SOLIDARITY AND DISSENT IN ISRAEL-DIASPORA RELATIONS*

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Framework and Assumptions

IN THE MORE thoughful discussions of Israel-Diaspora relations the question can arise as to what non-Israeli Jews should do when they find that they disagree with the official position of the government of Israel either on a matter of basic policy or with regard to tactical measures which they regard as unwise. This paper does not presume to provide definitive answers to the dilemmas that confront committed Jews in the Diaspora when they are faced with appeals for solidarity which limit their freedom to give full expression to independent, critical views. Nor is it our intention to present an exhaustive review of the literature on this complex issue. Our objective is simply to facilitate a more systematic examination of this subject by outlining the various arguments have been marshalled on each side, illustrating the kinds of issues that have been raised, and finally noting the various forms and degrees of dissent that have been advocated by some as legitimate and constructive.

(While some of the following general comments may apply to other Diaspora communities as well, our focus will be upon the American Jewish community and its interaction with Israel.)

It might also be well to state explicitly at the outset two assumptions which set the parameters for this discussion:

1. Most American Jews are at least concerned about, if not deeply committed to the survival of the state of Israel. As for those Jews who are indifferent to Israel's fate, they are not likely to be swayed by appeals to solidarity. Indeed this entire discussion will seem irrelevant and therefore of little interest to them.

2. Israel desires to achieve lasting peace in the Middle East, is committed to the preservation of a democratic society, and is concerned for the welfare of Jews throughout the world. Consequently, irrespective of naturally differing perspectives and occasional disagreements between Washington and Jerusalem, there is no fundamental conflict of interests between the United Strates and Israel on the governmental level, or between American Jews and Israelis. There are of course some Jews who consider the state of Israel as inherently "sinful"—as do the Satmar and Neturei Karta; or who regard Israel as

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* The essay is based on a paper prepared for the American Jewish Committee Task Force on Israel-American Jewry Interaction, 1977.

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threatening vital American interests in the Middle East—as does Alfred Lilienthal, or as endangering what they consider the status and security of American Jews—as does Rabbi Elmer Berger. But for such groups and individuals the self-restraints upon dissent do not apply. They see a clear need to publicly criticize and dissociate themselves from Israeli policies and actions.

We are thus dealing with those elements in the American Jewish community who maintain an interest in Israeli affairs and would like to be supportive of Israel, but find that something Israel has done or failed to do upsets them greatly. Although this paper concentrates upon views and perceptions in the American Jewish community, it should be noted that some of the observations concerning group loyalty and dissent also apply, conversely, to Israeli views of instances of action or inaction by American Jews which the Israelis regard as adversely affecting Israeli or general Jewish interests. (Some reported examples will be included in the discussion below.)

Arguments for Solidarity:

One of the primary arguments advanced for the suspension of any expression of criticism of Israeli policies by Diaspora Jews is the importance of Jewish solidarity to Israel at a time when it is "surrounded by enemies on all sides" and the Arabs are engaged in intensive international efforts to weaken Israel economically, isolate her diplomatically, and ultimately to destroy the Jewish state if not through physical genocide, then through "politicide." The Jewish communities of the world, and especially those of the United States and other Western democracies, are seen by both Israel and its adversaries as an important ally of Israel. Occasionaly Israelis go so far as to declare that the Jews of the world are "our only reliable ally."

Continual gestures of Jewish solidarity with Israel are considered important by both Israeli and Diaspora leaders as one means of maintaining the morale of the Israeli public in the face of terrorist attacks and signs of diplomatic isolation. This factor has played a role in the public stances adopted by American Jewish organizations. For example, when the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations discussed how to respond to the first appearance of PLO leader Yasir Arafat before the United Nations General Assembly in November 1974, some persons noted that a massive Jewish demonstration near the United Nations was not likely to change delegates' votes, and some believed it might even have the negative effect of attracting greater coverage of the PLO by the mass media than if the Jewish community did not draw special attention to the event.[1] While these points were

[1] PLO representatives had, since 1965, been participating in the annual debate on the budget of UNRWA, the UN relief and works agency for Palestinian refugees. These appearances had received virtually no press coverage. It could be argued, however, that the political situation had greatly changed by 1974. In the earlier appearances the UN committee had specified that its allowing "persons" constituting the PLO delegation to speak was "without such authorization implying recognition" of their organization. Now Arafat was being received as if he were a head of state, permitted to speak before the Assembly plenum, under a General Assembly resolution that recognized the PLO's claim to be "the representative of the Palestinian people."

generally conceded, they were outweighed in the minds of the organizers of the rally by the feeling that a massive outpouring of Jewish opposition to the PLO's participation in the UN debate was necessary as a means of channeling, in an organized and nonviolent way, the basic feelings of solidarity with Israel in her time of need that many American Jews—as well as some non-Jews—wished to voice, and served to demonstrate this feeling to the Israeli public.

Similarly, immediately following the adoption in November 1975 of a UN General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with racism, the government of Israel and the Jewish Agency convened an emergency conference of international Jewish leadership in Jerusalem. Some thought that this Jewish summit conference would provide a timely opportunity for a fundamental reexamination of Israel's political strategies and public relations tactics, as well as assessing the best means of presenting the Israeli case on the international arena. It quickly became apparent, however, that the sponsors of the conference had in mind the more specific objective of demonstrating and spreading world-wide Jewish identification with Israel. The conclave was in fact entitled "the Jerusalem Conference of Jewish Solidarity" and its purpose, as stated in the fervent opening address by President Ephraim Katzir, was "as a demonstration to the world of the unity of Israel, Zionism and Jewry, to repel the vile attack on the Jewish people" contained in the General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with racism, and "to plan together the steps that must be taken to strengthen and fortify the Zionist enterprise." The conference concluded on December 5 with an impressive ceremony at the Knesset (Parliament) in which all the participants from some 27 countries affixed their signatures to a formal Declaration expressing "the devotion of the Jewish people to Zion and its solidarity with the state of Israel." [2]

The conference program was so structured as to avoid discussion of any controversial political and therefore potentially divisive issues, such as Israel's public stance on the Palestinians, the policy of aerial raids against suspected terrorist bases in Lebanon, or the effect on peace prospects of establishment of new Israeli settlements in Sinai, the Golan Heights, and in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank). Instead, two days of intensive workshops elaborated program recommendations to strengthen Jewish education, increase *aliyah*, make the most of economic resources and stimulate investment in Israel, and to work for "public solidarity" for Israel around the world. While these were no doubt laudable objectives, some delegates privately shared the view of the Latin American delegate who expressed to the press his disappointment at having travelled thousands of miles merely to endorse resolutions that he said

The increased media attention to the PLO could thus be attributed not to anything done or not done by the Jewish community but to the PLO's greatly enhanced international standing, as demonstrated by actions of the Rabat Arab League Summit and the UN. (On the PLO's appearances at the UN, see George E. Gruen, "The United States, Israel and the Middle East," *American Jewish Year Book*, 1966 [Vol. 67], pp. 265–69 *et passim*, and similarly titled articles in subsequent volumes.)

