

very much hope Taiwan will feel more assured about its de facto independence a year from now. The absence of administration signals on that score is deeply troubling. Although we cannot go on to survey the whole world in terms of Carter's performance, the Middle East cannot go unmentioned. Earlier this fall there was loud nervousness about the Soviet-American statement on a Geneva conference. The noise seemed excessive. The idea of a more or less permanent Geneva conference as a further forum to explore possibilities is attractive. The public strains between Washington and the Israeli government, especially *this* Israeli government, seem altogether predictable. Carter has repeatedly said he will not "commit political suicide" by letting down Israel, and there is no reason to doubt that he indeed knows it would be political suicide. Giving the Begin government free rein would mean letting down both Israel and the world's hope for peace in the Mideast. The current checks, and the resulting tensions, seem appropriate.

The pundits may be right; maybe at the end of The First Year the administration seems incompetent, fumbling, devoid of style or substance. But it doesn't look that way from here. Jack Valenti got into Bartlett's Familiar Quotations with his remark about sleeping better at night because Lyndon Johnson was his president, and we don't envy Mr. Valenti his fame. But there is, as Le Carré said, something like a spring in our tread and a twinkle in our eye, and if they are not caused by it, neither are they diminished by the fact that Jimmy Carter is in the White House at the start of the Year of Our Lord 1978.

EXCURSUS II

Charles Angell on

Difficult Days Ahead for Jewish-Christian Relations

There are troubled days ahead both for the religious dialogue of American Christians with Jews and for the political relationship between the governments of the United States and Israel. The new Begin government in Israel is formulating policies that are in direct conflict with the stated position of the American churches and present U.S. governmental policy. Begin, like the PLO, wants all of the old Palestine Mandate. These two extremes mutually exclude each other and have, as a matter of fact, denied the existence of each other in the past. The clear position of both the American churches and the Carter administration is that there are two recognizable people in the Palestine area—Israelis and Palestinians—and it is only through mutual recognition, mutual negotiation, and mutual compromise that a peaceful settlement will be achieved.

When, in 1947, the United Nations recommended a partition of the old Palestine Mandate west of the Jordan River, the Jews were to get 56 per cent of the country and the Palestinians the rest; but after the 1949 hostilities the new State of Israel ended up with 77 per cent of the land within the cease-fire lines that it occupied. These lines held in general until Israeli forces conquered the remaining 23 per cent in the 1967 war. It is this remnant—23 per cent of the old Palestine—that is now being suggested as a homeland for the Palestinian people and which the State of Israel refuses to relinquish. There are roughly three million Israeli Jews and three million Palestinians (a half-million within the 1967 borders of the State of Israel who are citizens of that country, a million on the West Bank and Gaza, and a million and a half scattered throughout the Arab states).

American Jews have long called upon the churches here to "recognize the Legitimacy of the State of Israel." But which Israel is it that we are called upon to legitimate? The 1948 Israel with 56 per cent of the country? the 1967 Israel with 77 per cent of the country? the 1977 Israel with 100 per cent?

Historically, American Christians have been vocal on both sides of the Arab-Israeli conflict. On the Arab side there have been many of our churches, especially those who worked with Palestinian refugees in the camps of Jordan and Lebanon, who were strong in their demand that justice be done for a dispersed and disinherited people. Even Pope Paul in his Christmas message of 1975 said: "Even if we are well aware of the tragedy not so long ago that has compelled the Jewish people to seek a secure and protected garrison in a sovereign and independent state of their own—and because we are properly aware of this—we would like to invite the children of this people to recognize the right and legitimate aspirations of another people which also has suffered for a long time, the people of Palestine." But many Christian Arab apologists went much farther, refusing to see legitimacy in a State of Israel.

Still other Christians, especially those engaged in Christian-Jewish dialogue, conscious of the tragedy of the Holocaust that had occurred in the face of what must be termed at best inadequate Christian opposition, and reflecting upon the long, sad history of Christian anti-Semitism, championed the cause of a sovereign Israel as the necessary expression of a resurrected people. Some of these Christians tended to equate support for Israel with support for whatever the government of Israel said or did. A number of them were guilt-ridden mouthpieces for press handouts of the Israeli information ministry.

