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Letters from Readers

"Whose Palestine?"

To the Editor of Commentary:

"Whose Palestine?" by Erich Isaac and Rael Jean Isaac [July] is a valuable addition to the growing literature on Joan Peters's From Time Immemorial. Some of the exegetes of the book over the last year have unhappily had the appearance of a political witchhunt. Attention has thus been diverted, sometimes for motives unrelated to any concern for scholarly accuracy, from the main theses of the book and has been concentrated, fudged by tactical reasons on a small number of population statistics about which demographic experts can legitimately disagree.

The main theses thus have disappeared from view and need to be reiterated as a healthy corrective. There was a continuous Jewish presence in Palestine, British governments after 1922 did not abide by the obligation of the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations Mandate to foster a Jewish National Home. Some British officials who wanted their government to honor its obligation suffered a sad fate. There was substantial Arab migration into the Mandate territory, especially into those areas settled by Jews. This was unimpeded and unacknowledged by the British who did, in contrast, impose severe restrictions on Jewish immigration. Britain did remove three-quarters of the total area from the Mandate by setting up the emirate of Trans-Jordan, which in its present form of Jordan can logically be regarded as the Arab state in Palestine. Some Arab leaders, especially the Mufti of Jerusalem, established a relationship with the Nazi regime and encouraged its persecution of Jews. The number of Jewish refugees from Arab lands in the late 1940's was at least equal to the number of Palestinian Arabs displaced from areas held by Israel.

Underlying these theses is the simple fact that the essence of the Arab-Israel conflict is the refusal of the Arab world, except now Egypt, to admit the legitimacy and reality of the existence of Israel. No solution is possible until that reality is acknowledged.

Michael Curtis
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, New Jersey

To the Editor of Commentary:

Commentary is to be commended for opening its pages to a candid discussion of the controversy surrounding Joan Peters's From Time Immemorial and, in particular, for forthrightly addressing the very grave allegations of misrepresentation that have been leveled against the book. In this respect, the article by Erich Isaac and Rael Jean Isaac compares very favorably with, say, the New York Review of Books which elected to shield its readers from so "indelicate a subject . . . Further, there is despite its evidently sharp disagreement with both the tone and substance of my charges, the Isaacs' article fairly acknowledges my specific contribution to the controversy . . .

The Isaacs do, however, take great exception to my findings. They purport that (1) my scholarship is flawed, (2) even if it weren't, there is still no basis to my allegations of "fraud," "hoax," etc., and (3) even if everything I had written were true, the central theses of From Time Immemorial are, nonetheless, "generally sound." I will discuss each of these points in turn.

1. The Isaacs cite two examples of my allegedly flawed scholarship. Let me note straightforwardly that if this is the best they can do, then Joan Peters's book is, at the very least, a disgraceful piece of scholarship, since, in various periodicals during the past two years, I have identified dozens of gross misrepresentations in From Time Immemorial. (Much of this material will appear in a forthcoming collection to be published by Verso press.) But, as it happens, in neither of the instances cited by the Isaacs was I in error.

The Isaacs first allege that I "incorrectly" added 40,000 Arabs to one of Miss Peters's demographic projections and then accused her of "not accounting for them properly." Let me first briefly rehearse the argument. Miss Peters claimed to have used the population movements of indigenous Palestinian Arabs between the years 1893 and 1947. She first takes the 1893 population figures for each of the five regions into which she has divided Palestine (Areas I through V) and then projects what the population in each of these regions would have been in 1947 had growth been ex-
clusively the result of natural increase. She then compares these projections with the actual 1947 census figures for each of the five regions (minus all immigrants and nomads) to establish the magnitude of "in-migration" for each region, that is, the number of indigenous Palestinian Arabs who had migrated into (or out of) Area I, Area II, and so on (see p. 256 of Miss Peters's text for an explicit account of her method).

For Area I, my calculations tally almost precisely with her own and also with those of Philip Hauser, the demographer who has certified Miss Peters's finding for Area I in an appendix:

\[
\begin{align*}
92,300 & \quad (1893 \text{ population}) \\
\times 2.7 & \quad (\text{factor of natural increase}) \\
249,210 & \quad (\text{projected 1947 population}) \\
417,300 & \quad (\text{actual 1947 population minus immigrants and nomads}) \\
+168,090 & \quad (\text{net in-migration to Area I})
\end{align*}
\]

Yet if the same computations are made for Area IV, the resulting figure is 40,000 greater than the one listed in Miss Peters's table. The Isaacs' criticism is clearly misplaced. What is more, the Isaacs are deafeningly silent on the crucial context in which I took note of this discrepancy, namely, that Miss Peters ignored all the demographic changes in Area IV because, if taken into account, they would render her actual findings at best trivial. This point was the subject of a detailed communication, "The Strange Case of Area IV," which I submitted some two years ago to the scores of periodicals, including COMMENTARY, that had acclaimed Miss Peters's demographic study (none of which, alas, published it). Likewise, fully one-half of my In These Times review was taken up with an elucidation of this point. Yet the Isaacs curiously omit any discussion of it in their article.

The Isaacs also fault me with misrendering the findings of the Anglo-American Survey of Palestine on Arab immigration into Palestine during World War II. The document in question divides this Arab immigration into two categories: first, the 3,800 Arabs who were brought in under "official" arrangements and, second, the "considerable numbers," of which "no estimates are available," who were either recruited by private contractors or else "entered individually." The Survey then suggests figures for the number of Arabs who remained in Palestine after October 1944, to which I will return presently. Miss Peters's summary description of this section in the Survey reads as follows:

What the official Anglo-American Survey of 1945-46 definitively disclosed . . . is that . . . tens of thousands of "Arab illegal immigrants" [were] recorded as having been "brought" into Palestine . . . In addition, other unestimated "considerable" numbers immigrated "unofficially" or as "individuals" during the war, according to the report (p. 379, all emphases in original).

The latter sentence refers unmistakably to the second category of Arab immigrant workers: note, for...
example, the quotation marks around "considerable," "unofficially," and "individuals," and the italics in "unestimated." The "tens of thousands" of Arabs "recorded as having been "brought" into Palestine" must then refer to the first category—those who entered "under official arrangements." Yet the Survey records only 3,800 such immigrant workers. Moreover, Miss Peters completely misrepresents the Survey's tabulations of Arab immigration. For example, she first lists the 3,800 Arabs who entered Palestine with official permission (p. 378) and, further on, the roughly 4,000 illegal immigrants who were employed by the War Department and the Royal Air Force in Palestine (p. 379). But she also splits these two groups together and catalogues as a third, separate group, "nearly 10,000 reported foreign workers . . .". (p. 378). Astonishingly, the Isaacs credit Miss Peters's handling of this document.

Finally, nothing in the Survey's text supports the conclusion that substantial numbers of Arab immigrants remained in Palestine at the end of World War II. Indeed, the Survey explicitly (and consistently) concludes that "Arab illegal immigration for the purposes of settlement is insignificant." Yet the Isaacs themselves make the pertinent point that Miss Peters's thesis depends crucially on evidence that Arabs not only entered Palestine but also took up permanent residence there.

2. The Isaacs acknowledge that Miss Peters's "handling of materials . . . is flawed" and that "even some of Finkelstein's specific criticisms, setting aside his accusations of deliberate deception, are well taken." Before taking up the evidence of "deliberate deception," I should like to make a preliminary observation. The Isaacs rightly point out that all my findings were brought to the attention of Miss Peters's publisher, Harper & Row, within months of the book's publication. The Isaacs also readily concede that at least certain of my criticisms are "well taken." Yet Harper & Row . . . steadfastly refused to correct, in either the seven subsequent hardback printings of From Time Immemorial or in the paperback edition, any of the dozens of egregious errors I spotted. (I will gladly make available to interested readers the relevant correspondence.) This was clearly not a "technical" problem, since both the seventh hardback printing and the paperback edition do contain "corrections." The explanation . . . is not hard to find: if all the "errors" I identified were "corrected," nothing would remain of the fabulous "scholarly" foundation on which Miss Peters built her "thesis." The Isaacs practically admit as much. They describe Miss Peters's nineteen (or more) falsifications of one paragraph in the Hope Simpson Report, for instance, as an uncorrectable "lethal systemic error." What does this mean if not that this "error" goes to the very heart of Miss Peters's argument, exactly as I wrote in my original In These Times piece?

Let us now turn to the matter of "deliberate deception." The Isaacs offer an ingenious, if scarcely convincing, explanation of the above-mentioned "error," repeated more than nineteen times in Miss Peters's text. Yet they do not even attempt to account for the second "error" in From Time Immemorial that they concede—and with good reason.

Miss Peters writes that, according to an anonymous "thirty-year archivist—a specialist in the Foreign Office and Colonial Office records on the Middle East for the Public Record Office," the British "[n]ever kept track" of Arab immigration into Palestine. To substantiate this extraordinary claim, she goes on to cite the 1935 annual Report to the League of Nations in which, she avers, "only 'Jewish immigration into Palestine' was catalogued; that was the only heading" (p. 275). In fact, the British report in question meticulously and exhaustively tabulated every conceivable aspect of Arab immigration into Palestine on nine consecutive pages. Miss Peters could hardly have overlooked these tabulations since the comparable statistics for Jewish immigration appear on the very same pages in parallel columns. Every annual British report on Palestine—and Miss Peters purports to have scrutinized thirteen of them—contains identical exhaustive tabulations of Arab immigration under the exact same chapter heading, "Immigration and Emigration." The Isaacs breezily chalk up the "error" to "carelessness." Personally, I much prefer Miss Peters's defense. When I queried her on this point during a London radio broadcast, citing her text verbatim, Miss Peters, totally unruffled, replied: "I never wrote that."

3. The Isaacs conclude their defense of From Time Immemorial on a singularly low-key note: "Despite its lapses, then, Joan Peters's book offers a generally sound thesis." We have clearly come a long way from those first heady days when From Time Immemorial was being touted as a "revelation" (Barbara Tuchman), "the historical truth about the Middle East" (Lucy S. Dawidowicz), destined to "change the mind of our generation" (Martin Peretz), and so on for two hundred reviews ranging from awe to ecstasy. But how sound is Joan Peters's thesis? I have in front of me Haaretz's account (June 15, 1986) of an international conference at Haifa University, the focus of which was Joan Peters's From Time Immemorial. According to Haaretz, virtually all the participants dismissed Miss Peters's demographic theses and the most authoritative scholar in attendance, Yehoshua Ben-Arieh of Hebrew University, denounced the Peters enterprise for discrediting the "Zionist cause.

