

# Israeli Apartheid: A Socialist View

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John Greyson – filmmaker, writer, queer activist and professor at York University in Toronto – recently produced *Vuvuzela*. This short video, available on YouTube, cleverly portrays the growing participation of musicians in the cultural boycott of Israel as a contest of soccer teams on the world stage. Simply producing and distributing this video was a radical political act, as it presents Israel as a state subject to the same type of international pressure that challenged apartheid South Africa.

The efforts to repress and discredit the idea that Israel is a state fitting the descriptor of ‘apartheid’ has been coordinated and relentless, and it shows no sign of abetting. On February 16, a new re-groupment of Zionist academics and professionals convened at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Toronto. Dubbing themselves Advocates for Civil Liberties (ACL), their founding conference was titled “When Middle East Politics Invade Campus.” It featured speakers who deemed claims that Israel was an apartheid state as symptomatic of “a jihad in the classroom” (Sidman, 2011).

On the left, it is important to recognize that these claims are consistent with the Canadian state’s interests in attempting to dislodge the application of the term ‘apartheid’ to the Israeli context. We need to build a united movement that insists on freedom of expression. Certainly, the winds of political change in the region are opening the doors to democratic transformation. As Ali Abunimah recently stated:

Arab people everywhere now imagine themselves as Tunisians or Egyptians. And every Arab ruler imagines himself as Ben Ali or Mubarak.... Whatever happens next, the Egyptian revolution will also have a profound effect on the regional balance of power. Undoubtedly the United States, Israel and their allies are already weaker as a result (Abunimah, 2011).

But without making it a condition or narrowing the potential of a movement for freedom of expression, we also need to ensure that there is a voice that does more than this. The term apartheid has been controversial in Canadian politics because it simultaneously clears the distortions of Zionist mythology and presents a new legitimacy to serious critical analysis of Israel. It serves to shed light on realities in the Middle East, and exposes the links between Israel and the imperialist agendas of western states including Canada.

What follows is an explanation of the context of the repression and some considerations of a socialist analysis of

recent debates regarding Israeli apartheid. The latter includes the issue of freedom of speech, what I term ‘really existing Zionism,’ and the significance of the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaign in a wider movement against imperialism internationally.

## The Ruling Class and the Repression

The campaign to challenge the legitimacy of the use of the term ‘apartheid’ to describe the state of Israel has been well documented, arising in a context of efforts to silence those who challenge Canada’s complicity in Israel’s policies. As Rafeef Ziadah notes:

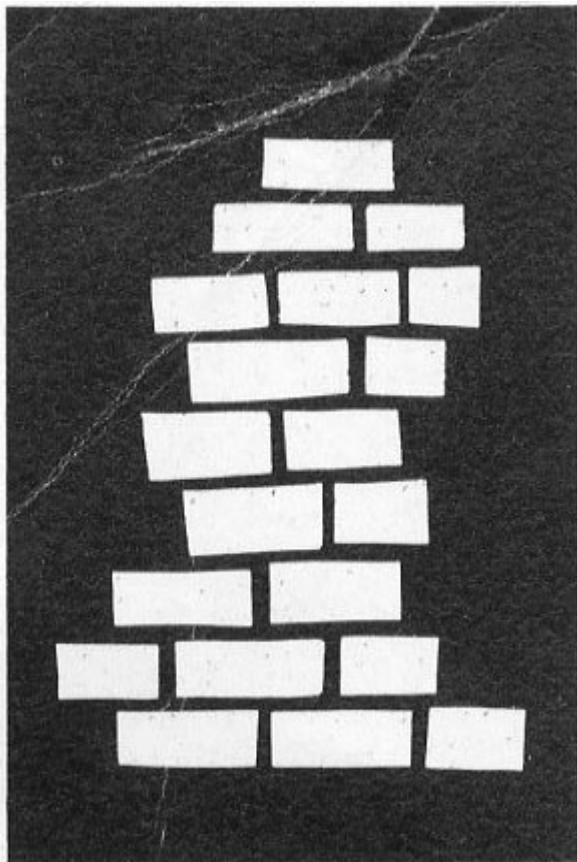
Enormous resources have been marshaled by conservative and Zionist organizations in an attempt to silence criticism of the Canadian government’s unwavering support for Israel... Such examples include: 1) cutting funding to the Canadian Arab Federation (CAF) due to the organization’s outspoken criticism of the government during the war in Gaza; (2) banning posters for the annual Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) in several Ontario university campuses; and (3) a smear campaign against the Ontario branch of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) for daring to discuss the issue of an academic boycott of Israel. This is not an exhaustive list (Ziadah, 2009).

Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) specifically attracted the attention of the Tories’ Citizen and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney (CIC, 2009) and Liberal Party Leader Michael Ignatieff (*National Post*, 2009). The Canadian state is indicating that it is dead serious about trying to silence criticism of Israel and its racist and colonial treatment of Palestinians. As Mary-Jo Nadeau and Alan Sears summarize, 2009 marked a turning point:

In June, the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism (CPCCA) was formed with the explicit focus on reframing antisemitism in terms of criticism of the State of Israel. The launch of the CPCCA followed the February meetings of the Interparliamentary Committee for Combating Antisemitism in London, UK. Also in June, the organizers of the conference ‘Israel/Palestine: Mapping Models of Statehood and Paths to Peace’ held at York University was subjected to enormous pressures, culminating ultimately in an extraordinary

after-the-fact review of the event launched by the York University administration. The Canadian Association of University Teachers has also initiated an inquiry considering the academic freedom dimensions of the situation. On 31 August, the Presidential Task Force on Student Life, Learning and Community at York University submitted its report. The task force was initiated specifically in response to complaints arising around IAW (Nadeau and Sears, 2010: 8).

Canada is leading an international movement of states to challenge criticisms of Israel. But Canada has also distinguished itself in the degree of repression among liberal democratic western states, carrying out “the politically suspect and professionally unjustifiable defunding of organizations that advocate Palestinian rights and organize humanitarian efforts on behalf of Palestinians” exemplified in the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) funding cuts to KAIROS, a faith-based human rights agency (BNC Secretariat, 2010). In November, 2010, Ottawa hosted the second meeting of the International Parliamentary Committee for Combating Antisemitism, (see Keefer, 2010; PFEEX, 2010). Canada also led the withdrawal of states from the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) review conference in Geneva in 2009, and supported the walkout of the U.S. and Israel from the predecessor 2001 conference in Durban. The withdrawal from the WCAR was on the grounds that these events were anti-Semitic. They were not. But they did raise, minimally, Israel’s treatment of the Palestinian population.



## Free Speech...And more...

Also over this period, any group or individual associated with Palestine solidarity, and particularly with the BDS campaign which identifies Israel as an apartheid state, has been targeted. George Galloway, the UK anti-war former MP and activist, was banned from speaking in Canada on grounds of his relationship to Hamas, the elected representative of the people of Gaza (which a Federal Court judge determined to be motivated by political suppression rather than concerns about security) (“George Galloway,” globeandmail.com, 2010).

This is the context in which the Toronto Pride 2010 organizers felt reassured in banning the use of the term ‘apartheid’; the group Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QUAIA) was banned from participation in the annual march under their name. A wave of resistance from the LGBTQ community and allies succeeded in reversing the ban, though the threat continues for future Pride events (see queersagainstapartheid.org).

But if the term ‘apartheid’ was treated with exceptional censorship, the leader of the apartheid state was warmly welcomed. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu came to Ottawa in May, 2010, with his visit only interrupted by the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) assault on the flotilla of solidarity activists determined to break the siege of Gaza.

Clearly, what is needed is a movement to ensure freedom of speech (see freeexpressionpalestine.com). And on this point, socialists are not equivocal. But there are specific arguments that need to be addressed directly that go beyond the issue of free speech. The claim that to identify the state of Israel as an apartheid state is anti-Semitic needs to be challenged. Anti-semitism is a form of racism that targets ‘Jews’ – an ambiguous category racialized to collectively ascribe common traits to those of Jewish faith, identity or culture. Israel, while a capitalist state in terms of its political economy, is ideologically a “Jewish state,” but this is also a constructed claim. Unique in the world system, Israel claims to represent the interest of ‘Jews’ in the region and in the global diaspora.

