

**CHILE CONFERENCE ON PALESTINE AND LATIN AMERICAN CHURCHES**  
**GLOBAL APARTHEID AND SYSTEMS OF EXCLUSION**

**"THIS WALL HAS NO FUTURE!"**

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**I**

Every time rightminded Black South Africans have the opportunity to visit Israel/Palestine, they come away with a profound sense of shock, and it is the shock of recognition, of profound disorientation, of relived trauma: this is apartheid. It is the sense that something as irrelevant as the colour of one's skin or what is called "racial identity" has condemned you from birth. It is the onslaught upon your dignity through discrimination, a thousand humiliations every day in every imaginable situation, and the relentless, deliberate process of dehumanisation.

It is the sense not only that your very life is being threatened at every turn, but that your life does not matter. It is the ongoing tragedies of dispossession through land theft and forced removals, destruction of property, and devastation of communities, legalised and legitimised by the law and enforced by the violence of the state. It is the myriad ways in which one is told that one has no place in the country of one's birth. And it is always the violence: systemic, structural, physical, pervasive, and permanent.

Since 1948, South Africa, with its draconian, racist, white supremacist, and exclusivist policies had set the world a particularly vicious model of oppression and discrimination, injustice and exploitation. They called that system "apartheid". So much had that system impacted the world, that we may speak today of a phenomenon called "global apartheid" which includes socio-economic inequalities and relentless exploitation, political and social exclusion, racial and ethnic discrimination, as well as gender injustice and heteronormative oppression. The common element here is not so much dominance of the racial element as the systemic, violent, pervasive, and totalitarian nature of that oppression.

The general reference globally today is the division of the world between the so-called 1% and the 99%, made crystal clear in Oxfam's annual reports: In January 2017,

Oxfam reported just 8 white men own as much wealth as half the world's population. One in nine people do not have enough to eat and more than 1 billion people live on less than \$1.25 a day. In 2020, Oxfam reported that in 2018 billionaire fortunes grew by \$2.5 billion *a day* while the 3.8 billion of the poorest half of humanity saw their wealth decline by 11%. Last month, Oxfam told us this:

**“As poverty levels increased to record levels and workers struggled with decades-high prices, two thirds of the world’s countries failed to raise their minimum wages in line with economic growth. Despite huge pressure on government finances, 143 out 161 countries froze that rates on their riches citizens, and 11 countries even lowered them.”**

From Oxfam's most recent report:

**The wealth of the world's 10 richest men has doubled since the pandemic began. The incomes of 99% of humanity are worse off because of COVID-19. Widening economic, gender, and racial inequalities—as well as the inequality that exists between countries—are tearing our world apart.**

**This is not by chance, but choice: “economic violence” is perpetrated when structural policy choices are made for the richest and most powerful people. This causes direct harm to us all, and to the poorest people, women and girls, and racialized groups most. Inequality contributes to the death of at least one person every four seconds.**

Global apartheid is not only real, it is growing, and the greatest victims are always the poor, the powerless, and the marginalised, especially women and children.

The description of Human Rights Watch is frighteningly recognisable when it describes India's treatment of Dalits - discrimination, denial of access to land, forced labour, degrading working and living conditions, and abuse at the hands of police and higher-caste groups that enjoy the state's protection - as “hidden apartheid.” In the last few years though, emboldened by an aggressive, state-sanctioned Hindu nationalism it has been much more blatant, much more openly violent, and much more shameless.

The term “Global Apartheid” expresses our understanding that apartheid is a system of governance, expressed in policies and actions that may occur anywhere and under different circumstances. In recent years, since the outbreak of COVID-19, the disparities as a result of socio-economic inequalities, one of the most glaring forms of global apartheid, and the disproportionate suffering of the poor, the marginalised,

and people of colour across the world, evidenced how powerfully relevant the term had become.

The coronavirus has itself destroyed the myth that the pandemic is “the great equalizer.” It has not only exposed the criminal inequalities in health care. It has exposed all the entrenched structural, institutional, and systemic economic, social and political inequalities, and the incessant, comprehensive war against the poor and vulnerable, globally and nationally. Whether we are talking about people of colour in the US, UK, and Europe, or Native Americans in the US, Canada, Bolivia, Brazil, or Chile, the racial element in all this, nationally and globally, is now undeniable. Experts say that poverty, hunger, diseases, and violence exacerbated by the pandemic, including gender-based violence, may dwarf the number of those dying of the virus itself. All this flies in the face of the calls for solidarity the World Health Organization pleads for every day. Oxfam calls it “a care crisis.” The WHO calls it a “moral and political crisis.” Thirty years ago, German theologian Jürgen Moltmann spoke of “a God crisis.” It seems more relevant now than ever.

