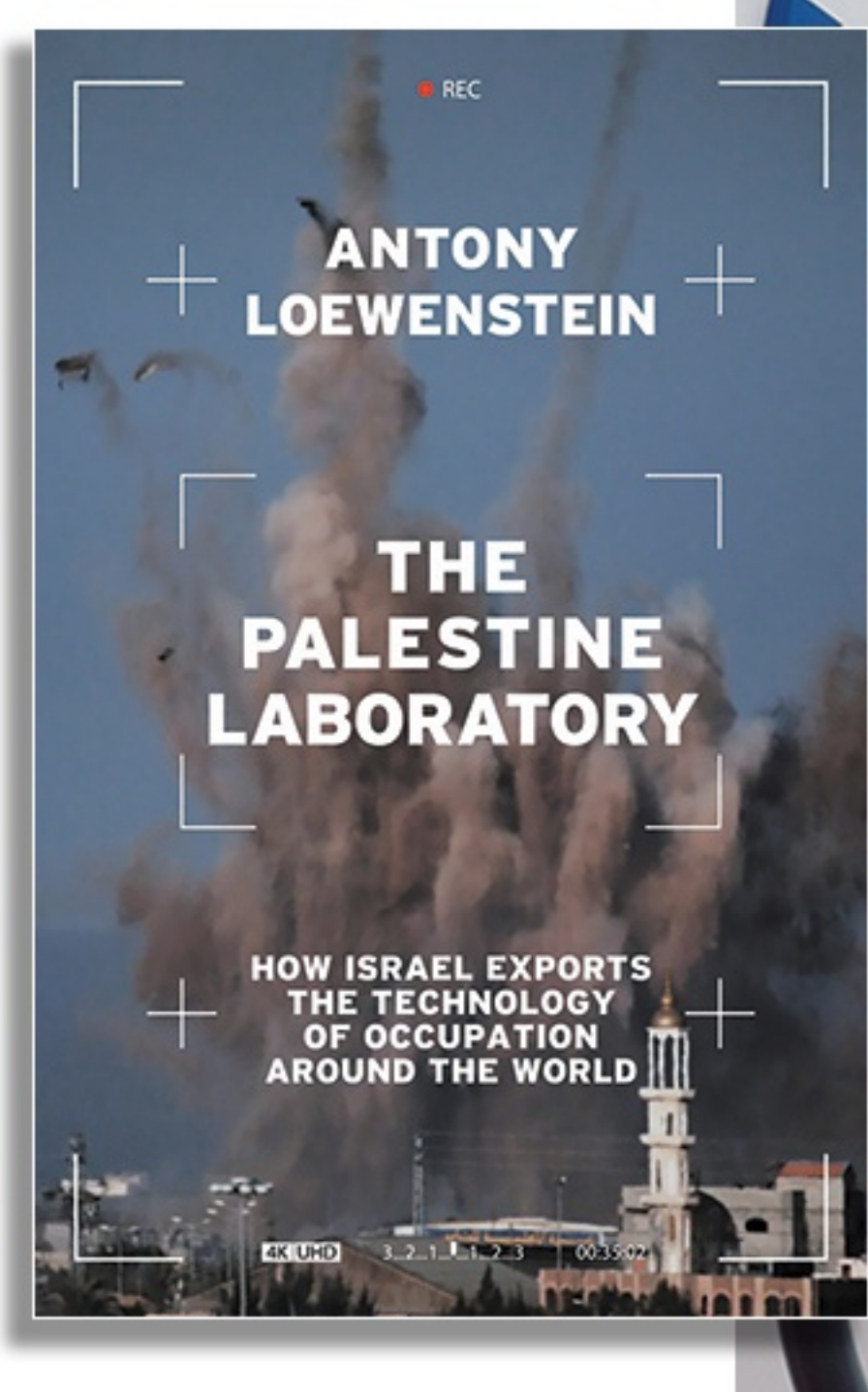


Books

Ultra-nationalism and its many markets

BOB NEWLAND is engaged by a work of investigative journalism that uncovers the extent of Israel's arms industry



MS DEATH FOR SALE: IAI Harop UAV at the Paris Air show in 2013 *Photo: Julian Herzog/CC*

The Palestine Laboratory
by Antony Loewenstein
Verso, £18.99

THIS book, dedicated “in solidarity with the Palestinians and Israelis fighting for a just future” is a very effective contribution to that cause.

