

LAWRENCE

Today

Fall 1988



Mark Bruzonsky, '69

A
look
at the
Middle East

LAWRENCE

Today

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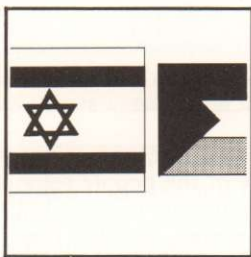
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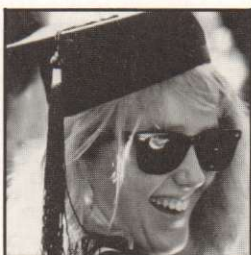
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Israel and the Palestinians

*Mark Bruzonsky, '69, takes a stand
after immersing himself in
Middle Eastern matters for the past 15 years.*

by Mark A. Bruzonsky, '69



A personal reflection

If we cannot find ways of peace and understanding, if the only way of establishing the Jewish National Home is upon the bayonets of some Empire, our whole enterprise is not worthwhile, and it is better that the Eternal People that has outlived many a mighty empire should possess its soul in patience and plan and wait. It is one of the great civilizing tasks before the Jewish people to enter the promised land, not in the Joshua way, but bringing peace and culture, hard work and sacrifice and love, and a determination to do nothing that cannot be justified before the conscience of the world.

—Judah L. Magnes, chancellor
Hebrew University in Jerusalem, 1929

In total population, New York City alone is far larger than Israel and Palestine. And in size, all of Israel and the

occupied territories—about 30,000 square kilometers—is no larger than Belgium. But in its ability to capture and hold the attention of the world, the area historically known as The Holy Land is immense. And today, it contains the potential for igniting regional, even global, conflict.

Had anyone suggested while I was attending Lawrence in the late '60s that I soon would become immersed in Middle East matters—in the Arab-Israeli conflict particularly—well, I would have had to consult a map to familiarize myself with the region. Had anyone further told me that I soon would represent the International Student Movement at the United Nations (ISMUN) and then the World Jewish Congress, and, many years later, combine my life with that of a Palestinian woman born in Jerusalem whose father had worked secretly for the PLO. . . well, such options were far beyond my vision at the time.

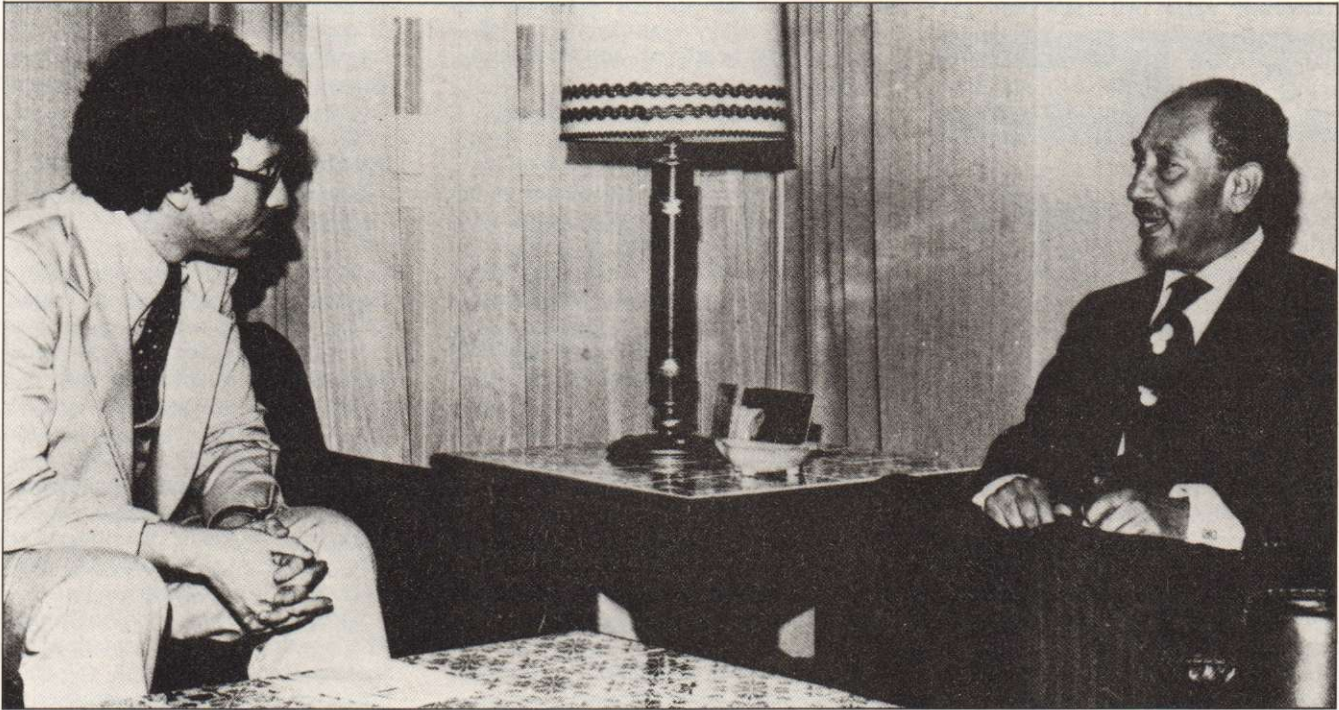
Yet, looking back, it was the broad liberal arts education obtained at Lawrence that helped prepare me for all this; and it was during a weekend visit with a Lawrence classmate's family in Connecticut that my original contact with ISMUN was made and my personal journey begun.

