National Party in Cape Province explained why Israel was worthy of all the assistance:

Israel and South Africa have a common lot. Both are engaged in a struggle for existence and both are in constant clash with decisive majorities in the United Nations. Both are reliable foci of strength within the region which would, without them, fall into anti-Western anarchy. It is in South Africa's interest that Israel be successful in containing her enemies, who are among our own most vicious enemies... The anti-Western powers have driven Israel and South Africa into a community of interests which had better be utilized than denied. (24)

Although Israel still needed Black Africa's support, perhaps even more than before the war, cooperation with South Africa increased substantially.

The thaw in relations was evident in increased commercial links with the growing participation of state-financed corporations. An Israeli-South African Friendship League was founded at the initiative of Knesset Members Eliezer Shostak and Shmuel Tamir in January of 1968. The League was headed by Menachem Begin, whose party supported South Africa on the issue of apartheid because of that country's friendship to Israel and the local Jewish community. (25) The Israeli-South African Trade Association was also established in 1968. Shimon Peres, then Secretary-General of the Labor Party visited South Africa and met with Minister of Defence P. W. Botha. (26) David Ben-Gurion and Chaim Herzog visited the following year; Ben-Gurion met with Prime Minister Vorster. (27) Still, Black Africa remained generally friendly. It was not until the early 1970's that Israel's ties with South Africa began to "sink in".

By 1971, as C.L. Sulzberger of the New York Times noted during a trip to South Africa, the countries were in a "remarkably close if little known partnership". "The basic truth", he noted, "remains that this country, which has few friends abroad, regards Israel as one of them." The article was titled "Strange Nonalliance". (28)

The relationship was to suffer only one other setback of some significance. In the summer of 1971 Israel offered a small financial contribution to the African Liberation Committee of the Organization of African Unity. In part, this may have been an attempt to reassure Black Africa of Israel's interest despite the increasingly visible cooperation with Pretoria. This step was assailed by Menachem Begin who headed the political opposition. The Israeli Consul-General I. Unna asked South Africans to understand: "Israel does not expect South Africa's blessing for its decision but it does expect South Africans to understand the political and other reasons for its action". (29) Although the contribution was rejected, (30) Pretoria felt betrayed once again and temporarily discontinued the flow of currency to Israel. The impact on the overall ties, however, was temporary and insubstantial. (31) Even as the dispute was at its height, visits of Israeli officials and Knesset members continued. A delegation of South African Parliamentarians visited the Knesset in October. The following year, in 1972, South Africa opened its first diplomatic mission in Tel Aviv. (32) The coming years were to bring closer and closer ties, and the fluctuations described above would become a thing of the past.

NOTES

- (1) Adams, op. cit. p. 4. This friendship was also described in great detail by Richard Stevens in the Journal of Palestine Studies, Autumn 1973.
- (2) South African Jewish Chronicle, September 22, 1950.
- (3) Stevens, Richard, "Zionism, South Africa and Apartheid: The Paradoxical Triangle", Phylon (2), 1971.
- (4) Weisbord, Robert G., "The Dilemma of South African Jewry", The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1967 p. 235.
- (5) Patterson, Sheila. The Last Trek: A Study of the Boer People and the Afrikaner Nation. London: Rutledge & Paul, 1957 p. 290; also Encyclopaedia Judaica, Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972 Vol. 15, col. 190.
- (6) Roberts, Michael and Trollip, A.E.G. The South African Opposition 1939-1945. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1947, p. 192.
- (7) Ibid.
- (8) Hepple, Alexander. South Africa: Workers Under Apartheid. London: Published for the International Defence and Aid Fund by Christian Action Publications Ltd., 1971 p. 3.
- (9) Current Biography Yearbook, 1967. New York: The H. W. Wilson Co.
- (10) Current Biography Yearbook, 1959. New York: The H. W. Wilson Co.; also Patterson, op. cit. p. 290.
- (11) Patterson, op. cit. p. 291.
- (12) Horizon (East Germany) cited in Jewish Affairs (SA), March 1980.
- (13) Current Biography Yearbook, 1979. New York: The

H. W. Wilson Co.

(14) The New York Times, June 10, 1984.

(15) Adams, op. cit. p. 5. The author says South Africa was the first country to recognize Israel, an assertion repeated in the aforementioned Sunday Times (London) review article as well as in South African Panorama, August 1978 p. 9. Even if accurate, the time margin was probably small.

(16) Chazan, Naomi, "The Fallacies of Pragmatism: Israeli Foreign Policy towards South Africa", African Affairs, April 1983, p. 172.

(17) Ainslee, Rosalynde. Israel and South Africa: An Unlikely Alliance? United Nations Centre Against Apartheid, 1981. See also United Nations Official Records, General Assembly Ad Hoc Political Committee, November 18, 1952.

(18) Djanovich, Dusan J. (ed.) United Nations Resolutions. Dobbs Ferry, NY: Oceana Publishers, Series I, Vol. VIII 1960-1962, p. 242.

(19) Cited by Henry Katzew in "Jews in the Land of Apartheid", Midstream, December 1962, p. 73.

(20) Rand Daily Mail, November 23, 1961.

(21) The Jewish Herald (SA), April 13, 1976.

(22) Die Oosterlig, January 13, 1976. Translated in Jewish Affairs (SA), February 1976.

(23) Adams, op. cit. p. 13.

(24) Die Burger, May 29, 1968. Translated in Stevens, Richard and Elmessiri, A.M. Israel and South Africa: The Progression of a Relationship. New York: New World Press, 1976 p. 196.

(25) Brecher, Michael. The Foreign Policy System of Israel. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974 p. 173.

(26) Ainslee, op. cit. p. 6.

(27) Ibid.

(28) The New York Times, April 30, 1971.

(29) American Jewish Yearbook, 1972 p. 586.

(30) Chazan, op. cit. p. 172.

(31) The continued development of trade, tourism and possibly military ties as well is detailed by Joshua David Kreindler in "South Africa, Jewish Palestine and Israel: The Growing Relationship 1919-1974", Africa Quarterly, 20 (3-4) 1981.

(32) After independence Israel established a legation in Pretoria and a Consulate General in Johannesburg, but South Africa chose to be represented through Britain as a member of the Commonwealth. When it lost that status in 1961 it remained without representation in Israel.

Chapter 3

SECURING THE STATUS QUO AFTER 1973: DIFFERENT PROBLEMS, SIMILAR CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of the period covered in this study, both South Africa and Israel found themselves facing serious political and military problems. These problems, discussed below, led their policymakers to the conclusion that closer ties with each other would be desirable. That assessment has remained unchanged.

When the October 1973 war broke out, Israel was caught almost completely unprepared. Egypt had little difficulty overrunning the "Bar-Lev" line on the Israeli-held side of the Suez Canal. At the same time Syria began a vigorous offensive on the Golan Heights. The severe setbacks suffered by the Israeli army in the initial stages of the war led to a political crisis and to the loss of confidence in what had previously seemed like near-omnipotence and invincibility of their army.

As in 1948 and 1967, white South Africa's heart was with Israel during the war because, as Defence Minister P. W. Botha noted, "what's happening to them today may happen to us tomorrow." (1) Support was not limited to words of solidarity. Volunteers flew to Israel again. The Finance Ministry relaxed all currency regulations in order to facilitate transfers to Israel. It was even reported in Britain and elsewhere, but remained unconfirmed, that South African pilots flew their jets to the Suez front ostensibly to get combat experience, and fought alongside the Israelis. They would have flown to the Azores through Portuguese territories and joined American planes which were airlifting supplies to Israel. (2)

In addition to the trauma of the war, 1973 marked the rise of OPEC which could, it was feared in Israel, pressure or influence friendly Western powers. The situation was frequently referred to in Israel as "oil blackmail". But the worst was yet to come: by the end of the year, all but four Black African states severed all official relations with Israel. Mauritius followed in 1976. The other three- Lesotho, Malawi and Swaziland had diplomatic ties with South Africa as well and are considered outside of mainstream African politics. The reasons for the break with Black Africa, which left

Israel isolated as never before, are complex. Their roots are traceable at least several years earlier, well before the world heard of "Arab oil power". By the 1960's if not earlier yet, Israel's voting pattern and sources of support at the United Nations set her apart from the Third world and closer to the colonial West. (3) For instance, in the 1950's and 1960's Israel was France's ally and opposed Algerian independence at the U.N.; it supported secessionist movements in Biafra, Nigeria and Southern Sudan and was accused of supplying arms to the Portuguese. Concern and criticism of Israel in still-friendly Black Africa rose in the early 1970's after the failure of an attempt at mediation in the Middle East by the Organization of African Unity. African leaders, for whom territorial integrity was a key principle, were concerned by what seemed like Israeli intransigence about withdrawal from the territories it occupied in the 1967 war. (4) That, it was feared, might set a dangerous precedent. The chairman of the Committee of Ten which had attempted the mediation effort reported at the 1972 O.A.U. summit meeting that "Israel strongly rejected any peace settlement and was even more opposed to anything that

might lead to withdrawal of its forces from occupied territories". (5) By 1972 much of Africa already supported the Arab position on the occupied territories, Israeli settlements and the Palestinians. (6)

The October war highlighted the close ties Israel had with Black Africa's enemies Portugal and especially South Africa. Only then did these ties begin to attract attention and become an issue for African states. There had been no mentioning of Israeli-South African cooperation in any O.A.U. resolutions prior to 1973. (7) In addition, by 1973 attempts to tighten African and Moslem solidarity made at previous O.A.U summit meetings and other fora began to bear fruit. Oil states made promises of financial support and preferential oil prices. When, in October 1973 Israel briefly occupied Egyptian territory west of the Suez Canal, most of Black Africa severed diplomatic relations with her, although informal ties have continued in some cases. Six states severed relations before the October war and the rise of OPEC, and Guinea did so during the June 1967 war.

Whatever the causes for Black Africa's stance, the response in Israel was overwhelming shock and feelings of betrayal. (8) Against this background, South

Africa's extended hand was more noticeable than ever before to Israeli leaders. At the same time, the "loss" of Black Africa meant that the incentive to keep the ties with the white minority regime on the back burner had largely vanished. The political climate was ripe for calls to strengthen ties with South Africa even further. Yosef Lapid, the prominent commentator, wrote an article entitled "For the Sake of South Africa I Shall Not Keep My Silence", paraphrasing a familiar Jewish pledge about Zion:

After they abandoned us at our most difficult hour... we are relieved of the need to be circumspect by which we have abided in the past... the supposedly liberated African states are for the most part a bad joke and an affront to human dignity... All these years I had the feeling we were fooling the public when, for reasons of diplomacy, we did not tell them that most Black African states are a nauseating mess...

A few weeks ago Professor Baker's research was published in Britain which, among other things compared the history of Jews and Negroes in New York so as to investigate differences in achievement obtained by races with different I.Q.'s and different aptitudes under constant conditions... Evidently, there is, after all, a hereditary difference in intellect between a man whose father lived in the jungle and one whose forefathers were priests in the Temple, as D'Israeli put it...

It is very regrettable that South Africa's white rulers found it impossible to grant the greatest amount of civil rights to the Negro majority in their country. I presume they would have done so if only they could trust that the Black majority would not

oppress the white minority, would not rob it and would not turn a wealthy and prosperous country into another parody of political independence...

For the life of me, if I have to choose between friendship with today's Black Africa and friendship with a white, organized and successful country with a thriving Jewish community, then I prefer South Africa. It is only too bad we waited for the Negroes to throw us out. (9)

Mr. Lapid later became head of the Israeli Broadcasting Authority which oversees state radio and television. How widespread was the preference in Israel for the "white, organized and successful" country may be impossible to tell. However, later developments suggested that in a different language and tone, Israeli leaders reached similar conclusions about the benefits of closer ties with South Africa and the role that country could play in Israel's long-term strategy.

Eversince it became independent, Israel's main policy goals have been survival as a Zionist state and the acceptance of its political legitimacy. (That legitimacy is widely accepted in the West but less fully in the rest of the world, let alone the Middle East.) Regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict, Israeli leaders have always sought to obtain recognition and negotiate peace agreements with the Arab states. At the same time, while Labor and Likud differ on the

wisdom of some withdrawal as opposed to no withdrawal at all from the West Bank, both reject total withdrawal and Palestinian self-determination in an independent state, goals supported by most of the international community despite the opposition of the United States and Israel. Since the Arab states and the Palestinians have not accepted the above Israeli terms, the defense of the status quo must be viewed as the main concern of Israeli planners. For these planners, the difference between defending the country and defending the political status quo is likely to become increasingly blurred.

In such a struggle, carried on under conditions of political isolation, any reliable friends wherever they can be found would be valuable. An ally like South Africa would have the added advantage of not being subject to pressures from the Third World and would therefore be unlikely to exact a political price for supplying Israel with vital resources. South Africa's cheap and plentiful coal, for instance, held the promise of meeting some of the country's energy needs at a time when oil crises and the rising power of OPEC were of great concern. Equally or more important must have been South Africa's possession of uranium reserves after a war which eroded confidence in conventional superiority. In addition, the fate of

South Vietnam could not have gone unnoticed in Israel, a country greatly dependent on United States aid. This too would underscore the need for a reliable partner - or major customer - for the arms industry, preferably with a strong currency and natural resources. The case for closer ties with South Africa (and with Portugal which was at the time losing its colonies) was made by General Chaim Herzog, now President of the country and always a highly influential political and military analyst. The Haaretz article he wrote was titled "Time for Initiatives":

During the war we enjoyed unreserved sympathy in South Africa which is the strongest power on the African continent. The Arabs are making big noises about an oil embargo against South Africa, Portugal and Rhodesia. But South Africa, with its gold power, can withstand it...

We only have one criterion: Is it good for the Jews or not, and there is no justification why our relations with South Africa or Portugal- the only European country which permitted U.S. planes to land on their way to Israel with vital supplies- should be different from their relations with other Western states. We must develop adequate relations with any country in the world which is willing to have such relations with us... Our geopolitical situation also calls for a fundamental change in our attitude towards a country like South Africa. (10)

Herzog's recommendations were apparently consistent with the inclinations of those in policymaking positions in Jerusalem. Israel was now willing to respond more openly to Pretoria's

overtures. The first South African Ambassador to Israel Dr. Charles Fincham observed:

The turning point in our relations with Israel was undoubtedly the Yom Kippur war and its tragic aftermath... At this time our former Prime Minister and our present Prime Minister, then Minister of Defence, made some public references to Israel's plight. The sympathy implicit in these remarks was not lost on the Israeli press and public opinion. The latent support for South Africa, which we knew existed but which had been difficult to quantify, came to the surface. Why, it was asked, had Israel been supporting resolutions in the United Nations which were hurtful to South Africa when South Africa now stood revealed as one of the few countries to stand up and be counted when Israel was in peril? (11)

As it happened, those were trying times for the prospective South African partners as well. The regime in Rhodesia was on its last legs. The 1974 coup in Portugal was to lead to the end of colonial rule in Angola and its replacement by a radical, hostile government. Mozambique was also led by an unfriendly radical government after the overthrow of colonial rule. The specter of being surrounded and attacked by Black states aided by "the Communists" had been a frequent nightmare for South African planners. The need to obtain the arms and technologies which would offset such unfavorable numerical odds was urgent.

In fact, quite apart from the political realities of the early and mid 1970's, the long-term strategy

for the survival of the Republic also called for closer ties with a country like Israel. As might be expected, policymakers in South Africa have given much thought to the options available to them in a world in which they are regarded as untouchables. Two major and related concepts which they developed provide a clue as to their state of mind. "Total National Strategy" was proposed by P.W. Botha as encompassing all respects in which South Africa must mobilize in order to survive (that is, make its corner of the world safe for apartheid; like Israel, South Africa has no additional territorial aspirations and would be content to be left alone by the domestic and foreign enemies of the existing status quo). The "Total National Strategy" included the military, economic, public administration and foreign policy spheres. "Total National Strategy" was necessary because of the "Total Onslaught" to which South Africa has been subjected, the main element of which is the "Communist threat". [The aim of the latter is, as Minister of Defence Magnus Malan pointed out, "overthrow of the present constitutional order and its replacement by a subject Communist-oriented Black government." (12) That, he warned, must not be allowed to happen because it is in fact "directed against the whole free Western

World." [13] Regrettably, he continued, most of the Western World either does not see or is too weak to mobilize against this peril, a theme to which we return in the last chapter.

What then can South Africa do when faced with "Marxist expansionism" and at best Western indifference? Few foreign policy options were available, and closer ties with a country like Israel figured among them. As P.W. Botha explained in an address, some of the options were that South Africa become a non-aligned, neutral country like Switzerland, or that it attempt to achieve a regional detente on an anti-Marxist basis, or, as a remote possibility, make overtures towards the "Red" enemy. But a more realistic option would be to

...avoid any sort of commitment to any of the major powers and to seek to develop an alliance with other middle rank powers whose political philosophies have something in common with ours. (14)

The explicitly-named "pariah option" was to include, in addition to Israel, such countries as Taiwan, Iran and Paraguay. Not that prospects for the future appeared particularly bright:

The shifting fortunes and instability of many of these states may make this a hazardous enterprise.

Whether by default or by design, it is this

"pariah option" which seems to have been pursued. Deon Geldenhuys, Assistant Director of the South African Institute of International Affairs and now Associate Professor of political science at Rand Afrikaans University concurred that "it does indeed make sense for the Republic to turn to other friendly pariahs for some essential goods and services if Western countries are, due to political considerations becoming unwilling or unreliable sources of supply." (15) He added that the status of pariah makes it natural for these states to collaborate in exploring the nuclear option as well.

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In 1974 the Israeli Consulate in South Africa was upgraded to an embassy, making Israel one of two dozen states- including "homelands"- which have diplomatic missions in South Africa. (16) That same year the Israeli-South African Chamber of Commerce was founded in Tel Aviv, with a South African counterpart in Johannesburg. The chambers publish the Israel-South Africa Trade Journal. The following year South Africa reciprocated the embassy move.

At the United Nations, Israel's voting pattern

shifted from condemnation of apartheid to abstention or absence from any vote which had to do with South Africa. By January 1978, the South African paper The Citizen was able to note that "14 new United Nations General Assembly resolutions against apartheid have gone on the books without the participation of Israel in any of the votes on grounds of 'hypocrisy of Third World sponsors'". (17) The Israeli representatives at various fora, observed one Haaretz columnist, have generally chosen to "run to the bathroom" when South Africa was being voted on. (18) Nor has Israel signed the United Nations International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid which was adopted in 1973. For her part, South Africa has been one of the few countries in the world not to call for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967.

High level visits continued, with less emphasis than before on their "private" nature. Moshe Dayan visited in 1974 as a guest of the South Africa Foundation and told the South Africans: "I am one of your admirers and I believe you have very many friends" adding that no one could fail to be impressed by the "tremendous civilisation" being created in South Africa. Dayan felt confident that his hosts have

"first class troops and good installations in your country and they can take good care of South Africa."

(19) South African Minister of the Interior Connie Mulder visited Israel both in 1975 and 1976. His meetings with Prime Minister Rabin and with the Foreign Minister prepared the groundwork for the history-making Vorster visit. (20) It is clear that the difficulties faced by Israeli and South African leaders in and after 1973 turned the aforementioned "partnership" and "strange nonalliance" into an extensive web of ties. As the following chapters detail, these ties were particularly close on the commercial, military and nuclear levels.

NOTES

(1) American Jewish Yearbook, 1974-1975 p. 557.

(2) The Daily Telegraph, October 31, 1973.

(3) This issue is discussed in greater detail in Cervenka, Zdenek and Rogers, Barbara. The Nuclear Axis: Secret Collaboration Between West Germany and South Africa. New York: Times Books, 1978, p. 446-447.

(4) Ojo, Olusola, "Israeli-South African Connections and Afro-Israeli Relations", International Studies, January-March 1982, p. 42.

(5) Ibid, citing Africa Research Bulletin.

(6) Mazrui, Ali, "Black Africa and the Arabs", Foreign Affairs, July 1975, p. 736. Also Ojo, Ibid.

(7) Ojo, op. cit. p. 47.

(8) It is sometimes argued that here lies the explanation for South African-Israeli closeness. Naomi Chazan considers the merits of this argument in the African Affairs article cited earlier. She does not find it particularly convincing because it fails to explain why, in Chazan's own words, "after emotions subsided the South African connection has grown". (p. 194.) We return to this hypothesis in the concluding remarks.

(9) Lapid, Yosef, "Lemaan D'rom Africa Lo Echeshe" ("For the Sake of South Africa I Shall not Keep my Silence"), Maariv, March 14, 1974.

(10) Herzog, Chaim, "Ha'et Le'iozmot" ("Time for Initiatives"), Haaretz, December 7, 1973.

(11) Quoted by Breytenbach, Willie, "Isolation and Cooperation", Africa Report, November-December 1980 p. 41.

(12) Geldenhuys, Deon. Some Foreign Policy

Implications of South Africa's Total National Strategy. Braamfontein: South African Institute of International Affairs, 1979, p. 3.

(13) Ibid.

(14) Ibid.

(15) Ibid, p. 34.

(16) Geldenhuys, Deon. The Diplomacy of Isolation: South African Foreign Policy Making. New York: St. Martin Press, 1984 p. 133.

(17) The Citizen, January 17, 1978.

(18) Akiva Eldar in Haaretz, August 2, 1985. United Nations General Assembly resolutions on South Africa which Israel boycotted in recent years are listed in appendix A.

(19) Africa Confidential, June 20, 1977.

A comment Dayan made in a television interview in 1980 sheds additional light on his thinking on Blacks and racism. He saw the need for a military draft in the United States in order to overcome the problem that "most soldiers are Blacks who have a low education and intelligence". The army, he said, needs "better blood and brains". Quoted by Weisbord, Robert and Kazarian, Richard. Israel in the Black American Perspective. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985 p. 160.

(20) Ainslee, op. cit. p. 9.

Chapter 4

VORSTER IN JERUSALEM: OVERCOMING "A MEASURE OF UNEASE" ABOUT APARTHEID

The November 1975 United Nations General Assembly resolution which determined that Zionism is one of the forms of racism and recalled earlier condemnations of Zionism and apartheid lent additional weight to those in Israel who saw the world, and especially the Third World, as "incorrigible". "In this age of inflation of statehood", editorialized the Jerusalem Post in a typical comment, "this alliance of weakness and immaturity with cynicism and extortion is sufficient to win a majority in the world organization". (1) In the Knesset, Prime Minister Rabin compared the resolution to the events of the Crystal Night in Nazi Germany 37 years earlier on the same date. By giving a hand to that "Arab plot", Rabin said, "the U.N. forfeited any moral and political authority". (2) It thus became even more difficult than before to argue

that there was anything to lose from closer ties with South Africa. As was later explained by Mordechai Tomarkin in Skira Hodshit, a journal for IDF officers, for as long as the United Nations mattered it made sense to downplay the ties with South Africa. But by the 1970's the United Nations was "hopelessly lost". (3) Several months later, in April 1976, the world was able to witness a spectacular manifestation of South African-Israeli closeness which would have been unthinkable only three years earlier. When Prime Minister Vorster came to Jerusalem, few in influential positions in Israel saw any reason to deny him the most hospitable treatment any dignitary can receive. It was Vorster's third foreign visit in the ten years he had been in office, (4) and it was so successful that in former Information Minister Eschel Rhoodie's assessment it was "South Africa's greatest achievement in international alliance since World War II" ("Operation David"). (5)

Although initially presented by Vorster and some in Israel as a private "pilgrimage" to the Holy Land by a devout Christian, the pretense was dropped before long. In fact, according to Deon Geldenhuys of the South African Institute of International Affairs, it was Rabin who invited Vorster to visit Israel. (6)

Upon arrival, Vorster was given a red carpet welcome by the Prime Minister and his wife. As is common for visiting dignitaries, the South African guest, who spent time in detention during World War Two for actively opposing the war effort against Nazi Germany (chapter 2) made his first stop in Jerusalem at Yad Vashem, the national shrine for Holocaust victims. Vorster laid a wreath there in South Africa's national colors and heard about the evils of Nazism. [Eschel Rhodie recalls that Vorster himself had been very skeptical he would be able to visit Israel given "what was being said" about his past. (7)]

Among the other places on the South African visitor's itinerary were factories, kibbutzim, an airforce base, a military aircraft plant, Christian holy places (where he underscored the importance of religion and the Bible in his life) and selected areas in the Israeli-occupied territories. He also met with Foreign Minister Igal Alon, President Ephraim Kazar and Teddy Kolek, the mayor of Jerusalem. The South African embassy held a reception at the King David hotel with the participation of Izhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, Igal Alon, Knesset Speaker I. Yeshaiahu, Chief Rabbi Goren, Moshe Dayan, Menachem Begin and Gideon Hausner, the Chief Prosecutor in Adolf Eichmann's

trial.

However, the apogee of the visit was a state banquet at the Knesset where Prime Minister Rabin toasted "the ideals shared by Israel and South Africa: the hopes for justice and peaceful coexistence". He pointed out that the two countries had to cope with the same threats: "How to face up to the problems of dialogue and make coexistence a feasibility in the face of foreign-inspired instability and recklessness". (8) Mr. Vorster himself was so moved he was reportedly unable to speak for a few minutes. Then he noted that "relations with Israel have never been better than now" and assured his Knesset hosts that "I have dedicated myself to work for peace in Africa. There might be temporary setbacks but in the end I have no doubt that those who desire peace will do their utmost to bring it about".

The outcome of the trip was officially described as a decision to establish a joint ministerial committee which would meet at least once a year to discuss economic, industrial and scientific areas of cooperation. In fact, a considerable number of joint projects were discussed on the general principle of Israeli know-how and South African resources. Among them were three additional ports in Israel, an

extension of railroad tracks into the Negev desert and South African assistance in building an oil and coal power station between Haifa and Ashdod. (9) The agreements in the military sphere were even more significant. The joint ministerial committee was to include the Defense ministers; it was during that visit, according to The Unnatural Alliance, that the foundation was laid for the two countries to become a "prime force in the world arms trade". (10) See also chapter 6. Before leaving, the South African visitor thanked his Israeli hosts and said he felt "at home", without elaborating.

Apart from the aforementioned decisions on significant cooperation, what made the visit an historic event were the highly enthusiastic reactions in both countries. These reactions provide a clue as to how Israeli ties with South Africa seem to differ from those of other countries which conduct business with Pretoria. We return to this important issue in chapter 10. Vorster's visit was announced in Israel only a few days in advance and, as noted, was initially presented as a pilgrimage by a deeply devout Christian. After reporting that none of the Labor cabinet Ministers had any objections to the visit, the leading Haaretz, among the most liberal Israeli

newspapers, praised the wisdom of the step and saw it as a "manifestation of the improving quality of relations between Israel and South Africa". The editorial noted that much had changed since 1971 when the Israeli Foreign Ministry attempted to make a contribution which would have reached "anti-South African terrorist organizations". At that time, the Haaretz editors went on, Jerusalem sought Black Africa's friendship and apartheid was regarded in Israel as a source of "a measure of unease." (11) Maariv described Mr. Vorster as a "desirable guest" while Yediot Aharonot urged that "the Prime Minister of South Africa ought to be welcomed with the greatest respect we can show..." (12) With the exception of several dozen leftist demonstrators, that advice was followed across the political spectrum. The Opposition, led by Menachem Begin, head of the Israeli-South African Friendship League, warmed up to the visit even more than the official hosts. This near-consensus did not escape the notice of the South Africans. As Henry Kissinger can attest, "not every statesman who visits Israel is assured of a warm reception from both the government and the opposition" observed the Jewish Herald (SA) on April 13, 1976. Fleur Villiers, political correspondent of the Sunday

Times of Johannesburg, similarly noted that "the warmth and quality of his reception in this embattled country since his arrival on Thursday has delighted South Africans in the official party. They described the visit as being of tremendous importance." (13)

Indeed, for South African whites the breakthrough was psychological as well as political. "In a world where we have few friends and even fewer countries likely to be agreeable to a visit of this nature, it is all the more noteworthy that Israel is willing to extend this hospitality", wrote the Rand Daily Mail.

