

The Americanization of "Peace Now"

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Breira, a Jewish organization that rose to brief prominence in 1977 and collapsed the following year, left behind a constituency in search of a new organizational focus. That constituency was concentrated in an identifiable segment of American Jewry: Conservative and Reform rabbis, university-based intellectuals, employees of the Jewish communal organizations (including some editors of Jewish magazines), and members of the Jewish "counter-culture" — a group that might be superficially characterized as one more likely to read *Moment* than *Midstream*, *Present Tense* than *Commentary*. Breira had called for greater independence of Diaspora Jewry from Israel and for a solution to the Arab-Israel conflict through creation of a Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. The organization's demise was the result not of dissatisfaction with its program on the part of members but of mounting questions concerning the motivation of its organizers, a number of whom had a record of hostile activity toward Israel.

Breira fell then because of the problem of legitimacy; if that problem were to be solved its constituency could regroup, even expand. Breira's origins went back to 1973, when Israel had a Labor government. With the replacement of Labor by the Likud, a movement of dissent from Israeli government policy could also draw upon those American Jews who had political and ideological ties to parties that were part of the Labor Alignment in Israel.

The problem of legitimacy has been solved with the appearance of the Peace Now movement in Israel. Israelis, for whom the policies of their government are a matter of life and death, cannot be accused of seeking the destruction of their state. American Jews who identified with Peace Now would then not be subject to the criticism that they were being manipulated by enemies of Israel seeking to undermine Jewish — and ultimately American — support for the state.

But before examining the American Jewish interaction with Peace Now, and the question of whether Peace Now has in fact solved the problems raised by Breira, it is necessary to take a look at the Peace Now movement in Israel and the reason it has been able to mobilize much greater strength than any

previous Israeli peace movement. We must also examine what led Peace Now in 1979 to launch a campaign to mobilize support in the United States.

The immediate origin of Peace Now was in a letter addressed by 350 Israelis to Prime Minister Begin on March 7, 1978. The letter posited a choice between peace and territory: "a government that prefers the existence of settlements beyond the Green Line to the liquidation of the historical conflict and the establishment of a system of normal relations in our region will awaken in us questions concerning the justice of our way." The letter continued by asserting that rule over a million Arabs would damage the Jewish democratic character of the state and suggested that this would impede identification of the signatories with the state. The letter concluded by urging Prime Minister Begin to "choose the way of peace and strengthen our faith in the justice of our course."

Much of the impact of the letter came from the manner in which the signatories identified themselves. All were officers in the reserves, the preponderant ranks being lieutenant and captain. They were representatives of the dedicated officer corps that was the key to the fighting spirit of the army and that took the heaviest losses in Israel's wars. Most press accounts focused on the most distinguished reserve officers among the signatories (one, Yuval Neriya, had won Israel's highest award for valor), treating the letter as the product of their initiative.

Actually the letter's history was more complicated. It grew from the cooperation of two groups: the older, Movement for a Different Zionism, had been formed to oppose settlements on the West Bank and was based in Jerusalem; the second was based in Tel Aviv. As their first joint effort the two groups planned a whole series of mass signed letters to the Prime Minister from reserve army officers, from mothers of children near draft age, from immigrants from English-speaking countries, etc. The officers' letter received the requisite number of signatures first. The draft of the letter was shown to several Left-wing political figures on whose advice the text was toned down. For tactical reasons the officers' letter was released in such a way as to make it

appear that it had no connection to any existing group.'

But if the letter was not quite as spontaneous as the public believed it to be, it clearly evoked a broad and spontaneous response once it was published in the form of an ad, with telephone numbers included. The first mass meeting on April 1, 1978, at Tel Aviv's City Hall Square drew 30,000 people. From then on the movement was known as Peace Now, the name coming from "Peace Now" stickers the Tel Aviv group had ordered from a local artist.

There had been no lack of earlier groups with perspectives similar to that of Peace Now: such groups went back, indeed, to the pre-state period when Brit Shalom was founded by some of the foremost intellectual figures of the Yishuv. In the mid-1950s, the magazine *New Outlook* was founded. Most of its founders had roots in the Hashomer Hazair and the left-wing of Mapam, though a few came from the Liberal Party (now part of the Likud). The magazine's emphasis was on the need to make peace through Israeli concessions. The 1967 War produced a whole series of peace groups, most of which linked themselves to the umbrella Movement for Peace and Security. The major slogan of Peace Now, *Tov Shalom mi-Eretz Yisrael Hashlema* (Peace is better than an undivided land of Israel), had been the slogan of the Movement for Peace and Security. No group before Peace Now, however, had been able to attract an audience beyond a narrow band of academics, far Leftists, literary and artistic figures, and some students.

What gave Peace Now its momentum was the sequence of three events: the Yom Kippur War, the victory of the Likud, and the Jerusalem visit of Egypt's President Anwar Sadat.

The Yom Kippur War, the first since 1948 in which victory was not swift, unambiguous, and relatively small in cost to life, had had a profoundly demoralizing effect. The officers corps was especially hard hit and many of those who were to sign the officers' letter had received automatic promotion because of the devastation in the lower commissioned ranks. Shevach Weiss, a professor in sympathy with the movement, described a Peace Now demonstration: "I saw at this one-time gathering the heroes, the victims, the wounded, and the disabled of the next war. Here were gathered the mourning parents, the young widows, and the orphans of the next round." As Peace Now's Orly Lubin put it, "Many of those in the movement are in it out of pure fright of another war."

The victory of the Likud was important because Begin's traditional emphasis on Israel's right to Judea and Samaria made part of the public fear that "mystical conceptions" rather than security needs would determine government policy.