Graduating at the height of the Vietnam War in 1969, I had a Root-Tilden Fellowship to New York University Law School in hand and a hoped-for deferment from the draft in mind. Lawrence

President Curtis Tarr, one of my mentors and one of the people responsible for my receiving the coveted full fellowship to law school, also left that spring—to become Richard Nixon's director of the Selective Service. Deferment denied, I can still rather vividly recall sitting later that year in New York's well-known West End Bar, with my closest friend from Lawrence years, readying myself to leave for Canada, while Tarr had become the very symbol of the policies that seemed to necessitate this drastic step. Still, I often visited him at "SS" headquarters near the White House when I, the recipient of a high draft number, I went to Washington to help organize anti-war demonstrations as vice-president of Law Students Against the War. The irony escaped neither of us, of course.

Those were revolutionary times, and they planted in me a seed of unrest. The straight path from Lawrence to law school to law firm thus never transpired. I had never been out of the country and didn't even have a passport when I graduated from Lawrence; yet, five years later, I had visited 35 countries and had earned both a law degree from NYU and a master's degree in international affairs from Princeton University. I was pleasantly perplexed about what would come next.

It has been a most eventful life since then, combining journalism, the World Jewish Congress, many years as assistant to Philip Klutznick, former Secretary of Commerce and president of both the



Mark Bruzonsky with Anwar Sadat, November 14, 1977, arranging for the first telegram ever sent from the Arab world to Israel. This picture appeared on the front page of most Egyptian newspapers.

World Jewish Congress and B'nai B'rith International, and a computer and telecommunications business.

I first set foot in the Middle East, in Israel, the summer of 1971. Zionism held something of a magnetism for me at that time, a welcome and seemingly vibrant alternative to the anti-American sentiments generated by the Vietnam era. I had just spent two weeks in Vietnam renewing the People's Peace Treaty which student leaders in the United States and Vietnam had originated the previous year, and my new-found friends in the Israeli-affiliate of ISMUN were looking forward to showing me the Promised Land. They were quite pleased to have one of their own, a Jew, representing their organization at U.N. headquarters. It was Israel's heyday, the aftermath of the stunning 1967 victory which resulted in Israel's occupation of Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip, Jordan's West Bank, and Syria's Golan Heights. I returned to Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School intrigued about the area and began studying Hebrew and reading all I could find about Zionism and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The next summer, with trepidation, a fresh passport (i.e., no Israeli stamp),

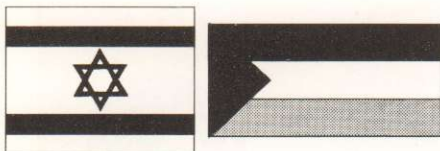
and a newly adopted, temporary religion (Unitarianism), I visited Cairo. Because I was going to spend the summer at ISMUN's office in Nairobi, Kenya, I was asked to stop in Egypt to try to enlist the General Union of Egyptian Students into our organization. As it turned out, a short time before I arrived, Egyptian students had marched through the streets demonstrating for war with Israel. Plans made and ticket in hand, I was too much of a coward to back out, too worried about what ISMUN officials would think if I did.

Pictures of Sadat, Quaddafi, and Assad were everywhere. Russians were about—Americans were not. I didn't know anyone of my background who had dared visit the "enemy," and, for the first time in my life, I was happy to have my religious identity and prior travel history concealed.