(14) A Johannesburg radio commentary noted that the agreements which were signed were probably the most far-reaching between South Africa and any other country. (15) The Zionist Record of South Africa wrote that this was the first time in history when two countries so far apart from each other were to establish a joint cabinet committee, and reiterated that times have changed since "difficulties arose mainly from tensions at the United Nations when Israeli policies with regard to the emergent Third World embarrassed her good relations with the Republic." (16) The agreements just reached "will make South Africa and Israel allies in the true sense of the word" summed up another South African Jewish

publication, (17) while Die Burger was convinced that

The Western world needs a courageous minority to inspire and to mobilise the conviction of a majority. South Africa and Israel have the potential to be the joint spearhead of a turning point. (18)

In the South African House of Assembly, J. J. Engelbrecht congratulated Prime Minister Vorster on his return and expressed his confidence that, "much good will flow from that for South Africa" at a time when "necessary arms are being withheld from us by the United States of America as well as European countries with the exception of a few..." (19)

Outside of South Africa and Israel, however, the reactions were monumentally different. Holland, a friendly Western country, expressed concern at the government level and advised Israel that the royal treatment extended to Prime Minister Vorster would make it more difficult to convince the world that there is no connection between Zionism and racism. (20) The Organization of African Unity, the Arab League and Pravda were even less circumspect. The latter denounced the "racist-Zionist alliance against the African and Arab liberation movements", (21) a conclusion shared nearly word for word by the Ghanaian Times which saw the visit as "an escalation of racist resistance to the African Liberation Movement". (22)

"Operation David" indeed made the two countries "allies in the true sense of the word". Despite occasional Israeli statements of opposition to apartheid, there was little left of the earlier "measure of unease" about extensive dealings with the white oligarchy; for Prime Minister Rabin of the Labor party, Vorster became "my good friend". (23) We now proceed to assess the commercial, conventional military and nuclear levels of the connection.

NOTES

- (1) The Jerusalem Post, November 12, 1975.
- (2) Divrei Haknesset. (The Knesset Record) Jerusalem: Vol. 75 p. 314, November 11, 1975.
- (3) Tomarkin, Mordechai, "Yachasei Israel-Drom Africa Baespaclaria Shel Istrategiat Mediniut Hahutz Shel Israel" (The Israeli-South African Relations Viewed in the Looking Glass of Israeli Foreign Policy Strategy"), Skira Hodshit, A Monthly Journal for IDF Officers, December 1980.
- (4) Ojo, op. cit. p. 44.
- (5) Rhodie, Eschel. The Real Information Scandal. Pretoria: Orbis, Ltd. 1983 p. 111.
- (6) Geldenhuys, Deon. The Diplomacy of Isolation. op. cit. p. 116. Additional details about the reception are available in South African Digest, April 16, 1976; Beit-Hallahmi, Benjamin, "South Africa and Israel's Strategy of Survival", New Outlook: Middle East Monthly, April 1977.
- (7) Rhodie, op. cit. p. 112.
- (8) South African Digest, April 16, 1976; Beit-Hallahmi, op. cit.
- (9) Adams, op. cit. p. 17. The text of the agreement has not been made available, a fact which underscores the limitations faced by researchers interested in primary sources about this relationship.
- (10) Ibid. p. 74.
- (11) "Dreach Midrom Africa" ("A Guest from South Africa"), Haaretz, April 6, 1976.
- (12) South African Panorama, June 1976.
- (13) The Sunday Times, April 11, 1976.

- (14) The Rand Daily Mail cited in the Zionist Record (SA), April 14, 1976.
- (15) Ojo, op. cit. p. 47.
- (16) The Zionist Record (SA), April 14, 1976.
- (17) The Jewish Herald (SA), April 20, 1976.
- (18) Dawie in Die Burger, cited in South African Digest, April 30, 1976.
- (19) South African House of Assembly Debates. Cape Town. April 21, 1976. pp. 5091-5092.
- (20) The New York Times, April 18, 1976.
- (21) Ibid.
- (22) Cited by Ojo, op. cit. p. 48.
- (23) Keller, Gerald, Major (USMC), "Israeli-South African Trade: An Analysis of Recent Developments", Naval War College Review, Spring 1978 p. 74 citing Africa Report.

Chapter 5

ECONOMIC TIES: "WE CAN REALLY GO PLACES IF WE JOIN FORCES"

The South African-Israeli relationship is not about trade, at least not in the conventional sense of civilian trade. Nonetheless, one finds that it is often "trade" that the question of South Africa and Israel conjures up. (1) The trade aspect itself is subject to considerable misrepresentation because of the way it is computed. At first glance, it would seem that there is little room for error: after all, each country, as well as the International Monetary Fund, reports import and export data. These statistics show that Israel imports from South Africa materials such as steel, timber and sugar; South Africa's imports from Israel include fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, textiles and machinery. The International Monetary Fund's Direction of Trade Statistics also indicates that these imports and exports are miniscule by

comparison with other countries: South Africa exported \$2.2 billion worth of goods to the United States in 1980 and \$1.5 billion in 1983. It imported \$2.5 billion worth of American goods in 1980 and \$2.2 billion in 1983. For South Africa and Japan, the above figures were \$1.5, \$1.4, \$1.6, \$1.7 billion, respectively. However with respect to Israel the equivalent amounts were \$95, \$142, \$25, \$51 million, respectively. Proportionally, trade with Israel represents less than half a percent of South Africa's total imports and 0.7% of its exports; as a proportion of Israel's total trade, the figures are about 1 and 2 percent, respectively. (2) Despite a tenfold expansion in the 1970's alone, (3) South African-Israeli trade continues to appear humble even by comparison with Black Africa's trade with Pretoria, a fact quickly pointed out to Western audiences by Israeli diplomats. It is therefore possible, on the basis of these and similar formal figures to make a plausible (if deceptive) case that Israel is "singled out" despite negligible ties with South Africa, perhaps due to anti-Semitism. (4)

In reality, the above represents only what Israel and South Africa choose to report. Given the absence of crucial items, discussed below, these official

statistics are less useful as an analytical than as a propaganda tool. When correcting for the absence of diamonds and military transfers alone, whose exact value is classified, a different picture emerges.

Adams's own assessment is:

While it is impossible to place an accurate figure on the true total volume, it is probable that when all trade is taken into account, Israel may be South Africa's biggest trading partner. (5)

"Among the biggest trading partners" would probably be closer to the mark, as is indicated below in an attempt to estimate the actual amounts. Meanwhile, the discrepancy between real and declared trade has come to the fore on various occasions. A Financial Mail (SA) special supplement dealing with the economic ties with Israel (September 14, 1979) began by quoting two individuals who are clearly in a position to discuss the subject. Ephraim Raviv, Economic and Commercial Counselor at the Israeli embassy in Pretoria and director of the Israeli Trade and Tourism Center in South Africa was not particularly enthusiastic:

The volume of trade between Israel and South Africa is still small and disappointing and its importance should not be exaggerated. Figures have certainly grown in absolute terms but we have a long way to go before we can say we're satisfied. The export/import trade with South Africa amounts to less than

1% of Israel's total trade.

But Dr. Jacques Baranes, chairman of the Israeli-South African Chamber of Commerce and senior manager of Israel Discount Bank drew a different picture already in 1979:

Until a few years ago we used to trade in figures of \$15m-\$20m, a fraction of each country's \$10 billion-\$12 billion trade with the world. But we are now dealing in hundreds of millions of dollars. We have a real and important trade partnership.

The report noted that the contradiction could be easily reconciled if diamonds, which are bought in London, are taken into account. The value of this import item was \$1 billion in 1978, which in itself was more than a six-fold increase since the beginning of the decade. (That alone exceeds the value of South African exports to France and West Germany, for instance). For Israel, the apparent trade imbalance would have been worrisome, but in fact "hardly anyone [in Israel] appeared overly worried about the imbalance in trade in favour of South Africa", the report continued, due to the "undisclosed trade items- on the value of which nobody is prepared to venture even an anonymous guess. One thing is certain: South Africa is a highly valued client of Israel's electronics industry." In 1976 South Africa had been

designated a "preferred export target" by the Israeli Ministry of Trade. (6)

The editor of the research report Israeli Foreign Affairs (US) recently made an attempt to calculate a "minimally realistic picture of Israeli-South African trade" by estimating the value of arms and diamonds and adding the figures to 1983 civilian trade data as reported in Direction of Trade Statistics. (7) For arms transfers, a \$350 million a year figure would follow from estimates by Dr. Aaron Klieman of the Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University as well as the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. (See next chapter for sources). When this amount is added to the declared Israeli exports to South Africa (\$69 million), the \$419 million figure approaches France's total reported exports to South Africa, \$544 million. Turning to South African exports to Israel, according to figures reported in The Jerusalem Post, Israeli earnings from diamonds are at least \$1 billion a year. (We return to this item later in the chapter). Since figures provided by Israel to the U.S. Congress during the 1984 hearings on a Free Trade Agreement indicate that the value added by polishing in Israel is about 25%, at least \$750 million worth of raw diamonds would have

been imported from South Africa. When adding this amount to the declared imports figure of \$142 million, the total is greater than reported South African 1983 exports to France (\$353 million) and to West Germany (\$703 million). Even so, the estimate does not include salaries for Israeli military advisers, nuclear exchanges, royalties on arms production licenses and profits from joint ventures.

The basis for Israeli commercial links with South Africa has been an easy to understand marriage of needs. Facing political isolation and military challenges, Israeli leaders saw the importance of acquiring another powerful ally rich in natural resources (chapter 3). The ally,

should not be too susceptible to American influence; should have shared geopolitical interests with Israel; and above all should have the resources and technology to help build a sophisticated weapons industry. South Africa seemed to fit the bill. (8)

As for South Africa, the Israeli connection has been a golden opportunity for its exports, which have gained favorable back door access to Western markets. Israel has a large number of export oriented industries, and transportation costs to Europe and the United States, its main export markets, are lower than from South Africa. More importantly, it has duty-free

access to the EEC as well as to the United States under the Generalized System of Preferences. As long as the Israeli added value is at least 40%, goods originating in South Africa and finished in Israel can be "legally" exported to these markets with a "made in Israel" label. The offer to use Israel as a stepping stone to Western markets - a "vital bridgehead for South African exports" in the words of Naomi Chazan, (9)- was made by Israeli Finance Minister Simcha Erlich who visited South Africa in February 1978 heading an economic delegation. (10)

South African business and political leaders have, of course, recognized the opportunities inherent in Israel's readiness to serve as a trans-shipment point for their exports. Most recently, in early 1985 when Israel was negotiating with the United States about exporting goods with only 25% local content, Director-General of the South African Department of Finance Dr. Joop de Loor pointed to "quite a number of opportunities" for South African manufacturers for "triangular export". He was speaking at a luncheon in Johannesburg sponsored by the South Africa-Israel Chamber of Commerce. (11) These opportunities have also been dissected in a University of Cape Town M.B.A. thesis with the frank title "A

Study of Some of the Factors Influencing the Use of Israel as a Springboard for South African Exports".

(12) In fact, the importance of the arrangement for Pretoria is not limited to more favorable access to Western markets; it might prove especially valuable should sanctions be imposed by the West.

Within these parameters, it is now worth taking a closer look at some key aspects of the economic ties.

Diamonds. The modern Israeli diamond industry was established shortly after 1948, but the roots of the industry go to European centers where Jews had achieved prominence, such as Antwerp, Belgium. Israel buys diamonds through the Central Selling Organization in London and, after cutting and polishing, the jems are a close second to military sales as a source of foreign currency earnings. The industry accounts for some 8000 jobs. (13) Since diamond sales are kept secret and since the fortunes of the industry have fluctuated widely in recent years, the figures cited by various sources may vary. The aforementioned 1979 Financial Mail supplement on trade with Israel cited a \$1 billion figure for 1978 alone, nearly all imported from South Africa. More recently, figures provided by the Israeli Ministry of Industry and Trade indicate that in the first quarter of 1985 the country exported

\$300.3 million worth of diamonds. (14)

Coal. Most of Israel's coal needs- about 65%- are currently imported from South Africa. (15) South Africa has vast quantities of coal which is also cheaply-mined. Both the price and the friendly attitude of the Pretoria government must have seemed attractive to Israel which has long sought dependable sources of energy. During John Vorster's visit in 1976 it was reportedly agreed to sharply increase Israeli coal imports from South Africa, perhaps with the ultimate goal of receiving all coal from that country. (16)

Joint investment ventures (civilian). While numerous countries still trade with South Africa, far fewer are involved in joint ventures with it. Speaking at the opening of an Israeli industrial trade fair, T.F. van der Walt, the South African Secretary of Commerce and Consumer Affairs explained what his country hoped to gain:

Israel could play a significant role in complementing South Africa's economy... South Africa has abundant raw materials and labour resources. It has substantial resources of capital of its own and a diversified economic structure. But despite these positive factors we still experience a relative shortage of risk capital and technical skills. In this particular field, a country like Israel could also play a significant role in harnessing these

extensive raw material resources in the form of joint ventures to the benefit of both countries. (17)

The Secretary was echoing thoughts expressed earlier by I. Unna when he was Israeli Consul General in South Africa: "With South Africa's abundance of raw materials and Israel's know-how we can really go places if we join forces". (18)

The thoughts have been put into practice. The most important joint venture is Iskoor, established in Israel by the South African Iron and Steel Corporation (ISCOR) and the Koor concern which is controlled by Israel's Labor Federation, the Histadrut. The Histadrut is a major factor in the Israeli economy since it is both the country's chief trade union and a major employer which provides jobs to one out of every four Israeli workers. Iskoor was established in order to process and distribute steel from South Africa, including export to the EEC and the United States. Already in 1977 it was noted in the business section of The Star (October 7) that "Israel is fast emerging as a springboard for South African steel to the EEC and the United States". This was confirmed by Dr. Tamir Agmon, professor of finance at Tel Aviv University, during a visit to South Africa as a member of an economic delegation. The purpose of the trip was

"to encourage local businessmen to use the Israeli connection to enter markets abroad".

Similarly, a Financial Mail (SA) article titled "The Manna Falls" (May 4, 1979) quoted Archie Hendler of Hendler and Hendler who explained that "the main reason for going into Israel is to gain access to the Common Market". The same is true of other joint ventures, such as that between Chemtra and the Israeli company Polichrom: "In the long term we are interested in establishing a marketing office which will be used as a springboard to get South African products into Europe". And the chairman of Elron, another Israeli company in a joint venture, agreed that "joint ventures in the semi-processed aluminum field make good sense" since, after all, "we buy most of our semi-processed aluminum from Canada now, we might as well buy it from South Africa". (19)

An Israeli researcher describes a few of the other civilian joint projects and investments. South African investors, encouraged by favorable terms from both governments, have "poured money into a variety of Israeli schemes, ranging from a new hydroelectric system that will divert water from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea, regional development projects in the Negev, a plan for linking Eilat and Tel Aviv by

rail... and a brush factory on a kibbutz". (20) [Not all of these materialized; the shelving of the hydroelectric project was described as a "blow to South African contractors". (21)] South African companies such as Tagun Rubber, a Calan subsidiary, Transvaal Mattress and the aforementioned Hendler and Hendler now operate in Israel. (22) Zim, the sea-freight company combined with Unicorn of South Africa to form Zimcorn. (23) New projects are regularly considered; visits by officials have been "too numerous to mention". (24) South Africa now provides 35% of non-U.S. foreign investment in Israel. (25) An accord to avoid double taxation was signed in early 1978.

Homelands. Israel is one of very few countries with ties and investments in the South African bantustans, now officially known as "national states" and recognized only by Pretoria. Political considerations and value judgements aside, readiness to invest in these "homelands" is indicative of confidence in the viability of the status quo in South Africa. As early as 1976 Knesset Member Mordechai Ben-Porat said Israel was willing to help develop Transkei when he visited South Africa. (26) Following the visit, Israeli companies were reported to be

interested in utilizing "the low-cost semi-skilled labour available in the Republic and then import the goods back to Israel... [from where they can be] exported elsewhere, possibly to the EEC". (27)

Although no official recognition has been extended to the homelands, the Israeli state-owned Agridev agricultural development company has carried out development projects in Ciskei. The Israeli Discount Bank helped finance some of the projects. (28) At least two of the bantustans, Bophuthatswana and Ciskei, have been privately represented in Israel. The former is represented by Shabtai Kalmanowitz, a businessman with extensive political connections. Two other Israeli businessmen, Yosef Schneider and Nat Rosenwasser headed the Ciskei Commercial Delegation until the summer of 1985 when their contract was terminated in connection with a corruption investigation. The Nordau Boulevard building where their Tel Aviv office was located sported the flag of Ciskei; they said they were employees of that homeland's Foreign Ministry and the telephone was being answered "Hello, [this is] Ciskei". (29)

Ciskei is in many ways an investor's paradise with low labor costs, low rents and cheap loans. Pretoria, of course, has had a great stake in this linchpin of

the original grand apartheid scheme. In order to attract investments, the authorities have assumed responsibility for as much as 95% of the salary of local employees, as long as the amount did not exceed the equivalent of about \$50 a month. The Jerusalem Post reports that there are now about ten Israeli-owned factories in various stages of construction in Ciskei. Among the investors are former Finance Minister and now Kneset Member Yoram Aridor, reserve brigadier-general Ephraim Poran who was a military adviser to Prime Ministers Rabin and Begin as well as other Kneset members. (30) The report goes on to describe the human rights record of "President-for-life Sebe [who] has imposed a reign of terror on his people that has left even his apartheid mentors aghast".

The Israeli press provides more details about the activities of Israeli entrepreneurs in the homelands. According to Maariv, the Sun chain hotels and casinos in Sun City, Bophuthatswana's "mini Las Vegas", are run by an Israeli businessman. Business could hardly be better because "gambling, games of fortune and striptease are banned in South Africa proper". Another Israeli became rich by building a factory for "grade-B clothing for Black consumers in Venda", most of whose

financing was provided by the bantustan authorities. He became the employer of 500 Blacks. (31)

The web of semi-official ties with the homelands enabled President Sebe of Ciskei to say in 1983 when he visited Israel, "For the sake of diplomacy and speaking in parables I would say that it is an ad-hoc recognition". (32) The occasion was an international tourism exhibition in Tel Aviv. During two other trips to Israel that year he negotiated the purchase of aircraft and training for 18 pilots in Israel—presumably the nucleus of a future Ciskeian air force. (33) One likely use of such an airforce would be counterinsurgency; The Ciskei authorities have no international borders to defend, and the main conceivable threat to them might come from the bantustan's own population. Indeed, Lennox Sebe's former security adviser disclosed in an interview with The Star (Johannesburg) that he and Sebe had gone to Israel in 1982 to buy arms for the Ciskei government. (34)

In view of all the above, the characterization of Israeli interests in the bantustans as a "homelands lobby" (35) which includes members of the political and military establishment does not seem exaggerated. Adams sums up that Israel has "invested millions of

dollars in the homelands and its support has done much to underpin the homelands both economically and politically". (36) This is apparently a reference to the link between economic and political viability and to the involvement in these bantustans of establishment Israelis- not only anonymous entrepreneurs unconnected with the state.

As to the stance of the Israeli government, although no concrete steps have been taken to stop the activities in the homelands, there are indications that some Foreign Ministry officials find them embarrassing and would prefer that they be discontinued. [This applies only to dealings with the homelands. There is hardly any significant opposition to ties with South Africa itself, which for years have qualified as a matter of national consensus (chapter 10).] Those Foreign Ministry officials are concerned that the high visibility of Israelis in the homelands might harm the prospects of improved ties with Black Africa. (37) Hence in one instance when Israeli Minister of Tourism Sharir invited Sebe to a state banquet, the Foreign Ministry took action to block it, but since it was too late to cancel altogether, they had to settle for making the banquet unofficial. (38)

In sum, what is commonly referred-to as "trade"

between South Africa and Israel is a highly diversified economic relationship. South Africa sells Israel coal and diamonds and has used her Middle Eastern ally as a back door to gain easier access to Western markets. Important joint ventures were established in Israel for that purpose. To be sure, all the above generates opposition and criticism abroad, but as an editorial in the Israel-South Africa Trade Journal pointed out, the countries seem to have adopted the attitude: "The dogs may bark but the trading caravans must go on". (39)

NOTES

(1) In one instance several candidates for New York City Mayor were asked how they would handle the problem of "Israeli trade" with South Africa. The New York Times, December 16, 1984 p. 6E.

(2) Direction of Trade Statistics. Washington, D.C.: The International Monetary Fund, July, 1982 in Adams, op. cit. p. 19.

(3) Chazan, op. cit. p. 179.

(4) See for instance Decter, Moshe, "South Africa and Black Africa- a Report on Growing Trade Relations", The American Jewish Congress, New York, August 1976; Mayor Edward Koch of New York City, "Double Standard Where Israel is Concerned", The Jewish Press, January 18, 1985.

(5) Adams, op. cit. p. 19. We return to consider the importance of diamond trade later in the chapter.

(6) Ainslee, op. cit. p. 10.

(7) Hunter, Jane, "Trade with South Africa- How Much?", Israeli Foreign Affairs (US) June 1985 p. 3.

(8) The Economist, November 5, 1977.

(9) Chazan, op. cit. p. 180. Naomi Chazan has consistently opposed what she sees as a shortsighted Israeli policy towards South Africa. The African Affairs article attempts to prove that "Israel has become embroiled in an unequal relationship" whose scope is "meagre" and which benefits mainly "the other partner". Although the evidence presented in this study emphatically contradicts the characterization of the relationship as "meagre", it is impossible to tell, given the secrecy of many of its aspects, which of the allies is getting the better deal and needs the other more. In any case, the question is more important to political

activists than to scholars.

(10) Haaretz, February 7, 1978; Africa Report March-April 1978; The Washington Post, February 8, 1978.

(11) The Rand Daily Mail, February 13, 1985 in Jewish Affairs (SA), March 1985.

(12) Shapiro, Z. A Study of Some of the Factors Influencing the Use of Israel as a Springboard for South African Exports: A Technical Report. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business, 1979.

(13) Figure provided by the Israeli Ministry of Industry and Trade and reported in The Jerusalem Post International Edition, April 13, 1985.

(14) Ibid.

(15) The Journal of Commerce, July 1, 1985.

(16) Adams, op. cit. p. 24.

(17) The Citizen, March 18, 1980 in Jewish Affairs, April 1980.

The Israeli Trade Consul in South Africa was even more explicit when he pointed out that South Africa was "rich in cheap labour, which Israel lacks", apparently ignoring the West Bank where wages are well under half their level in pre-1967 Israel. The Star Weekly Edition, April 24, 1976.

(18) The Financial Mail, June 7, 1974.

(19) The Financial Mail, September 14, 1979.

(20) Chazan, op. cit. p. 179.

(21) The Financial Mail, May 11, 1984. The South African newspaper published a fifty page supplement on Israel and trade opportunities with her.

(22) Chazan, op. cit. p. 179.

(23) The Financial Mail, May 11, 1984.

(24) Beit-Hallahmi, Benjamin, "Israel and South Africa

1977-1982: Business as Usual- and More", New Outlook: Middle East Monthly, February 1983, p. 32.

(25) Hunter, Jane, "Israel and South Africa: How Close?", Israeli Foreign Affairs (US), February 1985 citing South African Digest.

(26) Ainslee, op. cit. p. 23.

(27) Ibid, p. 24.

(28) The Jerusalem Post, June 20, 1984 p. 1.

(29) Segev, Shmuel, "Israel Umedinot Hehasut" ("Israel and the Homelands"), Maariv, December 2, 1983; Maariv Overseas Edition, April 11, 1985 p. 6.

(30) Isacowitz, Roy, "Twinning with a Tyrant", The Jerusalem Post Magazine, November 9, 1984.

(31) Bitzur, Yehoshua, "Chavrei Haknesset Gilu et Ciskei" ("Knesset Members Discover Ciskei"), Maariv, April 19, 1985. For additional details on investments and high-level visits see Lavi, Arie, "Kol Anshei Ciskei" ("All the Ciskei Men") in Haaretz, June 28, 1985; The Jerusalem Post, June 20, 1984 p. 1.

(32) Adams, op. cit. p. 28.

(33) The Citizen, November 12, 1983 in Jewish Affairs (SA), December 1983.

(34) Reported by Isacowitz, op. cit.

(35) Africa News, April 2, 1984 citing The Jerusalem Post.

(36) Adams, op. cit. p. 27.

(37) Segev, op. cit.

(38) Ibid.

(39) Shapiro, M.B.A. Thesis, op. cit. p. 9.

Chapter 6

MILITARY AFFAIRS: COUNTERINSURGENCY, ELECTRONICS AND HARDWARE

South Africa's military strategy has been developed with the help of Israeli officers, her armed forces are equipped by Israel and their counterinsurgency tactics have evolved almost entirely as a result of the lessons learned by the Israelis in their fight against the Palestine Liberation Organization. (1)

It has been difficult, in recent years, to find many reports dealing with South Africa's military machine in which Israel does not figure. It is probable that Israel is now the largest hole in the embargo net surrounding South Africa. Since the military cooperation is held in strict secrecy, the information presented here cannot be backed up by official sources, a problem encountered in the previous and next chapters as well. For this reason, it may not satisfy supporters of Israel, especially if it is assumed that in this case what cannot be found in official statements does not exist. "What is perhaps most surprising about the development of their

respective armed forces", added James Adams, a military reporter himself, "is that it has all taken place without the world either knowing or caring".

(2)

Although the evidence about close military cooperation is of a circumstantial nature, it often comes from several sources and goes well beyond rumors and speculation. One type of source has been conversations with intelligence officials and army officers. A good number of senior officers, intelligence officials and ministers from each country are known to have visited the other, rarely for the purpose of spending their vacation there. Among the Israeli generals who visited South Africa in recent years are Meir Amit, Aharon Yariv, Ezer Weizmann, Chaim Bar-Lev, Chaim Herzog, Nathan Nir, Amos Horev and Mordechai Gur. Ariel Sharon spent 10 days in Namibia in 1981. Prominent visitors from South Africa to Israel have been Major General Neil Webster and Hendrik van der Berghe, chief of the Bureau of State Security. (3)

Since 1963 South Africa has been subjected to an international arms embargo. The embargo was voluntary at first, but when it became common knowledge that loopholes and weaknesses had turned it into a farce,

stricter provisions were sought by Third World countries. The West, however, resisted such calls until December 1977 following the Soweto killings the year before, the death of Steve Biko in police custody, the crackdown on Black consciousness organizations and some of their white allies and possibly South African preparations for a nuclear test (chapter 7). At that time Security Council resolution 418 determined that the acquisition of arms by South Africa constituted a threat to international security. Hence all members of the United Nations were obligated to stop the supply of weapons, ammunition and equipment to South Africa as well as the granting of new licenses for manufacturing such items in South Africa. Existing licenses were to be reviewed with an eye to terminating them.

No serious argument exists that the embargo was effective in either its voluntary or "mandatory" version. Italy, Spain, Israel, and France only begin the list of countries which have reportedly breached it in one way or another. In part this is because the 1977 resolution is weakened by ambiguities and loopholes (4): It fails to define "arms and related materiel" which are supposed to be withheld from South Africa; it does not block the manufacture of arms and

equipment inside South Africa by subsidiaries of Western companies; it calls for reviewing but does not demand the termination of contracts. Nor was the embargo resolution able to stop the export of "dual use" equipment which can be described as civilian but is in fact used by the army and police. Even more importantly, little was or could be done about the transfer of arms technology to South Africa, an area where a country like Israel has much to offer. Once the know-how for the production of advanced weapons is available to South African manufacturers, the hardware can be manufactured locally and even exported later on. A modern howitzer, discussed later, is a case in point. Technology transfers can similarly help save from obsolescence existing weapons such as tanks and jet fighters. However used, such transfers relieve South Africa of the need to spend the vast amounts required for independent research and development.

