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"OUR DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE": AFRICAN AMERICANS, ARAB AMERICANS, AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLCIT, 1967–1979

Abstract
This article examines the evolution of African-American commentary and activism on the Arab-Israeli conflict from 1967 to 1979. It focuses in particular on the crystallization of a moderate black position that, while continuing to support the existence of a Jewish state in Palestine, increasingly questioned the pro-Israel orientation of US foreign policy. The article argues that the emergence of this perspective reflected a transformation in the politics of the Arab-Israeli dispute, both internationally and within the United States. Following the October War of 1973, the Arab states and the Palestine Liberation Organization, along with Arab-American groups, grew more amenable to an imagined settlement involving Israel's withdrawal from all of the Arab territory occupied in the 1967 War and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The emergence of this pragmatic position, articulated simultaneously by Arabs and Arab Americans, opened up new political space for African-American moderates, making it possible for them to support Arab and Palestinian claims without opposing Israel's existence. In the process, Arab Americans began playing more visible roles in national political discourse.

On 15 May 1967, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., announced that he would lead a pilgrimage of American Christians, most of them black, to the Holy Land. The trip, scheduled for the following November, had received encouragement from both the Israeli and the Jordanian governments; King's delegation would perform religious ceremonies in Israeli- and Jordanian-held sectors of Jerusalem. It was only fitting that black Americans should undertake such a mission, one of King's aides, the Reverend Andrew Young, told a reporter. "The River Jordan . . . occurs in many spirituals. And the whole story of the children of Israel has been constantly used as an analogy of the Negro's struggle for freedom."[1] If Young invoked a parallel kinship with the

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region's Arab inhabitants, the sentiment went unrecorded. Jordan was a river; Israel, a people.

The next day, Egypt's government requested that the United Nations withdraw its peacekeeping forces from portions of Egyptian territory, setting in motion a chain of events that culminated, three weeks later, in the third major Arab-Israeli war. Israel won a swift and stunning victory, seizing the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) from Jordan. In the smoldering aftermath of those hostilities, King and his comrades were forced to cancel their pilgrimage.[2] Discursively, however, African Americans grew increasingly enmeshed in Arab-Israeli politics. Over the summer of 1967, ascendant black radicals castigated Israel as a violent proxy of Western imperialism and racism. Black moderates like King rebuked the critics and reaffirmed their devotion to the Jewish state.[3] Jewish partisans of Israel took solace from the moderates' support, while stewing over the radicals' denunciations.

Fast-forward a dozen years to the summer of 1979, and to another controversy involving African Americans and Israel. Andrew Young, now serving as the first black US Ambassador to the United Nations—and newly attuned to the politics of the Arab world—was compelled to resign his post after holding an unauthorized meeting with an official of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Young's ouster caused an uproar among moderate black leaders, many of them, like Young himself, former associates of Dr. King. Believing Young had been forced out in order to appease Israel and its American supporters, the moderates cried foul.

Both of these instances of black American criticism of Israel, in 1967 and 1979, elicited anguished commentary, mostly from American Jews but sometimes from African Americans as well, about a tragic deterioration in relations between blacks and Jews—historically marginalized groups that had previously marched together in the civil rights movement. But there were fundamental differences between those two moments that escaped the notice, or at least the serious analysis, of commentators at the time and historians ever since. In 1967 (and, indeed, for some years thereafter), the anti-Israel criticism came almost entirely from the radical end of the black spectrum, and the critics not only condemned Israel's behavior but also opposed its existence. In 1979, the criticism emanated from the African-American mainstream, from figures who upheld Israel's legitimacy but believed

that US policy had become unreasonably partial to Israel and insensitive to Arab, and especially Palestinian, claims and concerns.

There was another difference between those two moments, one of particular interest to readers of this journal. In the earlier instance, Arab Americans were only minimally visible. In the later one, they played a significant role in helping to articulate and amplify the new African-American critique of US Middle East policy. In so doing, they secured for themselves a modest place in national politics that, despite extraordinary challenges and setbacks, they have not since relinquished.

So what is new about the story I will be telling? At the most basic level, it provides a historical narrative of black/Arab-American interactions regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict—drawing on the full range of archival, scholarly, and journalistic sources—that has not, until now, been available to us.[4] Beyond that, my article sheds new light on a subject that has received some scholarly attention: African-American perspectives on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Journalists, historians, and political scientists have chronicled the events described above, often with great sensitivity and insight.[5] But they have neglected to do two things. First, they have not called attention to, or tried to explain, the fundamental differences between the earlier and the later cases of African-American criticism of Israel. Instead, they have treated such criticism as a more or less undifferentiated phenomenon that found significant expression at two separate historical moments.[6] Second, scholars have not connected this transformation in African-American attitudes to the changing politics of the Arab-Israeli conflict, both among Middle Eastern actors and among Arab Americans.

This latter failure is crucial, for the political evolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict offers a key to understanding the evolution of African-American discourse on the issue. Over the dozen years following the 1967 War, and especially after 1973, the center of gravity of Arab and Arab-American politics shifted—away from a complete rejection of Israel's existence and toward a willingness to coexist with the Jewish state, provided it returned all of the territory seized in the 1967 War and permitted the Palestinians to exercise national sovereignty on some portion of their ancestral homeland. The emergence of this pragmatic position, articulated simultaneously by Arabs and Arab Americans, opened up new political space for African-American moderates: it became possible for them to support Arab and Palestinian claims without opposing Israel's existence. For most of the second half of the 1970s, relatively few black moderates chose to stand

on this newly available ground. Following the Young controversy of 1979, many rushed to occupy it. In the process, Arab Americans gained a new purchase on national politics.

With the notable exception of the Nation of Islam, prior to 1967 national African-American organizations showed only intermittent interest in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In the immediate post-World War II years, most black opinion leaders expressed strong support for the Zionist movement, often portraying it as a model for black American self-help, for African independence, or for the revitalization of the African diaspora. Following Israel's creation in 1948, however, the controversies resulting from that development did not feature prominently in African-American public commentary. In the 1950s, political initiatives emanating from the Arab world, like the Algerian struggle for independence from French colonial rule or Egyptian President Jamal ʿAbd al-Nasir's vision of pan-Arab nationalism, sometimes won praise from black American leaders and commentators. Yet the anti-Zionist character of such movements received little attention in this celebratory discourse, which focused instead on Arabs' participation in the emerging "Afro-Asian" bloc of peoples and nations. During the Suez War of 1956, when Britain, France, and Israel jointly attacked Egypt, African-American commentators were far more critical of the first two aggressors than of the third.[7]

All this changed following the 1967 War, which left Israel in occupation of large swaths of Arab territory and made the conflict an issue of much greater global concern. Like Americans generally, African Americans grew more attuned to the dispute, and it became customary for black organizations to take public positions on it. Over the next few years, this African-American commentary followed a distinct and almost unvarying pattern: whereas mainstream civil rights organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Urban League, and Dr. King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) staunchly defended Israel, radical groups like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Black Panther Party harshly condemned it.[8]

Mainstream organizations' affinity for Israel sprang from many sources, among them a long-standing reverence for Jewish biblical history within African-American culture, genuine gratitude for

American Jewish groups' financial and moral support for civil rights struggles, and a fear that alienating Israel could lead to a drying up of that support. One also imagines that mainstream civil rights figures, like many other Americans, tended to internalize the sympathetic portrayals of Israel disseminated in US news media, popular culture, and political discourse.[9]

Black radicals' anti-Israel perspective, by contrast, was rooted in an emerging "third world" orientation that privileged Arab and Palestinian claims over Zionist ones; in a sharply critical view of US foreign policy; in a growing admiration for the martyred Black Muslim leader Malcolm X, who in his final year of life had traveled in the Arab world and, in some measure, identified himself with it; and in recent efforts by SNCC and like-minded groups to assert their independence from white allies who, as it happened, were disproportionately Jewish.[10]