Even more to the point, the Isaacs seem unaware that Miss Peters's own data stunningly refute all her demographic "arguments." Consider the following:

• According to Miss Peters's demographic study, Palestine's Arab population expanded naturally by a factor of at least 2.7 between 1893 and 1947. Miss Peters puts Palestine's Arab population at 466,400 in 1893. Multiplying 2.7 by 466,400, we get 1,259,280. Palestine's total Arab population stood at 1,303,800 in 1947. Natural increase therefore accounts for all but at most 44,520 of the Arabs in Palestine in 1947. Yet Miss Peters contends that a minimum of hundreds of thousands of Arab immigrants settled in Palestine during these years.

• The case Miss Peters mounts for massive illegal Arab immigration into Palestine nullifies her "thesis" on Arab in-migration. Miss Peters's own demographic study conclusively demonstrates that Arabs could not have both immigrated and in-migrated in significant numbers to Area I (the "main areas of Jewish settlement"), as she claims. (On this point, see my unpublished manuscript, Protocols of Joan Peters.)

• Miss Peters asserts that in 1893 some 60,000 Jews and 92,300 non-
Jews inhabited the "Jewish-settled areas" of Palestine. (For the pre-1948 period she uses the phrase "Jewish-settled areas" to designate the region of Palestine that later became Israel; cf. p. 264: "What is now Israel, i.e., Jewish-settled areas.") Since 38,000 of the non-Jews were Christians, Jews were "perhaps" a "marginal majority.

But, according to Miss Peters's own table in the back of the book, not 92,500, but fully 218,000 non-Jews resided, in 1893, in the slice of Palestine that became Israel.

Not too long ago, I described From Time Immemorial in the pages of the (London) Times Literary Supplement as "the most spectacular . . . disinformation effort ever mounted by Israel's self-styled 'friends' abroad." Nothing I read in the Isaacs's article persuades me to reconsider or qualify that judgment. Permit me to suggest that, rather than indict the bearers for bringing the bad news, COMMENTARY would do better to reflect on what this extraordinary episode reveals about the state of American intellectual culture.

NORMAN G. FINKELSTEIN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"Whose Palestine?" Erich Isaac and Rael Jean Isaac's article in defense of Joan Peters's book, leaves that book as exposed to criticism as it has ever been. I do not want to repeat my ideological debate with Miss Peters about the nature of Zionism and the parallel movements of population, although in opposite directions, which took place during the 1948 war. I would only like to stress once again that her presentation plays into the Arabs' hands: if both Jewish immigrants to Israel from Arab countries and Palestinian Arab refugees left their traditional abodes against their will, as a result of pressure exerted upon them, the best solution to their plight would lie in the return of all of them to their original places. And, indeed, since the mid-70's this has been the official position of Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Morocco, etc. Only by underlining the different character of the Jewish immigration to Israel, only by stressing that the Jewish immigrants were returning to their historic home ("Ascending to Zion"), will we be able to refute the equation of Arab refugees with Jewish immigrants.

From an ideological point of view I found that argument most disturbing, but from the angle of historical analysis, Joan Peters's treatment of the demographic process which has taken place in Palestine since the late 19th century is even more misleading.

I would like to stress three points which were the kernel of my article on From Time Immemorial in the New York Review of Books (January 16, 1986) and of my letter replying to the correspondence on my article (New York Review of Books, March 27, 1986). These points were not refuted by the Isaacs.

1. The Isaacs agree that Miss Peters's figure for non-Jews living in the "Jewish-settled areas" of Palestine in 1893 (about 92,000) is neither an official Ottoman figure nor that of the French geographer Vital Cuinet, but "Miss Peters's estimate." This is a most important confession. Furthermore, in a footnote the Isaacs add that, rather strangely, Miss Peters arbitrarily chose which subdistricts (kazas) of Ottoman Palestine should be included in her definition of the Jewish-settled areas. To that I would like to add that Miss Peters omits another subdistrict, Hebron, in which, according to the same Cuinet, 1,072 Jews lived. Miss Peters does not explain that omission, but one can rather easily guess the reason: the Hebron subdistrict contained 92,600 Muslims, and if she had included it, the number of non-Jews would have performed much higher than the figure stated in her book.

We are left, therefore, with a very weak foundation for the claim that in the "Jewish-settled areas" of Palestine the population up to 1947 quintupled whereas in other parts of the country it only more than doubled, because even Cuinet's figures and the official Ottoman figures (and both, for different reasons, which I explained in my New York Review pieces, actually underrate the Muslim population) give us at least double Miss Peters's figure for non-Jews living in "Jewish-settled areas" in 1893. The significance of this mistake was not fully appreciated by the Isaacs.

2. Miss Peters argues that since a great many of the Arabs living in these "Jewish-settled areas" were simply newcomers, they did not remain during the 1948 war but rather returned to their original places in the Arab parts of Palestine or even beyond the borders of Palestine. She also maintains that they were not forcibly evicted by the Israeli army, and she quotes several sources confirming this view. In my article I drew attention to the publication of the "Daled Plan" of the Haganah (the Jewish fighting forces in Palestine) in which the possibility of eviction was contemplated, but the Isaacs preferred to ignore it. Therefore, I would like to elaborate a little on that point.

In February and March 1948 the Haganah went through its most dangerous experience. The Arabs had succeeded in gaining the upper hand in the "battle for the roads," by cutting the transportation and physical connection between the Jewish center in Tel Aviv and the areas to the north and Jerusalem and the areas to the south. The Haganah lost three big convoys—the Yehiram, Huldah, and Nebi Daniel—and with them the majority of its makeshift armored cars. Only toward the end of March did it succeed in relieving the situation.

To prevent a repetition of that dangerous state of affairs should the regular Arab armies invade the newly founded state of Israel, the Haganah's high command then prepared a strategic plan designed to ensure the territorial linkage of the Jewish areas. It was learned from the bitter battles of February and March that a hostile Arab village along the road was a source of danger to the transportation system. Consequently, the plan provided that "each village must be surrounded and searched. In case of resistance the armed force [in it] must be destroyed and the population must be expelled beyond the borders of the state." A similar provision was made for Arab urban quarters.

That document was published as Annex 49 to the third part of volume three of The History of the Haganah (in Hebrew, Tel Aviv, 1972, pp. 1955-59). Miss Peters does not deal with this but simply ignores it. Her defenders could at least have claimed that the actual developments of the war proved that the plan had not been carried out. But they, too, ignore the whole question. I think the Isaacs preferred to remain silent because an analysis of the actual developments indicates that the plan was indeed carried out. In order to assure the safety of transportation along the coastal shore (from Tel Aviv to Haifa) and thence to Jeru-
salem and to the Negev in the south, most of the Arab villages along these roads were destroyed and their population expelled.

These facts are not new, and Miss Peters could have dealt with them. She could not, of course, have known of the work of Israeli historians which has been published only recently, such as Tom Segev's 1949—The First Israelis (1985) and Benny Morris's articles in the Middle East Journal (Winter 1986) and Middle Eastern Studies (January 1986). These studies, based on Israeli archival material, prove what I argue above. But the Isaacs, having written their article not before the end of March 1986, should have known better.

It is impossible to maintain the traditional Israeli view that in 1948 there were expulsions, even large-scale ones, of Arabs. It is much more useful in the long run to face the real situation and account for it than to deny the undeniable. The 1948 war (for Israelis, the War of Independence, of course) was launched by the Arabs who rejected the United Nations partition solution. Many Arabs, mainly town dwellers, left because they could not endure the worsening conditions in their towns. But many other Arabs were forcibly expelled by the Israeli army out of sheer military considerations. Those who began the war are responsible for its consequences, including the expulsion of Arabs from places where their continued presence could have constituted a mortal danger to the young state of Israel fighting for its survival against almost overwhelming odds. This to my mind is the true explanation.

3. The Isaacs still cannot believe that the Palestine Arab population could have doubled itself during the thirty years of the British Mandate by the sheer force of natural increase. Let me remind them that a population can double itself in thirty years if its average annual rate of natural increase is 2.45 percent. And the actual average annual rate was very close to that figure; it rose from 2.1 percent in 1923 to 3.1 percent in 1947. Furthermore, in my article I drew the readers' attention to the fact that in Israel since 1948, during an equivalent period of thirty years, the Arab population not only doubled but more than tripled itself. And that phenomenon took place under Israeli control—in the absence of British authorities who, maliciously of course, would have encouraged Arabs to immigrate to the Jewish state. This point, a crucial one in my view, was totally overlooked by the Isaacs.

Many other small factual mistakes or false allegations made by Miss Peters have been exposed by many reviewers so that even some of her defenders have had to admit that she committed "numerous examples of sloppiness" or that she "quotes carelessly, uses statistics sloppily, and ignores inconvenient facts" (New York Review of Books, March 27, 1986). I wonder if the Isaacs would do the same.

YEHOSHUA PORATH
Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:
While Erich Isaac and Rael Jean Isaac have discussed the merits and demerits of Joan Peters's From Time Immemorial, they have not adequately dealt with the criticism of that book by Yehoshua Porath, professor of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, which appeared in the New York Review of Books. The Isaacs say that his attack was long awaited by those eager to do in Miss Peters and her book. The purpose of this letter is not to defend or to attack Miss Peters's book, its thesis, or its scholarship, but to ask whether Mr. Porath's criticism is fair and meets the standards one would expect from a scholar damning an author's work.

Miss Peters states in her book that in 1893 there were living in the "main areas" of Jewish settlement in Palestine 92,930 non-Jews at most and almost 60,000 Jews; and that if the first group were divided between Christians and Muslims, the Jews would outnumber each part—or, as she puts it, "the Jews were at least as numerous as the Muslims."

In his article, Mr. Porath claims that Miss Peters's "very tendentious reasoning on this point has already been exposed," and he refers his readers to a criticism of Miss Peters's book by one Bill Farrell in the Journal of Palestine Studies (Fall 1984), based primarily on an analysis of the 1895 Ottoman census.

Mr. Porath goes on to say:
What she [Miss Peters] has done, to put it briefly, is to compare the figures for non-Jews in the 1893 Ottoman census of Palestine with the estimate of the Jewish population proposed by the French geographer Vital Cuinet in 1895. She dismisses the Ottoman figures for the Jews because, she says, "the Ottoman census apparently registered only known Ottoman subjects; since most Jews had failed to obtain Ottoman citizenship, a representative figure of the Palestinian Jewish population could not be extrapolated from the 1893 census."

This may sound plausible, until one discovers, first, that Cuinet's estimates are generally considered to be unreliable, and, second, that Professor Kemal Karpat of the University of Wisconsin, whose analysis of the Ottoman census Miss Peters relies on, does not find the census estimate of the Jewish population to be inaccurate in the way she claims.

