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*Besieged Bedfellows: Israel and the Land of Apartheid* by Benjamin M. Joseph

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throughout his discussion. He views Afrikaners as "narrow-minded and intolerant, resisting absolutely any liberal ideas of government," and claims that it is "evident" that "the government in South Africa is a throwback to Hitler and his Nazi party (p.29)." He sees no solution to the crisis in southern Africa other than the complete dismantlement of the entire apartheid system. One would hope to find these same nefarious passions directed toward any government supporting the South African regime. Despite the fact that Ali views U.S. actions as maintaining the apartheid system, his tone takes a complete turn when discussing American policies toward South Africa. While he calls U.S. policy toward southern Africa "weak and reactive" and is in support of complete divestment and disengagement of U.S. diplomatic ties, his tone and suggestions for American policy are surprisingly weak and apathetic.

But all in all, Southern Africa: An American Enigma, is a sound introduction to the fundamental issues of apartheid, particularly with respect to U.S. and South African relations. Ali presents the information with substantial clarity and cohesiveness.

The book has a bibliography which provides a sound framework for persons who have limited knowledge in this particular field and wish to further their understanding. It also has a fairly extensive index for quick reference to topics raised throughout his discussion.

Judith Robb

**Benjamin M. Joseph. Besieged Bedfellows: Israel and the Land of Apartheid. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988).**

There has been a great deal of speculation about the contemporary relationship between Israel and South Africa. Clearly, Israel and South Africa are two of the foremost pariah states in the world today whose international isolation is only comparable to Albania, the Vietnamese backed regime in Kampuchea and arguably, Taiwan. In fact, there are a number of countries in the world today in which political affairs are dominated by an ethnic clique, yet there is something very distinctive about the immutability of the Israeli and South African political systems which are both explicitly racist in ideology and yet democratic in form. It is as if all the 20th century trends toward liberation, equality and freedom have been frozen out of southern Africa or Palestine. In fact, no state since World War II has more consistently and flagrantly disregarded and abused the principles of universal citizenship and the sanctity of borders which form the basis of modern international politics than either Israel or South Africa.

Of course, both South Africa and Israel are products of British imperialism, of the British colonial policy of divide and rule. Ali Mazrui has argued that origins of British racism can be traced to the dehumanizing Teutonic mentality of the alleged genetic superiority of the white race which thus necessitates the complete separation of the races; perhaps this was a necessary condition for the rise of Zionism and Apartheid. Yet, the forces which have been drawing South Africa and Israel into an ever more intimate relationship go far beyond the common heritage of British colonialism. Indeed, Benjamin Joseph's *Besieged Bedfellows* is aimed precisely at systematically and categorically examining the many facets of the unique relationship between South Africa and Israel.

Joseph, in the preface, claims not to be passing judgement upon or questioning the morality of Zionism or Apartheid. However, Joseph assumes throughout his work that the brutality and exploitation of Apartheid are self-evident to any rational observer, and thus Joseph's focuses on exposing Zionist racism. For the most part, the book draws its facts from South African and Israeli newspapers as well as other non-classified sources, yet this does not diminish the ability of Joseph to find incredibly incriminating racist statements by Israeli leaders such as the following by Yosef Lapid, head of the Israeli Broadcasting Authority:

The supposedly liberated African states are for the most part a bad joke and an affront to human dignity... research was published in Britain which, among other things compared the history of Jews and Negroes in New York so as to investigate differences in achievement obtained by races with different IQs and different aptitudes under constant conditions... Evidently, there is, after all, a hereditary difference in intellect between a man whose father lived in the jungle and one whose forefathers were priests in the Temple, as D'Israeli put it.

Joseph presents such statements without critical comment and attempts to place them within the context of Israeli-South African relations. Thus, at times, Joseph's tone is so overly concise that it leaves the reader craving for more general themes so that the many details and facts could be presented with a more distinguishable purpose.

Ten of the book's twelve chapters are devoted mostly to describing to twists and turns in the many levels of interaction between South Africa and Israel. Joseph posits that the October 1973 War, which shattered the myth of invincible Israeli military supremacy, was a turning point in the relationship. In fact, South Africa has always been

one of Israel's most tenacious supporters, and during the October 1973 War, there were reports that South African pilots flew with the Israeli air force on the Suez front in order to gain combat experience. Furthermore, the Apartheid regime has allowed South Africa's Jewish community to send money to Israel which is a rare exception to South Africa's currency regulations, and later Israel also became the only foreign country permitted to sell its government securities in South Africa. Perhaps the most visible display of the growing intimacy of the relationship came in 1976, the year the United Nations condemned Zionism as a form of racism, when South African Prime Minister John Vorster was, as Joseph describes it, "given the red carpet welcome by Israeli Prime Minister Rabin."

