

THE ISRAELI- SOUTH AFRICA AXIS - A THREAT TO AFRICA

by Brian Bunting

At opposite ends of the African continent, Israel and South Africa today constitute a threat to world peace and equality of peoples. In the Middle East Israel has stolen the lands of the Arab peoples, killed thousands of men, women and children and dispossessed millions from their homes.

In South Africa the white supremacists have likewise dispossessed the Non-White peoples of their lands, denied them political rights and equality of opportunity, and are at this moment joined with the neighbouring states of Rhodesia and the Portuguese colonies in an aggressive alliance against independent Africa.

Israel and South Africa are today not only acting as the gendarmes of the imperialist powers, the pillars of neo-colonialism and white domination on a Black continent. With the growth of their advanced economies, both are beginning to take on an openly imperialist role in their own right, aiming to exploit their human and material resources by a combination of economic, political and, if necessary, military pressure.

South Africa was one of the first states to recognise Israel in 1948, and in 1953 the South African Prime Minister, Dr. D. F. Malan, visited Israel. During the Second World

War Malan had led the Nationalist Party resistance to the Allied war effort, and had hoped to come to power with the assistance of a Nazi military victory in Europe. Despite this, Malan was cordially received in Israel in 1953 and had his name inscribed in the Golden Book as one who proved himself a true friend. In 1956 South African sympathies were firmly on Israel's side when the Anglo-French-Israeli attack on Suez took place.

ISRAEL IN AFRICA

The failure of the Suez attack in 1956 led to a temporary change in Israel's policy towards Africa, at least in its outward manifestations. Great efforts were made to cultivate relations with the African states, and Israel's "aid" and advisers began to appear in a number of countries. Not only did this "aid" help to undermine Afro-Asian solidarity against Israel; it also brought in a substantial profit - it has been estimated, for example, that Israeli trade benefitted by about £ 30 million as a result of this "aid" in 1962.

The other side of the medal was a diplomatic offensive against South Africa at the United Nations, culminating in Israel's support for the 1962 General Assembly resolution calling for the severance of all relations with South Africa and the imposition of sanctions against her. In due course the head of the Israeli mission in Pretoria was withdrawn, and the country thereafter was represented only by a charge d'affaires. In 1966 Israel supported the U. N. resolution in the General Assembly revoking South Africa's mandate over South West Africa.

The 1967 war stripped the mask from Israel's true face. The quick success of the Israeli forces, with the connivance of the imperialists, filled them with the conviction that they were now impregnable. The African policy which had served Israel for 10 years was discarded as no longer necessary. Relations were established with South Africa on a new basis which sought to stress their identity of aims in Africa and the Middle East.

When hostilities broke out on June 5, 1967, South Africa proclaimed herself neutral, but she did not act as a neutral. On the contrary, she did whatever was in her power to ensure the success of the Israeli aggression.

South Africa contains not only one of the largest but also one of the wealthiest of the world's Jewish communities, and South African Jewry's contributions to Israel rank second in size only to those of the United States. Of course not all South African Jews are Zionists. In fact many of the Jewish people of South Africa have played a prominent part in the liberation movement and have been persecuted by the Nationalist regime for supporting the Communist Party and the African National Congress. South Africa's security chief, General van den Bergh, has even expressed his dismay that so many Jews joined the Communist organisations or were involved in Communist-organised sabotage - something which could only be explained in the light of his racialist philosophy "because Communism was the highest form of capitalism".

SOUTH AFRICAN ZIONISTS

Nevertheless, the Jewish community as a whole, as represented by its leading organs, undoubtedly supported Israel, and has contributed greatly to its present position both in money and in men. Within a week of the outbreak of war in 1967, South African Zionists had collected £ 10

million for Israel – and the Vorster Government waived its financial restrictions to allow the money to be exported. In addition, thousands of volunteers crammed Zionist offices in all the main centres of South Africa to offer their services to Israel or to donate blood.

It is significant, however, that sympathy for Israel was by no means confined to the Zionist section of the population. White South Africans of all political complexions identified themselves with the Israeli cause and collected funds for it.

South Africa's links with Israel are long-standing. Many South Africans have emigrated to Israel over the years, and there are many South African communities there. Many South Africans fought in the Israeli army in the 1948 war. Many of those in top positions in the Israeli political and armed services are South African-born, among them Abba Eban, the Foreign Minister; Mike Comay, a top Foreign Office official and former Israeli representative at the United Nations; Louis Pincus, the chairman of the Jewish Agency, the controlling body of the World Zionist Organisation. There can be little doubt that many of these immigrants from South Africa brought with them the racial attitudes which have helped to make the Israeli attitude to and treatment of the Arabs so similar to the treatment of Non-Whites by the majority of whites in South Africa. Israel's proposals for the development of the stolen territories on the west bank of the Jordan bear a remarkable similarity to the Bantustan policy of the Nationalist Government. "Perspective", the journal of the big business organisation the South African Foundation, commented in its issue of August 1967: "The recent war in the Middle East aroused fevered interest and passionate concern in many parts of the world, but in few so deep a sense of personal involvement as in South Africa.