The poor are facing intensifying calamities at every level – from criminal neglect by governments to joblessness to evictions; from overwhelming and unpayable debt to illness and death in vastly disproportionate numbers. To say nothing of spiritual despair. They are drowning in a river of escalating impoverishment, while the rich are not only getting richer, but are profiting shamelessly from the virus itself. Jeff Bezos’s 13 billion dollar profit in one day is staggering, but really only a drop in the bucket of wealth collection and expansion during these times. Meanwhile, by the end of this year, 12,000 people will die of hunger every day – most of them in the Global South, and in the Third World of the empire.

Even during the search for a vaccine we hoped would stem the tide, and even turn the forward rush of the virus, the rich have, beforehand, secured their own safety. The United States early on cornered the market for the vaccine by securing contracts worth almost \$7 billion with four pharmaceutical companies for 400 million doses of these vaccines. Other rich countries, like the UK, have done the same. Poor countries are not only way down the line, they are completely out of sight. Hence the coining of the term “vaccine apartheid.” Never before has Global Apartheid been so glaring. All the subtlety and obfuscation is gone.

In this sense, it is quite understandable how the global community began to comprehend the socio-political and ethical relevance and applicability of the term “global apartheid.” More and more though, “global apartheid” is best understood in the all-encompassing, global expression of what we call “empire,” a reality we can no longer afford to keep out of the discussion, but will take us too far from our subject to discuss today.

For our specific purposes today, a more particular, and painfully precise, example of the way in which ‘apartheid’ is applied, globally understood, and most readily perceived, is in the policies of the modern state of Israel toward the people of occupied Palestine. From its Apartheid Wall and its policies of incarceration to land theft to insidious genocide Israel is rightly called an apartheid state.

## II

The application of the term to the state of Israel has made Zionists of all stripes, Jewish, Christian, and irreligious, apoplectic, especially since the term has recently been so deliberately embraced and applied to the Israeli state by world bodies, including the United Nations and no less than five international human rights organisations. From Amnesty International to Human Rights Watch and B’Tselem in Israel, they could no longer deny the realities displayed before our every eyes on a daily basis. They finally had to accept the verdict of Palestinian Human Rights organisations held before the world since the early 1970s.

Since the Rome Declaration by the United Nations in 1962, apartheid is defined, and legally treated, as a “Crime Against Humanity.” Apartheid, so the concept is now widely understood and accepted, is governance through policies, systems, and structures of discrimination, exploitation, exclusion, and subjugation. It is upheld by false notions of superiority, racial, religious, or otherwise. Ever present are the realities of violence in all its manifestations. And even though “race” is a social construct, with no basis in scientific reality, it is a construct deployed for the purposes of political domination, economic exploitation, and social manipulation. In the end, the real issue is not race, or religion, or prejudices, even harmful ones, but the systemic, structuralised, legalised nature of the oppression that leads to deprivation of all kinds: of land, of equal treatment, of opportunities for flourishing, of rights, of future, of life

itself. And whereas in South Africa apartheid's ultimate aim was subjugation and exploitation, Israeli apartheid's ultimate aim is elimination.

In the struggle against apartheid, the church took a strong and principled stance against racism with as central tenet the belief of the church that all human beings are created in the image of God. But our understanding of these matters gradually deepened. We came to understand, in contrast to earlier times, that with regard to racism, we could no longer speak of it simply in individual, personal, that is to say, attitudinal terms. We understood racism in its historical, structural, systemic dimensions and manifestations as well. Racism, we discovered, is all the more devastating when it is linked with power and powerlessness. Dealing with racism means dealing with power relations; with systems of domination, subjection, and exploitation.

The church began to speak of racism as "sin" because it denies the humanbeingness of others. It denies the truth that all human beings are created in the image of God, people whose humanity is confirmed and made sacred by the incarnation of God through Jesus Christ. We are human in the likeness of God, which means not a physical likeness, but our unique, dynamic relation to God and hence to one another. God, writes John Calvin, sees in all humanity the marks and features of God's own countenance, so "whenever God contemplates [God's] own face, [God] both rightly loves it and holds it in honour..." Dare we argue that this is true only of certain selected, God-chosen persons as certain racist theologies hold? And if God holds their humanity in honour, how dare we dishonour it?

