

Opinion

Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian question

Don't include the PLO in negotiations

A few weeks ago, a group of protesters with signs encouraging support of the Palestinians in Israel gathered next to the Pit. Along with those were signs supporting the Palestine Liberation Organization. This sight saddened and sickened me. How could people who were interested in securing the rights of their fellow man in any way encourage support for the PLO, a self-proclaimed terrorist organization which exists to exterminate the state of Israel and its citizens?

As I spoke to one of the protesters, it became clear that much of the PLO propaganda had gotten through to her, since she was ignorant of what the PLO stands for. I wondered how many of my fellow students were ignorant of the PLO and its stated purposes. So I decided to look into the matter.

First, I looked at what the PLO says about itself. In the Palestinian National Covenant, which the PLO signed, Article 9 states that "armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine," and that the Palestinian Arab people assert their "determination . . . to continue their armed struggle . . . for the liberation of their country." In other words, any negotiation with Israel is out of the question.

Article 17 states in part: "The Palestinian Arab people look forward to the support of all those in the world who believe in the dignity and freedom of man." This is particularly outrageous when the PLO claims responsibility for hundreds of terrorist acts against those who support Israel, including murders of Palestinian Arabs who indicate just a desire to negotiate with the state of Israel.

Article 20 states, "The Balfour Declaration, the Mandate Docu-

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ment, and everything based upon them are deemed null and void." Interestingly enough, this would also eradicate the Arab nation of Jordan, since it was given its original territory by the mandates. Also included would be Syria, Lebanon and the Egyptian Sinai. Article 20 continues, "Claims of historical or religious ties of Jews with Palestine are incompatible with the facts of history . . ." (Hmmm, I had better tell my Old Testament prof about that one; it might be cause for invalidating our exams.) . . . the Jews are not one people with an independent identity. They are rather citizens of the states to which they belong." Wew, and all this time individual nations have persecuted mere citizens of their countries who have nothing in common with each other. They just happen to have a common religion, a common language, the same ancestral lineage and the same homeland from which they had been expelled. I guess the Arabs are also "not one people with an independent identity." But that is obvious from the amount of fighting among them. The only thing that they agree on is that they hate Israel.

There is much more that we could look at, but it becomes clear that the PLO does not acknowledge the right of Israel to exist. So it becomes more than a matter of supporting Palestinians in Israel. I, too, believe that Palestinians should be treated fairly and given the right of self-determination within the nation they reside in. Otherwise there is taxation

without representation, which is something that Americans are very touchy about. But to make the PLO the legitimate governing body of Palestine is as ludicrous as giving Qaddafi the Nobel Peace Prize.

The PLO should have no place in negotiations with Arabs, Palestinians and Israel. It has proven time and again that it is merely a terrorist group that regards human rights as unimportant to the goal of eradicating Israel and its citizens.

Israel is not entirely innocent in its treatment of Palestinian Arabs within its borders, and it should not be excused for its actions. But the West Bank and Gaza Strip belong to Israel and were won in wars Israel did not start. Why didn't a Palestinian homeland come about before Israel won these territories? If the Arab nations were so concerned for the Palestinians, they would have concentrated their efforts on building a homeland for these people, rather than attacking Israel from the day of its independence.

Yes, I believe that the rights of Palestinians should be upheld. Palestinians are those who reside in Palestine. This includes Jews and Arabs, whether they are Moslems, Jews or Christians. Efforts at peace among these peoples should be encouraged and supported, not rejected at every turn, as the PLO has done. Don't be deceived by cries of injustice. Peace is the only just option.

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Work for justice: recognize the PLO

Bob Sheldon
Guest Writer

On March 15, Muhamed Massarwa, Israeli Consul General for the Southeastern region, spoke at UNC as part of the Great Decisions program. Massarwa, an Arab Israeli, was soft-spoken, amiable and seemingly a bridge between Palestinians and Israel.

He spoke of the dire conditions of the Palestinians under occupation, the need for a Palestinian homeland and the need for negotiations leading to peaceful resolution — all of which had a sweeter ring than the uncompromising words coming from Yitzhak Shamir.