Looking back today, that visit to Egypt was an experience that proved to be immensely important. It began the process of shattering the stereotypes that my limited background had ingrained in me. Ten years after that initial visit to Egypt, I had been the guest of most governments in the area—including Saudi Arabia, Libya, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)—and written for many leading Arab publications in these countries, including a few years as Washington

correspondent for *The Saudi Gazette* and interview editor for the London-based *Middle East Magazine*. I had come to know "the other side" as I never would have imagined possible.

Now a decade and a half later, after repeated visits to the region, meetings with many of its key leaders and intellectuals, many days of lengthy political discussions, and the making of many friendships, everything is quite different than it had seemed in the summer of 1972. I'm now unable to escape what I term the "emotional quicksand" of the Middle East. Its people, food, history, and pain have become my own. My future children, it now seems, will share its rich heritage and its many problems. And, to be sadly realistic, if there is not a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, these children, if they learn what I have learned, may find themselves bitterly opposed to both the small country of my religious heritage, as well as the great, but misguided, country of which they will be citizens.



Origins of conflict

Independent Arab and Jewish States and the Special International Regime for the City of Jerusalem. . . shall come into existence in Palestine two months after the evacuation of the armed forces of the mandatory Power has been completed but in any case not later than 1 October 1948.

—U.N. General Assembly
Resolution 181 (II)
Concerning the Future Government
of Palestine, 20 November 1947

The origins of today's Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be extricated from the early decades of this century, the 1920s and '30s. At that time, most people understood that there were two national existences at issue: that of the emigrant Jews and that of the Arabs who lived in Palestine when the British took control in 1917 and encouraged Jewish immigration to it—the Palestinian Arabs. But when the Arabs were defeated in the 1948 "War of Independence," the conflict was transformed, at least for most Western observers, into one between Israel and its neighboring

Arab states. The Palestinians were left demoralized, scattered, and without a voice.

Political Zionism, greatly aided by sympathies stemming from the horrors of Hitler's Holocaust and Western colonial attitudes, had triumphed in a larger part of Palestine than specified under the 1947 partition plan. Essentially, delayed civil war had erupted in Palestine after World War II and has flared up repeatedly ever since.

An uneasy diplomatic accommodation brought a shaky armistice in 1949. Through complex and secret negotiations with the Jews, the Hashemite throne—then in control of the area east of the Jordan River—annexed what was to become known as the West Bank; and Egypt found itself in control of what was to be called the Gaza Strip, an area already teeming with camps of destitute refugees who had fled their villages in Palestine.

During the 1950s, under the leadership of Gamal Abdel Nasser, Egypt showed signs of wanting to strike a deal with Israel, as long as a reasonable arrangement could be found for the Palestinian people. At that time, a deal, even one without Palestinian participation or consent, might have taken root. But Israel was unwilling, as it remains today, to accept Palestinian nationalism as a legitimate political force.

Then, when Israeli/French/British troops attacked Egypt in 1956, Egypt's interest in negotiation came to an abrupt end. The civil war in what was now Israel was subsumed, for a time, into the larger context of a poetic, but

delusive, Pan-Arabism, and the notion of compromise between two national movements was replaced by a seemingly zero-sum outlook allowing for only one victor. Both Jews and Palestinians now feared more than they dreamed.

For the Jews, there were recurring nightmares of a repetition of the Nazi era, as well as aspirations for more territory. Yet there also was Judah Magnes's moral admonition, a kind of open psychological wound gnawing at Zionism's roots. For the Arab states, there was the humiliation born of the existence of a sovereign Jewish state that had humbled and alienated them. And for the Palestinian refugees—displaced and numbed by the loss of their homes—there was the expected "Return" for which they longed and to which they have continued to cling in an expectation of eventual justice.

With U.N. Security Council resolution 242, coming in the aftermath of the Six-Day War in June 1967, the Palestinian national question remained submerged, while the inter-state aspects of the struggle climaxed. Leaderless, the Palestinians were left hoping that the Arab world would somehow, someday, redeem Palestine for them.

The Palestinian Liberation Organization, formed a few years before in 1964, was soon to give the Palestinians an authentic voice. It was Nasser's Egypt that first breathed life into the PLO, and, a decade later, it was Egypt's Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy, at the 1974 Rabat summit, who proposed the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people."



Mark Bruzonsky and Muna Hamzeh at dinner with Yasir Arafat and the leadership of the PLO at Kubba Palace near Cairo in November 1985. Mark and Muna, a Palestinian, were married in August 1988.

