

Introduction

Most Canadians believe our country acts and has acted as an honest broker or peacekeeper on the world stage. While this belief may indicate a widespread desire for a democratic and humanistic foreign policy it often does not reflect reality. My *Black Book of Canadian Foreign Policy* was a broad overview of the subject. This work, on the other hand, is an attempt to understand Canada's role in one of the world's longest standing conflicts. To develop a peace-promoting, altruistic Canadian foreign policy, the first step is to understand the past and current reality. Only then can we demand change. The aim of this book is to educate Canadians about what has been and is currently being done in our name in an important part of the world.

Thousands of books describe various aspects of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. Only a handful detail Canada's ties to the dispute and most do so from a pro-Israel perspective. This is the first book to focus on Canadian support for the dispossession of Palestinians, for a state building a nation based on one religion, and for the last major European colonial project.

Most Canadians believe their government should treat all citizens equally and that everyone born in Canada is Canadian. They support the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which bans discrimination based on religion, ethnicity and place of origin. A majority believes multiculturalism is a good a thing and are proud that people from all religious backgrounds, from every ethnicity and from every corner of the globe can be accepted as Canadian. Our constitution recognizes, and most of us believe, that First Nations have rights to their land and self-government. Despite numerous ongoing abuses, many Canadians regret the historical treatment of indigenous people and our colonial past. The federal government has apologized for some of its most egregious past behaviour.

I believe most Canadians want their government to uphold the Charter of Rights and Freedoms by following its principles when determining our foreign policy. Yet, in many respects Israel represents the antithesis of these principles. It proclaims itself a nation of one religion. It controls millions of people's lives without allowing them to vote. It refuses to allow hundreds of thousands of people born in the land of Israel and their descendents to become citizens or even visit the country. In many ways Israel's current reality resembles the worst of Canada's colonial past.

Still, this book is not about Israel, or the nature of Zionism. It does, however, begin with the position that Israel is an "apartheid state".¹ In recognition that this analysis is controversial in some quarters, a short explanation is necessary.

In *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* former U.S. President Jimmy Carter argues that Israel's policies in the Palestinian territories constitute "a system of apartheid, with two peoples occupying the same land, but completely separated from each other, with Israelis totally dominant and suppressing violence by depriving Palestinians of their basic human rights."² On numerous occasions Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu has compared the treatment of Palestinians to Blacks under South African apartheid. The 1973 UN International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid described the "inhuman acts" of apartheid as:

"Denial to a member or members of a racial group or groups of the right to life and liberty of persons... By the infliction upon the members of a racial group or groups of serious bodily or mental harm, by the infringement of their freedom or dignity, or by subjecting them to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

"Any legislative measures and other measures calculated to prevent a racial group or groups from participation in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the country ... including ... the

right to education, the right to leave and to return to their country, the right to a nationality, the right to freedom of movement and residence.

“Any measures, including legislative measures, designed to divide the population along racial lines by the creation of separate reserves and ghettos for the members of a racial group or groups ... the expropriation of landed property belonging to a racial group.”³

Certain aspects of Israeli reality fit this definition. Israel’s laws are fundamentally racist, forcing citizens and institutions to make racist decisions. “Legal apartheid is regulated in Israel,” notes Uri Davis, by “ceding state sovereignty and investing its responsibilities in the critical area of immigration, settlement and land development with Zionist organizations constitutionally committed to the exclusive principle of ‘only for the Jews’.”⁴ With quasi state status the World Zionist Organization, Jewish Agency and Jewish National Fund are constitutionally committed to serving and promoting the interests of Jews and only Jews.⁵

Through the Law of Return, my longtime friend in Vancouver, Michael Rosen, — who hasn’t been to Israel, has no familial connection to the country and has never even been religious — can emigrate to Israel. On the other hand, Noor Tibi, a woman I met at Concordia University in Montreal whose grandfather fled from Haifa in 1948, could not enter (let alone live in) Israel until she got a Canadian passport. Justified as an affirmative action measure to protect besieged Jewry, the Law of Return becomes patently racist when Israel refuses to allow Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland.

Zionist forces expelled 87% of the Arab population from the soon-to-be Jewish state in 1947/48.⁶ This was the first major act of apartheid waged against Palestinians. Refusing to allow them to return is an ongoing form of apartheid. Since its establishment Israel has been in a state of emergency to keep the properties of Palestinian refugees in the hands of the state and the Jewish

National Fund.⁷ This theft is sanctified by the Absentees' Property Law of 1950.⁸

Most of the land Israel grabbed from Palestinians is off limits to the Arabs who remain in Israel. Almost a fifth of the population, Arabs are legally excluded from owning 93% of Israel (not including the occupied territories).⁹ They are also politically disenfranchised. Between 1948 and 1966 the Arab sectors of Israel were under martial law and today political parties that oppose the Jewish supremacist character of the state are outlawed.¹⁰ Article 7 (a) of Israel's Basic Law stipulates that "A candidates' list shall not participate in the elections to the Knesset if its objects or actions, expressly or by implication, include... negation of the existence of the State of Israel as the state of the Jewish people."¹¹

In addition to legal structures that discriminate against the indigenous Arab population, government services prioritize Jews. Despite making up 18% of the population, Arab Israelis receive about 4% of public spending.¹² A March 2009 report found that the "government invested [US] \$1,100 in each Jewish pupil's education compared to \$190 for each Arab pupil. The gap is even wider when compared to the popular state-run religious schools, where Jewish pupils receive nine times more funding than Arab pupils."¹³ According to Israel's National Insurance Institute, half of all Arab Israeli families live in poverty compared to 14% of Jewish families.¹⁴

In the West Bank, Israeli apartheid is especially obvious. The population has been pushed into bantustan-like enclaves, encircled by a massive wall, had their water and land appropriated, and are subjected to daily humiliation at military checkpoints. For more than four decades supposedly democratic Israel has dominated the West Bank population without allowing them to vote in national elections. In Gaza 1.5 million Palestinians — many of whom were forced from their homes in 1947/48 — live in a giant prison cut off from the world by the mighty Israeli military.