[2] See Appendix for text of the Declaration of the Jerusalem Conference of Jewish Solidarity.

could as well have been sent him for comment by mail. He had hoped to participate in a basic discussion of the changing international climate facing Israel to which he could contribute the particular insights of a resident of Latin America.

From the Israel government's point of view, however, the conference had already achieved a major objective—demonstrating to Jews and non-Jews alike that Israel could still count on the solidarity of world Jewry. Such demonstrations are important not only to maintain the morale of the beleaguered Israelis. They also have a practical value as a counterweight in the struggle with the Arabs for the economic and political support of the United States and other free countries. As the Arab states increasingly use their oil and petrodollars both as a threat and as an inducement to the United States to lessen its support of Israel, the evidence given to Washington that American Jews are solidly in support of Israel, it is argued, can serve to limit the amount of pressure the United States will bring to bear upon the Israeli government to make concessions it regards as inimical to its security. We need not go into the reasons for the prevalent view that American Jews exert an influence on elected officials and upon the media far out of proportion to their numerical representation in the population. True or exaggerated, this pervasive belief in Jewish influence has political significance. It means that American officials will hesitate before taking action regarded by the Israel government as so dangerous to Israel's vital interests as to justify the calling out of what has been referred to as "Dinitz's troops"—the Jewish masses in the United States. Thus Jewish solidarity is seen as a restraint upon unwarranted American governmental pressure on Israel.

The spontaneous cancellation of thousands of flight and hotel reservations to Mexico in protest against the vote by the Mexican delegate in favor of the anti-Zionism resolution provided another demonstration of American Jewish solidarity with Israel and of the economic "clout" that the Jewish community could bring to bear when it felt sufficiently outraged. While it is hard to measure the economic influence of the American Jewish community—e.g. to what extent the cancellations of planned conferences in Mexico by non-Jewish groups were prompted by a general sense of moral outrage or were initiated by Jewish members or Jewish travel agents—this is a factor that must be weighed by American firms. An American corporation presumably will be more reluctant to capitulate to Arab boycott demands if it knows that such action will become public knowledge and provoke mass protest from American Jewish consumers and stockholders.

Fear of offending the highly sensitive and articulate pro-Israel Jewish public has also frequently been cited as a factor preventing some publisher and mass media producers from presenting pro-Arab positions or even views highly critical of Israel by Jewish sources. The extent to which these inhibitions influence publishing or broadcasting decisions is also impossible to measure, but the allegation that "the Jews control the mass media" and thereby prevent the dissemination of dissenting views is not and never was true. The Arab failure in the past to win much of a hearing was probably due mostly to their own ineptness at public relations and the extremism of their message.

In the past, widely reported Arab threats to "drive the Jews into the sea" and blatantly anti-Semitic remarks by Saudi Arabian monarchs hurt the Arab image in the United States and worked in favor of support for Israel. American revulsion against the genocidal policies of the Nazis and a general sympathy for Israel's creation as a haven for the Jewish refugees of the extermination camps helped Israel win American support in the early years of statehood. Even though this factor is lessening as the memory of World War II fades and as an increasing proportion of the American public consists of persons who grew up after World War II, anti-Semitism is still looked upon with disfavor by the majority of Americans. The Arabs have begun to realize this and, as their propaganda efforts become more professionalized and better financed, their spokesmen are also becoming more articulate and soft-spoken.[3]

A constant Arab propaganda theme is that the Arab world has always shown tolerance and understanding for Jews and Judaism; it is only "expansionist" Zionism and its supporters that they oppose. Consequently the militant Arab leaders have embarked on a two pronged attack to increase Israel's international isolation and to diminish American popular and ultimately Congressional support, which has been so crucial to Israel. One prong of the attack—and this is directed mainly to the newly independent countries who, together with the Communist and Arab bloc, constitute the majority of UN members—is to deny that Zionism is a legitimate national or religious movement, and to charge instead, as did Yasir Arafat in his November 13, 1974 speech to the UN General Assembly, that:[4]

> Zionism is an ideology that is imperialistic, colonialist, racist; it is profoundly reactionary and discriminatory; *it is united with anti-Semitism in its retrograde tenets* and is, when all is said and done, another side of the same coin.

The second prong of the Arab attack is directed at public opinion in the Western democracies, and especially at liberal opinion in the United States, including American Jews. Thus, in his nationally televised speech, Arafat told the American public that his dream was to return with his people from exile to live in Palestine "in one democratic state where Christian, Jew, and Moslem live in justice, equality and fraternity." The Arab propaganda task would obviously be made much simpler if they could somehow separate American Jews from Israel. Arafat in fact chided European and American Jews for their support for a "racist" Jewish state and their opposition to his proclaimed ideal of a secular democracy:

> Let us remember, Mr. President, that the Jews of Europe and the United States have been known to lead the struggles for secularism and the separation of church and state; they have also been known to fight against discrimination on religious grounds. How do they then refuse this humane paradigm for the holy land?

Those in Israel and in the Jewish community who argue that American Jews

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[3] See George E. Gruen, "Arab Petropower and American Public Opinion," *Middle East Review*, Winter 1975–76, pp. 33–39.

[4] Emphasis added. Full text in *New York Times*, November 14, 1974.

should suspend their expression of criticism of Israel "for the duration" point to this continuing Arab campaign to portray the Jewish state as racist and discriminatory. If American Jews were to publicly express their criticism of defects in Israel's society such as the continuing gap in terms of education, employment, and housing between the Israelis of European origin and those of Afro-Asian origin, or the unsettled controversies between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews on issues relating to religion and state in Israel, or the problem of land expropriated from Israeli Arabs in the villages of Ikrit and Biram, or the maintenance of suspected Arabs under preventive detention, would they not be giving ammunition and credibility to the Arabs for their slanderous barrage against Israel? If American Jews were to become critical of Israel, would this not send a signal to the Arabs that they could separate Israel from its natural base of support?

Possibly even more important, it is argued, if American Jews *themselves* criticized Israel government policies and Israeli society, would this not provide a "hechsher" or official stamp of approval for all those who wish to put pressure on Israel under the pretext that they could not be accused of anti-Semitism when the policies of the Jewish state were criticized by fellow Jews?