Nevertheless, the PLO and Palestinian nationalism have always been highly suspect by the conservative and dictatorial Arab regimes, themselves desperately clinging to power and privilege with decreasing legitimacy, and thus, through various methods of repression and co-optation. Then, as now, Jordan and other Arab states stood in fearful opposition to a truly independent Palestinian movement and did what they could to force the movement under their wings. The PLO, first a symbol of the Palestinian struggle against Israel and later of the Palestinian quest for self-determination in part of Palestine, became a useful political football in the ongoing inter-Arab struggle for dominance. Except for reminding the world of the injustice done them—though rarely with a clearly articulated means of redress—the PLO was never a serious military or even terrorist threat to Israel. Rather, the PLO became the embodiment of an historic wrong, a moral weight threatening Zionism's ethical foundations, a unique claimant on world society that had midwived Israel's birth in partial atonement for the Nazi slaughter.

Spurred by the despair resulting from the Arab defeat in 1967, the PLO gradually began to consider the possibility of a truncated Palestinian state in part of historic Palestine. By the mid-1970s, in the aftermath of the October 1973 War, an ambiguous movement for mutual recognition of both Israel's and the Palestinian's national rights finally emerged. When Yasir Arafat appeared before the U.N. General Assembly in the fall of 1974, he did so as a protégé of world society and was accorded the stature of a head of state. Carrying both gun and olive branch, he symbolized the Third World's quest for dignity, assertiveness, and justice. Even the Israeli establishment—still shocked by the October 1973 War—took note and openly began contemplating the possibility of attempting to reach a compromise with the Palestinian nationalists.

But this period of hope soon degenerated, due in part to misguided American involvements brought on by the extremely powerful Israeli/Jewish lobby. Virulent opposition to Palestinian nationalism, and thus to the PLO, increasingly became Israel's course—an approach considerably strengthened with the right-wing Likud Party's unexpected ascent to power in 1977.

The basic issue then, as now, was not the PLO as such, nor terrorism, for that matter. Rather, Israel had to decide whether to reopen the historical debate

over partition. And the answer in recent years has always been "no," even though some factions of Israel's liberal Labor party continue to masquerade as if they are in favor of a partition the Palestinians could possibly accept.

For the Arab states, meanwhile, behind-the-scenes intrigue continued with constant maneuvering to make sure that neither Palestinian secularism nor democracy took root without Arab establishment control. For if either of these potent forces were actually unleashed in a free Palestine, what could the kings and rulers of Arabdom expect in their own realms?

King Hussein has hardly forgotten the lessons of his own civil war; nor is he about to share power honestly with a truly independent PLO. Police-state monarchies and enthusiastic populism mix like oil and water. Consequently, public rhetoric aside and with Israel's continuing acquiescence, Hussein has tried to control the West Bank while very carefully circumscribing Palestinian activity within his own kingdom.

Even the King's latest step—his speech renouncing Jordan's role in the West Bank—is but another calculated move in the ongoing tension between Palestine nationalism and the Hashemite throne. With a growing majority of Jordan's population of Palestinian origin and a long history of Hashemite collusion with Israel to put down Palestinian aspirations, the Kingdom of Jordan and the Palestinians remain on a collision course.

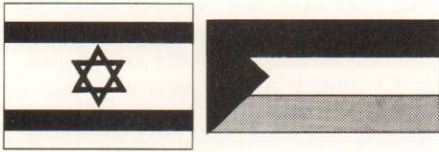
Even today, much of the Arab world continues to react in a schizophrenic manner to Palestinian nationalism: while publicly supporting the Palestinians' struggle with Israel, it makes strenuous efforts to control and "moderate" the PLO and to put out the flames of a true Palestinian revolution. For an Arab world stuck in a pre-democratic phase of evolution, Palestinian nationalism threatens to become an uncontrollable political infectant and thus has to be co-opted if possible, contained if not—a reality that explains why the Palestinians stood alone against the full might of Israel when Lebanon was invaded in the summer of 1982.

By the early 1980s, Arafat's leadership of the Palestinians represented an uneasy compromise for the Arab establishment. The Palestinian revolution had in many ways been tamed, reduced to a movement begging for a small piece, any piece, of historic Palestine. The PLO's leaders had been nurtured into the prevailing Arab state system and accepted their place within the confines of existing Arab power.

The PLO itself had come to reflect the contemporary Arab state system—one symbolized largely by the ceremonial and impotent Arab League of which the PLO had become a constituent member. In turn, such developments led the PLO to incompetent representation, nepotism, corruption, and a kind of cult worship of the leader—sins similar to those rampant throughout the region. Such a PLO was fit to take its place at the negotiating table and in the corridors of Arab power, but it was no longer fit to actually fight for Palestine.

