

Zaire provides perhaps the clearest example of how Israeli efforts serve to perpetuate subordination to international capital. When Israeli President Herzog visited Zaire in January 1984, he personally arranged contact between Mobutu and British businessman Leon Tamman who has extensive investments in 'Israel'. Tamman subsequently agreed to invest \$400 million in Zaire's transport and pharmaceutical sectors, the largest foreign investment ever in the country. The Israeli paper *Davar* wrote forthrightly that it was hoped that the Tamman deal would «help Israel's image in Africa and... strengthen the impression in other countries that Israel has connections and influence with businessmen worldwide who might invest in countries in Africa.» The other side of the deal is that Zaire ceded 40% of the government stake in three state-owned enterprises (the national air and shipping lines and the central pharmaceutical-buying organization) to the Tamman investment group which also gains a 60% stake in two new companies dealing with medicine and timber. The whole deal is part of an IMF program for Zaire.

Having turned the financial aspect over to a Zionist-linked, international capitalist concern, President Herzog signed three cooperation accords with Mobutu when the latter visited 'Israel' in May 1985. These concern aviation, investment and technical training. The cooperation between Air Zaire and El Al can have hidden benefits for Israeli covert operations, trade with South Africa, etc., since in February 1985 the Belgian authorities let it be known that Air Zaire was smuggling diamonds, ivory and drugs to Brussels. What 'Israel' actually offered Zaire was, typically, in the military field. Mobutu had been grumbling about the Israelis' not honoring the promise reportedly made by Ariel Sharon, who visited Zaire when he was defense minister and pledged a \$8 million credit for arms purchases if diplomatic relations were restored. While secrecy shrouded the military agreements made during Mobutu's 1985 visit, the *Economist's* Intelligence Unit wrote that «Tel Aviv made an unconfirmed commitment to match... Zairian purchases of Israeli arms with credit for further acquisitions» (quoted in *Israeli Foreign Affairs*, February 1986).

Zaire is a rich country by African standards due to extensive mineral deposits. The economic problems suffered by its population stem from the regime's willing subordination to imperialist interests, economically and militarily, and Mobutu's habit of usurping a sizeable portion of the national wealth for his own private consumption. Since Zionist relations with the regime serve to reinforce all these negative

trends, one can ask what the consequences of Israeli influence on poorer nations will be.

APARTHEID'S BEST FRIEND

Of course, the most damaging aspect of Israeli activities in Africa is support to the racist regime in Pretoria. While imperialist, Zionist and reactionary forces planned that restoring the Sinai to Egypt would pave the way for official Israeli reentry into Africa, African national interests in abolishing apartheid argue against this. It is telling that those African states who openly deal with 'Israel' are far removed from the struggle against apartheid.

Relations between the racist states in occupied Palestine and South Africa are too extensive to be comprehensively covered here. Yet there is little doubt that military cooperation is a dominant aspect in ties that extend back to pre-state days, based on shared racism and settler-colonial ambitions. From the mid-sixties to the mid-eighties, a reported 35% of Israeli arms exports went to South Africa (*Washington Post*, August 12, 1985). When the UN imposed an arms embargo on South Africa in 1977, the Israeli ambassador in Johannesburg publicly stated that it was now more important than ever for the two states to stick together to confront the alliance of Africa and the Arab world.

Currently, annual Israeli arms sales to South Africa are estimated at \$125 million-US administration report mandated by Congress - to \$800 million - unconfirmed Israeli report (*International Herald Tribune*, March 30, 1987). While war capitalists in many countries defy the embargo, the Israeli sales have a special character because the Israeli arms industry is government-controlled. Far more than a purely economic venture, this arms trade is a facet of close, high-tech military cooperation which includes the exchange of expertise and manpower, and ranges from counterinsurgency to joint nuclear weapons development, as we touched on in *Democratic Palestine* no. 25. According to James Adams in his book *The Unnatural Alliance*, Israeli officials privately acknowledged that there are approximately 300 Israeli military personnel in South Africa, giving training and working on joint arms projects.

The Zionist state has been the key party in helping South Africa in circumventing sanctions. This help ranges from recycling South African products into the European Common Market, to passing on US technology to the apartheid regime. There are reports of South African involvement in funding the development of the Israelis' Lavi fighter jet, in hopes of later producing it on license. Besides the official agreements signed between the two states with Vorster's visit to 'Israel' in 1976, this cooperation is facilitated by 20,000 Israelis working in South Africa and South African ownership of a high-tech industrial park in 'Israel' (*Jerusalem Post*, August 20, 1985).

The Zionist state has also been willing to cross world opinion on two other issues vital to the South African regime: Namibia and the bantustans. The Israelis have been involved in fighting SWAPO since the seventies. In December 1984, the Israeli ambassador to South Africa announced Israeli willingness to give technical aid to Namibia before South African ended its illegal occupation there. The fields in which 'Israel' offered expertise, especially «community development», are chillingly reminiscent of the help 'Israel' gave the Guatemalan dictatorship in herding peasants into «model villages» (read: concentration camps) to separate them from the revolutionary guerrilla forces (*Israeli Foreign Affairs*, October 1985). In

South Africa's Prime Minister Vorster, former Nazi supporter, visits occupied Jerusalem in 1976.

