

It was not surprising that Richardson chose to angle for a spot in the Ford Cabinet as his best hope for the Presidency. As Commerce Secretary, Richardson inherits perhaps the grayest and dullest of all Cabinet departments. Since the days of Herbert Hoover, most of his predecessors have concentrated on praising the marvels of big business and trying to make American capitalism more dominant in world markets. The low esteem in which Commerce is held was manifest in the appointment as Deputy Assistant Secretary of one-time Agnew heeler Peter Malatesta, whose

chief claim to fame is that he is Bob Hope's nephew. Among the unexciting agencies now under Richardson's control are the federal fire council, patent office, census bureau, national oceanic and atmospheric administration, and the U.S. travel service. If he fails to win the power struggle with Zarb to control energy policy, Richardson will have to settle for being a distinguished Commerce Secretary—which, as a 1924 *New Republic* editorial on Hoover politely observed, "is like saying that he is a big five-footer." □

BEHIND THE ZIONIST POSITION

The Israeli Debate We Never Hear

IRENE L. GENDZIER

The decision of the Israeli Government to boycott the current Security Council decision of the United Nations because of the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization once again raises questions about the nature of Israeli policy toward the Palestinians and peace in the Middle East. In official declarations from the Rabin government, seconded by the American Zionist establishment which reflects the views of the most conservative elements of Israeli political life, it remains "unthinkable" to deal with the Palestinians and specifically, the PLO, as something other than nameless terrorists. The bankruptcy of this position has long preoccupied non-Zionists and anti-Zionists in Israel. But for the first time, attention is being paid in the American press to groups in Israel that no longer support their government on the Palestinian question. This opposition, erroneously labeled as being on the Left, in reality represents a political spectrum made up of figures who are staunchly Zionist and committed to the principle of an all-Jewish state. In these circles the distinction is made between Israel's relations with Palestinians outside its boundaries and those "Israeli Arabs" within. In the urgency of the immediate political crisis, this separation may be viable, but the issues are inseparable. The situation of the Israeli Arabs, the suspicion with which they are held in Israel, the legal and social discrimination practiced against them, is directly related to Israel's policy toward the Palestinian people, which itself reflects the antagonism toward Palestinian Arabs that has been a part of the Zionist experience.

Recognizing the political character of the Palestinian resistance movement—which the Israeli Government has never done—is, therefore, not the end of the story, but there is no doubt that it is a belated first step in the process of accommodation between Israelis and Palestinians without which peace is not possible. Furthermore, it is an important step for Americans concerned with Israel and the Middle East to be aware of. Dependent on news media that emphasize the monolithic aspect of Israeli political life and that present exclusively the view of the

current Israeli administration and its right-wing supporters, Americans in general are ignorant of the nature of Israeli political debate on the Palestinian issue. With few exceptions they have been deprived of the extensive discussions that have taken place on this question, and they have often been prevented from hearing the views of even a "loyal opposition" by the effective strategy of the most hawkish elements in the Zionist lobby in the United States.

None of this is new. What is new is the international context in which the current phase of the Israeli-Palestinian struggle is taking place. The position of the United States on the Palestinians, the growing international recognition of the PLO, and the changing character of the United Nations, have all affected the course of this struggle. To a large extent these factors result from the 1973 October war and its multiple consequences for the Middle East, the Third World and the industrialized West. The change has found expression at the U.N. where, as the passage of the anti-Zionist resolution demonstrated, Third World countries have been able to exercise greater influence through their increased collaboration in the face of Western opposition. The ability of the PLO to win recognition in a variety of international bodies as well as at the United Nations is at least as much another example of this transformation as it is proof of the PLO's success in pleading its cause. Occasional tensions have begun to mar Israeli-U.S. relations as the American Government seeks to stabilize its interests in the Middle East, a process that may entail a shift in its policy toward the Palestinians.

