

Zionist Global Role

In our last issue there was a study entitled «*Israel and Africa*», which we now complete with a short article about Israeli interests in South Africa's bantustans. In the meantime, we have received an excellent research paper made by US progressive, Steve Goldfield, Ph. D., entitled «*The Israeli Role in United States' Global Strategy*». We have selected a portion of this research which covers Israeli military relations with the racist regime of South Africa, to complement our theme of 'Israel' and Africa. We anticipate printing the other portions of Steve Goldfield's paper in coming issues. (Note: Every specific fact and figure in his paper is documented in footnotes. We have omitted these due to space limitations.)

Israel's closest military relations in Africa were and are with the white racists of Rhodesia and South Africa. The notorious 1978 deal, in direct violation of U.S. law, which sent Bell helicopters to Ian Smith's regime was an Israeli arms sale.¹¹² The Israelis also licensed Smith to produce special Uzi submachine guns called Rhuzis.¹¹³

South Africa, however, is the single largest Israeli weapons customer.¹¹⁴ South Africa's prime suppliers of arms in 1976-77 were France and Israel.¹¹⁵ Relations go back more than fifty years between the two states and between the Zionist movement and South Africa before 1948. In fact, the same Lord Balfour responsible for the infamous British cabinet resolution favoring a Jewish homeland in Palestine had authored the measure setting up the South African state in 1913. Jan Smuts, South African Prime Minister in the twenties and again in the forties, became a fervent supporter of Zionism and a friend of Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann in London during World War I.¹¹⁶ Smuts was also an architect of the Balfour Declaration.¹¹⁷ The ruling South African party came to power in 1948, the same year as the declaration of the Zionist state. D. F. Malan, founder of South African apartheid, a virulent anti-Semite, and an open Nazi sympathizer, was the first head of state to visit Israel.¹¹⁸ Relations were fairly cool, however, until the early seventies.

In 1974 relations were raised to the ambassadorial level. Between 1968 and 1976 trade grew from \$9 million to \$97 million, not including arms sales.¹¹⁹ South African Jewish citizens have a unique exception which allows them to invest in Israel. After the Soweto uprising in 1976 these investments grew, in a matter of months, from \$8 million to \$12 million. The South African government had approved a ceiling on such investments of \$25 million.¹²⁰ In 1977 came the United Nations embargo on arms to South Africa. Israel pledged to observe it.¹²¹

Yosef Goell, a columnist for the *Jerusalem Post*, quoted a senior diplomat at the Israel Embassy in Pretoria saying, «South Africa is the only country with which we maintain relations where our main problem is not so much that of explaining Israel and her positions with the aim of improving those relations, but rather that of maintaining a low profile on what are embarrassingly good relations.»¹²²

These relations are good in spite of minor provocations on both sides. Former South African Premier Verwoerd wrote a threatening letter to a leading South African Jewish lawyer saying that the fact that «so many Jews voted for the opposition Progressive party and so few for his own Nationalist party 'did not go unnoticed'», according to Goell.¹²³ In 1977 Jimmy Kruger, South African minister of justice and police, «casti-

gated South African Jews for sending money to Israel and for 'running away' from South Africa in its time of troubles.»¹²⁴ Former Prime Minister Vorster, like many South African government figures, was interned during World War II because of pro-Nazi activities.

In June 1971, on the other hand, Israel offered a modest \$2,000 contribution to the Liberation Committee of the Organization of African Unity,¹²⁵ which did not even deign to acknowledge the offer.¹²⁶ South Africa retaliated by suspending the transfer of \$25 million in Jewish donations to Israel; the South African Jewish community is the highest per capita supporter of Israel among world Jewry.¹²⁷ The Israeli donation was quietly withdrawn.

In spite of these frictions, during Prime Minister Vorster's visit in 1976, the two governments formed a Ministerial Joint Committee made up of defense ministers of both countries.¹²⁸ According to this agreement, the exchange of Israeli arms and advice for South African strategic materials¹²⁹ has three main areas: conventional arms trade, nuclear collaboration, and counterinsurgency.¹³⁰ Since that time, South African-Israeli relations have been improving rapidly.

Israeli-supplied conventional arms sales and licensing agreements with South Africa include: Reshef-class gunboats armed with Gabriel missiles;¹³¹ Dabour coastal patrol boats; hardened steel for South Africa's armored