



Joshua Lederberg

Intellectuals Revive Dream Of Israeli-Arabic Planning

JERUSALEM—A culture that has devoted much of its energy for over two millennia to the examination of its soul must regard every question as ever open. The ideological foundation of the state of Israel is no exception, as illustrated by the recent ferment here over the "Goldmann affair."

The mischievous potential of any misunderstanding, outside, about the Israeli will to live is self-evident. Beyond these tactical issues lies the much-discussed question of the legitimacy of the Jewish nation-state, as theoretically contrasted with the human rights of Jews as individuals.

In fact, the Arab terror, openly supported or condoned by the various adversary governments and reaching to other continents and to the skies over Europe, has mooted the distinction. Whether as individuals or as a nation, Israel's Jews face the culmination of Hitler's holocaust.

Two and a half million Israelis should, perhaps, consider committing suicide as a graceful way to relieve the world's embarrassment over their existence. They will have no competition from others vying for the priority of this kind of honor.

THE ISRAELI government, in the nature of political affairs is, and responsibly must be, weighted toward the nationalistic side of the spectrum of beliefs in this democratic society. This may dull its alertness to policies that might further separate the practical interests of individual Arabs, in particular the refugees, from the counterpart ideology of pan-Arabic nationalism.

This remark would compare the occupation policy more with perfectionist ideals than with the historical practice of other countries. However, perfectionism is political realism when life commitments are at stake.

The Arabs in Israel and the West Bank have been only secondary beneficiaries of the extraordinary economic development of Israel. Nevertheless they have moved far ahead of the masses in other Arab countries except where oil revenues have come in. Some analysts believe that this process can be accelerated as a primary objective, and that the refugees can be rehabilitated without massive resettlement and without prejudicing final territorial agreements, by furthering industrial development.

This would require international capital investment on a scale which is impossible without more intensive planning, more visibly exposed. To do otherwise would be to continue the policy followed for 20 years by the Arab governments of letting the refugee camps fester as an intentional irritant, leaving the people as mere pawns in a larger political game. By making bet-

ter use of its intellectual resources for comprehensive planning, Israel could do much to reinforce its own claim on the world's conscience and expectations for a new harmony.

ON A GLOBAL scale, the ideology of nationalism was made obsolete at Hiroshima. Nevertheless, Israel's success or failure against equally nationalistic adversaries counts for little in a process so dominated by the games of the superpowers. Many non-Zionist Jews, like myself, might wish that Israel could demonstrate some transcendental, post-nationalistic form of political organization. To demand that other people live in our futuristic dreams, however, is to condemn them to extinction in present reality.

Israel does have unique assets for an eventual turning toward that transcendence in its democratic traditions and in the caliber of its intellectual resources. (Witness its universities and the Weizmann Institute of Science, which are unmatched in many larger countries.) A number of intellectuals of a wide range of political complexion have organized an Association for Peace in Tel Aviv, with a mailing address in Rome to facilitate a dialogue with their Arab counterparts.

They would refocus efforts on regional planning for the welfare of the whole area—a dream that Israel's first president, Chaim Weizmann, shared with many Arab leaders 50 years ago. Present hope of economic development rests, of course, on stopping the hemorrhage of war. The association posits no particular tactical solution on boundaries but stresses the positive merits of arrangements for economic and social cooperation.

Whether the Arab countries are still free enough from external control to pursue their own advantage is an empty question until they develop the insight and desire to do so. For Israel's part, the government must still take many steps before such schemes can be believed as more than unofficial fantasies.

Fear that the terrorists might redouble their attacks on Arab groups willing to cooperate with Israel has dampened publicity about such efforts, but this may also be too easy an excuse to postpone important humanitarian steps.

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