But the record of the American churches in their official statements regarding the Middle East is a different picture indeed. Recently I had occasion to survey all the statements the American churches published in recent years on Israel, and I was tremendously impressed by the striking consensus in what they have to say. While I think it fair to state that specific recognition of Palestinian nationhood

has come about more recently as the Palestinians became more articulate in expressing their self-identity (an identity I believe is a form of Zionism in reverse), it is true to say that for over a quarter of a century the American churches have consistently expressed their support for *both* Palestinian and Israeli rights and encouraged a peaceful compromise solution.

Since the 1973 war seven U.S. churches, the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, and the National Council of Churches have all issued statements. All but two (Antiochian Orthodox Church, with largely Arab-American membership, and the American Baptist Convention) specifically affirm the right of Israelis and Arab Palestinians to self-determination. Four statements (Antiochian Orthodox, Presbyterian Church, United Methodist Church, and the Church of the Brethren) endorse PLO participation in negotiations. All but one of the statements (Antiochian Orthodox) reflect a startling consensus of the American churches: There are two peoples claiming the same land, both entitled to self-determination insofar as a compromise can be achieved. Thus the statements reject both the official position of the Palestine Liberation Organization—which claims for itself the right to organize a secular democratic state in all of the old Palestine Mandate west of the Jordan—and the current position of the State of Israel—which refuses to relinquish the occupied territories. American churches have consistently shown concern for all the people in the Middle East and have refused to back all-or-nothing solutions for either side.

Typical of these statements are two: that of the Executive Committee of the National Council of Churches (issued in September, 1974) and the statement of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (adopted in 1973 and subsequently reaffirmed). The former states: "The love of Christ constrains us to speak from the depth of our Christian conscience. We call upon the Arab nations, Israel and the Palestinians to renounce their use of violence and to engage actively in negotiations to achieve an equitable and lasting peace.... We call upon Israel and the Palestinians to recognize the right of the other party to the same self-determination which they desire for themselves. We affirm the right of Israel as a free nation within secure borders. We equally affirm the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and a national entity. We urge our own government and the government of the Soviet Union to serve as partners on the path to peace, maintaining a posture from which they can carry on meaningful dialogue with Israel and the Arab states. Furthermore, we call upon the United States to develop more open contacts with leadership of the Palestinians, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, as a means of furthering prospects for peace...."

The Catholic position includes: "(1) Recognition of Israel's right to exist as a sovereign state with

secure boundaries; (2) Recognition of the rights of the Palestinian Arabs, including their partnership in any negotiation, acceptance of their right to a state, and compensation for past losses by Israel and all those responsible for the 1948 partition plan; (3) Acceptance, as the basis for negotiations by all parties involved, of the stipulation set forth in U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 in November 1967; (4) Recognition of the need for 'continued restraint and continuing responsible diplomatic involvement' by the Soviet Union and the United States; (5) Continuing reliance on the United Nations; (6) Insured access to the city of Jerusalem through a form of international guarantee and the assurance of Jerusalem's continued existence as a religiously pluralist community and equal protection of the religious and civil rights of all citizens."

Thus the time has come for American Christians to face frankly the fact that the stated policies of our churches, and the present policies of the American Government, are directly opposed both to the present position of the Begin government in Israel and the position of the PLO. In the case of the Arabs, opposition is nothing new. In the case of Israel it most certainly is new and can only mean increasing difficulties for Jewish-Christian dialogue in the U.S.

A fundamental shift occurred after the 1973 war and brought new challenges to the moral conscience of American Christians. The failure of the Arabs to eliminate Israel led them eventually to shift their tactics. They began to speak of a solution to the conflict based on United Nations resolution 242, which called for a return to the 1967 lines by Israel and a recognition of Israel's sovereign security in exchange for peace. Thus for the first time since the conflict began the churches were hearing appeals for a peaceful settlement from the Arab side. Hitherto it had appeared to them that the sentiments for peace came entirely from the Israeli side. When, in 1977, it became evident that the Begin government was unwilling to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza, and unwilling to countenance the establishment of a Palestinian homeland west of the Jordan even in exchange for peace, American Christians were faced with a new moral dilemma.

If Christians now oppose the Begin government and say quite frankly that we are morally opposed to a continuation of Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, with its consequent denial of self-determination for the Palestinian Arabs there, will we be disloyal to the Jews with whom we are engaged in friendly dialogue in the U.S.? And will we be turning our backs on the people of the State of Israel we have supported since their independence? What is worse, will such opposition to the Begin government provide the occasion for all those latent, unfortunately still-existent, anti-Semitic elements within the Christian churches to reemerge like cockroaches from the ecclesiastical woodwork? My experience in the interreligious dialogue in Israel as well as in the United States has given me, I

believe, an insight into this problem.