To assume that the motivation of the backlash against the use of the term Israeli apartheid has anything to do with defending Jewish people against anti-Semitism simply makes no sense. Canada’s record of real anti-Semitism, as in anti-Jewish racism, is well known. Not least it is marked by the refusal to allow entry of German Jews fleeing for their lives during World War Two (Abella and Troper, 1983). More recently, the Harper government can hardly lay claim to anti-racist policy credentials (Razack, 2008). Nor should we presume Michael Ignatieff and the Liberal Party in Canada are motivated by concerns to reverse racism. This is the same party that advocated deadly sanctions against Iraq, brought us to the brink of war against this same country, and sent Canadian military troops to war on Afghanistan. The Liberals also implemented a series of racist immigration laws that continue to regulate the borders of Canada. And both of these parties have shameful records regarding indigenous rights.

The NDP also has a shameful record on this issue. The Ontario legislature added its voice to the wave of repression, adopting a position condemning the term ‘apartheid’ as applied to Israel in February of 2010, notably in advance of the annual Israeli Apartheid Week in March. The private member’s bill needed unanimous support to pass, and most of the MPPs stayed away. But the vote was endorsed forcefully by the NDP’s Cheri Di Novo, who spoke and voted in favour of the bill, ensuring the claim to ‘unanimity.’

The NDP is a social democratic party, with strong material and historical links to the trade union movement. It is therefore subject to different pressures than the other parties. In an apparently contradictory step, Ontario NDP leader Andrea Horwath expressed her dismay at the vote (Benzie, 2010), though no disciplinary action followed against Di Novo. At the federal level, the NDP is also the home of Libby Davies, who has bravely come out in defense of the BDS campaign and has herself become the subject of the backlash. In June of 2010, Davies came very near to losing her position as Federal NDP Deputy Leader after a public campaign, including the voice of Stephen Harper, pushed Jack Layton to the brink precisely around Davies’ position on Israel/Palestine. Only after a public apology for “mistakenly” stating that Israel occupied Palestine in 1948 (which is in fact true) did Layton decide to “accept her apology” (Taber, 2010).

The repression of freedom of expression regarding Palestine generally, and the term ‘apartheid’ as applied to Israel specifically, clearly needs to be challenged. However, an explanation that rests at the level of free speech cannot explain the extent of the backlash. The object of repression is not just a word, but the movement that names and challenges the reality of Israel’s apartheid policies and practices. What is in fact threatening to the interests of the Canadian elite and its Israeli state allies is the effectiveness of the anti-apartheid movement. This movement exposes the close economic and political links between Canadian imperialism and the state of Israel, and suggests a common cause in challenging these links between Palestinians and progressive forces in Canada and internationally.

## Really-existing Zionism

To understand the links between western imperialism and the Israeli state, Zionism needs to be understood as a secular political ideology. Distinct from Judaism as a theology or religion, or Jewish cultural identity, Zionism is a particular political strategy which insists on an ethnically-defined ‘Jewish’ state as the only remedy for global anti-Semitism. In the present period, really existing Zionism means defense of the state of Israel and a legitimation of its colonial settler policies in the name of support of the ‘Jewish’ people in the face of anti-Jewish racism.

Challenging Zionism, despite the claims of early labour Zionists to the contrary, is not only consistent with a Marxist analysis, but central to a Marxist anti-imperialist framework. Marxists were among the early analysts of Israel as a colonial settler state, a framework consistent with the apartheid analysis.

For example, Maxime Rodinson’s, *Israel: A Colonial Settler State* (1973), is a classic text. Tony Cliff, the late British Marxist, was also the Palestinian Jewish son of Russian Zionists; his partner, Chanie Rosenberg, a longstanding British socialist and labour activist, is a South African Jew, now living in Britain. Together they identified Israel’s similarities with apartheid South Africa when they were a young couple living in mandate Palestine. Cliff wrote in his autobiography:

I remember the following incident. It was when Chanie was quite new to the country [Mandate Palestine, circa 1945] and she joined me to live just next to the Jewish market in Tel Aviv. One day she saw a young Jewish man walking among the women selling vegetables and eggs, and from time to time he smashed the eggs with his boot or poured paraffin on the vegetables. She asked, ‘What is he doing?’ I explained that he was checking whether the women were Jewish or Arab. If the former, it was alright; if the latter, he used force. Chanie reacted, ‘That’s just like South Africa,’ from where she had just come. I replied, ‘It’s worse. In South Africa the blacks are at least employed’ (Cliff, 2000: 9).

