

The New Owner of The New Republic

Marty Peretz Begins

By Richard Lee

Marty Peretz is a paradox—a canny, contradictory blend of hustler and do-gooder, conniver and charmer, pragmatist and idealist, mover and *mensch*.

For the past decade or so, Marty Peretz has been a leading fund-raiser for and contributor to leftist causes and liberal campaigns (everything from Ramparts magazine to the SDS to Gene McCarthy's presidential bid), while teaching government and social studies at Harvard. This he has done fairly anonymously, taking care to avoid the publicity pitfalls inherent in the activist-cum-philanthropist role he's created for himself—with the help of his wife's vast fortune. But now he's come out from behind the scenes, so to speak, and bought The New Republic, America's archetypal liberal weekly, and the sudden transfer of ownership of this esteemed and venerable (60 years old this year) journal of politics and the arts has, inevitably, raised some intriguing questions about this radic-lib activist from Cambridge, and what he's up to here: Is Marty Peretz looking to build a power base in Washington? To use a prestigious magazine for his own personal self-aggrandizement? To make what has been described as "a moderate leap into national prominence"? Or does he think it would be fun to inject some color and controversy into The New Republic's genteel gray image?

Peretz is a wiry, sharp-featured, charismatic 35-year-old—"an oversized Jewish leprechaun," as one writer described him, and very aptly, too, it seems, as you watch him scamper up three flights of stairs to his small, sparsely furnished office at the magazine's grayish-green brick townhouse headquarters on 19th Street. He's a bespectacled, fleet-footed bundle of nervous energy, with dark brown mod-length hair and a luxuriant dark brown beard which, despite his youthful demeanor, gives him an oddly patriarchal look. He's dressed in a well-cut navy jacket, gray slacks pale blue shirt, and a fuchsia polka-dotted tie. He's addicted to loud ties, he admits. One sure-fire way to score points with your students is to wear loud ties, he says, flashing an ingratiating smile.

He's been teaching social sciences courses at Harvard since 1966, he tells me. "It's a small, interdisciplinary department," he explains, "an honors program, with a limited enrollment, which was set up by McGeorge Bundy back in the '60s." Peretz and his wife are also master and mistress of South House, on the Rad-

cliffe quad, and are said to have a "fond following" there.

"I spend a lot of time with the students," he says. "My greatest satisfaction comes from discovering diamonds-in-the-rough—people who are very smart, and rough around the edges, but enormously talented, and they come to Harvard from some place like South Dakota, and it can be absolutely terrifying for them, very intimidating," he shakes his head in a show of sympathy and concern. "I had one kid who came from Milwaukee, and his school wouldn't even send us his transcripts. They thought we were the Kremlin-on-the-Charles!

"It's enormously satisfying, releasing this talent," he confides. "That's what it is, you know—you're almost a talent scout. And I think my eye is pretty good," he adds with a grin.

Two of his latest discoveries were serving him as summer interns here. One of them, an athletically handsome man in his early 20s, was at work in Peretz's outer office, compiling an anthology of New Republic arts and literature essays of the '20s—a vintage writing period for the magazine, Peretz reminds, as he savors the illustrious names involved: Edmund Wilson, Walter Lippmann, John Dewey, Rebecca West, George Bernard Shaw, George Santayana, among others.

Peretz was born in Manhattan, he says, briefly recounting his "relatively happy," middle class, urban Jewish boyhood. His father, now retired and in poor health, was "in real estate," and he has a younger brother, Jerry, now a community organizer in New York. "My mother is deceased," he says. Did his parents push him to succeed? "They always expected me to do well," he replies. He does not elaborate. He graduated from the Bronx High School of Science in 1955. "All these supposedly brainy people went there," he recalls, "Stokely Carmichael went there, but I didn't know him. I guess it was an impressive thing," he adds perfunctorily, "but I really don't have too many memories of it."

Brandeis, where he majored in history, is something else again—"a rather interesting place, very political, at a very apathetic, apolitical time, on most college campuses," he points out. "The issues of the '60s were being discussed and formulated there in the late '50s, and you had people like Herbert Marcuse and Max Lerner teaching there, and Irving Howe, and John Roche, and Philip Rahv, and C. Wright Mills—they were refugees from the student activism of the '30s, and they'd been hurt by the Red scare of the early '50s, and with jobs hard to get, Brandeis was able to pick them up cheap."