A striking feature of the new African-American discourse on the Middle East was the near absence of any middle ground. Black moderates went well beyond defending Israel's right to exist; they acted as if the Jewish state could do no wrong and echoed the most celebratory pro-Israel tropes of the era. "A people persecuted down through the centuries has made a land to bloom," wrote NAACP executive director Roy Wilkins shortly after the 1967 War. "It has built a bastion of democracy in an area which has known only autocracy." Addressing a gathering of rabbis in upstate New York in March 1968, Dr. King sounded the same themes: "I see Israel . . . as one of the great outposts of democracy in the world, and a marvelous example of what can be done, how desert land can be transformed into an oasis of brotherhood and democracy."[11]

Although King and other pro-Israel civil rights leaders expressed concern for the wellbeing of Arab peoples, they did so in ways that circumvented critical scrutiny of Israeli behavior and that instead posited Zionism as a force for Arab uplift. In a September 1967 statement on the Arab-Israeli dispute, King observed that "the Arab world is in a state of imposed poverty and backwardness that must threaten peace and harmony" if left unchecked (italics in original). The principal culprits were US "oil interests" and "Arab feudal leaders" who "neglect the plight of their own peoples." King's rather implausible solution was for "Israel and progressive Arab forces" to cooperate with "the great powers" to address the region's economic and social discontents. In May 1969 National Urban League president Whitney Young wrote glowingly of Israel's efforts "to motivate its

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Arab population and open new opportunities for them."[12] Young's observation contained some truth, but it ignored the many forms of discrimination that Israel's Palestinian citizens faced.[13] It was also largely irrelevant to the disputes resulting from Israel's creation in 1948 and from its occupation of Arab lands in 1967.

Black radicals, for their part, not only charged Israel with violent self-aggrandizement but portrayed it as an instrument of Western imperialism and racism. In August 1968 former SNCC leader Stokely Carmichael decried the "evil of Zionism" and claimed that "Israel is nothing but a finger of the United States of America." One purpose of Israel's "aggression" in the recent war, he said, "was to destroy the revolutionary governments of the Arab world." The Black Panther Party agreed, declaring in its official newspaper in November 1968, "The Israeli Government is an imperialist, expansionist power in Palestine . . . and it has the same policy as the US Government has in the Middle East."[14] Occasionally, black radicals indulged in crude anti-Semitism.[15] Such instances were infrequent, but they understandably provoked a great deal of criticism, not least from moderate black leaders.[16]

In hindsight, it is all too easy to dismiss this African-American commentary on the Middle East—in both its moderate and its radical incarnations—as simplistic and tendentious. We should remember, however, that the participants in the discourse were not primarily concerned with Middle Eastern affairs. They were actors in a domestic American drama filled with turmoil, anguish, and dizzying social change; people enduring extraordinary political and psychological pressures and, in some cases, facing grave personal peril.

To a large degree, moreover, the polarization of African-American commentary reflected the state of play in the Middle East itself. In the early aftermath of the 1967 War, the Arab states were defiant in their defeat. They refused to recognize or negotiate with Israel and insisted on the immediate and unconditional return of their lost territory. The emergence at this time of an independent Palestinian movement, publicly committed to "liberating" all of Palestine by force, only heightened the mood of Arab militancy. The Israelis were equally adamant about retaining significant portions of the Arab land they had seized. They believed that the Arab states were too weak and incompetent to pose a serious challenge and would eventually see that they had no choice but to make peace on Israel's terms. Behind the scenes, there was considerably more flexibility (especially on the Arab side) than the public posturing suggested. But African-American

activists had only the public positions to go on, and these provided little basis for an imagined compromise.[17]

In this period, Arab Americans played only a limited role in shaping African-American discourse on the Middle East. National political organizing by Arab Americans was in its infancy, and Arab-American activists were first and foremost concerned with stirring their own communities to action. To the extent that they did exert an influence, it was to reinforce the polarization of black attitudes on the Middle East, mainly by making common cause with black radical critics of Israel. The most prominent national Arab-American organization in the late 1960s was the Association of Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG), formed in the months following the 1967 War. Consisting largely of Arab-born intellectuals and professionals, the AAUG embraced Palestinian militancy and radical Arab nationalism. It called for the dismantling of Israel (by force if necessary) and for the political and social transformation of the Arab world. Espousing the same general positions was the Organization of Arab Students in the United States and Canada (OAS), which had existed since the early 1950s. Though representing Arab nationals rather than Americans of Arab descent, the OAS had some Arab-American members and collaborated with the AAUG and other Arab-American groups.[18]

Both the AAUG and the OAS reached out to African-American critics of Zionism. In the summer of 1967, after SNCC came under attack from Jewish and moderate civil rights groups for its harsh denunciations of Israel, the OAS leapt to SNCC's defense and passed a resolution noting "the underlying similarities between the continuing struggle of the Palestinian Arabs in Occupied Palestine against Zionist invasion and exploitation, and the ever-increasing resistance of the Afro-Americans in the United States to a power structure of inequality." A year later, former SNCC chairman Stokely Carmichael delivered the keynote speech at the OAS's annual convention in Ann Arbor, MI. Addressing his own group's national convention in Detroit in December 1969, AAUG president Ibrahim Abu-Lughod declared, "We stand united with our Black Brothers in the United States, South Africa, Rhodesia and in Mozambique and Angola . . . . We are heartened by the support of the Black community." The AAUG's 1970 national convention, in Evanston, IL, featured an address by the author and activist Shirley Graham Du Bois, widow of W. E. B. Du Bois. She spoke about economic and strategic ties between Israel and apartheid

South Africa, an increasingly common theme in third world-oriented discourse at the time.[19]

Arab-American activists sometimes engaged with pro-Israel black leaders, but these efforts were often clumsy and ineffectual. In June 1970 the A. Philip Randolph Institute, an organization for black trade unionists, took out a full-page advertisement in the New York Times containing "An Appeal by Black Americans For United States Support to Israel." The moving spirit behind the ad was Bayard Rustin, executive director of the Institute and a major civil rights figure. Abu-Lughod, now a former AAUG president, and Margaret Pennar, public relations director of the AAUG's New York chapter, wrote separately to Rustin to complain. "I have tried to figure out," Abu-Lughod observed, "why would a Black American lend his good name to supporting the endeavor of a European settler state" to dominate its neighbors. "I have no doubts that you lent your good name to the statement with good intention; equally I have no doubt that you had nothing to do with its writing." Pennar wrote: "We believe that if you had had access to all the facts underlying the Middle East tragedy you would not have signed your name to a statement of support for Israel. Possibly you might have been pressured to do so."[20] While Abu-Lughod and Pennar clearly were trying to give Rustin an "out," it was—at the very least—tactless of them to suggest that a man of Rustin's experience and stature was serving merely as a mouthpiece for others. In fact, Rustin was personally and deeply committed to Israel, probably more so than any other black leader of the era.[21]

Also protesting Rustin's ad was Muhammad "M. T." Mehdi, the Iraqi-born head of the Action Committee on American-Arab relations, an advocacy group formed in 1964. Although Mehdi's ideological perspective was more liberal than radical, his critique of Zionism and Israel was every bit as scathing as the AAUG's—and his approach to Rustin equally maladroit. "We charge the [A. Philip Randolph] Institute with hypocrisy," Mehdi wrote the civil rights leader, "employing a double standard and escalating war efforts in the Middle East. This is to gain the respect of the Zionist Jews and their financial support for the Institute." When Rustin failed to respond, Mehdi wrote again to express the hope that such silence "is not a kind of discourtesy and discrimination directed at us just as the white Americans used to be discourteous and discriminating against black Americans." An indignant Rustin finally replied that "this kind of ad hominem argument is not conducive to a meaningful discussion."[22]

In the early 1970s, the politics surrounding the Arab-Israeli conflict, in both the Middle East and the United States, became somewhat more fluid. In early 1971 Egypt's president, Anwar Sadat, offered to conclude a peace treaty with Israel if it relinquished all of the territory taken in 1967. Never before had an Arab head of state so publicly contemplated formal peace with Israel. Israel rejected the offer, and the administration of Richard M. Nixon did not seriously press Israel to modify its stance. Still, Sadat's gesture laid the groundwork for the more conciliatory Arab positions that were to take hold a few years later.[23] In 1972–1973 the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA) came into being. Consisting largely of second- and third-generation Lebanese Americans, the NAAA called for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict entailing Israel's withdrawal to the 1967 lines, Arab recognition of Israel, and a just (though as yet unspecified) accommodation of Palestinian national claims.[24] Among both Arabs and Arab Americans, the outlines of a possible compromise were starting to emerge.