This analysis was a minority left critique for many years, marginalized in the hegemonic rise of Zionism in the post-WWII era. However, in the post 9/11 period, particularly since the 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon, the lies and distortions associated with the Zionist narrative have started to come unstuck. The BDS movement has given substance and momentum to an analytic that exposes the ideological justifications for imperialism in the Middle East.

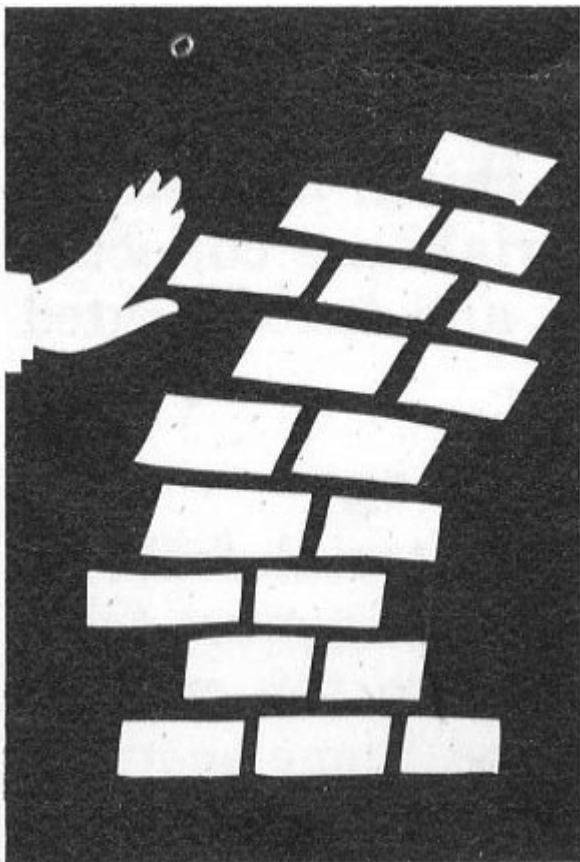
During the 2006 war on Lebanon, the U.S., Canada and the UK overtly identified their common interests with Israel in suppressing resistance to the western military expansion in the region, marked most clearly by the war on Iraq. Israel’s linkages with the west, now demand open ideological defense, pushing Zionist forces to ally more openly with the most conservative elements in any given state and internationally. Israel’s license to protect its interests without regard for international law and without fear of international consequences is now the subject of global political debate on a much wider scale.

The costs associated with an exposure of the apartheid character of Israel are high. Israel receives the highest proportion of U.S. economic and military aid of any state in the world. Canada is an expanding imperialist power, has a free trade agreement with Israel, and plans to extend greater ties in the region. On October 10, 2010, the Harper government announced ambitious plans to pursue ‘exploratory talks’ to expand the trade partnership. The federal Tories have declared that “Israel is a key economic partner for Canada” (DFAIT, 2010). Two-way merchandise trade reached \$1.3-billion last year, and Israel is now Canada’s sixth largest export market in the Middle East. According to Minister of International Trade, Peter Van Loan:

Canada and Israel can be even more effective partners in the areas of technology collaboration, research and development, and innovation commercialization. We hope to see increased collaboration that will bring significant benefits to both our countries, including future economic growth, improved health and environmental sustainability (DFAIT, 2010).

The government of Ontario's policy of opposing the word 'apartheid' was not only strategic in challenging university students' and faculty's right to hold educational conferences. It was also useful for Premier McGuinty's trip to Israel in May of 2010, where he was accompanied by university presidents of Queen's and York. McGuinty was the first Ontario premier to visit Israel since 1998, when Tory Mike Harris led a similar mission to assist Ontario corporations in making trade links to Israel's booming apartheid economy.