Richard Lee is a free lance writer and editor.

Continued on page 29

Peretz from page 12

"They had very significant impact on me," he acknowledges. "I can discern the pattern of influence . . . I know that my own politics over a period of time became iconoclastic, very much influenced by Dissent magazine and Irvin Howe in the beginning. And I became personally close to Max Lerner," he says. He was also a favorite student of Herbert Marcuse, but he was not, he admits, "an outstanding scholar."

"He was one of those fellows who was just naturally looked up to as a leader," Lerner, an author and syndicated columnist and still a close friend, said later. "He was managing editor of the college newspaper, and very active in campus politics, but he was not popular—not in the usual sense of the term. He would never have been elected president of his class."

His reputation as an aggressive radical continued at Harvard, where he did graduate work in government. (He got his Ph.D. in 1965.) He was the university's *enfant terrible* at a time when picketing Woolworth's was considered a radical act. And there was a lot of scrambling for attention, a lot of "Marty parties," as they came to be known. "He was the classic climber," as one friend from that period later recalled, "always cultivating beautiful, successful people—or their sons and daughters. Anybody who had a famous name." Once, in an effort to cure him of this annoying habit, a group of undergraduates pulled an elaborate practical joke: At one of Peretz's bigger and tipsier parties, they recruited a young woman who bore a passing resemblance to the then First Lady, Jacqueline Kennedy, gave her the fictitious name "Cosette Bouvier," and waited to see how long it would take Peretz to move in on her. "In a matter of minutes he was by her side and coming on strong," the friend related laughingly.

"Half the partygoers were in on the joke, and when Marty and the fake socialite were thoroughly enamored, photographers rushed in and snapped their picture, and the room went wild. But then one of Marty's companions took pity on him and told him what was up, and Marty made a fast exit from the scene."

When asked about the incident now, Peretz flushes a

bit, grins sheepishly, and shrugs it off as an early tactical error. But he denies that he ever was a celebrity hound or a social climber. He also denies an assertion by radical writer Andrew Kopkind (in Boston's *Real Paper*) that there was "a lot of subtle anti-Semitism" directed against him in the highly visible and highly vocal early stages of his career at Harvard.

Not that Peretz was confining his operations to Harvard Square. Not at all. Those activist professors at Brandeis had done their work well—Peretz was all over the New Left landscape during the '60s, brandishing his social conscience, taking up with the causes he believed in: He raised most of the money for H. Stuart Hughes' independent senatorial campaign in 1962. (Hughes was the ban-the-bomb candidate running against Teddy Kennedy and George Lodge), a doomed campaign, to be sure, but Peretz worked hard in it, and developed a long-standing distaste for Kennedy-style politicking. ("The Kennedys run the Democratic Party in Massachusetts like a —like a swamp," he sputters.) Civil rights and the student movement were growth stocks in that period, and Peretz invested whatever time, money, and energy he could: He gave money (upwards of \$25,000) to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, and he made helpful grants to the Students for a Democratic Society (in its pre-Weatherman days), and he bankrolled the early muckraking efforts of *Ramparts* magazine—until he got turned off by their harsh criticism of Israel during the Six-Day War in 1967.

"For nearly two years he was a main source of money for us," says former *Ramparts* editor Warren Hinckle, "and Marty was as reasonable as any money person can normally be. He made editorial suggestions, sure, but he never did it in a dictatorial way. He didn't like a piece we ran about the Black Panthers—he thought it was too sympathetic—and he let me know about it, but he didn't interfere. But then we had this editorial about the Six-Day War, and because it was friendly to Nasser and critical of Israel, suddenly it was an issue.

Continued on next page.

Cristina found a



Marry read it and came in screaming—screaming and yelling, "You can't run that editorial! You can't run that editorial!" He was violently opposed, but it was a unanimous decision, and the editorial ran, and the upshot was

that Marry took all his money out of the magazine. He suffers from a fatal, fatal arrogance when it's an issue he has a personal, emotional stake in, and he was very, very strong on Israel. A super-Zionist."