Thus in his article Mr. Porath in no way takes issue with the 1893 Ottoman census or with Farrell's study based on that census, but rather implies that Miss Peters should have used it for Jews as well as for non-Jews. (I will not here argue the merits of Cuinet except to say that other demographers do not share Mr. Porath's views of him. Justin McCarthy, for example, in his article "The Population of Ottoman Syria and Iraq, 1878-1914", Asian and African Studies 15, No. 1, March 1981, calls Cuinet "the best known and most reliable European author on Ottoman population.")

In turning to Farrell's article, one finds that Farrell, using figures developed by Kemal Karpat, gives the 1895 Ottoman census figures for Muslims and Jews for all of Palestine as 371,969 Muslims and 9,817 Jews. After certain "corrections" have been made for "undercounting," the figures become 419,311 Muslims and 10,746 Jews.

These statistics (particularly the comparison of Miss Peters's figure of almost 60,000 Jews with the census figure of 9,817 Jews in 1893) were picked up and repeated by Anthony Lewis in his column in the New York Times for January 13, 1986, where he praises Mr. Porath's article in glowing terms and states triumphantly that "Miss Peters's evidence is cooked. That is what a growing number of scholarly critics have said. It is what I believe."

Miss Peters also refers in her book to certain statistics by the sociologist Arthur Ruppin on the number of Jews in Palestine. In
the article to which Mr. Porath directs his readers, Farrell calls Ruppin "unreliable" and dismisses him and his statistics saying:

Arthur Ruppin, upon whom Miss Peters also relies, was a Zionist who went to the Middle East around the turn of the century to scout out the territory. He wrote with a clear political purpose. Ruppin had no way of counting the population, and, as all European observers, he cannot be considered an objective source.

The New York Review subsequently published Mr. Porath's letter answering critics of his article. In the course of this letter he rather surprisingly states:

I never claimed . . . that the 1893 Ottoman census figure of the number of Jews living in Palestine (9,817) is correct; nor do I accept that the Ottoman figure for the Muslims (371,959), also cited by Miss Peters from an article by K. Karpat, is correct.

In his letter, Mr. Porath now takes issue with the Muslim count, claiming that attention has not been given to the fact that in 1893 only Muslims were subject to conscription and thus Muslims would try to avoid the census. This, however, overlooks the fact that since the census was the principal means to obtain conscripts, the Ottoman authorities would, and did, take special pains to see that all Muslims subject to conscription were registered.

But it is with the figures for Jews that we are most concerned here. Mr. Porath in his letter now finds that "[t]he Jews were certainly undercounted in that [1893] census . . ."—and for the very reason given by Miss Peters. She stated that she did not rely on the 1893 Ottoman census for the Jews because the census apparently registered only known Ottoman subjects and most Jews were not Ottoman subjects. Mr. Porath now asserts that the count for Jews was wrong because "all the Jewish newcomers were foreign nationals who cherished their privileged status under the capitulatory regime and would have refused to have anything to do with the census authorities."

Thus, having first cast doubt on Miss Peters's reasons for not using the 1893 Ottoman census for Jews, Mr. Porath now concedes that her reasons were valid. He himself gives no figures for Jews, but he also no longer suggests that Miss Peters's figure of almost 60,000 Jews in 1893 is far off the mark.

In his letter, Mr. Porath moreover pays tribute to Arthur Ruppin, calling him "an outstanding demographer and sociologist" who cannot be accused of "superficial work" and whose estimates are "plausible" and based on "thorough analysis." This is the same man disparaged by Farrell in the article to which Mr. Porath had previously referred his readers. Arthur Ruppin (1876-1943) was a towering figure in the history of modern Palestine. He came to Palestine in 1907 and from that time until his death he directed Jewish settlement. He was a world-renowned statistician and sociologist and a full professor at the Hebrew University.

Mr. Porath's comments on Ruppin are welcome. However, he uses Ruppin's name for an odd purpose, namely, to lend authenticity to a total population estimate for Palestine of 689,275 persons. He gives no specific year for this estimate, but it happens to be a figure for the year 1915 (Ruppin, Syrien Als Wirtschaftsgebiet [Harz Berlin/Wien, 1920] pp. 11-16).

It is strange that Mr. Porath should use Ruppin's name in connection with the estimate, because in that book Ruppin states that the figures come mainly from official Ottoman sources and that he makes no claim for their accuracy. In fact, they appear to be figures from the 1914-1915 Ottoman census as adjusted by Ruppin's estimate for Jews. (According to the Survey of Palestine 1946-47, Vol. 1, p. 144, the figure 689,000 comes from "Turkish sources.") But strangest of all is that Mr. Porath should have turned to Ruppin's obscure, hard-to-come-by book for this information when the figure is on p. 425 of Miss Peter's book, where she gives the 1915 population of Palestine as 640,300 non-Jews and 85,000 Jews, for a total of 689,300.

Ruppin might better have been quoted on the question of the al-

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displaced by the creation of Israel in 1948 were not Arabs of long-term residence, but Arabs who had taken up temporary residence in primarily Jewish-settled areas (p. 256). Thus, the massive numbers of Arab refugees created by the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 are much less than Arabs who had not been permanent residents for a prolonged period of time.

Second, short of knowing the population of individual Arab towns and villages in Palestine in 1948 as compared to 1922 or 1931 when censuses were carried out, it is virtually impossible to state categorically how many Palestinians were temporary, semi-permanent, or permanent residents. Other scholars, like Martin Kramer (the New Leader, May 14, 1984), have already correctly questioned Miss Peters's misuse of the tenuous 1893 Ottoman census figures. Her statistical acrobatics for determining the permanency of the Arab population in Palestine are not based upon a credible data base.

Third, when Jews immigrated to Palestine they purchased land directly from near-senior residents. Many Palestinian Arabs themselves sold land directly to Jewish immigrants. Palestinian Arab notables repeatedly lined up to torpedo Miss Peters's work in the respect noted here should, I believe, be unacceptable to any fair-minded person.

Lawrence R. Eno

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Erich Isaac and Rael Jean Isaac in "Whose Palestine?" have, like Yehoshua Porath in the New York Review of Books, begun to correct the unfortunate but growing impression that Joan Peters's book From Time Immemorial is a legitimate work of scholarship with accurate findings. The Isaacs have correctly focused on Miss Peters's piling-on of statistics, her misreading of source materials, and her biased interpretation of apparent fact. But the Isaacs are too gentle in their criticism of her book. Their limited censure only begins to scratch the surface of Miss Peters's misuse and abuse of her sources.

Miss Peters's main assertion is that approximately 86 percent of the Palestinian Arab population displaced by the Jewish land sales was not Arabs of the state. Many of those displaced by Arab land sales, whether they sold land themselves or had land sold "over their heads" by large land owners, became migratory laborers and were attracted to Jewish capital and development. Many others who were agricultural laborers, tenants, manure carriers, plowmen, threshers, and shepherds who worked the land before Jewish land purchase later became per-diem workers, or Miss Peters's migratory laborers in Jewish-settled areas and ultimately the state of Israel.

Besides these errors of interpretation and fact, the core issues for the historian are the research sources and methods employed. Miss Peters's work reveals a startling lack of rigor in using the available source material. There are glaring errors of omission and perhaps commission. After hearing Miss Peters speak four times in a weekend to various Jewish communal organizations and gatherings in Atlanta in late September 1984, my opinion was reinforced that she lacked a familiarity with the key primary sources she claims to have used.

Though From Time Immemorial displays a bulging bibliography, more than 1,800 footnotes, and 400 pages of text, poundage alone is not a criterion for assuming excellence, accuracy, or proof of an author's assertions. Miss Peters may claim that she has not written and had no intention of writing a scholarly book, yet she carefully "drops" the names of some of the most authoritative Middle East historians in her acknowledgments. She has cultivated the assumption that because individuals are helpful in the execution of research, they are, by extension, also automatically supportive of one's findings. The adulation accorded her work by a raft of enthusiasts on the jacket cover of the book seems cleverly designed to imply that her findings have a cloak of legitimacy from very reputable individuals.

In general, Miss Peters has relied mostly on official published materials, selected secondary sources, archival materials (to a lesser degree), and on the archival findings of others. If one applies the criterion of sources used, the findings and scholarship of this book are unsound.
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Miss Peters failed to use important and available archival sources. She failed to use critical non-English sources. She failed to use crucial English-language sources. The footnoting method and support of assumptions made are lackadaisical, careless, and unprofessional.

From what appears in Miss Peters’s bibliography and footnotes, there is very little evidence that either Hebrew- or Arabic-language sources were used extensively. She may have employed others to assist in translating foreign-language material, but to write on the origins of the Arab-Israel conflict with the authoritative nature of her assertive findings without an apparent ability to use the language of the region is a serious shortcoming for some, and for others just scholarly unacceptable.

Miss Peters had used just-published Hebrew materials such as candid memoirs of the Jewish nation-builders, her distorted conclusions about the origins and movement of the Palestinian Arab population would have been clarified. She should have read the personal diaries of Chaim Arlosoroff, Moshe Sharet, David Ben-Gurion, Joseph Weitz, Arthur Ruppin, and others to understand the social dynamic causing Arab in-migration and internal migration within Palestine during the Mandate.

Miss Peters in her acknowledgments claims that she used the documents at the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem. But her footnotes give virtually no indication that she utilized this vast and rich archive with source material in German, Hebrew, French, and Arabic. Miss Peters would have learned from reading these numerous, incredibly detailed, and secret internal memoranda of Jewish Agency departments and affiliated organizations about how Jewish land-settlement organizations planned to handle Arab populations displaced by Arab land sales and Jewish land purchases.

Jews purchased land mainly in the coastal and plains regions of Palestine in which Arab peasant cultivators were sometimes in residence. After a purchase, these cultivators and their families sometimes moved eastward where they settled their families, but more often than not they continued to work in the newly developing Jewish-owned areas, mostly in the valley and plains regions, commuting on a daily or weekly basis.

This simple point would have been confirmed several times for her had she systematically used the files of the Jewish Agency’s Political Department and the Jewish National Fund which contain copious assessments made by Jewish land and settlement experts during the Mandate.

The private candor of men like Menahem Ussishkin, Yehoshua Hankin, Yaakov Thon, Avraham Granovsky, Berl Katzenelson, and others who engaged on a daily basis in the Jewish nation-building process in Palestine would have rounded out Miss Peters’s interpretation of how Arab tenants and agricultural workers displaced by Jewish land purchase were encouraged through monetary compensation to resettle far from existing or future Jewish settlements.