The sense of this potential danger no doubt explains the gravity with which Israel viewed the "Zionism equals racism" resolution and the intensive campaign urged by UN Ambassador Chaim Herzog upon American Jewish organizations to declare publicly and unequivocally that not withstanding Arab disclaimers to the contrary they regarded the Arab assault upon Zionism as an attack not simply against Israel but against all Jews. (The controversy as to the wisdom of Ambassador Herzog's releasing to the press his criticisms of the Jewish community for its allegedly apathetic response is discussed below.) In his address to the President's Conference on October 24, 1975, Herzog termed the Assembly resolution "plain, unadulterated anti-Semitism." He warned the Jewish leaders:[5]

> If we do not today, as one people all over the world, speak out against this new international outburst of anti-Semitism, this medieval attack on our religion, we shall sin towards the future generations of Jews who will ask us where we were when this occurred. If we do not as a people demand an immediate stop to this new development, if we do not make it clear to each country which is a signatory to this document, what is its responsibility to Jewish history and to the Jewish religion in this respect, then we shall be encouraging newer and more violent outbursts. Let us learn from the past and fight to defend what is so sacred to us.

Some observers privately expressed doubts as to whether this resolution would really provoke new anti-Semitic outbreaks around the world. Democracies, it was said, would not mistreat their Jews simply because of such an obviously partisan political ploy, while totalitarian states did not wait for a UN "go ahead" to persecute their Jews. But whatever its potential danger for world Jewry, the UN resolution did provide an immediate tactical opportunity for Israel

[5] "Address to President's (sic) Conference by Ambassador Chaim Herzog, 24 October 1975," p. 13 (Xerox copy of 20 page text distributed to press).

to attempt to reverse the growing image of nearly total diplomatic isolation. Had the Arab states merely pushed yet another resolution denouncing Israel for allegedly mistreating Arabs in the occupied territories, denying the Palestinian refugees the choice of repatriation or compensation, and refusing to recognize Palestinian "rights of self-determination," they would probably have again scored a completely lopsided victory such as the 105 to 4 vote in October 1974, inviting the PLO to participate in the UN debate on the question of Palestine. Then only Bolivia and the Dominican Republic had joined the United States in supporting Israel's objection to Arafat's participation.

By raising the specter of anti-Semitism and getting world Jewry to concur in this characterization of the issue, Israel now managed to win the backing of 34 states, representing nearly all the democratic countries of the world and including the major Western European powers whose support for Israel had been gradually eroding under Arab economic and political pressure. It can be argued therefore that the solidarity displayed by world Jewry on this issue, despite some private reservations as to the intellectual honesty of the Israeli position, no doubt played an important role in enabling Israel and the United States to bring together a significant group of countries to express openly their opposition to this Arab attack.

Other Arguments Against Diaspora Criticism of Israel

Among other arguments often given for Diaspora Jewry to refrain from criticism of Israeli policies is that Diaspora Jews do not share the burdens and responsibilities equally with Israelis. American Jews may contribute to UJA or buy Israel Bonds, but their contributions are voluntary acts. It is only Israelis who are required to pay the taxes to maintain the country's defense and must serve in its armed forces. It is the Israelis whose lives are on the firing line and therefore American Jews should refrain from the luxury of sniping from the sidelines or serving as armchair generals. "If you want a voice in Israeli affairs, come on *aliyah*" is the blunt response sometimes given by Israelis to Diaspora critics. The author recalls a conversation that some American Jews had had a few years ago with the then Minister of Religions Zerach Wahrhaftig. When the Americans complained about the lack of official status granted to Conservative and Reform rabbis in Israel and the absence of the option of civil marriage, Dr. Wahrhaftig suggested to them that they bring a million of their adherents with them to Israel and then they would be able to act as a legitimate pressure group to modify Israeli legislation, even going so far as to run their own slate of candidates for the Knesset, if they wished.

Another argument used by Israelis is that Jews who do not live in Israel do not have the background and expertise to comment on the complex problems facing Israel. "You Americans don't really understand the Arabs as we who have lived with them for decades do," is a commonly heard Israeli response to what they consider the dove-like naïveté of the American proposals. Another dimension of this question is noted by Professor Charles Liebman in his paper in which he points out that not only are American Jews often ignorant of the complexities of Israeli politics and so-

ciety, but that they subconsciously prefer it this way. For them Israel is a symbol with which they identify. To get American Jews deeply involved in Israel's day-to-day problems would inevitably tarnish the symbol for them and pose the danger of weakening the basis of their identification with Israel.[6]

A variant on the argument of lack of informedness which has been used even against those foreigners who do have acknowledged expertise in international relations and Middle East affairs is that the Israeli government's actions are based on *secret* information and contacts which cannot be disclosed prematurely. "Trust us, we know what we are doing and eventually you will see that we were right." Thus, for example, the timing and nature of the aerial bombardment in early December 1975 against Lebanese guerrilla targets in which many civilians were killed or wounded, was officially explained as prompted by secret intelligence that terrorist leaders were meeting there and were planning to step up forays into Israel. The timing of the raid was thus necessitated by the military consideration of pre-empting them and so disrupting their aggressive plans, which would have endangered countless Israeli civilian lives.

If the raid hurt Israel's standing in American public opinion and if it was inconvenient for the United States because of Lebanon's internal problems that could not be helped. Israel also regretted any loss of Lebanse civilian life, but that could not be avoided unless Israel risked greater numbers of Israeli civilian and military personnel through inaction. How many American Jews would be prepared to argue and say: "I have independent and better intelligenee to the effect that no major terrorist raids were being planned, or that the PLO leaders were not planning to be at that place at that time?"

There is also concern among some Israelis and friends of Israel abroad that it will be hard to get and maintain the necessary deep sense of commitment and high level of personal involvement in Israel's cause among Diaspora Jews if the struggle in the Middle East is not presented in clear terms of the Israelis being morally right and the Arabs wrong. Will a realistic appraisal of the relative merits of the conflicting claims not confuse and fragment the Jewish community with potentially disastrous consequences for Israel? In recent years some Jews began privately asking questions such as that posed to the author by a participant in an adult education series on the Middle East in Historical Perspective: "I am beginning to wonder about my long held assumptions that the Israeli version of history was always correct. Maybe it is just our propaganda versus theirs. Is there any objective truth?"