But most important, of course, was Sadat's visit, which for the first time gave a large number of Israelis the sense that peace was possible. When that surge of hope was dampened after Sadat abruptly broke off the politi-

cal committee talks in Jerusalem in February, 1978, many people felt, in Orly Lubin's words, "like a child whose toy has just been snatched away."²

The new movement was able to collect 200,000 signatures within three months. Its activities were marked by an imagination unusual on the Israeli protest scene. A few weeks after the Tel Aviv rally, Peace Now members strung themselves along a 15-mile stretch of highway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, passing out bumper stickers and holding up signs, many of them in English and French for the benefit of the foreign press.

The summer of 1978 was a high point of activity. On a Saturday that Peace Now dubbed *Shabbat Shalom*, they set up stands on major cross-roads from Dan to Beersheba and sold bumper stickers and T-shirts with the familiar slogan "Better Peace than *Eretz Yisrael Hashlema*." Early in August, the movement conducted a blitz poster campaign covering billboards to protest the imminent establishment of five new settlements (planned under the Labor government) in the Jordan Valley. Three days later Peace Now hit the headlines once more with a clever coup. Members had managed to erect a monument to peace at the Gush Emunim settlement at Shiloh. The settlers had been fooled into thinking a concrete slab placed at the settlement 10 days earlier by Peace Now members was the foundation for a communications antenna and had actually watered the concrete daily to make sure it would harden properly. On the appointed day a crane bore a several ton monument by Yigal Tumarkin, an abstract representation of a dove-cote in clay and steel. At the ceremony Peace Now speakers voiced the hope that the monument and not the settlement would remain.

On September 2, 1978, just before the Israeli delegation left for Camp David, Peace Now mounted a rally that brought 80,000 people to City Hall Square in Tel Aviv. After Camp David, where Begin manifested precisely the sort of flexibility demanded by Peace Now, the movement fell temporarily silent.

The movement revived under the impact of the Cabinet's decision in January, 1979, to permit a new settlement by Gush Emunim near Nablus. Peace Now protested by creating a miniature settlement, complete with bulldozer, barbed wire, and tents in front of the Prime Minister's residence in Jerusalem. It also demonstrated at the site, blocking off access roads to the settlement with boulders until Defense Minister Ezer Weizman, whom the movement saw as a sympathetic figure, persuaded them to transfer their protest to Jerusalem. Peace Now continued to demonstrate its originality — and ability to capture headlines — with a motorcade to Hebron early in May, 1979. Peace Now members planted vines in a rocky field to symbolize their protest against Israeli settlers at Kiryat Arba who had earlier destroyed vines in expanding their settlement. (Peace Now was less than happy when the press reported that on May 14 an Arab group had torn up

their symbolic offering on the grounds that nothing planted by Jewish hands should be allowed to stand.)

The sociological characteristics of Peace Now supporters have been described by a number of observers. They are young, chiefly between 25 and 35, Ashkenazic, university-educated, and come from the major cities and kibbutzim. They are primarily professionals, government bureaucrats, teachers, and farmers. Most voted for the Democratic Movement for Change or for Labor in the last elections. A *New York Times* photo of one of the early demonstrations revealed two lovely young women, one holding a baby and one with a baby on her back. Given the desire of *The Times* to foster images of peace in the Middle East (it printed a photo of Arafat kissing a baby), the selection was no doubt a careful one. Nonetheless, there is a general impression that these are Israel's beautiful people, handsome, appealing, articulate.

There is another element in Peace Now in uneasy coexistence with the more familiar one — the extreme political Left. They see in the movement the long-sought lever for radical change.

Peace Now's ability to define what it wants is influenced by the diffuse character of its support. There are many in the movement, both in the Left-wing old-timer segment and within the youthful organizing sector, prepared to state that they want a return to the pre-1967 borders and the establishment of a Palestinian state. But the movement cannot come out with such a program. Its strength is in the numbers it can mobilize to march, to sign postcards, to wear T-shirts, to put bumper stickers on their cars. What binds the marchers and T-shirt wearers together is not a belief in any one set of boundaries or security arrangements or even a faith that the Arab-Israel conflict is soluble. What makes Peace Now a mass movement is the conviction that Israel must prove to herself as well as to the world that no stone has been left unturned in the search for peace. The marchers for Peace Now want to go to the next war, if a next war there must be, with a clear conscience.

Peace Now's solution has been to define what it does not want rather than what it wants. It does not want to dominate Arabs; it does not want to establish settlements while there are negotiations; above all it does not want to forfeit peace because of the "mysticism" of the Prime Minister.

A good way of seeing the fine line Peace Now treads is to examine its reaction to another letter sent to the Prime Minister, this one by 100 soldiers in the reserves in August, 1978. The signatories to this letter asserted that since the government's policy was "erroneous, misguided, and fraudulent" they would refuse to defend or guard Israeli settlements in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. Peace Now quickly dissociated itself from the letter.³ The signers of the second letter were upset;

they asserted that they had attempted to further the movement. And indeed a comparison of the two letters shows that those who signed the second had put their finger on the weakness of the first. Those who signed the first letter stated in three separate ways that continuation of the government's policy would sap their **faith** in the justice of the cause for which they are asked to fight. Those who signed the second letter made the logical inference that if you do not have faith in the justice of what you are called upon to do, you should not do it. They did not say they would refuse to fight in another war but that they refused to guard settlements beyond the Green Line, the settlements that had been explicitly attacked in the first letter.

