

Israel and South Africa: A Complex and Enduring Relationship

The relationship between Israel and South Africa is complex and has evolved significantly over time. The two countries have a long history, dating back to the early days of the Zionist movement.

Early Relations

In the early 20th century, many Jews from Eastern Europe emigrated to South Africa. They established a small but vibrant Jewish community in the country. In 1917, the Balfour Declaration was issued, which expressed the British government's support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. This declaration was welcomed by many Jews in South Africa, who saw it as a step towards their own national aspirations.



Israel and South Africa: The Many Faces of Apartheid

by Ilan Pappé

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In 1948, Israel declared independence. The new state was immediately recognized by South Africa, which was one of the first countries to do so.

This was a significant gesture, as it came at a time when Israel was facing hostility from many Arab states.

Apartheid and International Isolation

In the 1950s and 1960s, South Africa's government implemented a system of apartheid, which segregated the country's black population from the white population. This system was widely condemned by the international community, and South Africa was expelled from the United Nations in 1974.

Despite the international condemnation, Israel continued to maintain relations with South Africa. This was due in part to the fact that Israel was itself a young state that was facing hostility from its neighbors. Israel also saw South Africa as a potential ally in the fight against communism.

However, as the international pressure on South Africa grew, Israel's relationship with the country became increasingly uncomfortable. In 1987, Israel voted in favor of a UN resolution condemning apartheid. This was a significant turning point in the relationship between the two countries.

Post-Apartheid Relations

In 1994, apartheid was finally abolished in South Africa. The new government of Nelson Mandela adopted a policy of reconciliation and forgiveness. This policy also extended to Israel, and relations between the two countries improved significantly.

In 1995, Israel and South Africa established full diplomatic relations. This was followed by a number of high-level visits between the two countries. In 2000, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak became the first Israeli leader to

visit South Africa. In 2013, South African President Jacob Zuma visited Israel.

Current Relations

Today, the relationship between Israel and South Africa is strong and multifaceted. The two countries cooperate in a number of areas, including trade, investment, and technology. They also share a common commitment to democracy and human rights.

However, there are still some tensions in the relationship. These tensions stem from South Africa's support for the Palestinian cause. South Africa has consistently called for the establishment of a Palestinian state, and it has criticized Israel's settlement policies in the West Bank.

Despite these tensions, the relationship between Israel and South Africa remains strong. The two countries have a long history of cooperation, and they share a common commitment to democracy and human rights. This relationship is likely to continue to grow in the years to come.

The relationship between Israel and South Africa is complex and has evolved significantly over time. The two countries have a long history of cooperation, but they have also faced periods of tension. Despite these tensions, the relationship between Israel and South Africa remains strong. The two countries share a common commitment to democracy and human rights, and this relationship is likely to continue to grow in the years to come.

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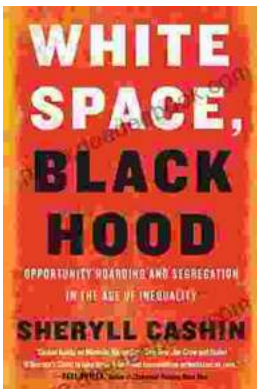


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