However, we must ask what kind of homeland, what kind of negotiations and what kind of peace? Even though he was vague during his talk and evaded questions, he did mention the Camp David accords, the Reagan Plan of 1983-84 and the present Shultz peace initiatives. This is where he tipped his hand, for the common thread running through all three initiatives is their leaving out the key actors — the Palestinians themselves.

An international consensus has existed since the mid-seventies for a two-state solution which would be negotiated on the Palestinian side by the Palestine Liberation Organization. The PLO (which according to Israeli polls, is accepted by more than 90 percent of the people in the occupied territories as their representative) has made numerous statements over the last 12 to 14 years accepting a two-state solution. It has been the United States and Israel who have determined and maintained the uncompromising position: no Palestinian state; no negotiations with the PLO.

Over the last 20 years, the Palestinian wish list has grown shorter, yet Israel's response has been the illegal

seizure of major portions of the West Bank; the incarceration of tens of thousands of Palestinians; the banning of books and newspapers; the expulsion of thousands and the invasion of Lebanon, which resulted in tens of thousands of casualties. As repression increased in the occupied territories, an explosive point was reached. Now, we are witnessing a popular uprising.

If the United States and Israel are interested in resolving the uprising, they must resolve the problems that led to it. To do this, they must take into account the main actors — the Palestinian people. Those actors are both inside and outside the occupied territories. In fact, there are close to five million Palestinians dispersed around the world. With this in mind, Palestinian leadership suggested meeting with Shultz at four different sites, including Washington, D.C. Shultz refused; instead, the newspapers announced that the Palestinians refused to meet Shultz! As usual, the administration portrayed itself as peacemaker and the Palestinians as rejectionists.

For the Palestinians, there is little to negotiate away. In 1948, most of Palestine was lost; in 1967, the rest became occupied. The PLO has gone from an uncompromising position of liberating all of Palestine by armed force to a position of negotiating a two-state solution; whereas Israel, with the fourth most powerful army in the world, can only repeat its chorus of "PLO violence" and "Israeli security" to the world at large, it is

the security of Palestinians which is at stake.

Security for Israelis and Palestinians can come only by allowing the Palestinians their own state, negotiated by their own representatives. Because the autonomy plans of Camp David, Reagan and Shultz would allow no substantial Palestinian control of their own state, the realizations of these plans would amount to nothing more than the establishment of Israeli Bantustans. Such a program is unacceptable to virtually all Palestinians in the territories and Diaspora. Without some compromise by the United States and Israel, there will be no negotiations, and without negotiations there will be no peace.

Shamir may be the bad cop, but at this point Peres, Shultz and Massarwa are nothing more than good cops. It should be clear that Massarwa, as a representative of the Israeli government and not of the Palestinian people, is traveling the United States for damage control. As the racist and militarist policies of Israel are more keenly exposed, he comes forward talking of peace and building bridges. If Massarwa is for peace with even a modicum of justice for the Palestinians, let him strongly criticize Israel's policies and actions toward the Palestinians, as well as call for recognition of the PLO and its right to negotiate a two-state solution with Israel. If his influence fails, let him do like some of the Israeli reservists have done: resign his post and actively work for justice for the Palestinian people.

Bob Sheldon is a resident of Chapel Hill.

No one chooses to be homeless

I would like to applaud Dan Morrison's piece on the "The Changing Face of the Homeless" (March 28). It is high time that we take notice of the drastically increasing population of homeless people throughout the world. However, I must take issue with Morrison's notion that homeless Americans have the choice to be so and are backed by the Constitution.

Here he makes a serious mistake in his analysis. Granted, the homeless population no longer consists of small numbers that can easily be ignored. Today this sector consists, in large part, of people living on the streets due to a variety of reasons that are often beyond their control. Since 1980, individuals, families, educated people, and people who had previously been gainfully employed are joining the ranks of the American homeless — and not by their own free will. Much homelessness is due to joblessness. In the past seven or eight years, losses of industrial jobs have forced many people out of their homes. Meanwhile, the Reagan administration has cut Aid to Families with Dependent Children by one-third. Between 1981 and 1987, the

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government cut almost all federal funds for the rehabilitation and new construction of low-income housing. In addition, in 1980, for every dollar allocated for national defense, 19 cents went to federally subsidized housing. The statistics continue on and on. Eventually, one realizes that a significantly large portion of today's homeless population is not there by choice.