In America the Jewish community frequently appears to the Christian as a monolith. I think this is so because, as a minority with a tragic history of persecution in the all-too-recent past, they tend to stick together in the conversations with outsiders. In Israel quite the opposite is true. There Jews are in the majority and Christians are a small minority. A prominent Israeli Jew once remarked to me: "A Jew can afford to be wrong only in Israel." There is a marvelous pluriformity of opinions vociferously expressed. It would be impossible to persuade an Israeli Jew that opposition to the current government is somehow un-Jewish. While there is fierce loyalty to the State of Israel itself, and particularly in times of outside threat, there is still in that democratic nation a tremendous freedom of expression and diversity of opinion even after almost thirty years of danger and warfare.

American Jews don't like to admit that they can differ among themselves, much less differ with the official government position of the present regime in Israel. But that is what they are going to have to do if the dialogue here is to be anything but an exchange of press releases. When I, an American Christian, say that the Begin regime is biblical irridentism run rampant, I am saying nothing that is not being said quite freely in Israel's own free press. And indeed there are American Jews who vigorously oppose the Begin position. *Breira* is an organization of American Jews that advocates a peaceful solution of the conflict based on some recognition of Palestinian rights. *Breira* also recognizes the impossibility of a fortunate outcome to the continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

I consider myself a friend of Israel, and let me state quite frankly what I envision if the present Begin policies are followed. Israel is at present a Jewish democratic state. Israel's half-million Arab citizens have shown increasing restiveness in recent years, as indicated by the serious riots that took place in 1975 in the Galilee. These riots were fueled by the increasing expropriation of land by the Israeli Government to enforce increased Jewish settlement in that region, in which Arabs are beginning to outnumber Jews. Several Arabs were killed in the riots, riots that amazed me because never before had I detected serious civil disorders among those Arabs who have been Israeli citizens since 1948. They had come to the end of their rope; they felt they no longer controlled their own destiny. The Jewish government was insensitive to their needs. I ask what will happen when the million Arabs on the West Bank and in Gaza are added to the half-million Arabs already within the borders of pre-1967 Israel? Their birth rate is such that well before the end of this century there will be an Arab majority in the expanded Greater Israel that Begin now controls and insists on keeping. What will an Arab majority mean for a Jewish democratic state? Either Begin's policies will result in a PLO secular democratic state in reverse, if the state grants civil rights to all (thus

ceasing to be a Jewish state) or Begin will deny Arabs the vote or seek to expel them by some means. In any event, the resulting state will no longer be democratic. You cannot have a Jewish democracy with an Arab majority.

When I pressed this dilemma with Samuel Katz, the official representative of the Begin government shortly after its election, he assured me that nothing of the sort would eventuate. In the first place he was convinced that the present Jewish emigration from the State of Israel, which currently exceeds Jewish immigration into the country, would be reversed by the more favorable economic circumstances consequent upon the Begin government's return to a free economy and its desocialization of many aspects of Israeli life. He claimed that the economy was stagnant because of misguided governmental policies of the past. Increased prosperity would bring more Jews, and it would make the Arabs' lot happier too. In addition he felt certain that as the new government extended social services to all inhabitants of Israel on an equal basis (he did not explain how the government could accomplish this financially), the present discontent among Arabs would dissipate. Thus he felt confident of a continued Jewish majority with at least a minimally contented Arab minority. I remain unconvinced.

In Israel such a position is popular only because a recent poll of Israelis showed that 88 per cent feel that the Arabs are out to destroy them no matter what they say. It is this feeling that any surrender to the Arabs means the beginning of the collapse of the State of Israel and a consequent new Holocaust that causes many Israelis to say "we can do nothing else." They see no alternative to the present stalemate (and, indeed, the irresponsible and unstable PLO leadership has done nothing to dissipate this fear). If I sound discontent with Begin's position, I am even unhappier with the PLO.

For American Jews the situation is further complicated by the fact that they are unused to anything but a minority status. In Israel there is some sense of Jewish responsibility for being the Establishment; but in America it is difficult to convey the idea that for the first time in two thousand years Jews do have some power and the options and responsibility that go along with it. I do not believe that the American churches can be faulted with "a conspiracy of silence" in regard to the Middle East conflict in light of the record of the two public statements I have cited and their long-standing involvement in Middle East affairs. Nor do I think they have been morally insensitive to the complex and difficult issues involved. But I am sure that both these charges will be leveled by Jews at the American churches when it becomes apparent that our views and theirs do not converge.