It is too early to assess the long term effect on Diaspora attitudes of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's bold and unprecented initiative in going to Jerusalem and publicly acknowledging Israel's right to exist as a sovereign state in the region. The direct Egyptian-Israeli negotiations there and in Cairo have already greatly improved Egypt's image among the Amer-

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[6] Charles S. Liebman, "Political Relationships Between Israel and American Jewry," (draft paper prepared for American Jewish Committee Task Force on Israel-American Jewish Relations, Feb. 1976), pp. 223, and 34–36 of this volume.

ican public in general—and a recent Harris poll found that Egypt is now perceived as almost equally ready for peace as Israel. This is a remarkable reversal of the traditional pattern in which a majority of Americans saw Israel as desirous of peace in contrast to the Arab states who were overwhelmingly regarded as still committed to Israel's destruction.

American Jews have also warmly welcomed the Egyptian initiative, the Synagogue Council of America and other organizations have sought out the Egyptian Ambassadors as speakers, and one Reform rabbinical leader has even suggested that Sadat be awarded a Nobel Peace Prize. In a sense this echoed the outpouring of friendship that the Israeli public extended to the Egyptian leader, although a group of Israeli university professors were more evenhanded in their enthusiasm, proposing that Sadat and Prime Minister Menachem Begin share the Nobel Prize.

After the initial surprise at Begin's upset election victory in May 1977, the organized American Jewish community had publicly supported the new government, despite some private misgivings over the Likud Party's platform and Begin's pronouncements concerning the "liberated" territories of Judea and Samaria and the intention of establishing new Jewish settlements throughout the area, and not only in strategically located areas, which has been the Labor Party policy.

American Jewish solidarity for Israel was strengthened and the expression of dissenting views diminished in the face of growing fears that the Carter Administration—either through incompetence or by design—was moving toward recognition of the PLO, was courting the Syrians, and reintroducing the Russians into the diplomatic arena, all steps that would result in additional pressure on Israel to make unilateral concessions.

Whether this solidity of American Jewish support for Israel will continue will depend in part on what happens as the Egyptian-Israeli talks move from ceremony to substance. If the Begin Government continues to display flexibility and a readiness to compromise on such issues as withdrawal from Sinai and Palestinian self-rule in the context of real peace, then this support is likely to remain solid. The potential dilemma for American Jews will be avoided if moderate Palestinians emerge who are prepared to accept Israel's offer and to dissociate themselves from the PLO and the Arab rejectionist states, led by Libya and Iraq. (See George E. Gruen, "Struggle for American Public Opinion," (*Jerusalem Post*, December 9, 1977.)

Why Was Diaspora Criticism of Israel Increasingly Voiced?

Already in March 1973, the London *Jewish Chronicle* noted in an editorial the increasing number of reports of "sounds of discontent within the American Jewish community about the relationship with Israel." While the essence of the complaint was that "Israel takes too much and gives too little," the editorial warned that this revealed only a fraction of what was basically amiss. Noting that there were both emotional and pratcical reasons for submerging criticism in the past, the editorial nevertheless cautioned:[7]

[7] "Seeds of Discontent," editorial, *Jewish Chronicle* (London), March 16, 1973.

> A crisis that is maintained for twenty-five years is bound to lose some of its emotive qualities. The strains begin to appear and it is better to face the problems that emerge and take stock of all the implications before the essential Israel-Diaspora relationship is allowed to deteriorate into any sort of serious understanding.

The editorial asserted that "the fact that dissent is now open shows how imperative it is to take action without delay." The editorial concluded with some suggestions for "regular and permanent consultation" between Israeli and Diaspora leaders to achieve greater understanding and "defuse the possibility of serious conflicts arising."

The editorial dealt primarily with the issues related to raising, allocating and supervising the expenditure of funds for Israel and posed questions concerning the impact of fund-raising for Israel in tending to "starve local community needs," the danger that an "expense-account morality was developing in Israel," as well as the long-range ethical and psychological effects upon Israel of dependence upon foreign aid and the growing materialism within Diaspora Jewish communities because the well organized mechanisms of fund-raising for Israel were tending to "debase traditional Jewish values by elevating only the wealthy into the seats of eminence."

One should note that this editorial restricted itself to the *internal* Jewish agenda and did not raise any basic issues of Israeli foreign policy. Some observers even believed that it was only because of the relative tranquility along Israel's borders as well as the booming Israeli economy following the Six-Day War that Diaspora Jews began to allow themselves the luxury of openly grumbling and questioning some aspects of Israel-Diaspora relations. The same issue of the *Chronicle* did contain an editorial, "Peace with Jordan," discussing Yigal Allon's proposal for a reappraisal of Israel's then current view that peace talks would have to begin with Egyptian President Sadat, and to examine instead the possibility of beginning talks with King Hussein, the only Arab leader with "a real willingness to negotiate," and whose plan for a federal state linking the East and West Banks of the Jordan offered the possibility of "a measure of Palestinian self-determination." The editorial was, however, deferential to the Israelis in its tone and did not presume to judge the issue on the merits. It concluded simply that "Mr. Allon's proposal is worthy of careful consideration by Israel's government even in the knowledge that it can hardly be acted upon before the elections."

As it turned out, the Yom Kippur War was launched by Egypt and Syria before the Israeli elections, which had been scheduled for the end of October 1973. This created a new situation and subsequently aroused questions both within Israel and in the Diaspora as to whether Israel had not lost precious opportunities since 1967 by assuming that it could operate in a more leisurely time-frame than was really available to it. People began to ask whether responsible Jewish voices in the Diaspora, such as the respected editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* should not have pressed harder for changes in Israeli negotiating tactics.

The Yom Kippur War had paradoxical effects on the issue of Diaspora criticism of Israel. On the one hand, by once again demonstrating Israel's vulnerability to physical attack by hostile Arab forces, the

war reawakened among Diaspora Jewry the sense of clear and present danger that they seemed to have forgotten during the euphoric period following the Six-Day War. The acuteness of the crisis reinforced the arguments, cited above, for the need for world-wide Jewish solidarity with beleagured Israel.