Most of South Africa's arsenal is of Western European and American origin. Having gained the status of a "strategic asset" for the West because of its minerals and the Cape route, South Africa received vast quantities of weapons from these countries. Britain was the main supplier in the 1950's. From the 1960's to the mid 1970's France took Britain's place,

pouring into South Africa nearly every possible kind of conventional weapon- from armored cars to planes and submarines- all this while formally observing the voluntary arms embargo. But France has interests in the Third World as well, especially Black Africa, and as political scientist Andrew Pierre noted in The Global Politics of Arms Sales,

In the second half of the 1970's, as unfavorable Third World opinion led France to curtail its assistance, Israel, another pariah state, emerged as an important arms ally... (5)

Several days after the 1977 embargo resolution, Moshe Dayan said that South Africa was a "good friend" and that Israel would not "leave her to the mercy of fate". (6) However, after the critical reactions which followed, the Israeli government- and Dayan himself- announced that Israel would abide by the embargo. The only admitted exception is commitments made before the United Nations resolution. The evidence reviewed in this chapter, however, suggests that Israel's contribution to the fortification of South Africa has been substantial and in ways which go beyond the supply of weapons. As with cooperation in other spheres, it does not follow that it is the intention of Israeli leaders to underpin apartheid as such. Yet it is military force that assures the existence of

white supremacy in South Africa, and Israel is an important ally in that respect.

Today's South Africa, armed to its teeth, is even conventionally stronger than any combination of neighboring countries. It claims to be the largest arms producer in the Southern hemisphere, and is self-sufficient in many types of light weapons, ammunition, armored and other operational vehicles, land mines and artillery guns. Some of these it offers for export. In a 1982 interview, Piet Marais, head of Armaments Corporation of South Africa (ARMSCOR) said that the arms embargo deserved credit for fostering the development of a South African arms industry and acknowledged that there had been technological cooperation with Israel, which he played down. He also confirmed reports that South Africa hoped to export some of its surplus weapons through Israel and Taiwan to countries which do not wish to be seen as openly buying weapons from her. (7)

*

In a narrow sense, military cooperation between Israel and South Africa began already in 1948 when, as noted earlier, South African authorities allowed volunteers, most of whom were probably Jewish, to fly and assist Israel in her first war. Funds raised in

South Africa were sent to Israel for the war effort. Brigadier Jack Penn noted that more than 1000 volunteers came to Israel from South Africa, a higher number than from the United States or Britain. (8) Between the 1948 and 1967 wars relations were low-key and military cooperation was limited as well; it consisted of relatively insubstantial exchanges of materiel. (The Israeli Uzi submachine gun has been manufactured in South Africa since the early 1960's- under Belgian license.) In May 1967, when Egypt's Nasser closed the Tiran straits, South Africa was, according to a former Knesset member, the first country to offer ships to break the blockade. (9) As confirmed by Brigadier Jack Penn, once the war broke out Israel received aircraft and spare parts from South Africa; in return, Dayan was asked, and agreed, that Israel would not "bark against South Africa louder than the rest of the pack" at the United Nations and would advise the South African forces on "Russian equipment etc." (10)

However it was the spectacular Israeli victory in that war that marked the beginning of a new chapter of systematic ties. The South Africans felt particularly inspired by the performance of the few against the many who surrounded them. They became convinced that

there was much to learn from such a demonstration of superior technology and training. And indeed, the two countries began to regularly exchange information and expertise shortly after the war. A South African military delegation went to Israel to study the war and Mordechai Hod, commander of the Israeli air force, lectured before the South African staff college in October of that year. (11) The contacts burgeoned in later years; this was confirmed in 1975 by General Meir Amit, former chief of the Israeli secret services and president of Koor industries who came to South Africa on a business and lecture tour. At that time he said that Israeli officers regularly lectured before their South African counterparts about modern warfare and counterinsurgency, an area in which no other country could provide better advice. When it was put to him in an interview that, in addition to major industrial projects Israel and South Africa shared good military relations, his answer was that "that is an understatement". (12) Shortly after Vorster's visit in 1976, Israeli officers were reported to be "closely involved" in planning the South African raid against Angola, and General Rogers of the SAAF attributed the low casualties suffered by the invaders to Israeli evacuation techniques. (13)

At present, hundreds of Israeli instructors are apparently attached to South African army units, as James Adams learned from his conversations with senior Israeli officers. He reports in The Unnatural Alliance that the nearly three hundred Israelis on secondment in South Africa are assisting all branches of its armed forces in areas such as training air force and navy personnel, weapons research, sealing the borders against guerillas and counterinsurgency intelligence. Similar training is being provided to hundreds of South Africans inside Israel. [The contacts made by Israeli officers in the process are often valuable for those who become arms traders upon retiring.] Also, among the estimated 25,000 Israeli emigrants in South Africa (chapter 9), there are no doubt many who have had combat experience and other skills which are useful to the South African forces. The secondment of Israelis in South Africa was raised in the Knesset by K.M. Marcia Friedman but was promptly denied. (14)

The mark of Israeli counterinsurgency expertise is already noticeable in South African operations: South Africans have come to recognize the value of gathering inside information within the guerilla organization and of deep strikes into guerilla-held territory (15) in addition to the aforementioned evacuation

techniques. In early 1984 South African troops invaded Angola once more, an operation which may well have been modeled on the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. As a result, the Angolan government committed itself to curb guerilla activity against South Africa.

The Israeli Mossad and South African intelligence services are also cooperating closely. As a result, South Africa has reportedly gained access to Israeli sources in Africa and the United States, while Israel gained access to the ultramodern surveillance center for naval vessels and aircraft at Silvermine. (16)

A related area of cooperation is that of military electronics. The three largest Israeli electronics companies- Tadiran, Elbit and Israeli Aircraft Industries (IAI) have sold millions of dollars worth of equipment to South Africa, most notably electronic fences, infiltration alarm systems, communications systems, night vision equipment and computers. (17) One electronic fence was erected on the Angola-Namibia border in the late 1970's in order to stop SWAPO guerillas, part of a plan to surround South Africa with a "ring of steel". The advanced technology for the fence came from IAI. (18) James Adams reports that by now much of the work on the larger project has been completed and, in areas where it is possible to

travel, "the fifteen foot high fence is clearly visible with a cordon sanitaire running alongside". (19) The anti-personnel mines along the border area are also from Israel, he was told.

South Africa now has its own electronics industry which produces enough of certain items to export them- field telephones, radios and surveillance systems; There are also joint ventures with major Israeli companies, such as between Consolidated Power and Tadiran, the Koor subsidiary. The joint electronics venture specializes in computers and military electronics. Another example is Conlog, formed by the Israeli company Elron and the Durban-based subsidiary of Control Logic. Some of the electronics products are for export. (20)

One of the most important products of the Israeli electronics industry has been the Scout Remotely Piloted Vehicle (RPV), a pilotless aircraft crammed with advanced electronic equipment. During the summer of 1982 it was used by Israel to detect troop positions and jam Syrian equipment- with a devastating effect: The RPV helped destroy dozens of ground-to-air missiles. The South African army now possesses this device and can use it to detect guerilla bases in neighboring countries without risking any casualties.

One such Israeli-supplied plane was apparently shot down over Mozambique in mid-1983. (21)

Hardware for Apartheid

Although some South African officials like to talk about "self sufficiency", it is quite clear that this does not extend to heavier weapons and electronics, several types of which Pretoria still requires. The South African army does not have all the modern jet fighters and large ships it desires nor all the spare parts for weapons already supplied. It can also use advice on countering modern Soviet equipment. Again, Israel has much to offer. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, South Africa was Israel's leading purchaser of arms in the 1970's, receiving more than 35% of Israeli exports. (22) In a separate 1982 New York Times report on Israeli arms supplies to the junta in Argentina, Israeli officials confirmed that South Africa was second to none among Israel's arms customers. (23) The same figures are available from a recent study by Dr. Aaron Klieman of Tel Aviv University's Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies. (24)

Israel's arms exports make up about one quarter of

her total exports, among the highest ratios in the world. One hundred and twelve Israeli industries and some 60,000 jobs are involved in a sector whose annual exports exceed \$1 billion: "The old image of a sunny Israel exporting oranges has been supplemented if not superseded by that of a small nation that can provide more bang for the buck". (25)

An interesting illustration of the above statement is a full page ad of Israeli Military Industries (for instance in Aviation Week, August 9, 1982), in which an airplane loaded with bombs is shown. The readers are assured that the Israeli bombs are "bombs you can count on to do what they're supposed to do. That's the only kind of bomb we make". The advertisers noted that Israel makes air bombs for "over 20 countries in the Free World" and those interested are invited to "contact us before planning your next aircraft armament procurement program".

As to who these customers are, an Israeli journal notes that "the average purchaser of Israeli arms is most likely to be a non-industrialized country with a defense-oriented right wing government". (26) The Israeli directory of defense industries is published in two languages, English and Spanish.

In exporting arms to South Africa and other

countries with a "defense-oriented right wing government" Israel's immediate objectives are to earn needed foreign exchange and recover part of the substantial investment in research and development which modern weapons require. Yet the destinations for these weapons are such that, as numerous authors have pointed out, a service is performed- by proxy- for United States interests. (27) (This, of course, need not be the result of a formal agreement between Washington and its Middle Eastern client, just as there may not be one between the Soviet Union and Cuba to guide the latter's international conduct.) Thus Israel has often supplied arms to regimes which the United States was unable to help openly, such as Guatemala, Chile and Somoza's Nicaragua. Similarly, there have been numerous reports of Israeli assistance to the counterrevolutionary forces fighting to overthrow the government of Nicaragua. (28) In the case of South Africa too, Israeli sales amount to an important conduit for arms and technology while Washington is in a position to say that it adheres to the arms embargo. Not surprisingly, at least in the Reagan years there have been no indications that Washington is troubled in any way by the Israeli ties with South Africa. Israeli spokesmen do not neglect to

remind Americans of Israel's "value for the Free World", inter alia a likely reference to the above service to American power.

In 1981 Yaakov Meridor, Menachem Begin's Special Assistant for Economic Coordination spoke candidly about the role Israel wished to play. "We are going to say to the Americans", he explained in a speech before American and European businessmen,

Don't compete with us in Taiwan, South Africa, the Carribean or in other countries where you couldn't directly do it [sell arms]. You sell ammunition and equipment by proxy. Israel will be your proxy. (29)

That same year, after his visit to the "operational areas" in Namibia, Defense Minister Ariel Sharon came to Washington (to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the Reagan Administration) and openly urged that more weapons be shipped to South Africa. (30)

The most familiar South African military purchase from Israel is the Reshef patrol ship. The 1955 Simonstown agreement under which Britain had supplied South Africa with patrol ships in order to control the Cape Sea route was cancelled in 1975, the year before Vorster's visit. South Africa had little ship-building experience and turned to Israel to fill the gap: Vorster agreed to purchase three Israeli Reshefs and

manufacture nine more under license in Durban. (This according to The Unnatural Alliance; other sources report that six were built in Israel.) The Reshefs are equipped with sea-to-sea Gabriel missiles, a version of which (known as "Scorpion") is also being manufactured in South Africa under license. The guns for the Reshefs were from Italy; so as to avoid an overt violation of the arms embargo, Israel acted as middleman. (31) To complete the deal, Israel trained South African naval personnel in the use of the new equipment, a fact reported in the Israeli press as well. (32) Six Dvora type fast patrol ships were also delivered to South Africa later. For her part, Pretoria was to help finance the next generation of Israeli warships- an ultramodern version of the Reshef. (33) Just prior to Vorster's visit the South African authorities had decided to hike military spending by 40%. (34)

Another agreement reached during Vorster's visit pertained to armor development. South Africa had what Israel needed in order to sheath the Merkava tank: specially hardened steel as well as advanced metallurgy and high-pressure forging technology, one of South Africa's strengths. In return, Israel agreed to modernize 150 South African Centurion tanks and to

provide armor plating for most of the armored vehicles used by the South African army, making them much less vulnerable to anti-tank weapons. (35)

South Africa now possesses one of the most sophisticated artillery systems in the world, a 155mm howitzer which can double as a nuclear delivery system. The system was manufactured in the United States and, in one of the most serious violations of the arms embargo was smuggled to South Africa in the mid-1970's. Adams reports that Israel was partially involved in the operation. (36) Two executives of Space Research Corporation of Vermont which manufactured the howitzer were found guilty, fined and given short prison terms. The system filled a large gap in South Africa's military needs and has become an export item.

The complementarity of South African-Israeli needs and resources has been utilized in the area of aircraft development as well. Although South Africa has the license to build French Mirage fighters, these are hardly the most advanced planes available today, and Western powers are increasingly reluctant to supply the more modern aircraft. Unlike lighter weapons which can be smuggled or purchased through middlemen, highly sophisticated new aircraft are

generally available only on a government-to-government basis. One possible and logical answer is the Israeli Kfir, an improved and modernized version of the Mirage with a General Electric engine. The Kfir is not expected to become obsolete until the mid 1990's, by which time Israeli planners hope to have produced the ultramodern Lavi.

According to some reports cited by James Adams, the deal to sell Israeli Kfirs to South Africa may already have been made in 1980 and pilots and crew have been trained in Israel. This, he says, amounts to "a cooperative attitude difficult to find among other Western governments for such a highly visible commodity". (37) The similarity of the Kfir to the Mirage would make it unnecessary for Pretoria to invest in extensive retooling or retraining of pilots. One major problem remains, however: given the origin of the engine, the jets cannot be delivered without United States approval.

Meanwhile, Israeli air force officers have lectured before their South African counterparts on combat against Soviet aircraft and Soviet-trained pilots. They also helped the South African air force build modern, efficient air bases. When the South Africans need Mirage spare parts, which France often

refuses to supply pointing to the arms embargo, Israeli technicians stationed in South Africa perform the repairs and maintenance with spare parts from Israeli warehouses. The complexity of some of the repairs would otherwise require calling in the manufacturer. (38)

As for the Lavi, it has run into severe budgetary problems due to the state of the Israeli economy. There are indications, according to James Adams, that "the South Africans have provisionally agreed to help with the development of the Lavi and although exact figures are not available, its commitment must run into several hundred million dollars". (39) They apparently hope to produce it under license at some future point. (40) If and when that happens,

South Africa will have the most modern air force south of the Sahara for the foreseeable future. Any realistic conventional military threat to South Africa will be doomed to failure and the guerilla camps will become increasingly vulnerable to air strikes following the pattern of the lightning Israeli retaliatory raids against the PLO refugee camps in Lebanon. (41)

South Africa then owes its conventional military might to massive arms supplies from a handful of Western powers. These ties have cooled considerably in the past decade. Pretoria has nonetheless been able to

fill much of the gap by developing a domestic arms industry and importing from or cooperating with Israel in major joint ventures. The sharing of intelligence, counterinsurgency and combat experience against Soviet equipment are valuable contributions to the power of the white minority government. Such cooperation is considerably more difficult to obtain than weapons alone. Israel found in South Africa not only a market for electronics and hardware and a partner willing to finance joint projects, but also a highly reliable friend in past, and most probably future wars.

NOTES

- (1) Adams, op. cit. p. 26.
- (2) Adams, op. cit. p. 125.
- (3) Ainslee, op. cit. p. 8; 14; 16.
- (4) Leonard, Richard. South Africa at War. Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill & Co., 1983 pp. 131-137; United States House of Representatives. International Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Africa, "United States-South African Relations: Arms Embargo Implementation", Testimony by Sean Gervasi, H 461-74.1, July 14, 1977 pp. 2-41.
- (5) Pierre, Andrew. The Global Politics of Arms Sales. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982, p. 266.
- (6) Ojo, op. cit. p. 46.
- (7) Davar, December 17, 1982; The New York Times, December 5, 1982 p. 7.
- (8) Penn, Jack, "South Africa/Israel Cooperation in War", Armed Forces (SA), February 1981.
- (9) Letter from former Knesset Member Yedidia Beeri disputing Naomi Chazan's contention that Israel has benefited little from the ties with South Africa. Haaretz, August 16, 1985.
- (10) Penn, op. cit. p. 12.
- (11) Adams, op. cit. p. 33.
- (12) "Israel Held Giving S. Africa Military Information", The Washington Post, July 8, 1975; Cervenka and Rogers, op. cit. p. 410.
- (13) Ainslee, op. cit. p. 12.
- (14) Adams, op. cit. p. 80. On Marcia Friedman's

question in the Knesset see also The New York Times, June 1, 1976 p. 9.

(15) Adams, op. cit. p. 90.

(16) Ibid, p. 86. James Adams's Mossad sources even alleged that the main payoff for South Africa came in 1982 when Israel invaded Lebanon and obtained information about cooperation between the PLO and other guerilla organizations, including the African National Congress. At that time, they claimed, South Africa received "early warning of changes in strategy and tactics as well as detailed lists of recruits, their specialties, units and even their performance on the training courses", all this amounting to a serious setback for the A.N.C. This particular assertion is probably the least credible in the book. It seems to echo the likes of Ariel Sharon in Israel and South Africa who talked about the "center of international terrorism" in Lebanon, without any evidence which survives close examination.

(17) The Economist, November 5, 1977.

(18) Shahak, Israel. Israel's Global Role: Weapons for Repression. Belmont, Mass.: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1981 p. 28 citing a 1980 lecture by Colin Legum. Foreign Report published by the London Economist noted already in its November 2, 1977 issue that work was in progress on an Israeli-style "electronic wall".

(19) Adams, op. cit. p. 93.

(20) Shapiro, M.B.A. thesis, op. cit. p. 18.

(21) New Africa, August 1983; The Christian Science Monitor, June 6, 1983.

(22) Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. World Armament and Disarmament: SIPRI Yearbook. London: Taylor & Francis, 1981 p. 116.

(23) The New York Times, May 9, 1982 p. 16.

(24) Reported in the Washington Post, "Israel Said to Depend Heavily on Arms Sales", March 22, 1985 p. E1.

(25) Ibid. Also Nabil, Hanan, "Selling Defense",

Israel Economist, July 1984 p. 21.

(26) Nabil, op. cit.

(27) Howard, Esther, "Israel: The Sorcerer's Apprentice", MERIP Reports, February 1983; Shahak, op. cit., passim; Husain, Azim, "The West, South Africa and Israel: A Strategic Triangle", Third World Quarterly, January 1982.

(28) The New York Times, January 5, 1985 and front page report January 13, 1985.

(29) Financial Times, August 18, 1981; Haaretz, August 25, 1981 p. 11.

(30) The New York Times, December 14, 1981.

(31) "Strangers and Brothers: The Unlikely Alliance between Israel and South Africa", by the editors of The Sunday Times (London) April 15, 1984.

(32) Maariv, August 6, 1976; The New York Times, August 18, 1976.

(33) The Economist, November 5, 1977.

(34) Keller, Gerald, Major USMC, op. cit. p. 70.

(35) The Economist, November 5, 1977.

(36) Adams, op. cit. pp. 38-71. The story is told in considerable detail.

(37) Ibid, p. 117.

(38) The Times (London), October 29, 1981.

(39) Adams, op. cit. p. 120.

(40) Hunter, Jane, "Israel and South Africa: How Close?" Israeli Foreign Affairs (US), February 1985 citing several sources.

(41) Adams, op. cit. p. 120.

Chapter 7

THE ULTIMATE WEAPON: "DON'T PUSH US TOO FAR"

Something will happen that the proponents of violence cannot even dream of... They don't know what they are going to reap... A big silence and desolation will come over many parts of South Africa.

P. W. Botha in Parliament, 1982. (1)

Pariahs have the clearest incentives to increase their military power, the least technical distance to go to build a bomb and the least to lose in doing so.

Richard K. Betts in Foreign Policy. (2)

No other aspect of the South African-Israeli relationship has aroused as much international concern as their probable nuclear cooperation. The Middle East and Southern Africa are already two of the world's most dangerous hot spots. The specter of a white minority government in South Africa armed with weapons

of mass destruction and sophisticated delivery systems is of concern not only for those who are struggling to eliminate apartheid but for much of the African continent as well. It would become unthinkable for any country or group of countries to contemplate pressuring Pretoria to the point it feels cornered. The uneasiness is compounded by the fact that South Africa, like Israel, has not agreed to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty which would have required inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency. To be sure, such inspections are hardly a fool-proof procedure, but the refusal to accept even a measure of international monitoring remains significant. One hundred and twenty three countries have joined the superpowers and Britain as signatories of the 1968 treaty. The list of signatories stretches alphabetically from Afghanistan to Zaire, including Libya; the other non-signatories outside the official nuclear club are India, Pakistan, Argentina and Brazil. (3)

As might be expected, nuclear cooperation is the most closely guarded secret of a relationship which is already highly classified in most respects. Little can be asserted with absolute certainty. A 1980 United Nations report quoted in articles defending Israel's

role acknowledges that since "there have been no official statements to confirm such cooperation in the nuclear field... this whole question remains in a state of uncertainty" until "specific examples of actual nuclear exchanges or transactions can be cited as clear evidence of such cooperation". (4) What is widely known is that South Africa has vast quantities of uranium and is the world's third largest source of this material after the United States and Canada. It controls empty areas suitable for nuclear tests, in addition to its access to the Indian Ocean. Israel, according to the familiar pattern, has the know-how to complement these assets.

Unlike other pariah states, Israeli and South African planners cannot avoid taking into account the possibility that a military defeat for their country would have consequences considerably more severe than a change of regime. The inability or unwillingness of the United States to intervene in order to save them from defeat would no doubt figure prominently in any worst-case scenario considered by these planners. (5) As already noted, the fate of South Vietnam may have raised the level of concern in the 1970's. Further, few small nations can produce all the modern weapons they need, and even if they could, a protracted war

might exhaust their supplies. That, again, raises the question of dependence on a major power and the need to overcome it.

With or without foreign aid, Israeli leaders are aware that their country's present status as one of the world's strongest military powers may not last indefinitely. The improvement in Arab conventional capabilities is an increasing preoccupation, and the long-term prospects are hardly encouraging. "Unless one assumes a racial theory of Arab inferiority", noted Steven J. Rosen in Nuclear Proliferation and the Near Nuclear Countries, "tiny Israel's past victories against the populous Arab world must be regarded as somewhat 'unnatural' events to be explained by special circumstances." (6) The possession of weapons of mass destruction, or Arab suspicions that Israel possesses such weapons, could go a long way to offset these dismal odds from the perspective of Israeli planners. (In fact it is conceivable - although, of course, not provable - that this awareness was a factor in Sadat's decision to sign the Camp David accords with Israel.)

Some Israelis already favor "going public" with the bomb. As the costly arms race in the Middle East accelerates, this school of thought is likely to gain more adherents. Shai Feldman of Tel Aviv University,

for instance, concludes that in order to insure Israeli survival and maximize the country's deterrent capacity, Israel would have to adopt an explicit nuclear posture. Combined with flexibility regarding the territories occupied in 1967, the policy may, in Feldman's view, be a long-term solution to the security problem. (7) In a 1976 address, Moshe Dayan too was in favor of laying the nuclear cards on the table because of the "absurdity of turning Israel into a warehouse of [conventional] hardware". (8)

Israeli public statements have generally been ambiguous, neither confirming nor flatly denying the possession of nuclear weapons. In 1974 President Ephraim Katzir, a distinguished scientist himself, said that Israel would not be the first country to deploy nuclear weapons in the Middle East but has the potential to do so if necessary (9); in a 1981 interview with The New York Times Dayan repeated that Israel can deploy such weapons in a short time if necessary, leaving a clear impression that it would not be starting from scratch. (10) Arguably, a nuclear device which is almost fully but not 100% assembled would not quite qualify as a bomb, and the statement that "Israel will not be the first... etc." could remain technically correct. Or, Israeli officials can

argue that weapons have already been introduced to the Middle East aboard American or Soviet ships. In any case, Israel benefits from such speculation.

South African whites are also aware that they cannot afford a defeat. "I am afraid we can lose only once", explained Chief of the Army Lieutenant-General Magnus Malan in one instance. (11) Under the assumption of rational planning, however, it is not immediately clear how nuclear weapons could help prevent a defeat, which is in any case inconceivable in the immediate future. Nor can nuclear weapons prevent or stop mass insurgency, although a neutron device which destroys only living things might demoralize potential rebels. (See footnote #1). Further, if South Africa were known to possess nuclear weapons, pressures for sanctions would mount. However, such a situation would also hold certain advantages for South Africa. Among them, Pretoria's bargaining positions would improve markedly in any negotiations with intimidated Black states after making it clear to them that confrontation is futile. Alternately, under the nuclear umbrella Pretoria could feel even freer and more confident in invading and subverting its neighbors. Above all, the white minority would feel psychologically relieved that its survival cannot be

threatened, and that foes had better heed the "don't push us too far" warnings, such as the one by P.W. Botha in a major address on August 15, 1985.

Turning to the nuclear capabilities of the two countries, Israel has had a sophisticated nuclear reactor at Dimona in the Negev desert since the late 1950's. At first Ben-Gurion insisted it was a "textile factory" until American suspicions as to the nature of the facility were confirmed by a U-2 spy plane in 1960. Since Israel has not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty, no outside inspectors are admitted to the heavily-guarded facility. It is likely that plutonium produced at the reactor was one of the sources used to build nuclear weapons; by the early 1970's the Central Intelligence Agency as well as other Western intelligence agencies concluded that Israel possessed such weapons. (12) One now-declassified Central Intelligence Agency memorandum dated September 4, 1974 stated: "We believe that Israel already has produced nuclear weapons" and backed up that conclusion by pointing to Israeli efforts to obtain large quantities of uranium, including by "clandestine means", ambiguous Israeli efforts in the field of uranium enrichment and its large investment in a missile system ("Jericho") designed to accommodate nuclear warheads.

According to numerous sources (13) including The Unnatural Alliance, the aforementioned "clandestine means" included hijackings of uranium shipments carried out by the Israeli Mossad in Europe, smuggling operations and establishing dummy companies which purchased uranium and then diverted it to Israel. One of the better known cases involved the disappearance of some 200 pounds of uranium from the Nuclear Materials and Equipment Corporation (NUMEC) of Pennsylvania in the mid 1960's. The company, headed by Zalman Shapiro, a devout supporter of Israel, was also under contract to be that country's "technical consultant and training procurement center" in the United States. In 1967 Zalman Shapiro had to pay the United States government \$1.1 million in fines for the disappearance of the uranium. There was little disagreement among experts as to the final destination of the uranium. (14) Deputy Director of the C.I.A. for Science and Technology Carl Duckett was later quoted on ABC Television as confirming that his agency concluded Israel had indeed used the illegally-obtained uranium to make nuclear bombs. (15)

It has also been widely reported that after the loss of the NUMEC source the Mossad executed one of

its most spectacular operations: the contents of an entire ship, the Scheersberg, which carried 200 tons of uranium were diverted to Israel. The ship left Rotterdam for Genoa in 1968 but never reached its destination. When it reappeared, all the cargo had vanished and the ship itself had a new name and crew. The barrels containing the 200 tons of uranium had been transferred to a heavily escorted Israeli ship in mid-sea. (16)

A more dependable source was nonetheless being sought. It was found in South Africa.