The disapproval of those who signed the first letter was no doubt genuine. Many who signed may have seen themselves as giving a quasi-technical opinion that the fighting capacity of the army could be affected by concern for issues that should not have to cross the minds of Israel's soldiers. They did not intend to suggest that they would disobey orders because of political disagreements. The army, and indeed the nation, had so long been nourished on the notion that politics had no place in the Israel Defense Forces that even when they used their reserve ranks in a letter casting doubt on their ability to fight, they did not see the implications that could be drawn from what they wrote.

Although Peace Now in Israel still retains the image of a movement without a program, one that offers only the general principles in terms of which policy should be formulated, in fact the movement has begun to formulate specific policy positions. From a recent pamphlet (in English) called "Peace Now" distributed by the movement in the United States, it is clear that Peace Now's emphasis on security (crucial for retaining mass appeal) is a veneer, and that in fact security needs, no less than religious and historical considerations are dismissed as principles for achieving a political accord.

The pamphlet asserts that the term "'defensible borders' is meaningless" since "peace can secure borders better than any borders can secure peace." The pamphlet points out that until 1967 Israel would have been very happy to win Arab recognition of then existing borders and that it is necessary to take risks to obtain borders that will be acceptable "to all sides." Security arrangements, the pamphlet says, could substitute for territory, and existing settlements beyond the Green Line, which may have to be evacuated, must serve as bargaining cards. Significantly, Jerusalem is never mentioned, though the constant reiteration that "religious and historical considerations should play no role in these negotiations" certainly suggests that Jerusalem should not be distinguished from any other territory taken in 1967.

There is therefore a fundamental dishonesty in Peace Now. Its activists accept the demands Sadat made in the Knesset in November 1977, but are afraid to say so for

fear of forfeiting the movement's mass support. So the leadership pretends to accept security considerations as a valid guide for determining policy when in fact it rejects security arguments, treating them as a mere screen for lurking "ideological" views. By the end of 1979, Peace Now was in fact rejecting anything at all that would interfere with a return to the borders of 1949.

The decision of Peace Now to go to the United States and to Europe for support testifies to both the successes and the weaknesses of the movement. In some ways Peace Now was very successful. The five settlements that were the subject of its poster blitz were cancelled. While the impact on Begin of the mass demonstration that preceded Camp David is difficult to assess, Begin himself wrote to Israeli author and peace movement activist Amos Oz that he thought often of the Peace Now demonstrators during his days at Camp David. In any event the upshot of Camp David was precisely the sort of agreement for which Peace Now had hoped. On Begin's return it was Peace Now supporters who welcomed him at the airport.

On the other hand Peace Now found its gains threatened. It soon became clear that the autonomy Begin had promised at Camp David for the West Bank was interpreted differently in Cairo and in Jerusalem, and that the PLO, in effective control of the decisions of West Bank mayors and other notables, was not going to permit participation in autonomy arrangements that did not guarantee full independence.

An additional problem for the movement was that it almost immediately achieved the limits of its growth. While its numbers were impressive, and while it had what it regarded as allies in the ruling Likud coalition, its political weight was not sufficient to counterbalance the weight of other considerations shaping government policy. And so Peace Now began to search for shortcuts that might enable it to obtain its goals.

The temptation was strong because Peace Now proved enormously attractive to a significant segment of Diaspora Jewry, which virtually thrust its support upon the movement. Shortly after the original officers letter, *The New York Times* reported on its front page that 37 prominent Jews had sent a letter of support to the Peace Now movement. The letter, which included such well known names as Saul Bellow and Nobel Laureate Kenneth Arrow, was organized by Leonard Fein, the editor of *Moment* magazine. Telegrams and messages of support came in from European Jews as well.⁴ Yet for Peace Now deliberately to make use of this support to organize opposition to the Israeli government abroad violated the consensus that foreign policy debates by Israelis should be confined to Israel.

At first, Peace Now seemed to have decided to maintain this tradition. When in May, 1978, a Los Angeles group claiming to be in support of Peace Now staged a

demonstration outside the Inglewood Forum where Begin was speaking, Peace Now disclaimed the action, specifically stating that Israelis should conduct their political struggles in Israel.

But the temptation grew as the limits the movement faced in Israel became increasingly apparent to the leadership, some of whom had all along seen in Jewish communities abroad, especially the U.S. Jewish community, the lever by which pressure could successfully be brought upon the government. When the movement was only a few months old, one of the early activists said:

We must obtain as much support as we can from Jewry abroad because as I see it in this debate Jewry abroad will have power it never had till now. For the first time and mainly because of us the consensus of Jews abroad is starting to break There is no reason for American Jewry to be unified if they don't believe Israelis are behind the government. In New York we see now we have the support of many people who for years were thought to be supporters of the Israeli government. This will bring pressure on the Israeli government because Begin gives a great deal of importance to Jewry abroad.⁵

If the perceived American Jewish support for the Israeli government could be shown to be a myth then the full weight of United States government pressure could be brought uninhibitedly upon Israel, which would be forced to submit to American demands that Peace Now believed were in harmony with its own goals.

Who were the Jews in the United States who made the first overtures to Peace Now? The "Letter of the 37" was the subject of an article by Moshe Decter in *Midstream* (June/July, 1978). Decter noted that of the 35 who actually signed the statement (*The Times's* number was incorrect), the most prominent, those that gave the letter its cachet in the eyes of *The Times*, could scarcely be described, as they were in the statement, as "life-long friends of Israel." Saul Bellow and Irving Howe came out of the Trotskyite movement (Howe switched to the Shachtmanites); Daniel Bell and Seymour Martin Lipset came from the Young People's Socialist League; Lucy Davidowicz had been a Bundist; Martin Peretz for a time had backed the New Left.