When Miss Peters does refer to sources in foreign languages she usually states in her footnotes that she is citing a source mentioned by another author. This is an acceptable convention except when done so frequently that one questions whether Miss Peters saw or read the original foreign-language source material herself, or merely relied upon another’s judgment. Through-out the book, Miss Peters selectively uses data culled by other researchers to support her assertions.

What is astonishing is the number of times in her footnotes Miss Peters uses a primary source in defense of an assertion, and then notes that the original source is cited in a secondary source which she employed. Of the more than 1,800 footnotes, hundreds of Miss Peters’s supporting claims are stated as “cited by” or “cited in.” There is no reason a writer cannot adopt such a procedure for accumulating information, but secondary sources and the existing body of literature must be utilized judiciously.

Miss Peters even failed to use the most important available English archival and secondary sources. And the ones chosen were used sparingly and selectively. Miss Peters very smartly protects herself against criticism for not using all the necessary source material when she says in her explanatory first footnote of Chapter 13: “The records reproduced in this book . . . are by no means all-inclusive.” If the records she used are not all-inclusive, then her findings must be treated in the same tentative manner.

The central British archival documentation for the Mandate period is the Colonial Office (CO) 733 series. This crucial correspondence from 1921 to the end of the Mandate reveals how British policy was made on virtually all matters concerning Palestine and the evolution of the Jewish National Home, particularly on the four major issues of constant tension: Jewish immigration; Jewish land purchase and Arab land sales; the Palestine Arab majority’s quest for self-determination; and Britain’s desire to maintain its strategic presence in Palestine at the least possible cost in manpower and financial burden to the British taxpayer.

Of the more than 1,800 footnotes in From Time Immemorial, not more than 2 percent cite the CO 733 series! When Miss Peters does cite the CO 733 series for the 1940’s, she does so because another author cited this important record group.

More substance is added to doubt Miss Peters’s rigor and familiarity with the source material in her citations of the CO 733 series, which are often incomplete and therefore of no use to anyone who wants to check her assertions and thus her conclusions. For each file in the CO 733 series there is a number which follows CO 733 and then a reference number following that, so that an accurate and precise citation would read CO 733/191/77211, but Miss Peters on pp. 519 (fns. 7, 10, 12, 14) and 547 (fns. 4 and 10) gives us only two of the three components of the citation, such as CO 733/27137. With this information it is impossible to find the source she is citing. Similarly in her use of the Foreign Office Record Group 371 series on Palestine, she repeatedly gives only a partial listing of the files. On pp. 534 and 535 from fn. 45 to fn. 74, only one citation is in its complete form.

It is impossible to check Miss Peters’s claims and assertions or to reconstruct the use of her source materials because her footnoting is frequently inconsistent, inaccurate, and incomplete. By any standard of measurement, the author’s very intermittent use and inexact footnoting of these two sources is unacceptable even for popular literature. To omit or misuse such important source material is most glaring to any serious student of the Mandate period and the history of modern Israel.

There are other examples in the use of English sources where Miss
Peters could have given a more complete and accurate picture. She underused the important 1931 Census for Palestine; she failed to read thoroughly the Chancellor Papers at Rhodes House at Oxford; and she did not read or understand the important research by Haim Gerber, Ylana Miller, Rachelle Taqqu, Alexander Scholch, and others on population and society in 19th- and 20th-century Palestine.

Miss Peters became too dependent on officially published British sources and insufficiently skeptical of their accuracy. The British, as others have often done, "cooked their statistics" to coincide with a predetermined conclusion for a particular purpose. The Isaacs very carefully point out how Miss Peters failed to read or understand clearly the 1950 Hope Simpson Report. Miss Peters should have been equally skeptical of the data collection and therefore the findings of the Landless Arab Inquiry, the French Reports, the Johnson-Crosbie Report, and the Survey of Palestine which are flawed, but nevertheless used by Miss Peters as benchmark assumptions for her conclusions. Data were repeatedly collected by all sides, sometimes "cleansed" of damaging evidence, and other times just quashed because of their political implications. Ulterior motives prevailed in this earlier period, too, to bolster historical legitimacy, national dominance, and strategic control of Palestine.

In the end, there is little evidence of scholarly fidelity in Miss Peters's method. She does not demonstrate care or diligence in the treatment of official sources. Her book is shoddy both in its workmanship and in its attention to nuance. Miss Peters does not let either all of the available source material or all the facts get in the way of her conclusions. It is particularly troubling to see a research style accepted where chapters are seemingly written by taking carefully chosen chunks of previously accumulated information and then dexterously manipulating them for purposes of authenticity and desired outcome.

The danger that such a book has for scholarship and the enormous body of literature on the origins of the Arab-Israel conflict is that students and others seeking philosophical nourishment will cite her findings as conclusive evidence about the population of Palestine in the period before 1948. Rather than clarifying the complexities of the Arab-Israel conflict's development, this book will add to the layers of meta-truths that already abound in the literature.

From Time Immemorial is not a serious book; its sources and conclusions are tendentious and incomplete. Those who read it should understand that from the outset.

KENNETH W. STEIN

Emory University
Atlanta, Georgia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Two years ago I was asked by the Jewish Book Council for a joint review of two books with a similar subject, From Time Immemorial by Joan Peters and The Claim of Dispossession by Arieh Avneri. I wrote that Peters's book was a "must read" for anyone interested in the history of Jewish settlement in Palestine. He provided important and intelligible statistics on the migration of Arabs into areas of Jewish settlement. Joan Peters covered the same ground, I wrote, in convoluted, hard-to-follow tables. Her book, I said, was badly written and poorly edited. . . .

Daniel Pipes, who reviewed the Peters book in COMMENTARY, has described it recently as "an appallingly crafted book," marred by "eccentric footnotes and a polemical, somewhat hysterical undertone." Eccentric footnotes is a polite way of saying that Miss Peters gives us no fewer than 120 pages of footnotes to impress us with her diligent "scholarship" but that many of the minor and most of the major citations, as the Isaacs and other critics have found, simply do not stand up to examination.

Several months after the Jewish Book Council published my critical review, it awarded the Peters book a prize in the Israel category. I was surprised. I asked one of the judges why she hadn't voted for the Avneri book or for one of several other good books on Israel that I had named. All of them had been written by Israelis. I was told that only American authors are eligible for Jewish Book Council awards and that no other book of consequence on an Israeli subject had been published by an American author in 1984. I agreed that there was nothing else worth considering by an American writer. Under the peculiar conditions of the Jewish Book Council, Joan
Peters received a prize by default. The Isaacs take me to task for stating that the Peters book is a "Herut polemic." My first hint of the anti-Labor bias of the book was the foolish assertion, repeated several times, that Jewish employers in Mandatory Palestine were forced to hire Arabs because of British restrictions on Jewish immigration. It was the word "forced" that hit me in the gut. I am not an expert on Jewish employment in Palestine, but I was a reporter on the Palestine Post from 1934 to 1937 and I have some knowledge of how Jewish employers acted then. There were pockets of Jewish unemployment. The Histadrut tried to find jobs for unemployed Jewish labor by carrying on a struggle for avodah Ivrit, the employment of Jews and not Arabs in Jewish enterprises. This campaign was sometimes violent and largely unsuccessful.

Those Jewish employers who preferred to hire lower-paid Arabs in order to save a pound or two were the financial backers of the anti-Histadrut parties, the Revisionists and the General Zionists. These parties have evolved into the Herut and the Liberals, now united in the Likud coalition. Miss Peters's assertion that these Jewish employers were forced to hire lower-paid Arabs may be part of what Leon Wieseltier has described in a prize-winning article in the New Republic (November 11, 1985) as a Herut campaign to rewrite the history of Jewish settlement, eliminating or distorting the Histadrut's major role.

In all of Miss Peters's seven years of research, she could find no record of the campaign for avodah Ivrit, which was a major cause of strife in the Yishuv for many years. In her 120 pages of footnotes and her 36 pages of index, the word Histadrut cannot be found.

Miss Peters may have attempted to rewrite history. Two years after her book was fraudulently promoted into best-sellerdom and long-mooted into best-sellerdom and long-cited for the jacket blurbs and promotional ads, have committed a fraud on the reading public?

The associates of the Isaacs in Americans for a Safe Israel, who vigorously promoted this book, would not agree. Harry Louis Sel- den, to give just one example, wrote in the Washington Jewish Week: "In some 600 pages of diligent research and meticulously documented narrative [Miss Peters] establishes beyond any doubt that . . . [the Palestinians] are nothing more than parvenu squatters." Miss Peters cannot escape the blame for Selden's conclusion. She never calls the Arabs "squatters," but this is the impression she tries to leave her readers with.

There are now close to four million Arabs who call themselves Palestinians. Over two million are under the jurisdiction of Israel. To deny them any legitimate rights to the land prohibits any basis for the settlement of the conflict.

Of particular interest to me as chairman of the American Friends of Neve Shalom, which is about five years old, has done yeoman work in bringing together Israeli Arab and Jewish youth, erasing stereotypes, and instilling the seeds of peaceful coexistence. COMMENTARY would do better to devote an article to a description of this pioneering school, which recently hosted Catholics and Protestants from Northern Ireland who came to Israel to learn about Neve Shalom's innovative methods, than to publish an article on a poor and harmful two-year-old-book.

The Isaacs deny that the book is harmful. They write that despite Miss Peters's egregious errors, her book has performed a valuable service. For a contrary opinion, may I quote Justin McCarthy, chairman of the history department of the University of Louisville? The Kentucky professor attended an academic conference on Palestinian demography at Haifa University in June. Miss Peters was invited, I am told, but did not attend. According to the Jerusalem Post, McCarthy said: "Her figures have been cited by American Zionists and now that they are being disproved they will hurt Israel because critics will say you lied about this; you probably lie about other things too."

I would like to add a personal word to the Isaacs. I witnessed the invasion of Haifa by the Hauranies in the 1930's, which, as Miss Peters points out, was condoned by the British authorities. Unskilled Haurani laborers were welcomed in the Jewish sector, notwithstanding Histadrut opposition, just as unskilled workers from the West Bank and Gaza are the construction workers, dishwashers, and garbage collectors in Israel today. The Hauranies squatted in tin shacks without water, sanitation, or municipal services on public land on the outskirts of Haifa. On a much smaller scale, the Haurani camp resembled Crossroads outside Capetown which the South African authorities keep trying to destroy.

The British finally bulldozed the
From Time Immemorial and speciousness of the smears, Dissecting the disingenuousness coterie of political zealots led by

tion directed against Joan Peters's a superb analysis of the carefully Isaac and Rael Jean Isaac contains

Pleasantville, New York

Israel. There are no squatter camps on the outskirts of Israeli cities. Israeli law forbids workers from the terri-
tories to stay overnight in Israel. They must commute from their homes daily. The bus trip can add up to four hours to the work-
ing day and the fare can be a good-
ly slice of their wages.