Now that Israel can no longer rely on hijacking uranium shipments, there can be little doubt that the Israelis regard South Africa as a vitally important source of uranium, both natural and enriched, free of any international safeguards or inspection. (17)

As for South Africa's nuclear capability, its foundation was laid by several Western countries, just as is true of that country's conventional military machine. For several decades, the United States, Britain, West Germany and France readily supplied South Africa with materials, technology and training. Nuclear cooperation between the United States and South Africa began in the early 1950's when the latter became a source for some of the uranium needed by the United States in the arms race. South Africans were

able to gain first-hand experience in the nuclear field as a result of the mining and processing industry developed there by the United States. (18) In 1957 the Eisenhower Administration signed the fifty-year nuclear cooperation agreement "Atoms for Peace" with South Africa. The Safari-1 nuclear reactor which was exported to South Africa in 1961 and the approximately 200 pounds of enriched uranium which followed were provided-for by the agreement. By 1967 another reactor, Safari-2 (now decommissioned) was developed in South Africa with Israeli assistance. (19) South Africa also obtained the Koeberg nuclear power reactor from France and the Valindaba pilot uranium enrichment plant from West Germany. The facilities have been regularly visited by Israeli scientists and technicians. (20)

Among the most important Israeli scientists to visit South Africa was Ernst David Bergman, who may have the best claim to the title of "father" of Israel's nuclear capability. Bergman, a close associate of Chaim Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion, headed the science department of the Israeli Defense Ministry for 20 years. In addition, between 1953 and 1966 he was chairman of the Israeli Atomic Energy Commission as well. (21) In 1968, the year he visited

South Africa, Bergman was awarded the Israel Prize for Natural Sciences. In a speech before the South African Institute of International Affairs, he discussed the "common problems" which Israel and South Africa experienced and the need for both to remain technologically superior, concluding that cooperation was possible and desirable. The address deserves some attention as one of the few available documents pertaining to the origins and early stages of Israeli-South African scientific and nuclear cooperation. Bergman was concerned about the need to educate "that part of the population which does not have the European tradition of learning and scientific research" and pointed out that

...of course our problem is a little easier than that of your country because the Jews coming from Arab countries, although they have been reduced to the intellectual level of the Arab countries, have a tradition for learning and respect for learning. (22)

Turning to what South Africa and Israel can do for each other, he explained:

It is difficult to indicate... whether South Africa or Israel is the more highly developed. I think that in both countries the development is uneven- there are many areas in which Israel undoubtedly can learn from South Africa... There are areas in which Israel has been forced to be more progressive and in which perhaps a country like South Africa could learn from her... I have discussed with many of my colleagues

whom I have met in this country and with whom I have created some personal and professional links the question whether, in view of the circumstances, a collaboration between the two countries might not be of some value. I was glad to find a very enthusiastic response and the willingness to think about the exchange of professors, the exchange of graduate students and the exchange of information and in going back to Israel I will do my best to further and perhaps formalize such contacts between scientists of our two countries.

He concluded the lengthy speech, which did not contain any reference to apartheid, by restating the basis for the cooperation which he pledged to further:

Neither of us has neighbors to whom we can speak and to whom we are going to be able to speak in the near future. If we are in this position of isolation, perhaps it might be best for both our countries to speak to each other.

*

By 1974 Dr. L. Alberts, vice president of South Africa's Atomic Energy Board, was in a position to say that "our technology and science have advanced sufficiently for us to produce an atomic bomb if we have to", (23) and a month after returning from Israel Prime Minister Vorster repeated, also ambiguously, that "we can enrich uranium and we have the capability. And we did not sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty". (24)

In August 1977, a Soviet satellite detected South African preparations for a nuclear test in the Kalahari desert. United States authorities confirmed the information conveyed by the Soviet Union, as did British, West German and French intelligence services. Washington then joined with the Foreign Ministers of these countries to warn of serious consequences, including the breaking of diplomatic relations, should such a test take place. The test was averted (25) and the episode was probably a contributing factor to the arms embargo imposed later that year against South Africa.

Systematic exchanges of materials and nuclear technology with Israel have apparently been taking place since 1976 when Vorster came to Jerusalem. A 1979 study of the United States Defense Intelligence Agency found that Israeli scientists were working on nuclear projects in South Africa, while South Africa supplied uranium to Israel and Taiwan; Pretoria was thus exchanging uranium for technology and benefitting from "enhanced international opportunities in the nuclear field from the emerging pariah state network"- in addition to the full web of other military and economic ties. (26) These enhanced opportunities apparently culminated in an event which has since

become the most talked-about feature of South African-Israeli nuclear cooperation.

It took place in the Indian Ocean in the vicinity of the Prince Edward islands on the night of September 22, 1979. The area itself is deserted and characterized by a high degree of natural radiation because the ionized layer of the earth's atmosphere comes particularly close to the surface there. A United States Vela satellite with sophisticated instruments was circling the earth expressly in order to monitor compliance with the 1963 nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The satellite had an error-free record, having detected 41 out of 41 nuclear tests. It had been calibrated one week earlier. On the night in question the instruments registered the normally unmistakable signature of a nuclear explosion in the form of a double light flash. The Central Intelligence Agency was already aware that South Africa was in the process of conducting a secret naval exercise in that same area. (27)

The Vela discovery was kept secret for several weeks until television newscasts in the United States reported it, giving rise to widespread speculation that South Africa and Israel had joined the nuclear club. Both governments dismissed the reports, although

three days after the flash Prime Minister Botha warned "terrorists" that "we have military weapons they do not know about". (28) On the Israeli end, Dan Raviv, the CBS correspondent there flew to Rome in February 1980 to avoid Israeli censorship and reported about a new book which confirmed the speculations about the nature of the explosion. The book was to be titled None Will Survive Us: The Story of the Israeli A-Bomb, apparently in the form of a novel. The Israeli authorities responded by revoking Raviv's press credentials, an unexpected and drastic response given the official position that the talk about a South African-Israeli bomb was utter nonsense. The book itself has never cleared Israeli censorship and the authors, journalists Ami Dor-On and Eli Teicher were threatened with prison terms of 15 years to life if they defied the publication ban. (29)

In the United States, the growing controversy had led President Carter to seek an authoritative answer by appointing a distinguished commission of inquiry. The commission, headed by Dr. Jack Ruina of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was asked to assess the probability that a nuclear explosion had taken place and to offer alternative explanations, if appropriate. Their report, which was completed in

November 1979 but released in a sanitized version only the following July, focused on the absence of a "smoking gun" in the form of nuclear radiation and unambiguous shock waves. It therefore turned to consider which naturally-occurring atmospheric events might have caused the Vela instruments to register what they had, while questioning in the process all indications pointing to a nuclear explosion. The panel thus concluded that the best available explanation was that the satellite had collided with some small particle of matter. That was offered only as a hypothesis, not an official or definite finding: "Although we cannot rule out the possibility that this signal was of nuclear origin, the panel considers it more likely that the signal was one of the zoo events, possibly a consequence of the impact of a small meteoroid on the satellite". (30) The term "zoo event" referred to a quirk about which the truth may never be known. The White House scientists then neither confirmed nor conclusively ruled out any possibility.

The final report nonetheless reduced much of the speculation and was a boon for President Carter, who saw the prevention of nuclear proliferation as a foreign policy priority and who would have suffered numerous election-year setbacks and embarrassments had

the finding been positive. At a time when the Iran hostage crisis was already more than enough political trouble, questions would likely have been raised about the role of the United States in Israeli and South African nuclear capabilities; under non-proliferation legislation and the Symington Amendment the President would have had to cut off aid and any nuclear transactions with a country like Israel; doubts about American monitoring competence would have cast a shadow on arms control treaties and negotiations. The Pandora's box might also have included attempts by other states in the Middle East to obtain nuclear weapons, the undermining of the Camp David deal of which Carter was very proud and increased pressures for an economic boycott against South Africa.

While many in Washington and elsewhere accepted the findings of the White House panel as the final word, others in the scientific and intelligence communities, as well as some investigative journalists, regarded the work of the panel as hasty and evasive. To start with, the commission might have considered whether the ambiguous nature of the evidence was in itself suggestive: "The ad hoc panel does not discuss the possibility that the lack of persuasive corroborative evidence may reflect not that

no explosion occurred but that some country tested a nuclear device but went to great pains to cover its tracks", pointed out a United Nations study. (31) The panelists' haste to dismiss indications of a nuclear explosion was illustrated, according to some critics, in their treatment of a ripple in the atmosphere detected on the night in question by the world's largest radio telescope at Arecibo, Puerto Rico. No earthquake or other natural causes for the ripple were readily apparent. Both the timing and the direction of the disturbance, which was coming from the south and east, corresponded to the Vela findings. Yet the White House panel disagreed on grounds that the Arecibo lab had had little experience with accurate measurements of such occurrences and that a tropical storm near Arecibo might have been the cause after all. "It surprised me" one Arecibo scientist said later, "that people have tried as much as they did to discredit it". (32) A double flash and a ionospheric ripple occurring simultaneously are indeed a remarkable coincidence.

More importantly, parallel investigations were conducted with less publicity by the Defense Intelligence Agency, the C.I.A., the Department of the Navy, Los Alamos Laboratory scientists (where Vela was

developed) and the Naval Research Laboratory. All of these investigations concluded that a nuclear explosion had occurred. (33) The C.I.A. explicitly named Israel and South Africa as partners in generating the explosion; the most extensive report was produced by a staff of 75 researchers at the Naval Research Laboratory, and was described in Science magazine as another of the discordant voices which "continue to rise above the White House mood music whose theme is that nothing happened and if something did it cannot be proved". (34)

Similarly, an extensive report published in June 1980 in the London journal The Middle East found, after interviewing more than two dozen officials, "an astonishing accumulation of circumstantial evidence suggesting that there was indeed a nuclear blast." Vela had never erred; no "zoo events" had occurred in the previous decade; there have been nuclear tests in the past which left no measurable fallout; furthermore, the United States began to search for radioactivity at least three days after the double flash. Since the explosion would have been of low yield and in a vast area, radiation could easily have remained undetected and dissipated by rainfall. (35) Others asked why the commission had failed to consider

the possibility of a neutron bomb, which leaves no fallout but produces the same double flash. (36)

Foreign Report published by the London Economist asserted that President Jimmy Carter had failed to share with the commission available intelligence reports about nuclear cooperation between Israel, South Africa and Taiwan. Some of these reports involved intercepted radio messages and documents pertaining to the work of Israeli nuclear scientists in South Africa as well as a mystery-visit to that country by then-Defense Minister Ezer Weizmann in March 1980. (37) The Israeli censor first permitted but shortly afterwards withdrew the permission to broadcast the report that Weizman had spent three days in South Africa discussing "security matters". (38)

Another possibly relevant fact was disclosed by the National Technical Information Service to the U.S. Senate Special Subcommittee on Nuclear Proliferation: the South African Defense and Naval Attache in Washington had shown much interest in literature on the subject of "detection of nuclear explosions and countermeasures to prevent detection", including the flight path of Vela. He requested a computer search of such sources, the only request of this kind ever received. (39)

Additional information became available in the spring of 1985. Columnist Jack Anderson completed a five-year investigation and concluded that United States intelligence agencies have known since 1979 that a South African-Israeli nuclear test took place. This information was not shared with the White House panel, although he says it was disclosed in secret testimony to the the National Security Council and to Congress. (40)

Similar conclusions were reached in a study completed in May 1985 and released by the Washington Office on Africa in cooperation with Congressman John Conyers's office and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. It was based on some 500 pages of previously unreleased documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act. The documents led the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory to the "firm conclusion that a nuclear explosion had indeed occurred" after the "most extensive study by any agency in the U.S. government on this matter". (41) Among the pieces of evidence which reinforced this likelihood was a letter to the Naval Research Laboratory from a University of Tennessee professor who happened to be examining the thyroids of sheep in Australia shortly after the blast. He found unusually high levels of radioactive

iodine, something which had never happened before in his 25 years of research. The deviation was 3-6 times above the norm, depending on statistical methodology. The Naval Research Laboratory and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration confirmed that wind and weather patterns at the site of the explosion might have carried fallout [from the site of the explosion] towards Australia, thus accounting for the radioactive iodine. The White House panel was unaware of these findings, to which no alternative explanation has been proposed. In sum, the amount of circumstantial evidence pointing to a nuclear blast is considerable. A State Department official told the Washington Post in 1980: "It basically comes down to a choice between South Africa and Israel- or both". (42)

"It is, of course" observed James Adams

rather difficult to distinguish between an Israeli and a South African bomb. It is certainly true that South Africa has developed her own deterrent on her own soil, but the work has been done with the help of Israeli scientists and Israeli technology. (43)

The question of delivery systems inevitably follows that of obtaining the nuclear weapon itself. Both countries have high-performance aircraft and Jericho missiles which can be used for this purpose. In addition, there have been some reports that the

nuclear cooperation extends to the development of cruise missiles- in cooperation with Taiwan. Jack Anderson noted in 1980 that "United States intelligence agencies had known for years that the three nations were working together on nuclear weapons development. But the addition of cruise missiles to their arsenals drastically alters the worldwide 'balance of terror'". (44)

A book about the bombing of the unfinished Iraqi nuclear reactor carried out by the Israeli air force in 1981 seems to lend additional support to the above information. At the time, the Begin government claimed that although Iraq signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the facility could be used to produce a nuclear weapon and that Israel therefore had the right to carry out a preemptive strike. The Israeli monopoly on such weapons in the Middle East was presumably preserved. The book which described the operation, Two Minutes Over Bagdad (45) is noteworthy because of the credentials and connections of its three authors: Amos Perlmutter is a former member of the Israeli Atomic Energy Commission and of the Israeli delegation to the United Nations; he is now professor of political science and sociology at American University in Washington. Uri Bar-Yosef is a former Israeli air

force officer and Michael Handel is a military historian at the Harvard Center for International Affairs. In the book, which deals primarily with the bombing operation they also note that Israel threatened and prepared to use nuclear weapons in the 1973 war if the United States did not ship the weapons Israel wanted; the threat was directed toward the United States. Since the beginning of the 1970's, the authors say, Israel has been working to expand her tactical and strategic nuclear arsenal in cooperation with South Africa and Taiwan. They cite without comment findings of the C.I.A. and other Western intelligence services that the September 1979 explosion was a nuclear shell launched by South Africa and Israel from the ultramodern nuclear howitzer (Chapter 6), and then cite a report by Jack Anderson about the attempt of the three states to develop a cruise missile with a range of 1500 miles. Such a missile could hit most targets in the Arab world as well as parts of southern USSR. (46)

In the spring of 1985 Israel was among a handful of United States allies which were invited, and accepted, to participate in the "Star Wars" project. The Jerusalem Post defense correspondent Hirsh Goodman hailed the project, which he saw as "something to be

grateful for" since it offers, among other benefits, "potentially real answers to this country's economic and defense needs". The system could, for instance, "render it unnecessary to bomb the next Iraqi reactor". (47)

Meanwhile, circumstantial evidence pointing to South African-Israeli cooperation in the areas of development, testing and delivery of nuclear weapons continues to accumulate. Although most sources remain, by necessity, secondary and as such are subject to dismissal by official spokesmen and supporters, their weight and diversity are turning yesterday's speculation into today's likelihood. Systematic cooperation in developing nuclear weapons must be considered the highest possible form of cooperation between any two nation states. Of all facets of Israeli-South African ties, then, this remains the most significant, and to many the most ominous one.

NOTES

(1) P. W. Botha in Parliament in February 1982 as quoted by James North in Freedom Rising: War and Peace in Southern Africa. New York: Macmillan, 1985, p. 323. The author believes Botha was referring to a neutron bomb which destroys only living things, not property and that a totalitarian government cannot be counted on to act rationally when cornered.

(2) Betts, Richard K., "Paranoids, Pygmies, Pariahs and Nonproliferation", Foreign Policy, Spring 1977.

(3) Shaker, Mohamed. The Non- Proliferation Treaty. Dobbs Ferry, NY: Oceana Publishers, 1980 (appendix.); Spector, Leonard, "Proliferation: The Silent Spread", Foreign Policy, No. 58, Spring 1985. France and China have not signed the treaty due to objections to its "discriminatory" treatment of non-nuclear weapons states.

(4) United Nations General Assembly. Report of the Secretary General. Implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. September 1980, Document #A/35/402 p. 17.

(5) Harkavy, Robert, "Pariah States and Nuclear Proliferation" in Quester, George, H. (ed.) Nuclear Proliferation: Breaking the Chain. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981 p. 143.

(6) Rosen, Steven, "Nuclearization and Stability in the Middle East" in Marwah, Onkar and Schulz, Ann (eds.) Nuclear Proliferation and the Near Nuclear Countries. Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Publishing Co., 1975 p. 159; Also Harkavy, op. cit. p. 144.

(7) Feldman, Shai. Israeli Nuclear Deterrence: A Strategy for the 1980's. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

(8) Haaretz, March 15, 1976.

- (9) The Washington Post, December 3, 1974.
- (10) The New York Times, June 25, 1981.
- (11) Africa Contemporary Record quoted by Bustin, Edouard, "South Africa's Foreign Policy Alternatives and Deterrence Needs" in Marwah and Schulz, op. cit. p. 217.
- (12) United States Central Intelligence Agency, "Prospects for Further Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons", A Memorandum, September 4, 1974.
A C.I.A. spokesman later said that the memorandum had been declassified in error and that the agency would refuse to comment any further. Yediot Aharonot, May 17, 1985.
- (13) See especially Davenport, Elaine, Eddy, Paul and Gillman, Peter. The Plumbat Affair. London: Futura Publications, 1978; Pry, Peter. Israel's Nuclear Arsenal. Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1984; Spector, op. cit. relies on Atomic Energy Commission documents which also refer to the probable uranium theft.
- (14) Manning, Robert and Talbot, Stephen, "White House Nuclear Report: What's in the Clouds?" New West, June 2, 1980 and elsewhere.
- (15) The Christian Science Monitor, December 2, 1981.
- (16) Spector, op. cit.; Adams, op. cit. p. 160; The New York Times, June 25, 1981.
- (17) Cervenka, Zdenek and Rogers, Barbara. The Nuclear Axis: Secret Collaboration Between West Germany and South Africa. New York Times Books, 1978 p. 327.
- (18) For more details about United States and other Western cooperation with South Africa in this area see Adams, op. cit. pp. 169-174; Cervenka, op. cit. passim.
- (19) Adams, op. cit. p. 170.
- (20) Ibid, p. 179; The New York Times, June 28, 1981 citing a United States Defense Intelligence Agency study.
- (21) The Encyclopaedia Judaica. Jerusalem: Keter

Publishers, 1972 vol. 4, p. 615.

(22) Bergman, Ernst. South Africa and Israel: Different Countries - Common Problems. Braamfontein: The South African Institute of International Affairs, 1968.

(23) De St. Jorre, John. A House Divided: South Africa's Uncertain Future. New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1977 p. 96.

(24) Ibid.

There are other similar statements pointing perhaps to a deliberate policy of "deterrence by uncertainty". Former Information and Interior Minister Cornelius Mulder warned that "if we are attacked, no rules apply at all if it comes to a question of our existence. We will use all means at our disposal, whatever they may be. It is true that we have just completed our own pilot plant that uses very advanced technology and that we have major uranium technology." United Nations General Assembly. Report of the Secretary General, op. cit. p. 28.

(25) Spector, op. cit. and elsewhere.

(26) Study cited in The New York Times, June 28, 1981.

(27) Manning, Robert and Talbot, Stephen, "American Cover-up on Israeli Bomb", The Middle East (London), June 1980; Penycat, John, "Was it the Bomb?" New African, June 1980.

(28) Quoted in a Washington Office on Africa Educational Fund report, "The September 22, 1979 Mystery Flash: Did South Africa Detonate a Nuclear Bomb?", Washington, D.C., May 1985 p. 16.

(29) Fry, op. cit. p. 3.

(30) Executive Office of the President. Office of Science and Technology Policy. Ad Hoc Panel Report on the September 22 Event, July 1980 in Washington Office on Africa report, op. cit. p. 5.

(31) United Nations General Assembly. Report of the Secretary General op. cit. p. 33.

- (32) Manning and Talbot in The Middle East, op. cit.
- (33) Adams, op. cit. pp. 193-195, citing inter alia Aviation Week and Space Technology; Jack Anderson in the Washington Post, September 16, 1980; Science, August 29, 1980.
- (34) Science, August 29, 1980, "Navy Lab Concludes the Vela Saw a Bomb".
- (35) Manning and Talbot in The Middle East, op. cit.; The Wall Street Journal, July 16, 1980. According to the aforementioned Washington Office on Africa study which, in turn, relies on Washington Post reports, the time elapsed before the search for radioactivity began was three weeks.
- (36) Pencyat, op. cit. p. 36.
- (37) The report is cited in Maariv, February 11, 1981.
- (38) Adams, op. cit. p. 109.
- (39) Manning and Talbot in The Middle East, op. cit.; Pencyat, op. cit.; Washington Office on Africa report, op. cit. p. 16.
- (40) Jack Anderson in The Washington Post, April 26, 1985.
- (41) The Washington Office on Africa report, op. cit. pp. 1-2.
- (42) Ibid, p. 12.
- (43) Adams, op. cit. p. 195.
- (44) The Washington Post, December 8, 1980.
- (45) Perlmutter, Amos et al. Two Minutes Over Bagdad. London: Vallentine, Mitchell & Co., 1982.
- (46) Ibid, pp. 50-51.
- (47) Goodman, Hirsh, "The Star Wars Opportunity", The Jerusalem Post International Edition, April 20, 1985.

Chapter 8

APARTHEID AND DOUBLE STANDARDS

The foregoing discussion indicated that South Africa's ties with Israel contribute substantially to the strength of the white minority regime, eventhough reinforcing apartheid as such may not be a policy priority for Israeli leaders. The suggestion that Israel is an important ally of South Africa is not likely to be agreeable to Israeli representatives and others who defend Israeli policies in the West, such as major American Jewish organizations. They generally react by making any or a combination of the following points:

1. Ties with South Africa do not imply approval of apartheid. The refusal of the Israeli Ambassador I. Unna to attend the premiere of the play "Golda" in a segregated Pretoria theatre seven years ago is sometimes mentioned as one illustration of this

point. (1)

2. What ties with South Africa? There may be various unproven rumors and propaganda, but I.M.F. figures prove that Israeli trade with South Africa is miniscule. As recently as mid-1985, Michael Curtis stated, without acknowledging the existence of James Adams's book, that "Israel and South Africa are not allies and no entente cordiale exists between them".

(2)

3. So there are ties between Israel and South Africa, but everybody "does it". Why single out Israel? (Examples and citations follow).

This study does not have among its goals the assigning or reassigning of blame. It attempts to present accurate information on a significant relationship, and it could reasonably be expected that moral judgements or questions of "double standards" would be dealt with elsewhere. Yet anyone familiar with the writings on Israeli-South African ties can confirm that allegations of "unfairness" to Israel in the very discussion of the topic are repeated with such regularity and in so many sources that failure to address them would be tantamount to ignoring part of the "literature".

Turning to the first of the three above points, it

is quite clear that the question never was whether Israel consciously favors apartheid. Not even Israel's sharpest critics have argued that Israel favors South African apartheid as it cooperates with Pretoria. This has remained true in recent years as Israel boycotted nearly all votes on South Africa at the United Nations (appendix A). It is not that Israel favors apartheid; the relevant point is that apartheid did not seem to matter as the countries became allies. In other words, the question is not who favors apartheid but who is underpinning it behind the fig leaf of opposition. (Rev. Jerry Falwell, who is campaigning for reinvestment in South Africa also stated "I don't believe any Christian could support segregation, apartheid"). (3)

The second assertion concerns the "miniscule dealings" between the two countries. The argument can, of course, only be made before a poorly informed or uninformed audience. It refers only to trade and only to that part of trade which the countries chose to report. In view of the evidence discussed in the preceding chapters, the characterization of the ties as "miniscule" qualifies as at best inadvertent misrepresentation. On the other hand, the question of "double standards" is legitimate and deserves a closer look.

Although there are numerous examples of this type of commentary, the following excerpts from an article by New York City Mayor Edward Koch appear to be representative. Again, the focus is on trade alone and declared figures alone:

...my response is that it is no more immoral for Israel to trade with South Africa than it is for other nations, Great Britain, the United States and others to do so. The same standards and the same loud denunciations do not seem to apply to other nations. Why not?
(4)

Mayor Koch can conceive of a situation where he himself might join those who ask Israel to cease trading with South Africa, but naturally, there are a few preconditions:

When the nations of black Africa reestablish diplomatic relationships with Israel, end their economic boycott against it, rescind the abominable "Zionism is racism" resolution and put their own countries on the line in the struggle for freedom inside South Africa, then- and only then- those of us who support the suffering citizens of South Africa will join in asking Israel to cut its ties and cut off all trade with the nation.

Moshe Decter, who prepared reports for the American Jewish Congress accusing critics of Israeli ties with South Africa of "double standards", also supplied his own explanation for the criticism:

First, many of the [U.N.] committee members do business with the Western states and the U.S.S.R. Out of their own interests, it would not do to criticize or condemn these countries for maintaining a massive arms

traffic and other commerce with South Africa. It is far easier to find a suitable scapegoat.

Second, focusing the world's attention on Israel's trade with South Africa helps to distract attention from their own culpability.

Finally, anti-Semitism continues to operate as an irrational combination of unreasoning ignorance and wild prejudice. (5)

It is, of course, true that South Africa owes a major part of its might to arms supplies, loans, massive investments and diplomatic support by Western nations. Their consistent use of the veto power has blocked all attempts to impose effective international economic and military sanctions. The great majority of foreign investment in South Africa comes, in descending order, from Britain, the United States, West Germany, France and Switzerland. The Western powers readily accepted South Africa's claims that it is a "strategic asset" for their defense; the country became an important market for Western weapons, while its Black population was a source of inexpensive labor.

The United States is South Africa's largest trading partner. According to the United States Department of Commerce, investments of American firms in South Africa amount to \$2.3 billion. There are, in addition, \$3.5 billion in loans and some \$8 billion in

shares of South African companies held in the United States. (6) American companies dominate the South African computer industry and play a central role in other vital industries such as petroleum and automobiles. Given the importance of all the above, in South Africa it is a crime to call for disinvestment.

"Constructive engagement", the overall policy of the Reagan Administration, has been described by a Congressional critic as "protesting apartheid with one hand while feeding it with the other." (7) It is, Representative John Conyers continued, a "toothless euphemism disguising military, economic and diplomatic support for Pretoria." A study he prepared draws attention to the fact that the United States government has lifted restrictions on exporting police and military equipment to South Africa; It also permits the shipment of "dual use" equipment (that is, items ostensibly meant for civilian use but which ultimately can assist the South African army and police.) Thus in recent years South Africa received from the United States equipment such as police aircraft, electric shock batons, military and space electronics, optical guidance equipment as well as arms manufacturing technology. (8) It seems that the

loss of United States backing and ties would be a considerably more painful blow to Pretoria than the loss of ties with any other country, including Israel.

The contribution of other Western powers to South African strength has paralleled that of the United States. France was South Africa's main supplier of armaments in the 1960's and until the mid 1970's. It also provided South Africa with nuclear reactors. (However in July 1985, following the imposition of the state of emergency by the white authorities, the French government was the first among Western powers to suspend all new investment in South Africa). West Germany, as already noted, permitted nuclear know-how to be exported to South Africa in exchange for uranium. This by no means exhausts the contribution each of these countries, as well as others in the West, have made to South African power. (9)

Black African countries have also found themselves among South Africa's business partners, a situation which is probably "one of the most glaring instances of the exploitative imperial-colonial legacy"; consequently, "the effort of these states to transform, indeed negate this relationship is the very essence of the independence period".(10) Lesotho, for instance, a former British High Commission territory,

is fully surrounded by South Africa. It is dependent on South African mine work as a source of foreign exchange and employment. The countries also share a costly hydroelectric system. Most of Zimbabwe's imports and exports and most of Zambia's exports pass through South African ports. Maputo, Mozambique's main port, would be dealt a devastating blow if South African ships avoided it. (For such countries, to avoid dealing with South Africa is perhaps no easier than it is for developing countries in the Western hemisphere to avoid dealing with the United States.)

International Monetary Fund statistics further indicate that not even Arab states (11) and Eastern European states are absent from the list of South Africa's trading partners. Oil from Middle Eastern countries also finds its way to South Africa. There is, in sum, every reason to conclude that Israel's declared trade with South Africa is comparatively insignificant, despite a spectacular expansion since 1973.

The same cannot be said of present supplies of sophisticated weapons and training of troops. While the arms embargo against South Africa can and has been violated, few analysts would contend that military relations between South Africa and the West remain as

warm as they used to be. Gaps still exist in South Africa's arsenal and technological capability, and as Andrew Pierre was quoted earlier, "Israel, another pariah state, emerged as an important arms ally" to help fill the gaps. This seems to be one important reason why Prime Minister Vorster was congratulated so warmly in the House of Assembly after returning from Israel (chapter 4). "Much good will flow from that for South Africa", J. J. Engelbrecht explained, at a time when "necessary arms are being withheld from us by the United States of America as well as European countries with the exception of a few..." (12) Moreover, training for South African forces in military tactics and counterinsurgency techniques is not normally available even from those sources which would gladly sell hardware and transfer technology.

