

**A CALL FOR AN ANTI-APARTHEID CAMPAIGN
AS ISRAEL PREPARES TO MAKE ITS OCCUPATION PERMANENT**

**A Working Paper and a Proposal for Coordinated Action
Among Palestinian, Israeli and International Civil Societies**

**“STOP ISRAELI APARTHEID, END THE OCCUPATION”
“FREEDOM FOR PALESTINIANS!”**

"The [convergence] plan is inevitable, it will be implemented, hopefully by agreement, but it will be implemented."

-- Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, June 13, 2006

The time has arrived. After years of warning of an “impending” regime of apartheid in Israel-Palestine, of the dangerous trend “towards” apartheid, of an “apartheid-like” situation, it has become official: within the next year – two at the most – an expanded Israel will officially and unilaterally impose an apartheid regime over the remaining tiny, isolated and impoverished islands of a Palestinian Bantustan. The official Guidelines of the Olmert government include the following passage:

The government aspires to bring about the definition of the state's permanent borders as a Jewish state with a Jewish majority, and as a democratic state, and will act to do so through a negotiated agreement with the Palestinians on the basis of mutual recognition, existing agreements, the principles of the road map, an end to violence and the disarmament of the terror organizations. The government shall endeavor, as stated, to conduct negotiations with the Palestinians ... but if the Palestinians do not behave as stipulated in the near future, the government shall act even in the absence of negotiations and an agreement with them on the basis of the broad national consensus in Israel and its deep understanding with Israel's friends in the world and at their head the United States of America and President George Bush.

That is, Israel, by annexing its major settlement blocs, declaring the Wall that intrudes deeply into Palestinian territory its permanent border *plus* declaring the Jordan Valley its second eastern border, Israel expands from 78% to some 85% of the country, sandwiching the Palestinian majority into a series of enclaves on the remaining 15%. The permanent and structured domination of Israel over the Palestinians based on the “separation” of Jews and Arabs in order to ensure Jewish demographic hegemony, combined with the creation of a truncated, non-viable Palestinian Bantustan, constitutes an apartheid regime in a full sense of the term. This is the only way to interpret the “Convergence Plan” that Ehud Olmert, Israel's new Prime Minister, has laid out in great detail as the central task of his government. On May 23rd, 2006, he will meet with Bush in order to extract from him the requisite American approval.

The time has therefore come to unite the various specialized campaigns, important as they are, into a coherent, assertive Big Picture “meta-campaign” to prevent an official regime of apartheid from soon being imposed on the Palestinians – and if it is imposed, to transform it into a full-fledged anti-apartheid campaign. Campaigns of divestment and

sanctions; campaigns against house demolitions, the construction of the Wall, the uprooting of olive trees; campaigns for applying the Fourth Geneva Convention or norms of human rights to the Occupied Territories; resistance to Occupation on the ground and internationally – as vital as they are to the struggle for justice and peace in Palestine-Israel – must be integrated into an overarching meta-campaign against apartheid. This is the most fundamental, immediate and urgent political need of the moment, the final and ultimate confrontation with the Iron Wall, with dispossession, with the imprisonment of an entire people.

The Anti-Apartheid Call of Civil Society

A draft of the “Call” for a global anti-apartheid campaign is presented below. It presents in concise form the issue outlined above, stresses the urgency of the situation, and demands international intervention based on the civil society Call of Palestinian NGOs of July 2005. As it is circulated among Palestinian and Israeli NGOs and activist groups, it will be hopefully modified in a way that balances a substantive campaign squarely addressing the issues before us and a language that permits the maximum mobilization of international organizations.

One of the issues is the very use of the term “apartheid.” While not based on the racial policies of South African apartheid, the formal institutionalization of the Occupation whereby one state assumes permanent and structured domination over another, one people permanent domination over another through a system of institutionalized discrimination, means that Israel’s form of apartheid conforms in principle, conception and structure to apartheid. There are those who object to that term on the grounds that it is a “red flag” that deflects debate from the issues themselves. They prefer terms more descriptive for what is occurring in Israel-Palestine: “dispossession,” “ethnic cleansing,” “colonization,” “occupation,” “separation” and others. Apartheid, however, is the only term that gets to the *systemic* quality of Israel’s Occupation, the intent to impose not merely policies of discrimination but a deliberately structured and institutionalized regime of permanent domination that perpetuates the Occupation forever.