But the letter was deceptive in other ways too. Its text suggested that it was the Begin government's response to Sadat's peace initiative that had forced the signatories to their first public criticism of Israel. Yet of the 35 signatories, eight had lent their names to Breira, which meant that they were continuing what had become for them a tradition of publicly criticizing Israel and criticizing her regardless of which government was in power and what its policies were. Leonard Fein, while not formally a member of Breira, had been one of the most vociferous in attacking those who called Breira's bona fides into questions

Another response from American Jews, larger in numbers if not in influence, came in an advertisement published in July, 1978, in *Haaretz* and *The Jerusalem*

Post: 560 American Jews announced their support for Peace Now. The ad was coordinated by Americans for a Progressive Israel, a U.S. organization supporting Mapam. The ad is interesting because it offers the first public indication that those whose goal it is to undermine Israel see Peace Now as a valuable asset.

The ad was signed by a number of individuals who had been prominent in CONAME (Committee for New Alternatives in the Middle East), which originated in 1970 as a Trotskyite front group and broadened to become a sponsoring organization for anti-Israel speakers in the United States. It was also signed by a number of people from the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), the radical Left think-tank in Washington, D.C. that served as a veritable nest of anti-Israel activists, many of them honored by the various PLO-linked groups in the United States. The ad was signed by I.F. Stone, who recently compared Israel's treatment of the Arabs to the Nazis' treatment of the Jews and by Harold M. Smuck, associate general secretary of the Wider Ministries Commission of Friends United Meeting, a prominent Quaker, who in 1976 had written an article in *Quaker Life* denying that there was any theological, historical, or moral legitimacy for Israel's existence. The ad was also signed by 130 members of the defunct Breira. Since the text of the ad described the signatories as "American Jews who have consistently supported Israel's struggle for security in her homeland" it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the Israelis this ad was addressed to were being had.

Peace Now quickly found itself the beneficiary of funds from the Samuel Rubin Foundation, which had been the chief source of funds for Breira and for the Institute for Policy Studies. This is not to say that all the support Peace Now received, whether moral or financial, was from those hostile to Israel. But from the beginning the movement, outside of Israel, faced precisely the same problem as Breira: enemies of the state saw it as a weapon with which to undermine Israel and hastily joined forces with those motivated by a genuine concern for Israel's welfare.

In the spring of 1979, Peace Now decided to build upon the support it obviously enjoyed abroad. Shulamit Koenig, one of the movement's first organizers, a businesswoman who had given Peace Now its first Tel Aviv office, went to the United States for a protracted stay. According to Mrs. Koenig, she was asked by Peace Now to make appearances on its behalf and to raise money for the movement. In October, 1979, Peace Now sent a delegation to the *New Outlook* conference in Washington, D.C. with the mission, once the conference was over, of touring the United States to organize and raise money on behalf of Peace Now and to encourage American Jewry to become a political force in bringing pressure upon the government of Israel to change its

policies.

The *New Outlook* conference, held from October 27-30, 1979, had become highly controversial in Israel, and the decision of Peace Now to participate in it was thus considered by *New Outlook* a major achievement. Israeli parties, with the exception of the Citizens Rights Movement and the far Left Mapam and Sheli, had denounced the conference and urged their members to take no part in it.⁷ What was controversial in Israel was not the fact of the conference, since *New Outlook* had been holding conferences biennially for over a decade, but its location. *New Outlook* was seeking to bring together Palestinian Arabs, especially West Bank mayors, Peace Now spokesmen, "doves" within the Labor Party, individuals associated with *New Outlook*, and some leading American Jews to deal with the question of how Palestinian Arab aspirations and Israeli security could be reconciled. Since by far the largest number of potential participants was in Israel it would have been far easier and cheaper to have had the conference there. Holding it in the United States, in Washington, D.C. specifically, was a naked bid to influence the American political process and through it to force changes on Israeli policy.

Thus the conference had a theatrical function. Held under the nose of American policy makers, with maximum media coverage hoped for, the conference would provide proof of the "intransigence" of the Israeli government by showing that Israelis and Palestinian Arab leaders *could* talk together; it would dramatize a split in the American Jewish community as prominent Jews attended despite the Israeli government's opposition to the conference; it would show the American political leadership that outside formal party structures there was a political force in Israel that held the Israeli government responsible for failure to solve the Arab-Israel conflict and was eager to recognize the PLO; that indeed *New Outlook* and its affinity groups, especially Peace Now, could provide the lever to bring both Israel's government and the major opposition parties to heel.

The conference failed in some of its aims. As one observer put it, it was like a wedding where neither the bride nor the groom appears — only the matchmaker. The Labor Party doves did not come, nor did the Palestinian mayors or invited PLO officials from Lebanon. This immediately undercut the organizers' hopes of major media coverage. However, the presence of the Peace Now delegation did bring to the conference prominent American Jews who supported the movement. The conference also brought out traditional enemies of Israel. And while the conference organizers can perhaps not be blamed if actual enemies like Alfred Lilienthal and I.F. Stone attended, they surely can be blamed for taking the money of individuals hostile to Israel to fund the conference and for using such people as speakers, coordinators, and discussion leaders. (It

was with money that *New Outlook* obtained, incidentally, that Peace Now sent its delegation to the United States.)

Simha Flapan, the editor of *New Outlook*, announced that those who contributed to the conference "are wealthy Jewish people who care about what is happening in the Middle East. We know each of them personally." The statement was made and the list of donors (in amounts above \$35) was published in response to charges made by a Labor member of the Knesset that the CIA had funded the conference. Actually, the CIA would have been a respectable source of funds compared to a number of those that *New Outlook* admitted were donors.