An outstanding work of investigative journalism, it exposes the close links between Israel, the US and repressive regimes throughout the world.

It catalogues extensively how Israel has developed its arms industry through the occupation of Palestinian lands and promoted it through decades of suppression of Palestinian rights.

Loewenstein grew up in Australia, the child of refugees from Nazi Germany. As he studied Israel he came to believe that the policies of the state of Israel represent a threat to its Jewish population rather than offering a safe haven.

He became an avid supporter of Palestinian rights and an opponent of apartheid Israel.

After four years (2016-20) living in East Jerusalem, he is convinced that a two-state solution is no longer viable — that the security of the Jewish people in Israel can only be served by a “one-state solution ... where all its citizens can live equally.”

Loewenstein focuses on the “commercialisation of an extreme form of nationalism.” This is powerfully represented by Benjamin Netanyahu’s right-wing Zionist coalition which protects corruption, exports repression and seeks to establish Israel as an exclusively Jewish state by expelling the remaining Palestinians and colonising their lands.

Evidence suggests that the US used Latin America as its laboratory for repression, and Israel does the same with Palestine.

Hence Loewenstein’s exploration begins with Chile after Augusto Pinochet’s US-backed coup. CIA and US State Department memos show how Israel stepped into the breach when the US Congress was obliged to impose an arms embargo against Pinochet.

A long list of disreputable regimes from Myanmar to Rhodesia (today’s Zimbabwe) benefitted from Israeli weapons. Israel poured German reparations into developing its armaments industry with support from the US, France and Germany.

This money, intended to compensate the victims of the Holocaust, was also used to develop nuclear weapons in defiance of international law. Iran and North Korea faced massive sanctions for developing the same technology; Israel escaped unscathed.

Opponents of apartheid South Africa, such as myself, well remember how Israel and Germany collaborated in supplying that illegal regime with the means to develop its own nuclear arsenal.

The book details how Israel built a system for training the police and military of repressive regimes from the US to South Sudan, including the death squads in Argentina, Colombia and Nicaragua.

Marketing material for this industry of death and repression claims these methods have been tried and tested by the Israeli police and military. Following the terror attacks of September 11 2001 this theme morphed into the unambiguous message “We have been fighting a war on terror since our birth. We’ll show you how it’s done.”

It seems to work, as by 2021 Israel achieved worldwide military sales of US\$11.3 billion.

Loewenstein claims the model for “the war on terror” is Israel’s actions in the West Bank where “Palestinian sovereignty is denied with numerous fortified Jewish colonies.” This experience has informed counterinsurgency actions such as that against Tamils in Sri Lanka using mass expulsion and buffer zones.

The author provides evidence of the scale of Israel’s supremacy in the field of surveillance, and the threat posed by its support of anti-democratic dictatorships worldwide and the use of such technology for spying against Western democracies.

Recent spyware technology has focused on mobile phones and social media. Monitoring is both generic (such as that which deletes keywords such as “resistance” or “martyr”) on platforms such as TikTok, Facebook and Twitter and, increasingly, political where social media users are finding it harder to post any criticism of Israel.

Loewenstein concludes by assessing the impact of Israel’s domestic policies and its global support for war and repression.

He believes that while this has been a financial success, it is leading to the greater isolation of Israel. He suggests that objections to Israel’s contribution to global repression has opened up debates on the occupation of Palestine, illegal settlements and the very nature of Israel itself.

The book’s subtitle, “How Israel Exports the Technology of Occupation around the World,” encapsulates the horror of Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians at home and its disregard for the human rights of people throughout the world.