Enemies of Israel have likened this regulation to South Africa's apartheid law on controlled resi-
dence. They are wrong and will be wrong so long as Israel does not annex the territories, and the Arabs from the territories remain guest workers with no residence rights.

But annexation of the territories for security and national reasons is the chief plank of Americans for a Safe Israel, of which the Isaacs are leading members. If the terri-
tories were annexed, only an ac-
tual apartheid regulation could prevent these Arabs from living closer to their jobs. Only an apostle-
heid regulation could prevent the rise of squatter camps of tin and plastic on the outskirts of Israeli

cities.

This is the lesson I have learned
from the Haurani invasion of the 1930's that Miss Peters makes so much of. I recommend it to the Isaacs.

JESSE ZEL LURIE
Pleasantville, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

“Whose Palestine?” by Erich Isaac and Rael Jean Isaac contains a superb analysis of the carefully
crafted campaign of disinformation directed against Joan Peters's From Time Immemorial by a small
coterie of political zealots led by Noam Chomsky and Edward Said. Dissecting the disingenuous and speciousness of the smears, the Isaacs conclude, rightly, that Miss Peters's book, with its nearly
2,000 citations, has exploded the

myth of the Palestinian Arabs as a
nation living on its soil “from time
immemorial,” and is therefore a profound contribution to the current debate on the Middle East.

Still, one would have hoped that the Isaacs would have highlighted the fact that the screams of the book's detractors and their arith-
metical sleight-of-hand were deliber-
ate diversionary tactics to present From Time Immemorial as a book only about numbers. By hewing to that numerical frame of reference for so much of their article, the Isaacs—unintentionally, to be sure—dance to the tune set by the smear campaign. Though stating at the outset that several themes of equal importance are set forth in From Time Immemorial, the Isaacs then focus on the popula-
tion study, which constitutes only about one-fourth of the book. They devote an inordinate amount of space to numerical items, most of which make no fundamental dif-

terence—a discrepancy of two or three thousand in population, be-
ing of such small magnitude, is of no overall significance.

Moreover, before publication Miss Peters checked her demo-
graphics with Philip Hauser, one of the world’s most eminent demog-
raphers. One would have thought the Isaacs would have reported that From Time Immemorial contains demographic notes discussing and approving its demographic meth-
odology, prepared and signed by Hauser.

One thing is clear from all the disinformational pieces about From Time Immemorial . . . and from the excellent article by the Isaacs: the very truth about what is in the book can be manipulated and altered in much the same way that the myth of the “Palestinians from time immemorial” has itself been propagated.

HERBERT TARR
Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Whether Joan Peters's book is correct in its major theses is totally irrelevant to the peace process in the Middle East. Were a settle-
ment to be decided by some objec-
tive judicial body, and if that deci-
sion were to be based, at least in part, on claims of prior occupation of the land, the questions addressed by Miss Peters and the Isaacs would be important—perhaps even cru-

ial.

But even the most naive observer

must realize that the conflict be-

tween Israel and the Arabs is not going to be resolved, even in part, by whether there were more Jews or more Arabs in some part of Pal-
estine in 1880 or 1920. It is not go-
ing to be resolved, even in part, by how many of the local Arabs had grandparents who emigrated from some part of Syria in 1934. (How many angels can dance the hora on the tip of a pin?)

The critical fact for politicians is that the Arabs living in Pale-
tine believe that they are Pales-
tinians. Whether historians deter-
mine that their ancestors came from Syria or were born locally is not going to change that belief. Can someone really believe that if they were demonstrated without a doubt that all the Arabs in Pales-
tine are descendants of immigrants from some other place, these Arabs would then give up their claim to be Palestinians and their claim to Palestinian territory?

Let's stop arguing about whether there is, in fact, a Palestinian people . . . and get on with settling the problem rather than arguing about which historian is correct. Political leaders—and commentators—must deal with perceptions as they are, and not as we would like them to be.

ROBERT J. SCHREIBER
Stamford, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Last fall I helped organize a talk by Joan Peters on the campus of the University of Virginia, and was most disappointed when there were no effective responses to later de-
nunciations of her in the national press. This has now been rectified by "Whose Palestine?"

If Yehoshua Porath and others wish to continue to claim that Arab migration to Palestine is not been insignificant, the ball is in their court to produce some demo-

graphic evidence for this hypo-
thesis, rather than continue ipse
dixit statements to this effect.

JONATHAN S. MARK
Charlottesville, Virginia

ERICH ISAAC and RAEL JEAN ISAAC

write:

Michael Curtis has touched on a vital issue and the letters to Com-

mentary bear out its validity. The major theses of Joan Peters's book have been lost in a welter of charges that have little or nothing
to do with what she has written. Given this fact, it is important to
remember her theme at the outset: as her title, *From Time Immemorial*, underlines, she is seeking to counter the impact of a propaganda campaign which claims that the Arab-speaking people of Palestine are an autochthonous population, a nation that survived innumerable invasions, including that of the biblical Hebrews, until its dispossession first by Zionist settlers and then by the forces of the nascent Jewish state.

To emphasize this is not to deny that *From Time Immemorial* has serious flaws. These (contrary to Yehoshua Porath) we made no attempt to minimize. Indeed, some of the problems we pointed out had eluded Miss Peters's earlier critics.

But the flaws of the book, for all too many of its critics, have become the occasion for the release of hostilities toward Zionism, toward Israel, toward political parties within which Israel and world Jewry, in some cases toward Judaism itself. And there is a ferocity in some of the attacks that has little to do with concern for standards of scholarship. In his letter, Norman G. Finkelstein, for example, refers to his unpublished manuscript *Protocols of Joan Peters*. The very title is a cruel defamation, implying that Miss Peters has written a version of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. That forgery, widely circulated in the Arab world, continues to be used to legitimize the extermination of the Jews. Finkelstein's denouncements, by his use of the title, implies that Miss Peters has written a forgery whose intent is to extinguish Palestinian Arabs. Similarly, the title of his published article (in the far-left *In These Times*) is "A Spectacular Fraud." Joan Peters, a journalist who undertook a massive scholarly effort involving the techniques of several disciplines, an undertaking that would have daunted highly trained specialists, is not credited with a capacity for mistakes—only with malignant intent to deceive and misrepresent. Yet if inaccuracy bespeaks fraud, what is one to say of the "mistakes" (of which there are many) in Mr. Finkelstein's own article and letter?

For Mr. Porath, Miss Peters's book provides an excuse for an exercise in revisionist history. American fashions come to Israel late, often only after they are already out of fashion in the land of their birth. Here revisionist history focused on alleged U.S. responsibility for starting the cold war. Now that revisionist history has been discredited in this country, it has begun to flourish in Israel, one of its themes being the alleged primary Jewish responsibility for the Arab exodus in 1948.

If for Mr. Porath Miss Peters's book provides an avenue into revisionist history, for Jesse Zel Lurie it offers an excuse to continue a stale ideological campaign against the Revisionist and General Zionist parties of the pre-state *Yishuv*, and to warn darkly of the consequences should Israel annex territories conquered in 1967, again a subject on which Miss Peters's book is wholly silent.

To comment specifically on individual letters: Norman G. Finkelstein denies our allegation that he has incorrectly added 40,000 Arabs to Miss Peters's demographic projection for her Area IV. But this is precisely what he does. He ignores the fact that nomads were included in the 1893 population figures but separated out in the 1947 figures. Area IV, which included the Negev, had a sizable population of nomads (48,000), which is listed clearly and properly by Miss Peters in separate columns for 1947 on p. 425. It is only by ignoring these nomads that Mr. Finkelstein comes up with an alleged figure of 40,000 Arabs that Miss Peters has not accounted for. (He comes up with 40,000 rather than 48,000—the number of nomads—because he wrongly multiplies by 2.7, rather than by 2.795, the growth factor Miss Peters uses.)

As for the Anglo-American Survey of Palestine, the other illustration we used in our article of Mr. Finkelstein's unfair attack, it is instructive to look at his original comments in *In These Times* on Miss Peters's use of the Survey. He offers quotations from Miss Peters on one side, his own observations on them on the other:

*Peters*: What the official Anglo-American Survey of 1945-46 definitely disclosed . . . is that . . . tens of thousands of "Arab illegal immigrants" [were] recorded as having been "brought" into . . . Palestine . . . (p. 379, emphasis in original).

*Finkelstein*: (a) a good illustration of how Peters handles figures—"3,800" recorded Arab immigrants becomes "tens of thousands"; (b) Peters's falsified presentation (pp. 378-79) of the—for her purposes—crucial section of the Survey in which this quote appears is in a class all its own.

We pointed out that the Survey provided evidence of far more than 3,800 immigrants. And lo and behold, Mr. Finkelstein's letter indicates that he too knows that his original statement was false, for he now talks of the Survey's reference to an additional 4,000 illegal immigrants employed by the War Department and the Royal Air Force. He also now concedes the Survey's references to "considerable numbers" for which "no estimates are available" recruited by private contractors or entering "individually." His quarrel now seems to be with Miss Peters's use of the word "rework," and the implication he derives from her text that tens of thousands entered "under official arrangements."

Miss Peters can indeed be faulted, here as elsewhere, for overblown rhetoric and a sloppy use of language. But, as the context of her remarks makes clear, her intention was to emphasize that at the very time Britain was barring the gates of Palestine to the Jews of Europe, tens of thousands of Arabs, whether under official or unofficial arrangements, were entering Palestine to fill labor needs resulting from the war. (And indeed the Survey unintentionally highlights Britain's appalling behavior while Hitler enacted his Final Solution. The Survey declares that "His Majesty's Government decided, on grounds of policy, not to facilitate in any way immigration of Jewish or other refugees from Germany or territory occupied by Germany. This was interpreted to mean that no facilities for Palestine were to be granted to any person who left Germany or German-occupied territory after the date of the outbreak of the war." ) Ironically, the first persons to be killed by British bullets after the outbreak of World War II were two refugees aboard the *Tiger Hill*, which ran the British blockade of Palestine.

Moreover, our reading of the Survey does indeed support the conclusion that the 10,000 workers constituted a separate group. The Survey puts that number under the heading of "those working for contractors engaged on military . . . or in other civil employment," a category it specifically differentiates.
from "Those employed directly by the War Department and the Royal Air Force," whose numbers it reports separately.

On balance, who then would seem guilty of misrepresentation? Miss Peters, because of her awkward use of language? Or Mr. Finkelstein, who in his original article cites as one of Miss Peters's "crude and shameless falsifications" that the Survey's 3,800 Arab immigrants had become "tens of thousands"?