Furthermore, if the Constitution is behind homeless people (as Morrison contends), why are increasing numbers of Americans going to any length to rid their neighborhoods, cities and public places of homeless people? They are not, mind you, helping them find alternate housing or jobs. Instead, they are knifing them, poisoning garbage with bleach or rat poison to discourage foraging by homeless people, forbidding them to sleep in warm public places on sub-zero winter nights and literally giving them one-way tickets to ship them out of town. If the homeless popu-

lation was backed by the Constitution, individuals and groups would be lobbying and litigating on their behalf and winning. Instead, the humiliation and suffering of homelessness continues.

I think Morrison has made a serious mistake in his view of homelessness in America. If more people think that the homeless are living on the streets with the sanction of the Constitution, our country will soon be facing an even more perilous crisis. As it is, we can no longer afford to think of homeless people as "someone else's problem," and we certainly cannot let misconceptions such as Morrison's continue. If we hope to find any sort of relief for the homeless, involvement must occur at every level — private welfare groups, churches, businesses, individuals, urban developers and the like. Perhaps if we all work together, we will be able to alleviate this degradation by the year 2000, if not before.

Maria Karres is a senior history and French major from Chapel Hill.

Selling Playboy in UNC Student Stores does not oppress or exploit women

Thomas Jackson's recent letter ("Pornography enslaves women," March 29) concerning the sale of Playboy in the Student Stores demands attention.

It is unclear exactly what Mr. Jackson is arguing, but I think that he is at least making the following claims:

1. Playboy is pornographic. 2. Pornography oppresses women (in various ways). 3. Pornography ought not to be available in the UNC Student Stores. 4. The sale of Playboy on campus is such a heinous moral crime that it makes UNC comparable to South Africa, Chile and Iran.

Let us begin with the first claim. It ought to concern us right off the bat that Mr. Jackson classifies the relatively innocuous kind of erotica exemplified by Playboy as pornographic. There is no violence, no threatened violence, no act which could in any way be construed as perverse. Is there something inherently wrong with showing naked bodies, something wrong with frank sexuality? This would be a very odd thing to say. I suppose that we must construe Mr. Jackson's point as being something to the effect that Playboy has something in common with sexually explicit material that shows women being terrorized, abused and the like. But what is the common denominator? The material ignores their personhood, he says, reducing the women to sex objects. This, too, is a peculiar charge, for a number of reasons. First, it is unclear how one goes about portraying someone as

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whole person in a photograph. Second, it is not clear why this is important. Surely, it is not a demand we make of other artistic endeavors, that they "portray people as whole persons." Thirdly, it is not clear what is wrong with sometimes portraying people solely as objects of sexual pleasure — in fact, much of the so-called "sexual revolution" was an effort to make it acceptable for consenting adults to treat each other as objects of sexual pleasure, independent of other considerations. Mr. Jackson's objections seem to be of a piece with the claims of certain religions that sex for its own sake is somehow "dirty," and the distant cousin of other arguments that certain "humanistic" literature should be banned because it does not portray persons as possessors of souls, but "merely" as material beings.

Another negative result of erotic material, according to Mr. Jackson, is that it pressures women with unrealistic standards of beauty. This type of argument (which might be called the fallacy of "appeal to mediocrity") is quite obviously problematic in that it applies to all sorts of persons and activities: Michael Jordan should not be allowed to play basketball, nor Joan Didion to write essays — they set unrealistic standards for the rest of us.

Though the existence of erotica such as Playboy is offensive to some, its mere existence cannot reasonably be said to oppress or exploit women (unless the models themselves have been exploited, which is a different question). If, however, Mr. Jackson's point is that erotica causes men to actually act in ways which are exploitative or harmful to women, this is a substantive claim which deserves serious consideration, though it has never been proven. Despite the claims of the Meese commission and the Moral Majority, no causal link has ever been shown to exist between pornography and violence or negative attitudes toward women.

This brings us conveniently to Mr. Jackson's third claim, that Playboy should be banned from the Student Stores. Although First Amendment freedoms are often suspended in the face of a clear and present danger, without proof of some link between erotica and negative attitudes, there does not seem to be any good reason to allow censorship of these materials.