But the bloody Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 in a sense saved the Palestinians from this fate. Once again they were defeated, uprooted, scattered, but not destroyed as Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon had planned. The Israelis made desperate attempts to kill Arafat and the PLO's senior leadership at that time, but the PLO proved itself extraordinarily capable—at least at protecting its leadership. An attempt was made again a few years later when the PLO headquarters outside of Tunis were bombed, but again Arafat escaped.

And then, just last December, the Palestinian struggle was spontaneously resurrected through a mass uprising so unexpected that it dominated headlines and so all-pervasive that it has continued straight throughout 1988. After Israel's weakness and confusion in being pushed out of southern Lebanon, and after so many years of world apathy and Arab rhetoric, the women and children of Palestine decided that they had endured enough. They then discovered within themselves a power that is transforming the struggle in ways yet to be foreseen.



The Intifadab— The Uprising

*The Children of Stones
They dazzled the world. . .
With nothing in their hands but
stones. . .
They illuminated like
lanterns. . . and came as good
tidings,
They resisted. . . they exploded. . .
and won martyrdom. . .
We remained polar bears. . .
Whose bodies were insulated
against heat. . .
They fought for us. . . until they
were killed. . .
While we sat in our coffee-
houses. . .
Like the spittle of an oyster.
One of us is seeking an
apartment. . .
Another one is seeking a new
billion. . .
and a fourth marriage. . .
and well-shaped breasts polished
by civilization. . .
Yet another one in London is look-
ing for a lofty place. . .
One is an arms-broker. . .
One is looking for thrill in the
bars
One is looking for a throne. . .
an army. . . an Emirate.
Oh, Generation of treachery. . .
Generation of brokerage. . .
Generation of refuse. . .
Generation of prostitution
You will be swayed (However late
history might be),
by the Children of Stones.*

—By Nizar Qubbani
December 18, 1987

Not since Israel's creation, not since 1936, has there been such a widespread, uncontrollable revolt by the Palestinian masses against their situation. The Palestinian cause seemed lost and overwhelmed to many until the *intifadab*, the Uprising, began on December 8, 1987.

In the years preceding World War II, the Palestinians rose up against the British. The rebellion took the form of a multi-year nationwide strike and was broken only by the coming of the war in Europe and the Jewish flight from Nazism. Today's revolt is against the Israelis and their American benefactors. It takes the form of a spreading civil insurrection and is proving far more difficult to contain than anyone predicted, including the Palestinians themselves.

Fifty years ago, the Palestinians sought to halt the British-sponsored immigration of Jews to Palestine, a prescient demand propelled by the growing fear that the Zionists would deprive them of their own country by declaring it a Jewish state. Today, they seek to stop the expansion of that Jewish state throughout Palestine and to end the 22-year-old occupation of a million and a half Palestinians. The Palestinians sense that only by violently asserting themselves might they be able to resurrect their cause. And in just a few months, the *intifadab* has indeed transformed the political landscape—so much so that it is already difficult to recall that the occupation commanded

very little attention prior to last December.

The most basic change of all is in the long-held Israeli conviction that Palestinian nationalism can be stamped out and forgotten. Golda Meir's famous 1969 comment, "There is no such thing as a Palestinian people," today seems strangely myopic.

The *intifadab* also has unmasked the Israeli hope that Zionism could evolve without having to face the racial contradictions imposed on it by history and demography. The Palestinian predicament, one of the basic unresolved issues on the world agenda throughout most of this century, has matured since Camp David into a much more virulent and uncontrolled form of political cancer—and the prognosis without radical political surgery is not a pleasant one.

There are those, of course, who continue to insist that only repressive treatment is possible, for there is no known cure at this historical moment. For these persons—the leaders of Israel foremost among them—force and unyielding repression are the treatments prescribed. They are employing ever-increasing amounts of teargas, beatings, infiltration, and intimidation, even though many experts are warning that the revolt is actually being enhanced by these tactics.

There are others who think that swift creation of a separate political entity, The State of Palestine, in the areas now known as the West Bank and Gaza Strip, can bring the turmoil to a quick end. This step, they insist, will prove to be the long-sought cure leading to



Palestinian youths throw stones at unseen Israeli soldiers in the occupied West Bank town of Ramallah following the firebombing of a workers' passenger bus in March 1988.

peace and harmony between Arabs and Jews in the historic homeland of both.