In African-American circles, too, discourse on the Middle East grew a bit less rigid. In 1972 Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm of New York, a progressive Democrat, ran for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination, becoming the first black woman to do so within a major party. In a position paper on the Middle East issued that spring, Chisholm wrote: "While we must protect Israel's very existence against outside threat by giving her whatever assistance she truly needs, we must also finally launch a new effort to resolve the root cause of this Middle East conflict, the Palestine dispute." Although Chisholm did not spell how she would reconcile Israel's existence with Palestinian national claims, her willingness to depart from pro-Israel orthodoxy and foreground the Palestinian issue gratified many Arab Americans. The *AAUG Newsletter* featured Chisholm in several articles that year, and in May she was the main speaker at the annual dinner of the Association's Washington, DC, chapter. Middle East policy was not, however, a prominent issue in Chisholm's campaign, and the candidate said little about it after ending her presidential bid. The thirteen-member Congressional Black Caucus of which she was a member remained, on the whole, firmly entrenched in the Democratic Party's pro-Israel consensus.[25]

The October War of 1973 profoundly transformed the politics of the Arab-Israeli conflict, both internationally and within the United States. Although Egypt and Syria suffered a military defeat, they scored a

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political success in persuading the international community that the regional status quo was untenable. After all, the war not only dangerously exacerbated US–Soviet tensions but also triggered an Arab oil embargo (and related spikes in the price of oil) that severely dislocated the global economy. Over the next few years, something approaching an international consensus emerged favoring Arab recognition of Israel in exchange for an Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 lines and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Henry Kissinger, the US secretary of state from 1973 to 1977 (and an extraordinarily dominant figure in the nation's foreign policy), disdained this international consensus, though the extent of his hostility was not obvious at first; for a while it appeared that Kissinger supported substantial Israeli withdrawals on all fronts. Against this encouraging diplomatic backdrop, Arab states became more explicit about their willingness to live in peace with Israel in the event of a restoration of the 1967 borders and an accommodation of Palestinian national claims. The PLO, too, began hinting that it would settle for a mini-state on the West Bank and Gaza. This evolution in the PLO's position was slow and uneven, and difficult for casual observers to discern. By the spring of 1977, however, it was clear to informed observers that the mainstream leadership of the PLO was indeed prepared for such a compromise.[26]

Within the United States, the October War and its aftermath had the effect of placing Arab actors in a somewhat more sympathetic light. Ever larger numbers of Americans came to see that substantial portions of the Arab world remained under Israeli occupation and that not all Arabs were calling for Israel's liquidation. The use of the oil weapon, moreover, showed that pronounced fealty to Israel came at a cost. "Until 1973," the journalist Robert Kaiser wrote in 1977, "the Arabs' friends had trouble making the argument that the United States had practical interests in putting more distance between itself and Israel. Now, what might be called the OPEC [Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries] factor has made that argument more plausible to many Americans."[27] In the years following the October War, there was growing support for the Arab position among ordinary Americans. Although opinion polls always revealed significantly greater sympathy for Israel than for the Arab states, the gap narrowed considerably in the mid-to-late 1970s.[28] For years, Senator James Abourezk of South Dakota, a Lebanese American, had been a lonely Arab-friendly voice on Capitol Hill. By 1978 he could quip, "It is

becoming so trendy to be pro-Arab that I am thinking of switching sides."[29]

For Arab-American organizations, these transformations had two main effects. First, they prompted those organizations to become larger, more numerous, more assertive, and more visible. Second, they put a premium on moderation. Like the Arab actors themselves, many Arab Americans recognized that a rare diplomatic opportunity had presented itself, and they strove to place their activism on a more realistic footing. The pragmatic position that the NAAA had staked out prior to the October War became more prevalent among Arab Americans as a whole. Even within the AAUG, talk of a two-state settlement became acceptable, though the group's official statements stopped short of endorsing it.[30]

As for African Americans, after 1973 they remained divided over the Middle East, but the divisions became more complex and the overall tenor of black commentary was increasingly critical of Israeli policies. Radical activists stepped up their attacks on the Zionist state, spurred on by a deterioration in relations between Israel and several sub-Saharan African countries, by a deepening alliance between Israel and apartheid South Africa (see below), and by the continuing prominence of the Palestinian movement within the politics of third world solidarity. Among mainstream blacks, opinions became more varied. Bayard Rustin and his allies continued to advocate unstinting US support for Israel, and several African-American commentators accused oil-rich Arab states of engaging in economic blackmail—a standard theme of Zionist polemics at the time. But other opinion leaders began questioning pro-Israel orthodoxies. In late 1973 the Reverend Jesse Jackson, leading a tenants' protest in Chicago against the rising cost of home heating oil, scoffed at the notion that "the Arabs are holding people hostage for a Middle East position." The real villains were the oil companies, which exploited the energy crisis for their own benefit. A February 1975 editorial in the *Chicago Daily Defender*, a black newspaper that ordinarily championed Israel's cause, showed that the economic argument against the status quo was having its effect. "There are some facts, hard as they may seem, which must be faced," the editorial noted. Renewed Arab-Israeli hostilities were bound to trigger another oil embargo, causing an economic crisis that fell especially hard on African Americans and other disadvantaged minorities. "If the danger of war again in the Middle East is to be averted, a pullback by Israeli forces from the territory previously occupied by the Palestinians is essential." Some mainstream columnists

warned that, should war resume, African-American soldiers might be sent to fight in the region.[31]

By now, another diplomatic development was challenging pro-Israel sentiment within the black community: an increasingly conspicuous association between Israel and South Africa. Since the beginning of the decade, partly in a bid for African-American support, AAUG figures had portrayed Israel as fundamentally hostile to Africa's indigenous populations. They noted that the Sinai Peninsula, which Israel continued to occupy, was part of Africa; they insisted that the "settler regimes" of Israel, South Africa, and Rhodesia were expressions of the same colonial and racist impulses; and they alleged that Israel and South Africa shared close economic and strategic ties. In the early 1970s, many black radicals embraced this narrative, but it found little support among mainstream African-American commentators, who often praised Israel's record of technical assistance to sub-Saharan African nations and generally ignored the allegations about Israel's ties to South Africa. In fact, Israeli-South African relations defied easy characterization at this time. They had been tense for much of the 1960s but had begun to improve after 1967, as Israel's status as an occupying power increasingly isolated that nation in international forums. Signs of new cooperation and old hostility coexisted in a confusing mix.[32]

From the mid-1970s on, however, the picture was all too clear: Israel, to compensate for the loss of diplomatic support from black African states, was indeed forging a close diplomatic, economic, and strategic partnership with South Africa. In 1974 Israel sent an ambassador to Pretoria (a move previously avoided for fear of alienating black African governments), and two years later it hosted a high-profile visit by South Africa's prime minister, John Vorster. Over the same period Israel ended all support for anti-South African resolutions in the United Nations, concluded a set of wide-ranging trade agreements with South Africa, and began providing the apartheid regime with sophisticated weapons systems and military materiel, possibly including nuclear-weapons technology. In September 1979 a US reconnaissance satellite detected a mysterious flash in the South Atlantic, prompting speculation by US intelligence agencies, subsequently leaked to the news media, that Israel and South Africa had jointly tested a nuclear bomb.[33]

Mainstream African-American commentators could not ignore these developments, though their public discussion of them was initially cautious and restrained. In 1977, activists with close ties to the

Congressional Black Caucus formed TransAfrica, an organization devoted to influencing U.S. policies toward Africa. At its founding meeting, the group issued a statement criticizing several Western countries for aiding South Africa; with some trepidation, it included Israel on the list. That same year the syndicated columnist Carl Rowan, who in the mid-1960s had headed the United States Information Agency (and thus was about as Establishment as they came), noted that Israel was supplying South Africa with arms and possibly even nuclear-weapons assistance. "The US," he wrote, "ought to announce regularly what it knows about which countries are 'playing footsie' with South Africa." Even Rustin expressed concern about Israeli-South African relations, though his intervention seemed less about voicing genuine disquiet than about eliciting reassuring explanations from Israeli officials that could be disseminated in the black press.[34] The mainstream critique of Israeli-South African ties would, as we shall see, grow much more forceful in the wake of the Andrew Young affair.