General (Res.) Mattityahu Peled, one of Israel's most outspoken "doves," complained bitterly upon his return from a speaking trip to the United States sponsored by Breira in the spring of 1975, at the extent to which he found American Jews, with few exceptions, "more Israeli than Israelis." In an article in *New Outlook* he complained that the Jewish community as a whole was "supporting the most intransigent views in Israel on the Arab-Israel conflict, in the belief that this is expected of it, and oblivious of the fact that Israel is not monolithic politically and the hard line taken by the Israeli Government is seriously challenged within Israel." The American Jewish antipathy to dissent from Israel's official line, he said, extended even to resentment at the existence of such divergent views in Israel. He cited a well-respected American Jewish leader as deploring the public debate within Israel itself since "Israel should appear united in time of crisis." Moreover, Peled found it "pitiable and outlandish" that even an Israeli *shaliach* (emissary) of a left and "dovish" movement such as Hashomer Hatzair, who in private agreed with him completely, then added that "it is quite 'unhealthy' to express such views 'here'." [8]

On the other hand, the Yom Kippur War shook American Jewish complacency in another way. American Jews read of the popular protest movements and demonstrations within Israel and the official investigation into the causes of the "mechdal"—the name given to the various acts of omission and commission that had resulted in Israel's much praised intelligence establishment being deficient and its military preparedness lax in the face of the Egyptian-Syrian surprise attack. Until then, few would have thought of questioning the competence and virtually none dared doubt the rectitude, of the towering figures who had brought about modern Israel's rebirth.

As long as the Israelis seemed to be winning, American Jews generally were prepared to accept the Israel Government's reassurances that it knew best what to do. The aftermath of the war saw the replacement of the charismatic leadership of Golda Meir and the tarnishing of the image—at least temporarily—of Israel's flamboyant and heroic Defense Minister Moshe Dayan. Professor Annon Rubinstein, on his return from the United States described the effect on American Jewry as follows in a *Ha'aretz* article in September 1975: [9]

> Mrs. Meir was Queen of the Jews. She spoke to them not only as an Israeli representative, but also as its head. She was also Mrs. Meir "the miracle worker": The miracle being a strong, invincible Israel which could say "no" to world leaders.... There was no reason to criticize the Israeli Government. But when the miracle ended, the situation changed. The reverance disappeared and the questioning began.

[8] Mattityahu Peled, "American Jewry: 'More Israeli than Israelis'," *New Outlook*, May–June 1975, pp. 18–26. Breira is described below.

[9] Amnon Rubinstein, "The Jews of America Today," *Ha'aretz*, Sept. 5, 1975.

Professor Rubinstein, who was one of the leaders of *Shinui* (change), one of the post-Yom Kippur war political movements for structural and policy changes in Israel, noted that the relative lack of charisma of Israel's current leadership at the time made it easier for American Jews to "ask questions, even aloud." Moreover, "the recently exposed corruption and blackmail in Israel shocked American Jewry." Was that what the Israelis did with American Jewish money? Was that the way they used public funds?*

Since the reports of political incompetence and financial scandal in Israel were being reported by the general American media they could no longer be covered up, and American Jewish critics were now in the position to argue that they were not weakening Israel in the eyes of the non-Jewish world by discussing problems that had become public knowledge.

American Jews, especially those involved in "liberal" causes, had also been affected by the growing disenchantment with and distrust of officialdom within the United States in the aftermath of Vietnam and Watergate. It is surely not accidental that rabbis and younger Jewish laymen who had been active in the anti-Vietnam peace movement were prominent in the 1973 founding of *Breira* (choice), the most organized and publicity conscious Jewish movement till now in the United States to provide a hearing for more "dovish" options to the Israel Government's official policy concerning the Palestinians and the post-'67 territories as well as for a more independent American voice in Israel-Diaspora relations. In an article in *Davar* on "Israel and the Territories: A Dissenting View," Rabbi Henry Siegman notes that an American Jew expressing views that clash with official Israeli policy immediately faces two questions: "Is it conceivable that Israeli leaders whose commitment to decent and humane values is beyond question, and for whom peace is not merely an abstract goal but the very condition of survival, would pursue policies which make the attainment of peace more difficult?" And—"Isn't an American who imagines he understands the situation better than the Israelis—whose very lives are on the line —guilty of a very special *hubris* (presumption)?" He responds:[10]

> I must confess that if it were not for the experience of Vietnam I would have found these considerations intimidating. Vietnam has taught us their essential fallacy. Americans brought to Vietnam great ideals and the highest of moral values. Our policymakers were neither cruel nor

* Prior to the May 1977 elections *Shinui* merged with Yigael Yadin's new party to form the Democratic Movement for Change (DMC), which joined the Begin Government in October. Rubinstein was in the minority that was unhappy about the move. The majority justified it as a way of influencing Begin policies in crucial domestic and foreign policy issues.

[10] Henry Siegman, "Israel and the Territories: A Dissenting View, *Davar*, Sept. 19, 1975. English version reprinted and distributed by Breira. See also the interview with Rabbi Segman by David C. Gross, "Scores Kissinger Deal: Religious leader fears Sinai Pact may merely postpone another war." *The Jewish Week-American Examiner*. Oct. 5–11, 1975. The Americans for Progressive Israel, affiliated to Israel's Mapam Party, has published *Israel Horizons* for 25 years, but this has a very limited circulation.

> stupid; on the contrary they were "the best and the brightest." They themselves now know how tragically misguided they were. And the most misguided of all were those with first-hand experience in Vietnam . . .

Siegman goes on to stress the basic differences between the Vietnam war and Israel's historically and morally justified struggle for survival. However, he believes that the Vietnam experience supports his argument that "people deeply involved in the stresses of military and political conflict are not necessarily the most objective and reliable judges of their own situation." Consequently, belief that Israel's cause is fundamentally just, "does not free one, however, from questioning aspects of Israel's policies that do not seem to serve that fundamental objective."

Another reason for the growth of a questioning if not yet openly critical attitude is the direct exposure for the first time of some American Jews, including religious and business leaders, to the Arab countries of the Middle East. Until 1967 it was exceedingly rare for American Jews to travel to Arab countries, in part because most Arab countries, with the exception of Egypt, made it difficult for Jews to enter unless they were clearly identified with pro-Arab and anti-Zionist causes. It was thus possible for the mainstream of the Jewish community to dismiss the reports of such Jews as those of "traitors to the cause." There were also relatively few non-Jewish Americans who travelled to the Middle East and these were mainly career diplomats, Christian missionaries and educators who concentrated upon the Arab countries and whose views could similarly be discredited as reflecting a pro-Arab bias. American Jews tended only to visit Israel and thus their personal experiences had the effect of reinforcing the correctness of the Israeli version of Middle East history and the Israeli stereotypes of Arab attitudes and policies.

Beginning after the 1967 war and increasing upon the resumption of American diplomatic relations with most of the Arab states following the Yom Kippur War, many of the Arab states eased their entry regulations for Jews in their desire to attract American tourists and businessmen, and to present their case directly to American legislators, scholars, journalists, religious and business leaders, and ordinary citizens as well. As a result, American Jews in still small but steadily increasing numbers, are returning from direct exposure to the Arab as well as the Israeli side of the line, often visiting both on the same trip. They note that Christian participants in such delegations, including those who cannot be dismissed as biased or anti-Semitic, are increasingly finding the official Israel explanations unsatisfactory and the Jewish participants in such fact-finding missions are often chagrined to find that they themselves lack satisfactory answers.

