

Israeli Apartheid in the Global Context

*by Samir Amin**

‘Do It Yourself Apartheid,’ as the Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign has succinctly captured in its analysis, is what is currently being imposed upon the Palestinian people by Israel and global capitalism, with the ultimate aim of destroying Palestine. To understand this project and the links between Israel and the beneficiaries of imperialism, it is important to take a step backwards and analyse the aims and mechanisms of capitalism on a global scale, and the role of Zionism within this system.

First of all, it is crucial to make a clear distinction between the rhetoric of the system and the targets and mechanisms of capitalism in reality. The rhetoric is formulated by governing bodies in general, but particularly the World Bank – which I consider to be a kind of Ministry for Propaganda of the G7 and specifically of the US. This rhetoric is based on the idea that there should be a market economy – an open market economy – in which the market operates in a transparent way as equal as possible for everybody. This is pure rhetoric and propaganda. It has nothing to do with the current system. It is a metaphysical debate of an illusory system of so-called globalized markets.

Existing capitalism is based not on competition amongst equals but on oligopoly, and in the present stage the target of this system is to establish what are called the five monopolies of the centre:

First, the control of the natural resources of the globe, with a view to their use by a minority – 15% – of the global population. This is the real reason for the current Middle East policy, particularly of course the military occupation of Iraq and the attempt to control oth-

er oil countries such as Iran, together with the penetration of the US in all countries throughout Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Second, the control of technologies. The so-called industrial and intellectual property rights defined by the WTO carefully reinforce the power of the oligopolies, making 'catching up' almost impossible for those countries which would like to move from lower to higher grades of industries.

Third, the monopoly of global finance, which is established to allow US control over the "oil-dollar" standard. This dollar standard, connected with the control of oil, ensures US leadership over the flows of capital from the rest of the world.

Fourth, the control of communications, and from it the hegemony of the market culture as a manifestation of imperialism. Put simply, you can have in the right hand the bible or a national flag, or whatever you want, as long as in the other hand you have a bottle of *Coca-Cola* and you have faith in the system.

Finally, the control and monopoly of the production of multi-destructive armaments. As we know, Iraq was attacked not because it had multi-destructive armaments but because it did not. The US wants, along with some others, to maintain their exclusive monopoly, and eventually their use.

These five points taken together constitute the "globalized law of value", through which capitalism today produces and reproduces inequalities on a global scale. This is the strategy of the collective imperialism of the client. That is the US plus its allies: Canada, the European Union (not including Poland and the new eastern countries), Japan of course, and others like Australia and New Zealand. This collective imperialism of the client has the US at its leadership, albeit with some potential contradictions emerging with the European countries.

The role of Zionism and the state of Israel within this system becomes evident when we consider that Zionism and Israel have been from the very start – when the Zionist quest for the creation of Israel was born – the ally of imperialism. It is a strategic choice made from the beginning by the Zionist leaders that Israel cannot be established unless supported and strongly backed by imperialists. This demands much more than ideological sympathy – it requires that Israel and imperialist expansion clearly benefit from each other. This has been the case and it is essential today that the target of collective imperialism, and in particular the US, is to dominate the whole Middle East including Iran and Central Asia in order to control the most important, if not all the oil resources of the planet. This includes military control of these societies and we see this most obviously in the case of Iraq, where the US has chosen to militarily occupy the country.

Zionism and the state of Israel play a crucial role in this as it provides a military base in the region. It has further proved its efficacy in being able to defeat nationalistic or populist movements, such as Nasserism, Ba'athism and others that have flourished in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Thus Israel receives the strong financial support without which it could not survive.

In this perspective it becomes clear why the imperialist collective, particularly the US, supports the Zionist plan to destroy Palestine. Its actions are not about peace or recognition of the Zion in Palestine – it is about destroying Palestine and simultaneously controlling the neighbouring Arab countries: Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq of course, Lebanon and the Gulf countries.

Additionally, we must also point out the role of somebody like Wolfowitz, a war criminal and a super pro-Zionist, as head of the World Bank. He embodies the common interests of global capitalism and Zionism and reaffirms US leadership over the imperialist collec-

tive as Europe's colliding interests could not prevent his accession.

In the short run, the shared plan of the World Bank and Zionism is to establish not a Palestinian state – not even a Palestinian service state – but a number of disparate, miserable Bantustans, separated from one another de-facto. They will have no economic life as Israel, supported by global capital, has set out to systematically destroy and steal Palestinian lands and water (including groundwater reserves), making any type of economic life impossible within those Bantustans. Exactly as the apartheid regime in South Africa has done, the only economic purpose of the Bantustans is to provide cheap labour and manpower.

In this framework, all the plans for the so-called “development” of Palestine – like the World Bank's plans, the European Community's plans, and even possibly the strategy of the Palestinian Authority – cannot but lead towards the same result: miserable Bantustans and cheap manpower.

But I do believe that the ultimate goal of Zionism and Israel is beyond that of Apartheid South Africa: it aims to create an atmosphere which will lead to a gradual emigration and to push out the Palestinians from even those miserable Bantustans. Of course this is part of the plan for a Greater Middle East.

Unfortunately, many of the so-called NGOs – what are being termed “civil society” – particularly in the West and specifically in North America and Europe, are failing to understand that this is the plan. Therefore in some way they concur with it. This includes these “wishful thinking” organizations working on humanitarian issues or in defence of human rights. What I am seeing from outside of Palestine leaves me with little optimism about the role of such NGOs generally.

So what economic alternatives exist? We need to consider this on a global level but also for Palestine and for the region.

In the longer run I think it is necessary to rebuild globalization to reflect a really polycentric world – that is, a world which has the real possibility to negotiate the conditions for globalization. It is not “anti-globalization” but “alternative globalization”, based on respect for popular interests and popular class interests everywhere in the “developed” and the “not developed” world, giving the capacity for negotiation – which means the capacity to protect people in each region.

This scenario is not impossible, but it demands a lot of conditions which are not yet politically mature. However, they may emerge quicker than we think, especially if we look at how the Europeans themselves are questioning the pattern of Euro-American construction. The Middle East and Arab world can then open up spaces in which to renegotiate its participation in globalization, in particular its relations with Europe but also with other regions of the “Third World” or the South.

In the shorter run, any developmental discourse and projects need to support clearly the creation of economic, autonomous productive activities in Palestine. By productive activities I mean agricultural production and small industries which have the control of the natural resources such as land and water. This autonomous economic activity should be at the forefront of development until deeper integration into the process of global negotiation has been achieved. Palestine needs to have its own banking system, its own currency, its own custom system and duties and so on.

All this has nothing in common with what is presently the plan for the so-called “development” of Palestine, whether through the projects of the World Bank, its partners or the international community.

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