But after nearly 100 visits to the region during the past 15 years, including a few days last December living with Palestinian refugees in one of the camps near Bethlehem, I have come to the conclusion that there is no nice and neat solution. The Israeli-Palestinian feud has become deeply embedded and in need of major psychological, as well as political, reevaluation by everyone involved, including the superpower with the greatest responsibility for today's quagmire and the greatest stake in its resolution.

Jews and Arabs live more separate and isolated lives today than they did in the 1930s. Then, talk of a bi-national pluralistic state shared by the two ethnic groups—a Middle East variant of Switzerland if you will—was not only acceptable but was publicly championed by major figures, including the Chancellor of Hebrew University Judah Magnes, the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, and the respected Arab mayor of Haifa, Hassan Shukri. Neither Jew nor Arab was so demonized, or feared, by the other.

But half a century of conflict and six outbreaks of international warfare later, the separation between Arabs and Jews is severe, as is the tension between Palestinian nationalism and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

In historic Palestine itself, an entire generation now has come of age with the mentality of conqueror and oppressed. The cultural and psychological divisions among all parties are far more pronounced today. Few Arabs or Jews have real friends on the other side anymore. Few Arabs or Jews ever cross over, except in uniform or as subservient laborers. Though they are within commuting distances from the major Israeli cities, the world of the camps is completely unknown and deeply threatening to the Israelis. And the life of the Jews is impenetrably different for Arabs, who are required by law to depart from Jewish areas by sundown.

Yet, after 21 years of Israeli occupation and colonization, the whole territory of historic Palestine has become interconnected as never before—its roads, its economy, its problems. These linkages can no longer be neatly severed by dividing a small land into two competing, antagonistic, totally separate entities feeding on each other's failures. A political solution more harmonious is now required, a blending of visions and aspirations, a bending of tribal and nationalistic impulses. And

politicians alone drawing lines on maps, trading one area for another, won't bring about that harmony, as history has proven so many times before.

Whatever happens in the coming months, the current revolt of the Palestinians has brought both the Israelis and the Arabs of Palestine to another historic moment of decision. Unless both sides soon find the political wisdom to turn toward each other, they are likely to grow still further apart, away from the notion of compromise and toward aspirations of revenge and eventual triumph.

For the Jews, expulsion of many Palestinians is now a quietly whispered reaction to the fear of being swamped by the exploding Arab birthrate and the escalating violence of mass uprising. For the Palestinians, the failure of "moderate" approaches, international diplomacy, and reliance on the Arab states has led to interest in the more uncompromising approaches of violent protest—Marxist or "Islamic" approaches—and to rekindled dreams that eventually the Jews (with their American backers)—like the Romans, the Crusaders, the Ottomans, and the British before them—will depart and all of Palestine will be theirs once more.

The United States has the political and economic leverage to bring the protagonists together. Yet, for decades now, the U.S. has lacked both the understand-

ing and vision to even attempt this task. Moreover, the U.S. political scene has evolved in such a way that severe penalties are brought against those who stray into the area of peacemaking against Israeli designs. Though weakened by the ongoing severe deterioration of Israel's image, the Jewish lobby remains an extremely potent force in the U.S. capital, a force stifling the requisite rethinking and exacting a harsh price from those who try.

And so the stalemate prevails, the cancer expands, the world watches daily in angered impotence. But even these realities do not sufficiently express the serious dangers. There now are hundreds of battlefield nuclear weapons on one side and a growing array of ballistic missiles tipped with chemical and biological warheads on the other. This is the true realpolitik situation within which the Israelis and the Americans, on one side, and much of the Arab and Muslim world, sometimes with Soviet help, on the other side, prepare for tomorrow's renewed battle.

Israel, emerging from the rubble of devastated Europe, was to be a safe haven for Jewish survivors, a place for Jewish rebirth. Instead, it has become a country in racial and religious turmoil that is increasingly compared to South Africa, a land many Jews believe to be betraying Jewish values and history, a



Israeli soldiers lob a tear gas grenade and fire tear gas in the direction of unseen Palestinian protesters in the Jelazoun Refugee Camp in the occupied West Bank in May 1988.

place where Jews now face weapons capable of inflicting another holocaust.

Palestine, so the Arabs dreamed earlier this century, was to be a land in which one of the most sophisticated of the Arab peoples could finally assert its right to independence. Instead, it has become a destitute area of refugee camps, underdevelopment, and growing radicalism, a land where the people are employed in subservient and menial jobs by their occupiers—a land in which the rise of fundamentalism and radicalism now threatens the cultural heritage of a proud people.