For radical activists—African- and Arab-American alike—reports of Israel's strengthening ties to South Africa brought grim vindication. The two groups intensified their attacks on the Zionism/apartheid nexus, sometimes in cooperation with one another. In May 1978 the OAS joined forces with the All-African People's Revolutionary Party (A-APRP) to stage a 3,000-person protest march in Washington, DC. After denouncing Zionist racism in front of the Israeli embassy, the demonstrators marched to the South African embassy to rally against apartheid. Stokely Carmichael, now a major figure in the A-APRP, and Black Panther Party co-founder Bobby Seale took part in the demonstration. A year later a slightly smaller group of African- and Arab-American activists (again including Carmichael) returned to the Israeli and South African embassies to renew the denunciations.[35]

In the second half of the decade, then, it was increasingly evident that African Americans as a whole were growing more skeptical of Israeli positions and claims, a development with clear relevance to Arab-American political activism. If the 1973 War and its aftermath had constituted one major opportunity for such activism, then the evolution of black attitudes now presented another. The most successful effort to exploit the latter opening came in the form of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign (PHRC), an offshoot of the AAUG launched in 1977 by James Zogby. As its name suggested, the PHRC advocated on behalf of the human and political rights of Palestinians, especially those living under Israeli occupation. A principal strategy of the campaign was to enlist support from non-Arab-American activists

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in churches, the peace movement, and civil rights groups. The PHRC quickly brought Arab Americans into partnership with influential black leaders and activists. By 1978 the group's sponsors included the Black Power activist Angela Davis, Congressman John Conyers of Michigan, Josephine Butler of the DC Statehood Commission, Freedomways editor Jack O'Dell, and a number of Detroit City Council members. Congressman Conyers was a keynote speaker at the first PHRC national convention, held that year in Washington, DC.[36] In February 1979 the PHRC issued a public appeal to President Jimmy Carter to investigate allegations of Israeli torture of Palestinian prisoners. One of the main signatories of the appeal was the Reverend Ralph Abernathy, a former president of the SCLC and a prominent figure in the civil rights movement.[37]

A few months later, the AAUG launched its own initiative to cultivate African-American support. In June 1979 it arranged for a delegation of black journalists and activists, generally left/liberal in outlook, to visit Lebanon and tour Palestinian refugee camps and Lebanese communities that had borne the brunt of Israeli raids. Heading the delegation was Jack O'Dell, who in addition to editing Freedomways served as the international affairs director for Operation PUSH (People United to Save Humanity), Jesse Jackson's Chicago-based social justice organization. Jackson's wife Jacqueline Jackson, a senior officer in PUSH, was part of the delegation. The *AAUG Newsletter* reported that Ms. Jackson, after attending some children's events, "spoke of her pain and embarrassment in realizing how much of the children's suffering had been inflicted through weapons and policies originating in the United States." In early July Jesse Jackson, perhaps influenced by his wife's experience in Lebanon, called on the United States to alter its "blind and arrogant" policies toward the Middle East. "There will be no lasting peace in the Middle East," he said, "until a homeland for the Palestinian people is given the same weight of importance as our concerns for the sovereignty of the national territory of the Lebanese people and a homeland for the Jews."[38]

As the preceding narrative shows, by the summer of 1979 significant segments of the African-American mainstream had taken positions critical of Israel's behavior but not opposed to its existence; Arab Americans had staked out similar political terrain and made modest efforts to cultivate black support. Consequently, when Andrew Young was forced to step down as UN Ambassador in August, the resulting

controversy drew a more potent and coordinated response from those two communities than it could have otherwise.

A former civil rights leader and congressman, Ambassador Young was a freewheeling and outspoken figure who often chafed against the restrictions of his diplomatic post. In late July he held a secret, unauthorized meeting in New York with Zehdi Terzi, the PLO's observer to the UN, to discuss procedures in the UN Security Council.[39] The Israeli government caught wind of the meeting and protested to the US State Department, charging that Young had violated former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's 1975 pledge that the United States would not negotiate with the PLO as long as it refused to recognize Israel. Young had already informed the State Department about the meeting but had described it as a purely social encounter. When, in mid-August, it emerged that the meeting had been substantive, the current secretary of state, Cyrus Vance, angrily demanded Young's resignation, which the ambassador submitted. President Carter agonized over the situation. Young was a close friend and ally, an embodiment of his administration's commitment to black Americans. Yet the ambassador had alienated many American Jews, whose support Carter would need in his 1980 reelection bid, as well as losing the confidence of Secretary Vance. Carter accepted the resignation on 15 August. "It is absolutely ridiculous," he lamented in his diary, "that we pledged under Kissinger . . . that we would not negotiate with the PLO." Young was willing to use the same adjective in public. The ban on dealing with the PLO, he said in a television interview days later, "is kind of ridiculous."[40]

Young's downfall provoked a surge of anger throughout the black community. To all appearances, the highest-ranking African American in the Carter administration had been humiliated and expelled in order to assuage Israeli sensibilities. Long-smoldering grievances against organized American Jewry—over busing, affirmative action, support for Israel, and other issues—burst into flame. Several of the more established black leaders rushed to contain the reaction. On 16 August Benjamin Hooks, executive director of the NAACP, Coretta Scott King, widow of Martin Luther King, Bayard Rustin, and other leaders issued a statement expressing dismay over Young's ouster. The group insisted, however, that its quarrel was with the State Department, which in their view had applied the anti-PLO policy inconsistently, not with Israel or American Jews.[41] Hooks expressed the hope that the controversy would "not lead to any incitement or exacerbation in tensions between the black and Jewish

communities."[42] But another set of civil rights veterans, including Jesse Jackson, SCLC president Joseph Lowery, and Washington, DC, delegate to Congress Walter Fauntroy, kept the dispute alive by interrogating the policy Young had violated. Why wouldn't the United States talk to the PLO? Weren't the Palestinians key to a viable Arab-Israeli settlement? Wasn't it obvious that the PLO was their representative? Over the next several weeks, these and similar questions proved far more audible within mainstream black discourse than the soothing words of Hooks, King, and Rustin. Exasperation with perceived Israeli intransigence, and with American Jews who abetted it, became the dominant mood.