In closing, I would like to point out that Mr. Jackson fails to consider the fact that the Student Stores also carries that notorious oppressor of men, Playgirl. He certainly has his work cut out for him in his campaign to keep our thoughts pure.

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Obtaining a liberal education

David Starnes
Guest Writer

My arrival in Chapel Hill, the start of my grand experiment in liberalism, held a promise for me that is difficult to explain. As a son of the South and a native of Alabama, I was escaping a stigma found on the evening news and in magazines, in stereotypes and Neil Young albums, which brands the Heart of Dixie as a preeminent bastion of conservative and stubborn (read backwards) ways. Frank Deford of "Sports Illustrated," a UNC graduate, once wrote a daring Jungian analysis of Alabama football, in which he concluded that "Bear" Bryant was the archetypal reincarnation of Robert E. Lee, and the Tide's forays North an embodiment of the belief that the South shall rise again (I'm not sure what ghosts lurk behind the similar success of Dean, though a Freudian analysis might find a clue in his nose). The many people that I meet from New Jersey, or near there, share the same expectations; I've even met one girl from New York who refuses to believe I am from Alabama, because I lack the accent. It is this type of national scrutiny that I abandoned, leaving what I thought to be the most intensely "stubborn" state in the Union for a different perception.

It took some time before I realized the full implications of Jesse Helms, and even longer before it dawned upon me that he had many avid supporters on campus. A freshman initiated by the Franklin Street "riot" of August 31, 1986, my visions of activism versus hapless authority had been solidified early; it required some naive to believe that people willing to lay downtown Chapel Hill to waste over beer would be even more vociferous about human rights issues or governmental mismanagement. This was a campus with a gay and lesbian association, a prominent minority movement, and an organ-

izations catalogue which talked of issues I wasn't even aware existed. Here also were Students For America, an anti-CGLA element that appeared tireless, and Hamilton Hall, which produced an admirable number of protester jokes. The "college experience" promised to be an open and deadly crossfire of ideas.

After two years, I suppose I can admit that I approached "the experience" with more expectation and idealistic bias than was good for me. It turns out that we are willing to allow civil rights to be exclusively determined by "sexual preference;" we recurrently make such distinctions the focus of nasty and rather immature campaign efforts. In the end, the CGLA proves to be little more than a political litmus test for conservatives and liberals, although I can thank the debate for showing me there is little to fear in homosexuality and much to learn in toleration.

As for minority concerns, living with a black roommate has taught me that attitude is not enough. While I used to shake my head at racial comments made by friends and the indifference of the bureaucracy, both student and staff, I would catch myself making insensitive comments around the apartment. Equality and trust requires effort on both sides, but blacks and whites continue to misunderstand each other here as much as they do in Alabama, a situation that the administration has done nothing to help, and the Board of Trustees has chosen to ignore. Minority recruitment and divestment are no longer issues, just thorns.

In short, I find frustrating here what I find so frustrating at home.

Perhaps Alabama still has those who would rather deal with its fringe elements more by axe handle than by referendum, but its reputation forces it to make an effort to change. Effort is something I see little of in Chapel Hill, and I don't know if it's apathy or fear. A potential great man once said to me, "I measure my success with how many people I offend." I'm not sure how far he'll go on such a philosophy, but he does attend Wharton School of Business. This is a strong school, too, but being offensive here is quite nearly a crime. "Express your ideas, but don't bother me with them" seems to be the reigning sentiment; we won't even raise our voices at basketball games, much less at South Building.

It is true that to be both offensive and effective requires a good sense of balance, but it also true that if someone is making that kind of effort, it can't hurt to listen. College, after all, is the one place where you can afford an open mind, where preconception and expectation can be thrown out the window; you can't get fired from college, and failure only lasts until the next check from Mom and Dad.

During a ride on the elevator in Hamilton, I overheard two seniors discussing solutions to the protester "problem." One recommended the most extreme protest possible; in true Buddhist fashion, let them set themselves on fire, make their statement, and be done with it. A man in Birmingham tried it a few years ago; the news crew waited until they had enough footage for the evening news, and then they tried to put out the flames.

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