In fact, Zionism is an expansionist settler ideology. For more than a century the Zionist movement has steadily usurped Arab land. Many Zionists believe Eretz Israel (the land of Israel) includes the West Bank, Gaza and much more. The 450,000 state-supported settlers illegally installed in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are an expression of this expansionism.¹⁵ So is Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights, which was captured from Syria in the 1967 war.

To achieve its aims this expansionist ideology requires military might ("Israel is an army with a state" goes the saying). Israel has bombed Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Iraq and threatens to bomb Iran. Israeli military historian Zeev Maoz explains: "Between 1948 and 2004, Israel fought six interstate wars, fought two (some say three) civil wars, and engaged in over 144 dyadic militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) that involved the threat, the display, or the use of military force against another state. Israel is by far the most conflict prone state in modern history. It has averaged nearly four MIDS every year. It has fought an interstate war every nine years. Israel appears on top of the list of the most intense international rivalries in the last 200-year period."¹⁶ Later in *Defending The Holy Land: A Critical Analysis of Israel's Security & Foreign Policy*, Maoz notes: "There was only one year out of 56 years of history in which Israel did not engage in acts involving the threat, display, or limited use of force with its neighbors. The only year in which Israel did not engage in a militarized conflict was 1988, when Israel was deeply immersed in fighting the Palestinian uprising, the intifada. So it is fair to say that during each and every year of its history Israel was engaged in violent military actions of some magnitude."¹⁷ Maoz concludes: "None of the wars — with a possible exception of the 1948 war of Independence — was what Israel refers to as Milhemet Ein Brerah ('war of necessity'). They were all wars of choice or wars of folly."¹⁸

This book will demonstrate that, with the exception of Israel's 1956 invasion of Egypt, Ottawa openly or tacitly endorsed

these military endeavors. Despite claims to the contrary, Canada is not, nor has it ever been, an “honest broker” in the Palestine-Israel conflict. The different elements that make up Canada’s foreign policy – from diplomacy to security services, to tax policies related to charities, to “non-governmental organizations” such as churches – have largely sided with Israel.

This book will argue that, from the beginning, Israel was primarily the creation of European/North American sociopolitical forces, including Canadian ones. Ideologically, Zionism’s roots come from biblical literalism and European nationalism. Both also played significant roles in Canadian history. Zionism can be described as the ideology of the last major European settler movement. Of course Canada is, or at least was, also a settler state, which made Israel a familiar face and garnered it support.

This book will also describe the important role Canadian diplomats played in the 1947 UN negotiations to create a Jewish state on Palestinian land. Uninterested in the welfare of the indigenous population, Lester Pearson played a central role in two different UN bodies discussing the issue and Canada’s representative to the UN Special Committee on Palestine, Ivan C. Rand, pushed a partition plan bitterly resisted by Palestinians. After the UN-backed partition vote Canadians supported efforts to expel Palestine’s Arab population. Hundreds of Canadians fought in the 1947/48 war, while many more financed and procured weapons. During the war 700,000 Palestinians were driven from their homeland and Israel conquered 24% more territory than it was allocated in the already generous partition plan.

This book will argue that, unmoved by Palestinian suffering, Canadian diplomacy continued its one-sided backing of Israel after the 1948 war. Ottawa actively supported Israel before, during and after the 1967 war, for instance. A number of studies in the 1980s found Canada to be among Israel’s best friends at the UN. While, on occasion, Canadian pronouncements and UN votes

have supported Palestinian rights, rarely have the different arms of Canadian foreign policy provided concrete support. Canadian intelligence and military services have been one-sided advocates of Israel. The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) works closely with Mossad (its Israeli equivalent) and many Canadian weapons-makers ship their products to Israel. As well, private charities support Israeli militarism and every year Canadians send hundreds of millions of dollars worth of tax-deductible donations to Israeli universities, parks, immigration initiatives etc. More controversially, millions of dollars in private money, often subsidized by Canadian tax write-offs, is funnelled to illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

This book will discuss how Canada's political culture has spurred a political party two-step in which the Conservatives and Liberals one-up each other in proclaiming their love of Israel. Both Liberal and Conservative governments — from John Diefenbaker to Lester Pearson, Brian Mulroney to Paul Martin and Stephen Harper — staunchly backed Israel. And rarely has the opposition challenged the ruling parties' positions. Even the Left has supported Zionism since World War II, which explains (part of) Canada's staunch support for Israel. The book will argue that this lack of opposition has allowed the current government to make Canada (at least diplomatically) the most pro-Israel country in the world.

Finally, this book will discuss why Canadian politicians have exhibited such one-sided support for Israel. The central reason is this country's ties to U.S.-led imperialism. Support for Israel has largely mirrored different governments' relationship to Washington.

The book concludes with a discussion of how to reverse course. We need to create a political climate where supporting the killing of Palestinians and stealing their land is no longer acceptable.