Some Jews then begin to question whether Israel's policy has been sufficiently flexible and imaginative in seizing every possible opportunity for peace. The breakthrough in Egyptian-Israeli direct contacts has for the moment allayed these concerns. However, it has also stimulated additional interest among American Jews to visit Egypt and other Arab countries such as Morocco. Needless to say, the official view of a just settlement advanced by the leaders of such "moderate" countries is still far from the position of the Israel Government.

Arguments for Diaspora Dissent from Israeli Policies

One of the basic arguments in favor of the expression of views critical of Israeli policy by American Jews was a conviction that continuation of the current Israeli policy would lead to catastrophic results for Israel itself. An undated "Open Letter from Breira's Executive Board," appealing to other concerned Jews to join, declared:

> Our immediate and overriding concern is peace in the Middle East. Our concern grows out of our love and respect for the people and the land of Israel as well as our understanding that the continuity of creative Jewish life in the Diaspora is inextricably linked to the existence of a free Israel.
>
> We are not innocent bystanders. If we share anxieties about Israel's policies, we have the responsibility to say so. If we detect mistakes which might have catastrophic consequences, we must not ignore or swallow our concern: *For the sake of Zion, we shall not be silent.*[11]

Similar arguments are being made as well by outspoken critics of Israel's policies from the other side of the political spectrum. Such groups as SOIL (Save Our Israel Land), an offshoot of Rabbi Meir Kahane's Jewish Defense League, the Committee for a Secure Israel, and the American supporters of the Land of Israel Movement have been vociferous in public statements and demonstrations before the Israeli Consulate in New York and elsewhere criticizing the Israel Government for succumbing to American pressures for concessions they believe threaten Israel's security and historic rights. They have been equally critical of establishment Jewish organizations, and most notably the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, for in their opinion, abjectly following the Israel government's lead and for not speaking out in the face of what they regard as the intolerable American pressures to which the Israeli government is being subjected.

The argument that dissent and open discussion have positive values for a democratic society that outweigh the benefits of conformity has been advanced by scientists and sociologists alike. "The clash of doctrines is not a disaster, it is an opportunity," Alfred North Whitehead wrote in his *Science and the Modern World.*[12] In a resolution on Freedom of Speech, adopted on June 13, 1975, the Central Conference of American Rabbis noted "with interest and favor" the ongoing debate within Israel on various alternatives to bring about peace. The resolution by the organization of American Reform rabbis went on to declare:

> Since the security of Israel remains our abiding commitment, we believe that such security is enhanced by free and open exploration of options for solving the multitude of problems Israel now faces. In this light we applaud the openness that is present in Israel and call upon the American Jewish community to recognize that

[11] Emphasis in original. This is a paraphrase of the verse in Isaiah 62,1: "For the sake of Zion, I will not be silent, and for the sake of Jerusalem I will not rest, until her righteousness go forth as brilliance and her salvation burn as brightly as a torch." The Breira letter was distributed toward the end of 1975.

[12] Cited by Lewish A. Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict,* Glencoe, Ill., The Free Press, 1956, p. 9.

> diversity. Thus, we encourage a full discussion of alternatives in the North American community and call upon our movement to sponsor forums for open discussion of divergent points of view. No subject, including options for a solution to the Palestinian problem, should be ignored.

An Israeli, who is closely involved in Israel-American Jewry interaction, recently expressed the view privately that whatever the drawbacks of such open discussion, the advantages on the side of democratic values, common peoplehood, and the involvement of good minds who now feel estranged are all on the side of open discussion. He noted that, of course, there *is* a price and therefore both sides must be responsible and use good judgment in the exercise of freedom of discussion.

General Peled argues that "tremendous damage is done to Israel" by American Jews who, he alleges try to suppress the dissemination of dissenting "dovish" Israeli views. The result is[13] that:

> Israel is generally presented to the American public as a society of conservative chauvinists of whom nothing can be expected except intransigence and a desire for war. This is a terrible distortion of fact, and it is time that American Jewish leadership give some thought to the devastating consequences that may one day result from this image of Israel they help create in the general public's mind.

Another argument in favor of an independent stance by American Jews is the danger to American Jewry itself, and ultimately to Israel, from an automatic and unqualified identification of Jews in the United States with Israeli government policy. This concern was voiced both by the "minimalist" critics of the Labor Party's negotiating posture, such as Rabbi Siegman, and by the "maximalist" critics, such as Shmuel Katz, the Israeli author who was one of the founders of the Land of Israel Movement (the English name for the group does not adequately convey the concept implied in the Hebrew—one which maintains the essential "wholeness" of Israel within its historic boundaries and opposing any territorial concessions.) He has since become Premier Begin's adviser for public information and subsequently resigned finding Begin's stance to be too moderate. Mr. Katz argued that implacable Arab hostility was a given that could not be changed by Israeli weakness since this would simply be an invitation for renewed Arab attack. In an informal meeting in 1976 at the American Jewish Committee in New York, Mr. Katz warned of the danger to American Jewry if it did not adopt an independent stance from that of the then Israeli Government. If American Jews simply followed the zigs and zags in Israeli policy, automatically falling in with Jerusalem's dictates, they would soon be regarded by the American government and the general public as nothing more than agents for a foreign power. Their loyalty would increasingly be subject to question. Not only would this pose a threat to their own security, but ultimately this would be counterproductive to Israel itself, since the views of American Jews would be discounted and dismissed in advance as simply another example of special pleading by a foreign group. The basic strength of American Jewish support for Israel depends on the ability of American Jews to

[13] Peled, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

convince the 97 percent of the American public which is not Jewish that support for Israel is in the highest national interest of the United States itself. Only if American Jews adopt an idependent stance, including occasional criticism of Israeli policies and actions, will they be able to maintain their credibility with the general American public.

The value in United States Jewry presenting an independent posture is illustrated by the apocryphal story told about the late Secretary of State John Foster Dulles who allegedly remarked to an aide upon receiving a request for a meeting by the chairman of the Presidents' Conference, who was then a European-born rabbi, "Why should I waste my time meeting with Rabbi X, when I can hear the same arguments directly from Israeli Ambassador Abba Eban, — and in much better English at that!"