In other words, for Israel and its allies, apartheid is good for business. As Naomi Klein exposed in *The Shock Doctrine* (2008), the post 9/11 global increase in racial profiling of the Arabic and Muslim populations has been a boost to manufacture and export for Israeli industry. Israel's economic boom is tightly linked to the military and security sectors, where testing is done on the local Palestinian population prior to seeking international export markets.



Security systems are a major growth area for Israeli capitalism, refined in erecting barriers, surveillance techniques, and systems of regulation and control designed to limit and monitor Palestinian access to Israeli occupied land, roads, schools, hospitals and services. A detailed study by Israeli scholar Neve Gordon explains the pattern:

There is no dispute that many of Israel's homegrown technological skills were honed inside secret military labs and that military research has given Israel a clear lead in vital aspects of telecommunications and software technology (Gordon, 2009).

However, the particular appeal of Israel's market goes further. Israel's export strategy is largely based on the claim that domestic 'experience,' particularly in issues related to homeland security, render the country's technological sector particularly advanced. The Canadian state is playing its part in Israel's attempt to 're-brand' its image. As Gordon puts the case:

...[T]he Israeli experience in fighting terror is attractive not only because Israelis manage to kill 'terrorists' (the militaristic worldview), but also because killing terrorists is not necessarily adverse to neoliberal economic objectives, and actually advances them....This attraction stems from the sense (real or perceived) that fighting terrorism through methods of homeland security, that include suspending due process in many areas of the criminal justice system, including torture, the right to a speedy trial, the freedom from arbitrary police searches, and the prohibition against indefinite incarceration and incognito detentions (to mention a few methods) does not conflict with democratic values (Gordon, 2009).

Israel has made a priority of military production and related research and development, building on the 'special' defence relations with the U.S. and privileged access to American arms.

## The BDS Movement Against Israeli Apartheid

The resistance of the Palestinian population to Israeli occupation since 1948 has been central to resistance in the Middle East to western imperialism. The reinvigoration of the movement since the second Intifada in 2000 has also inspired anti-imperialist resistance throughout the region, significantly in neighbouring Egypt.

It is the more recent boycott, divestment and sanctions movement against Israel that has posed a particularly sharp threat to the ideological sustainability of really existing Zionism (see Bakan and Abu-Laban, 2009). The BDS movement originated with a unified call of 170 civil society (or non-state) organizations within Palestine. This is an important accomplishment given the divisions that followed from the failed Oslo peace negotiations, where the Palestine Liberation organization (PLO), once itself a unifying force, served as a repressive force to advance a two-

state outcome consistent with many features of an apartheid model, and thus opposed by many Palestinian political groups.

The anti-apartheid movement from Palestine took inspiration from the anti-apartheid movement against South Africa's pre-1994 system. Notably, South African anti-apartheid leaders, including Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu, have been at the forefront of international discussions about the applicability of the term. A similar role has been adopted by advocates of the role of the United Nations (UN) as an arena to challenge apartheid conditions, including several UN rapporteurs and General Assembly representatives. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling against the 'Security Fence' ('Apartheid Wall') in 2004, and Israel's refusal to adhere to international law, acted as a focal point for discussions that, one year later, led to the unified BDS call from Palestine.

The movement is framed around three demands, all notably consistent with international law: (1) ending Israel's occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the 'Apartheid Wall'; (2) recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and (3) respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194 (bdsmovement.com).

The BDS movement is effective and continues to grow for a number of reasons. It is grounded in not only economic, but also and equally importantly, educational goals. It is designed to be flexible, to adapt to demands in particular local contexts. In Canada, the BDS movement has been attractive to students who have advanced divestment campaigns (see SAIA Carleton Divestment Campaign), to faith communities (United Church Toronto conference), and to unions (CUPW, CUPE, Quebec teachers). It has appealed to social movements (Independent Jewish Voices, Not In Our Name: Jewish Voices Opposing Zionism, Quebec Women's Federation), and communities that support consumer boycott campaigns (Chapters/Indigo, MEC; see Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid, caiaweb.org). The new progressive political party, Québec Solidaire, has supported the BDS call. The movement also calls for sanctions such as those implemented by Venezuela and Bolivia, and promotes demands against the Canadian state such as ending the siege of Gaza, abrogating the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement, and opposition to trade missions like McGuinty's recent visit.

