

Mr. Erwin Knoll  
The Progressive  
409 East Main St.,  
Madison WI 53703

5/28/88

Dear Erwin Knoll,

As you say, we'll continue to disagree. You also say that you believe in a secure Israel, with secure borders. I hope that I'll see in the Progressive what I do not recall seeing, a realistic explanation of how Israel's borders can be secure now and for the immediate future when most of the Arab world wants its end, still yearns for what Izzy condemned in one of many such Araft speeches. Where we seem to disagree is on how Israel can have borders with even a little security, something it did not have before the war that gave it control over the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and doesn't have now, although fewer of its people by far are now being killed.

Another aspect of this I do not recall seeing mentioned in the Progressive is something I read just this morning, that according to our Arms Control and Disarmament Agency eight of the 10 countries that spend most of their national product on war are Arab. Israel, which is the only Jewish state, unlike the 20, plus Arab states, is 12th. The Chinese missiles Saudi Arabia just got have a range further than the most distant point in Israel. When none of these states is willing to agree to a peace after ~~more than~~ 40 years, there is no indication that they intend peace or any equivalent of it.

I have great respect, really admiration, for Izzy, with whom my first contact was when he was still working for David Stern. Sure, reconciliation is the best thing for all, but how can one side reconcile when the other won't and for 40 years in the present era alone has refused to? However, beautiful as his words are, they do not address the grim realities. I see in them what I think I see in yours, almost a guilt feeling because those terrible things that are happening are things we've hated all our lives. We feel responsible for them and almost seek absolution. If I have almost nothing in common with the Begin, the Shamirs and the Sharons, I share their fear of what will happen if they begin, as they are being asked to begin, what will lead to negotiations by giving up in advance what the other side wants. I agree with them also, if I understand their position correctly, that the other side not only does not want peace, it does want the end of Israel (One of the reasons I didn't get into in writing you earlier and again I do not recall seeing in the Progressive is that all the Muslim tyrannies, fear a beacon of freedom in their midsts, any state with any social concerns, with regard for the welfare of its people.

There are no simple or easy solutions, if there can be any solution now, but there is no solution without secure Israeli borders and given what surrounds them, and the kinds of governments there, Israel won't last long with a major part 10 miles wide.

I do hope that you will find the time to reread your letter because there is in it what I hope you will think about. Like telling me that Israel alone of the states we help is abusing people with our money. In disagreeing one of the many such states I mentioned is Turkey. On the chance you missed it in The Nation I enclose a piece from the issue that came the day I mailed that letter.

Best wishes,



Harold Weisberg

# *the Progressive*

409 EAST MAIN STREET, MADISON, WI 53703

May 26, 1988

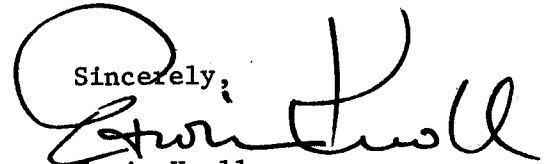
Mr. Harold Weisberg  
7627 Old Receiver Road  
Frederick, MD 21701

Dear Harold Weisberg:

Thank you for your letter of May 23. I do believe you still misunderstand my basic position. You accuse me of taking the position "that Jews are the only people in the world who are not entitled to their own homeland, within secure borders." Quite the contrary is true. It is because I believe in a secure Israel that I find the Israeli government's present course so ruinously counterproductive.

I think we'll just have to agree to disagree. It seems unlikely to me that you will change my mind or I yours. I do want to enclose one item for your thoughtful consideration: a deeply moving piece by Izzy Stone that we published in The Progressive more than thirteen years ago.

Sincerely,



Erwin Knoll  
Editor

EK/tt  
Enc.

608/257-4626

# On Justice for the Palestinians

I. F. STONE

*In the late 1940s, I.F. Stone, reporting from Europe and the Middle East, helped mobilize American concern for the Jewish survivors of the Nazi holocaust who were trying to rebuild their lives in the state of Israel. His "Underground to Palestine" in the spring of 1946 described his travels through the British blockade with illegal immigrants from Poland to Palestine. This article by the former editor of I.F. Stone's Weekly is adapted from remarks he delivered recently at Temple Sinai in Washington, D.C. —The Editors*

I have not spoken in a synagogue for a long time. I was welcome in synagogues when I spoke about Jewish refugees, but the plight of Arab refugees is not a popular subject in synagogues.

From the beginning of Zionism we have hated to admit that the Arabs were there. We knew they were there, but we pretended that they weren't. Or we talked about helping them. We didn't talk about dislodging them—very few of us thought the day would come when we would dislodge a kindred people. Nothing seems to me more dreadful than that, in the effort to resettle our own people, we have been drawn into the terrible moral fate of treating another people with injustice.

We cannot ignore the problems of the Arab refugees, and of Palestinian national aspirations, nor blind ourselves to their realities. We cannot say that Jews have a right to yearn for Palestine after 1,900 years and deny the Arabs the right to yearn for their homes after nineteen years. These *were* their homes; they are not all Bedouins. But anyone who wants to regard them as Bedouins must remember that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were Bedouins. Any Jew with historical imagination who sees the tents of the Bedouins can't help but see the tents of our forefathers.

In any case, we are not dealing with Bedouins. The Arab world is in many stages of development. We are dealing with a contemporary people—many radical young people, many good older people. And while many of us are beginning to act and think like *goyim*, many of them are beginning to act and think like Jews.