One of those listed as a financial backer is the Reverend Humphrey Walz, who served as editor of *The Link*, a publication of Americans for Middle East Understanding, an outright anti-Israel publication. Walz's articles have been used as propaganda handouts by the Arab League's Information Center. Walz's anti-Israel credentials are so impressive as to defy brief enumeration. Suffice it to say here that he defended the "Zionism is racism" resolution of the U.N. in *The Link*; was a speaker at the "National Conference on Zionism and Racism" held November 16-17, 1976, in Washington, D.C. by the Oppressed Peoples Affairs Committee; brought suit to remove the tax exempt status of the United Jewish Appeal; and now serves as a sponsor of the PLO support group, the Palestine Human Rights Campaign.

Much of the funding for the conference came from the Samuel Rubin Foundation, the funder of Peace Now, Breira, and the virulent Institute for Policy Studies. Other figures from the radical foundations were among the donors listed by *New Outlook*, including Victor Rabinowitz, secretary of the Louis Rabinowitz Foundation and official attorney for the Cuban government (in 1961-65 he was registered as a foreign agent for Cuba). Rabinowitz was President of the radical National Lawyers Guild, whose investigating team declared that "the Israeli government implements a policy of torture for the annexation of the occupied areas."⁸ There was W.H. Ferry and his wife, long associated with the now liquidated DJB Foundation, which gave \$2.25 million to the Institute for Policy Studies. Ferry also funded *Counterspy Magazine* after most of its earlier donors refused to contribute following the magazine's publication of a list of CIA agents and the consequent assassination of one of them in Athens.⁹

Money also came from the estate of Louise Berman. The wife of Leo Brantsen, the chief Communist Party organizer in the San Francisco area in the 1930s, Louise Berman was herself identified in Congressional hearings as a Communist Party member. Shirley Magidson is listed as a donor. She was active in the Peace and Freedom Party that ran Eldridge Cleaver for President of the United States in his Black Panther period. Yet another donor was L. Dean Brown, President of the Mid

dle East Institute, a private organization founded in 1946 to bring Arabs and Americans closer together." Brown had been ambassador to Jordan and was briefly special envoy to Lebanon. He has made no secret of his view that the United States has made a mistake in not dealing with the PLO.

Eight of the donors" signed a statement in 1976 calling for immediate United States negotiations with the PLO without preconditions. The ad was sponsored by all the "peace" organizations and signed by familiar enemies of Israel like Daniel Berrigan, I.F. Stone, Noam Chomsky, David Dellinger, etc.

One must note that *New Outlook's* Simha Flapan displayed some caution in his description of donors to the conference. He said they cared about "what is happening in the Middle East" — not about what happens to Israel.

Although all contributions above \$35 were supposedly accounted for in the list of donors published by *New Outlook*, we have ascertained that a \$15,000 donation solicited by the World Jewish Congress from the Eli Lilly Endowment for a conference that was not held, with the approval of the Lilly Endowment was transferred to the *New Outlook* Conference. The head of the Lilly Endowment when the original application was made was Dr. Landrum Bolling, the organizer of the Quaker study group that in 1970 produced *Search for Peace in the Middle East*, the opening salvo in the ongoing AFSC campaign against Israel. Bolling played a role in the planning in Washington of the *New Outlook* conference as his speech at the conference indicates. That his connections at the Lilly Endowment were instrumental in smoothing the transfer of funds from one recipient to another seems to us probable.

Why was this substantial donation, which *New Outlook* could have listed as coming from either the World Jewish Congress or the Lilly Endowment, not reported? Was the World Jewish Congress reluctant to have its role known? Why, more important, should the World Jewish Congress have wanted to fund a conference condemned not only by the government of Israel but by all major political parties as contrary to the interests of the state? There is of course no grounds for surprise that Dr. Nahum Goldmann, the retired President of the World Jewish Congress, should have sought to promote the conference for he shares the views of the *New Outlook* organizers concerning the need to satisfy the PLO. Indeed he probably goes further than these organizers would in crucial respects. The *New Outlook* editors have not yet called, as Goldmann has, for a situation where Israel "would not be able to conduct a policy that conflicted in any marked degree with the declared principles of the Arab world." (Not surprisingly Goldmann's pronouncements have won the applause of the notorious head of the U.S. Labor Party Lyndon H. LaRouche, who offers to send Goldmann on a nationwide tour of the United States.) Was Goldmann able to make the

decision to fund the conference despite the fact that he had stepped down as President?

Many of the conference's speakers, coordinators, and discussion group leaders also had a history of working to undermine American support for Israel. Selection of these people by *New Outlook* served to legitimize them as genuine seekers for peace and to undercut the ongoing effort of American Jews to emphasize the one-sided character of their activities. Thus the Reverend Walz was not only a contributor but a coordinator for the discussion on American policy in the Middle East.

Peter Weiss served as a coordinator on the "Israeli-Palestinian" question. The son-in-law of the late Samuel Rubin, Weiss is chairman of the board of the Institute for Policy Studies, was a member of the steering committee of CONAME, and is active in the National Lawyer's Guild. Asserting concern for free speech, in 1975, Weiss, along with William Kunstler and Ramsay Clark, sought to provide legal assistance to the Baader-Meinhof gang, which had cooperated with the PLO and other Palestinian factions.¹² In the promotional material put out by the conference, Weiss describes himself as a "life-long Zionist."