On 20 August the SCLC, which Young had served as executive director in the 1960s, came out in favor of a Palestinian "homeland" living side-by-side with Israel; Operation PUSH and even the NAACP shortly followed suit. The SCLC's Lowery held his own meeting with Zehdi Terzi and pronounced it "fruitful." A separate meeting between Lowery and Yehuda Blum, Israel's UN ambassador, was far less successful, and the atmosphere subsequently worsened when Blum told reporters that black Americans were "[u]nderstandably. . . less knowledgeable about the Middle East conflict than other parties." Blum's remarks, which Lowery called "arrogant and paternalistic," infuriated black leaders and only deepened their sense of estrangement from the Israeli government. While they continued to voice support for Israel's existence, their criticisms of its policies grew increasingly barbed. "[T]o be pro-Palestinian does not mean I am anti-Israel," said Wyatt Tee Walker, a former SCLC leader and pastor of Harlem's Canaan Baptist Church, but "[a]ll you have to do is go to a Palestinian refugee camp one time and you will know that the Palestinians are the niggers of the Mideast."[43]

Critiques once voiced in muted tones now rang out with sharper clarity. Some black leaders warned that excessive partiality to Israel might provoke another Arab oil embargo that harmed African Americans disproportionately. "If things get tight," Lowery declared, "it would be like America catching a cold and black folks developing pneumonia." Others cautioned that the festering Middle East dispute could exact a still heavier toll on their constituents. "[S]hould the United States become drawn into a war in the Middle East," predicted Fauntroy, "black Americans will once more be called upon to sacrifice their lives." (Months later, Jesse Jackson would vividly combine these two scenarios: "Blacks have a vital interest in peace in the Middle East

because in a hot war we will die first and in a cold war over oil, we will be unemployed and freeze first.")[44]

The Israeli-South African relationship also came in for much sharper scrutiny and criticism. On 22 August, leaders of the main civil rights organizations met in New York to discuss the Young crisis. According to The New York Times, several of them "condemned Israel's economic ties to South Africa, ending what for many had amounted to a longtime reluctance to broach the subject." In an open letter to President Carter on the Young affair, TransAfrica not only detailed Israel's extensive military cooperation with South Africa but echoed one of the more stringent anti-Zionist critiques: "Africans have now come to share the opinion that so often has been advanced by Arab spokesmen, that Israel and South Africa represent examples of a similar phenomenon, 'settler colonialism' or arrogant, aggressive racialism. Americans should have enough influence with Israel to change and negate the growing reality of this charge."[45]

In late September and early October, Lowery and Jackson led separate delegations to visit the Middle East. Jackson's trip, which was more extensive than Lowery's, and headed by a younger, more charismatic, and more media-savvy figure, attracted greater attention. Trailed by American television crews, Jackson addressed a prayer breakfast in East Jerusalem, led West Bank Palestinians in his trademark "I am . . . somebody" chant, visited a war-damaged refugee camp in South Lebanon, and, in a move that left many pro-Israel Americans embittered for years, held three friendly meetings with Yasir Arafat in Beirut. Jackson did urge the PLO chairman to make a conciliatory gesture to Israel. Arafat replied that the PLO sought to establish an independent state "in any part of Palestine from which Israel will withdraw," implying that Israel could exist in the remainder. This was a familiar PLO position, first unveiled in the summer of 1974.[46] Pro-Israel commentators, including black leaders like Bayard Rustin, scoffed that Jackson had achieved nothing new. Worse still, they charged, Jackson had undermined the movement's commitment to nonviolence by cavorting with a notorious terrorist.[47]

Arab-American activists, by contrast, enthusiastically endorsed the pro-Palestinian black initiatives and did what they could to exploit the new opportunity. Fortuitously, the weekend on which the PHRC held a national conference in Washington coincided with the interval between Lowery's return from the Middle East and Jackson's departure for it. Both leaders were invited to address the conference, and they did so in rousing speeches that further identified the struggle

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for racial justice at home with the quest for an equitable settlement in Palestine. The AAUG had offered to help cover the travel costs of Lowery, Jackson, and their delegations, but the offer was declined. Instead, a number of AAUG members in Chicago joined with other Arabs and Arab Americans to raise several thousand dollars for Jackson's Operation PUSH. In Washington, when Fauntroy's call for dialogue with the PLO provoked attacks from Jewish groups, the NAAA praised the DC delegate for breaking the "stranglehold" on public discussion of the Palestine issue. Jackson, Lowery, and Fauntroy were featured speakers at the AAUG's annual convention in Washington that November. Such conspicuous Arab-American outreach drew the predictable accusation that the black leaders were being used for purposes they didn't fully comprehend. Lowery would have none of it. Addressing the PHRC convention upon his return from the Middle East (and channeling the pop singer Bill Withers), Lowery declared: "If war comes, an armed forces disproportionately composed of blacks will be called upon to die. If we're being used to fight that, then use me, baby, till you use me up."[48]

In fact, each community had powerful incentives to embrace the other. For Arab Americans, the sudden involvement of prominent civil rights veterans presented a rare opportunity to promote the Palestinian cause within the United States. "There is no way to know just where the current flurry of activity will lead," observed the September 1 issue of *Political Focus*, an NAAA newsletter, "but a 'sea change' has taken place, and there will be no return to status quo ante." In the coming weeks, Arab-American groups launched a vigorous campaign to woo African Americans. "We have sent telegrams to every black leader we could identify saying we want to initiate dialogue to talk about issues of concern to both groups," Palestine American Congress chairman Jawad George told the New York Times in late October. "We have received some response, mainly from individuals but also from some local organizations. And no one has sent letters back . . . saying they do not want to talk to us."[49]

For African-American organizations, branching out to Middle Eastern issues opened prospects for raising funds from Arab and Arab-American donors, for attracting Arab and Arab-American investment in underserved black communities, and for pursuing business opportunities in the Arab world—all attractive scenarios at a time of deepening economic recession. In a September 1979 meeting in Chicago with Arab and Arab-American businessmen, Jackson reportedly warned that black organizations would drop the Palestine

issue if Arab funds failed to flow into black communities. "We will learn to recite the alphabet without three letters, P-L-O," he was quoted as saying. Jackson and some of the meeting participants denied that the Reverend had issued such a threat. But Leon Finney, executive director of The Woodlawn Organization, another community organization in Chicago, acknowledged to the Chicago Tribune that his own pitch to Arab donors had entailed a clear quid pro quo: "If we're going to help you establish a homeland you should help us rebuild our community. That's what I told them." Elsewhere in the country, and presumably with similar considerations in mind, other civil rights groups increased their involvement in Middle Eastern affairs. The SCLC launched a series of workshops, held in ten cities across the nation, to raise awareness of Middle East issues in the black community. The NAACP organized a seminar, attended by fifty black businesspeople, to explore commercial opportunities in that region.[50]

Another set of Americans appears to have benefited from the new African-American interest in the Middle East: thirteen employees of the U.S. embassy in Tehran. On 4 November militant Iranian students overran the embassy compound and took more than sixty American citizens hostage, an action quickly endorsed by Iran's new revolutionary government. Days later, hoping to ingratiate himself with the Carter administration (and thereby persuade it, at last, to set aside Kissinger's ban on talking to the PLO), Yasir Arafat sent a PLO delegation to Tehran to appeal for the hostages' release. At first, Arafat's initiative seemed to go badly. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Iranian government's spiritual leader, angrily insisted that the fate of the American captives was not up for discussion, with the PLO or anyone else. The students holding the hostages echoed this position. Backpedaling, the PLO announced that its delegation was in Iran not to mediate over the hostages but simply to demonstrate solidarity with the Islamic Republic. Yet the delegation stayed on in Tehran and quietly urged Iranian leaders to make a conciliatory gesture, advice Arafat underscored in phone calls from Beirut.[51]

In mid-November, the PLO mission achieved a modest success when Khomeini authorized the release of thirteen black and female hostages. (The remaining American captives would be held until January 1981.) Khomeini explained the partial release by declaring that "blacks for a long time have lived under oppression and pressure in America" and that "Islam reserves special rights for women." According to the Washington Post, the African Americans may have owed their freedom to a more particular set of circumstances: "the PLO

first suggested the release of the blacks in recognition of its own rapprochement with American blacks following Andrew Young's resignation as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations last summer."[52]

Although the Young controversy soon died down, it left an enduring mark on black politics. From now on, African Americans would participate far more vocally in the national discourse on the Middle East, taking positions generally more sympathetic to Arabs and Palestinians than those found in the U.S. mainstream. It became customary for African-American figures to participate in Arab-American conventions. When James Abourezk, now an ex-senator, formed the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) in the spring of 1980, Congressman Conyers and Delegate Fauntroy attended the organizational meeting. Over the coming years, a small but outspoken contingent of black members of Congress—Conyers, Fauntroy, Mervyn Dymally, Gus Savage, Cynthia McKinney, and others—would push for more Arab-friendly U.S. policies, often in close coordination with Arab-American organizations. The distinguished psychologist Kenneth Clark was on to something when he said, in the heady days following Young's resignation, that the crisis had prompted black Americans to issue "our Declaration of Independence."[53]