Peretz says now that it was an accumulation of grievances—including the spendthrift ways of editors Hinckle and Robert Scheer—not just the Israel issue, which prompted his departure. But around the same

time Peretz also withdrew his financial support of SNCC—there had been an article critical of Israel in the SNCC paper.

In 1967, Peretz also helped organize and pay for a New Politics Convention in Chi-

cago, a culmination of another Peretz-sponsored project, Vietnam Summer, which was an attempt to fuse civil rights and peace groups into one coherent antiwar movement for the '68 elections—an idealistic venture, but it, too,

...e years, our panel
...s traveled to many
...ing numerous wines,
...hese wines, some of
...never been available

ids.

Answers to last week's Potomac games

Quote-Acrossic

Source: Addison: The Spectator

"Mirth is like a flash of lightning that breaks through a gloom of clouds and glitters a moment. Cheerfulness keeps up a kind of daylight in the mind and fills it with a steady and perpetual seren-

was doomed to failure: Under pressure from a black caucus, the convention quickly deteriorated into hostile infighting and factionalism. It was a "shattering blow" for Peretz, and a "watershed" in his political development, according to Michael Walzer, an associate professor of government at Harvard and a close friend since their Brandeis days. "The New Left for a while had a healthy growth, and Marty was involved in that growth," Walzer says. "Then, things went sour—the racial split, the effects of the war in producing whole patterns of frustration and nihilism. And Marty was never that way. He avoided the pathologies and became one of the critics."

Since that time, Peretz has concentrated mostly on political campaigns. He gave "thousands" to Gene McCarthy in 1968 (one of the "top four or five" contributors to the cam-

paign, according to Jerry Ellner, McCarthy's closest aide, who first introduced Peretz to McCarthy when he "suddenly appeared out of nowhere" in New Hampshire, eager to be of financial assistance), and he tried to get McCarthy to run again in '72. When he failed in that effort, he contributed about \$150,000 to the McGovern campaign—more out of political responsibility than personal affinity, he hastens to explain. He has also supported, among others, Charles Goodell, Paul O'Dwyer, Bella Abzug, Falter Drinan, Herman Badillo, and Julian Bond.

"McCarthy was the only candidate I ever got close to," he says. "A lot of my time and emotional energy went into that campaign," he admits, shaking his head and smiling fondly. And he's remained "personally close" to both Abigail and Gene McCarthy ever

since, he says. "I had no comparable feeling for McGovern," he adds. "It was an awful campaign, intellectually flabby, morally self-inflated. . . . I think he's a big nothing. Dull and witless."

Peretz was an intellectual, a teacher, and an activist before he became a giver—a giver with certain differences, he would like to point out: "I don't like to see the leverage of money as a way of having an ideological influence on a campaign," he says. "I think what is important in the philosophical and political arts is the art, and not the people who fund it. My attitude is very different from someone like Stewart Mott, who calls attention to himself in every way possible, who courts publicity. . . . and lives in a three-million-

dollar penthouse in New York," he adds, disapprovingly.

Where General Motors heir Stewart Mott takes his money and decides on A Cause, Marty Peretz's philanthropy, it's said, "has been the consequence of his philosophic and ideological development"—a development scorned by his New Left detractors as superficial, self-serving, and reactionary.

Peretz denies it. "But anyway, the New Left doesn't exist anymore," he counters. "It overreached its moral beginnings. It had contempt for America in the guise of being a popular movement. It was a disdainful movement, and it romanticized certain forces in the world that didn't merit romanticizing. . . . I once said if I had to choose between Tom Hayden and Mayor Daley, I would have no moral qualms about not

choosing Tom Hayden." But he doesn't want to rake over a lot of "Byzantine quarreling" of the '60s. "I have my own—I live by my own lights," he says, smiling his ingratiating smile again.

Then what is he today politically? An independent liberal? A conservative radical?

He frowns. "I'm unsatisfied with these appellations," he says, "But I'm for fundamental changes in our society—a radical redistribution of wealth and privilege, a less unequal society than we have. I believe and I think that it's the fundamental ethical problem of American society today," he declares.

