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APARTHEID AND ITS DESTRUCTIVE CONSEQUENCES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

An Address B Ambassador Johanan Bein

Israel's Acting Permanent Representative To The United Nations

At The 44th General Assembly Of The United Nations

December 13, 1989

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of this special session of the General Assembly. We know of your outstanding leadership qualities both in your home country and at the United Nations. We are confident, therefore, as to your continued success in the difficult and important task of steering this session.

Mr. President,

Apartheid is an abomination for every Israeli, for every Jew, for every Zionist. It is totally unacceptable both as an ideology and a political system. We in Israel share in the pain of those suffering under its yoke. Apartheid must be abolished. It should be banished forever.

More than any other people or nation, the Jewish people have experienced the outcome of state-endorsed racism. The horrible implications of systematic racial discrimination could not be clearer to any other people. Only a generation ago, we lost six million of our brethren who were burned in the ovens of Nazi Europe in a genocidal onslaught fanned by the fires of racism. Moreover, the anguish of persecution and oppression has been the lot of the Jewish people throughout their history of exile. It is from the depths of our national experience, therefore, that we decry, reject and are repulsed by Apartheid.

The very soul of Zionism - the national liberation movement of the Jewish people - emanated from a national rebellion against religious and ethnic discrimination. Zionism struggled to attain self-emancipation and redemption for a people long subjected to persecution. Zionism is, therefore, the very antithesis of racism, and served as a model for many liberation movements around the world.

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Prominent champions of Black African liberty sought to emulate Zionism as a model for the liberation of their peoples from the grip of colonialism and racism. William Dubois, one of the early advocates of African freedom, declared in 1919 that "The Pan-African movement means to us what the Zionist movement means to the Jews." And he was not alone.

As Nelson Mandela stood before the South African court that sentenced him to life imprisonment on April 20th 1964, he delivered a speech on the moral limitations of political struggle. He declared that his movement seeks to ensure high moral standards in resistance activities. These moral standards, he proclaimed, were an "importation from the Jewish nation's underground organizations".

Modern Zionism is rooted in a tradition of justice and equality that reaches back thousands of years to the dawn of Jewish history and the origins of moral thought. Millenia ago when the practice of slavery was deeply embedded in all societies, the Jews introduced to the world a revolutionary idea: That men are inherently born free and equal. At a time when slavery was considered a natural state of human condition, the lofty ideals of the prophets Amos, Jeremiah and Isaiah, on the innate liberty and equality of all men, were being preached from the hills of Judea and the dusty expanses of Samaria. It was from Jerusalem that the morality of human equality and the passion for justice emerged.

Mr. President,

Our profound empathy and identification with those suffering under Apartheid is thus not only a result of our own abject condition in history. It is derived also from the deepest wells of Jewish morality. The fusing of Jewish moral passion and the Jewish historical experience is what led the Jewish people to take a leading role among the champions of human dignity in modern times. Theodore Herzl, the father of modern Zionism, wrote that after the liberation of the Jews we should dedicate ourselves to the liberation of the blacks. This strong affinity with the struggle of the blacks underlies the decades of friendly relations between Israel and black African nations.

Since its rebirth in 1948, Israel has trained thousands of Africans in agriculture and economics in the context of the technical co-operation programmes which had developed between Israel and African states. This assistance in nation building continued even during the years in which, following intense

pressure and threats from Arab states, relations were curtailed between Israel and some African nations.

Israel's abhorrence of Apartheid stems also from the nature of its contemporary society. Israel is a multi-racial society composed of some 100 ethnic groups of all shades and colors. It is the most color-blind nation in the world, a society both democratic and pluralistic.

The declaration of independence of the State of Israel guarantees to all inhabitants, regardless of origin, color or religion, that the government "will uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens without distinction of race, creed or sex."

Hebrew and Arabic coexist as the two official languages of our country. The Arab citizens of Israel enjoy full civil and political rights. They occupy important positions in government, legislature and the judiciary, a representation which is evident even in our mission to the United Nations.

The black majority in South Africa is systematically denied the rights of full citizenship and is, in fact, disenfranchised. Such an abysmal situation is untenable; Apartheid in its entirety must be abolished.

Mr. President,

On the declarative level, Israel's repulsion and total opposition to Apartheid has been enunciated so often, in so many forums, by the government, Presidents, Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers and by hosts of other Israeli leaders, that it should be quite self evident by now. Representatives of Israel around the world have issued solemn declarations protesting Apartheid and reaffirming our total condemnation of its ideology and practice. These declarations reflect Israeli public opinion which regards Apartheid as anathema to Zionism and the fundamental values upon which Israeli society is predicated.

On an operative level, the government of Israel has instituted far-reaching measures against South Africa which served as an example to other western democracies. Since the implementation of these measures in March 1987, Israel has continued to curtail its associations with South Africa. We have banned all investments in South Africa, all scientific cooperation, and all access to and from our ports. We have severed all cultural ties with South African organizations connected in any way with the Apartheid regime. Israeli athletes are prohibited from taking part in sport events in South Africa. There is no promotion of tourism, and official visits are prohibited.

In this context, we wish to state categorically that it is the

adamant and long standing policy of the Government of Israel to have no cooperation whatsoever with South Africa in the nuclear field. Any allegations to the contrary are offered without reference or substantiation and fail to be subjected to any form of scrutiny or examination. Instead, such imputations are the product of political and polemical agendas, which have nothing to do with the struggle against Apartheid, but rather aim at defaming Israel by attempting to link it with South Africa and Apartheid. This libel stands in direct contradiction to the facts.

Mr. President,

We are convened here in a special session of the General Assembly to discuss the campaign and struggle against Apartheid. Yet, this laudable objective continues to be prejudiced and abused by digressive efforts on the part of those who's only goal is to attack Israel. Apartheid is too great an evil, the struggle to eradicate it too important an objective, to be cynically manipulated by an obsessive campaign of hate against Israel. We urge all those who are genuinely concerned with the plight of those suffering under the yoke of racial discrimination in South Africa, to resist the efforts which sidetrack the struggle against Apartheid and cause it to degenerate into a meaningless exercise in polemics.

For the struggle against Apartheid to succeed, action must take precedence over rhetoric. The black community is in need of a strong and developed leadership. A leadership which is able to improve the lot of the people and share the reigns of power on an equal basis and in an orderly and peaceful fashion; it has no need for empty slogans and endless tirades. The black community needs an adequate and self-sustaining infrastructure; it does not need stultified propaganda.

In taking an active stand against Apartheid, Israel has extended special assistance to representatives of the South African black communities. By the end of 1989 Israel will have accommodated close to 200 South African black leaders in a variety of training programmes, focusing especially on cooperative development. A course on "The Role of People's Organizations in Community National Development" has recently been concluded and was attended specifically by students from the South African black community. Israel is one of the very few countries which offer such assistance. Other nations should be urged to follow suit. Such concrete measures will contribute substantially in fostering

the basis for the struggle against Apartheid and serve to encourage the transformation in South Africa which will, hopefully, culminate in peaceful relations of equality and tolerance among all sectors of the population.

Mr. President,

We declare once again our unswerving determination to stand by you, the peoples of Africa, in the struggle to eradicate Apartheid, as we stand by you in your efforts to further development and welfare in all of the continent of Africa.  
Thank you Mr. President.