Having considered the role of the United States and other NATO powers, it remains true that today South African leaders cannot fail to count Israel when asking themselves who their allies are in this hostile world. The reverse also seems true; recall Yoel Marcus's characterization of South Africa in Haaretz as "our second most important ally after the United States". But since it is South Africa which the international community condemns with virtual

unanimity, it is worth noting that it would be difficult to find another country whose links with Pretoria are so diverse: From counterinsurgency training to avoidance of nearly all anti-apartheid United Nations votes in recent years; from joint military and economic ventures which help South Africa gain preferential access to the EEC to levels of hospitality for South African dignitaries which no other Western governments would contemplate (chapter 10); from exchanges of visits of professors and scientists to cabinet level consultations, investments in the bantustans by establishment Israelis and nuclear cooperation. In all these respects the countries have found in each other important allies as South Africa is increasingly ostracized in the international arena. As John F. Burns of the New York Times reported from South Africa in 1977,

Most whites here celebrate the growth of the relationship over the last three years. It has given South Africa access to armaments that are increasingly difficult to get elsewhere as well as opening healthy trade in other items. Moreover, it has offered South Africa diplomatic comfort at a time when its old friends in the West have become increasingly alienated by apartheid. (13)

It can be summed up that South Africa's main sources of strength have been a handful of Western powers and, in recent years, Israel. Until the 1970's

France and Britain were her main arms suppliers. Western trade, investments and loans continue to underpin the South African system. But in many respects, e.g. military training and cooperation with the bantustans, Israel has been willing to go much farther than even the above Western countries. It is not a distortion or the application of "double standards" to state that in the past decade Israel has distinguished itself as an important ally of the apartheid regime. The policy can no longer be described as a result of temporary resentment against Black Africa or a reluctantly-undertaken emergency measure. It can only be seen as part of a long-term strategy for securing the status quo (chapter 3) and resisting pressures for policy changes with respect to the territories occupied in 1967 and the rights of the Palestinian population. Dr. Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi of Haifa University noted in 1977,

It is quite clear that the present level of relations with Vorster's regime is a matter of choice, deliberation and planning... Everybody was doing business with South Africa 10 years ago and everybody is doing business with South Africa today. But no country is basing a major part of its future viability on an alliance with South Africa.
(14)

Nothing of significance has changed in this relationship since then. In the spring of 1985, when

South Africa's isolation reached new heights, Israel remained a dependable ally. Senator William Proxmire read a report in the Washington Post which impressed him so much that he requested that it be included in the Congressional Record for April 1. What the Senator described as the "big shocker" in the March 22 report- which was based on a study by Dr. Aaron Klieman of Tel Aviv University- was the estimate that 35% of Israel's over \$1 billion a year in arms exports have gone to South Africa.

What would be the reaction in this body if the United States were selling \$350 million in weapons to South Africa? There would be outrage. There would be picketing. And there would be swift and sure action by the Congress to stop it... At a time when South Africa is imposing its cruel apartheid system on the 70% of its citizens who are Black, at a time when South African police are shooting down unarmed innocent Black citizens who are guilty of nothing except attending a funeral for their deceased brethren, can Israel really justify selling them \$350 million worth of military weapons?
(15)

NOTES

(1) Curtis, Michael, "Israel and South Africa", Middle East Review Special Report, October 1983; Simon, Leslie D., "Israel and South Africa: The Allegations and the Reality", Institute for Jewish Policy Planning and Research of the Synagogue Council of America, 1980.

Golda Meir herself is said to have pledged not to set foot in South Africa for as long as apartheid existed. At some point she also considered discontinuing El-Al flights to Johannesburg. Weisbord and Kazarian, op. cit. p. 97.

(2) Curtis, Michael, "Africa, Israel and the Middle East", Middle East Review, Summer 1985 p. 16. For another example see Davis, Leonard J. Myths and Facts: A Concise Reader of the Arab-Israeli Conflict. Washington, D.C.: Near east Research, 1985 p. 15.

(3) The New York Times, August 22, 1985 p. 10.

(4) The Jewish Press, January 18, 1985.

(5) Decter, Moshe, "The Arms Traffic with South Africa: Who is Guilty?", The American Jewish Congress, New York 1976.

(6) Figures cited in Newsday, April 14, 1985.

(7) The New York Times, op-ed January 23, 1985.

(8) Findings reported by Ridgeway, James, "Reagan's Secret Aid to Apartheid", The Village Voice, December 25, 1984.

(9) For fuller details see for instance Osia, op. cit. pp. 35-92 and sources.

(10) Stevens, Richard and Elmessiri, A. M., op. cit. p. 1.

(11) In the above 1985 article, Michael Curtis describes at length Arab trade and oil supplies to South Africa, all as part of an effort to debunk the

"distortion" of "depicting Israel as a close associate of South Africa".

(12) J. J. Engelbrecht in South African House of Assembly Debates. Cape Town: April 21, 1976, columns 5091-5092.

(13) Burns, John F., "South Africa Gains Arms and Trade as Israel Link Hardens", The New York Times, May 21, 1977.

(14) Beit-Hallahmi, Benjamin, "South Africa and Israel's Strategy of Survival", New Outlook: Middle East Monthly, April-May 1977.

(15) The Congressional Record. U.S. Senate, April 1, 1985, S/3772-3773.

SUMMARY: SOUTH AFRICAN- ISRAELI MILESTONES

* 1948: The state of Israel is established and South Africa is among the first countries to recognize it. The National Party, led by politicians with a record of anti-Semitism and "neutrality" or opposition to the war effort against Nazi Germany wins the elections in South Africa.

* 1953: South African premier Daniel F. Malan is the first head of a foreign government to visit Israel.

* 1961: Relations between the two countries deteriorate when Israel joins the anti-apartheid censure initiative in the United Nations General Assembly.

* 1967: Israeli victory in the June war signals the beginning of a thaw with an admiring South African government.

* 1971: Israel offers a financial contribution to the Organization of African Unity. The contribution is rejected but nonetheless briefly arrests the post-1967 thaw with South Africa.

* 1973: The October war and Black Africa's break with Israel make for a turning point in relations with South Africa.

* 1974: Israel upgrades the diplomatic representation in South Africa to the level of embassy. The move is reciprocated by South Africa the following year.

* 1976: Prime Minister Vorster visits Israel, signs a string of agreements and is widely applauded in South Africa for the "historic breakthrough."

* 1977: Menachem Begin, former head of the Israeli-

South African Friendship League becomes Prime Minister. The extent and visibility of the ties continue their upward movement.

* 1979: A controversial flash in the Indian Ocean is believed by many to have been the result of a South African- Israeli nuclear test.

Chapter 9

SOUTH AFRICAN JEWS: OPTING FOR SILENCE

The South African Jewish community, which numbers only 119,000 among a population of some 30 million, has made a disproportionately high contribution to South Africa's economy and culture, as all sources unanimously point out. Jews have been prominent in the emerging gold and diamond industries as well as in clothing, furniture and food. They have, in addition, helped establish universities and encouraged the arts. Today the largely upper-middle class community is represented in finance, industry, medicine law and commerce, among other occupations. Most South African Jews are of Eastern European origin and immigrated to South Africa between the 1880's and World War II. More than half the Jews live in Johannesburg, and about 20% live in Cape Town. (1)

Before the ruling National Party took office in

1948, it had a consistent record of anti-Semitism and opposition to Jewish immigration (chapter 2). The year 1948, however, marked a sharp reversal in the attitude of the white authorities, whose interests dictated far better relations with the white, prosperous Jewish community. Given the importance of white unity, Daniel Malan announced that the government would not support discrimination against "any segment of the white population". (2) That promise was kept. According to a recent report of the American Jewish Committee, there is now "virtually no trace of any discrimination", despite sporadic manifestations of anti-Semitism. (3) The Jews found themselves in the historically unprecedented situation of being a minority held in favor by a Christian government which subjected the majority population to severe repression and discrimination. Their "white" classification has enabled them to fully participate in South African political life, such as becoming members of the Parliament, the Senate and as mayors. (4)

Like many Jews elsewhere, South African Jews have consistently supported Israel through contributions, assistance in all the wars Israel has fought and, not the least, immigration. Theirs is the highest rate of immigration from any Western Country. (5)

Among the prominent Israelis who were born in South Africa are Abba Eban, Samuel Katz, the right-wing publisher and former adviser to Prime Minister Begin, Michael Comay who represented Israel at the United Nations and the late Louis Aryeh Pincus, former chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive. The annual immigration to Israel has been around 200 and changed little over time, except after the Sharpeville massacre when the number of Jews leaving South Africa quadrupled. (6) Despite the emigration- due to Zionist convictions, fear for the future of all whites who stay or opposition to apartheid- the number of Jews in that country has remained virtually unchanged since 1948. At present, an estimated 25,000 Israelis either permanently reside or are seconded in South Africa at any given time. (7) Israelis are the largest source of postwar Jewish immigration to that contry. In recent years, there has been some Jewish immigration from Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) as well.

The South African Jewish community has contributed to Israel the highest amount per-capita of any Jewish community in the world while holding a similar record for involvement in Zionist organizations. The white authorities have been unusually cooperative with

respect to investment and currency regulations which severely restrict transfers to foreign countries, indeed even to the United States or Britain. Israel is also the only country which may sell its government bonds in South Africa.

There are two major South African Jewish organizations. The South African Zionist Federation is concerned with Israeli issues and the promotion of Zionism, while the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, established in 1903 after the South African War, deals primarily with domestic matters. Some 320 Jewish organizations are affiliated with the Board, bringing it very near the status of official spokesman of the entire community.

Until very recently, the above "domestic matters" have not included apartheid. Some in the West believe, apparently less on the basis of fact than of wishful thinking, that most South African Jews are active in or supportive of anti-apartheid causes. Many in the forefront of opposition to apartheid are indeed Jewish, most notably Helen Suzman and other examples which follow. Among most other South African Jews, one does not find a great deal of identification with the goals and policies of the National Party; but when it comes to hostile criticism of apartheid or political

activism against it, the Jews as a community are, apparently, not substantially different from the other segments of the white population. (8) For instance, as Professor Arkin of the South African Zionist Federation noted, while some districts with a large Jewish population tend to vote for the liberal Progressive Federal Party, Jews also supported the conservative, now defunct United Party. There has been an increase in Jewish participation in the National Party and in establishment organizations. (9) Most South African Jews fear majority rule and another Rhodesia.

For several decades, then, the organization which is the most representative of South African Jewry has favored a policy of noninvolvement with respect to apartheid. The Board considered itself a "non-political body which refrains from taking any position on party political issues and does not express views on the various race policies being advocated". (10) Hence the Jewish organization was reluctant to go beyond calling for "harmonious relations" between all groups of the South African population and kept silent after the Sharpeville massacre. (11) The South African Jewish writer Dan Jacobson defended the policy of silence about discrimination (unless it is against Jews) in an exchange with a critic in Commentary:

...Each group must act in defense of what it

perceives to be its own interests or else it ceases to exist as a group... It is impossible for me to imagine that any community will ever sacrifice itself for the sake of another... The martyrdom and self sacrifices that he calls for from the entire community appear on the whole to be gratuitous, disinterested. (12)

"Die schwarze/the Blacks", Jacobson had observed earlier, "are talked of as contemptuously at Jewish tea parties as they are at gatherings of English and Afrikaans-speaking whites". (13)

Some Jews no doubt have feared for their privileged status as whites or a revival of anti-Semitism should they be perceived as collectively antagonistic to the rest of the white community. That might endanger what Professor E. Feit described in an understanding account as... "a standard of life far better than they could obtain anywhere else. There is a plentitude of sunshine and servants." (14) Whatever guilt there is, he noted, is assuaged "by extra kindness and consideration of their African servants and employees."

There are, of course, also those who accept the point of view of the white oligarchy that South Africa's first and foremost problem is the threat from Moscow, which outweighs all else. Rabbi Ben Isaacson had this to say in a sermon at Temple David in Morningside, Johannesburg:

Whatever one's political and moral standpoint vis-a-vis our internal problems and the shaping of our society, there is no doubt that the threat of communist domination for the moment outweighs all else. It was sometimes the fate of small nations to confront major powers and even superpowers. Israel was not only fighting her hostile neighbors but the might of Soviet Russia with all that it entailed. Similarly, South Africa found itself today isolated in its struggle against the headlong progress of atheistic communism... It is no mere coincidence that the same nations who band together at the United Nations in order to destroy Israel are also those who wish to destroy South Africa... A world descending into the abyss of barbarism needs to be shaken up, and who knows, maybe it is the lot of small countries to bear the burden of civilisation. May God bless South Africa. (15)

Other rabbis are on record with similar sentiments. After Dr. Verwoerd's death in 1966, Chief Rabbi Casper of Johannesburg described the architect of apartheid as someone who is "in true scriptural sense a man of valour". (16) In Cape Town, the Chief Rabbi eulogized Verwoerd as "a man of sincerity and deep integrity... A moral conscience underlay his policies. He was the first man to give apartheid a moral ground". (17) And Rabbi Arthur Super of the Progressive Jewish Congregation mourned the death of "one of the greatest, if not the greatest Prime Ministers South Africa has ever produced... who like Mozes of old, had led his people through the promised

land after 60 years of wandering..." (18)

The long silence of South African Jews has been sharply criticized overseas. The authors of Israel and South Africa: The Progression of a Relationship deplored that-

...It is in this white redoubt that one of the richest Jewish communities in the world, a community long committed to political Zionism... having derived its sustenance from a social structure whose inequalities were the very condition of white economic growth, apartheid is treated from the Jewish organizational point of view as "political". In short... only those situations or issues are to be characterized from the communal point of view as "immoral" which directly affect the Jewish community or the Zionist cause. (19)

Similarly, Robert Weisbord observed in The Journal of Modern African Studies that although the Jewish community will never actively or enthusiastically support apartheid, "they will play the role of non-political, law-abiding patriotic bystanders silent in the face of evil". (20)

As the Board of Deputies talked about the absence of a "collective Jewish position" on apartheid, notable individuals could and did disapprove of this stance. Some of these may have been reminded of the Nuremberg Laws and other periods in Jewish history. Zionist Board members like Ellen Hellmann, a leading figure in the Institute of Race Relations, Israel

Maisels, defense counsel in the great Treason Trial, Harold Hanson who was one of the founders of the Liberal Party and Arthur Suzman campaigned for a different stance vis-a-vis apartheid. Some of them became active in the late 1930's and during World War II as political polarization occurred among leftist and liberal Jews in South Africa. Louis Pincus, Colin Legum, Phyllis Rabkin, and Ellen Hellmann formed the anti-apartheid Zionist Socialist party. They were criticized by other members of the Zionist Federation for "dissipating energies". (21) There was, in addition, a small measure of Jewish support for the diminutive Communist Party, the only party which was open to Blacks. Jews made up a disproportionately large part of of the party's active white leadership; for instance, out of its nine white candidates in the 1943 elections for Parliament, three were Jews. (22)

In effect, all Jewish anti-apartheid dissenters were conforming to the policy of the Board: individuals may do what they wish, but there is no collective position. That, at least, was the official stance. The actual preference of the Board of Deputies may have been different: Former Senator Leslie Rubin's experience was that the Board in fact took a dim view even of private Jewish opposition to the South

African government. "I was told more than once while in Parliament", he recalled, "that my prominence as a critic of apartheid and a spokesman for the African people was an embarrassment to the Board of Deputies. Other Jews experienced similar attempts to persuade them to tone down their opposition to the government." (23) [On the other hand, the Board rejected a call from the opposite end of the Jewish opinion spectrum when journalist Henry Katzew's proposed that it go on record as identifying with the "struggle for survival" of the Afrikaner. (24)]

In recent years the Board has begun to make references in its resolutions to the need to remove discriminatory legislation in South Africa; in 1982 the Board also expressed opposition to detention without trial. The most far-reaching resolution was adopted in 1985 after three days of debates and requests from the World Jewish Congress, as WJC president Edgar Bronfman announced. (25) The resolution favors "the removal of all provisions in the laws of South Africa which discriminate on grounds of color and race." All concerned are asked to "do everything possible to insure the establishment of a climate of peace and calm in which dialogue, negotiation and processes of reform can be continued." A concurrent resolution

of solidarity with Israel was also adopted. However Dr. Israel Abramowitz, president of Bnai Brith in South Africa and former chairman of the Board of Deputies later said in an address that South African Jews saw an "obsessional preoccupation" with their country in the United States. He described anti-South African protest as having a "purely American political motivation" and stressed that the future of the South African Jewish community is tied with that of the whites. (26)

Many sources dealing with Israel and South Africa (e.g. Osia, Stevens, Kreindler) place a great deal of emphasis on South African Jewry when discussing this relationship. It is apparently assumed that as a prosperous and Zionist community in South Africa, the Jews must somehow be a key element in the development and maintenance of the relationship. Israeli spokesmen are also likely to point to the Jewish community as a major reason why their ties with South Africa are and must remain good. The centrality of South African Jews however, is not automatically obvious and has not been demonstrated in the sense that the relationship would not be what it is if not for this community. Even less convincing is the claim that Israeli concern for South African Jews is a major reason for the extensive ties

with Pretoria. Such concern did not seem to be a compelling consideration in the 1960's when Israel voted against South Africa at the United Nations, causing a great deal of anger among that country's whites. (Similarly, Israeli concern for the much larger community of Soviet Jews did not prove decisive when Israel considered steps which the Soviet Union no doubt regarded as hostile, such as strategic cooperation with the United States, participation in the "Star Wars" project or accepting a powerful Voice of America transmitter.) Moreover, the future of the white-minority regime is far from bright, and the interests of South African Jews, especially in the long run, can hardly be served by becoming an ally of that regime; already there are reports about sharp antagonism to Israel among South African Black leaders, some of whose statements have been perceived by Jews as anti-Semitic. (27)

While it seems unlikely that the South African Jewish community accounts for the rise or strength of ties between Tel Aviv and Pretoria, the needs and benefits discussed in the last few chapters do appear substantial enough to warrant such a conclusion to a good first approximation. The relationship stands on its own and would likely have advanced even if no Jews

lived in South Africa. It would follow that South African Jews are more of an alibi than an explanation for South African-Israeli closeness.

There remains, however, a set of contributing factors which cannot be measured or quantified but nonetheless seem highly relevant to any investigation of South African-Israeli closeness. The balance of the study discusses the need to go beyond pragmatism and expediency in analyzing the interaction between these states.

NOTES

(1) Geller, David, "The Jewish Community of South Africa", A Background Memorandum, The International Relations Department of the American Jewish Committee, New York, May 1985 p. 1.

(2) Katzew, Henry, "Jews in the Land of Apartheid", Midstream, December, 1962.

(3) Geller, op. cit. p. 2.

(4) American Jewish Yearbook 1972, P. 581.

(5) Geller, op. cit. p. 1.

(6) Adams, op. cit. p. 7.

(7) Ibid. Also Geller, op. cit. p. 1.

(8) Numerous authors have pointed this out. See "South Africa, its Jews and the Israeli Connection" by Marcus Arkin, director of the South African Zionist Federation writing in South Africa International (published by the South Africa Foundation) October 1977; Weisbord, Robert G., "The Dilemma of South African Jewry", The Journal of Modern African Studies, No. 2 1967; [Weisbord, who noted that Jews are disproportionately represented in the ranks of those who oppose government policies, nonetheless accepted Edwin Munger's observation in Jews and the National Party that "the overwhelming majority of Jews favour apartheid and would be reluctant to give up its blessings." (p. 237 in article.)]; E. Feit, "Community in a Quandary: The South African Jewish Community and Apartheid", Race, April 1967; Osia, Kunirum. Israel, South Africa and Black Africa. New York: University Press of America, 1981 p. 5-15 quoting from and citing a variety of sources; Chazan, Naomi, op. cit.

(9) Arkin, op. cit.

(10) Cited by Richard Stevens in "Zionism, South Africa and Apartheid: The Paradoxical Triangle", Phylon, (2) 1971.

- [11] For a detailed discussion see Katzew, op. cit.
- [12] Jacobson, Dan and Segal, Ronald, "Apartheid and South African Jewry: An Exchange", Commentary, November 1957.
- [13] Jacobson, Dan, "The Jews of South Africa: Portrait of a Flourishing Community", Commentary, January 1957 p. 44.
- [14] Feit, op. cit. p. 408.
- [15] The Zionist Record and South African Jewish Chronicle, January 16, 1976.
- [16] Osia, op. cit. p. 19, citing the Rand Daily Mail.
- [17] Ibid.
- [18] Ibid.
- [19] Stevens, Richard and Elmessiri, A.M. Israel and South Africa: The Progression of a Relationship. New York: New World Press, 1976, p.2.
- [20] Weisbord, op. cit. p. 241;
- [21] Shimoni, Gideon. Jews and Zionism: The South African Experience 1910-1967. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1980 pp. 188-192.
- [22] Ibid, p. 158.
- [23] Rubin, Leslie, "Dialog: South African Jewry and Apartheid", Africa Report, February 1970 p. 24.
- [24] Shimoni, op. cit. p.293.
- [25] World Jewish Congress, "South African Jews Reject Apartheid", (A Memorandum), June 12, 1985.
- [26] The Jewish Press, July 19, 1985 p. 1.
- [27] Geller, op. cit. p. 2.

Chapter 10

SMILES AND RED CARPETS

Most of the preceding chapters dealt with aspects of the South African-Israeli relationship which could be easily related to the pursuit of national interests- power, security and economic advantage. James Adams's The Unnatural Alliance and similar works end after discussing these pragmatic aspects, typically concluding that politics makes strange bedfellows, in this case an unnatural alliance. A corollary proposition is that these states cooperate because they are "pariahs" and have few choices. Israel, in this view, regrettably had to compromise its principles and values by becoming a reluctant partner of the white minority government.

The official Israeli stance on ties with South Africa is similar, although it is usually denied that these ties are special in any way. After noting that

Israel opposes apartheid, former Assistant Director of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs Yaakov Shimoni explained:

...our international relations are based, like those of most countries in the world, on the assumption that countries maintain normal relations between existing governments whether you like the government or you dislike it... I do not know how many of the 145 members of the United Nations you could have relations with if you had relations only with those countries whose regimes you like, which you think are just fine... [In addition] we have the specific problem of a fairly large Jewish community. We feel a certain pang of responsibility for them... (1)

Although the diplomat attempted to portray the extensive web of South African-Israeli ties as merely an instance of maintaining "normal relations", it is certainly true that moral considerations are at best secondary when states pursue their interests. It is not difficult to recognize transactions motivated by expediency and realpolitik: For instance, an agreement for energy development or an arms sale, even in defiance of the international embargo, are the sort of transactions which few countries would renounce on grounds that the political character of their partners is unacceptable. Ideologically opposed countries can and, of course, do cooperate; recent reports indicated that even Beijing, which does not have diplomatic

relations with Israel, was interested in more extensive commercial, and possibly military dealings with her (The New York Times, July 22, 1985). Israel's choice, or need, to conduct that type of business with the white oligarchy in Pretoria would, arguably, still fall into the same category.

But would this remain true if in addition to the above business a pattern existed with manifestations such as unparalleled warmth displayed towards visiting South African officials, participation of members of the parliament in receptions for dignitaries from the bantustans or readiness to sign twin city agreements with South African cities? A relationship with South Africa which regularly includes such features can reasonably be viewed as one that involves more than reluctant pragmatism. These and similar features are reviewed in this chapter; although some of the accounts might be described as "anecdotal", the pattern remains unmistakable. In conjunction with the next chapter, which considers the common problems, backgrounds and perceptions shared by white South Africa and Zionist Israel, this segment of the study proposes that the above pattern can best be explained as the manifestation of a sense of kinship and empathy between these societies. All this, of

course, casts serious doubt on the contention that South Africa and Israel are in an "unnatural alliance" which is driven by considerations of realpolitik alone.

In fact, even as the pragmatic aspects of the relationship were being reviewed, a few references were made to conduct which appeared to point to something more than pragmatism: Prominent Israelis (Moshe Dayan, Yosef Lapid) volunteered compliments and understanding for the South African system; Knesset members established a friendship league with South Africa; Vorster was extended royal treatment on his 1976 visit. On the South African end, leaders and editorials were quoted as expressing a great deal of admiration and empathy with Israel and Zionism, starting with Jan Smuts who used his influence to help obtain the Balfour Declaration from the British government.

Afrikaners have long noticed that their struggle for survival at the foot of Africa parallels that of another "white" country near the head of the continent:

With the partition of Palestine and the establishment of Israel, an apartheid was at the same time carried into effect which had the result that hundreds of thousands of Arab refugees from the Jewish area

languished in neighbouring Arab states and formed an insoluble international problem. We say this with no reproach. But Israel owes its existence to the refusal of its Jewish citizens to accept integration and equality with an Arab majority in one state. The apartheid policy is based on the same attitude by European South Africans toward the non-European majority. (2)

Since the countries were seen as sharing a common lot, "their community of interests had better be utilized than denied" (chapter 2). South Africa assisted Israel in all her wars, and the Israeli victories were a source of inspiration. General H. van den Berghe, former head of the South African Bureau of State Security (BOSS) noted: "I went to Israel recently and enjoyed every moment there. I told the Prime Minister when I got back that as long as Israel exists we have hope". (3) Admiration and empathy with Israel are not limited to the South African leadership: In one Markinor survey in which respondents ranked their favorite countries, Israel emerged first. (4) There are also numerous "Christian Action for Israel" groups.

Militarism, invasions and interventions in neighboring states are often justified on grounds that similar Israeli actions were met with more understanding. After a trip to South Africa, New York Times columnist Flora Lewis observed that "comparison

with Israel has become an insistent theme in South Africa when people there discuss their country's actions". (5) For instance, "after the murderous South African raid on Lesotho recently, an American correspondent asked the Foreign Ministry how it explained talks with Angola one day and an armed attack on a neighbor next. The answer was simply that Israel invaded Lebanon while negotiating with Egypt and this has been accepted", as indeed it has. The African National Congress is regularly equated with the PLO. Other South Africans spoke of "Menachem Botha" and "Magnus Sharon".

Turning to South Africa's image in Israel since the 1970's, one difference is readily apparent: There are far fewer verbal expressions of admiration and empathy. Unlike their South African counterparts, one does not find Israeli leaders or the mass media regularly equating Israel's history and present problems with those of South Africa. Although some Israelis who oppose government policies on the West Bank fear another South Africa, few would agree that their country is already in the same boat as South Africa. Such a comparison would often be rejected out of hand. In the view of observers such as Naomi Chazan, this asymmetry deals a serious blow to the

hypothesis that empathy and kinship resulting from similar backgrounds, interests and perceptions play an important part in Israeli-South African ties:

The problem with this hypothesis is that it has fallen mostly on deaf ears in Israel. Conspiracies need collaborators... (6)

Leaving aside the term "conspiracy" which is more likely to be derisive than descriptive, there are in fact numerous indications that Israelis compensate for the above asymmetry in their own special way: While there has been little outspoken support and admiration for the South African allies, the closeness and cordiality displayed by influential Israelis seems to have gone well beyond anything South Africans are used to elsewhere in the West.

The treatment extended to South African dignitaries in Israel seems to illustrate this point. It is difficult to imagine a South African leader being received in a Western country the way Vorster was received in Israel (chapter 4): In the summer of 1984, for instance, then Prime Minister P. W. Botha visited Western Europe. Upon his arrival in Germany,

A large upholstered sofa was removed from West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's office last week minutes before South Africa's Prime Minister P. W. Botha came to call. The Chancellor typically sits on the sofa with his foreign guests as photographers snap. This time, Mr. Kohl stared unsmilingly and

stiff next to a relaxed-looking Mr. Botha. The Chancellor declined to re-enact a handshake for the cameramen, who did, however immortalize the departing piece of furniture. (7)

In London, Botha's presence "detonated a huge demonstration" and "photographs of her [Margaret Thatcher] glowering countenance in pictures with Mr. Botha were meant to convey Britain's disapproval of apartheid".

