

tues. In 1976—it is another nice irony of American history—we were taking inordinate pride in our sins. It is a fantasy of omnipotence that makes many in the American élite assume delicious guilt for the “oppressions” of the Third World. We are not powerful enough to have retarded the human race everywhere. Indeed, much of the world’s present restlessness has been stimulated by our ideals, our ideas, and our practical achievements. We can be more generous, more intelligent, and more farsighted in responding to the agonies and miseries of our brothers and sisters elsewhere on this planet. We serve no one’s interests by denying the power of our own ideas, ideals, and institutions, to which the possibility of “modernization” is owed. We have been, not their possessors, but their temporary stewards.

Now that our ideas and ideals belong (at least dimly) to everyone, the long and slow course of building up institutions suited to realizing them will have to be invented by each culture in its own way. It is the fond illusion of many élites elsewhere—and some in our own midst—to believe that ancient tyrannies can be broken only through establishing new ones. *Liberty* is the secret of unleashed human energy, of unparalleled inventiveness, of unexampled productivity. To have missed that point is to have missed everything. We are great sinners, no doubt, but we have given birth to liberty. In fidelity to her we keep alive the world’s hope.

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EXCURSUS IV

Harris Schoenberg on Diplomacy or Deceit?

While the press conferences of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) were projecting a new image of flexibility, the United Nations General Assembly was meeting in November at the PLO’s behest. The agenda was a U.N. committee’s recommendation of steps that would lead to an Arab takeover of Israel.

The recommendations of the General Assembly’s Palestinian Committee, contained in a report endorsed by the Assembly, reflect the perspective and timetable of the PLO, which is still officially committed to Israel’s destruction. These recommendations include the “return” of the Palestinian Arabs “to their homes and property” abandoned since 1948, and their achievement of “self-determination, national independence, and sovereignty.” The territory they would return to in

the second stage of the plan is the State of Israel. The purpose of their return, repeatedly explained by Arab spokesmen, is the extinction of Israel. Thus the report of the Palestinian Committee sanctions Israel’s demise.

Strikingly absent from the report and from the Assembly resolutions authorizing and endorsing it are any references to Israel or to Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. These, it will be remembered, are the resolutions that set forth balanced principles and procedures for a negotiated Israeli-Arab peace. These omissions, upon which the PLO insisted, make the Committee’s work and its recommendations contrary to international law and, in the words of the Ford Administration’s United Nations Ambassador, William W. Scranton, “senseless” and “unfair.”

Though the Palestinian Committee was established on November 10, 1975, it was not until five weeks later that the Arabs found twenty states willing to serve as members. Of these only four maintain diplomatic relations with Israel, and only two did not vote for the resolution equating Zionism with racism. Few of the twenty states, which profess concern for the rights of the Palestinian Arabs, honor the civil rights of their own citizens or maintain free and open political systems.

The authorizing resolution enabled the Committee to establish contact with and consider suggestions from the PLO. It quickly became clear, however, that the Committee was not only established at the initiative of the PLO but was serving as its instrument. From February to May, 1976, the PLO participated in all stages of the Committee’s deliberations, including the closed sessions. The PLO also served (although not a Committee member) on its drafting group, whose sessions were also closed. It is therefore not entirely surprising that the Committee’s recommendations are essentially a restatement of the PLO position. Contrary to the U.N. Charter, this position explicitly rejected conciliation, mediation, arbitration, adjudication, or negotiation.

Central to the Committee’s recommendations are the rights to return and to self-determination, which the Committee report refers to as “inalienable.” Not only is the “right” of return fictitious—resettlement has been the accepted international practice throughout the twentieth century—but for Israel to permit the massive influx of self-proclaimed enemies of Israel would be suicidal. Especially in this time, when the Arab states have not ended their state of war.

Precedent from American history is instructive. During the peace negotiations leading to the end of the American Revolutionary War the British Government pressed the new American nation to permit the loyalists who had fled to Canada to return and reclaim their property. The United States Congress flatly refused, in the words of Benjamin Franklin, to “receive again into our bosom those who have been our bitterest enemies.” Congress did agree to recommend that the individual states permit the resto-

ration or property, provided Britain paid "full compensation for all the wanton destruction which the subjects of that nation have committed on the property of the citizens of the United States."