The African way of life called Ubuntu teaches that our humanity is confirmed by and in the humanity of the other; our own humanness is affirmed by our recognition of the humanness of the other, and therefore our existence is incomplete without that human recognition and reflection and our God-given capacity for intimate, caring and loving relationships. Cultural, racial, ethnic, language, sexual or any other difference cannot invalidate that basic truth that constitutes human life together. In Jesus Christ, these truths become utterly compelling.

We called racism a form of idolatry in which the one dominant group assumes for itself, on the basis of pigmentation and the mythical belief in a social construct called "race", a status higher than the other, and through political, cultural, military and economic power, as well as socio-economic and psychological structuring, seeks to play God in the lives of others. White culture and white power demand from blacks a "correction" of their "deviant" (that is, black) humanity that is in fact God-given: to be celebrated, not denigrated; to be embraced, not discriminated against; to be dignified with love, not vilified by ignorance and abuse.

We went further. We called apartheid-racism a pseudo-gospel and a heresy because it claimed to have salvific power, made demands in the name of the gospel the gospel itself does not make. It instituted conditions for and a threshold to membership of and full acceptance in the church other than faith in Jesus Christ alone; claimed to know better than God the way of salvation. We rejected the apartheid pseudo-gospel because it claimed that the most important thing about a person is not that they are human beings created in the image of God the Liberator, with inalienable, God-given rights, but rather their racial identity and pigmentation. It meant that racial identity determines, with an overwhelming intensity, everything in a person's life. This pseudo-gospel was perhaps willing to admit that God created us all, but added a "but..." That "but" was the beginning of the heresy, the human hubris and arrogance that dared to question the completeness, rightness and gloriousness of God's creation. I submit that all these truths are applicable to the ideologized theology of "Christian Zionism."

That view, we further determined, has all sorts of bitter consequences. Because it dehumanises the Other, reduces them to the caricature human beings, not God, created, they are stripped of their human dignity, of the freedom of being, choice and options. Dislodged from the image of God, they are not fit to be considered in terms of pain or humiliation, dreams or aspirations, human degradation or human fulfilment and human rights. They become, in sinful, racist minds, the completed and completely distorted "other", the product of the perverted, racially-obsessed imagination of the dominant group, the object of scorn.

The international community declared South Africa's apartheid, the spawn of Western imperialism and colonialism, a "Crime against Humanity". The churches of the ecumenical movement, led by the World Communion of Reformed Churches, declared it a sin, and its theological justification a travesty of the gospel, and a heresy – still one of the Reformed communion's finest, and most prophetic moments.

To me the description of Human Rights Watch is frighteningly recognisable when it describes India's treatment of Dalits - discrimination, denial of access to land, forced labour, degrading working and living conditions, and abuse at the hands of police and higher-caste groups that enjoy the state's protection - as "hidden apartheid." In the last few years though, emboldened by an aggressive, state-sanctioned Hindu nationalism it has been much more blatant, more openly violent, and much more shameless. In a more precise sense, "global apartheid" is best understood in the all-encompassing, global expression of what we call "empire," a reality we can no longer afford to keep out of the discussion, but will take us too far out of the scope of this presentation.

Today, the most glaring example of the way in which "apartheid" is applied, globally understood, and most readily perceived is in the political, social, and economic policies of the modern state of Israel toward the people of occupied Palestine. Israel is rightly called an apartheid state.

### **III**

That sense of shock for Black South Africans I spoke about in the beginning, is reinforced by one, other, overwhelming reality, namely this: in disturbingly many ways Israeli apartheid is so much worse than South African apartheid.

There is of course, the extent of spatial apartheid. We still have the separation of space in the permanency of the Black townships, and the resultant inequalities in service delivery, education and opportunities in life. We had of course the attempt at the creation of a fictional "White South Africa" with its sham independent "Bantu homelands", but we never knew apartheid roads especially for whites, where Blacks were not allowed to even drive on. South Africa had land theft on a grand scale, and that issue is still far from settled, but even that is surpassed by the land theft exercised

by the Israeli state. We had racial group areas, but apartheid never attempted to build a physical, separation wall, as did the Israeli authorities. Apartheid had the hated pass laws, and any police officer had the right and power to stop a Black person anywhere, who had to show the "pass." But the severity and level of cruelty at the Israeli checkpoints and the atrocities committed, or allowed to happen there on an almost daily basis are quite unique.