Israeli leaders, by contrast, believe that that is no way to treat a white guest from South Africa. Several months later, in November, Foreign Minister Roelof Botha visited Jerusalem. He met with Defense Minister Rabin, whose Ministry tried to avoid much publicity, but as Maariv columnist Amnon Abramowitz noted, Foreign Minister Shamir had to have a state-level reception and "went to Ben-Gurion airport, rolled a red carpet in front of the guest, received him according to all the rules of protocol and even invited reporters to photograph his meeting with Botha at the Foreign Ministry". (8) (The Associated Press indeed distributed a picture of Botha and Shamir shaking hands and smiling broadly.) Botha was driven in an official limousine and served a state dinner. Amnon Abramowitz went on to comment that unlike other countries in the West which do business with South

Africa "quietly under the table", Israel's approach is comparable to a Jew who not only eats pork but also lets the fat run out of his mouth.

An even more remarkable treatment had been extended to South African Treasury Minister Owen Horwood who visited Israel in December of 1980 and met with Menachem Begin and other officials. Then-Knesset member Amnon Rubinstein, who favors "normal" political and commercial ties with South Africa assailed Igal Horowitz, Horwood's Israeli counterpart who had praised the "deep ties" between Israel and South Africa without even the most perfunctory condemnation of apartheid. Rubinstein added that the guest from Pretoria was honored at a reception in a Yeshiva with the participation of Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef and Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kolek; Rabbi Yosef blessed the South African visitor "Halevay veitkaimu becha kol birkot hatora" (may all the Torah's blessings come true for you). (9) The Hebrew University in Jerusalem awarded him an honorary doctorate in philosophy (10). "This is not part of a normal relationship which we have to have," wrote Rubinstein. "This is blatant disregard for the basic sensitivity we as Jews and Israelis must have"; for, whoever visits South Africa, he observed, is immediately reminded of the ghetto,

the Pale, stamps in identity cards, places which are off-limits, the absence of the most elementary rights and the persecution of those who dissent. Knesset member Rubinstein reminded the readers of Haaretz that by Pretoria's standards most of today's Israelis would likely be classified as non-whites and that some Israelis in South Africa had in fact been "mistakenly" abused or removed from "white" buses.

There are numerous other examples of gestures of good will and amity by prominent Israelis towards white South Africa, none of which can be reasonably described as "part of the normal relationship" which Rubinstein favors. Thus one reads in the Rand Daily Mail that general Nathan Nir, chairman of the Israeli Association for the Welfare of Soldiers visited South Africa "on a mission to help give soldiers the feeling that they are needed and appreciated". Naturally, he also met ("privately") with several high-ranking military officers and praised the raid into Angola as the only way to deal with terrorists who must be "attacked at their bases. In this way they would never feel safe". (11) As for the Israel's willingness to train South African forces in counterinsurgency (chapter 6), Naomi Chazan agrees that at least overtly, there seems to be "no good reason why Israel

should give these services to South Africa, especially since there is no visible return for such involvement..." To her, "the reasons for these alleged actions remain a mystery". (12)

It is not uncommon for Israelis or the Israeli media to refer to those who resist apartheid as "terrorists" with which South Africa, like Israel, is plagued. Although it would be of interest to see the results of a systematic research on this specific issue, it is known that the Israeli state and non-state media have at least some of the time adopted Pretoria's perspective on events in Southern Africa. As Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi noted in New Outlook, the Israeli state television was willing to screen a South African program celebrating the "new state of Transkei"; when violence erupted in Soweto, the minority government's version was given prominence and the events were explained as "criminal violence" perpetrated by "Communist elements and outside agitators"; and some newspapers described American diplomatic initiatives in Southern Africa as a "sellout" of the kind that Israel might expect. (13) This, Beit-Hallahmi adds, is a degree of sympathy for Pretoria which cannot be found in many countries, and furthermore one which has generated no measurable

controversy in Israel.

With one or two exceptions, the Knesset has had nothing to debate about these ties, widely regarded as necessary for reasons of state. Here and there a liberal columnist or politician may protest, in most cases not so much the ties as their unnecessarily high "public visibility". (Amnon Rubinstein's above article is a case in point.) The great majority of the Israeli public has shown no signs of concern or opposition: There is no record of major demonstrations or sit-ins demanding that ties be cut off. Nor do product labels which read "made in South Africa" raise many eyebrows. For the most part, the connection with South Africa has been a non-issue, and [at least by default] a "matter of true national consensus". (14)

This helps explain why developments which would be met with vehement protests and boycotts in the United States or Western Europe pass virtually without notice in Israel; why financial considerations were allowed to prevail in situations where most other Western governments or even private investors have chosen to draw the line. Thus it is impossible to imagine New York City's Bloomingdale's department store holding, as did the Shalom department store in Tel Aviv, a promotional "South Africa Week". The event was

organized by the South African Department of Commerce with "contributions by the Department of Information in cooperation with the management of Shalom stores". Naturally, "information" about South Africa was distributed as well. (15) A similar "South Africa Week" was held by Supersol, the largest Israeli supermarket chain. (16) By now, Naomi Chazan noted, "it is sufficient to enter an Israeli supermarket to see the extent of South African goods".

South Africa was reportedly the first country to open a state tourist office in Israel. It did so in 1979. (17) Four years later Israeli Minister of Tourism Sharir awarded South African Airways the title of "Most Favoured Tourist Undertaking for 1983" for its contribution to the promotion of tourism in Israel. (18)

Among other developments which passed almost without notice in Israel was the 1976 declaration as twin cities of Cape Town and Haifa, the latter a city with a Zionist Socialist and labor tradition. (19) Similar agreements were signed by Simonstown and Akko as well as by Durban and Eilat. In November 1984 the West Bank colony of Ariel also signed a twin city agreement with Bisho, the capital of Ciskei. The agreement provided for cultural, scientific,

industrial and tourist exchanges, although it is not clear what either city has to offer on these levels. "President" Lennox Sebe came for the ceremony; he found the occasion, in his words, "almost too precious to be scarred by words... almost too glorious for ordinary men". Perhaps he felt that way because the other guests included Israeli Knesset Members who "spoke in terms of Israeli-Ciskeian brotherhood and a common struggle against a cruel world of double standards." (20) The Rand Daily Mail added that Sebe considered the ceremony to be the beginning of international recognition, especially since the Israeli authorities had sent heavy police escorts to protect him. This "shows respect for us from the international community. There are none so blind as those who would not see..." (21) In Ciskei proper, Israeli retired colonels have been involved in protecting Sebe. (Maariv, August 1, 1985.)

The ties of prominent Israelis with bantustans continue despite objections from the Foreign Ministry on the familiar grounds that such ties might harm Israeli foreign policy interests elsewhere in Africa. Former Deputy Finance Minister Yehezkel Flomin, Tel Aviv Deputy Mayor David Griffel and Ruth Dayan have been among the visitors to Ciskei. Haaretz columnist

Nechemia Strassler noted that in that bantustan "money talks" and former Finance Minister Yoram Aridor, now a member of the Knesset, is a "most popular personality" and nearly "a member of the family". In April 1985 Aridor and other Knesset Members were expected to attend the opening ceremony of the Ciskeian Parliament and watch a military parade of units trained by Israeli officers. Strassler pointed out that there is not a politician in the world today who would visit Ciskei or any other bantustan. (22) Indeed, it seems fair to suppose that no United States Senator would consider being a regular visitor and investor in a South African "homeland".

Turning to academic contacts, some Israeli professors have toured and lectured in South Africa as guests of the South African government. The government would pay all their expenses and in many cases their spouses' as well. (23) Dr. Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi of Haifa University added privately that South Africa has become an acceptable destination for sabbatical for Israeli academics, another practice which would be difficult to imagine elsewhere in the West. The number of Israeli scholars who have chosen to investigate the ties with their country's "second most important ally after the United States" can easily be counted on the

fingers of one hand, as the bibliography at the end of this study indicates.

The significance of these aspects of South African-Israeli closeness is, of course, not merely that they have taken place but that they generated no measurable protest and apparently remained immune from the wave of world condemnation of South Africa, demonstrations and campaigns for disinvestment. Most of the Israelis mentioned in this chapter are establishment Israelis: political and military leaders, legislators and shapers of public opinion.

It is also instructive to look at how the topic was handled in the few cases when Israelis debated it in the Knesset and media. A recurring argument, which also appears to be a favorite in Pretoria, has been that it is hypocritical to focus on South Africa when there are plenty of repressive regimes; South Africa is really no worse, and in some ways freer, than other countries in Africa and elsewhere. On January 30, 1979, prior to the Moscow Olympics, the Knesset debated the Israeli sports ties with South Africa. Dovish Knesset member Yossi Sarid argued that cultural and sports ties are different from diplomatic ties or other vital interests which a state must pursue. The former are optional ties of good will, and are

therefore inappropriate to have with South Africa. In his rebuttal, Likud Knesset member Dov Shilansky chided the Israeli "beautiful souls" who favored Israeli suspension of sports ties with South Africa but did not object to the participation of Nigeria, Uganda or Iraq in the Olympics. As for apartheid, Shilanski explained,

I am not saying that I am happy or even agree with the manifestation of separation in South Africa [sic]. I am just saying we have our own problems and let us not poke our noses into the affairs of the whole world.

Shilanski asked Knesset member Sarid whether he would be consistent enough to demand that Israel also cut off trade with South Africa or abandon the plan to build a power plant near Hadera, since that plant was to use South African coal mined by cheap Black labor. The Likud legislator recalled that when he visited South Africa a cabinet Minister said "State of Israel, good luck to you", and he therefore urged the Knesset: "Let us honor our friend [South Africa] and wish her good luck as she wishes us". (24) His earlier question directed to Yossi Sarid remained unanswered.

A year later Dr. Herzl Rosenblum, a signer of the Israeli Declaration of Independence and the editor of Yediot Aharonot, Israel's most popular daily was

troubled by the reception extended to Owen Horwood. (The facts about that reception were reviewed above.) Rosenblum's complaint, however, was that Horwood had been met with hostility and that "if they only could, our brothers the Jews would have knifed him in the back". He therefore took the opportunity to demonstrate that critics of the high-profile relationship with South Africa were afflicted with "Naiveté, Stupidity and Hypocrisy", as his editorial was titled:

...This urge to avoid any contact with Pretoria has its origins in naiveté, stupidity and hypocrisy combined.

It is naive to suppose that the rest of the world is better than South Africa. And it is naive to suppose that South Africa's enemies which have rallied against her have done so for the sake of the "ideal". And it is naive to suppose that what South Africa's enemies say about her is also what they think about her.

Now, the stupidity. Well, it is stupidity to believe that to oppress an ordinary majority, whether political or ideological as the Russian regime does, is a lesser crime than to oppress a racial or ethnic majority, as the ruling minority does in South Africa. And, it is stupidity to suppose that the oppressed majority in South Africa is worse off than the oppressed majority in the Communist bloc and the "non-aligned" dictatorships...

And more: the hypocrisy. Well, it is hypocritical to benefit from South Africa and do business under the table with her while venomously assailing her in public. And it is hypocrisy to argue that if the "progressive" countries gained control over South Africa they would have granted her

Black majority more freedom than the current Pretoria government... And, it is hypocrisy to favor non-interference in the domestic affairs of any state and to exclude South Africa from this, whose domestic affairs are everybody's business...

How is South Africa worse than Iran and Lybia? We even recognized Idi Amin's Uganda and became friends with Idi Amin himself until he humiliated us and expelled us. Is South Africa worse than even Idi Amin's Uganda?...

And more: The Blacks in South Africa do not want us or our political assistance. Why do we have to immolate ourselves on their altar in order to overthrow a government which does want us?... Can this be called "statemanship"?

Even if we do all that our "progressives" tell us to do and completely disassociate ourselves from South Africa, our haters will still condemn us, for they hate us not because of our relations with South Africa but rather condemn our relations with South Africa because they hate us, and they will never lack an excuse to hate us. And, the world's hatred with South Africa's friendship is better for us than its hatred without South Africa's friendship. (25)

There is no change in the official Israeli position of non-acceptance of apartheid. (For discussion see chapter 8.) Upon closer examination, some of what are said to be "unequivocal condemnations of South Africa" appear to be fairly ambiguous statements of Jewish opposition to racism, at times without mentioning South Africa or apartheid. (26) When South Africa or apartheid are mentioned, it is not uncommon for the statement to be tempered with several "ifs" and "buts" or even praise for South

Africa. Thus while I. Unna, the Israeli Ambassador in South Africa is on record as opposing apartheid, the "background noise" with which he has chosen to surround some of his statements is less familiar. In an interview with The Jewish Press (New York) he was asked by the editors whether Jewish communities in the United States and elsewhere ought to look favorably upon South Africa because of the "special relationship" between Pretoria and Jerusalem. No mention was made of apartheid at any point in the interview, which was published the week the Soweto shootings began. "Look", Unna replied,

I would take my guide line from what the Minister of Tourism Mr. Marais Steyn said to you last night. South Africa is not a Utopia, in fact very few countries are, even Israel is not a Utopia, we all have our shortcomings. Nobody doubts, including the South Africans, that South Africa has its shortcomings, but I do believe that such a visit as yours here, as the guests of the South African Tourist Organization and Pan Am, will enable you to have an honest look at South Africa. You will be able to, I think, divorce hostile propaganda from the reality of the situation, which, I believe, is far more sanguine than the propaganda, the anti-South African propaganda slant tends to make out... (27)

In another instance, an address on the "impressive relationship" between Israel and South Africa, the Ambassador went beyond portraying apartheid as a kind of "shortcoming" and non-Utopia, but even as he did so

he described South Africa in terms which would be difficult to imagine coming from many other foreign diplomats. Hence the passage, in a sense, recapitulates the theme of this chapter:

Now it must be clear that, in spite of the good relationship which exists between South Africa and Israel, there can be for us no acceptance of your domestic structure... If we do not join the symphony of nations who constantly breathe down South Africa's neck, it is not because we are not critical of the domestic structure of South Africa, but because we are people who are surrounded ourselves by hordes of counselors, some of whom literally compete with each other in prescribing to us the most effective recipes for our national suicide... If our voice is not as shrill and as persistent as some would like it to be in the chorus of criticism of South Africa, it is because we have faith in the sincerity of South Africa to tackle these problems and to seek and establish a society which will move away from social injustices...

I would like to say in conclusion that there is one thing I believe South Africa and Israel really share in common and that is a desire to establish a society based on the vision of the prophet Isaiah, a vision of universal peace and the vision of prophets Amos and Micha, the visions of universal justice. (28)

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By the summer of 1985, unrest and killings were soaring in South Africa with no end in sight. Pretoria's other allies in the West issued official, sharp condemnations promptly after the heavy-handed state of emergency was declared and withdrew their ambassadors. France banned new investments in South

Africa. The movement towards disinvestment from apartheid was gaining momentum elsewhere in the West as well.

At a time when the white minority government was more isolated than ever before, the ties with Israel appeared more immune than most to any domestic pressures for change. Israel did not issue an official condemnation of the state of emergency, recall the ambassador or even offer him a "summer vacation". In mid-August only he and six other ambassadors were still in South Africa, among them those from Chile, Paraguay and Taiwan. (29) Haaretz reported that Foreign Ministry officials feared that the Israeli ambassador may be the only one left in Pretoria, and some of them proposed the following: Let the present ambassador stay until the end of his term in the fall, but his replacement should leave later, perhaps at the end of the year.

Meanwhile, the Jerusalem Post reported that several dozen Israelis demonstrated against the state of emergency, some complaining that the weapons used by the South African security forces had been supplied by Israel. At a cabinet meeting, Minister of Communications Amnon Rubinstein brought up the question of Israeli ties with South Africa. Prime

Minister Peres announced, as reported in Haaretz, that "the state of the Jews [sic] will not agree with any discrimination on grounds of race, religion and color". (30) Most Ministers had no comment but Igal Horowitz thought that Israel "should not rush" to criticize one of her few friends. There was no discussion on taking any other steps.

Also in August, Chief Buthelezi came to Israel on a ten day visit as guest of the government. The visit was seen by commentators as important since it helped maintain contacts with "moderate" Black leaders, just in case.

In sum, at this writing in September 1985 it appears that Israeli officials intend to settle for statements opposing discrimination, some but not all of which mention South Africa by name, but otherwise continue business as usual for as long as possible. As was the case with Iran under the Shah, if and when Jerusalem concludes that the collapse of the apartheid government is imminent, the relationship may have to be abandoned. This would be bad news for Jerusalem, but as of now it is not yet on the horizon despite the warning of one Haaretz columnist that "the day is near when Israel will find that it was a mistake to cling to the bed of the moribund white man to the last

moment, at a time when everybody is fleeing from him
like from the plague". (31)

NOTES

(1) Shimoni Yaakov in "Israel, the Arabs and Africa", Africa Report, July-August 1976.

(2) Die Burger in 1952 quoted by Shimoni, Gideon in Jews and Zionism: The South African Experience 1910-1967 op. cit. p. 221.

(3) Cervenka and Rogers, op. cit. p. 311.

(4) The Sunday Times (SA), August 11, 1981.

(5) Lewis, Flora, "Pretoria's Israel Mask", The New York Times, January 28, 1983.

(6) Chazan, op. cit. p. 196.

(7) Markham, James, "Europeans Give Botha a Frosty Reception", The New York Times, June 10, 1984.

(8) Amnon Abramowitz in Maariv, November 9, 1984.

(9) Haaretz, December 12, 1980.

(10) Beeld, December 10, 1980 in Jewish Affairs, January 1981.

(11) The Rand Daily Mail, September 5, 1981.

(12) Chazan, op. cit. p. 188.

(13) Beit-Hallahmi, Benjamin, "South Africa and Israel's Strategy of Survival", New Outlook: Middle East Monthly, April-May 1977 pp. 56-57.

(14) Beit-Hallahmi, Benjamin, "Israel and South Africa 1977- 1982: Business as Usual- and More", New Outlook: Middle East Monthly, February 1983.

(15) Oogenblad, July 30, 1977 in Jewish Affairs, September 1977.

- (16) The Financial Mail (SA) September 14, 1979, p. 18.
- (17) Ainslee, op. cit. p. 25.
- (18) Die Transvaler, July 27, 1983 in Jewish Affairs, September 1983.
- (19) Metrowich, F.R. South Africa's New Frontiers. Sandton: Valiant, 1977, p. 137. In their aforementioned book, Weisbord and Kazarian noted that if Black Americans found out about these agreements they might have felt the way Jews would have felt in the 1930's if similar agreements were signed with Munich.
- (20) Isacowitz, Roy, "Twinning with a Tyrant", The Jerusalem Post Magazine, November 9, 1984.
- (21) The Rand Daily Mail, November 15, 1984 in Jewish Affairs, January 1985.
- (22) Strassler, Nechemia, "Aridor's Blacks", Haaretz, April 11, 1985; Maariv, April 11, 1985 Overseas Edition, p. 6; After heavy pressure from Foreign Ministry officials, only three of the entire delegation left.
- (23) Chazan, op. cit. p. 183.
- (24) Divrei Haknesset (The Knesset Record), January 30, 1979 #2.
- (25) Yediot Aharonot, January 2, 1981.
- (26) See a collection of nine Israeli statements, some official, since 1978 in Bandler, Kenneth and Gruen, George, "Israel and South Africa", A Special Report of the International Relations Department, The American Jewish Committee, New York, 1985 pp. 12-14.
- (27) The Jewish Press, June 18, 1976.
- (28) Unna, I., "Israel and South Africa: An Impressive Relationship", The Zionist Record and South African Jewish Chronicle, May 20, 1976.
- (29) Haaretz, August 16, 1985 p. 1.

(30) Haaretz, August 12, 1985 p. 1.

(31) Akiva Eldar in Haaretz, August 2, 1985.

Chapter 11

SEPARATISM AT THE WRONG TIME IN HISTORY?

Israel and South Africa have one thing above all else in common: They are both situated in a predominantly hostile world inhabited by dark peoples.

Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa (1)

The previous chapter considered some of the indications that the South African-Israeli relationship goes beyond reluctant pragmatism: ordinary business is in fact supplemented by a pattern of amity, good will and empathy. This chapter attempts to assess the factors which might account for that empathy and amity, as well as for the common difficulties the two countries face regionally and internationally. The inquiry finds that there are significant similarities between their backgrounds,

that prevailing political perceptions in the two societies are analogous in important respects and that upon a closer examination the logic of their ethnic policies is similar as well. These similarities are sufficiently significant to set the countries apart from the rest of today's world, placing them in a unique position in contemporary history. If this can be demonstrated, then solidarity, amity, a community of interests and close ties when political circumstances are ripe would not be unexpected.

To be sure, any two states can be shown to be similar if the comparison is sufficiently abstract. If, on the other hand, the focus is on relatively minor details, the subjects of the comparison are likely to appear dissimilar. Are South Africa and Israel similar at a significant level? Do those elements in their ideologies which appear to be similar transcend most internal divisions within each society? The study concludes that the answer is affirmative on both counts.

It is worth noting at this point that this is not primarily a comparative study. It does not attempt to list all possible similarities and assess their significance. The focus is on those commonalities which promise to shed some light on the South

African-Israeli embrace in recent years. Most of these involve the most fundamental questions any society can face: survival and reason for being.

There is, of course, substantial resistance in the West to the notion that the similarities between South Africa and Israel are more than fortuitous or go much beyond climate. Such a proposition is rejected out of hand by the many who view Israel as a democratic society with superior moral standards under attack by Arab states and terrorists. Two examples of such thinking follow. Much of the balance of this chapter is devoted to assessing their merits.

After reading the proposal for this study, a faculty member of the City University of New York Political Science program rejected as "biased" any suggestion that South Africa and Israel might be natural bedfellows:

Israel has a working democracy with universal suffrage... South Africa is ruled by a dominant minority... Israel is the historical homeland of the Jewish people and the only homeland it has ever had. The South African whites are people of European stock who left their homeland in search of economic opportunity... Israel has no bantustans.

Similarly, Jerusalem Post columnist Hirsh Goodman wrote after returning from South Africa,

...When one explains [to Afrikaners] that

there is no basis for comparison, one is treated as if one had uttered a blasphemy. One explains that every citizen of Israel is equal in the eyes of the law; that there is freedom of political expression; that there were 31 political parties in the recent Knesset elections from the Marxist left to the right wing fringe of Meir Kahane... One points out that Israel is a member of the Socialist International, that it gives equal pay for equal work, that it has the Histadrut labor federation and does not exploit five out of six citizens for the economic benefit of the minority. One stresses that there is no repressive legislation on Israel's statute book and no discriminatory legislation other than the Law of Return which makes Jews more equal in immigration status than others... (2)

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Two Promised Lands

As a point of departure for this inquiry, it seems helpful to consider a few highlights in the history of Zionism and Afrikanerdom. This account does not, of course, purport to come close to a comprehensive review, nor does it attempt to judge the merits of justifications offered by Afrikaners or Zionists in defense of their right to act as they have. Because they seem to be more controversial, Zionism and Israel are discussed below in greater detail than either apartheid or South Africa.

The movement of Political Zionism (as distinct from religious or spiritual Zionism) formally began in

1897 with the first Zionist Congress in Basle. The Congress declared its aims to be settlement and statehood in Palestine. Anti-Semitism and pogroms in Europe in an era of self-determination in that continent had led Jewish thinkers such as Herzl and Pinsker to the conclusion that the "Jewish question" has no solution among non-Jews: Anti-Semitism is all but incurable, the Zionists maintained, and hence for as long as Jews stay among non-Jews they can expect to be persecuted and humiliated. What was needed, they insisted, was a state where Jews are the majority at all times and the masters of their own destiny. At first there was no unanimity as to where that special state should be; at some point even Uganda was briefly considered. Eventually, of course, those who favored Palestine for sentimental and religious reasons won out. At the turn of the century, when Political Zionism became a movement, more than 95% of the residents of Palestine were non-Jews. (3)

In 1917 the British cabinet issued the Balfour Declaration in which it announced that "His Majesty's government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people". As far as Zionist leaders were concerned Palestine was, as one of their better known slogans put it, "A land

without a people for a people without a land". (4) The idea was to develop a land believed to be abandoned and deserted which badly needed the blessings of Western civilization. What local population existed was expected to benefit from the settlement project: it would have the opportunity to learn modern work methods as well as to enjoy economic prosperity, modern medicine and education. Socialist Zionist leader Berl Katzenelson, for instance, explained that "never before has the white man undertaken colonisation with that sense of justice and social progress which fills the Jew who comes to Palestine".

(5)

As the Zionist movement was gaining momentum, leaders such as Katzenelson, Chaim Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion candidly explained that the Palestinian majority will ultimately have to be transferred to Trans-Jordan, Syria or Iraq since they have no serious attachment to the land. Ben-Gurion found "nothing morally wrong with the idea" while Yosef Weitz, who became director of the Jewish National Fund in 1932, noted eight years later,

It must be clear that there is no room for both peoples in this country... If the Arabs leave the country, it will be broad and wide-open for us. And if the Arabs stay, the country will remain narrow and miserable...

and there is no way besides transferring the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries- to transfer them all. Except maybe for Bethlehem, Nazareth and Old Jerusalem, we must not leave a single village, not a single tribe. And the transfer must be directed to Iraq, to Syria and even to Trans-Jordan. (6)

Berl Katzenelson had similar thoughts:

The matter of transfer of population raises a dispute among us: permissible or forbidden? My conscience is entirely calm on this matter: better a distant neighbor than a nearby enemy... I believed, and still do, that they must ultimately move to Syria and Iraq. (7)

Unlike the whites in South Africa, the original motivation of the Zionist settlers was not economic enrichment. Exclusion of the local population was by far more important than its exploitation. Indeed, it was not uncommon for middle-class European Jews to become laborers and peasants upon arrival in Palestine. The restructuring of Jewish social life required the creation of a Jewish working class and Jewish peasantry, and in a land with a non-Jewish majority this meant deliberate and overt exclusion of Arab labor. The policy was known as "conquest of labor" or "Hebrew labor"; the acquisition of land owned by non-Jews was known as "redemption" or "salvaging" of land ("geulat adamot"). The Histadrut trade union sought quotas for Jewish employment and

"civilized" pay rates. (8)

In subsequent years the local population did not agree that they were obligated to accommodate Jewish national aspirations in Palestine, a position which did not change even after the tragedy in Europe. What appeared a reasonable compromise to the settlers was seen in a different light by those who lived on the land where the compromise was to take place, as one might have expected anywhere else in an already populated area: They perhaps "wondered why a more appropriate response would not have been to remove the population of Bavaria and turn it into a Jewish state-or... why the project could not have been carried out in Massachusetts or New York". (9) The United States, Britain and South Africa were closed to massive immigration of Jewish refugees.

The 1948 war, also known in Israel as the "Liberation War" resulted in a massive exodus of Arabs, three quarters of a million of whom fled or were driven out of Palestine. There was no longer an Arab majority, a relief which Chaim Weizmann described as a "miraculous cleaning of the land; the miraculous simplification of Israel's task". (10) The now-simplified task included control of the influx of non-Jews while encouraging any Jew in the world to

"return". The Arab refugees themselves were never allowed to return to the Jewish state. The Israeli government has maintained that they should be resettled in Arab states since the Arabs have sufficient funds and states and since these Palestinian refugees were replaced by Jews from Arab countries.

In his book Arabs in the Jewish State Ian Lustick details some of the methods employed in subsequent years by the government, Zionist institutions and Jewish settlements in order to gain ownership or control of the great majority of lands within Israel: Much of the land previously owned by those who became refugees in 1948, including those who fled to another area within Israel, was declared "abandoned" and transferred to the Custodian of Absentee Property. The owners were not allowed to reclaim their property even if they were Israeli citizens. As many as half the Arabs in Israel became "present absentees" and in many cases saw their lands, houses and shops taken over by Jewish immigrants. (By 1954 more than a third of the Jewish population lived on "absentee" property.) Other laws, some retroactive, empowered the state to seize lands deemed "uncultivated", "needed for security" or needed for the absorption of Jewish immigration.