Ann Lesch served as a discussion leader. Her activities on behalf of the AFSC in Israel had led Israel to seek to remove her from the country. Barbara Bick chaired a speakers' section on "American Policy in the Middle East." A long-time staff member of the Institute for Policy Studies, Barbara Bick has no known claim to special knowledge of the Middle East. She was cited in testimony before a Congressional committee as a member of the Communist Party in the United States. Bolling was a speaker in the session on the possibility of an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, which replaced the session on the compatibility of Israeli and Palestinian national aspirations that had to be scrapped when the "Palestinians" did not show up.

Yet another speaker, at the banquet, was Dr. Cynthia Wedel, who had served as sponsor for a 1971 gathering at the Washington National Cathedral billed as the first of its kind in America "to focus American concern more sharply on the needs and aspirations of the almost three million Christian and Moslem Palestinians whose home is the Holy Land but . . . are now a people uprooted and without a country." That meeting, which mobilized some of the best known propagandists against Israel, was sponsored by American organizations specializing in promoting the Arab side of the conflict (e.g., Americans for Middle East Understanding, American Friends of the Middle East). The conference was also addressed by Professor Stanley Hoffman, Ambassador Charles Yost, and Hermann Eilts, former U.S. ambassador to Egypt, all of them known for consistent criticism of Israel. (Eilts was the only participant with any connection to Egypt. No Egyptian representatives were invited

for fear of alienating the "Palestinians.")

Some of *New Outlook's* choices for the role of what it obviously conceived as "moderator" between Israelis and Palestinian Arabs might have served well in ironing out difficulties between George Habash and Yasir Arafat. In a conference supposedly dedicated to the welfare of Israel the use of these people showed appalling lack both of judgment and self-respect.

There were flickering signs of recognition, particularly in the American Jewish supporters of Peace Now, that the vision of many of these "moderators" was not that Israel serve as a "light unto the nations" but that it be extinguished altogether. Irving Howe articulated this discomfort in noting that the non-Jewish "mediators" assembled by *New Outlook* put him in mind of the saying that "in the warmest of hearts there is a cold spot for Jews."

But perhaps the most interesting feature of the conference, given the predictable character of most of it, was the onslaught by several Israeli speakers upon the American Jewish community. Matityahu Peled of the Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace asserted that the Anti-Defamation League was the greatest enemy of the Jewish people; several other speakers suggested that the greatest barrier to peace was the American Jewish Establishment. One woman in the audience rose to blame American Jews for the absence of civil marriage and divorce in Israel. This apparently bizarre perspective can be understood only in terms of the conception in the peace movement in Israel generally that without American Jewish support for the Israeli government, that government could not sustain its "intransigent" policies.

Published reports of the conference emphasized disagreements between *New Outlook* spokesmen and Israeli representatives of the Sheli Party on the one hand and Peace Now representatives, their American Jewish supporters, and Shulamit Aloni on the other. Thus Howe openly protested the failure of participants even to mention the Soviet Union and the dismissal of Camp David (variously described as a half-step, a gimmick, demeaning) by many of the speakers. He complained that the hostility of the Arab states to Israel was ignored; instead "all-powerful" Israelis were contrasted with "powerless" Palestinians. At the press conference the "moderates" were angered when *New Outlook's* Simha Flapan expressed the conference's disappointment that the State Department had denied visas to two PLO representatives, and Sheli leaders called for unconditional talks with the PLO, suggesting this too represented a consensus.

But the dissension should not be overdrawn. Observer Paul Riebenfeld noted a spirit of camaraderie, even communion among the several hundred youthful American participants. Nor did disagreements interfere with the willingness of participants to work together to undermine American Jewish support for the Israeli government. It was suggested that Peace Now be

the "cutting edge" for the Israeli peace movement's activities in the United States, especially on campus. The past help given by Hillel rabbis to Breira was mentioned as an indication of the support they might lend to Peace Now affiliated groups.

Immediately after the conference, Peace Now representatives together with representatives of Sheli, *New Outlook*, and Mapam met with a Jewish audience at the Society for Advancement of Judaism in New York City to offer a report on "the peace movement in Israel."

For American Jews it became virtually impossible to distinguish between the Israeli peace groups. Hillel Schenker, managing editor of *New Outlook*, and Orly Lubin of Peace Now gave a joint interview to the Jewish Student Press Service. Schenker said, "The fact that Peace Now has held demonstrations of up to 100,000 people indicates that we touched something very basic in the Israeli psyche." No wonder then that *the Jewish Post and Opinion* said of *New Outlook*: "The prestigious magazine is a potent ingredient of Israel's Peace Now movement."

The same individual would appear as representative of different organizations from one speaking engagement to another. Shulamit Koenig was introduced as "an official of the Peace Now group in the United States now on a fund-raising trip" for her appearance on the *MacNeil-Lehrer Report* on National Public Television on June 8, 1979. But on April 28, 1979, she had addressed the American Friends Service Committee's conference on "Search for Peace in the Middle East" as a representative of *New Outlook*. In the fall she addressed a meeting of American Reform Zionists (ARZA) as the personal representative of Knesset member Shulamit Aloni. At Oberlin College the advertisements for her speech described her as the representative of Peace Now, but when she actually spoke she said she did so for herself alone and not as a representative of any group.

The welding together of Israeli peace groups abroad was not merely an impression but a fact. On June 30, 1978, the *Jewish Chronicle* reported that Simha Flapan and David Shaham of *New Outlook* had given a survey of the activities of the Peace Now movement at the Hashomer Hazair club in London. The paper reported that the two were in England to launch the Peace Now campaign inaugurated by Young Mapam and a Manchester-based Jewish socialist group. Abroad, Peace Now, the radical Left Sheli, *New Outlook*, and the Council for Israel-Palestinian Peace became parts of an undifferentiated Israeli "peace movement."