On November 12, Harold Saunders presented before the Special Subcommittee on Investigations of the House International Relations Committee a paper that was the most elaborate sign to date of such a possible change. Saunders at the time was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Middle Eastern Affairs; on December 1 he became Director of Intelligence and Research in the State Department. His paper, described by subcommittee Chairman Lee Hamilton as "conciliatory" in its tone toward the PLO, was striking merely because it discussed the Palestinian role in any future Middle East peace. By taking the position that "the Palestinians collectively are a political factor which must be dealt with if there is to be a

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peace between Israel and its neighbors," the paper advocated a new American perception of the conflict. The issue was no longer whether or not Palestinians existed, or could be included in peace talks, but how their presence there could be accommodated. On an altogether different level, the Brookings Institution in Washington published a report entitled, "Toward Peace in the Middle East," in which prominent academicians, many not previously identified with the views of the report, and foreign policy experts associated with the Department of State, offered their formulations of essentially the same position. The need to provide for "Palestinian self-determination, subject to Palestinian acceptance of the sovereignty and integrity of Israel within agreed boundaries," was firmly linked to the interests of the United States in the Middle East.

If there has been an Israeli reaction to the Brookings report, it has apparently been a very private one. The same is clearly not the case with respect to the Saunders paper. Not only did it—understandably, in the light of the official Israeli position—provoke bitter denunciations of the PLO and repeated assertions of Israel's refusal to negotiate with that organization, but it also cast new doubts about U.S. reliability in supporting Israeli policies. Prime Minister Rabin has made it clear that he is not willing to entertain the possibility that the PLO might "soften" its position vis-à-vis Israel, which is to say recognize its existence, and he therefore sees no need to formulate an Israeli response to such a move. The same message was conveyed at the United Nations by Ambassador Chaim Herzog, who presented his government's position with a vehemence surpassed only by the presentations of U.S. Ambassador Patrick Moynihan, who simply restated the Israeli position. There is no doubt that Moynihan's performance won strong support among American Zionists as well as among those closet isolationists who appeared to relish the thought of the United States leaving the United Nations. Needless to say, the two camps were not always allies on the Israeli-Palestinian question.

The enthusiasm for Moynihan's defense of Israel and specifically for his rejoinder after the passage of the anti-Zionism resolution reflected the near hysteria which pervaded pro-Israel opinion. One example will suffice. In the January issue of *Moment* magazine, a relatively new journal of Jewish opinion, Editor L. Fein proclaimed that there was "comfort to be taken in the behavior of the American Ambassador to the United Nations. . . . Rarely has a cause we share been so eloquently championed, rarely has a policy of the United States Government been so infused and enlarged by personal conviction." Referring to the anti-Zionism resolution, Fein observed that "whatever the debate among Jews on Zionism as of November 9, 1975, the General Assembly resolution guaranteed that as of November 10, all Jews had become Zionists." The language was strikingly similar to that employed by Norman Podhoretz in an article he wrote after the October 1973 war, "Now Instant Zionism," which appeared in *The New York Times Magazine* of February 3, 1974. The urge to describe American Jewish opinion as solidly behind Israel was not new, neither was it new to condemn critical opinion of Israeli policies. The assertion of a debate on Zionism in Fein's article is exaggerated, since, in spite of attempts to open the subject in *Moment* itself, it is the one subject that has been virtually taboo in

the American Jewish community. There has been discussion about who ought to be allowed to debate the issue, which is not quite the same thing. Not surprisingly, those considered best qualified to offer opinions on Israel and Zionism were invariably those with the least inclination to be critical in any meaningful sense. While many succumbed to the pressures exercised so effectively by established leaders of the American Zionist community—referring, for instance, to critics of Israel as anti-Semites—the increasing and overt intolerance of this hierarchy has begun to worry some of its own members.