There will be difficult days for Jews and Christians in this country, and we should face them together with candor and understanding. I hope that we will both remember the old adage that a friend is not somebody who tells you what you want to hear but a

person who has the confidence and sense of mutual esteem to tell you what he or she really thinks.

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EXCURSUS III

Kay Phillips on

The "Normality" of Idi Amin

Since Idi Amin came to power in Uganda some six years ago his behavior has been described as insane, psychotic, syphilitic, and the like. The traditional behavior of the rulers of the Baganda chiefdom (now a part of Uganda) suggests that Amin's actions—however erratic in Western eyes—are not all that surprising.

In the light of historical precedents set by the expected and accepted behavior of the early rulers of the Baganda, Amin's national and international actions are neither pathological nor syphilitic, but simply "normal." He is a member of the Kakwa tribe and early came under the spell of Bagandan politicians and their way of acting. Amin is acting in line with the rights and responsibilities of his office as defined by his predecessors and his culture. It may be that he is determined to prove that he is more Bagandan than the Baganda he so admires.

Before the days of colonial rule in East Africa the Baganda constituted a large and powerful chiefdom. The "king," chosen at the death of his father, was typically one of many sons from the large number of king's wives. After the new king ascended to office, his many brothers and half-brothers were put to death. It was an effective, if not very humane, way of minimizing potential claims to the throne. The ruler of the Baganda has almost absolute power, killing clumsy subordinates or irritating subchiefs at whim. Human sacrifice and torture were prevalent, not simply as a way to protect the king, but also as symbolic homage to him. Such sacrifice "invigorated" his spirits and gave him a psychic lift. In addition to being an absolute ruler the Bagandan king maintained control by exercising the right of capricious and arbitrary homicide.

Students of things cross-cultural must always keep in mind cultural relativity. What is true of cultures is also true of individuals. A person's behavior can only be judged normal or abnormal by the standards and traditions of his own culture. To assess Idi Amin's behavior by the standards of the Judeo-Christian (or any other) heritage—and thus to proclaim him psychotic or syphilitic and, therefore, unpredictable—is a bad mistake. It could have serious consequences for those who must deal with him on a political or diplomatic level. A review of the homicidal behavior of Bagandan kings

provides not only understanding but predictability with respect to the future behavior of Amin.

Given Amin's despotic powers, no amount of international criticism is likely to change his domestic policies. His refusal to recognize—indeed, his open defiance of—what we consider basic human rights will not only continue but will likely become more pronounced. Persistent derisive criticism of Amin's behavior will only aggravate the antagonistic attitudes of a man who by tradition considers himself the sovereign of all sovereigns.

Understanding Amin's behavior in context will enable us to predict—and if possible guard against—his international actions. By tradition Bagandan kings regularly, even annually, mounted military expeditions for the expansion of their territory, for booty, and for slaves. Typically successful, these expansionist ventures continued until some of the Bagandan neighbors (particularly the Bunyoro) acquired comparable military strength. If and when Amin can acquire the necessary resources and materials of war, he is likely to reestablish the policy of military campaigns for territorial gain, regardless of the politesse with which he may try to approach the international community.

The international community therefore should take steps to strengthen some of Uganda's neighboring countries. This might at least discourage Amin from externalizing his hostilities or giving vent to his primeval impulses.

We need to bear in mind the injunction against interfering in the internal affairs of other states. Just as important, we can take heart from the transitory nature of politics and politicians in developing societies, Uganda and Amin included. With changes in domestic and international politics, leaders who cannot respond creatively by steering their nations forward will tend to disappear from the scene.

Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana is a good example of a man who in the 1950's provided effective leadership in the decolonization process but who was ousted in a 1966 coup d'état when his behavior and command were deemed inappropriate to the changing national and international context. By contrast, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, although different in leadership styles, have remained in power because, among other things, they have pursued policies consistent with the needs of their nations and of the international community.

In sum, we would do well not to challenge Amin's self-concept or to humiliate him before his own people. He is striving to be a "perfect" Bagandan king; it is a role-model that exists only in history. His behavior is anachronistic and atavistic—anathema to the needs of a twentieth-century developing country. Thus, while Amin's leadership may wreak political and human havoc in Uganda for a time, his tenure will not likely last very long.

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