"I think that my own politics have remained stable," he goes on. "The center of gravity in that sector of the American population that thinks about politics and is concerned with ideas has moved

much closer to the views that I held when I became politically active because of the war issue. There's a new national orthodoxy, but I'm not saying 'I told you so.' I don't mean that. It's just the march of progress. The center of gravity has moved to the left, but I find myself very much outflanked on the left by a lot of militant radicals—a lot of people who have tremendous ideological hostilities toward me."

Perez is always uncomfortable talking about money, he says, and he fidgets, frowns, and looks embarrassed when you ask him to tell you why he got into philanthropy in the first place.

"I know it sounds sort of sly and theological, but . . . I try in various ways to do good," he says. "It has an importance in my life. I . . . think one should try to redress the grievances of

others . . .

"I was never very religious, I was never an observing Jew, but I am very Jewish. I live with a set of ethical presuppositions, in a way," he says, almost shyly, "and every time I try to talk about them, they vanish," he smiles, "but they're here," he says, smiling again as he pats his chest in a rather deft display of fumbling, inarticulate sincerity. Perez does want you to believe he has deep humanitarian concerns, and there seems no reason to believe that he doesn't, but he's just too much of a mover to pass muster as someone entirely motivated by altruism. What's in it for him? He must want something . . .

"I think he plays a very subtle game," says Tom Page, veteran campaign fundraiser, who observed Perez at close range during the McCarthy campaign. "I think he really

seeks domination in the guise of piety. I think that's his thrust. It's a power trip, definitely—you're in there to influence the tide of American events, but outwardly it doesn't seem so, because it goes so much f . . . goodness."

"He wants access," says Owen Donnelly, another campaign finance man in the McCarthy campaign, "that's the important thing with Mary—access to the candidate. He wants to be able to pick up the phone and get through to the man, and to be listened to. That's the only return on his investment that he's interested in. . . . He sort of buys his way into the campaign strategy meetings, and then when they don't do it his way, he gets pissed off. But he's not what you would call a typical far-cat financier by any means. His interests are different. He doesn't have cro-

nies, and he's not after an ambassadorship, and he doesn't want to be part of an administration. Mary would always end up talking to the money people about ideological matters, and most money-type people couldn't care less about that, but Mary does this all the time."

"I don't think you can overestimate the Judaism part of it," says Abigail McCarthy. "I don't think it's just ego satisfaction. It's a moral decision. I think it's part of their tradition—their reward is in knowing that they're doing good here. Mary comes from a family that founded secular, ethical Judaism. His great uncle (L. L. Perez), you know, was a famous short-story writer and poet. These people have a tremendous sense of making the world better. It's really a strong part of Mary's character."

"He's a very responsible fi-

nanacial contributor," one former radical activist has been quoted as saying. "He's difficult to get along with, he's hard-headed and egotistical, but he's politically up-front. He'll say, 'Look, I don't think what you're doing is very good, so I'm not going to give you money. . . . with Mary it's always very straightforward. I've raised money from a lot of people, but it was more fun to raise money from Mary and Anne than from anyone. And it really is from the two of them, although everyone always says, 'Mary Perez gave this or that.'"

Mostly it's from Anne, it turns out. Perez has been married these past eight years to a very wealthy woman, the former Anne Farnsworth, whose family is associated with the Singer Sewing Machine Company, and whose personal fortune has been conservatively estimated at

\$30 million.

Where did he meet her? "At a party in New York," he tells me, guardedly. (It was a fundraising party during the Stuart Hughes campaign, I learn later.) They were both married to "other people" at the time, he goes on to say, after a bit of prodding, but both marriages were having "overt difficulties," it seems, "but I don't want to talk about it," he says, getting slightly irritated. "That's my really private life."

According to Arthur Waskow, the antiwar movement intellectual and political organizer who knew them both back in the '60s, Peretz's "liaison" with Anne Farnsworth was looked upon with greedy anticipation by New Left types eager for a fund of great wealth to further their causes. "It was like a New Left 'Perils of Pauline,'" said Waskow, now with the Insti-

tute for Policy Studies. "Marty was managing Anne's money, but they weren't married yet, and we were all waiting breathlessly for the wedding day. Would the movement get all that money? How were Marty and Anne getting along? It was like a soap opera, and pretty cold-blooded and calculating as I think about it now." Waskow added with a shamefaced laugh. "We should have been thinking more about Marty and Anne and their future happiness together."