Implicit in the arguments of the conservative protectors of American Zionist opinion has been the notion that a total identity of views, if not of problems, exists between American Jewry and its Israeli counterpart; an assumption which is doubtful at best and which touches on the sensitive issue of Diaspora-Israeli relations. Beyond this was the assumption that collaboration between organized American Jewry and the right wing of Israeli political life was never to be challenged or exposed. This collaboration has been effective in that both groups have achieved the kind of support they needed in their mutual camps, to the detriment of both societies. That there was a time, before and after the state of Israel was formed in 1948, when American Jews were not afraid to think critically about Palestinian Jewry and Zionism may be an unwarranted speculation. Yet there was a period, ironically the one when the Palestinian struggle was at its peak in 1948, when Jewish periodicals in this country showed a willingness to confront some of the issues involved in Palestine that have since become almost forbidden. Consider *Commentary*, for instance, which today supports the policy of the Israeli Government with no reservations of any significance, and the same magazine nearly thirty years ago. A prominent journal of Jewish opinion, the *Commentary* of the past offered its readers a wide selection of interpretations of Palestinian problems. All of its authors on this subject were Zionist in that they supported the existence of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. But what is remarkable is that by reading some of their articles it was possible to grasp Palestinian realities and not merely the favorable and restricted images prepared for American Jewish consumption by spokesmen for particular political circles.

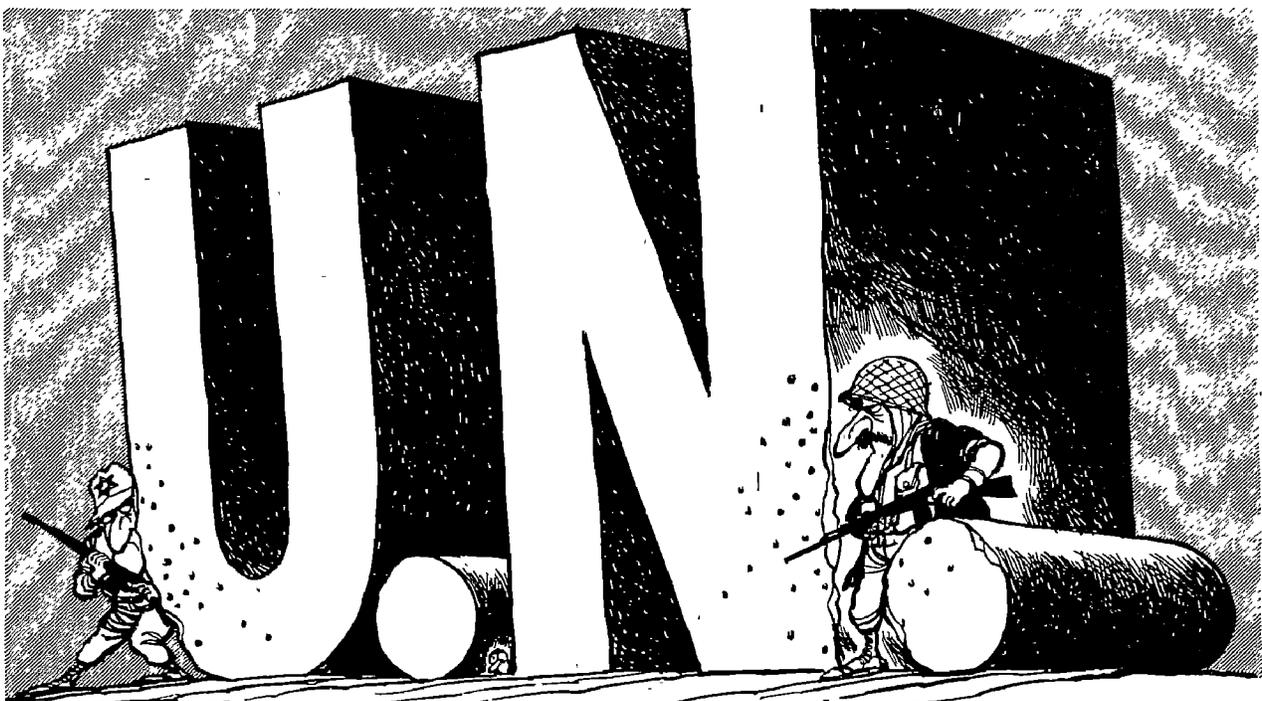
No subject was broached as often as that of Jewish-Arab relations, something which continues to haunt current Jewish writers but in an entirely different manner. For instance, what distinguished the earlier pages of *Commentary* from those it publishes today was the willingness to confront without venom the Achilles heel of the Zionist experiment—its avoidance of the Palestinian issue. This period was closer in time and in emotional experience to World War II and the holocaust, and yet proximity did not interfere with the discussion of the situation in Palestine. Those torments were certainly not used, as they have been since, as a weapon to prohibit the open discussion of Palestinian-Israeli problems. Consider the article of Moshe Smilansky, "A Palestinian's Solution," which appeared in March 1946, and which argued against Jewish statehood on behalf of membership in the British Commonwealth, an imperialist position which offered reasons for opposing statehood.