Internationally, the Palestine solidarity movement has mushroomed since 2005. Specific moments of resistance continue to attract new layers of support. For example, following the May 31, 2010 Israeli commando attack on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla, an appeal from Palestinian civil society to redouble global efforts to isolate Israel resonated with workers who organized actions in Sweden, South Africa, Turkey and the U.S. (Young, 2010).

But the core of the success of the BDS movement is that it expresses the voice of a national liberation struggle against a

colonial occupying force. Palestinian resistance against Israeli attacks has been a central element in building the confidence and capacity of the global movement against imperialism that started with the war on Iraq and continued against the war on Afghanistan. Like the movement of Vietnam against U.S. imperialism in the 1970s, whose central focal point was the Vietnamese resistance expressed most clearly in the National Liberation Front (NLF), the movement for Palestinian liberation has inspired a new generation of anti-imperialist activists. The resonance from the global south among civil society activists in the global north is reflective of the shift of the Palestinian struggle to the centre of international politics generally, and specifically to the centre of the international left. It is not an exaggeration to refer to Palestine as the "emblematic solidarity movement of our time" (Bhattacharyya, 2008: 46).

The BDS movement roots its analysis of the Israeli state not in terms of its ascribed "Jewish" character, but in its political character as an apartheid state. The apartheid analysis offers an educational element about the nature of Israel, but also of global imperialism. This framework challenges the post-WWII, and especially the post-1967, hegemony of Zionism as part of western ruling class ideological armory. Advancing a counter-hegemonic force that names Israel as an apartheid state is significant, therefore, as part of positioning a new left that can negotiate the complex terrain of 21<sup>st</sup> century imperialism.

The association of Israel with apartheid, and the legacy that the term provokes with the movement against apartheid South Africa, shifts the terms of discussion. It focuses on the Israeli state as criminal and overtly racist, acting in violation of international law.

Virginia Tilley summarizes the specific way in which Israeli law marks legal separation, which is the meaning of the Afrikaans term 'apartheid':

The special standing of Jewish identity under Israeli law is not well understood by most but is fundamental to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ... A cluster of laws defines Israel as a 'Jewish state' and establishes Israel's two-tiered system of citizenship, which privileges 'Jewish' nationality. The Law of Return (1950) grants any Jew the right to immigrate to Israel ... The Citizenship Law (1952) ... grants anyone arriving in Israel under the Law of Return (i.e., Jews) Israeli citizenship without further procedures, immediately upon entering the country. The Population Registry Law (1965) then provides such citizens as having 'Jewish nationality' (not 'Israeli nationality,' which is prohibited under Israeli law). The World Zionist Organization-Jewish Agency (Status) Law (1952) authorizes the Jewish Agency and its various arms to administer most of the state's land and properties and a plethora of other resources in the interests of that Jewish nationality. The Jewish Agency's administrative authority reaches far through Israeli society, including '[t]he organization of immigration abroad and the transfer of immigrants and

their property to Israel; youth immigration; agricultural settlement in Israel... [and] the development of private capital investments in Israel...'

Uri Davis (2003) explains the meaning of apartheid in international law:

... I refer to the term 'apartheid' in the narrow and technical sense of the word, namely, as a term designating a political programme predicated on discrimination in law on a racial basis; and I refer to 'racial discrimination' as defined in Article 1 (1) of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1966. ... Classifying Israel as an apartheid state does not mean equating Israel with South Africa. ... But the relevant differences (for example, that one million Palestinian Arabs in Israel are citizens, though not equal citizens) in the first case do not imply that one (South Africa) is apartheid and the other (Israel) is not...

The apartheid analysis, then, changes the frame: it puts supporters of Israel on the defensive. Palestinians who resist and their supporters can move the argument for solidarity and change forward, rather than continually rebutting charges of 'terrorist' or 'anti-Semite.' Discussing Israel in terms of apartheid secularizes the discussion of Zionism, placing it as a political ideology, and challenging the claimed place of Zionism as the



voice of all Jews. This is why a socialist analysis cannot be limited to defending the right to express the words 'Israeli apartheid': it is also important to understand and advance its meaning. Accurate explanation of lived events can contribute to clarity in the movement, and build confidence to continue to challenge the often overwhelming impact of imperialism and war.

