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ISRAEL and MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS:

Issues & Comments

ANTI-ZIONIST CAMPAIGN AT THE U.N.

NOVEMBER 1975

ANTI-ZIONIST CAMPAIGN AT THE UNITED NATIONS

On October 17, 1975 seventy members of the Social Humanitarian and Cultural Committee of the United Nations declared, "Zionism is a form of racial discrimination." This anti-Zionist resolution was opposed by 29 countries including Britain and her eight Common Market partners, the United States, Canada, the Scandinavian countries, Australia, New Zealand, several Latin American states, the Ivory Coast, Liberia, and Israel. The 27 abstentions included Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Upper Volta, Zaire, Zambia, Japan and Romania. Speaking after the vote the U.S. delegate, Mr. Leonard Garment, described the vote "as the supreme act of deceit." Zionism is a movement aiming at the preservation "of a small remnant of the Jewish people that survived the horrors of the racial holocaust."

This resolution is the latest in a series of political moves against Israel inspired by hostility to Israel's existence. Resolutions opposing Israel and with no relevance to the work of the organisations concerned have been forced through several United Nations agencies during the last year, including UNESCO, I.L.O., and the International Women's Year Conference. This particular campaign began in 1974 and led directly to the appearance at the United Nations General Assembly of Yasser Arafat, leader of the Fatah Terrorist Group. In his address to the 29th General Assembly Arafat spelled-out the themes which formed the basis for the anti-Israel campaign which has continued unabated ever since. He made frequent references to Zionism, comparing it to colonialism, racism, and imperialism, and describing it as reactionary and discriminatory and spelled out his political programme:

> "We have entered the world from its widest gate. Now Zionism will get out of this world - and from Palestine in particular under the blow of the people's struggle".

This theme was reiterated again and again in his speech in which Arafat also said, "We respect the Jewish faith." Arafat also threatened Israel with suspension from the United Nations, accused her of terrorism against her Arab population and against Lebanon, and of responsibility for every kind of crime.

The Cue from Yasser Arafat

Taking a cue from Arafat's harangue a chain of events was set in motion in various international forums. First an Arab conference to spell-out the specific "offence" with which Israel was to be slandered, followed by a Moslem Conference to ratify the slander, leading to a

conference of Developing Countries who were invited to endorse the slander, and finally to a resolution at the appropriate United Nations agency backed by a pre-committed majority.

Success at UNESCO, I.L.O. and the International Women's Year Conference only encouraged the Arab sponsors of anti-Israel resolutions to demand Israel's suspension from the United Nations. Once again a Moslem Conference ratified the policy, but a subsequent conference of African states refused to endorse this particular proposal and the split was repeated at the Conference of Developing Nations at Lima. Having failed for the first time in more than a year to carry with them the automatic majority at the United Nations Arab governments substituted a resolution equating Zionism with racism and racial discrimination hoping to encorporate this formulation in the programme for a U.N. Decade Against Racialism to be launched in Accra next year.

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This anti-Zionist resolution and indeed the whole political campaign of which it is part is nothing but a euphemism for the genocidal ambitions of those who seek to destroy the State of Israel. An important element in this campaign is to try to show that Zionism is an evil conspiratorial international force and quite distinct from the State of Israel. This is a reincarnation of the Russian anti-Semitic libel "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" whose theme of an alleged secret Jewish conspiracy aiming at world domination has found willing adherents among the enemies of the Jewish people. Six million Jews were murdered by the Nazi purveyors of this defamatory libel and Communist and Arab governments have not been loathe to exploit this discredited lie. Soviet anti-Semitism, as expressed in anti-Semitic publications from Soviet universities, have harped on the theme of the alleged Zionist conspiracy. Arab governments and heads of state in repeating these libels have used the same theme and Arab newspapers caricature Jews with Der Stuermer-like deformations.