On the bookshelf nearest Peretz's desk are several framed photographs—outdoorsy shots of Anne (a strikingly pretty brunette in her mid-30s) and their four children: David, 14, Lisa, 12, Jessie, 6, and Bobo, 4½. Peretz recites their names affectionately. The two oldest are Anne's by her former marriage, "but I always think of

them now as my own children," he tells me. They both encourage their children's interest in American history, he says. "I think it's very important for them to know about their roots—where they came from—but I tell them to believe only half of what they read about me," he adds with a roguish grin.

His wife is a therapist—"psychotherapist," he says, "and she also paints. She's very good at it. She's given a couple of exhibitions—one-woman shows. My wife has an independent life, and she makes her own decisions. Which isn't to say we're not close. We're very close."

But when, during a subsequent interview, you ask about the possibility of interviewing her, Peretz shakes his head. "She will not talk to any reporter," he says firmly. "She distrusts you as a breed."

"She's very publicity-shy,"

confirms Jerry Eller, "a tiny little woman, very strong, very bright, very gregarious, but she does her own thing. She has almost a kind of peasant instinct for the simple life, which is kind of funny, because of her enormous wealth. She's not pretentious at all, and she gets very upset when somebody refers to her in print as an heiress. The very word is an embarrassment to her. There was a story in one of the news magazines a while back, which listed her as the sixth richest woman in America. It took Marty a week to calm her down."

Peretz adamantly denies a report that he was "managing her 'bulging investment portfolio'" before they were married. Nor did he "develop" his wife into a philanthropist, he adds testily. Nor is he managing her money now, he insists, with a weary

sigh. "She has her own people to do that," he says. They have set up a joint fund, "a small vehicle," as Peretz puts it, by which they support worthy causes. "But it's not heavily endowed," he says, adding that they have only one staff assistant to help sift through requests and keep track of where the money goes, and how it's used. He declines to discuss it any more specifically, except to say they've cut back "significantly" in their giving lately.

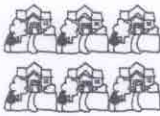
The Peretz lifestyle, friends note with bemusement, is almost a case study in reverse snobbery. "We live very simply," Peretz says. "We have a house in Cambridge, which we rent to students during the summer, and a small summer house out on the Cape. We don't even have a color TV. We live a very settled life. All our friends are middle-class professionals. Joe Alsop

raet
... gives satisfaction always



METRIC IS COMING Be a jump ahead with this pencil holder that converts U.S. measures to metric and reverse. 4", black only, \$5.00. Be sure to see our Christmas Shop.

URSSELL'S
Que Street at Wisconsin—Georgetown



"We rented our house 8 times through your paper. It never takes more than one ad."

The Washington Post carries 2 out of 4 cars, real estate classified ads daily and Sunday.

The Washington Post
Classified Ads
Call 725-6200

LANE BRYANT
BUDGET FLOOR



once reported he saw me driving a Rolls-Royce. A Rolls-Royce. Incredible! . . . I drive a used Porsche—and I still have trouble shifting from second to fourth," he confesses. "Before that I drove a Fiat. Before that I had a Porsche for nine years, but in Boston there's so much snow in the winter the floorboards rotted around the gas pedal, and I finally had to get rid of it."

He neither drinks nor smokes, he says. "Well . . . I drink white wine," he amends. "I can't tell the difference between what any of that other stuff tastes like. Sometimes I walk around at cocktail parties carrying a glass with Coke in it, and people look at me and think, 'What is this, a reformed alcoholic?'"

Perez insists he bought The New Republic with his own money. The selling price was \$380,000. "I don't have a large fortune," he says, "but I do have a certain amount of money which I have shrewdly invested over a long period of time. But I don't want to talk about that."