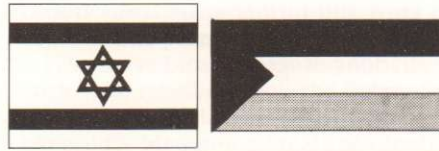
The obscured historical truth is that Palestine and Israel are indeed one and the same by another name. A true political settlement at this moment in history will have to devise a way to integrate both people's national aspirations for identity, equality, and protection within the geographical and economical realities under which they exist. A way to live together, not apart, is what is required—and this necessitates political imagination, ideological flexibility, cultural understanding, and moral courage.

Bold new leadership on all sides will have to come forward if the march toward further separation and eventual mutual destruction is to be overcome. Sadly, there are few visible signs in the region of such leadership or such political imagination. And American



Jawdat Man'aa and his three daughters. Lena, the youngest, is on the right.

diplomacy remains roadblocked by a combination of domestic political pressures and stubborn refusal to rethink today's predicament. As a consequence, the stones and the guns and the dangers of genocidal warfare are likely to continue as the divisions in the Middle East take on new forms and even greater dangers.



Emotional quicksand

"They are like grasshoppers compared to us."

—Israeli Prime Minister Yitchak Shamir
2 April 1988

(Late December 1987)

She wasn't a grasshopper to me—or a drugged cockroach in a bottle, as former Israeli Army Chief of Staff Eitan described the Arabs under his control a few years ago. She was a darling little girl; and it was kind of love at first sight for both of us, I think.

For the past few days, I'd been staying in a nearby refugee camp. Now Lena's father wanted me to spend my last evening with his family in Bethlehem, a few miles away. Stimulated, but depressed by what I'd been experiencing behind the barbed wire of the camp, I wasn't sure if I was ready to leave the numbing cold and foodless environment that was, in a strange way, so exhilarating.

My friend had been born in a tent a few years after I was born in Duluth, Minnesota. I was free, as an American Jew, to go where I wished throughout Israel, the Middle East, the world; he had no country, no passport, no freedom. He had moved out of the camp a few years ago, though he returned nearly every day. I had been staying with his mother and relatives; now it was time to meet his wife and children.

Lena's eyes and mine caught each other's right away. I had my video camera with me, and my friend told his family that I was a journalist from America. Lena had unbounded enthusiasm. She sang, danced, talked non-stop with me as her father translated. If I turned off the video camera and the little flickering red light went pale, she would playfully come up to me, alternately smiling and screaming, until I

turned it back on. She controlled everyone in the room. At three years old, she was in charge.

The subject of politics was unavoidable, of course. Many of the songs Lena sang with such enthusiasm reflected the growing Palestinian national consciousness in both words and spirit. Playfully, and knowing I had come to try to understand things as they seemed to the Palestinians, her father asked Lena if she liked the Jews.

She was stunned.
"Of course not!" she loudly and spontaneously responded.

"Why not?" her father replied.
This question sent her running around, rattling off all the reasons.

"They beat us, they put my grandfather and my father in prison, they shoot us, they stole our country, they... they... they." When she finished her own list, she was off to her mother for more reasons why.

"Have you ever met a Jew?"
"Yes," she quickly responded. "I see them far away with their guns and they shoot at us."

"But Mark is a Jew, a Jew from America."

She froze... pondering... thinking, it seemed, that maybe she had misunderstood.

"No, no, he's not a Jew, he's one of us," she said, smiling at me.

"No, Lena. Mark's a Jew, a good Jew, a Jew from America. He's a friend of our people."

Now Lena realized that she had not misunderstood at all. A mere child, she seemed to go through a kind of political/cultural shock that I never faced until I was an adult. But I knew that maturity comes quickly for the Palestinians under occupation. The shock confused her, quieted her for the first time since we met an hour ago. Her father assured her again that I was a "good Jew."

Lena looked around the living room at everyone waiting for her next move. So much of the drama of human conflict compressed into the emotions of this young, adorable, irrepressible child. I had met other remarkably attractive children in the camps the past few days. Now Lena came to embody all of them, so innocently exhibiting the gulf of hatred, suspicion, and fear that has come to exist between the two Semitic peoples, even though just half an hour down the road, in Hebron, they both pray at the tomb of their common ancestor Abraham.

After an extended pause, Lena decided her course of action. She came up to me quite determined, facing me down with her eyes. Then she slapped

me on the knee, forcefully proclaiming, "Turn off your camera! I've said everything I have to say to you! Now you should leave!" and she pointed to the door. I sat quietly, fighting back tears.