Zionism - A Movement of National Liberation

In fact Zionism is the 19th century name given to the Jewish movement of national liberation, a centuries-old struggle for national independence in the land of Israel whose roots go back to forcible expulsion by ancient Rome. The Jewish movement for national independence aspired to a reborn Jewish state based on freedom of religion, democracy and full equality under the law. The State of Israel, which was established in 1948, is the realisation of that Zionist dream. It is a democracy and safeguards freedom of religion and equality under the law for all its citizens. It has achieved all its major objectives except for the securing of peace. The Zionist movement was in the vanguard of the drive to liberate oppressed peoples. Long before the rise of Arab nationalism the Jewish national independence movement had defined its goals and begun to realise its aims and to care for the destinies of others who were also oppressed. Zionism has a human and social content, innovating new forms of community life, and contributing to the solution of problems vexing modern society. Zionism is unique as the guardian of an ancient heritage in creating a modern civilisation.

Cardinal Feature of Faith

Chief Rabbi, Dr Immanuel Jakobovitz, has spoken of the Jewish yearning to return to Zion as being:

> " a cardinal feature of our religious faith. It has been expressed through the millenia in the Prophets, in the Psalms and in every prayer uttered daily by Jews in the home and in the Synagogue. As the first and principal victims of racism, nothing is more abhorrent to Jews and opposed to Jewish teaching than racial discrimination. The very term racism was given currency by the Nazis in their diabolical policy of Jewish extermination. It is therefore an absurd traversty of history to equate the movement which rescued the survivors of this pernicious doctrine with the evil ideology of the perpertrators. "

Euphemism for Anti-Semitism

The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Israel, Mr. Yigal Allon, addressing the United Nations General Assembly said:

> " Let me state catergorically that anti-Zionism is but a euphemism for anti-Semitism and the legitimization of aggression against Israel.
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> Let me state with equal emphasis that on this, the thirtieth anniversary of the liberation of the survivors of the gas chambers and concentration camps, the Jewish people will not tolerate a revival of the cancer of anti-Semitism. One cannot here escape a tragic reflection -- how many of the six million victims of the Nazis would be alive today if it had been given to the Zionist movement to create the State of Israel before that catastrophe?
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> It is painful to me to see a group of nations, many of whom were recently liberated from colonial rule, deriding one of the most noble liberation movements of this century. A movement which not only gave an example of encouragement and determination to the peoples struggling for independence, but also actively aided many of them

> during their period of preparation for independence and immediately thereafter. "

So far peace has eluded the State of Israel, but the recent agreement between Israel and Egypt could possibly be the first hopeful step towards the peace that is so badly needed by all the peoples of the Middle East. It is the rejection of peace that lends urgency and motivation to the campaign of political vilification of Israel. Those who promote this campaign seek to frustrate the hopeful prospects of peaceful accommodation. The chosen arena for their campaign is the international forum of the nations. Several times in the past year the principles upon which the United Nations was founded have been brought into disrepute and the political viability of the organisation has been jeopardised by the anti-peace campaign.

Daniel P. Moynihan, the United States Ambassador to the U.N. warned that the Anti-Zionist resolution could legitamise anti-semitism in many parts of the world, because:

> " it will give anti-semitism the appearance of international legality. This is just not Israel. We are talking about the Ukraine. We are talking about Brazil. We are talking about our own country perhaps,- and that is just appalling. "

Danger to Middle East Peace

The cause of peace and the cause of mutual understanding are the targets of this anti-peace campaign. Israel for its part seeks peace as it always has done, and is encouraged by the successful conclusion of its agreement with Egypt. However, there is cause for concern that the government of Egypt has not dissociated itself from the anti-peace, anti-Israel, anti-semitic campaign under the guise of anti-Zionism. If this campaign succeeds all nations of the Middle East will be the losers, Egypt included. It is to be hoped that Israel's resolution in its quest for peace will be matched by similar resolution from Arab leaders and by determination on the part of members of the United Nations not to allow the U.N. and the cause of peace to be subverted.

> " Zionism springs from an even deeper motive than Jewish suffering. It is rooted in a Jewish spiritual tradition whose maintenance and development are for Jews the basis of their continued existence as a community. "

Albert Einstein