The inherent systemic, structural, psychological violence of any apartheid system that leaves its victims permanently and generationally scarred and traumatised is a given, and a subject all by itself, and in my view, we have not paid enough attention, politically, psychologically, or theologically, to that phenomenon. But let us, for a moment, consider the level and degree of physical violence for example.

We have been imprisoned in South Africa's prisons and on Robben Island. Torture in apartheid's prisons was normal. We were subjected to hideous chemical and psychological experiments. All of that is true for the Israeli apartheid state. However, the violence inflicted upon the Palestinian people is, except for situations of open war, virtually unprecedented. Targeted Israeli bombs destroy the homes and lives of Palestinians in ways Black South Africans have not seen. Israeli soldiers slaughter at will, the army's snipers target, deliberately, youth with only stones and catapults in their hands; protesters in wheel chairs, medical personnel attending to the wounded, journalists trying to tell the truth about it all.

Since the advent of imperialist invasions and colonialism, we had experienced the genocide of the San and Khoi peoples, the first nations of the continent. We had endured the massacre of our people, from the Seekoei River massacre in 1775, the massacre at Bulhoek in 1921, to the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960, and the massacre at Langa Township in the Eastern Cape in 1985. The 1980s, with its unprecedented internal opposition and the two declared states of emergency – akin to military law – and its hundreds of deaths over that decade, are rightly described as the darkest period of the resistance to apartheid. So, Black South Africans are familiar with violence being inflicted upon us. Truth be told, however, Black South Africa, under apartheid, has not ever experienced the kind of sustained war, in the form of state terrorism, that is being waged against the Palestinian people on a daily



basis. Unfolding before our every eyes is a growing certainty: the extirpation of Palestinian communities has as ultimate goal the annihilation of the Palestinian people in one way or another.

South Africans have seen terrible violence, certainly, but we have not seen a phenomenon such as in Gaza, rightly described as the world's largest open-air prison, 2.1 million people forced to live on just 365 square kilometres, two-thirds of them under 25 years old. It is one of the most densely populated, most physically attacked populations of the world. It is also the most intensely and deliberately deprived of freedom, dignity, and human rights – no one is allowed to leave or enter except by Israeli permission. Their electricity and drinking water is cut off randomly on a daily basis. One does not want to begin to think what this means for hospitals, for instance, already deprived of the most basic medicines through Israeli sanctions. This, plus the four wars in 13 years unleashed by the Israeli state, make the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip the most cruelly subjected people on earth. The South African apartheid regime was immensely cruel, but such undisguised genocidal mercilessness was not part of their policies. South African settler-colonialists were more intent on domination and exploitation; Israeli settler-colonialists are intent on elimination. Annihilation is their intent; mercilessness is their method; impunity is their body armour.

#### **IV**

There is still, however, the most glaring difference between the situations in Palestine and South Africa, and that is the aspect of international and ecumenical compassion and solidarity. In South Africa, from its formal inception in 1948, apartheid was allowed by the international community, led by the countries of the West, to run amok till 1960. Then the world began to become aware of its complicity in that inhumanity. It is now more than seventy years since the Nakba, and, at least in official government circles, Palestinians, their plight, their unearned suffering, their subjection to unmentionable cruelties, their right to freedom and dignity, do not even seem to exist. The world sees, the world knows, the world participates in myriad ways, and the world remains unmoved. That is the most egregious difference between our struggle and the Palestinian struggle for freedom and justice.

After Sharpeville in 1960, but especially after 1976 and the revolution of the children, there was a surge of international solidarity with, and support for South Africans in their struggle. Governments in the Global South came to our aid in the ways that they could, and increasingly the Scandinavian countries began to follow the example of Sweden. Western governments across the world came under huge pressure from especially local anti-apartheid movements, the churches and students at universities and colleges, to support the South African cause. At a purely political level, the importance of these developments, putting pressure on the apartheid regime through boycotts, divestments and sanctions as a nonviolent measure of struggle, can hardly be overestimated.