Joseph recounts the many reciprocated visits by Israeli and South African leaders, some of which were official while others were working vacations. From such a perspective, Joseph reviews the arguments forwarded in Israel and South Africa that their economic comparative advantage were complementary - South Africa being natural resource abundant while Israel, supposedly is human resource rich. In fact, it is extremely difficult to accurately measure the trade between South Africa and Israel because so much of the economic interaction is conducted through third parties, yet it is quite clear that economic sanctions against South Africa could easily be subverted by Israel acting as a conduit for any critical supplies which South Africa might need. Indeed, one of the few editorial comments about the current deafening silence of the academic debate over Israeli-South African relations concerns Naomi Chazan's 1983 article "The Fallacies of Pragmatism" in *African Affairs*. Joseph dismisses Chazan's argument that the economic relationship is somehow unequal or meager as purely wishful thinking.

The most sensitive and most secretive area of Israeli-South African relations is their military cooperation. In 1987, Israel, symbolically bowing to American pressure announced that it would not sign any new military accords with South Africa, which, as Joseph points out, means that Israel and South Africa had already entered into a number of secret military accords. Joseph's attempts to fully describe the nature of the military relationship is obviously limited and he has to rely upon secondary sources to confirm, for instance, that Israel and South Africa did conduct a joint nuclear test in the Indian Ocean on September 22, 1979. For those who are willing to believe Zionist or Apartheid propaganda, Joseph acknowledges that absolute proof of the most intimate of military alliances has not yet been made public. This limitation, however, should not detract from Joseph's rigorous research, excellent documentation, and reliance upon indisputable facts to substantiate virtually every detail of Israeli-South African relations. Indeed, the only comparable work on this issue is James Adams' *The*

*Unnatural Alliance.* What makes Joseph's work a notable contribution is not only its slightly wider scope but also the different conclusions that Joseph reaches in the final chapters of the book.

The thrust of Joseph's argument is that the alliance between Israel and South Africa is based soundly upon "a community of interests and complementary resources." Indeed, at the very core of the relationship, Joseph argues that Zionism and Apartheid are the only two remaining ruling political ideologies committed to "separatism." Thus, the Zionist-Apartheid alliance is an entirely logical and natural outcome of extraordinarily similar political ideologies and practices. I doubt, however, that "separatism" really captures the exploitation, hatred, and paranoia which are so central to Zionism and Apartheid. Nonetheless, Joseph's arguments lead to the inescapable conclusion that the struggle against both Apartheid and Zionism is indeed the same struggle against racism globally. Thus, it is not the least bit surprising that these two states have established such close links, particularly in regards to their military and security affairs. In fact, some Israeli leaders have publicly stated that South Africa is Israel's "second most important ally" (after the American Jewish community) and that the end of Apartheid would certainly heighten international pressure to reform if not dismantle Zionism.

The single greatest weakness in Joseph's evidence is his lack of appreciation of the role that Africa has played in shaping Israeli-South African relations. Sadly, during the 1960's, many African states cooperated fully with Israel even while condemning Apartheid South Africa. However, Israel's invasion and occupation of Egypt in 1967 and in particular, crossing the Suez canal into the African continent in October 1973, as well as Israel's critically important role in the success of Idi Amin's coup in Uganda in 1971, clearly demonstrated Zionist intentions in Africa. Joseph only briefly mentions Africa's breaking of relations with Israel in October 1973. Israel would have certainly preferred to maintain ties with Africa, yet once most of the Zionist diplomatic efforts had failed, there was no constraint whatsoever for closer Israeli-South African relations. Indeed, since 1973, a number of Africa's most Machiavellian dictators such as Zaire's Mobutu, Liberia's Doe, and Cameroon's Biya have in fact reestablished very close ties with Israel. Thus, presently, Israel is able to pursue an invaluable military alliance with South Africa while at the same time enjoying diplomatic recognition from a number of Africa's most politically reactionary regimes. If Joseph had more carefully examined Africa's relations with Israel, then Israel's perceptions of the complexities of Zionist-Apartheid collaboration would have been highlighted. Nonetheless, given the virtual McCarthyism which surrounds the debate over Zionism in contemporary America, this book is proof that not all reasonable scholarship has been silenced. **Gregory Larkin**