The deal was negotiated in March after a series of discussions between Peretz and Gilbert A. Harrison (the editor-in-chief and owner for the last 20 years), which began rather informally at Martha's Vineyard the previous summer. They had met two years before, when Peretz arranged a private, exchange-of-ideas meeting with Golda Meir in New York, at the Waldorf, and invited Harrison and other prominent intellectuals to attend. Peretz had offhandedly broached the idea of buying the magazine at that time. "I had no intention of selling," Harrison recalled later, "but I thought about it, really, for the first time. I thought about a lot of things. First, is there a role for The New Republic to play in the future, and if there is, what's going to see it through? I was 59 last year. . . . so we talked about it some more, and I got to know him a little better, and inevitably, when there's a change of ownership, rumors get started, and there were several other offers to buy the magazine. But I decided that Marty came as close to anybody I know who had what was needed." And as for the selling price, "I proposed the

figure," Harrison said. "I took an arbitrary figure. There was never any discussion about money. The problem wasn't there. The main question in my mind was, would the person buying it be able and willing to see it through, in good times and bad. I had confidence that Marty could, and would. He's an inventive fellow, he's got the optimism, and he brings a fresh viewpoint to the magazine. He's full of ideas and enthusiasm."

That he is. And then some. "I think it's a greatly talented staff," he enthuses, "and it has a fantastically loyal audience." Circulation hovers around 100,000—down somewhat from a peak 167,000 in the mid '60s, but still healthy enough by literary journal standards. According to Harrison, the magazine is now operating at "a small profit." And Peretz, for his part, does not regard the magazine as "a charity."

"I've always thought of The New Republic as a kind of social reference point—politically and intellectually," Peretz says, thoughtfully, "a stable literary magazine that's not predictable, but it didn't embrace an apocalyptic vision of things. . . . Temperamentally, I'm not an apocalyptic person. The capability of advanced societies to muddle through should not be underestimated. . . . I don't think there is any other forum that talks with as much authority to all the politically involved, literate people on the left. . . ."

Among the staffers, a certain cautious optimism seems to prevail about the Peretz takeover:

"The line is, the magazine is not going to change," says managing editor David Sanford. "At least there aren't supposed to be any changes right away, since Gil is still editor, and retains control of hiring and firing and article assignments until '76. Then they'll take another look at it. Peretz has not had a lot of magazine experience, so he'll be learning the business for awhile. He's 25 years younger than Gil, and more of an activist than an intellectual in issues—Israel, of course, being one of them. Three years from now, he'll have more say-so, more control, and maybe the magazine will take off in some new direction for the next 20 years."

"I think the magazine reflects Gil's tastes now, and it

Continued on page 10

Colibri lighters are available at these fine stores.

- Baltimore, Md. Reliable Stores
- Bethesda, Md. Theodore Nya Jewelers
- Chevy Chase, Md. Boons & Sons, Inc.
- District Heights, Md. District Heights Jewelers
- Hyttsville, Md. Fabre Jewelers
Toltec Distributors
- Silver Spring, Md. DeCarlo Jewelers
Fredland Jewelers
- Washington, D.C. Afram Jewelers
Carr Jewelers
Charles Ernest
Continental Jewels, Inc.
Draper W. Curtis
Tobaccoconist, Inc.
Diener-Jackman Jewelers, Inc.
Galt Brothers
A. Garfinkel, Inc.
Georgetown Jewelers
A. Harris & Co.
The Hecht Co., Inc.
Kahn-Oppenheimer
Lane Luggage
McCall Jewelry Co.
Michastson Jewelers
Pamplintonia & Sons

Peretz, from page 34

will reflect Marty's tastes in the future—inevitably," says executive editor Walter Pincus, who had wanted to buy the magazine himself, but gave up on it when the money market got tight and his backers cooled to the idea.

"I don't think Marty would be content with a purely academic career," adds Abigail McCarthy. "He's bright, restless, and highly driven, but in a good way, so this is a perfect solution for him—owning a well-respected, opinion-forming organ."

Peretz says he has no plans at present to move his family to Washington, but he has rented a house on Reservoir Road—"which I'm trying to furnish," he smiles—and will spend more and more time here. "I'll be half-time at the University this year—they're accustomed now to people going on half-time—and also my head will be less preoccupied with class preparation, so I can pay more attention to the magazine."

As chairman of the editorial board, Peretz will be "present whenever he wishes," says Harrison. Peretz says he will be "involved in editorial development . . . I am rather more inclined to hire more freelancers, and I'm hoping to find a way to make the pages a little more open, and to attract more advertising." He will also write for the magazine, he says, but as for taking over some day as editor, "I'm not inclined to think I will ever be a working weekly editor of a weekly magazine."