A useful suggestion has been to emphasize that in its first stage – the period leading up to Olmert’s actual implementation of the “convergence plan” – our campaign will *warn against the danger* of impending apartheid. Only at implementation (within 6-9 months, according to Olmert) will the campaign turn into an explicit and full-fledged anti-apartheid campaign.

A second issue has to do with strategy. Is it possible to separate the anti-apartheid campaign from the issue of the final political resolution of the conflict (one/two states, confederation and all the details)? The campaign is intended to focus on apartheid and occupation, preparing the ground for negotiations and a just resolution. If we get into details as to the nature of the settlement – beyond what is written in the Call – we run the risk of putting off allies that we need. That balance will also have to be discussed.

This Call and campaign is perhaps one of the most important initiatives civil society has taken until now. Given our record of fragmentation, it is to be hoped that we will find a way to work together in good faith and good will to achieve our common aim: an end to Occupation, an end to any hint of apartheid and a just resolution to the conflict.

A Call of Civil Society to End the Israeli Occupation, Prevent the Imposition of an Apartheid Regime Over the Palestinian Territories and Achieve a Just and Lasting Peace

We, representatives of Palestinian, Israeli and international civil societies, call upon governments, international organizations and individuals of conscience to raise their voices against the imminent imposition of a permanent apartheid regime of Israel over Palestine and to join in a collective effort to end the Occupation before all hopes of a just peace in Palestine-Israel are dashed forever. The intentions of the Israeli government are spelled out in detail in its “Convergence Plan.”

Immediately upon receiving American approval (even tacit), Israel will move to declare both its illegal Wall extending far into Palestinian territory as its new “demographic” border and the Jordan Valley as its *second* eastern border. Its massive settlement blocs containing 87% of its illegal settlers will be annexed, leaving the Palestinians with a non-viable Bantustan comprised of tiny, impoverished and disconnected enclaves – a prison-state. The brutal physical “separation” of Jewish and Palestinian populations in which Israel permanently controls 85% of Palestine-Israel, the borders, Palestinian freedom of movement, the economy, Jerusalem, the richest agricultural lands, the water and even the country’s airspace constitutes nothing less than a full-fledged apartheid regime. Israel may declare the borders “provisional,” but the meaning of the Convergence Plan is to institutionalize Israel’s Occupation in perpetuity, reducing the Palestinians to a fragmented, powerless and dependent population without any rights of self-determination whatsoever.

The international community cannot remain silent, indifferent and inactive. Israel’s Convergence Plan is as illegal in international law as it is immoral, since the Fourth Geneva Convention specifies that occupation can only be disposed through negotiations, not through unilateral actions. It is inconceivable that only a few years after the fall of both the Berlin Wall and South African apartheid the international community would permit an entire people to be literally imprisoned and a new apartheid regime to emerge before our eyes.

We of the Palestinian, Israeli and international civil societies call upon the international community to take immediate and effective steps:

1. To reaffirm the Palestinian people’s inalienable right to self-determination as guaranteed in international law;
2. To end totally Israeli occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and to dismantle the Wall;
3. To find a just and mutually agreed-upon solution to the refugee issues that complies with international law and UN resolution 194 regarding the rights of Palestinian refugees;
4. To guarantee to the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel the fundamental right to full equality; and
5. To ensure the integrity and security of all the states in the region.

For the sake of justice and genuine peace in Palestine/Israel, as an essential contribution to global stability and well-being and, indeed, for the promotion of a world based on human rights and international law, we call upon you all to join with us in initiating a world-wide Campaign to Prevent an Israeli Apartheid.

Conception and Goals of the Anti-Apartheid Campaign

The proposed campaign is an urgent response to the imminent transformation of Israel's Occupation into a permanent regime of apartheid, as indicated by Olmert's "convergence plan." The following principles, organization and actions provide an initial approach:

- *A triple-focus.* The proposed campaign would focus on three fundamental preconditions for a just resolution of the conflict: (1) resistance to any attempt to impose an apartheid regime over Israel-Palestine; (2) insistence on a complete end to the Occupation; and (3) rejection out of hand of any attempt to impose a "solution" unilaterally. The anti-apartheid campaign would remain separate from any effort to promote a particular solution. Unlike the case of South Africa when the anti-apartheid movement fought to establish a single democratic state, there is no consensus among the Palestinians as to the "end game:" the political goal of Fatah differs from that of Hamas; proponents of a one-state solution exist side-by-side with proponents of various two-state solutions and of regional confederation. In order to attract maximal support, then the focus of the campaign should be on the three elements specified above.
- *From Prevention to Resistance.* The first phase of the Campaign would direct our energies towards preventing Israel from formally imposing an apartheid regime on Palestine with international backing. This really brings the struggle to the doorstep of every civil society group which is charged, among other things, with preventing its country from supporting Israel's apartheid intentions. In the likelihood that apartheid is in fact announced on a particular date (when Israel officially announces the implementation of its Convergence Plan), the Campaign would shift to a full-fledged campaign against apartheid.
- *Mobilization of international civil society.* Resistance to apartheid and movement towards a just peace will take place only if significant international pressure can be applied to Israel, the Occupying Power. For this it will be necessary to mobilize much wider circles of civil society than we have until now. The Israel-Palestine conflict must be re-framed as a global conflict having an impact far beyond its local confines. Only then will we be able to mobilize wider segments of the activist community than we have until today. And only when we succeed will be able to both pressure our governments and engage with them to secure a just peace.
- *Integration of existing campaigns.* An anti-apartheid campaign does not replace any existing campaign. It merely provides an overarching and urgent framework in which the various campaigns can "plug in" and coordinate their collective efforts. In

addition to their existing activities, each campaign should relate to the urgency of imminent apartheid and gear its demands to that eventuality. We all benefit from coordinated campaigns and sharing resources.

Organization and Mobilization

Although we may have several months in which to organize, the point of no return, a product of secret dealings among Israeli, American and European officials, is likely to arrive well before political declarations or events on the ground. It is crucial that we organize as quickly as possible and that we monitor events and developments.

- The Campaign would be led by a coalition of peace and human rights organizations inside Palestine/Israel and abroad according to agreed-upon principles. This will enable effective coordination. A closed internet list will be established in order to coordinate communication and strategy among the participating organizations, as well as for sharing materials. Local organizations will, of course, have the freedom to embark on initiatives of their own. The campaign will be coordinated among all the groups agreeing with its principles and goals. "Ownership" will be shared.
- With the help of the growing circle of participants, this working paper/proposal will be circulated widely for comments and suggestions, so that it will develop into a mission statement, statement of principles and an action plan acceptable to the widest circles, yet effective. The organizational goal is not control but merely *articulation* of our concerns and goals, *coordination* and the *joint development* of the most effective campaign possible.

Proposed Initial Actions

- **Information dissemination.** Development of effective informational materials. Among the most basic materials needed are:
 - **Apartheid in Israel-Palestine?** A basic brief flyer or brochure raising the issue and possibility of apartheid in Israel-Palestine in an open-ended manner that makes the case forcibly yet leaves the reader to draw his/her own intentions. The piece could include facts, maps, quotes, a concise definition of apartheid and why the Israeli case applies, references to the *International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid* and other documents of human rights and international law (such as the Fourth Geneva Convention), as well as reference to supporting statements of parliamentary, church, human rights or other respected voices. The material could also be translated into a power point presentation as well as film formats.

-- **Reframings** of the conflict “pitching” our case in terms of the worldviews and language of the different groups we are attempting to influence. This is a crucial if we want people to “get it.” The problem is not only information, but transmitting true understanding and sympathy, overcoming resistance to our message and empowering people to advocate effectively. Information is useful only if it can be integrated into a coherent framing that connects to existing worldviews and opinions. The essential task is to replace Israel’s “security framing” with an alternative re-framing that emphasizes (1) Israel as the Occupying Power pursuing a pro-active policy of controlling the entire country west of the Jordan River, and (2) the Palestinian narrative, including their rights to return and to self-determination, as well as their peace overtures towards Israel. That re-framing should then be presented within whatever major conceptual frameworks particular target audiences have: a Christian reframing, for example, or a Jewish one, a human rights one, one emphasizing women’s issues in occupation, a re-framing emphasizing one’s country’s own national interests in a just resolution of the conflict, a global re-framing, even re-framings emphasizing environmental or other specific concerns.