For a few moments, we all just sat without speaking. Even the other three young children were still. The conflict all around us was now touching us at the most basic human level.

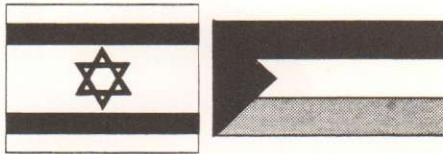
Her father intervened again, asking Lena to come to him and then repeating carefully to her that "Mark is a good Jew." But for Lena, those two words just didn't fit together.

The rest of the evening was pleasant enough. Lena and I soon were again playing with each other, even as the Jordanian TV news detailed that day's killings and demonstrations. A short while later, her father asked her if she still liked me. She thought about it, then smiled and said, "Yes, I still like him, but only if he stops being Jewish." We all tried to smile.

But things were never quite the same. There was still the liveliness and spark in Lena, but now there also was suspicion and doubt and confusion. The situation made me think back to when Muna and I first met. We felt we had to live rather secretly in Washington from our families and friends for nearly half a year. Then, when Muna's mother learned of our relationship, she would cry at the mention of my name, unwilling to talk about me or meet me. We even feared at crucial moments, and sometimes when dreaming, that the other was an agent and that we were being groomed for some special purpose. . . sort of like in the novel *Little Drummer Girl*.

The next morning, Lena was smiling again. As I prepared to leave, she asked her father, "Can't he stay another night?"

It was a little breakthrough—one the adults so badly need to emulate. □



Suggested Reading List

The Arab Awakening: The Story of The Arab National Movement by George Antonius (originally published by Pantheon in 1938); a classic of great historical importance now again available in paperback.

The Lobby: Jewish Political Power and American Foreign Policy by Edward Tivnan (Simon and Schuster, 1987) and *They Dare To Speak Out: People and Institutions Confront Israel's Lobby* by former Congressman Paul Findley (Lawrence Hill, 1985); two provocative books looking at the excessive influence of the Jewish lobby over American foreign policy.

The Question of Palestine by Edward Said (New York Times Book, 1979) and *Soul In Exile* by Fawaz Turki (Monthly Review Press, 1988); two highly informative and well-written books by important Palestinian authors living in the United States.

The Birth of Israel: Myths and Realities by Simha Flapan (Pantheon Books, 1987) and *The Israeli Connection: Who Israel Arms and Why* by Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi (Pantheon Books, 1987); two revealing books that together make it considerably easier to understand Israeli foreign policy and why so many Israelis themselves are deeply concerned.

Taking Sides: America's Secret Relations with a Militant Israel by Stephen Green (William Morrow, 1984) and *Living By The Sword* by Stephen Green (Amana Books, 1988); two very important books of historical investigative journalism uncovering much detail about Israel's policies and the U.S.-Israeli alliance.

Arafat: Terrorist or Peacemaker? by Alan Hart (Sidgwick & Jackson, 1984); an important, even if somewhat overromanticized, corrective written by a well-known British journalist that puts the PLO and its leader into perspective, especially for American readers.

The Yellow Wind by David Grossman (Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1988); a tearful, hard-to-put-down tale of what is happening today between Arab and Jew in the Holy Land.

Collusion Across The Jordan: King Abdullab, The Zionist Movement, and The Partition of Palestine by Avi Shlaim (Columbia University Press, 1988); a book explaining the origins and roots of today's conflict.

Israel's Fateful Decisions (tentative title) by Yehoshofat Harkabi, former Israeli director of military intelligence (Harper & Row, November 1988).



After graduating from Lawrence in 1969, Mark Bruzonsky was a Root-Tilden Scholar at New York University Law School (J.D. 1974) and also received a master's degree in international affairs from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School. For eight years, he was associate editor of Worldview Magazine; from 1977 through 1984, he was the Washington associate of the World Jewish Congress; and, from 1976 through 1985, he was special assistant to Philip Klutznick. He has been a consultant on Middle East affairs in Washington for Congressional Quarterly, the National Geographic Society, and the Smithsonian's Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, which last year published his latest edited book, *Security in the Middle East: Regional Change and Great Power Strategies* (Wilson Center/Westview, 1987). His articles and interviews have appeared in numerous publications in the U.S., Europe, Israel, and the Arab Middle East. Earlier this year, he founded *The Jewish Committee on the Middle East*, JCOME, already comprising nearly 1,000 American Jews, including professors at nearly 100 universities, works to stimulate new U.S. policies in the Middle East that, according to Bruzonsky, are consistent with the American commitment to democracy and self-determination.