Even more startling in its prophetic prediction of Israeli dilemmas was the article by Hannah Arendt, published in May 1948 on the eve of the partition of Palestine. Both Smilansky and Arendt were Zionists, at least at that period. Arendt, who had personally experienced the holocaust and who had lived in Palestine, did not hesitate to criticize the increasing uniformity of opinion which she felt was contaminating Palestinian political life, and which was evident among American Jews as well. She referred to this characteristic of the modern age as an expression of "fanaticism and hysteria," which was to be fought. Though clearly committed to the concept of a Jewish homeland, and enthusiastic about the kibbutz experiment despite its exclusivity, she was alarmed by the mentality she saw developing around her. She was aghast at the tendency to label all gentile opinion as hostile, an attitude she condemned as "plain racist chauvinism" and "out of touch with the realities of the world." No reality was more immediate, more pressing, and more liable to be evaded by the revisionist Zionists who triumphed in public support in the United States after 1942, as they had in Palestine, than "the presence of Arabs in Palestine, a reality no decision could alter—except, perhaps, the decision of a totalitarian state, implemented by its particular brand of ruthless force."

To argue in this fashion today in American Zionist circles is uncommon, to say the least. Yet it was possible for Hannah Arendt to insist with calm conviction that the idea of Arab-Jewish cooperation "is not an idealistic daydream but a sober statement of the fact that without it the whole Jewish venture in Palestine is doomed." It was not even sympathy for, let alone a just appreciation of, the Palestinian Arab position that marked Arendt's position. She merely reasoned with total realism when evaluating the future of the Jewish community in Palestine. The conviction

that Jewish statehood ultimately threatened the "Jewish homeland" precisely because it could come into being only against the wishes of the Palestinian and Arab peoples led Arendt to champion U.N. Trusteeship. "It would have the advantage of preventing the establishment of a sovereignty whose only sovereign right would be to commit suicide." Statehood was proclaimed and sovereignty established but the essential problem of Israeli-Palestinian relations appears no closer to solution than it was when Arendt wrote. Now, as then, it is a truism, as Arendt said, that in the Jewish establishment "only schlemiels prefer truth and negotiation to propaganda and machine guns. . . ."

The uniformity of opinion among American Jews and Israelis is by and large worse than it was when Arendt penned her article. Yet even today there are Israelis—and they are not the "non-Zionists" about whom Arendt wrote with favor, but members of the Israeli political establishment—who argue that Rabin's policy is suicidal and that a policy of no negotiation with the PLO and the Palestinians in general is no policy at all. Yitzhak Navon, chairman of the Knesset Committee on Security and Foreign Affairs, urged the government to state that it was prepared to "conduct negotiations with any Palestinian elements, bodies or organizations which are prepared to fulfill three conditions: to recognize Israel and its right to exist; to obligate themselves to refrain from terrorist acts; to assent to Security Council Resolution 242" (*Yediot Aharonot*, November 28). The Minister of Housing, A. Ofer, responding to the Saunders paper, suggested that the Israeli Government take the initiative and declare itself prepared to negotiate with Jordan and with all Palestinian elements that recognize its existence (*Haaretz*, December 2). Such expressions of dissent are omitted from the American coverage of Israeli politics. Instead one hears repeatedly of Rabin's reasoning or the feeble attempts of Foreign Minister Allon to identify Israel's plight with that of the



Oliphant, The Denver Post

FLN in Algeria, the Mau Maus in Kenya or the Congress Party in India (*Time*, January 19), none of which movements parallels Israel's struggles with its neighboring states and none of which it supported.