But he's obviously not going to be an absentee owner, either. And he thinks The New Republic must "toughen its liberalism with more aggressive, sharply argued opinions on issues now being exploited by conservatives—defense and arms limitations policies, for instance. There's a conservative offensive in this country, and we don't know how to respond to it," he complains. "And if the Democrats don't start coming up with some viable programs to deal with these problems we're having now, they're going to be out on their ass again in '76."

Speaking of '76 . . .

"I don't have a candidate for President in 1976," he says. Not yet, anyway. Too early in the game for Marty Peretz. He'll keep his options open. He does, however, say

some nice things about Henry Jackson, who might have been a hawk on Vietnam, but his pro-Israel stance in the Senate more than makes up for that unfortunate lapse, in Peretz's view: "A very complicated man," he says, admiringly. "A very complicated man."

Peretz is aware—intensely aware—of the talk that's been circulating here about him—that he's on some kind of an ego trip, that he doesn't have the best interests of The New Republic at heart, that he might end up turning it into a cranky, tract-ridden weekly version of Commentary . . .

"I've really had it up to here with these stories," he protests. "There are no sinister plots, no hidden agendas—I'm not going to compromise the magazine. The New Republic is listened to, it's respected, and it's a good thing to be a part of. This will always be a very respected magazine," he declares.

"Does it give me additional clout, owning this magazine?" he asks rhetorically. "I don't go to any more parties than I used to."

What about the State Department luncheon he set up with Henry Kissinger—to meet the entire New Republic staff (interns, too)?

"Henry and I have enjoyed a friendly conversation from time to time," he informs me. "His son and my step-daughter are close friends. We talk about Lisa and David . . . David's a remarkable boy—very, very intelligent," he says, shaking his head in a show of admiration. "I thought the luncheon would be a good and useful thing to do, so I called him up, and he called me right back, within a half an hour, and . . ." He's eyeing me suspiciously. The Kissinger luncheon hadn't been publicized. Only a few top journalists had known about it—initially, at least. "If you're going to write a sh . . . y kind of piece about me, why the f . . . should I help you?" he flares. "Who have you been talking to?" he demands. "What have they been saying about me? Let me speculate . . . because Walter Pincus didn't get to buy the magazine, there's a lot of resentment toward me, right? Walter and Ann are very established here, and very well-liked by the journalism establishment. They regard Walter as one of their own, and then along comes this political uni-

versity type, this Harvard teacher and activist, and that's a whole different thing, isn't it? Of course there's sentiment against me, and I don't want to characterize it beyond that, but I have learned the ways of Washington, and I think what they mean is, it's not going to be 'their' magazine anymore. . . ."

Several weeks later, responding to a spate of new rumors of "trouble" developing between Peretz and the staff of his newly-acquired magazine, I phoned executive editor Walter Pincus to see what was up. Pincus acknowledged there'd been some policy, and personality, disagreements, but nothing to cause any serious morale problems. "I think, overall, what Marty has done here, is a plus," he said. "I think he deserves credit for the 60-year thing (the special supplements on politics, the economy, and the arts which Peretz initiated and prepared in observance of the magazine's 60th anniversary in November), and for setting up the book subsidiary (to produce each year a limited number of collected essays and original works by NR writers).

On the negative side was a Citizens Committee for Javits ad which ran in the Times October 31—an ad Peretz had signed as "Chairman of the Editorial Board of The New Republic" without consulting anyone at the magazine. This, everyone agreed, was a mistake, since The New Republic had taken no position on the Javits-Ramsey Clark Senate race—a fact editor Gilbert Harrison hastened to point out in a terse letter to the Times the following day.

"It's the kind of thing I don't think he thought about," said Pincus. "He didn't take care to keep The New Republic out of it. The magazine stands for something in its own right. It can't be a personal thing. It's always been a team effort here, reflecting a tradition that's been going on for years.

"It's an educative process," Pincus added. "Marty is learning. My instincts are, he's going through a learning process with the magazine . . . I don't think he's really decided on his role here, yet . . ."