Mr. Finkelstein makes a major issue out of Joan Peters's Area IV, even seeking to publish an article on the alleged 110,000 "missing immigrants" from this region, which, he claims, render her case "trivial." First, as we have seen, Miss Peters is correct in calculating 70,000 potential out-migrants, since Mr. Finkelstein, in his recalculations, ignores the nomads, and her Area IV, which comprised chiefly the Negev and western and central Galilee, had a large number of Bedouin (mainly in the Negev). Even if 70,000 Arabs had migrated from Area IV to Area I and then become refugees, her case would not have been "trivial."

In practice it is most unlikely that this happened. The nomads of the Negev did not become sedentary dwellers in the Mandatory period and thus did not become out-migrants to Area I. There were peasant villages in the northern Negev but these were largely settled by Egyptian fellahin. This area experienced little natural growth, in part because of its misfortune in serving as a frontier zone between the feuding Qaisi and Yamani factions. The Galilee had an important Christian population component, which meant that in practice its natural growth rate was lower than that of purely Muslim areas. Thus it is unlikely that there would have been even 70,000 in-migrants to account for. There were no doubt some refugees who came from Area IV, although, needless to say, this did not necessarily mean they had been living in Palestine "from time immemorial."

Mr. Finkelstein devotes much space in his article to an allegedly sinister plot by Miss Peters to "hide" those 70,000 migrants because she provides a table in which she "forgets" to add the in-migrants from Area IV. But the purpose of that particular table is to show how many Arab in-migrants came into the areas that became Israel, and not where they came from. Since Area IV does not show Arab in-migration it is not included. Mr. Finkelstein's criticism is foolish.

As for Mr. Finkelstein's explanation for the failure of Harper & Row to make changes in subsequent editions of the book as a result of his criticisms, much of the blame is his. It was obvious to anyone that Mr. Finkelstein had no interest in improving the book. The few criticisms that had merit were the more easily ignored because of the vicious tone of the attack and the heavy admixture of false,
even absurd, charges. Mr. Finkelstein claims that if the errors were corrected nothing would remain of Miss Peters's thesis, and that we admit this when we refer to the many references to the Hope Simpson Report as a "lethal systemic error." Says Mr. Finkelstein: "What does this mean if not that this 'error' goes to the very heart of Miss Peters's argument...?" What we wrote was that by constantly referring back to the Hope Simpson Report, Miss Peters converted a "confined mistake, easily correctable in a later edition of the book," into a lethal systemic error. The error does not go to the heart of her argument—this, we tried to show in our article, has ample support. It is only because of Miss Peters's propensity to repeat herself that the error does substantial damage to her text, which would indeed require considerable rewriting.

We scarcely like to dignify Mr. Finkelstein's charges of deliberate deception by rebuttal. He allows that we offer an "ingenious" explanation for Miss Peters's misinterpretation of the passage in Hope Simpson. Actually our explanation was simple: Miss Peters walked into a trap set by Hope Simpson for quite different purposes. Hope Simpson had no sympathy for the Zionist enterprise (at the end of World War II he was still arguing that any Jewish desire for national existence could be amply fulfilled in the Soviet province of Birobidgean) and wanted Jewish immigration stopped. He disposes of the awkward (for him) problem of Arab illegal immigration by an ingenious maneuver: smuggling in two paragraphs under the heading "Evasion of the Frontier Control" in the section on Jewish immigration. It was very easy for Miss Peters to be misled into thinking Hope Simpson is still referring to Arabs when immediately following this he jumps to the case of the pseudo-traveler.

As for the other error which Mr. Finkelstein finds clinching proof of "deliberate deception," no one seeking to "disinform" would make the mistake painfully obvious.

Mr. Finkelstein says at the outset of his letter that we argue that the central theses of From Time Immemorial are "generally sound" and he promises to take this matter up after dealing with the issue of his own scholarship and Miss Peters's alleged "fraud." But when he gets to this (No. 3), Mr. Finkelstein avoids the subject. We are back to Miss Peters's population projections for her Areas I through V. And here Mr. Finkelstein simply fails to comprehend what Miss Peters has done. (In all fairness, Miss Peters's presentation leaves much to be desired.) Mr. Finkelstein argues that Miss Peters's projections almost fully account for Palestine's Arab population in 1947 by natural increase, thus nullifying her argument for substantial immigration. (He finds her figures account for all but 44,520 of the Arabs in Palestine in 1947 by natural increase.)

First of all, there are no missing 44,520 Arabs to be accounted for by immigration. Mr. Finkelstein once again multiplies by 2.7 instead of by 2.795, the growth factor Miss Peters uses.

What Miss Peters does, as Mr. Finkelstein should have realized, is to divide the number of Arabs in western Palestine in 1947 by the number in the same area in 1893—that gives her a value of 2.795 which she calls natural growth. Now the components of population growth are fertility, mortality, in-migration, and out-migration. Change of population over time is the result both of natural increase (the balance between birth and death) and net migration (the balance between in-migration and out-migration). The factor of 2.795 by which the population of 1947 is larger than the Ottoman census population of 1893 does not tell us to what extent the growth was by natural increase and to what extent by migration. To obtain reasonable values for immigration it is necessary to deduce reproductive change values from the growth figures. Though this was presumably done (see Philip Hauser's remarks, pp. 427-28), the method by which relevant birth and death statistics were derived, especially for the pre-Mandate years, is not explained. Here, as in other parts of the book, tighter editorial guidance might have prevented some of the questions raised.

The growth factor of 2.795 corresponds to an annual natural growth rate of 1.95 percent for 1893-1947 (determined either by compounding or exponential growth formulas). This would be an extraordinarily high figure for an undeveloped country in the first half of that period while Palestine was under Turkish rule. To put it in perspective, the average annual growth rate for developing countries in the period from 1850-1900 was 0.53 percent and from 1900-1920 was 0.52 percent, much below the rates for industrialized countries of that time. If we remove from consideration the high growth rate of 1922-47 (the product of government health services, plus effects of Jewish sanitation and health measures, plus immigration), we obtain an average annual growth for the Ottoman period of 1.2 percent. This strongly suggests very high Arab immigration in the 1890's and first decades of this century.

When it comes to the substance of Miss Peters's thesis—high rates of Arab in-migration and immigration into the predominantly Jewish areas—the best Mr. Finkelstein can do is to quote from a report in Haaretz about a conference at Haifa University. While Mr. Finkelstein may have Haaretz before him, we have the conference papers before us. And nothing could be further from the truth than to say, as Mr. Finkelstein does, that "virtually all of the participants dismissed Miss Peters's demographic theses." The only conference paper to refer specifically to Miss Peters's book was given by Arnon Soffer, a geographer who heads the Arab-Jewish Center of Haifa University. Far from dismissing Miss Peters's thesis, Soffer confirms it. It is Mr. Porath's demographic thesis that he rejects. Thus, in his concluding remarks Soffer says: "The facts brought forth here as to the scope of the Arab migration to the city of Haifa, the matter of Bedouin penetration into Palestine, and the waves of Egyptian migration all point to a rejection of Yehoshua Porath's arguments concerning the cessation of Bedouin penetration and natural increase as being the decisive factor (at least for the coastal plain). And this is what he has to say about Joan Peters's thesis: "All these findings underscore the fact that the coastal plain, like the other plains, was [an] area of population of out-migration of Zionist settlement..." At least as far as this important sector of Palestine, then, Joan Peters is right: the area was empty, the Arab population there is relatively new."

A number of the other conference papers, without referring to Miss Peters, reinforced her argu-
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ment. Thus papers by geography professor David Grossman of Bar Ilan University and anthropologist Gideon Kressel of Ben-Gurion University provided new material on Egyptian immigration to 19th-century Palestine. Daphne Tsimhoni's paper, "Demographic Trends of the Christian Population of Palestine during the Mandatory Period," reinforced Miss Peters's argument by showing that "rather than taking the usual form of migration from villages to towns, the major urbanization trend of Christians during the Mandate manifested itself in migration from the inland, traditional small towns to the expanding economic centers of the coastal towns, Haifa and Jaffa, or to the capital, Jerusalem." There were three papers on Arab migration to Haifa, by Joseph Vachnitz, Yossi Ben-Artzi, and Mahmoud Yazbak, the first of these summing up the reason for this special focus: "Of all towns in Palestine, Haifa absorbed the largest number of Arab migrants-most of them villagers."

Whence then did this total misinterpretation of the conference arise, fostered not only by Messrs. Finkelstein and Lurie (neither of whom was there), but by Arthur Hertzberg (also not there), who brought up the conference in the New York Times Book Review as a way of attacking Miss Peters in a review of another, unrelated book? Fred Gottheil of the University of Illinois, who attended the conference, has an explanation.

During the informal closing symposium Miss Peters's book was discussed and some participants were critical (this served as the source both of the Haaretz article and one in the Jerusalem Post), although others, himself included, defended the book.

To understand the reactions of Israeli scholars to the book it is necessary to keep in mind that there are two issues: Miss Peters's thesis and her scholarly performance. There are Israeli scholars who fear that the credibility of the thesis will be undermined by her mistakes. Soffer noted that Miss Peters deserved some of the criticism her book received, but credited it with "renewing the discussion revolving around the demographics of Palestine from the second half of the 19th century on." He also noted that her critics, in trying to produce proof to refute her claims, "fell into a trap on several issues."

Mr. Finkelstein cites Yehoshua Ben Arieh as "the most authoritative scholar in attendance." He has no reason to single him out from the other contributors except that (he might think) Ben Arieh would agree with him about the Peters book. We have not spoken to Ben Arieh, but judging from his paper, which reinforces Miss Peters's thesis of the emptiness of the land settled by Jews, there is little reason to believe he has common ground with Mr. Finkelstein.

Mr. Finkelstein concludes with the claim that Miss Peters asserts there were 92,300 non-Jews in the Jewish-settled areas in 1899, while her own table shows there were 218,000 non-Jews "in the slice of Palestine that became Israel." This is a neat sleight of hand. Miss Peters makes it clear that she is talking about her Area I when she speaks of 92,300 non-Jews, and not all the area that became Israel (which includes her Areas II and IV).

Based on his many errors, we would, were we to follow his own example, raise a cry against Mr. Finkelstein of "fraud," "hoax," and "misrepresentation." But at least in part he seems to be guilty of deliberate deception than of ignorance. While we are willing to give him the benefit of the doubt, the familiar injunction comes to mind: "Physician, heal thyself."