African Americans' growing presence in national debates over the Middle East enabled Arab Americans, in turn, to become fuller participants in national politics. This pattern was especially evident in Jesse Jackson's two runs for the Democratic presidential nomination, in 1984 and 1988. In both years, Arab Americans were a significant and visible component of Jackson's "Rainbow Coalition"; in 1984 they were, after African Americans, the largest ethnically defined donor group for the Jackson campaign. In his speech to the 1984 Democratic National Convention, Jackson observed that "Arab Americans . . . know the pain and hurt of racial and religious rejection. They must not continue to be made pariahs." Jim Zogby served as one of Jackson's deputy campaign managers in 1984 and as the Jackson campaign's national co-chair in 1988. At the 1984 Democratic Convention, Zogby delivered a nominating speech for the candidate. In 1988 he introduced, for debate at that year's convention, a platform plank favoring Palestinian statehood. By prearrangement, Zogby withdrew the measure before it could come to a vote, but the fact that it was debated at all was a significant milestone. To some extent, the Jackson campaign's cultivation of Arab-American support would serve as a

model for similar outreach by Barack Obama's vastly more successful—though also far more cautious and conventional—presidential campaign in 2008.[54]

In the years following the 1967 War, Arab Americans' and African Americans' activism on the Arab- Israeli conflict powerfully influenced the manner in which each community positioned itself nationally. Through their mutual interaction, the two groups drew each other, and themselves, a bit closer to the center of national discourse on Middle East issues. A key driver of this process was a profound transformation in the politics of the Arab-Israeli conflict, resulting in the emergence, by the second half of the 1970s, of a plausible scenario for resolving what had previously seemed an intractable dispute. The scenario in question—a full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and a two-state settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli dispute—did not come to pass, for reasons lying beyond the purview of this study. What I hope the article has demonstrated, however, is the importance of placing domestic activism on US foreign policy, in the Middle East or in any other part of the world, in a more dynamic international and transnational context. Only by attending closely to the shifting currents of politics abroad, and to their tributary influences on American activism, can we fully discern the changing landscape of possibility at home.

NOTES

[1] *New York Times*, 16 May 1967, 39; *Chicago Daily Defender*, 16 May 1967, 5.

[2] Mark Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 387–98; Robert G. Weisbord and Richard Kazarian, Jr., *Israel in the Black American Perspective* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 40.

[3] While the terms "moderate" and "radical" carry the potential to oversimplify a complex reality, I have found them useful for this study. In the context of civil rights activism in the late 1960s, "moderates," by and large, remained committed to nonviolence, favored the integration of African Americans into white-dominated mainstream institutions, and believed the federal government could still be an instrument for achieving racial justice. "Radicals" held that violence was justified in some circumstances (and that, perhaps equally importantly, the conspicuous readiness to engage in violence was essential for the safety and dignity of the community), rejected integration into mainstream institutions, and were deeply hostile to the

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national government. While some radicals leaned toward black separatism, others sought alliances with nonblack activists.

[4] I am not aware of any historical scholarship specifically devoted to Arab-American and black activism on the Arab- Israeli conflict. A handful of treatments of Arab-American political activism contain brief references to the subject. See, for example, Suad Joseph, "Against the Grain of the Nation—The Arab," Michael Suleiman, ed., *Arabs in America: Building a New Future* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 266-7; Randa A. Kayyali, *The Arab Americans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006), 142–43; Gregory Orfalea, *The Arab Americans: A History* (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 2006), 236, 273; Pamela Pennock, "Third World Alliances: Arab-American Activists in American Universities, 1967-1973," *Mashriq & Mahjar* 4 (2014): 55–56, 65, 68–69.

[5] The scholarship on black-Jewish relations in general, in which disagreements over the Arab-Israeli conflict are treated as a subtheme, is voluminous and is not cited here. For works focusing specifically on African Americans and the Arab-Israeli conflict, see Weisbord and Kazarian, Israel in the Black American Perspective; Lewis Young, "American Blacks and the Arab-Israeli Conflict," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 2, no. 1 (Autumn 1972): 70–85; Ronald Walters, "The Black Initiatives in the Middle East," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 10, no. 2 (Winter 1981): 3–13; Robert G. Newby, "Afro-Americans and Arabs: An Alliance in the Making?" *Journal of Palestine Studies* 10, no. 2 (Winter 1981): 50–58; Keith P. Feldman, "Representing Permanent War: Black Power's Palestine and the End(s) of Civil Rights," *The New Centennial Review* 8, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 193–231; Gary V. Smith, "Perspectives on Zionism and the Arab- Israeli Conflict in the Black Establishment Press," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (Winter 1980): 70–89. Alex Lubin, *Geographies of Liberation: The Making of an Afro-Arab Political Imaginary* (Durham, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), while not confined to African Americans and the Arab-Israeli dispute, deals extensively with that topic.

[6] See, for example, Weisbord and Kazarian, Jr., *Israel in the Black American Perspective*, 32–38, 121–8, 136–38; Feldman, "Representing Permanent War," 194; Eric J. Sundquist, *Strangers in the Land: Blacks, Jews, Post-Holocaust America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 330–36.

[7] Weisbord and Kazarian, *Israel in the Black American Perspective*, 19–24, 29–31; Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East Since 1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001[2005]), 89–91; Lubin, *Geographies of Liberation*, 105–6; Smith, "Perspectives on Zionism," 72.

[8] Young, "American Blacks," 70–85. In the first half of the 1960s, SNCC was closely allied with the SCLC and pursued, through nonviolent civil disobedience, an integrationist agenda. In 1966, however, SNCC turned sharply toward black separatism and disavowed (or at least significantly qualified) its commitment to nonviolence. Also in 1966, the Black Panther

Party for Self-Defense (BPP) was formed in Oakland, CA. For comprehensive histories of each organization, see Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981 [1995]); Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, Jr., *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2013). Any discussion of SNCC and the BPP must include the following caveat: As both organizations were subject to sharp internal dissension and chaotic decision-making procedures, it is always somewhat misleading to assert, without further explanation, that either group adopted a particular policy position. My approach here is to acknowledge this complexity but, at the same time, treat statements appearing in each group's public declarations or newsletters as at least approximating that group's collective view. The Middle East-related positions that I attribute to SNCC and the BPP were expressed repeatedly in public statements and documents. Any misgivings that individual leaders may have harbored about such views (and we know that such misgivings did exist within SNCC) were not strong enough to alter either organization's public stance. Carson, *In Struggle*, 267–72.

[9] McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, 87-89; Robert Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound: A History of America's Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 243.

[10] Carson, *In Struggle*, 265–7; Lubin, *Geographies of Liberation*, 116–17, 119–23; Bloom and Martin, *Black Against Empire*, 27–28; Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (New York: Viking, 2011), 307-314, 360–71, 480, 484; Sundquist, *Strangers in the Land*, 315.

[11] Roy Wilkins, "Israel's Smashing Victory Complicates Peace Search," *Los Angeles Times*, 19 June 1967, A5; Weisbord and Kazarian, *Israel in the Black American Perspective*, 40.

[12] "The Middle Eastern Question," Statement by Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, September 1967, in Lewis V. Baldwin, ed., *"In a Single Garment of Destiny": A Global Vision of Justice* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012), 182–83; Whitney M. Young, "To Be Equal: Israel's Lessons for America," *Sacramento Observer*, 22 May 1969, 4.

[13] Ilan Peleg and Dov Waxman, *Israel's Palestinians: The Conflict Within* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 32–39.

[14] Weisbord and Kazarian, *Israel in the Black American Perspective*, 36; Young, "American Blacks," 78; Lubin, *Geographies of Liberation*, 122.