Recognizing the weaknesses of Israeli policy toward the Third World and Arabs in particular is vitally important to a consideration of the current phase of the Israeli-Arab conflict. No matter how much support the Israeli Government of Prime Minister Rabin enjoys, there is still a small body of influential political opinion that has been casting doubts on its Palestinian policy and arguing in favor of a political resolution of the conflict, with conditions of the kind noted above. Yet this body of opinion, until recently and then only in restricted circles, has been almost entirely ignored by the American media and systematically cried down by the American Jewish community. It is a situation with which a number of Israelis, even those in the establishment, are familiar. In the May-June 1975 issue of *New Outlook*, an Israeli periodical published in English, retired Gen. Mattiyahu Peled, who had once served under Rabin, summarized his impressions of the American Jewish community. They were not flattering. In "American Jewry: More Israeli than the Israelis," Peled referred to the "blindly chauvinistic and narrow-minded" character of the American community. He described the increasing gap after the October war between American Jewry's position and that of the Israelis, some of whom had begun to question their government's policies. He expressed disappointment at the marked lack of realism in American Jewish circles that did not realize "the danger of prodding Israel once more toward a posture of calloused intransigence." And he labeled as "altogether preposterous" the denunciation of critics of Israeli policy as anti-Semites. Above all, Peled questioned the political and military intelligence of those who insisted upon retaining for Israel the territories occupied in 1967 instead of urging their return in exchange for peace. He did not question Zionism or its relation to the overt anti-Arab discrimination in Israel; he merely argued for an approach to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict different from that proposed by the Rabin government. Yet he found a cool reception among well-placed pro-Israel lobbyists, who left no doubt that they favored the most hawkish solution to Israel's situation. Peled suggested that these supporters of Israel were in fact working for a particular "school of political thinking in Israel at the

expense of others"—an interesting thought for Americans seeking information on Israeli politics in the light of recurring Mideast crises.

It is clear that Peled is no revolutionary. Neither are his colleagues in the recently formed Israel-Palestine Peace Council (IPPC), a loose coalition of establishment figures and intellectuals who advocate direct talks with Palestinians, including the PLO, as well as the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. In a rare gesture of recognition, the IPPC was described in *The New York Times* (Terence Smith: "Israeli Group Urges Palestinian Talks," January 13), although one may wonder how the article was understood by American readers who seldom hear of this side of Israeli political life. Members of the IPPC are referred to as "doves" in their opposition to the Israeli Government's intransigent position on the Palestinian question. Yet they are nationalist supporters of the Jewish state, whose criticism of government policies toward Israeli Arabs as well as toward West Bank Palestinians remains by and large on the level of pragmatic politics. They have avoided dealing with the more difficult problem of Zionism's attitude toward the Arabs per se. Without exception they accept the principle of a Jewish state and dissociate themselves from the anti-Zionist Left in Israel, including Rakah, the Israeli Communist Party, which has recognized the PLO and advocated negotiations with it (*Haaretz*, December 3). The membership of the coalition, its supporters and its political composition, make it apparent that it differs from the ruling circles primarily in its dissent on the Palestinian question. But even with this consideration in mind, it would be difficult to conceive of a comparable group of influential American Jews who would be prepared to present an alternative to the hawkish solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict advocated by the pro-Zionist lobby in the United States.

The alarming paradox remains that this lobby continues to promote the positions of a certain segment of the Israeli establishment, the most hawkish one, while belittling or masking signs of Israeli dissent no matter what its source. Thus, while a number of Israelis close to or in government circles are coming to realize the inevitability of dealing with the Palestinian issue on a political level, their American supporters, unable or unwilling to face the question, remain mired in the dangerous fantasies of military solutions. □

'BLUEPRINT FOR TYRANNY'

CONGRESS OVERHAULS THE LAWS

STEPHEN GILLERS

Watergate. The Pentagon Papers case. The antiwar movement. Law and order. The trials of Daniel Ellsberg, the Berrigans, the Chicago Seven, Dr. Spock and John Ehrlichman.

These and other events of the 1960s and 1970s not only had spectacular political repercussions but also confronted

our courts with important legal questions, some of which remain unresolved. The fifteen members of the Senate Judiciary Committee are now debating a proposal for new and controversial legislation that attempts to answer many of these legal questions, including such basic ones as the power of the President to keep information from Congress and the people, the propriety of government officials committing crimes in the interest of national security, and the right of the press to publish alleged government

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