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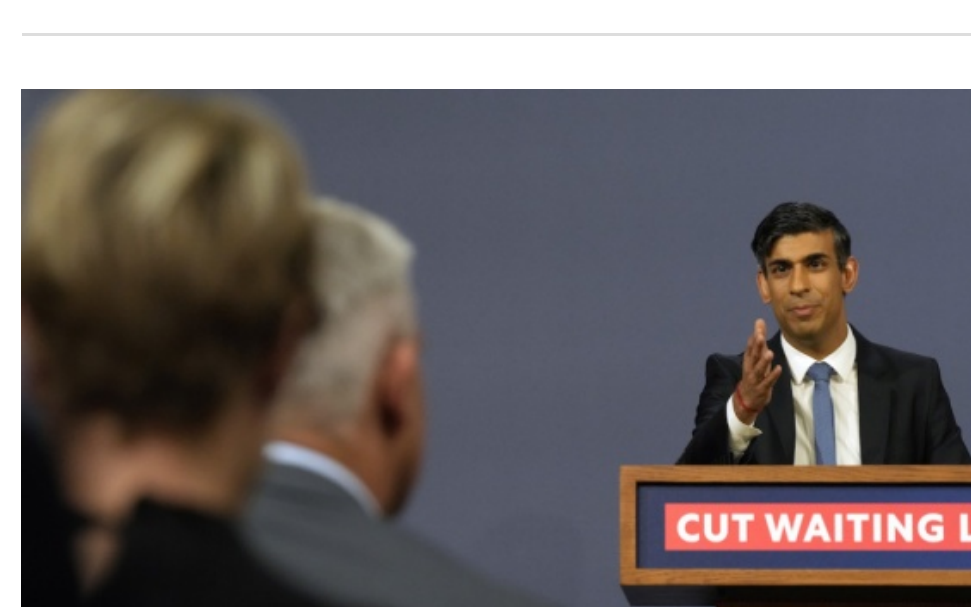
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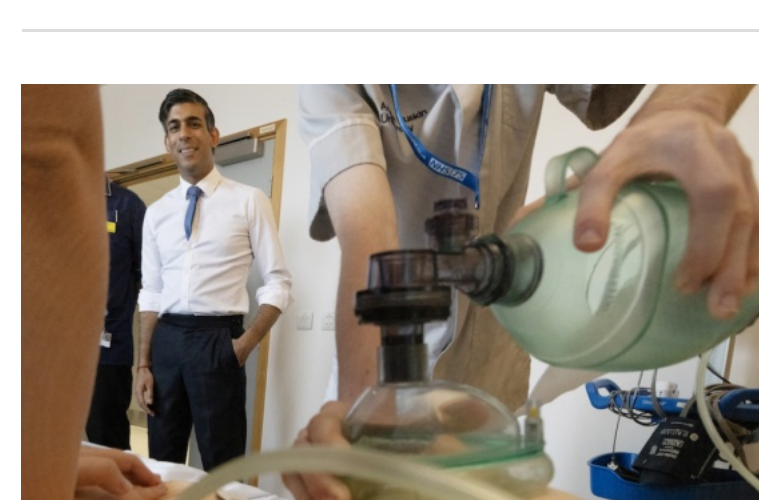
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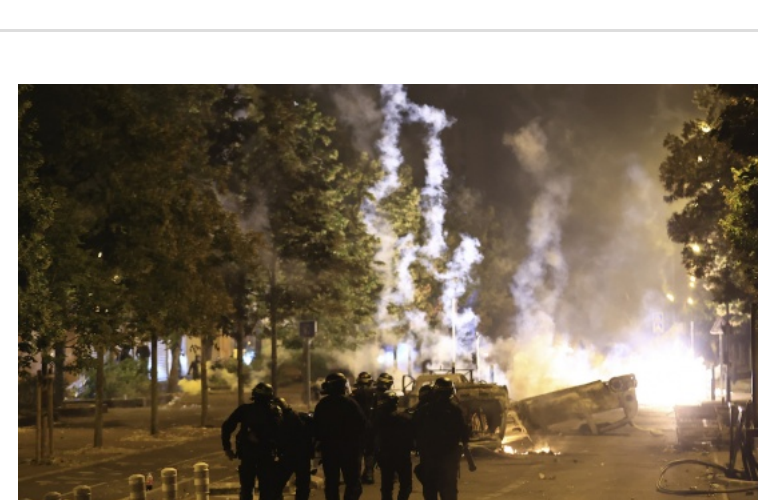


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