[15] The June–July 1967 issue of the *SNCC Newsletter*, for example, charged that the creation of Israel had resulted from a "conspiracy" between the British Empire and "the Rothschilds, who have long controlled the wealth of many European nations." Far worse, the June 1967 issue of *Black Power*, the Black Panther Party newsletter, contained a poem featuring the lines, "We're gonna burn their towns and that ain't all/We're gonna piss upon the Wailing Wall/ . . . That will be ecstasy, killing every Jew we see." Weisbord and Kazarian, *Israel in the Black American Perspective*, 33, 43. For two divergent

treatments of the resulting controversies, the first generally critical of the black radicals and the second generally sympathetic to them, see Weisbord and Kazarian, *Israel in the Black American Perspective*, 32–47, and Lubin, *Geographies of Liberation*, 111–23.

[16] Weisbord and Kazarian, *Israel in the Black American Perspective*, 39; *Chicago Daily Defender*, 17 August 1967, A15.

[17] Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 4th ed. (New York: St. Martin's, 2001), 301–13.

[18] Orfalea, *Arab Americans*, 215; Pennock, "Third World Alliances," 58–62.

[19] Pennock, "Third World Alliances," 55–56; Young, "American Blacks," 77–79; Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Presidential Statement, Association of Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG) Second Annual Convention, 5 December 1969, AAUG Twin Cities Chapter Papers, box 1, folder: "AAUG National HQ," Immigration History and Research Center, University of Minnesota Library, Minneapolis, MN (hereafter IHRC); *AAUG Newsletter*, December 1970, 2–4; ibid., July 1972, 5. W. E. B. Du Bois himself, who died in 1963, had strongly supported Zionism and Israel. Weisbord and Kazarian, *Israel in the Black American Perspective*, 13–15, 19–23; Lubin, *Geographies of Liberation*, 44–46, 105–6.

[20] Abu-Lughod to Bayard Rustin, 14 September 1970, Bayard Rustin Papers, box 14, folder: "Blacks and Israel Newspaper clippings," Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC (hereafter LC); Margaret Pennar to Rustin, n.d. (c. July 1970), ibid.

[21] For Rustin's views on Israel, see Daniel Levine, *Bayard Rustin and the Civil Rights Movement* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 224–8; Smith, "Perspectives on Zionism," 77–79.

[22] M[uhammad] T. Mehdi to Rustin, 29 June 1970, Rustin Papers, box 4, folder: "General Correspondence July 1970," LC; Rustin to Mehdi, 29 July 1970, ibid.; Mehdi to Rustin, 15 July 1970, ibid., box 14, folder: "Blacks and Israel Newspaper clippings," LC.

[23] William B. Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967*, rev. ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2001), 88–97; Salim Yaqub, "The Politics of Stalemate: The Nixon Administration and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1979–73," Nigel J. Ashton, ed., *The Cold War in the Middle East: Regional Conflict and the Superpowers, 1967–73* (London: Routledge, 2007), 43–49.

[24] Orfalea, *Arab Americans*, 218.

[25] Shirley Chisholm, Presidential Campaign Position Paper no. 2, n.d. (c. March 1972); AAUG Twin Cities Chapter Papers, box 1, "folder: "Archives," IHRC; *AAUG Newsletter*, April 1972, 1, 4; ibid, June 1972, 1, 5; ibid., July 1972, 1, 5.

[26] Quandt, *Peace Process*, 105–24; Yaqub, "The Weight of Conquest: Henry Kissinger and the Arab-Israeli Conflict," Fredrik Logevall and Andrew Preston, eds., *Nixon in the World: American Foreign Relations, 1969–1977* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 227–8, 236–45; Alain Gresh, *The PLO: The Struggle Within, Toward an Independent Palestinian State*, trans. A. M. Barrett (London: Zed Books, 1983), 133–207. President Jimmy Carter, who took office in January 1977, did initially favor a comprehensive settlement leading to Israel's withdrawal from virtually all of the occupied territory, Arab recognition of Israel, and the establishment of a Palestinian "homeland" (perhaps federated with Jordan) in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. But strenuous opposition to this plan from Israel and its American supporters, combined with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's own skepticism about its chances of success, forced Carter to set aside the comprehensive approach in favor of a bilateral peace process between Egypt and Israel, resulting in the Camp David Agreement of 1978 and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of 1979. Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1986), is still the definitive account.

[27] *Washington Post*, 24 October 1977, A21.

[28] In a Gallup poll taken among Americans at the start of the October War, 47 percent of respondents said they favored Israel in the Middle East dispute, while just 6 percent expressed a preference for the Arab countries. (The remaining respondents were neutral or had no opinion.) In a January 1979 Gallup poll, 42 percent favored Israel and 15 percent favored the Arabs. Richard H. Curtiss, *A Changing Image: American Perceptions of the Arab-Israeli Dispute* (Washington, DC: American Educational Trust, 1982), 189, 200.

[29] James G. Abourezk to John P. Richardson, 14 June 1978, James Abourezk Papers, box 649, folder: "Search Info—MERC, Arab Lobby," University of South Dakota Library, Vermillion, SD. When Abourezk arrived in the US Senate in early 1973, J. William Fulbright of Arkansas, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was a prominent advocate of a more evenhanded US policy on the Arab-Israeli dispute. But Fulbright's defeat in Arkansas's Democratic senatorial primary in 1974, resulting in his departure from the Senate in early 1975, deprived Abourezk of a key ally.

[30] For example, in its critique of the September 1978 Camp David Agreement, the AAUG called for an "Israeli military withdrawal from all Arab lands" and supported "the right of the Palestinian people to set up an independent and sovereign state on their own territory." "AAUG Statement on the Camp David Summit," 19 September 1978, AAUG Papers, box 16, folder "President—Fouad Moughrabi 1978," EMUL. Because the terms "Arab lands" and "their own territory" remained undefined, the statement was compatible with a two-state settlement but not necessarily bound to it. Such ambiguity, designed to bridge internal disagreements, was typical of the AAUG's official statements on this issue in the late 1970s.

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[31] *AAUG Newsletter*, March 1974, 7; *Chicago Daily Defender*, 17 November 1973, 1; ibid., 24 November 1973, 3; ibid., 20 December 1973, 10; ibid., 19 January 1974, 17; ibid., 4 February 1975, 9; *New York Times*, 12September 1975, 66; Smith, "Perspectives on Zionism," 73.

[32] *AAUG Newsletter*, July 1972, 1, 5; March 1974, 7; Abu-Lughod and Baha Abu-Laban, eds., *Settler Regimes in Africa and the Arab World: The Illusion of Permanence* (Wilmette, IL: Medina University Press International, 1974); Young, "American Blacks," 84–85; *Washington Post*, 24 May 1972, A13; Weisbord and Kazarian, *Israel in the Black American Perspective*, 95–100; Yvonne D. Newsome, "International Issues and Domestic Ethnic Relations: African Americans, American Jews, and the Israel-South Africa Debate," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 5, no. 1 (Autumn 1991): 32–33.

[33] Weisbord and Kazarian, *Israel in the Black American Perspective*, 100–11; Newsome, "International Issues," 33–34; Verne Harris, Sello Hatang, and Peter Liberman, "Unveiling South Africa's Nuclear Past," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30, no. 3 (September 2004): 461–62, 472; US Central Intelligence Agency, "The 22 September 1979 Event," December 1979, National Security Archive, accessed 13 April 2015, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB190/03.pdf; *Washington Post*, 15 July 1980, A7; ibid., 16 September 1980, A25; *Wall Street Journal*, 16 July 1980, 32.

[34] Francis Njubi Nesbitt, *Race for Sanctions: African Americans Against Apartheid, 1946–1994* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 102–3; William Raspberry, "Freedom of Speech About Israel," *Washington Post*, 29 August 1979, A25; Carl Rowan, "Nazi Mentality Loose in South Africa," *Evening News* (Newburgh, NY), 11 November 1977, 6A; Rustin to Uri Ben-Ari, 15 and 20 April 1976, Rustin Papers, box 12, folder: "Blacks and Israel B.A.S.I.C. South Africa," LC; Ben-Ari to Rustin, 29 April 1976, ibid.; Arthur Hertzberg to Rustin, 14 September 1976, ibid.; Rustin to BASIC members, 10 June 1976, ibid., folder: "Black and Israel B.A.S.I.C. Press releases and statements," LC; Rustin to Hertzberg, 27 August 1976, ibid., box 5, folder: "General Correspondence, 1976–77," LC; Hertzberg to Rustin, 1 September 1976, ibid.; Smith, "Perspectives on Zionism," 85. For other examples of criticism of the Israeli-South African relationship in the mainstream black press, see ibid., 86–87.