Aside from this practical reason there is also an underlying philosophic or even ideological basis advanced for the right of Diaspora Jewish communities occasionally to criticize Israeli policies. This is in a sense the obverse of Jewish solidarity. If the state of Israel is viewed, as it was by its own founders, not as an end in itself, but as a means for the survival and creative development of the Jewish people, then all Jews, whether in Israel or outside have not only a right but an obligation to help Israel remain true to its ideals. It may be argued further that a fundamental basis of popular American support for Israel is not the political situation in the Middle East but the moral bond rooted in the common Biblical commitment to "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." While the Israel government may, because of domestic political considerations or in response to the pressures of *realpolitik* be forced to make expedient tactical decisions that seem to violate the principles of Western democracy or the prophetic ideals of social justice, it is the role of Diaspora Jews, who are not caught up in day-to-day decisions and thus have a broader perspective, to remind Israel of its ultimate goals. American Jewry, it is argued, thus has a duty to keep "Israel honest" by measuring its actions against the utopian ideal that no earthly state can achieve but toward which the *Jewish* State must constantly strive.

Such a supportive but independent role for American Jewry has also won public approval in some prominent Israeli circles. When Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, was elected as Chairman of the Presidents' Conference he was quoted, in an interview with *Davar*, the Histadrut daily, as declaring that "it will be a mistake to see us as an agency of the government of Israel." The paper noted editorially that a somewhat independent stance would help establish bridges to the increasingly critical American Jewish intellectuals and university students and faculty.[14] *Ha'aretz*, Israel's leading independent morning paper, noted that Israelis should not be concerned over Schindler's efforts to make the Presidents' Conference more independent, since this did not mean a lessening of fundamental support for Israel, especially in view of the Reform movement's growing closeness to Zionism. The editorial concluded:[15]

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[14] *Davar*, interview, Jan. 14, editorial Jan. 16, 1976.

[15] *Ha'aretz*, editorial, Jan. 18, 1976.

> An independent leadership of American Jewry and the exercise of its right to tell Israel also what Israel does not like to hear, are a condition for the strengthening of the largest Jewish community in the world and for the deepening of its partnership with the state of Israel.

Modes of Expressing Criticism or Dissent

Even if the principle is accepted that American Jewry has a right to criticize Israeli policies, there remains the practical problem in each case of deciding how to do so in a responsible and constructive manner. What are the outer limits of permissible criticism? Most persons will agree, for example, that American Jews should feel free to speak frankly and even if necessary, bluntly, to Israeli leaders *in private*. A similar right is naturally accorded to Israeli representatives in their contacts with American Jewish leaders. The difficult questions is what to do when private advice seems to be ignored? Should dissent be voiced publicly? Is there a difference between official pronouncement by Jewish organizations and the right of *individual* Diaspora Jews, be they academicians or lay or religious leaders, to expound in public their personal views on such issues as step-by-step negotiations, the territorial aspects of a settlement, or the proposals for electoral reform in Israel? Can prominent individuals, who hold official positions in the Jewish community, effectively make the distinction in the public mind that their affiliations are "for identification purposes only?"

There are, of course, also non-verbal ways of showing criticism. One is simply to remain indifferent to Israeli appeals. The most extreme would be the threat to withhold UJA contributions and the purchase of Israel Bonds. But such threats obviously should never be made lightly, and certainly not as an empty bluff. A step short of the threat of withholding aid is the demand for greater accountability in the expenditure of funds contributed or invested by Diaspora Jews. Here it would seem that Diaspora Jews are on sound grounds both legally and morally.

But the ways of remedying alleged abuses can vary. For example, in the wake of the financial scandals surrounding the Israel Corporation, the Rothschilds, whose money was involved, did not go public but insisted in behind-the-scenes meetings with Israeli leaders to the appointment of independent auditors of their own choice to go over the books. They obviously had enough "clout" to have their demands met, although one should note that the Rabin Government publicly declared that it was committed to rooting out corruption and was prepared to be completely ruthless about the indictment and conviction of the guilty parties in Israel. (Prime Minister Rabin himself became a casualty of this policy, when he resigned in the wake of revelations of a technically illegal dollar bank account maintained in the U.S. by his wife with his knowledge).

Others, however, have followed the public route. For example, at its April 1975 annual conference, the Rabbinical Assembly, after some debate, approved the following resolution:[16]

> The American Jewish community cannot tolerate a situation which has led to al-

[16] Text taken from the galleys of the proceedings, publication of which is forthcoming.

> legations of corruption, mismanagement, and substantial loses of direly needed funds. We urge, in this time of unprecedented peril for the state of Israel, that vehicles of mutual responsibility and accountability be established between Israel and the Diaspora. We are especially concerned that no funds collected for strengthening Israel be diverted, under whatever disguises, for which they were not originally intended. We must insist that all who are responsible for the disbursement of philanthropic funds, whether in the United States or Israel, be held accountable for the manner in which these funds are spent in the Diaspora.

The rabbinical leaders of the Conservative movement then proceeded to remove some of the sting of the threat implicit in this resolution by unanimously adopting another calling upon President Ford and Secretary Kissinger to "continue wholehearted American support" of Israel and to avoid pressing it to make concessions that would "jeopardize its safety and security." This resolution concluded with a declaration of the RA membership's solidarity with Israel, asserting "our emotional and spiritual unity with Israel, and our continued support of the UJA and Israel Bonds. We establish it as a priority during these days of crisis and isolation for Israel; we pledge our leadership in our community campaigns."

It has also been frequently suggested that certain areas, such as that of fiscal accountability of contributions, Israeli legislation concerning conversion and definition of who is a Jew, or the Jewish Agency's educational programs in the Diaspora clearly affect Jews outside Israel directly or indirectly and therefore Diaspora Jews can legitimately demand a right to participate in discussions and possibly even in decisions on such matters. However, it may be argued, some other areas should remain exclusively within the jurisdiction of Israel or of the respective Diaspora communities. Some examples cited in the area of noninterference are the internal political campaigns of each country, Israel's negotiation of final borders and decisions as to military strategy and the voluntary right of American Jews to decide whether or not to go on *aliyah*. But even in these areas, while the ultimate *decision*-making power must rest with one side alone, there is the neutral ground of offering advice, which some may regard as improper and others consider quite legitimate.