As Archbishop Tutu and I travelled the world pushing this campaign, we saw the growth and effectiveness of worldwide anti-apartheid sentiment, especially in the United States, and in many cases, like Germany, especially the women, in waves of solidarity and commitment. Even the US Congress, having adopted the South African anti-apartheid legislation, which included aspects of BDS, overrode the veto exercised by President Ronald Reagan. It was, I was told, the first time Congress overrode a presidential veto on a foreign affairs matter. From consumers boycotting South African goods in supermarkets, to sports and cultural boycotts, to financial and banking sanctions towards the end of 1989, all this was enormously important. All honour remains with the courageous struggling masses of Black South Africa, especially our youth, but it remains my conviction that without this international solidarity, our struggle would not have the impact it had, and not ended in the way it had.

## **V**

The churches of the world came to our aid in ways that to this day set the standard for ecumenical solidarity and Christian love and faith in action. Immediately after the Sharpeville massacre, the World Council of Churches sent a delegation to meet with its member churches in South Africa to find a proper response to the situation in South Africa. That initiative resulted in what is today known as the Cottesloe Declaration, the churches speaking out against apartheid.

By 1970, the WCC moved from words to action. It initiated its Programme to Combat Racism, and a year later, it announced its Special Fund, through which it sought to support the work of the Southern African liberation movements. These were brave, costly decisions, and the WCC paid dearly for its prophetic faithfulness in this regard. By 1982, the then World Alliance of Reformed Churches declared apartheid a sin, its theological and biblical justification a heresy, and suspended the two white South African Dutch Reformed Churches for their moral and theological support for the apartheid system. Politically and theologically, these were earth-shaking events for South Africa, and offered encouragement to the struggling people of South Africa in ways I cannot even begin to describe.

For decades, Palestinians had had no such support. And even at its most recent World Assembly held in Karlsruhe, the WCC failed the Palestinian cause miserably. It not only failed to stand for Palestinian justice. According to an Assembly report from the *Kairos Palestine Solidarity Network*, it actively suppressed Palestinian voices at the Assembly. I consider this a failure of Christian solidarity and prophetic witness, prophetic truthfulness, and prophetic faithfulness of epic proportions.

The World Communion of Reformed Churches though, have taken strong and clear resolutions on this issue, and have initiated a series of study programmes toward ecumenical solidarity and action for its member churches. That is an initiative that every member church should support and embrace. It is for this reason that this conference today is of such great importance.

After World War II, the Nazis and the holocaust, the world asked itself the question, not only, "how did that happen?" but also, "how could we allow that to happen?" Collectively, the world resolved: "Never again!" That was right, and proper.

Yet, here we are, more than seventy years after the Nakba, the whole Western world in lockstep, and even some countries in the Arab world and the Global South, supporting apartheid Israel. Ignoring, condoning, justifying, conniving with one of the most vicious regimes in the world today, even profiteering from the unjust suffering of the Palestinian people, all of them complicit in crimes against humanity.

## VI

So where do we from here?

The situation is grim, no doubt, but I do not believe that all is lost. In the last few years, some states in the United States have enacted laws that punish businesses that refuse to do business with the state of Israel. It is forbidden to speak of the Palestinian cause in schools, in colleges and universities, or on some social media platforms. Students have been hauled before university disciplinary committees, suspended from classes. Lecturers have been threatened, insulted, publicly attacked, and some lost their jobs because of their principled stand on the Palestinian cause for justice and freedom. These are not signs of strength; they are all signs of weakness and loss of power.

In many Christian churches, the ideology of Christian Zionism, held up as gospel truth as if this was the cause of Jesus of Nazareth, is becoming increasingly strident. Those Christian leaders, like their counterparts in South Africa who justified apartheid, are betraying the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Sanctimoniously they raise their hands in praise to God, but those are hands dripping with the blood of Palestinian children. What they preach is not truth, but heresy, and like in the case of South Africa, it is time that ecumenical bodies of the world call these evils by their name. Like in South Africa, the truth of the Gospel and the integrity of the witness of the church are at stake.

Those misguided authorities think their actions on behalf of apartheid are a show of strength, but in reality, these are measures of sheer panic. It is the fear of being proved on the wrong side of history. I come from South Africa. I have seen this before: the desperation, the angst, the fear of being exposed as pandering lies, covering up for injustice; as justifying, aiding and abetting epic wrongdoing. They are called out by those who seek justice, they are challenged by the youth who better than their elders, understand God's call for justice. They are put to shame by their children who, better than they, understand that a house built on injustice is a house built on sand. They are told the truth by those who know that there is no future in the lie.