Inability to prove ownership to the satisfaction of lawyers of the national institutions resulted in the transfer of the "disputed" lands to the state. Another method was to declare an area "closed" under Emergency Regulations; since the owners were denied access, the land remained uncultivated. Then it could simply be seized as "uncultivated" and used for Zionist projects. (11)

Until 1966, nearly two decades after the state was established, four out of every five Israeli Arabs lived under "military administration" which permitted detention without trial, restrictions on employment, requirements for travel permits and continued large-scale land expropriation.

Turning to southern Africa, as in Palestine, indigenous non-Europeans have lived there since the beginning of recorded history. The first permanent European settlement was established in Cape Town in 1652, an era of outward European expansion. As the settlers moved toward the interior of what is today South Africa, they encountered resistance from the local population. The Khoi-San were the first casualties: Some were driven further north while others died in combat or were assimilated into the racial group known today as Coloureds. (12) By the

1770's, the forefathers of today's Afrikaners expanded far enough to come into contact- and combat- with the Bantu-speaking people. Colonization, subjugation and exploitation of this indigenous majority make up a substantial part of the history of South Africa and apartheid. Today, five million whites are in control of a country in which the Africans number more than 23 million.

Like the Zionists in Palestine, the Boers had to fight both the local population and the British. The first "Freedom War" broke out in 1880; the following year the Transvaal was granted autonomy. The second war, which broke out in 1899 was won by the British. The British set up concentration camps for the Boers' families in which many thousands of women and children died, often from starvation or disease. The experience continues to haunt the Afrikaners as a past holocaust of their own. In 1909 the British Parliament passed the South Africa Act which led to the establishment of the Union of South Africa.

While the reasons and justifications differed, it remained true that technologically superior settlers managed both in southern Africa and the Middle East to overcome the resistance of a poorly organized local population and establish a political structure in

which they have enjoyed superior political, economic and social status. The local population has continued to resist with all available means, including what the settlers see as terrorism. For their part, in the name of defense South Africa and Israel have invaded their neighbors causing numerous civilian casualties, defied United Nations resolutions, denied civil and political rights, dispossessed and banished opponents. There are no other examples in today's world of embattled Western-oriented outposts facing a hostile Third World population within and without their borders. The last two countries to share such characteristics were French Algeria and Rhodesia.

*

It is axiomatic for both Afrikaners and Zionists that although it was regrettably necessary to fight and win, justice and morality have been on their side ever since the first settlers arrived. It is often denied, especially in front of Western audiences, that the local population suffered displacement and tragedy in the process. Among Golda Meir's most often quoted statements is one she made in a 1969 interview with the Sunday Times of London: "It was not as though there was a Palestinian people in Palestine considering itself as a Palestinian people and we came

and threw them out and took their country away from them. They did not exist." (13) Hence Israel shares "No, no responsibility whatsoever for their plight". In domestic debates, however, Israeli statements are often more candid: Only weeks before Golda Meir's interview, Moshe Dayan had a somewhat different version, as he explained in a lecture before students in Haifa:

We came to a land which was populated by Arabs and we are creating a Hebrew state, a Jewish state. In many cases, we purchased the land from Arabs, and the Arab villages were replaced by Jewish villages. You don't even know their names and I do not blame you. Those geography books no longer exist. Not only the books, the villages themselves no longer exist. Nahalal was built in place of Mahaloul, Gevat was built in place of Jivta, Sarid in place of Hanfas... There is not a single settlement which was not built in place of a prior Arab settlement. (14)

Afrikaners have their own brand of revisionist history with regard to settlement and displacement. It is often asserted that the early settlers found only primitive "Kaffirs" who came from elsewhere in Africa at about the same time: "The Europeans, including Portuguese, Dutch, British and Germans have developed South Africa for about 400 years- the early settlers meeting the Black tribes who came down from central Africa to inhabit the lush lands of the north and east of the southern subcontinent." (15)

As Zionists see it, their right to the disputed land is backed up by historical, religious and other metaphysical reasons. The late Nahum Goldman, former president of the World Zionist Organization and a leading dove noted,

When we appeared on the scene of history, most progressive groups in the world were our best friends. Many of them are no longer. But when these opponents argue that we did the Arabs wrong, that while we may not have expelled a large group, hundreds of thousands of people, we have brought it about that they are no longer masters of their land, when one asks 'why not give America back to the Indians', the only answer to that is that we have a higher right on our side... We have the higher right for two simple reasons: One is what I would call a metaphysical, a religio-mystical reason, because Jewish history is unthinkable without the central position of Eretz Israel... And the second is the fact that for the Arabs who have large areas of land which they will not have settled in a hundred years, Palestine, which is one or two percent of this area does not play a decisive role. (16)

In the Israeli case, the act of settlement in effect involves the reclamation of an ancient but eternal title to the land. The basis for the claim is a divine promise to a chosen people who established an ancient kingdom, events for which the Old Testament is the primary available record. This is a major reason for the significance attached to the Old Testament in Zionist ideology. Even the non-observant- such as

Ben-Gurion- have accepted the Biblical claim as compelling. In Rebirth and Destiny of Israel

Ben-Gurion pointed out:

The rights to Palestine do not, as in other countries they do, belong to the existing settlers, whether they be Jews or Arabs. The crux is the Right of Return of Jewry Dispersed. (17)

Similarly, Arieh Eliav, former Secretary General of the Labor Party and today a voice for moderation saw fit to point out the following even as he was advocating a peaceful compromise:

In stating [that the Arabs also have rights] I do not negate or detract one whit from the full historical rights of the Jews to the undivided Land of Israel- that is, the Land of the Twelve Tribes. (18)

The Israeli child in public school begins to study the Old Testament as soon as he can read and write. It remains a mandatory subject through graduation from high school. Biblical verse can be heard at the beginning and end of each day on the state broadcast media. Some of the verse mention the conquest of the Land of Canaan and God's desire that the Canaanites be removed or turned into "hewers of wood and drawers of water", their rightful place (Book of Joshua). The attachment to Jerusalem and to the West Bank, known in Israeli official statements as Judea and Samaria, the renaming of the currency in

recent years as Shekel (used by Abraham) and indeed the name of the country are additional illustrations of the centrality of the Bible in this twentieth century state and political movement.

In Afrikaner mythology, one finds a similar pivotal role for the Bible as the document in which their God-given rights are guaranteed. The Boers firmly believed in predestination along racial lines and in the division of the human race into a small "chosen" part versus all the rest. In reading the Old Testament they found a reflection of their own story: After the exodus, Chosen People are led to a Chosen Land through a miracle of God; on their way they fight the heathen and suffer from plagues and droughts. The heathen were the equivalent of the Canaanites and Philistines, while the British played the role of Pharaoh in ancient Egypt. Biblical names were given to many of the Boer settlements: Betlehem, Nasareth, Bethan, Dalmanutha and Benoni. "It was the Old Testament and the doctrines of Calvin that moulded the Boer into the Afrikaner of today", Sheila Patterson noted in The Last Trek. (19) Another writer observed that "many Afrikaners felt they were entitled to draw authority from the Bible for their beliefs, particularly from such sources as Psalm 105, which

told them that 'He brought forth his people with joy and his chosen with gladness: and, gave them the lands of the heathen, and they inherited the labour of the people.'" They further appreciated the advice given to the Corinthians in the New Testament:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with the unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you. (20)

The Constitution Act, 1961, refers to South Africa as having been given by God to a specific people, "this their own" land. (21) According to the Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa (1982) religious programming on the airwaves remains very popular and some daily newspapers carry scriptural messages. Even "the defence and police forces regard religious instruction as an indispensable adjunct to the training of recruits". Afrikaners and their Dutch Reform Church have then found a way to reconcile apartheid and Christianity. In a system such as South Africa's, as a National Party member of Parliament explained in 1948, "we must beware that our attitude towards the non-European is not so Christian that it becomes un-Christian towards ourselves and our children". (22)

The Policies of "Contrived Ethnic Preponderance"

There is no a priori reason why in any one state men of different races and creeds should not be ardent [sic] citizens living in peace and harmony with each other. The trend of modern thought, in spite of backwaters and counter currents, is surely in that direction. A Russia which must be purely Slav and of the Orthodox Greek church strikes us as an anachronistic effort...
(23)

The ways in which South Africa and Israel preserve their "whiteness" and "Jewishness" respectively are considered next. Both efforts appear to qualify as the type of anachronistic "backwaters and counter currents" C.G. Montefiore was referring to at the turn of the century.

In South Africa, although biological features have been the determinants of power and privilege for centuries, it was not until 1948, when the National Party took office, that apartheid became official and systematic policy. The linchpin of apartheid is widely seen as the 1950 Population Registration Act which classified South Africans as either white, Black, Asian or Coloured, the latter further subdivided. The Population Registration Act as amended in 1962, for instance, defined a white person as someone who

(a) in appearance obviously is a white person and who is not generally accepted as a Coloured person: or (b) is generally accepted as a white person and is not in appearance obviously not a white person but does not include any person who for the purposes of his classification under this Act, freely and voluntarily admits that he is by descent a native or a Coloured person unless it is proved that the admission is not based on fact. (24)

Classification is subject to change. The Group Areas Act, also passed in 1950, designates the areas where each race may live. (25) The Pass Laws block freedom of movement for Africans, who may live either in homelands or townships from where they can go to work in "white" cities. A Black may not enter the white man's city without a pass, the document which every African over the age of 16- and only Africans- must now carry. Failure to produce the pass at the demand of a police officer is a criminal offense. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949) and the Immorality Act (1927 as amended in 1950 and 1957) prohibited marriage or sex between Europeans and non-Europeans. The police were authorized to enter bedrooms to gather evidence. The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (1953) and the Liquor Act (1977), in conjunction with the Group Areas Act are the basis for what has come to be known as "petty apartheid". This legislation determines which parks,

buses, rest rooms and other facilities are the white man's domain and therefore off-limits for Blacks. Earlier legislation, such as the Native Land Act of 1913 and the Native Trust and Land Act of 1936, allows less than one seventh of South Africa's area, mostly eroded although potentially fertile, to be owned by the 72% of the population which is African. Today, each of the ethnic groups within the African majority is assigned to a "homeland" or bantustan, the only places where, according to the "grand apartheid" scheme, they may exercise political rights. Four bantustans are now formally independent. In November 1983 P.W. Botha received overwhelming white approval for his "new constitution" which provides for a tricameral parliament for whites, Coloureds and Indians to the total exclusion of the African majority. No other country in the world practices such official and comprehensive discrimination on the basis of biological factors.

Would similar legislation have been enacted if the population ratio in South Africa was the reverse of what it is today? Would a hypothetical Afrikaner majority, which resulted from flight and banishment of most Africans to their homelands, be as insecure as the white minority is today? It is, of course,

impossible to be certain, but it seems logical to expect that the numerical odds against which supremacy is to be maintained are an important factor.

Israel, by contrast, found its task "miraculously simplified", as Chaim Weizmann noted. Only about 17% of the population is non-Jewish, excluding about 1.2 million Arabs in the territories occupied in 1967. The latter, unlike the Jewish settlers in their midst, have no political rights. Workers from the West Bank and Gaza commute to Israel daily as inexpensive guest workers who may not stay overnight where they work; they typically fill construction and janitorial openings. Emergency regulations left over from the British mandate period, comparable to those now in effect in South Africa, are enforced against "terrorists" and their families. Among the measures employed by the authorities have been deportations of leaders, restrictions on freedom of the press and bombing of houses as collective punishment. The dual system of politics and law has been in effect for 18 years, and all Israeli governments have opposed total withdrawal. The 1967 boundaries have been erased in every sense, including official maps.

Although the above features have invited comparisons with South Africa and the bantustans, it

is arguable that the status of the West Bank and Gaza has not been finally determined and they are not Israel proper. Hence the focus of the discussion below is not the West Bank and Gaza but pre-1967 Israel. As before, since apartheid is more familiar and generates less controversy, Israel is discussed in greater detail.

The Israeli Declaration of Independence seems to include a suggestive inconsistency. It states that "by virtue of our natural and historic right and on the strength of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly [we] hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz Israel". The Jewish settlers, having brought "the blessings of progress to all the country's inhabitants" now have a state which "will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles". The same paragraph states that the Jewish state will "ensure social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex." (26) [Emphasis added.] Thus in theory Israeli Arabs were to enjoy equality as individuals in a state established by Jews for Jews. As for their national rights, it follows, these can only be satisfied elsewhere, such as in Jordan.

In sharp contrast to South Africa, most Israeli

laws do not distinguish between Jewish and non-Jewish citizens, with the exception of the Law of Return (1950) and the Nationality Law (1952). The former allows any person in the world whose mother is Jewish or was converted to Judaism by a rabbi to become an Israeli citizen upon arrival. The Nationality Law is in fact two laws, one for Jews and the other for non-Jews. (27) While no other Israeli laws distinguish between Jews and non-Jews, the distinction is made by organizations which have been granted quasi-governmental status, received government funding and are known as "national institutions"- the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency and The Jewish National Fund. The Zionist organizations promote Jewish immigration, Jewish settlement and Jewish land acquisition. The Jewish Agency, for instance, plays a key role in the development of housing and the infrastructure; it paves roads and supplies electricity as well. The assignment of such tasks to separate institutions allows the channeling of vastly superior benefits to Jewish settlers while "lawfully" excluding non-Jews. As Ian Lustick explains,

Because they are not formally part of the Israeli government apparatus, they do not serve a constituency of Israeli citizens... They therefore constitute efficient conduits for channeling resources to the Jewish

population only, resources which are converted into capital-intensive economic development projects, educational vocational training, social services, land acquisition, etc. In the implementation of such programs, officials of these institutions see themselves ideologically as well as legally justified in ignoring the needs of Arab Israelis and the impact of their activities on the Arab sector. (28)

Not only is there no appearance of "separate development" originating from the government, the government may point out, as has been done repeatedly, that Israeli Arabs are materially better off than those in surrounding countries.

However in conjunction with far lower government spending in the Arab sector, the resulting gap between Jewish and Arab settlements is substantial. It applies to employment opportunities, the availability of housing, health services and even electricity. The following 1975 comparison between (Jewish) Upper Nazareth and (Arab) Nazareth, both within pre-1967 Israel, is instructive:

Upper Nazareth, which was built some 15 years ago "in order to create a counterweight to Arab Nazareth" constitutes a cornerstone of the "Judaization of the Galilee" policy. Upper Nazareth was erected upon the hills surrounding Nazareth as a security belt surrounding it almost on all sides. It was built upon thousands of acres of land which were expropriated high-handedly, purely and simply by force, from the Arab settlements, particularly Nazareth and Rana... The visitor to Nazareth

can notice with his own eyes the neglect and lack of development of the city, and if he then goes "up" to Upper Nazareth he will see the new buildings, the wide streets, the public lights, the steps, the tall buildings, the industrial and artisan enterprises and he will be able to notice the contrast: development up there and neglect down there, constant government construction up there and none whatsoever down there. Since 1966, the Israeli Ministry of Housing has not built a single apartment in old Nazareth. (29)

With legal mechanisms such as the Jewish National Fund, the Custodian of Absentee Property, the Land Administration and the Jewish Agency Settlement Department, "public" lands, (also known as "state" lands) have been reserved for Jewish use. Approximately 92% of the land in pre-1967 Israel falls into this category. Arabs are effectively denied access to such lands for the purpose of long-term leasing or development. (30) The Jewish National Fund charter mandates that lands controlled by the Fund must remain the property of the Jewish people indefinitely and cannot be sold, leased or rented to non-Jews. Non-Jewish labor may not be employed on such "public" lands. In one instance

The Ministry of Agriculture and the Settlement Department of the Jewish Agency have recently launched a vigorous campaign to eradicate the plague of leasing land and orchards to Bedouins and Arab farmers in the western Galilee.

The director of the Galilee Area for the

Jewish Agency, Mr. Aharon Nahumi, said that his office had sent a memorandum to all settlements in which they are warned that the leasing of national lands to be cultivated by Arab sharecroppers, as well as renting the orchards for the purpose of picking and marketing by Arabs, is against the law and the regulations of the Settlement Authorities and settlement movements.

The management of the Galilee area is calling on the settlements to refrain from this conduct and is underscoring that last year the Department pressed charges against those settlements which had not done so.
(31)

It is also important to consider the differential effects of military service for Israeli Jews and Arabs. The overwhelming majority of Israeli Arabs do not have to, and indeed may not volunteer to serve in the armed forces. Many job opportunities, some with no apparent connection to security, as well as benefits (e.g. government-backed mortgages, welfare payments aimed at encouraging large families and scholarships) were made contingent on past military service of the recipient or a member of his family. For instance, welfare benefits for those whose "parents, grandparents or brothers served in the IDF" were set 40% higher; and so as not to discriminate in the process against Jewish religious seminary students who are exempted from military service, a special fund was created for them under the control of the Ministry of

Religion. (32)

A network of state-run employment agencies is similarly non-discriminatory in appearance but nonetheless guarantees that Jewish workers have the first claim on job openings. The agencies are required to give preference to workers from the immediate area. Where Jews live, the immediate area is often industrialized or qualifies as a high-incentive development zone. There is little industry in Arab areas, which do not normally qualify as official development zones. At times of full employment this ensures that Jewish workers will be offered the better jobs. The openings do not become available to Arabs unless there is a shortage of Jewish labor. At times of unemployment, Arab areas would be hit hardest.

Mechanisms such as these make it impossible for the non-Jew in the Jewish state to go to a court of law, since no state law has been violated. In addition, court appeals by Arabs are routinely rejected "without further need of specification or substantiation" whenever the state claims that a step was necessary due to security considerations. (33)

The character of the state makes it inevitable for planners to be preoccupied with the "demographic nightmare"- the combined effects of lower Jewish

immigration, higher Jewish emigration and the difference between the Arab and Jewish birth rates. A confidential memorandum, "Handling the Arabs of Israel" written for Prime Minister Rabin in 1976 and leaked to Al Hamishmar is a case in point. Its author, Northern District Commissioner of the Ministry of the Interior, Israel Koenig, was concerned about the high rate of increase in the Arab population (5.9% annually) compared to only 1.5% for Jews. The author noted that in the past the state had failed to take into account "the Arab character which is Levantine and superficial, which contains no depth, and in which the activity of the imagination is greater than that of the reason." Koenig, who did not resign or lose his position after the memorandum became public recommended, among other measures, to "expand and deepen Jewish settlement in areas where the contiguity of the Arab population is prominent and where they number considerably more than the Jewish population; examine the possibility of diluting existing Arab population concentrations..." He was also in favor of reducing the number of Arab students in Israeli universities, making it easy for Arabs to go and study abroad but difficult to return, reducing allowances to Arab families with many children and using quotas for

Arab workers. The greater economic hardship should deny them the "social and economic security that... grants them, consciously and subconsciously, leisure for 'social-nationalist' thought". (34) Ian Lustick believes that "the document as a whole reflects more clearly and comprehensively than any other published source the overall orientation toward the Arab minority of those officials with responsibility for the affairs of the non-Jewish population." (35)

As the prospects of Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza become more remote, the Israeli public appears to become more amenable to solutions which involve deportation or denial of elementary rights. Deputy speaker of the Knesset Meir Cohen has already expressed his view that "Israel made a grave mistake [in 1967] by not expelling 200,000 to 300,000 Arabs from the West Bank." (36) Poll findings such as the following by the PORI research institute in late 1984 are unexceptional: just under 30% of the public accepts some or all of Knesset Member Meir Kahane's positions about the treatment of Palestinians. (37) Kahane, one of whose slogans is "I say what you think" and who often begins his speeches with the greeting "Hello Jews, hello dogs" has gained legitimacy after being elected to the Knesset. He is

expected to do much better in future elections and possibly become a coalition partner in a conservative government. "Today no one is dismissing rabbi Kahane", Thomas Friedman noted on the front page of the New York Times. (38) Kahane now appeals even to segments of "centrist Israeli society" who wish to "end what they call the 'Arab problem' once and for all".

One year before Friedman's observation, Israelis were asked in a Dahaf research institute poll conducted by Dr. Mina Zemach how they would handle the Palestinians in the occupied territories. 15% of the Israeli public favored their deportation to Arab states and about as many would grant them full civil rights in Israel. A substantial plurality, however, (43.5%) would allow these Palestinians to stay as long as they are denied voting and other political rights. (39) At least in this poll, then, as the Israeli newspaper put it, a majority of the Israeli public chose "deportation or apartheid".

Within this ideological climate, the local council of Kiryat Arba, a Jewish settlement near Hebron, agreed in July 1985 to "take immediate action to terminate the employment of all Arabs employed by the local council and to arrange for street maintenance and gardening to be performed by contractors who

will only employ Jews... to award permits and recommendations only to businesses or investors whose line of business and statements guarantee that only Jews will be employed and who will not establish joint enterprises with Arabs." (40)

The above discussion was not intended to settle the controversy on whether Zionism is by nature a form of racism. It does suggest that in a land populated with growing numbers of non-Jews, policies of "separate development" in some form or another are inevitable if Zionist ideology is to be implemented. Such policies need not be, and at present cannot be found in the letter of the Israeli law. Yet just as would be true of a Moslem, Christian or Black state, Israel's commitment to Zionist principles and the operating procedures of its major institutions assure that the country does not belong to all its citizens. National goals such as "ingathering of exiles", being "the sovereign state of all Jewish people" and maintaining a Jewish majority cannot easily be reconciled with secular citizenship rights and political pluralism. Hence it is misleading to describe Israel as "Jewish" in the same sense that France is French. The latter does not officially strive to be the country of one ethnic group or race.

Arabs living in the French state are French, but Arabs living in the Jewish state are not Jewish.

As for Israeli Jewish attitudes towards Arabs, polls consistently find widespread prejudice. The findings of one poll, conducted by the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem were reported on the front page of Maariv: 36% of Israeli Jews regarded Arabs as "dirty", 42% as "primitive", 33% as "not valuing human life" and 41% as "violent". 36% of the respondents opposed equal rights for Arabs and Jews, two in every three opposed the sale of lands to Arabs in the central region of the country and one in three believed that a way should be actively sought to induce Arabs to emigrate. The pollster, Dr. Mina Zemach, described the sample as scientific and representative of Israeli Jews. (41) Israeli officials are on record as having referred to Arabs or their labor as a "cancer". (42) There have been some newspaper reports about prison terms for Arabs who pretended to be Jews, although no Jews are known to have pretended to be Arabs. In one instance, an Arab was "suspected of having posed as a Jew and promised to marry a widow" with whom it was "suspected" he had had an intimate relationship. He was detained by the Fraud Squad of Haifa police. (43)

It is worth noting that the above ethnic and religious exclusivism can even override differences in skin color, as the acceptance of Ethiopian Jews demonstrates. The main problem they presented was whether they were genuine Jews, that is, biologically descended from an ancient Jewish tribe, as most rabbis ultimately ruled they were. (Some questions remained, however. The immigrants were reportedly indignant later over the demand of some rabbis that they immerse themselves in the "mikvah" ritual baths to "renew" their Jewishness and receive a document certifying their status as Jews.) Black Hebrews from the United States, by contrast, were not recognized as genuine Jews and have faced deportation and difficulties in finding employment.

South African whites, having had to cope with the threat of "absorption" and domination by the masses of Blacks have adopted more overt measures. These masses were seen as inferior objects of exploitation and at the same time as a formidable threat to survival. For the sake of survival, "if to do this effectively and avoid being submerged or absorbed entailed the domination of other groups, so it had to be." (44) There was also the distinction made by European colonizers between that part of the human race which

is civilized and the savages, a dichotomy which coincided with being Christian versus being a heathen. The Africans, as George Frederickson noted, appeared to the colonizers to be living lives more like those of beasts than of humans. It was their obligation, the colonizers believed, to try to rescue those savages from ignorance and darkness. (45)

Bigotry and prejudice remain pervasive. A recent book by Vincent Crapanzano quotes numerous whites who speak of Black inferiority, laziness and stupidity. One farmer who lives north of Cape Town explained that "the Black man thinks slowly" and then noted:

The relationship between whites and Coloureds is very good... The farmers treat them well. No farmer would treat his horse badly because he has to use it. It would be foolish. It is the same with the workers.
(46)

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At the root of apartheid is the definition of nationality in monoracial and unicultural terms. For the purpose of preserving a "white" South Africa, apartheid has designated special homogeneous homelands for each group, a practice also known as "macro-segregation". Other legislation regulates smaller scale segregation at the local level, e.g. the

Group Areas Act, the Bantu Education Act and the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act. No Israeli equivalent can be found for the latter type of official segregation, "micro-segregation". Yet the anti-pluralist, exclusivist tendencies of Zionism do seem to point to a significant philosophical convergence with apartheid: Under both, concepts of citizenship are anachronistic and seem to have borrowed from tribal concepts of kinship as well as from German nationalistic Volk thought. (47) Such criteria, if applied to the United States or the Soviet Union would have led to an Anglo-Saxon Christian America and a purely Slav Russia.

South Africa and Israel go beyond most modern democratic polities in their anti-pluralism. Thus while it is not uncommon for modern nations to be open to some outsiders and closed to others, the legal criteria for admission and benefits are not normally racial, religious or cultural. Yet Jewish Israel and white South Africa can only be what they are now: Secular citizenship rights would bring about their political demise, as spokesmen of the settler states point out themselves. The anachronistic concept of citizenship based on kinship and the struggle to preserve this type of separatism at what seems to be

the wrong time in history is then what makes the countries natural bedfellows in a significant sense.

The dream of apartheid calls for a white South Africa with autonomous black bantustans; the implementation of Zionism calls for a predominantly Jewish Israel with safeguards against a radical change in the demographic balance. The Likud Party favors annexation and, as a solution for the Palestinian "problem", autonomy under "moderate leadership" within Greater Israel (with more limitation than the South African bantustans- internal security, Jewish settlements, water rights, "state" lands, etc.) The Labor Party prefers "territorial compromise" for areas densely populated with Arabs and may accept a Palestinian "homeland" of sorts, provided it is not a sovereign state.

