

# Israel and the Death Squad Dictatorships

“Best friends”

Miguel Xlotl (David Watson)

In the Negev Desert Israeli “Green Patrols” employed military intimidation and violence to force the Bedouins off their ancestral lands into closed areas similar to Indian reservations. In fact, all Palestinian areas have more and more come to resemble reservations or South African bantustans, a situation which has only been exacerbated by the Oslo Accords. Israel’s resemblance to the English colonial expansion in the Americas is notable, thus it should come as no surprise that Israel has also been one of the largest suppliers of arms to Latin American death squad regimes, often functioning as a proxy for the U.S. when political pressure made direct arms aid impossible. Israel’s customers have included El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Chile, Argentina, Bolivia and Haiti, and have generated billions of dollars in profit.

Israeli aid to Guatemala and El Salvador, countries whose rulers waged open genocidal war against indigenous and mestizo campesinos throughout the 1960s, ‘70s and ‘80s has been particularly extensive. According to the International Institute for the Investigation of Peace, Israel was the sole provider of weapons to Guatemala during the late 1970s and early 1980s.

These weapons included Arava planes, piloted and maintained by Israeli pilots and technicians; light artillery weapons, including mortars, bazookas and grenade launchers; Galil rifles (long the weapon of choice of Central American death squad regimes), for which the U.S. supplied five million cartridges; a tactical communications system, and at the end of 1980, a radar system, installed and controlled by Israeli technicians. Israel also provided the Guatemala military with training in political terrorism and counter insurgency, intelligence and psychological warfare, trained the Salvadoran “ORDEN” death squads on a site in Guatemala; and helped the Guatemalan dictatorship to set up a computerized “Regional Telecommunications Center” managed by Israeli technicians, which provided the Guatemalan death squads with one of their most formidable weapons—computerized lists of potential targets.

In November 1981, at the opening of the Army Electronics and Transmission School, General Benedicto Lucas Garcia thanked Israel for its assistance in this advancement made in Guatemalan technology, to which the Israeli ambassador replied, “Israel considers Guatemala one of its best friends.” A couple of hundred thousand people paid with their lives in the Central American holocaust for this friendship.

Israel’s aid to Central American dictators dates back to its inception. When Menachem Begin was criticized for selling arms to the tottering Somoza government before its collapse in 1979, he replied, “We have a debt of gratitude with Somoza.”

He Was referring to an agreement made by the Israeli state in 1948 with the Nicaraguan strongman, who for the sum of \$200,000 arranged to have Yehuda Arazi (a member of the Zionist clandestine army, the Haganah) named Extraordinary Ambassador of Nicaragua in Europe, where he then could buy up arms in the name of the Nicaraguan government which would not have been sold to the Zionist rebels. Later, Israel repaid its debt by selling arms to the brutal regime when it was totally isolated in world opinion. Such collaboration is in keeping with Israeli

cooperation with reactionary states elsewhere—Iran under the Shah, Mobutu’s Zaire, the South African apartheid regime, and other dictatorships.

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