Neither is self-determination a universal right. Almost all the states of Asia and Africa have vigorously opposed expanding the idea of self-determination beyond its application to overseas colonial territories that were under the sway of European imperial powers. An American proposal to have self-determination apply to zones of military occupation was rejected by the U.N. The Arabs themselves have ruthlessly denied self-determination to the Kurds of Iraq and to the non-Muslim blacks in southern Sudan.

When the report of the Palestinian Committee was considered by the Security Council last June, it was rejected by the Western powers and vetoed by the United States as "misguided" and "totally devoid of balance." The United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Sweden all agreed that the Committee report failed to incorporate the need to respect the right of Israel to live within secure and recognized boundaries, a right to which the Security Council was committed.

Behind a facade of pseudolegalistic formulations about the right of return and of self-determination the Committee poses a fundamental and retroactive challenge to Israel's right to exist. The Palestinian Arabs are entitled to seek amends for their corporate grievances and to aspire toward an expression of national identity. It is not the right, however, of those who purport to speak for the Palestinians to use a distorted version of events supported by the threat and practice of barbaric terrorist outrages and oil embargoes. It is certainly not their right to deny the right of Israel to exist. If the Palestinian Arabs are to develop and assert their rights, it should be clear that the destruction of Israel is not among these rights.

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QUOTE / UNQUOTE

When May We Expect Your Resignation, Mr. Jordan?

"If, after the inauguration, you find a Cy Vance as Secretary of State and Zbigniew Brzezinski as head of National Security, then I would say we failed. And I'd quit. But that's not going to happen. You're going to see new faces, new ideas. The Government is going to be run by people you have never heard of."

—Hamilton Jordan, as quoted by Robert Sheer in *Playboy*, November, 1976

Vietnam: Follow-up on "Incidental Details"

State Department officials claimed that the NLF was no more than an instrument of North Vietnam working against the hopes of all the South Vietnamese for peace, independence, prosperity, and freedom....If the north was indeed trying to conquer the south, it was doing so by politics and culture but not by force. But even this case is impossible to make in a clear-cut manner, for there were southerners within the Politburo of Hanoi. The details are incidental.

—Francis Fitzgerald, *Fire in the Lake*, 1972, p. 147

Vietnam's Prime Minister, Pham Van Dong, announced today that the projected large-scale redistribution of the nation's population would begin early next year with the shifting of surplus labor from densely settled areas....

Such themes have also appeared in other speeches during the congress [of the Vietnam Workers (Communist) Party in Hanoi], which began Tuesday and which has underlined the North's domination of the nation's affairs. Southerners seem to have had little role to play.

"Most of the accents I've heard in the past three days of the broadcasts have been northern ones," said one Western analyst, referring to the six-tone dialect spoken in northern Vietnam in contrast to the five-tone one spoken in the south.

Since the takeover of South Vietnam by the Communists on April 30, 1975, the south seems to have had little role to play in the top organization of the Workers Party, which ran North Vietnam for more than 20 years....

Neither this report nor that of the Minister of the Interior, understood to be General Dung's twin brother, Tran Quoc Hoan, contained any surprises. Both stressed that there was a need to maintain the same national strength that "crushed the American imperialist aggressors." This was seen as an indication that no demobilization would take place in the foreseeable future. Indeed, General Dung reiterated that the army would be used in economic reconstruction.

—David A. Andelman in the *New York Times*, December 17, 1976

Earlier, senior northern Vietnamese officials, including Prime Minister Pham Van Dong, said the south would continue to serve largely as the north's ricebowl, sending workers to the north when needed to develop the heavy industry that would be concentrated there.

—David Andelman in the *Times*, the following day

How Many Contenders?

...His many publications include: ...a novel, *The Sands of Valor*, called the best fiction ever written of tank warfare in the Western Desert by *Life* magazine.

—Jacket copy for a recent book