Another interesting phenomenon occurred abroad. The representatives of Peace Now, like those of other groups, fell victim to the conceptual contagion of American radicalism, particularly those varieties of barely disguised anti-Semitic bent. Since the Jews encountered by the Israeli peace movement representatives were

usually the bearers of radical chic, they experienced little countervailing influence. Thus, one finds the by now familiar pattern whereby the speeches of these people in the United States are so sharply critical of Israel that Israelis who by chance find themselves in the audience write back home to their Israeli newspapers in horrified protest. For example, two Israelis who had identified with Peace Now in Israel wrote to both the *Jerusalem Post* and *Maariv* to protest what they had heard Shulamit Koenig say at Oberlin College. In the *Maariv* letter (December 19, 1979) they state that Mrs. Koenig demanded that Israel should be condemned by Americans just as South Africa was condemned by them; that to ask the PLO to repudiate its covenant was no less absurd than to ask Begin to dismiss the Bible; that Israeli attacks in Lebanon were no less terrorism than PLO attacks on Israeli citizens; that the Israeli leadership was not interested in peace, among other reasons because it was afraid of internal ethnic unrest should it be achieved; that Israel was not a democratic state but ruled by a Right-wing regime which is in power only because of the support of Right-wing groups in the United States.

The same radicalization process can be seen in Peace Now's later emissaries. *The New York Times* of November 18 reported that Peace Now representative Gary Brenner, speaking to delegates at the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations in Montreal, said: "The only precondition to talks with the PLO is an end to terror. Recognition of Israel will come as a part of the peace process." Similarly Peace Now's Yoki Amir (in an interview published in Philadelphia's *Jewish Exponent* on November 9) said that recognition of Israel not be a precondition for talks with the PLO. "We should declare that the only precondition for talking is the willingness to talk and only to talk." In an interview with Nat Hentoff (*Village Voice*, December 10, 1979) Peace Now's Deddy Zucker, asked about the PLO covenant calling for Israel's destruction, said: "I don't give any importance to any covenant, to any pieces of paper."

The Palestine National Covenant will not interfere with negotiations with the PLO since it is a piece of paper and a piece of paper means nothing. But why, if this piece of paper means nothing, should an agreement ultimately reached with the PLO that presumably would also have to be put to paper mean anything either? Whom or what do the young activists of Peace Now trust? Ultimately they trust themselves and demand that others trust them. This is the archetypal radical stance, and immensely arrogant. It mirrors the mindless phraseologies of the American sixties. ("Trust us, we are your children." Or "They are the finest generation ever.")

The Peace Now contingent went home after teams addressed Jewish audiences in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Sacramento, Seattle, Chicago, Madison, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Ithaca, and Montreal.

They left behind an organizational skeleton that they hope will be fleshed out in the months ahead to match the more advanced organizational situation in Europe. In the U.S. seven regional offices of Friends of Peace Now are in the planning stages to be linked in a framework called the Shalom Network. In addition, the old Breira activists are buoyed by the advent of Peace Now, which seems to offer them a new chance to mobilize anti-Establishment sentiment among American Jews. On January 27, 1980 representatives of Peace Now met in Paris with delegates from France, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, and England to create a Europe-wide Friends of Peace Now. (A storm was set off in Israel when Israeli Ambassador to France Meir Rosenne urged French Jewish communal leaders not to meet with the Israel Peace Now delegation on the grounds that they undermined the state.)

The Breira activists describe Breira as "tactically premature." So there is now an organizing committee for a "New Jewish Agenda" that plans to set up a national conference in the fall of 1980. In addition to the Shalom Network, which plans to bring members of the Israeli "peace community" before the American public, there is a Middle East Task Force also planning to schedule speakers. The latter, which includes a series of Breira activists, is coordinated by Alan Solomonow. Solomonow and Tom Cornell have served as coordinators of the Middle East Peace Project of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Cornell was the coordinator of the 1976 ad already mentioned calling for unconditional talks with the PLO; he signed a 1978 ad in *The Times* calling for the U.S. to "act in a constructive manner and recognize the essential role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in all international efforts that seek to establish peace with justice in the Middle East." That ad carried the signatures of the full panoply of anti-Israel activists from Chomsky, Stone, and Mezvinisky to Edward Said and James Zogby of the Palestine National Council and Abdeen Jabara of the Association of Arab American University Graduates, etc., etc. Cornell is currently a sponsor of the PLO's Palestine Human Rights Campaign. Alan Solomonow, one-time director of CONAME, also signed both ads. Under the guidance of Solomonow one can look forward to strong fare from the Middle East Task Force. Even Arthur Waskow is back again with a monthly newsletter to spark a "Jewish renewal." What Peace Now offers them is hope of access to a far wider public than Breira could muster. For example, as Israelis, Peace Now emissaries were able to appear in such strongholds of modern Orthodoxy as the Kehillath Jeshurun Synagogue in Manhattan.

Peace Now claims it is a non-political movement. This is deceptive. Operating outside party structures does not make Peace Now non-political. Its political aim in

the United States is to "destroy the American Jewish Establishment." The phrase is that of Mattityahu Peled at the *New Outlook* conference, but the aim is also explicitly that of Peace Now, which in its own official publication appeals to American Jews to express their dissent openly." As one observer of the Peace Now delegation in the Chicago area wrote to *The Jerusalem Post* (December 13):

They are traveling around this country urging American Jews to stop our political support of Israel as a way of pressuring the Begin government to change some of its policies . . . they have organized public meetings in which they appeared as a panel along with some Palestinians who are locally well known apologists for the PLO . . . They have now given the PLO a forum which it was never able to acquire on its own, and they have given its propagandists a visibility and an appearance of respectability which they did not have before.