With regard to Yehoshua Porath: Mr. Porath now claims that his worries about Miss Peters's book stem from his "Zionism"—her presentation plays into Arab hands. The reason he offers is astonishingly silly. If both Jews and Arabs left their traditional homes "as a result of pressure exerted upon them," says Mr. Porath, "the best solution to their plight would lie in the return of all of them to their original places." But why should this follow? Why should not the best solution lie in each group's being absorbed in its place of refuge? Does Mr. Porath seriously believe that because Hindus and Muslims were both forced from their traditional homes in 1947, the "best solution" is to send 9 million Hindus (and their descendants) from India back to Pakistan and Bangladesh and to send 7.5 million Muslims from Pakistan and 1 million from Bangladesh back to India? Obviously Iraq, Libya, Yemen, etc. have no intention of absorbing large numbers of Israeli Jews, and have no worries that their propaganda ploys will be taken seriously by former Jewish residents in their right minds.

Mr. Porath's ostensible concern for the good name of Zionism becomes even more suspect as we move to his elaboration of the Haganah's "Daled Plan," upon which much of the revisionist history claiming Jewish responsibility for the Arab exodus of 1948 is based. We have here what looks much more like an effort to besmirch Israel's good name than to preserve it. In his original article in the New York Review of Books Mr. Porath is careful to say that the existence of the plan did not constitute evidence that it was carried out. But now, in his letter, he goes further and says "an analysis of the actual developments indicates that the plan was indeed carried out," and there were "large-scale" expulsions of Arabs.

Actually the plan was part of the general Haganah effort, before the creation of the state, to secure communications along strategic arteries. Mr. Porath himself admits in his original article that the plan only talked of expelling Arabs where they engaged in violent opposition to the Haganah, and in his letter provides a reasonable account of why it was so important for the nascent state to secure strategic continuity. Nonetheless, historians of Israel's War of Independence are quite correct (Mr. Porath was right the first time) that the plan was carried out. The vast majority of the Arabs who left came from Haifa, Jaffa, Tiberias, etc. without reference to Plan Daled. Frightened, demoralized, their leaders having fled early on (not a single member of the Arab Higher Committee was left in Palestine as of March 1948), the Arabs were for the most part eager to leave for areas under the control of fellow-Arabs as the Jews took over. Even in places like Haifa, where there was a strong effort by the Jewish leadership to persuade the Arabs to remain, it was unavailing.

Nataniel Lorch, the military historian and author of Israel's War of Independence, points out the obvious—that it is the natural inclination of any sane person, whenever a battle is going on, to be somewhere else. Lorch notes the pressures exerted by Jews seeking to leave Jerusalem when it was un-
der siege. There were also Jewish refugees as a result of the war: not one Jew stayed behind in territories captured by the Arabs. Lorch asks: "One wonders what role was played by Arab projection of patterns of conduct. Did they expect that their fate under Jewish rule would not be different from that which would have befallen Jews if the situation were reversed?"

But whether or not Plan Daled was carried out, why does Mr. Porath place so much emphasis on it? If we did not talk about Plan Daled, it was not out of embarrassment over its supposed evil essence, as he suggests, but because we failed to see its relevance to Miss Peters's thesis. We still do. In this case, Miss Peters's book has simply provided an occasion for the venting of the idea current in certain Israeli coteries that there was a pristine "pure Zionism" exemplified by one of the forefathers—Ahad Haam is a favorite—before its corruption by those less pure, and above all by the state. The animus that some make no bones about, Mr. Porath feels the need to disguise. And so, when he is through with his talk of the need to recognize that there were large-scale expulsions of Arab civilian populations, he piously announces that "those who began the war are responsible for its consequences."

Moreover, while we are accused of failing to talk about Plan Daled, whose connection to the Peters book is, to put it mildly, tenuous, we wonder why Mr. Porath chose to ignore our discussion of Arie Avneri's The Claim of Dispossession, which in many respects bears out Miss Peters's thesis, and with which we assume he is at least familiar, given Avneri's acknowledgment of his help in the foreword. (Although we have not been taken to task for this, we were wrong in saying that Miss Peters's book antedated Avneri's; this was true of the English, not the Hebrew, edition.) Of course a population can double—or even triple—in thirty years. The question is what happened, not what can happen. And while there is no question that Arab nativity rates were high during the Mandate, there is a large body of evidence that there was significant Arab immigration into Palestine (as well as some out-migration) during that period.

But the best exposure of Mr. Porath's double game is in Lawrence R. Eno's letter. Although we had noted in our article that Mr. Porath had left the impression that the Ottoman census figures of 1899 for Jews were correct (later denying he believed this), we had failed to follow Mr. Porath's devious path which Mr. Eno so expertly uncovers.

With regard to Kenneth W. Stein: Most of Mr. Stein's rather pompous criticism involves complaints that Miss Peters did not use (or "underused" or "failed to read thoroughly") all the available source material, did not understand the intricacies of footnoting archival material, did not show equal skepticism for all English reports and collections of data, and did not know the languages of the region.

Yes, it would have been better if a distinguished scholar had undertaken the task that was left by default to an amateur. But when Mr. Stein accuses Miss Peters of misrepresenting the social and political history of 19th- and 20th-century Palestine, we find his reasoning weak. Since most Jews immigrated to Palestine, Mr. Stein argues, one could equally well claim that they had no right to settle there. Surely this is willfully to mis Miss Peters's point. The Jews set out to recreate their ancestral national home in what was at the time a largely depopulated land. After World War I that effort had the international sanction of the League of Nations and was to be carried out under the guidance of the British Mandatory government. To this was added, as Nazism gathered force, what Jabotinsky called the claim of starvation (as against what he called the claims of appetize of the Arab world, with its multiplicity of states). But as the need grew, so did the unwillingness of the British to carry out the terms of the Mandate, and eventually they slammed the doors shut to Jews.

Mr. Stein in his The Land Question in Palestine, 1917-1939 offers a remarkably muddled interpretation of these events. His focus is on Jewish land purchases and the Arab (and British) effort to stop them. As his letter indicates, he provides exhaustive evidence that virtually all Arab leaders, while declaring publicly against land sales to Jews, privately persisted in selling land to the Zionist organizations. (His letter fails to mention that his book offers some corroboration of Miss Peters's thesis. He notes, for example, that in 1931 there was already a noticeable increase of males migrating from the central range to the coastal plain and that while population density increased 25 percent in the central range from 1922 to 1931, the coastal plain's population density increased 50 percent in the same period.)

Mr. Stein's interpretation of his material is that the Zionists "manipulated the British bureaucracy in Palestine" and "were enormously successful at nullifying attempts to curtail the development of the national home." As for the Arabs, "there was little that a generally poor, unorganized, unsophisticated, and splintered Arab community could do to defend itself." All this is from the "conclusions" of the book. Would anyone dream from this that the end result of this "enormously successful" effort was the British White Paper of 1939, the end to land sales and the end to Jewish immigration? While Miss Peters did indeed make errors of interpretation in the course of her book, they are as nothing compared to the massive and amazing misinterpretation that lies at the heart of Mr. Stein's study.

One cannot help feeling there is something else at work here that feeds such extraordinary misperceptions, some sort of fashionable "progressive" ideological filter through which historical events are passed. Zionist organizations made their purchases from landowners (the very term causes delicious shudders of revulsion), not from the tenants who "worked" the soil. (Never mind that those tenants, after the sale, often put forth ludicrous claims and demands extorting additional sums beyond those allocated for their resettlement.) What would the Zionist land-purchasing agents have had to do to satisfy the cranky conscience of modern chroniclers like Mr. Stein? Presumably they should have given up their idea of a national revival and a return of the Jewish masses to Zion. They should have come to Palestine not to satisfy their own needs, not to secure the physical survival of the Jews, but as facilitators for Arab class warfare and "anti-imperialist" struggles.

With regard to Jesse Zel Lurie: Here we are back to pre-state ideo.
logical battles with a vengeance, as Mr. Lurie finds evidence of nefarious intent in Miss Peters's assertion that Jewish employers were "forced" to hire Arab labor (that word "forced" hit him "in the gut"). To imagine that Miss Peters, who can at most be accused here (as elsewhere) of oversimplification, is part and parcel of a "Herut campaign to rewrite the history of Jewish settlement" suggests that Mr. Lurie's obsessions have overcome his common sense. (Incidentally, Mr. Lurie, with his emphasis upon Arab-Israel understanding, could be expected to show greater ambivalence about "avodah l'irtzit." Whatever its virtues from a Zionist viewpoint, it was the occasion for much tension between Arab and Jewish workers. For Arabs it was a campaign to put them out of work, and their indignation was noted by him as the claims of the left wing of Zionist labor leaders that they were being saved from "exploitation."

Mr. Lurie's "proof" that Miss Peters is part of a campaign to downgrade the Histadrut boils down to his assertion that in all her 120 pages of footnotes and her 36 pages of index, the word Histadrut cannot be found. But inspection of the index shows that neither are "Revisionists," "General Zionists," or even "Religious Parties" mentioned. The only reference to a "Labor party" in the index is to the British Labor party. The prestate Zionist parties and movements are simply not part of the subject of her book.

Mr. Lurie's view of the book as a "Herut polemic" is the more extraordinary because the theme of Miss Peters's book, as we noted in our article, is more in tune with traditional Labor ideology. The foremost concern of Revisionist Zionism was with achievement of international legitimation for Jewish national rights in Palestine and with using political means toward that end. Labor placed much more emphasis on the settlement of the land and the rights derived therefrom, the theme underlying From Time Immemorial.

Although Mr. Lurie starts his letter with strong praise for Arieh Avneri's book, he did not read it carefully. He claims that by using Avneri as confirmation for Miss Peters's thesis we have provided a new interpretation according to which the insignificant number of "100,000 Arabs (or fewer than 20,000 heads of families) were added to the native Arabs by migration in the Mandatory era." But Avneri wrote that "the country absorbed 100,000 legal and illegal Arab immigrants and their offspring." Given the high rate of natural increase that everyone concedes in the Mandate period, and the tendency of young males to migrate in search of work, the numbers would have been very much higher by 1948. This does not include immigration prior to 1920. And Miss Peters focuses equally on "in-migration," the movement from the predominantly Arab part of western Palestine (which became the Jordanian "West Bank" in 1948) to the Jewish-settled area.

Both Messrs. Lurie and Stein profess to find something sinister in the public's active interest in Miss Peters's book. Mr. Lurie calls it a "campaign to put them out of work, the number of individuals..."

Mr. Lurie seems to feel he has the key to a settlement in the School for Peace at Neve Shalom. While one can sympathize with his hopes, it is difficult to share his view that personal contact, even friendship, along lines where there is communal conflict, will solve that conflict. Such efforts have a very long history, and an equally long history of heartbreaking failure. Alas, one suspects that Neve Shalom will be even worse than useless, perpetuating and encouraging among Jews a species of masochism familiar to us in this country among those groups who find the United States guilty of obstructing peace and justice worldwide.