With the apartheid analysis, Israel is placed in the context of another state – apartheid South Africa, which was clearly neither Jewish nor democratic. Such a comparison compels a challenge to the Zionist claim of deep exceptionality in Jewish history. A new literature and new areas of scholarship are developing, which see 'apartheid' as a generic type of capitalist state that can exist in various forms including the South African type, but is not reducible to it (Bakan and Abu-Laban, 2010). Jim Crow laws in the southern U.S., Canada's system of reserves and history of pass laws regulating the lives and movement of indigenous people, and various forms of colonial settler states can be understood to take the apartheid form. Israel clearly fits the bill.

Notably, in these conditions, any talk of a two state solution, despite the beliefs of "liberal" thinkers that include, for example, U.S. President Barack Obama and former U.S. President Jimmy Carter (who also has used the term apartheid to describe Israel) will inevitably fail. The only road to peace in the Middle East will be a single, democratic secular state. The BDS movement, though not explicitly taking a position for a one or two state solution, in pointing to the example of a post-apartheid South Africa has opened the door to these discussions (Bakan and Abu-Laban, 2010).

## Learning from the Movement

The shape of the Canadian and international left has changed as the BDS movement has advanced, with those who stand clearly on side finding more confidence and broadening alliances. There is a considerable room for a healthy exchange with other movements, and with anti-capitalist and socialist ideas, in this context.

In continuing this process, it is important that socialists adopt a position of constructive exchange. However, there is grounds for some humility here, to allow those of us whose experiences are shaped in the global north to listen and learn from a movement led and organized from Palestine and among Palestinians, across a spectrum that includes those living in the borders of 1948 Israel, in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and in the Palestinian diaspora. Indeed, the geographic dispersal of this movement is itself the product of apartheid. This is not simply a question of human rights or solidarity, but goes to the heart of challenging imperialism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As Adam Hanieh puts the case:

Palestinians are not victims but a people in struggle. This struggle goes beyond the borders of the West Bank and Gaza Strip: it is a central component of a broader regional fight. It is impossible to understand

events in any country of the Middle East today without situating the national context within the single, coherent and unified offensive that the U.S. and other imperialist states are waging against the peoples of the region (Hanieh, 2008: 8).

A fitting conclusion brings us back to John Greyson. He was one of the most high profile filmmakers to withdraw an earlier production – titled *Covered* – from the prestigious Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) in September 2009, which featured a ‘City-to-City’ spotlight linkage with Tel Aviv.

In Greyson’s words, in a letter announcing his decision to withdraw:

In the Canadian Jewish News, Israeli Consul General Amir Gissin described how this Spotlight is the culmination of his year-long Brand Israel campaign, which includes bus/radio/TV ads, the ROM’s notorious Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit, and ‘a major Israeli presence at next year’s Toronto International Film Festival, with numerous Israeli, Hollywood and Canadian entertainment luminaries on hand.’ .... Your TIFF program book may describe Tel Aviv as a ‘vibrant young city... of beaches, cafes and cultural ferment... that celebrates its diversity,’ but it’s also been called ‘a kind of alter-Gaza, the smiling face of Israeli apartheid’ (Naomi Klein)... (Greyson cited in Rebick, August 29, 1999).

Greyson’s actions have served to inspire artists and BDS supporters internationally. And from such actions, the wider movement continues to grow.

The apartheid analysis is under attack because it is a powerful analytical tool in explaining the Israeli state today, and the linkages between western imperialism and the Middle East. It is accurate, and has proven demonstrably helpful in advancing a widespread movement against imperialism, both in Canada and globally.

Socialists who are part of this process have an important contribution to make, but also much to learn. An example of such an exchange is the role that the Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid (CAIA) has played in helping to advance areas of common practice and new conversations as part of the establishment of the Greater Toronto Workers’ Assembly (GTWA, www.workersassembly.ca). Now past its one year anniversary, the GTWA has provided a critical space for activists and socialists across a broad spectrum of traditions and areas of work to unite in developing new constructive dialogues and practices. These include, but also generalize from, the anti-apartheid movement. **R**

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