Peace Now has come to tell American Jews — Shulamit Koenig's constant theme — that they stand between Israel and peace.

Much of the credibility of the newly burgeoning movement for Peace Now in the United States comes from the fact that it is an indigenous Israeli movement. Irving Howe describes Peace Now as "a wonderfully broad, open, fine-spirited movement." While this is by no means the universal opinion in Israel, it is conveyed by a significant segment of the media. The movement gains added credibility because opposition political parties see in it an instrument for discrediting the government and have sought to woo it. Again, even within Labor some leaders oppose it as dangerous. They well remember the onslaught of the much smaller Peace and Security Movement upon themselves and anticipate what lies in store for them from Peace Now once Labor returns to power. Indeed the Labor daily *Davar* has become a major platform for critics of the movement.

Ultimately it is up to Israelis themselves, especially those who are attracted by the face of the movement in Israel, to determine if they want to identify themselves with the purposes and activities of Peace Now in the United States and Europe. They must understand how flimsy is the membrane between disapproval of Israeli government policies and disapproval of Israel, and that there is no way to prevent the first from passing over into the second. American Jews may be able to make the distinction between Israel's government and Israel, but the general American public cannot, and if they hear American Jews attack the government of Israel for "Right-wing extremism," "biblical fanaticism," "unwillingness to make peace," "intransigence," etc., their willingness to support Israel will be lessened. The American media, in any case, have been steadily undermining the public image of Israel. This is not the result of Israeli government policy (it predates the victory of the Likud by a number of years) but of changing values of those who constitute the arbiters of intellectual and ideological fashion. Long buffeted by the media,

Israel's image as a democratic and decent society will not survive assault by American Jews.

Israelis must decide what they want. If they do not want to split the American Jewish community, if they do not want to add to the chorus of criticism of Israel the voice of an influential segment of the Jewish community, their own public opinion will have to set the limits

for Peace Now. Precisely because Peace Now aspires to be more than yet another radical Left sect, it is subject to public scrutiny in Israel. If public opinion does not make itself felt — and quickly — Peace Now, with its support systems overseas, may rapidly develop into the single force most destructive of what is left of Israel's standing in Western public opinion.

9. The letter's background is described by Boaz Evron in "The New Israeli Peace Movement," *New Outlook*, September, 1978, pp. 7-11 and was described in an interview with Rael Jean Isaac by an early Peace Now leader, Gil Leydner, in August, 1978.

10. Interview with Rael Jean Isaac, August, 1978.

11. The background of the second letter presumably also induced Peace Now leaders to distance themselves from it. The chairman of the student organization at Hebrew University explained that the organizers of the letter of the 100 were those who headed the student organization of Rakah and Sheli supporters that had sought to win control of the student government and had supported the Arab Student Committee at the Hebrew University when it ran into difficulty for calling for the destruction of Israel. *Maariv*, August 30, 1978.

12. A Peace Now ad of August 30, 1978, against settlement activity announced that Peace Now had 6,000 signatures from the U.S., 2,500 from England including that of the chief rabbi and the secretary general of the Zionist Federation, 1,000 from Belgium, 3,000 from Holland, 400 from France, and 1,000 from Italy. Leonard Fein has described (*Jewish Week*, May 7, 1978) what led him to organize the letter of the 37. He had been asked to write an article by *The New York Times Magazine* concerning disunity in the American Jewish community and the article had come out so sharp that he decided not to submit it. He looked for an alternative way to relieve his frustrations and noting that a rally had been called by the signers of the letter of 350 officers in Israel decided to draft a letter of support. The letter was published in the Israeli press and then picked up by *The Times*, which called him.

13. Interview with Gil Leydner, August, 1978.

14. See for example Leonard Fein's article, "The Assault on

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house rabbi for *Moment*, where he interprets the "meaning" of Jewish holidays.

1. Mapam divided on the issue, with veteran leaders Meir Yaari and Yaakov Hazan urging that the party boycott the conference. The compromise was that Mapam would participate on condition that no official representatives of the PLO be invited. *New Outlook* ignored this condition and invited PLO representatives from Beirut who in the end did not come. Peace Now decided to come without preconditions.

2. *The New York Times*, August 2, 1977.

3. *Counterspy's* issue of Spring, 1976, carried thanks to those who had saved the magazine after the scandal; Ferry was credited as one of the saviors.

4. A couple of weeks before the *New Outlook* conference, the Middle East Institute had its own conference with many of the same (non-Jewish) participants and with much the same conclusion: the United States should ignore previous commitments to Israel and deal with the PLO. In a summary of the proceedings Professor Seth Tillman said, "any president can change a former president's position."

5. Rabbi Everett Gendler, Mordecai Dayan, Rabbi Michael Robinson, Louise Berman, Carol and W.H. Ferry, Edward Kaplan, Abraham and Ida Kaufman, Dr. Donald Lehman.

6. *The New York Times* of April 15, 1975, reports that the highest German court ruled to limit the number of lawyers defending the gang: Weiss, with the others, filed a brief challenging the court's action.

7. Margo Bloom, Inge Lederer Gibel, David Szonyi, Doug Krantz, and Carolyn Toll.

8. As Nat Hentoff put it, summarizing his interview with five members of Peace Now, they have come "to find out if the majority of American Jews can be awakened from their sleep of obedience to their organizational spokesmen." *Village Voice*, December 10, 1979.

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