For example, Ambassador Herzog was criticized not so much for voicing his view that the response of the American Jewish community to the resolution equating Zionism with racism was too weak and apathetic, but for doing so in the presence of the general press. Had this been merely an internal Jewish discussion of tactics, he might have been persuaded by the argument of Rabbi Israel Miller and others that the decision to hold off on Jewish public demonstrations was not due to apathy but to a desire not to weaken the force of the expressions of outrage voiced by high American government officials in Washington and at the UN by making it appear that they were the result of Jewish pressure rather than general moral indignation at this "obscene act" of the UN Assembly. The Jewish community had in fact been active behind the scenes in garnering non-Jewish expressions of condemnation. By publicly demanding greater Jewish activism on a Friday, Herzog also made it appear that the advertisement by the Presidents' Conference, which appeared in the *New*

York Times the following Sunday condemning the UN vote was simply the automatic reaction of American Jewry to the Israeli Ambassador's exhortation. Few Americans were likely to know that the Presidents' Conference had decided upon the notice the previous week and copy had already been submitted several days before Herzog's address.[17] Significantly, Herzog's remarks were criticized not only by American Jewish leaders but also by members of the Israeli Cabinet.[18]

Earlier controversies had erupted following alleged remarks by Israeli officials to the effect that President Nixon had done more for Israel than any previous administration or that vocal American Jewish criticism of United States involvement in Vietnam might be harmful to Israel. Suffice it to note that while some Americans regarded such remarks as unconscionable Israeli interference in domestic American affairs, others defended the right of Israelis to express their opinions to Americans on issues which they believed might have critical consequences for future American governmental support of Israel.

Conversely, the question arises as to how far American Jews may go in giving support to Israeli political movements or to educational projects linked to political movements. Providing platforms for Israeli parliamentarians visiting the United States is already frequently done by like-minded groups. Disseminating their publications is another channel. Should the same standard be applied to government members as to those in opposition? And what of appeals by established or struggling new Israeli parties to recruit adherents and financial backers in the United States? Is this objectionable only if it involves UJA funds, or are even voluntary solicitations to be regarded as improper?

There is, of course, an inherent asymmetry in the relationship between a sovereign state, such as Israel, and the Jewish minority of the United States. There are naturally differences in some areas as to what is an appropriate role for each. The special position of American Jews as United States citizens but also with strong bonds to Israel raises difficult questions. While no state can be completely self-reliant in the interdependent world of today, Israel's extraordinarily heavy dependence upon the United States naturally prompts it to make great demands upon the American Jewish community for support.

Thus the question of the legitimate limits of intervention apply both to appeals for solidarity and to the expressions of opposition. What if the Israel Government or individual Israeli officials make demands upon American Jews which the latter consider either ideologically offensive or practically undesirable or unattainable? Robert Goldmann has suggested that an appropriate response, which stops short of public expression of dissent, is for American Jews in effect to say to the Israelis: "You are free within your sovereign authority to decide on the course of action you propose—for example, retaliatory raids into Lebanon, new settlements in the West Bank, denial of Palestinian Arab aspirations, or a request for $3 billion in United

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[17] The Herzog statement was widely covered in the general American press, e.g. *New York Post* Oct. 24, 1975, and *New York Times*, Oct. 25, and 27, 1975.

[18] See articles in *Jerusalem Post*, Oct. 26, 27, 28, 1975, and *The Jewish Week-American Examiner*, Nov. 2–8, 1975.

States economic and military aid. However, we must let you know that from our reading of the American national temperament we find that if you do so we can not help you effectively present your message to the American people." [19]

Other American Jews would go a step further and say: "You are free to do what you like, but if you want our help and advice, we believe the following modifications in your negotiating stance is more likely to win public support or the scaling down of your aid request is necessary to obtain the required Congressional approval."

A Practical Suggestion

While this paper has dealt mainly with abstract arguments for and against group loyalty and the right to dissent, in reality controversies usually flare up about specific cases. It appears to the author that one practical way of strengthening Israel-Diaspora relations is to increase the opportunities for American and other Diaspora Jews to become intimately involved in specific projects relating to Israel. Such involvement, whether it be in housing or in social welfare, in manpower utilization, in public relations, in legal issues, or even in examining the strategic concepts underlying the Israeli and American defense budgets, would help overcome the sense of alienation, of being left out, or of being manipulated that many knowledgeable American Jews frequently feel. In the process of working together, the Americans will get a better understanding of the complexities of the problems the Israelis are facing. Conversely, the Israeli participants will become more sensitive to the perspective of American Jews and possibly avoid misjudgments and unintended repercussions for Diaspora Jewry.

Obviously not all questions are suspectible to such joint approaches, but where they can be utilized they can help strengthen the sence of solidarity (the sense of *Klal Yisrael*) naturally linking American Jews with Israel. As Jewish Agency secretary-general Moshe Rivlin stated in a discussion of Israel-Diaspora relations in 1973: "We are not partners but brothers sharing the same destiny." [20] With this as the guiding principle, it is for us to examine in what areas and what ways we can replace destructive criticism with the creative tension of persons with diverse viewpoints working together towards common objectives.

Appendix

Declaration of the Jerusalem Conference of Jewish Solidarity

Jerusalem, December 5, 1975

We have come to Jerusalem to give expression to the devotion of the Jewish people to Zion and its solidarity with the state of Israel.

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[19] Mr. Robert Goldmann's comments were made during a meeting of the Steering Committee of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the American Jewish Committee, Feb. 5, 1976. Illustrative of the problem is a New York *Daily News* poll, Dec. 1, 1975, which found a majority of New Yorkers critical of the United Nations for equating Zionism with racism, but also found a majority of 61% disagreeing with Israel's relaliatory raids—with only 18% approving. Possibly most significant in terms of the limits of American Jewish support for Israel was the finding that only 37% of the Jewish respondents supported the Israeli retaliatory policy.

[20] "Israel-diaspora link provokes clash," *Jewish Chronicle*, July 13, 1973.

We reject categorically the resolutions adopted in the General Assembly of the United Nations on the initiative of the enemies of Israel and their supporters, which impugn the right of our people to national independence in the Land of Israel.

The historic right of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel is inalienable.

We declare that the resolutions of the UN Assembly condemning Zionism, the national revival and liberation movement of the Jewish people constitute a violation of elementary rights and justice, and are null and void.

In Jerusalem the eternal capital of Israel, we pledge ourselves to stand by the state of Israel with all our heart and soul, and to help it to fulfill its historic mission in the return to Zion, in immigration and absorption, in the settlement of the Land, and in the fostering of Jewish and universal values.

In the face of the campaign of baseless slander and calumny, we shall intensify our efforts to deepen the unbreakable bond of the Jewish people with its spiritual heritage and its historic homeland.

We shall work to strengthen Israel's power to defend its independence and we shall support its efforts to establish a lasting peace with its neighbors.

We, representatives of Jewish communities and organizations from all parts of the Diaspora and spokesmen of the State of Israel, set our hands in witness to this declaration at the closing session of the Conference on Jewish Solidarity in Jerusalem, on this day, Sabbath eve, the 1st of Tevet, 5735, the 5th of December 1975.