Heribert Adam explained why polities such as Israel and South Africa must be seen as fundamentally different from other states where discrimination exists:

In most hierarchically organized systems certain ethnic segments have a politically inferior status. They are not merely excluded from the spoils of political power as in many divided peripheries but the state itself is defined in terms of the myths and symbols of the ruling group as its exclusive domain. In these ethnic states the ruling group ideology is enshrined in law or custom

at the expense of secular citizenship rights. There are second-class citizens, almost outside the polity who are perceived as untrustworthy by birth. (48)

There is nothing in what was said so far that would prevent a considerable degree of freedom for members of the dominant segment of the population in each country, especially if dissent remains within the parameters of state ideology. One finds that both countries hold free elections and grant freedom of speech and freedom of the press, often to a greater extent than in surrounding Third World states. (In Israel, however, the lack of separation between church and state sets certain limits for the non-observant.) Still, restricted to the above criteria alone, Israel and South Africa are "two of the only 30 democracies in the world", as Israeli Minister of Industry and Commerce Gideon Pat pointed out in earnest in Pretoria. (49)

The Sea of Hostility

There are telling similarities in the ways dominant groups in the two countries view the world. From the perspective of a fortress mentality, the world is unjustly hostile, a "pack of wolves"

ganging up with double standards and no regard for fairness, truth or principles. The possibility that their policies may have even a minimal connection to the attitude of the Third World is not normally considered. (50) The majority of nations is seen as indifferent to whether terrorists and their backers manage to destroy the settler state (or, more crudely put, throw them into the sea.) Only their own power can insure their survival, and it makes no difference what others think. Therefore, with no one else to count on, "it does not matter what the gentiles say, only what the Jews do", as one Ben-Gurion's classic statements went. No one in the world has the right to "teach them morality" or tell them which measures are necessary to protect their security. In the Israeli case, anti-Semitism is often believed to be a primary motivation for a critical attitude abroad. Prime Minister Menachem Begin frequently brought up the Nazi Holocaust in response to criticism even by friendly Western governments, such as after the 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

President Chaim Herzog came to the conclusion that the Third World is swept up by an "automatic majority" while the West is "succumbing to the power of oil and commercial interests", as he wrote in his book Who

Stands Accused? And Further,

We represent principles and values which are so distasteful to many regimes in the world that we must continue to expect the outpouring of calumnies against the Jewish people and Israel to which we must become accustomed...(51)

If the last four years at the United Nations prove anything, it is that our enemies do not distinguish in any way between Israel and the Jewish people... These resolutions, which were drafted by the P.L.O. and the Arab states, recall from the shadows of the past the racist interpretations of Der Stürmer in Nazi Germany. The violent anti-Semitic tone which has been injected into these resolutions is gradually joining the automatic slogans of vilification and hate which have become part of the international political vocabulary in the Soviet and so-called non-aligned world. (52)

White South Africa's view of the world is similar in its broad outline. The world has refused to understand them and continues to humiliate, besmirch and oppress them. As early as 1946 the infant United Nations was described by Smuts as afflicted with a "solid mass of prejudice against the colour policies of South Africa", prejudices which cannot be neutralized by even the "most efficient publicity". (53) Daniel Malan saw a world which temporarily lost its senses about South Africa due to a "sickly sentimentality with regard to the Black man"; Verwoerd spoke of "psychosis" in the West about freedoms of

Blacks in South Africa while P.W. Botha saw a "paralysis in the mind of the West" which keeps it from seeing the importance of South Africa and becoming involved in "the fight for Christian civilised standards". But the essence of evil remains the United Nations, that "hydra-headed animal" conspiring to "contract us out of existence", as Roelof Botha put it. (54)

The motives of those who are politically active against South Africa are seen as maliciousness, vindictiveness, prejudice, ignorance or anti-white racism. They are bent on destroying the whites. As P.W. Botha stated,

...Like the rest of the Free World, the RSA is a target for international communism and its cohorts- leftist activists, exaggerated humanism, permissiveness, materialism and related ideologies. In addition, the RSA has been singled out as a special target for the by-product of their ideologies, such as Black racialism, exaggerated individual freedom, one-man one-vote and a host of other slogans employed against us on the basis of double standards... (55)

This is all part of the aforementioned "Total Onslaught" which includes all possible forms of pressure on South Africa: persuasion, coercion, boycotts and diplomatic isolation. The Onslaught (read calls to end white supremacy) is seen in Manichaeian terms as a manifestation of the ongoing struggle

between Western civilization and communism, its deadly enemy. Although communist-inspired, the Onslaught includes the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and even the West. Since the West wants to force the South African government to abdicate like Rhodesia, they are in fact, according to Defence Minister Magnus Malan "available as the handymen of the communists and they are indirectly contributing to the destruction of capitalism and the establishment of world communism". (56) This, as one scholar noted, is a "permanent invitation for the Western nations to embrace the apartheid regime as their ideological kin and to include it within their collective security system". (57)

The theme of a "communist master plot" to conquer the world, in most cases with South Africa as the first stepping stone, is indeed exceptionally common in South African official statements and writings. The blindness and weakness of the West is repeatedly contrasted with the rapaciousness of the communists who remain adamant in their desire to rule the world. For instance, the 1367 page report of a judicial commission to the South African parliament, published in 1982, saw the hand of the Soviet Union in the attempts to weaken South Africa with the goal of

denying minerals and oil to Western Europe. That would place the cunning communists in a better position to attack the United States. Soviet proxies, such as the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress, are useful tools for this purpose. The premise is that there would be no race conflict in South Africa if not for outside agitation. (58) Prime Minister P.W. Botha was even able to tell an interviewer the order in which the communists plan to conquer the world: Europe first, then Africa for its raw materials and Cape Sea route, then isolating the United States from Europe and proceeding to assault China. (59)

Although Israeli official statements are rarely as extreme, the above geo-political perspective of Free World versus communist expansionism is widely accepted, as might, of course, be expected of a close ally and client of the United States. The "common ideal" shared by Israel and South Africa, toasted by Prime Minister Rabin with his guest Vorster, (chapter 4) was indeed to resist "foreign-inspired instability and recklessness"; Ariel Sharon saw the need for the West to break the embargo and supply South Africa with additional weapons on grounds that it is one of the few countries in Africa and southwest Asia trying to

resist "Soviet infiltration" which is "gaining ground daily". (60)

As part of its contribution to what it sees as "the defense of the West", Israel has armed and trained numerous armies and police forces of right wing dictatorships- Chile, Zaire, Haiti the Philippines Guatemala and more. As noted, Israel was also among a handful of United States allies which were invited, and accepted, to participate in the "Star Wars" project.

South Africa under the current leadership fits well into the Israeli "Free World" anticommunist orientation. The collapse of white rule would no doubt be unwelcome news for Jerusalem not only because of the important relationship but also because more Third World and United Nations heat may then be turned on Israel. As A. Schweitzer explained in Haaretz in the summer of 1985, "the Third World, with Soviet guidance and Arab financing, has for years been on the offensive against two states which are linked with the West: Israel and South Africa... It should be clear to anyone who has eyes in his head that the fall of either of these states will accelerate the assault on the other. We would therefore not be doing ourselves a favor if we rush to mourn South Africa or speed up her

decline by diplomatic or other action." (61)

Former Israeli Ambassador to South Africa I. Unna also saw the importance of South Africa, which "must be seen as having special values for the Free World".

Should her enemies prevail, he warns, it would be a

frightful situation- one that would make any discussion about racial equality, or even improvements in the racial situation, completely irrelevant. It would be a disaster if South Africa were lost as a constructive and active member of the free community of nations. (62)

NOTES

(1) Republic of South Africa. South Africa Yearbook. Johannesburg: The Information Service of South Africa, 1977 ed. p. 61.

(2) Goodman, Hirsh, "Parallel Illusions", Jerusalem Post Magazine, September 11, 1981.

(3) Harris, Brice, "The South Africanization of Israel", Arab Studies Quarterly, Summer 1984 p. 171.

(4) See for instance Elon, Amos. The Israelis: Founders and Sons. New York, Chicago and San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971 p. 149.

(5) Quoted by Greenberg Stanley. State in Capitalist Development: Comparative Perspectives. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1980 p. 357.

(6) Weitz, Yosef in My Diary and Letters to the Children, quoted by Said, Edward. The Question of Palestine. New York: Times-Books, 1979 pp. 99-100.

(7) Katzenelson's Writings as quoted by author Moshe Shamir in Maariv, August 9, 1974.

(8) Greenberg, op. cit. pp. 360-365.

(9) Chomsky, Noam. The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel and the Palestinians. Boston: South End Press, 1983 p. 92.

(10) Quoted by Lustick, Ian. Arabs in the Jewish State: Israel's Control of a National Minority. (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1980 p. 28.

Despite the "miracle", in 1979 five Israeli cabinet members acting as a censorship board "prohibited former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin from including in his memoirs a first person account of the expulsion of 50,000 Palestinian civilians from their homes near Tel Aviv during the 1948 Arab- Israeli war". David K. Shipler, The New York Times, October 23, 1979.

Many other Palestinians fled in terror after the Dir Yassin massacre perpetuated by the right-wing Irgun Zvai Leumi led by Menachem Begin. Begin himself,

discussing the "enemy propaganda" which resulted from the massacre, noted in his book The Revolt: "In the result, it helped us. Panic overwhelmed the Arabs of Eretz Israel... the Arabs began to flee in terror even before they clashed with Jewish forces". The Arabs of Haifa for instance, "began fleeing in panic, shouting: Dir Yassin!" (The Revolt. Los Angeles: Nash Publishing, 1972 pp. 164-165.)

Israeli spokesmen, on the other hand, have argued that Arab leaders called upon the population to leave temporarily so as to make it easier for the Arab armies to rout the Israelis. The evidence presented to support this version of events has been at best meagre, nor is it clear why it would follow that those who listened to the above calls forfeited their right to their homes, lands and shops.

(11) Lustick, op. cit. p. 51; 57-59; 172-178.

(12) For a comprehensive history see the two-volume Oxford History of South Africa by Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.

(13) The Sunday Times (London), June 15, 1969.

(14) The address was reprinted in Haaretz, April 4, 1969.

(15) Brigadier Jack Penn in Armed Forces (SA), April 1980.

(16) Goldman, Nahum, "Basle 1897- Israel 1967: Assembly to Mark the 70th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Zionist Congress", pp. 27-28. Quoted in An Examination of Documents on which the State of Israel is Based by Bhim Singh, Beirut: P.L.O. Research Center, 1970.

(17) Quoted by Haddad, Hassan, "The Biblical Bases of Zionist Colonialism", in Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Settler Regimes in Africa and the Arab World: The Illusion of Endurance. Wilmette, Ill.: Medina University Press, 1974 p. 8.

(18) Eliav, Arieh, "We and the Arabs", Foreign Policy #10, Spring 1973 p. 64.

(19) Patterson, op. cit. p. 177; See also Frederickson, George. White Supremacy: A Comparative

Study in American and South African History. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.

(20) Fisher, John. The Afrikaners. London: Cassel & Co., 1969, p. 38.

(21) Wilson and Thompson, op. cit. p. 371.

(22) Patterson, op. cit. p. 207.

(23) C.G. Montefiore as quoted by Mazrui, Ali A., "Zionism and Apartheid: Strange Bedfellows or Natural Allies?" Alternatives No. 9, 1983 p. 77.

(24) Wilson and Thompson, op. cit. p. 403.

(25) For fuller details see also Marquard, Leo. The Peoples and Policies of South Africa. New York: Oxford University Press, 1969, especially pp. 129-135.

(26) Text in Encyclopaedia Judaica, op. cit. V. 5 col. 1453-1454.

(27) On occasion, questions arise about the "Jewishness" of a prospective immigrant or his parents and "additional documentation" is required, resulting in a Kafkaesque ordeal. See for instance the story of a couple told by Hon, Shaul, "Playing with the Law of Return", Maariv, May 17, 1985.

(28) Lustick, op. cit. p. 106.

(29) Elgazi, Joseph in Zo Haderech, July 30, 1975; See also Greenberg, op. cit. p. 368.

(30) Lustick, op. cit. pp. 107-108.

(31) Maariv, July 3, 1975.

(32) Lustick, op. cit. p. 94; 292.

(33) Smooha, Sammy and Peretz, Don, "The Arabs in Israel", Journal of Conflict Resolution, September 1982 p. 477.

(34) Al Hamishmar, September 7, 1976; Lustick, op. cit. pp. 68-69; 256.

(35) Lustick, op. cit. p. 69.

- (36) The New York Times, April 4, 1983.
- (37) Haaretz, December 11, 1984. Additional reports on the widespread support for Kahane among the youth appeared in Maariv weekly magazine, June 28, 1985; Rubinstein, Danny, "The Irony of Israel's Democracy Project", The New York Times, July 16, 1985.
- (38) The New York Times, August 5, 1985.
- (39) Al Hamishmar, July 20, 1984.
- (40) Maariv, July 26, 1985.
- (41) Maariv, August 19, 1980. See also Smooha and Peretz, op. cit. especially p. 476.
- (42) Aaron Uzan, then Minister of Agriculture, told a kibbutz audience that "the domination of Jewish agriculture by Arab workers is a cancer in our body". (Haaretz, December 13, 1974); similarly, in 1979, three years after the aforementioned Koenig report, the Northern Israeli Military Commander described the Arabs of the Galilee as a "cancer". (See Lawrence Meyer, Israel Now: Portrait of a Troubled Land. New York: Delacorte Press, 1982 p. 270); and former Chief of Staff Raphael Eytan explained to a Knesset committee in 1983 that "when we have settled the land, all the Arabs will be able to do about it will be to scurry around like drugged roaches in a bottle." The New York Times, April 14, 1983.
- (43) Maariv international edition, October 16, 1981 p. 7. See also Yediot Aharonot, April 20, 1979; Haaretz, July 28, 1977.
- (44) Wilson and Thompson, op. cit. Vol. II p. 366.
- (45) Frederickson, op. cit. passim.
- (46) Crapanzano, Vincent. Waiting: The Whites of South Africa. New York: Random House, 1985 pp. 317-318.
- (47) Mazrui, op. cit. p. 75.
- (48) Adam, Heribert, "Ethnic Politics and Crisis Management: Comparing South Africa and Israel", Journal of Asian and African Studies, V. 18, No. 1-2, 1983.

(49) Karni, Yoav, "Dr. Shekel and Mr. Apartheid", Yediot Aharonot, March 13, 1983.

As for Arab voting rights inside Israel, they have had effective access and voted heavily only for Rakah, the "pariah" Communist party. Others have run for the Knesset in "Arab lists" affiliated with the major Zionist parties. The lists themselves are not parties, have no steady membership and their names may vary from one election to the next. They are, however, useful as "vote-catching tactics" for as long as the candidates refrain from "exhibiting tendencies toward independence in their political stands". See Lustick, op. cit. pp. 208-209.

(50) This proposition does not require that the immediate causes of international opposition be identical at all times. At present, of course, international opposition to South Africa centers on the apartheid system, while Israel is often assailed for her policies in the occupied territories, treatment of Palestinians and indeed the ties with South Africa.

(51) Herzog, Chaim. Who Stands Accused? Israel Answers its Critics. New York: Random House, 1978, p. 17.

(52) Ibid, pp. 140-141.

(53) Geldenhuys, Deon. The Diplomacy of Isolation: South African Foreign Policy Making. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984, p. 209.

(54) Ibid.

(55) Department of Defence of the Republic of South Africa, "White Paper on Defence and Armament Production", 1973.

(56) Geldenhuys, Deon. The Diplomacy of Isolation, op. cit. p. 209.

(57) Bustin, Edouard in Onkar and Schultz, op. cit. 217.

(58) The report was discussed in The New York Times, February 7, 1982 p. E3.

(59) Starcke, Anna. Survival. Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers, 1978, p. 57.

(60) The New York Times, December 14, 1981.

(61) Schweitzer, A., "Madua Drom Africa"(Why South Africa), Haaretz, August 6, 1985.

(62) To the Point, July 27, 1979, in Jewish Affairs, September 1979.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this inquiry was to bring together all that is currently known about the South African-Israeli relationship and discuss it as a case study of realpolitik and ideology in interstate relations. This mostly-classified relationship is often seen in the West as one of expediency and pragmatism, an unnatural union of strange bedfellows. The main theme of the study, on the other hand, was that pragmatism alone cannot be regarded as an adequate and comprehensive explanation for the South African-Israeli interaction. The two-dimensional hypothesis developed here attempted to provide that fuller explanation.

But can the contending pragmatic hypothesis be reinforced? In the aforementioned article in African Affairs, Naomi Chazan suggested two possible explanations which are, in effect, just such reinforcements. Neither, however, seems to advance the

inquiry much beyond the point where it began. The first places great importance on the effects of the perceived 1973 "betrayal" of Israel by Black Africa, at a time when Pretoria acted like a friend in need. As an explanation for the ongoing ties, this does not appear compelling even to Chazan since, as noted, the ties with South Africa accelerated as emotions in Israel subsided. States do not often formulate long-term policies on the basis of injured emotions. More importantly, becoming an ally of South Africa is at least a dubious way to relieve international isolation. The second proposition, which Chazan appears to find more convincing than the former, holds that, as she put it, this "problematic alliance" was the outcome of lack of coordination, insensitivity, ignorance and apathy of the Israeli public about the ties with South Africa and indeed about South Africa itself. Since there are so many other matters of concern closer to home, commercial and military interests have been able, in this view, "to prevail in an overall state of policy inertia" and the absence of countervailing pressures. (1) This seems to aptly describe the evolution of some specific aspects of the ties, such as the involvement of Israeli entrepreneurs in the bantustans. However, it does little to explain

many other aspects of the ties which were detailed in chapters 5-7. Those other aspects would have required decisions and deliberations at the highest levels of policymaking. If there is public ignorance about South Africa and Israeli ties with her, the same cannot be said of members of the cabinet and Knesset. In fact, even in the above example of investments in the bantustans one finds that some of the entrepreneurs are prominent establishment Israelis. It is highly improbable that this is true of investors from any other country. Thus if we dismiss the notion that Israeli leaders found themselves in an alliance without knowing what they were doing, neither of these two explanations brings us any closer to an answer to the original question about the nature of the relationship.

On the other hand, the commonalities discussed earlier, such as settlement in a distant "promised" land and having to face a hostile, "dark" environment, fortress perceptions about the outside world and the struggle to survive as homogeneous entities which combine exclusivism with democratic institutions, a traumatic past and similar situations set the two countries apart from the rest of the world. The pattern described in chapter 10 ("Smiles and Red

Carpets"), some of whose features cannot be found in other pragmatic relationships with South Africa, is highly suggestive of a sense of solidarity and empathy which developed between these societies. It is likely that if a similar investigation was conducted on South African ties with former Rhodesia, any hypothesis which focused only on pragmatic considerations would have been found equally unsatisfactory. At the same time, it remains clear, as noted in the introduction, that no imaginable thesis can satisfy all objections from all quarters. In any case, what was attempted here, and what is generally expected from a theory is to take into account and fit all known facts, providing the best explanation for them without being in conflict with other facts or theories (or to reconcile the differences, if applicable.) As in all scholarly inquiry, the truths found here are tentative, not definitive, let alone "ultimate".

The foremost difference between the two countries remains that most Israeli laws are free of formal provisions for separate development. While in South Africa separate development and white privilege are maintained with explicit legislation and direct coercion, in Israel similar goals are effectively pursued through less visible and usually more complex

mechanisms (chapter 11). Arrangements such as these have been able to "serve the ideological ends of Zionism while reaping propaganda benefits among liberal circles abroad". (2) Due to the character of the state and its major institutions, the status of Arabs in the Jewish state is not comparable to that of other ethnic minorities in modern democratic states.

Israeli Arabs also have the right to vote and be elected to the Knesset, although establishing independent parties is discouraged. In the long run, it is unclear how Israel will resolve the conflict between the supreme national goal of maintaining the Jewish majority and character of the state on the one hand, and voting rights for increasing numbers of non-Jews on the other. Already there are indications, some cited in the previous chapter, that segments of the Jewish population are becoming more amenable to the idea of minority rule.

For the foreseeable future, South Africa is likely to remain an important ally in a highly diversified relationship. On the economic level it consists of joint investment and industrial projects, South African access to the EEC via Israel and the supply of South African coal to meet Israel's energy needs, among other aspects. The South African government has

allowed Israel to sell government bonds there, an unparalleled step; prominent Israelis, including members of the Knesset, have taken advantage of cheap labor and incentives to help develop the bantustans. One finds even the Histadrut labor federation and some kibbutzim involved in business projects with South Africa. The two countries now have a stake in each other's survival and prosperity.

Israel is sharing with South Africa her intelligence, combat and counterinsurgency experience. In the top-secret nuclear field, it seems probable that Israeli know-how and South African uranium have been the basis for extensive cooperation. The controversial explosion in 1979 may have been one result. Neither country has signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Despite some calls, so far unheeded, to reassess the ties after Pretoria imposed the state of emergency in the summer of 1985, opposition inside Israel to the connection with South Africa has never been more than marginal. There are no present or past indications of anything approaching significant controversy. Neither the Labor party nor Likud have condemned South Africa in their political platforms. Some Israeli doves, while favoring "normal" ties with South Africa, have

called for a lower profile or more frequent condemnations of apartheid (chapter 10). There are also sporadic reports of a measure of unhappiness among Foreign Ministry officials, again over the high profile of the relationship and the resulting damage to the prospects of formal reconciliation with Black Africa. Thus in 1976 Shlomo Avineri reportedly waited until Vorster completed his visit before assuming his post as Director-General of the Foreign Ministry. (3) The progress of the relationship is indicative of the degree of influence of such voices; the day before this dissertation was deposited, Israeli Foreign Minister Shamir said at a meeting with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations that despite anti-apartheid steps by other governments, "We are not going to change the character of our relations with South Africa." (4)

Meanwhile, there are no indications that the United States in the Reagan era is unhappy with this relationship. As the regional and domestic issues remain unresolved, tensions can be expected to rise in both areas. Increased "iron fist" state violence and counter-violence are likely to characterize the foreseeable future.

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Only a century ago, the term "international relations" conjured up little more than the competition, wars and alliances of a handful of European powers. Today's world is far different: The end of the colonial era in the the 1950's and 1960's resulted in a proliferation of states, and with it, diverse forms of cooperation and interaction in pursuit of their national interests. In many cases anti-imperialist ideologies were gradually placed on the back burner in order to secure badly needed Western investments and loans. Given the primacy of the national interest, the case of Israel and South Africa would seem unexceptional even if the countries had nothing in common on the ideological level.

In fact, the most salient feature of this relationship is the harmony of needs and resources in addition to significant ideological commonalities. Internal opposition to the ties is marginal on both sides; in the past decade, mutual gestures of good will and amity have been numerous. Today even if Israeli leaders had the choice between an ally like South Africa and Black Africa's diplomatic support, they may well opt for the former. At the same time, it

is noteworthy that the ties with South Africa have also had their fluctuations and lukewarm periods before the events of 1973 made major interests of the two states highly compatible.

The wide range of possible relationships among countries with similar ideologies confirms that ideological consanguinity can contribute to the strength and durability of a relationship where the basic ingredients in the form of interlocking interests are already present. It cannot make up for the absence of such interests or even diffuse tensions when the interests conflict. It is also apparent that under the condition of being a "pariah" on the international scene, already existing pragmatic and ideological commonalities can produce in a relatively short time what was described earlier as a "major new force on the world scene." The anti-Semitic record of South African leaders in the first half of this century has no greater impact on South African-Israeli ties today and does not make these ties any more unnatural than do past European wars make NATO unnatural.

By attempting to broaden the focus of inquiry on the role of ideology, this case study sought to contribute to the effort to understand better the

roots of state behavior on the international scene. While ideology has received much attention as a factor in foreign policy formation in a given state, the role it plays in bilateral relationships needs to be explored further. If the study has managed to suggest that in the South African-Israeli relationship ideology has a discernible role which indeed goes beyond rationalization of interests, it would highlight the usefulness of similar detailed investigations of bilateral relationships where common ideologies are present. This may yield theoretically-significant clues about the ways in which ideology can make its mark on a relationship and the circumstances under which its influence would be greatest.

Quite apart from ideology, there are no grounds in either the theory or practice of politics to regard close ties between two sovereign states as unnatural or to consider the partners "strange bedfellows". In the case of Israel and South Africa, since the relationship helps maintain the status quo and overcome political isolation, it is both natural and expected. If their connection is a "major new force on the world scene", it is at the same time an old way for nations to hold their ground on that scene.

NOTES

(1) Chazan, op. cit. p. 198.

(2) Lustick, op. cit. p. 268.

(3) Ibid, p. 174 (note.)

(4) "Israel Won't Act against Pretoria", The New York Times, September 27, 1985 p. 13.

A P P E N D I X A

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS ON SOUTH AFRICA ADOPTED IN RECENT YEARS IN ISRAEL'S ABSENCE (1)

1981

36/172A December 17: Situation in South Africa.

36/172B December 17: International Year of Mobilization Against South Africa.

36/172C December 17: Acts of Aggression by the Apartheid Regime Against Angola and Other Independent States.

36/172D December 17: Comprehensive and Mandatory Sanctions Against South Africa.

36/172E December 17: Military and Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa.

36/172F December 17: Arms Embargo Against South Africa.

36/172G December 17: Oil Embargo Against South Africa.

36/172H December 17: International Conference of Trade Unions on Sactions Against South Africa.

36/172I December 17: Academic, Cultural and Sports Boycotts of South Africa.

36/172J December 17: Political Prisoners in South Africa. (Adopted without a vote.)

36/172K December 17: Women and Children Under Apartheid.

36/172L December 17: Public Information and Public Action Against Apartheid and Role of the Mass Media in the Struggle Against Apartheid.

36/172M December 17: RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SOUTH AFRICA.

36/172N December 17: Programme of Work of the Special Committee Against Apartheid.

36/172O December 17: Investments in South Africa.

36/172P December 17: United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa.

1982

37/1 October 21: Appeal for Clemency in Favour of South African Freedom Fighters.

37/2 October 21: South Africa's Application for Credit from the International Monetary Fund.

37/68 December 7: Further Appeal for Clemency in Favour of South Africa's Freedom Fighters.

37/69A December 9: Situation in South Africa.

37/69B December 9: Concerted International Action for the Elimination of Apartheid.

37/69C December 9: Comprehensive and Mandatory Sanctions Against South Africa.

37/69D December 9: Military and Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa.

37/69E December 9: Programme of Work of the Special Committee Against Apartheid.

37/69F December 9: RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SOUTH AFRICA.

37/69G December 9: Apartheid in Sports.

37/69H December 9: Investments in South Africa.

37/69I December 9: United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa.

37/69J December 9: Oil Embargo Against South Africa.

37/101 December 14: Invasion of Lesotho by South Africa.

1983

38/11 November 15: Proposed New Racial Constitution of South Africa.

38/39A December 5: Situation in South Africa.

38/39B December 5: Programme of Action Against Apartheid.

38/39C December 5: Effects of Apartheid on the Countries of Southern Africa.

38/39D December 5: Sanctions Against South Africa.

38/39E December 5: Programme of Work of the Special Committee Against Apartheid.

38/39F December 5: RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SOUTH AFRICA.

38/39G December 5: Military and Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa.

38/39H December 5: United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa.

38/39I December 5: Investments in South Africa.

38/39J December 5: Oil Embargo Against South Africa.

38/39K December 5: Apartheid in Sports.

1984

39/2 September 28: Situation in South Africa.

39/72A December 13: Comprehensive Sanctions Against the Apartheid Regime and Support to the Liberation Struggle in South Africa.

39/72B December 13: Programme of Work of the Special Committee Against Apartheid.

39/72C December 13: RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SOUTH AFRICA.

39/72D December 13: Apartheid in Sports.

39/72E December 13: Public Information and Public Action Against Apartheid.

39/72F December 13: United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa. (Adopted without a vote.)

39/72G December 13: Concerted International Action for the Elimination of Apartheid.

NOTE

(1) According to the complete voting record for 1984 which was received only recently, Israel did vote once that year, in December. It was a "no" vote on the resolution dealing with South African-Israeli ties, making it the first vote in years on any resolution involving South Africa.

A P P E N D I X B

THE MOST RECENT UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
RESOLUTION ON SOUTH AFRICAN- ISRAELI RELATIONS
(RESOLUTION 39/72 C OF DECEMBER 13, 1984)

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions on relations between
Israel and South Africa,

Having considered the special report of the Special
Committee against Apartheid on recent developments
concerning relations between Israel and South Africa,

Taking note of the declaration and resolutions of
the Conference of Arab Solidarity with the Struggle for
Liberation in Southern Africa, held at Tunis from 7 to 9
August 1984,

Reiterating that the increasing collaboration by
Israel with the racist regime of South Africa,
especially in the military and nuclear fields, in
defiance of resolutions of the General Assembly and the
Security Council is a serious hindrance to international
action for the eradication of apartheid, an
encouragement to the racist regime of South Africa to
persist in its criminal policy of apartheid and a
hostile act against the oppressed people of South Africa
and the entire African continent and constitutes a
threat to international peace and security,

1. Commends the Special Committee against
Apartheid for publicizing the growing relations between
Israel and South Africa and promoting public awareness
of the grave dangers of the alliance between Israel and
South Africa;

2. Again strongly condemns the continuing and
increasing collaboration of Israel with the racist
regime of South Africa, especially in the military and
nuclear fields;

3. Demands that Israel desist from and terminate all forms of collaboration with South Africa forthwith, particularly in the military and nuclear fields, and abide scrupulously by the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council;

4. Calls upon all Governments and organizations to exert their influence to persuade Israel to desist from such collaboration and abide by the resolutions of the General Assembly;

5. Requests the Special Committee to continue to publicize, as widely as possible, information on the relations between Israel and South Africa;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to render, through the Department of Public Information and Centre against Apartheid of the Secretariat, all possible assistance to the Special Committee in disseminating information relating to the collaboration between Israel and South Africa;

7. Further requests the Special Committee to keep the matter under constant review and to report to the General Assembly and the Security Council as appropriate.

(The resolution was adopted with 108 votes in favor, 19 against and 25 abstentions.)

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