"Sympathy for Israel was not confined to the Jewish community, however. White South Africans generally identified themselves personally with the plight of the Israelis . . . All were aware of the analogy between the situation of Israel, surrounded by hostile neighbours, and the situation of South Africa – similarly, though perhaps less immediately, threatened by unfriendly states. In the circumstances, it seemed only natural that white South Africans generally should view the Israelis as comrades-in-peril, and seek to succour and assist them accordingly."

ZIONISTS THANK VORSTER

The Minister of Labour, Mr. M. Viljoen, speaking at a Nationalist Party meeting in Johannesburg on June 10, 1967, reflected the views of the Government when he said: "The Middle East war has not only brought the Arab states to a revaluation of their position, it also ought to make some of the most loud-mouthed African leaders, who continuously threaten attacks on South Africa, think again." On the same day a joint statement issued by the South African Zionist Federation and the S. A. Jewish Board of Deputies thanked the Prime Minister, Mr. Vorster, for permitting the transfer of funds from South Africa to Israel. "We sincerely thank our fellow South Africans of all faiths for the goodwill, sympathy and support for the cause of Israel which they have so amply demonstrated during these critical weeks", the statement said.

The previous day – June 9, 1967 – the Chief Rabbi of Cape Town, Professor Abrahams, said that if Israel had not won the war in the Middle East, the communist powers would have spread terrorism throughout Africa, including South Africa. "We Jews feel it was a victory not only for Israel against enemies who received constant support and

even incitement from Russia, but also a decisive victory for democracy and the western world."

The Johannesburg "Star" reported on June 10: "A demonstration of the fervour the Israeli cause generated among the Nationalists were reports circulating here (in Cape Town) that the Broederbond (The fascist secret society behind the Nationalist Party) had made a sizeable contribution to funds to assist Israel".

THE S. A. FOUNDATION IN ISRAEL

The South African Foundation, representing both Afrikaners and English big business interests, took steps to reconstruct its Israeli-South Africa Committee in an effort to improve relations between the two countries. Chairman of the Committee was Dr. Shlomo Peer, an economist who settled in South Africa two years previously. He was a founder-member of Ben Gurion's Rafi Party and a member of its national council. A second Israeli on the committee was Colonel Ephraim Shurer, who left Israel's Defence Force to become South African manager of the Israeli El Al Airline. One of the first things the committee did was to arrange a meeting between the South African Minister of Defence, Mr. P. W. Botha, and Mr. Shimon Peres, secretary general of the ruling Israel Labour Party and member of the key Foreign Affairs and Security Committee. In the last few years South Africa and Israel have been sharing military secrets.

In September 1967 General Mordechai Hod, commander of the Israeli Air Force, visited South Africa and addressed a selected group of officers at the Air Force College near Pretoria. One of those present later told a "Sunday Express" reporter: "It was an intensely interesting lecture, which made it apparent that the tactics employed by the Israeli Air Force were brilliant. The Israelis seem to have been as clever as a cartload of monkeys."

In December 1967 a group of Israeli government officials, businessmen and aviation experts, including the deputy director general and the chief engineer of Israel Aircraft Industries, toured South Africa. The Israelis visited the Atlas Aircraft Industries plant near Johannesburg and said they hoped to bring an Israeli-manufactured short-take-off-and-landing aircraft to South Africa for a series of demonstrations.

ISRAEL – SOUTH AFRICA LEAGUE

An Israel-South Africa League, headed by Knesset member Mr. Eliezer Shostak, of the right-wing Herut Party, was formed in Israel and pressed the government to revise its relationships with South Africa. The pressure was by no means ineffective. On January 3, 1969, the Tel Aviv correspondent of the Johannesburg "Star" reported "Israel will try in future to maintain much closer and fuller contacts with South Africa". The correspondent said that for years Israel had played down her relationship with South Africa "because the assumption was that closer links with South Africa would be detrimental to Israel's friendly relations to the independent African nations . . . There has now been a complete reappraisal of the situation . . . The pro-South Africa faction has, so it seems, won the day".