Imagine that you are an Arab. Imagine that you were

a dentist or a doctor in Jerusalem or Haifa, or that you had a villa along the little Arab Riviera in Jaffa—there were some lovely Arab villas there. Or imagine that you were a farmer, or that you had a business, or that you went to school. Then, suddenly, everything was swept away. You lost your home, your business, your school, your country. You would feel bitter—there is nothing mysterious about that—and you would feel desperate.

Terrorism is a reflection of that desperation. I do not favor terrorism, and I do not excuse it, but let's be honest: If the situation were reversed, Jewish boys would be doing what Arab boys are doing. Jewish terrorists did it in 1946 and 1948. They killed women and children in Jerusalem, they blew up the King David Hotel, they destroyed Arab villages.

The way to end the terror, the way to heal the breach, is first of all to recognize (as Chaim Weizmann, the first president of Israel, recognized from the beginning of Zionism) that this is a struggle of right against right, that there is an Arab side and a Jewish side, that we must find a way to live together. We must begin to see the problem through their eyes, and thus have the right to ask them to see it through ours.

I was depressed by Yasir Arafat's speech at the United Nations. It was no less than a demand for the unconditional surrender of Israel and the destruction of the Jewish state. But the intransigence of the Palestine Liberation Organization and its emergence as the sole spokesman for the Arabs has, in a sense, been forged by Israel's own intransigent policy; Ambassador Joseph Tekoah's reply to Arafat was hardly a model of moderation or fairness.

I am sure there is just as much diversity in the Palestinian Arab community as there is in the Jewish community. Yet, despite advice to the contrary, Israel has stifled every attempt to allow Arabs in the West Bank and in Gaza to express themselves politically. Israel vetoed the plan for a West Bank Arab university—and that is one reason why there are not enough skilled people in the West Bank; most of them are in the Arab diaspora—for now there is a Palestinian as well as a Jewish diaspora. The Israeli government has not allowed political parties to exist in the West Bank, and so the PLO has become their political voice.

It would be wise to detach the West Bank now from Israel, to put it under international auspices for two or three years, to let the Palestinian Arabs there and in the diaspora decide for themselves which parties they prefer and what kind of state they want to establish. It must be a real state, their state, not a South African-style enclave. Restitution for Arab properties lost to Israel must be part of the settlement; this would cost much less than a new war.

As for Jerusalem, which I love deeply: I would like to see a peace plan that provided for a united Jerusalem with an Arab borough and a Jewish borough, the Arab borough as the capital of the Arab state and the Jewish borough as the capital of the Jewish state, as a symbol of reconciliation and a keystone of coexistence.

I don't know whether any of this is possible. I know there are great risks. But the risks of peace are a better gamble than the risks of war. Another war would be terrible for the Arabs and the Jews: It would bring more destruction, more bitterness, more horror, and make the task of bringing peace more difficult.

The impact of the conventional arms race is far more costly and dangerous to Israel and the Arab states than the impact of the nuclear arms race is to the great powers. The conventional arms race is impoverishing Israel, and it will bleed the American Jewish community dry. For what? One more war, and then another war? Israel can win another war, maybe two more, maybe three, as David Ben Gurion told me years ago, but it cannot survive without finding the path to reconciliation. Otherwise it will eventually be destroyed, as the Crusaders' kingdom was destroyed, after a bare century of existence. I want to see Israel live.

If we do not pursue the path of reconciliation, the Jewish people will be transformed in the span of a generation; we cannot harden our hearts against our Arab brothers and remain the kind of people we have been proud of being for 2,000 years. We will begin to turn our backs on everything we have been proud of, everything that the Bible and the Prophets stand for. It would not be the first time: every time God has given the Holy Land back to us, we have gone after strange gods. Now we are in danger of bowing down to the idols of militarism and force and *realpolitik*.

Isaiah says, "Israel shall be redeemed by justice," and for me, this time around, that means justice for the Arabs as well as for the Jews. □

THE PROGRESSIVE

## THE WAY WE SAW IT

*These excerpts from articles and editorials published during The Progressive's sixty-five year history have been edited only to achieve brevity. Unless an author's name is appended, the material appeared as editorial comment.*

### Blame for Inflation

Both parties are building their campaigns around the strategy of fastening total blame for inflation on their opponent. Which of the two parties is to blame? The answer is both.

Hobart Rowen  
September 1948

### Conflict of Colonialism

For colonialism is one of the great conflicts of our age. It will be resolved by violence, as in Indochina—violence which came perilously close to erupting into world war—or it will be resolved by discussion, debate, and negotiation, as proposed in the case of North Africa by the bloc of Asian-African nations.

November 1955

### The First Amendment

The Constitution, with its First Amendment, is not visionary and unrealistic. It is wise and prudent. . . . Freedom of belief and of expression is not hostile to security. We need not choose between them. On the contrary, freedom, as a mode of life, as a form of government, is far more efficient, far more dependable in time of danger, than any form of suppression. It is, in fact, the only governing form which, in a world of rapid social change, gives promise of permanence and stability. If we keep faith with it, nothing human can destroy it. As we lose faith in it, we are destroying it.

Alexander Meiklejohn  
June 1952

### Cloud over Africa

Much of what has gone wrong—and the worse that surely is still to come in certain areas—can be imputed to colonialism, with its sometimes brutal, and always frustrating, racist philosophy. It is quite possible that if, by some miracle of history, Africa had been swept out of its backwater and into the Twentieth Century *without* a colonial period, things would be greatly different.

Russell Warren Howe  
August 1961