



No centre of gravity

Sir: In your magazine (*July No. 45*) you write that John Richardson — newly appointed public relations director of the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA), a registered lobby — says his object “is to make it possible or necessary... for the United States to practise its political ideals in Middle East Policy”; that NAAA and the Arab-American community “have a unique opportunity to contribute to this cause”. NAAA is different from the Jewish lobby, you write, because its “political centre of gravity is here while Israel’s lobby is there”.

The message I get from both the quotation and the article in general is that organised Arab-Americans and the Arab-

American lobby define themselves *vis-a-vis* the Israeli manifestation of organised Jewry. This suggests that Arab-America has, like the aforementioned description of the Jewish lobby, no centre of gravity here either — an Arab reflection of Sartre’s “inauthentic Jew”, who, before the Jewish state, defined himself in reaction to other people. It is often said Zionists create the best Arab nationalists.

To understand their Jewish teachers thoroughly Arabs should study the Yiddish language, culture and literature (just as Jews would do well to study the same, plus Arabic). So much Jewishness is rooted in the Eastern Europe experience, the “Polish” mentality, making the Jewish soul undigestable without knowledge thereof.

Gershon Freidlin, US