In May 1969 Israel's "elder statesman", Mr. David Ben Gurion, accompanied by Israeli military leader Brigadier General Chaim Herzog, visited South Africa to help launch a R25 million Israel United Appeal for the Emergency Solidarity Campaign. Asked at a press con-

ference whether Israel's experience with the Arabs had not made her understand that the Whites there were threatened in the same way as in South Africa, Ben Gurion replied: "I see your problem".

The South African President, Mr. J. J. Fouché, in turn visited Israel and in October 1969 told a Nationalist Party meeting in Henneman that Israel had a lot to teach South Africa. Surrounded by enemies, she had succeeded in developing a way of thinking in terms of the State, thereby kindling a national consciousness. "Each Jew is truly a nationalist, no matter what party," he said.

DEFYING WORLD OPINION

What impresses South Africa even more than the 1967 military victory, however, is that Israel has proved able, not only to swallow up large tracts of Arab land without any interference from the Western powers, but also to continue attacking her Arab neighbours and to defy United Nations and world opinion without harmful consequence. Incidents like the Israeli raid on the Beirut airport and what amounts to the hi-jacking of five gunboats from France have helped to remove any inhibitions from which South Africa may previously have suffered in implementing her aggressive plans against Africa.

When Zimbabwe and South African freedom fighters first crossed the Zambesi in August 1967, Vorster did not hesitate, as he might have done a year previously, to send his troops to prop up the illegal Smith regime. Since then South African forces have been deployed even further afield. Air attack and reconnaissance units operate with the Portuguese forces in Mozambique and Angola. Banda's sway in Malawi and Jonathan's in Lesotho are underpinned by South African personnel in key positions. South African squads have engaged in sabotage attacks on installations in Zambia and Tanzania. South African mercenaries and spies operate, with the connivance of the South African government, in all corners of the African continent. The subversion of independent African governments is one of the main aims of BOSS, South Africa's CIA; set up by Act of Parliament with a budget of nearly R 5 million in 1969.

The motives of the South African Government were forcefully expressed in a speech by the South African Minister of Information, Dr. C. Mulder, at Randburg in November 1968. The frank aim of world communism was to appropriate Africa and thus to encircle Europe, he said. Only two states today were still obstacles in the way of the Red plan - Israel and South Africa.

For this reason South Africa must realise and tackle its position and vocation in Africa. If South Africa stood unconcerned about the rest of Africa, "I can tell you now where the boundary will be in the fight between communism and anti-communism. It will be the Limpopo . . . "We refuse merely to defend. The eyes of the West must open and they must realise that the Republic is the key to the conquest of Africa."

The Israeli-South African alliance is an alliance of the most reactionary forces in the Afro-Asian world, backed by the forces of imperialism, and designed to hold back the tide of progress, preserve the stronghold of profit and privilege and perpetuate the exploitation of the oppressed masses in the interests of the tiny handful of racists and monopolists who are holding the world to ransom today. **Israel and South Africa are today the main bastions of imperialism and reaction in the Afro-Asian world. The smashing of the alliance between them must be one of the foremost priorities of progressive mankind today.**

ZAPU-ANC UNITY



James Chikerema
Vice-President ZAPU



Oliver Tambo
Acting President ANC

A joint meeting of the National Executive Committees of the Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union (ZAPU) and the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) was held in Lusaka on the 16th January, 1970.

The discussions which took place in a cordial and friendly atmosphere were preceded by a statement by James Chikerema, Vice-President of ZAPU and Oliver Tambo, Acting President General of the ANC (SA) both of whom underlined the historic importance of the revolutionary ZAPU/ANC alliance in the struggle against colonial oppression and race tyranny in Southern Africa. They emphasised that the significance of our common struggle against minority rule in Southern Africa extends beyond our own borders; it is closely connected with our whole continent's struggle for true independence and social progress and is part of the world-wide struggle against imperialism. The two organisations exchanged information on the development of the struggles in their respective countries and appropriate decisions were taken;

1. to intensify the struggle for national liberation on the basis of their programmes. A very close scrutiny of the machinery was made to ensure effective coordination of the political, military strategy of the alliance;

2. to work out details of an efficient and regular exchange of information at all levels of the two organisations and to work for a deeper commitment to the alliance by the peoples of Zimbabwe and South Africa.

The participants from both organisations were convinced that the above measures would further the consolidation and strengthening of the ZAPU/ANC alliance.

The joint meeting reaffirmed the necessity for broadening friendly relations and fraternal cooperation with the authentic legitimate revolutionary movements in Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Angola and Namibia. To this end, efforts are to be made to bring about full co-operation on all matters of common interest.

The joint meeting placed on record its deepest appreciation of the all-round assistance received by the two organisations from the O. A. U., the socialist countries, peace loving Asian countries and democratic organisations all over the world.