As far as Mr. Lurie's references to the Hauranis and apartheid are concerned, he apparently believes
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that the addition of the Arabs of Judea and Samaria to the population of Israel would pose more serious problems than would be posed by turning them over to Arab sovereignty. The dilemmas posed by Israel's Arab population for the future of Israel are real, whether within or without the borders of 1949. A variety of approaches was considered long before the Zionists were left with a fraction of the territory promised them, ranging from population transfers (which, incidentally, were advocated by many Zionist Labor intellectuals and became, much to their amazement, a plank in the British Labor party's platform in 1944) to a bi-national state. This is not a topic that can be adequately addressed here, and it has nothing to do with Miss Peters's book. One might, in passing, point out that those who see analogies between Israel and South Africa care little whether the territories are formally annexed or remain under Israeli military rule.

To Herbert Tarr: We focused primarily on Miss Peters's population study because, as we said in our article, that has been seen as its major contribution. As for Philip Hauser's demographic notes, the responsibility for the execution of a research design lies with a book's author.

In response to Robert J. Schreiber: Mr. Schreiber takes the view that questions of historical reality are a form of irrelevant casuistry. What matters is present belief: if the Arabs believe they are Palestinians, it is this perception alone that has practical relevance. While we would certainly not deny that perceptions of reality have political relevance, to treat perceptions as the only reality worth examination is to embark upon a path that we doubt Mr. Schreiber would want to follow very far. To take one example: the sect of Black Hebrews believes they are the original Jewish people and those who call themselves Jews today are usurpers. Is only what they "believe" relevant? To be sure, the Black Hebrews are a small sect, without political clout, so Mr. Schreiber might say that their perceptions do not in fact matter. But let us suppose this sect made massive converts among the blacks of Africa and the U.S. Would the historical validity of their claims then become inconsequential?

The Arabs are aware that history matters. This is why they have developed the myth of a Palestinian people in their land "from time immemorial." Traditionally Jews placed great emphasis on remembering what had passed: in Deuteronomy alone there are repeated injunctions "Remember and forget not" (9:7), "Remember the days of old" (32:7), "Thou shalt well remember" (7:18), "Thou shalt not forget" (5:17). Today, it seems, many Jews have forgotten to remember.

In response to Jonathan S. Mark: We too believe that the ball now belongs in the other court.

Anti-Communism

To the Editor of Commentary: I would like to commend David Horowitz ["Nicaragua: A Speech to My Former Comrades on the Left," June] for his intellectual courage in repudiating his earlier pro-Communist views, and for his realization that firm anti-Communism is the only sane position for the Western democracies. In this, Mr. Horowitz is in the tradition of the great anti-Communists of the 20th century, who also underwent profound conversions: Arthur Koestler, Whittaker Chambers, and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. . . .

Mr. Horowitz will no doubt be attacked by today's fellow-travelers, but he should nevertheless be proud to embrace his new position, knowing the empirical evidence is on his side.

William Doino, Jr.
Weston, Connecticut

Soviet Jewry

To the Editor of Commentary: Contrary to what Allan Kagedan maintains in "Gorbachev and the Jews" [May], the decline of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union was not determined exclusively by internal considerations. . . . The freedom of Soviet Jewry to emigrate was determined largely by the power of the Jewish community in the West to make Soviet fulfillment of human-rights pledges a condition of securing concessions from the West.

During the 70's the Soviets sought the legitimation of their World War II land acquisitions and expanded trade with the U.S. Their efforts culminated in the Helsinki Accords of 1975 in which they achieved these goals in exchange for a commitment to broaden human rights, including the emigration of Jews and others.

Since then, American-Soviet trade has expanded and the U.S. has become as dependent upon Soviet markets to sell American grain as the USSR is upon American products to modernize its industry. But once the U.S. was hooked, and with détente in decline, the Soviets reneged on their Helsinki commitments and smashed the organizations established to monitor the agreements. Jewish refuseniks and other dissidents were imprisoned or exiled. . . .

For several years now, however, the Soviets have been pursuing nuclear arms control with the West. Anticipating a summit conference with President Reagan, the Soviets began early in 1985 to float rumors of the possibility of expanded Jewish emigration to Israel in exchange for an end to American Jewish "criticism" of the USSR and for Israeli "flexibility" in negotiations over the Golan Heights. There was the added condition that the emigrants go to Israel rather than the West and the hint that relations between Israel and the Soviets would be renewed.

Of course, the rumored deals were fraudulent. They were simply a ploy to prevent the subject of Jewish emigration from surfacing in the summit negotiations. . . . The American Jewish community swallowed the Soviet bait and the ploy succeeded. Pre-summit American Jewish efforts to raise the subject of Soviet violations of the Helsinki Accords were minimal. . . . The nonsensical Soviet condition that emigrants go to Israel placed responsibility for the prospective deal in the province of USSR-Israel negotiations, so the American Jewish leadership stood aside waiting and hoping for something good to happen. Nothing did. . . .

Although early the next year world Jewry was rewarded with the release of Anatoly Shcharansky. This was done to maintain Soviet credibility for future "deals."

There was, however, a whisper of sincerity in the Soviet proposals. Having two million Jews with which to sweeten the pot, the Soviets were seeking to deal themselves into the Middle East peace-making poker game. They were baiting the hook with their proposals, but were prepared to wait until the demand for Soviet Jews
in Israel would bring them the price they want. The Soviet negotiating principle is the exchange of Soviet Jews—along with "peace"—for Israeli land given to Israel's enemies.

In the meantime, the oppression of Soviet Jews goes on. The Soviets will continue to sell, renege, and resell Jews as often as necessary to placate Western Jewry without frightening away the bulk of their Jewish hostages for anything less than a major voice in the Middle East. They have been successful in recent years because Western Jewry has been fearful of risking its power and position and would rather deal in the back rooms.

Nevertheless, despite a willingness to deal in Realpolitik if it must, Israel ought not to be forced to decide between retaining its land, which it can ill afford to give up, and the freedom of Soviet Jewry. Besides, if Israel publicly surrenders to the principle of trading land for Soviet Jews, it will be abandoning the principle of emigration as a human right. The Soviets will then be relieved of their moral obligations under the Helsinki Accords. . .

Moreover, given Soviet lip-service to human rights and the need for a positive image in the U.S., . . . the principle of emigration as a human right promises to be an even more powerful lever than deals involving the exchange of land. . . . And because it is with the United States that the Soviets are now seeking nuclear arms control, it is the American Jew who has more leverage vis-à-vis the Soviets than does Israel. . . .

For these reasons, American Jewry must assume responsibility for freeing Soviet Jewry. . . . Instead of allowing the Soviets to use the promise of freeing Soviet Jews as leverage to silence Western Jews, Americans must use Soviet failure to live up to treaty obligations as leverage to secure freedom for Soviet Jews. . . .

JEROME GREEN
Los Angeles, California

ALLAN KAGEDAN writes:

Nowhere in "Gorbachev and the Jews" did I say or imply that the rate of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union is determined exclusively by internal considerations. I focused on these concerns, however, because I believe they play a vital role, which has been largely neglected by Western commentators, in the making of Soviet emigration policy. Like such commentators, Jerome Green provides a scenario for Soviet decisions on emigration that is devoid of any reference to domestic concerns.

While few would deny that East Germany's emigration policy—illustrated most visibly by the Berlin Wall—relates to internal political control, or that domestic economic conditions affect Canada's immigration policy, somehow, when it comes to Soviet emigration policy regarding Jews, only foreign policy is said to count. Not only is this inaccurate, it has negative consequences for the campaign on behalf of Soviet Jews. For example, if one believes that a negotiated deal is an ever-present possibility, requiring only diplomatic finesses to be consummated, then it is easy to fall victim to wishful thinking each time a high-level U.S.-Soviet meeting is convened. Mr. Green gives one illustration of this kind of thinking when he states (exaggeratedly) that American Jews were misled by rumors in 1985 of a "deal" regarding Soviet Jewish emigration.

A second danger inherent in such a misreading of Soviet thinking is that, if the USSR is held to be always, or often, amenable to serious negotiation, then it is natural to look for a party to blame when little progress occurs. Mr. Green points a finger at American Jews and their leaders who, he claims, not only "swallowed the bait" of Soviet-inspired rumors but "stood aside" before the 1985 Geneva summit "waiting and hoping for something good to happen." He also asserts that American Jews have generally confined themselves to advocating the Soviet Jewish cause "in the back rooms." To the contrary, however: through a plethora of organizations, American Jews can be fairly said to have tried the back room, the front room, and indeed the sidewalk in their efforts to assist Soviet Jews, before, during, and after the Geneva summit. This does not mean that more should not be done, but Mr. Green's blaming of American Jews for the USSR's continued cutoff of Jewish emigration is unconvincing.

There is still a third hazard in dismissing Soviet internal conditions as a key factor in the Kremlin's emigration decisions: it leads to the demoralization of Western supporters of Soviet Jewry when no deals are struck for long periods of time. And from the Soviet perspective, nothing could be better than a decline in Western devotion to steady, patient work on behalf of Soviet Jews. Such work should include raising the credibility issue, as Mr. Green mentions, and, I would add, tying trade to emigration.

As for USSR-Israel relations, Mr. Green refers to reported Soviet proposals as "fraudulent," but then finds in them "a whisper of sincerity." This apparent contradiction can be explained if one takes into account internal Soviet concerns regarding emigration. The meetings between Soviet and Israeli diplomats Mr. Green refers to were, it seems, exploratory. That is, a wide range of issues was discussed, with the Soviet diplomats empowered neither to pledge nor to deliver on emigration. In fact, the Soviet Union would like nothing better—Arab reaction permitting—than to construct a relationship with Israel from which discussion of emigration is excluded. Israel sees things differently. This assessment has since been confirmed by the meeting of Soviet and Israeli diplomats held in Helsinki last August.

Of course, as Mr. Green suggests, for Israel to compromise on issues basic to its security in the service of virtually any cause, including the Soviet Jewish one, would be self-destructive. Yet there may be other areas of give-and-take. Among them could be the reported Soviet wish to send prospective Jewish emigrants directly to Israel, a condition Mr. Green describes as "nonsensical." If by this Mr. Green means unfair, unrealistic, or Machiavellian, I agree. But, as I pointed out in my article, for reasons of Marxist/Leninist ideology and because of the wish to limit the impact that any future Jewish emigration might have on Soviet society at large, Soviet motives for making such a proposal are clear.
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