

# COMMENTARY • by M.J. Nurenberger

## The Only Road to Peace

### SETTLE THE LAND WITH JEWS

The recent events in Israel — in actuality, the seventh Arab war against the Jewish state since its establishment — have raised some very serious questions. First is the issue of peace with the surrounding Arab states, peace meaning confirmation of the Jewish state, recognized and accepted by its neighbors. Then there is the more complicated query: What is Zionism in the 1980's? What is its *raison d'être*? And then, what is it which threatens the very existence of the Jewish state? Is it the media, the media only? The traditional hatred of the Jew? Or is it all these factors together, plus the most important and perhaps the most relevant one when facing this issue: absence of aliyah.

Of course anyone at all familiar with the Arab world, the Middle East and the Jewish position in this context must ask the very basic question: Would the dismemberment of the territory of Eretz Israel solve the problem, as some Zionists claim? Is there anyone of a clear mind who believes that should the knesset vote to truncate the territory of Eretz Israel west of the Jordan River and allow the Arabs ("Palestinians") to establish another Arab state in Nablus, Jericho, Hebron and a part of Jerusalem, peace would come to the area?

Of course there are those who refuse to learn from history, burying their heads in the sands of the Arab desert. They refrain from reading what the "moderate" Arab leaders demand, but support their ideas and "solutions". The present difficulties have been so greatly exaggerated because of the media and the intense Arab propaganda presenting PLO leader head Yassir Arafat as peacemaker and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir as warmonger. And here we return to the question: What is Zionism in the 1980's?

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Whenever discussing the issue of peace for Israel within the historic borders of the Jewish homeland, I end up telling about my interview in 1967 with the late Israeli prime minister, Levi Eshkol. I happened to have been at the dinner at New York's Waldorf Astoria the day the Jewish people celebrated the Israeli victory and liberation of East Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria. There I met my lamented friend, Yaacov Herzog, whom many Canadians remember from the days when he served as Israeli ambassador here. A great man, a *tamid haham* and Torah Jew, Herzog invited me to meet the Israeli prime minister who was in the Waldorf Towers about thirty flights above us. Certainly I was eager to meet Eshkol, a man known for his tolerance and lack of narrow partisanship. We went up to the prime minister's suite, and an interesting discussion developed. For almost an hour, we spoke Hebrew. Then Eshkol, who spoke a beautiful Ukrainian Yiddish, switched to his *mama loshen* and said: Let's talk plain Yiddish.

I asked: What do you mean by that?

His reply:

What I would like to say is that I am not as excited about our victory as those who are dancing downstairs. This victory is in essence the greatest challenge ever to Jews. If the Jewish people come and settle in the liberated territories where the Hebrew nation was born — in Judea, Samaria, Hebron, Bethlehem, Jerusalem — it will all remain Hebrew territory. But if there is no aliyah, I don't know.

Later on Herzog asked me: *Hayvanta?* (Did you understand?)

Of course I understood. And since that day, whenever the issue of the so-called West Bank is raised, I cannot help but recall this admonition by a great leader of Israel.

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Today the question of aliyah is acute. Is it fair to say that the problems facing Israel are the result only of the attitude of the media towards Israel? And if the media suddenly were to begin praising Jewish presence there, would it change the fact that the challenge taken up by Eshkol in 1967 found no response among Zionists the world over? Is it possible to build a Jewish state when Jews refuse to emigrate there?

Of course the Reform and assimilated Jews who control the Jewish Agency funds will find all kinds of excuses for North American Jews not to settle in Israel. And they will continue to attack Torah Jews who provide the largest percentage of olim.

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In my opinion, in this great debate concerning the reasons for the present situation in Eretz Israel, we are evading the essential point. I repeat: How can there be a Jewish state without Jews? And how can we change the demography of Eretz Israel if not through aliyah? Is it possible to consolidate the state without bringing hundreds of thousands of Jews to Eretz Israel, without telling the Zionists and ourselves that if we want the Jewish state to prosper, we must think earnestly of building the nation by settling there? Every one of us is a potential oleh. I believe that the failure of aliyah — which means the failure of Zionism — stems from the fact that we never even mention *mass aliyah*. We know that the Russian Jews in their majority do not wish to move to Israel, because we stay here. How can aliyah become a serious issue in the affluent Jewish communities of the West?

Personally, I believe Aliyah cannot be limited to individuals, no matter how lofty the ideal. The successful Aliyah following the establishment of the Jewish state was the mass aliyah of communities. The rabbis, the lay leaders, the rich and the poor evacuated old Jewish settlements and moved to Israel. Isolated families from North America, except for a few very idealistic, do not remain permanently in Israel.