Just in the last few months, I, like all of us, was shocked, disgusted, and terrified by the scenes that came from East Jerusalem, Palestine, and Gaza. The viciousness of the fascist Israeli Apartheid regime, the vileness of the complicity and cowardice of the United States government and the European Union, and the blood-stained blasphemies of Christian Zionists were on full display. The Biden administration is caught in the shame of total exposure of its wrong choices, with one hand waving the flag of feigned concern, while with the other stoking the fires by selling even more lethal weaponry to Israel, and protecting Israel at the United Nations Security Council.

The Europeans, still floundering in the unrepented guilt of their own anti-Semitism, instead of repenting by making the right choices this time, are trying to wash their hands in the blood of those same Palestinians who must pay the price for the multiple and ongoing sins of Europe. And such is their shamelessness that they, after decades of aiding and abetting the worst forms of violence by the state of Israel, dare to stand on the side lines as if they were neutral, calling for "restraint on both sides"; shouting "Peace! Peace!" where their own hypocrisy has made peace impossible. And two days after the last so-called cease-fire, Israel was once again locking down Gaza. Meanwhile, Israel continues to arrest and kill Palestinian activists. The refusal to understand that the issue is not Gaza, or the war between Gaza and Israel, or even the meaningless regime change in the Knesset; that the issues are the stolen land, unfettered citizenship, and an Apartheid state that has made peaceful coexistence impossible. The issue is the occupation. The issues are the right of return, human rights, dignity, security for the Palestinian people, and the creation of a non-racial, secular, inclusive, truly democratic state.

But at the same time, we watched, awed by the courage of the young Palestinians, who in wave after wave of nonviolent protests swamped the Israeli government and their military forces, facing down the brutality, the propaganda, the lies and the half-truths; not at all intimidated or beguiled by their misguided, inept, and cowardly leadership, keeping the power in the hands of the people and keeping their minds focused on the issues that matter. It was an awesome sight. Youthful, determined feet marching across the scorched earth of the Holy Land, all shouting in unison, and the world now beginning to shout with them in ever greater numbers:

"From the river to the sea, Palestine shall be free!" There is a fire burning for justice and freedom.

So, to say it with that matchless poet from ancient Persia, Omar Khayyam,

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,  
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit

Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,  
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it."

Throughout the years of struggle we have been sustained by hope. But it is not what American social critic Chris Hedges calls "the mania for hope" gripping so many of us. The mindless, unthinking, blind optimism that disempowers, paralyzes, and disempowers us. I cling to the hope African Church Father Augustine teaches us. He speaks of hope as a mother with two daughters, called Anger and Courage. Anger about the wrongs we see about us, and the courage to go out and do something about it.

So yes, sometimes we do feel helpless, fragile, and vulnerable, wracked with unnameable fears, countless uncertainties, and rightful anger.

But we are not abandoned. Hope is a mother. South Africa's Sol Plaatje knew it when in 1916, three years into the devastations of the 1913 Land Act, and at the beginning of a new phase of resistance he wrote, "The one thing that stands between us and despair is that Heaven has not yet deserted us." We knew and believed it when, by the grace of God, we were setting new standards for Christian involvement in our struggle for freedom.

We knew and believed it when our people were massacred at Sharpeville in 1960, and again in Soweto and Cape Town and Port Elizabeth in 1976; and again in Langa township in Uitenhage in 1985 when Archbishop Tutu and I buried 27 people at one funeral service, all massacred on the same day. We knew it through the years of protest and confrontation and slaughter throughout the 1980s, and we know and believe it now after the massacre at Marikana in 2012, and the different but very real slaughter of our people through poverty and hunger, neglect and disdain, corruption

and kleptocracy; through the continuing slaughter of our dreams, ideals, and hopes for the future.

God has not abandoned us.

So we marched, and resisted, danced and sang, laying our bodies on the line, "*Akanamandla, uSatani! The power of Satan is broken!*" That is the faith that inspires us today, and of those who believe in a new tomorrow. That is the also the power of that cry that is reverberating in more and more places across the world: "From the river to the sea, Palestine shall be free!"

In 2016, I went to Palestine for the first time. I have never been allowed back. But there, on the apartheid wall just outside Bethlehem, a young artist wrote words that will stay with me as long as I live:

"THIS WALL MAY HAVE A PRESENT, BUT IT HAS NO FUTURE!"

That is the hope that shall not wither. That is the faith that sustains struggle. That is the selfless, revolutionary love that overcomes fear. That is the powerlessness that outmatches power. That is the life that will not give in to death.

THIS WALL MAY HAVE A PRESENT, BUT IT HAS NO FUTURE!!