- **Intensifying Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns.**
- **Legal initiatives.** These are proving increasingly effective. High Israeli army officers have been advised by the government not to travel to Europe for fear of being arrested. We should develop a strategy for using legal instruments, including against our own governments who violate covenants on human rights and international law that they themselves have signed on.
- **Protest and Resistance; the need for urgency.** Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) campaigns have begun gathering momentum, especially among church groups and anti-Caterpillar activists. Apartheid adds another urgent dimension to these campaigns, which might be expanded as apartheid is entrenched. Other campaigns might also consider incorporating anti-apartheid elements.

One major action should be against the closure, the imprisonment of Palestinians behind the Wall, the sealing in of Palestinians and the inability of Israelis to visit or work with them. Hundreds of Israelis could be mobilized in a mass civil society protest to cross into Palestinian areas via the terminals and declare their defiance of the closure, thereby inviting arrest.

- **Lobbying.** While confronting the political establishment is important, we should also engage with it. Each country’s groups should develop a program of lobbying its leaders, both official and others (church leaders, opinion-makers, intellectuals, etc.), as well as lobbying and currying relations with university teachers and students, trade unions, religious groups and other significant members of the civil society.
- **Additional Activities:**

- **Development of an On-line Resource Pool** of visuals (photos, film-clips, access to films, power point presentations, etc.), maps, brochures, documents and reports.
- **Organizing speaking tours** for Israeli and Palestinian activists. It might be a good idea to bring anti-apartheid activists from South Africa to both make the point about apartheid and to help in strategizing and mobilizing.
- **Exhibits.** A number of Palestinian and Israel organizations have exhibits on issues such as house demolitions, checkpoints, women's issues under Occupation, military and settler oppression in Hebron and more, as well as more artistic exhibits. These visual presentations constitute effective instruments of communication and persuasion.
- **Theatrical performances.** A number of powerful theatre pieces exist and could be mounted locally: "My Name is Rachel Corrie," "Territories," and others.
- **Learning and Solidarity Activities in Palestine-Israel.** Palestinian and Israeli groups offer a wide variety of activities "on the ground" such as critical tours of the Occupied Territories, conferences, workshops and resistance activities. These experiences are powerful ways of bringing target groups – activists, parliamentary delegations, journalists, faculty and students, community leaders and others – into contact with the realities, issues and people involved. They should be employed as effective means of persuasion.

Stage II: When Apartheid is Declared, a Full-Fledged Anti-Apartheid Campaign

The steps suggested above are intended to call public attention to the coming plan of apartheid, to make it an issue *before* it happens, and in that way prime public opinion for our strong response. For in all likelihood an apartheid regime *will be* declared at a particular time. We must be ready for that, primed for a strong response that redefines the conflict from one of occupation to one of apartheid.

In the next few months we should be planning a series of responses within the framework of a major campaign. One proposal that should already be considered is the following:

- **Worldwide Ads.** When we decide that apartheid has been declared – the day Olmert or another Israeli leader unilaterally declare Israel's new permanent borders – we should have ads already prepared and monies raised to take out large ads in our major newspapers proclaiming the establishment of a new apartheid regime, explaining in bullet form why it is an apartheid regime, and calling for protests and resistance activities. We should have materials ready for press conferences, key journalists identified and primed, protests planned and have ready any other measures we think

effective. But we must be ready: if we merely respond after the fact, our voice will be lost.

- **Major Gatherings and Demonstrations.** Gatherings and demonstrations are ideal ways of mobilizing our supporters; they give focus and urgency to our efforts to organize. They also give tangible expression to our campaign. Two dates stand out as crucial ones: November 29, the date that the 1947 UN partition plan was approved and the recently-declared UN Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; and June 5, 2007, the 40th anniversary of the 1967 war and the start of the Occupation. Different country groups can decide how to mark these (and other) dates, but we should work in tandem toward major happenings next June 5, certainly in the US (a gathering of religious and civil society leaders at the National Cathedral in Washington has been proposed), as well as elsewhere.
- **Major Conference/Protest Gathering on the issue of implementation of international law,** to be held either in Geneva (the Swiss government being responsible for convening the High Contracting Parties of the Fourth Geneva Convention) or in Jerusalem (alternating between Israeli and Palestinian areas). Such a conference, with a strong protest/demand component, would focus attention on the critical problem of implementing international humanitarian law and human rights conventions, with specific demands to apply IHL to end 40 years of occupation.