The key to mass aliyah requires serious discussion, which I propose to launch in the next issue. Building the Galut and building Eretz Israel are two contradictory undertakings.

## What the Arabs ("Palestinians") Really Want THE PRICE OF SLEEP

### What Our "Liberals" Should Know

by Sidney Zion

In 1970, Sheik Mohamed Ali Jaabari, the Mayor of Hebron, had a few of us American journalists to his home for tea. Those were the days when every newspaperman who went to the Holy Land hunted for moderate Arab leaders who might help broker a peace between Israel and Jordan and thus end the three-year occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Mayor Jaabari seemed the quintessential moderate: He not only was close to King Hussein but despised the Palestine Liberation Organization.

I have reconstructed the interview from memory and from talking with a news man who was present.

Sheik Jaabari was asked the jackpot question first: What do the Arabs require for peace?

"It is quite simple," he said. "The Jews will have to restore to the Arabs all the land taken from them in the wars."

I said, "Did you say 'wars'? Not the 1967 war, but 'wars'?"

"All the wars — everything since the U.N. partition plan of 1947."

"That would mean Jaffa, for example."

"Yes," Sheik Jaabari said. "There were 70,000 Arabs in Jaffa in 1947; there will be 70,000 Arabs in Jaffa now."

"And half the Negev, and part of Haifa, all of Jerusalem, Beersheba."

"The whole of the Negev," he said. "And, for sure, Jerusalem, and much of Haifa, and Beersheba. Wherever the Arabs were then, the Arabs will be now."

I said, "Mr. Mayor, if the Arabs were to accept this arrangement, would you then recognize them and make peace with them?"

He thought for a moment and said, "I assure you that if the Jews do this, the Arab leaders will be very favorable to them."

"But no guarantees in advance," I said.

"The Arab leaders will have to meet, of course. But I know them. I know how they think. I tell you they would be very favorable to the Jews."

"First, the Israelis must give back the land, and then the Arab leaders meet, is that it?"

"Yes, though it might be simultaneously — that is a detail."

"Anyway, the Israelis must make the offer unconditionally."

"For peace, absolutely."

I said: "Mr. Mayor, I

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have great respect for you. So please do not take what I must say as a sign of disrespect."

"Say anything you like. You are my guest."

"My question is, What would your terms be if you won the war?"

So you wake up 17 years later, you read the papers and watch TV, and what do you know! If only the Jews hadn't been so brutish to the fathers, the sons wouldn't be throwing stones and Molotov cocktails at Israeli soldiers. What the Jews could have had from the moderate fathers they won't get from the sons. The sons are now filled with fury, rage, frustration, and cannot be controlled by their dads, whose compromising ways have proved fruitless. The Israelis missed the boat, media barons say, and when they say it, the consensus lines up around the corner.

The Middle East memory bank is empty again. It goes belly up every time Israel gets rough with its enemies. When this happens, the world is born yesterday, or tomorrow.

In 1981, Israel took out the Iraqi nuclear reactor. The Israelis were carpet-bombed by the world media, which had never heard of the hanging gardens of Baghdad: What

right did the Israelis have to do this to good old peace-loving Iraq? And how dare they invade Lebanon? That Syria and the P.L.O. had established a police state-within-a-state in Lebanon was forgotten: The Israeli hordes were overrunning a beautiful nation.

Yet none of the foregoing is as galling as this latest book of genesis, which has it that Israeli intransigence is responsible for the West Bank riots. Because now we are told to forget everything: that the Six-Day War was provoked by Egypt; that Hussein fired the first shot in Jerusalem after Prime Minister Levi Eshkol begged him to stay out, in a taped phone conversation — the only war in history where history can prove that history never had to happen; that from that moment on, the Arabs knew only one word, no.

And not just from that moment. Had the Arabs accepted the partition of 1947, Israel would be a fragment of what it is today, and very likely a memory. Had the Arabs been satisfied with the pre-June 1967 boundaries — the boundaries they now say they want — there would have been no Six-Day War.

The one time an Arab leader said yes — Anwar el-Sadat — Israel gave him everything he wanted.

The critics of Israel pretend to know nothing of this. They mount a moral attack on the Jewish state, many of them equating Israel with South Africa — as if the blacks had gone to war against the whites, had

vowed to destroy them. It is a profoundly vicious analogy, without a scintilla of factual basis, but like all big lies it grows and grows.

What if these moral cynics had their way? Suppose there was a Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank? Does anybody believe the Arabs would be free? There's not a free Arab state in the world: "Self-determination" is nothing more than a code word for the right to be ruled by a dictator of your own race. But then the moral critics of Israel could sleep, close the book on the Middle East — as they have on Vietnam, Cambodia and black Africa. If Israel becomes history — well, that's the price of sleep.

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