

**IN THE HOLIDAY GROOVE NAT HENTOFF**

THE

# **NATION**

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## MARK BRUZONSKY INTERVIEWS ARIE ELIAV

was mistreated in America by everybody. He came to Cairo with his pants down. Nobody took him seriously in America. . . . I think he made many mistakes himself because he was new.

Q. Should we have given them the office they wanted in Washington?

A. It's not a question of the office. To my mind you should have told—via the Saudis or any other way to Arafat, not to Sartawi—should have told them, "You have to behave differently, you have to spell it out, you have to talk differently." Then maybe, just maybe, via pressure on them, they would have talked differently and then the political arena would have been different. But you didn't press them, you didn't press us. You used silk gloves.

Q. What should the United States do now vis-à-vis the PLO?

A. The tragedy is that the PLO are making their own mistake. They are caught in their own Catch 22, as we are, as our government is. All through the Palestinian national movement's history they missed their boats, they missed their planes. The Mufti said all or nothing and he got nothing. Hussein said all or nothing and got killed. Shukairy said all or nothing and he was demoted. They cannot come out of it as yet.

Q. But the PLO has offered, behind the scenes, to accept 242 with reservations on the national question, if the United States will support a Palestinian state.

A. But they're not doing what Sadat did. They didn't have a daring man, and they don't act like Sadat, who will spell it out.

Q. What do you want them to say, clearly?

A. I want them to say that for full-fledged peace they are ready and willing to recognize Israel—not its right to exist, who wants it from them—to recognize Israel, conclude a full-fledged peace, and make their state in the West Bank and Gaza somehow federated with Jordan (it's their business), and then this is the end of it, the end of the conflict, no more; this is it.

Q. When you say federated with Jordan, if they want to have their own state, passports, flags. . . .

A. It's their own business.

Q. Will Sadat make a separate peace with Israel?

A. No, I don't think he will, he can't. Let's say he won't

and there will be another war. If there will be, what will the Palestinians gain? They'll be the first lambs to be slaughtered. So if there are responsible leaders—you're making speeches to me about their ideology—but they're risking the lives of a million and a half people, the remnants of their own people.

What do I want from them? A Yariv formula, that's all. "If Israel will recognize us, we'll recognize Israel." That's all I want from them. What is it? Is it a very big sacrifice? They've got a million people under military rule. If there is another war they'll have tens of thousands of killed and hundreds of thousands of refugees.

Q. What do you think about the American Jewish community?

A. There are many closet doves, many realists. When I came I talked my head off from Boston to Los Angeles.

But you American Jews are doing yourselves a terrible harm and the Israeli hawkish stand is doing you a terrible thing. A by-product of the Israeli hawkish stand is that it's the first time in 100 years that you are facing the very grave risk of going out of the American national consensus. And it's a very grave risk that the Israeli Government is taking and American Jews. . . .

Q. You're suggesting anti-Semitism?

A. No, no. American Jews were within the limit of the national consensus during most of the Zionist enterprise over the last eighty years, until maybe a few years ago. Now we are pushing you to the edge of an abyss for no good reason. We are playing on the guilt feelings of American Jews, filling them with horrible equations that PLO are Nazis, Arafat is Hitler, the Covenant is *Mein Kampf*, the whole thing is annihilation. So if PLO are Nazis—and all Palestinians, or most, say they are PLO—then the whole syndrome in American Jews creates terrible guilt feelings. We in Israel are playing on the annihilation syndrome.

And so American Jews are saying, what the hell, we are sitting in the nice villas, the suburbs of New York or Connecticut and these people are going to be annihilated. But this is not true! We are not going to be annihilated. We are the strongest military power in the whole Middle East, and getting stronger.