[35] *Washington Post*, 14 May 1978, B1; ibid., 20 May 1979, C3; *AAUG Newsletter*, June 1978, 9.

[36] PHRC conference program, "Palestinian Human Rights and Peace," 20–21 May 1978, office of James Zogby, Arab American Institute, Washington, DC. I am grateful to Dr. Zogby for granting me access to this and other documents in his possession.

[37] *Chicago Tribune*, 10 February 1979, S2.

[38] *AAUG Newsletter*, July 1979, 8; *Washington Post*, 11 July 1979, A4.

[39] Although Andrew Young's specific contact with Zehdi Terzi was unauthorized, it was part of a broader, behind-the-scenes effort by the Carter administration to coordinate UN action with the PLO. At the PLO's behest, Arab delegations had introduced a resolution in the UN Security Council recognizing Palestinian national rights. The Carter administration, not wishing to be presented with a resolution it would feel obliged to veto, was attempting to soften the Arab draft. The administration realized, however, that it needed more time to effect the necessary changes. Through a series of intermediaries, including Illinois Representative Paul Findley and American University of Beirut Professor Walid Khalidi, Washington sought, and obtained, the PLO's acquiescence in a postponement of the Security Council's consideration of the pro-Palestinian measure. Ambassador Young requested this same delay in his meeting with Terzi. It is unclear whether Young's initiative contributed in any way to the affirmative result or was purely redundant. See Yaqub, *Imperfect Strangers: Americans and Arabs in the 1970s*, forthcoming from Cornell University Press.

[40] Weisbord and Kazarian, *Israel in the Black American Perspective*, 121–22; Andrew J. DeRoche, *Andrew Young: Civil Rights Ambassador* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2003), 111–13; Bartlett C. Jones, *Flawed Triumphs: Andy Young at the United Nations* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996), 109–126, 131–34, 139–40; Jimmy Carter, *White House Diary* (New York: Ferrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010), 352; *Washington Post*, 20 August 1979, A1, A16.

[41] The statement by Hooks, Rustin, et al. cited news reports that another US diplomat, Ambassador to Austria Milton A. Wolf, had himself recently met with a PLO official without suffering any repercussions. Wolf had indeed met in Vienna with Issam Sartawi, a top aide to Arafat, as part of a general US effort to encourage the PLO to adopt a more conciliatory stance toward Israel. In early July, while in Vienna for talks with Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, Arafat had not objected to Kreisky's declaration that the PLO's goal "is not the destruction of the state of Israel." Wolf subsequently met with Sartawi, apparently to confirm that Arafat truly accepted Kreisky's characterization. When the State Department learned of this unauthorized meeting, it merely reminded Wolf of the ban on direct contact with the PLO. Wolf, however, had not misled the Department, as Young would do a month later. *Los Angeles Times*, 16 August 1979, 1, 9; ibid., 17 August 1979, B1; ibid., 18 August 1979, 1, 10.

[42] *Los Angeles Times*, 17 August 1979, B11.

[43] *Chicago Tribune,* 21 August 1979, 2; ibid., 26 August 1979, 16; *Los Angeles Times*, 11 September 1979, B11; *Washington Post*, 22 August 1979, A5.

[44] *Chicago Tribune*, 26 August 1979, 16; Walter E. Fauntroy, statement at the Black Leadership Meeting, 22 August 1979, Abdeen Jabara Papers, box 6, folder: "Activities—Black/Arab Coalition, 1979–1983," Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (hereafter BL); *AAUG Newsletter*, September/October 1980, 9.

[45] *New York Times*, 23 August 1979, A12; TransAfrica, Inc., "Message to the President on the Resignation of Ambassador Andrew Young and on United States Relations with the Middle East and with Africa," n.d. (c. September 1979), Zogby and Jack O'Dell, eds., *Afro-Americans Stand Up for Middle East Peace* (Washington, DC: Palestine Human Rights Campaign, 1980), 38.

[46] Clipping, *Jerusalem Post*, 27 September 1979, page number not shown, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (hereafter FCO) 93/2198, The National Archives, Kew, London, United Kingdom (hereafter TNA); M[ichael] P.V. Hannam to M[ichael] K. Jenner, 27 September 1979, ibid.; *Washington Post*, 30 September 1979, A16; *Los Angeles Times*, 30 September 1979, A5. In November 1978, in a meeting in Damascus with Congressman Findley, Arafat had dictated a more forthcoming statement about the PLO's willingness to make peace with Israel. "The PLO," he pledged, "will accept an independent Palestinian state consisting of the West Bank and Gaza, with connecting corridor, and in that circumstance will renounce any and all violent means to enlarge the territory of that state. I would reserve the right, of course, to use non-violent means, that is to say diplomatic and democratic means to bring about the eventual unification of all of Palestine. We will give de facto recognition to the State of Israel. We would live at peace with all of our neighbors." Statement by Yasir Arafat, 25 November 1978, Findley Papers, box 11, folder: "Arafat's Pledge to PF," Hoover Institution Library and Archives, Palo Alto, CA. The statement also appears in Findley, *They Dare to Speak Out: People and Institutions Confront Israel's Lobby* (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill & Co., 1985), 13.

[47] Rustin, "Do Blacks Have Anything to Gain From Ties to PLO?" *Chicago Tribune*, 14 October 1979, A1–A2; *Jewish Week*, 24 February 1980, 32.

[48] *Chicago Tribune*, 24 September 1979, D8; *Washington Post*, 26 September 1979, C1, C7; *New York Times*, 17 October 1979, D22; ibid., 30 October 1979, A15; Nabeel Abraham to *New York Times*, 18 October 1979, AAUG Papers, box 16, folder: "President—Samih Farsoun 1979," EMUL; *AAUG Newsletter*, December 1979/March 1980, 1–2.

[49] NAAA, *Political Focus*, 1 September 1979, 1; *New York Times*, 30 October 1979, A15.

[50] George F. Will, "Talk About Leaders," *Washington Post*, 11 October 1979, 23; *Chicago Tribune*, 28 October 1979, 6; NAAA, *Political Focus*, 15 November 1979, 1; ibid., 15 December 1979, 2.

[51] *New York Times*, 8 November 1979, A11; *Chicago Tribune*, 9 November 1979, 4; ibid., 10 November 1979, 1; ibid., 16 November 1979, 2; *Los Angeles Times*, 11 November 1979, A8; David D. Newsom and Harold H. Saunders to Cyrus Vance, 7 November 1979, Remote Access Capture (hereafter RAC), NLC-132-105-13-2-2, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, Atlanta, GA (hereafter CL); memorandum of conversation, John Gunther Dean and Walid Khalidi, 9 November 1979, RAC, NLC-131-12-5-23-2, CL.

[52] *Washington Post*, 18 November 1979, A1, A10. The Carter administration was in no doubt that the hostages' release had resulted from the PLO mission to Tehran. Carter's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, confided to a British diplomat that the PLO "had been decisive" on the matter. UK Embassy, Washington, to FCO, tel #3903, 26 November 1979, FCO 93/2062, TNA. In a confidential message to Arafat, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance noted that he "appreciate[d] the role the PLO played to bring about the release of the thirteen hostages." Vance to Arafat, 25 November 1979, RAC, NLC-131-1-3-8-4, CL. Vance's message was sent in written form to US Ambassador to Lebanon John Gunther Dean, who delivered it orally to Khalidi, who in turn conveyed it to Arafat.

[53] *The News Circle*, April 1980, 1; *Gainesville (FL) Sun*, 20 April 1986, 8A; *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, February 1988, accessed 13 April 2015, http://www.wrmea.org/1988-february/lobbies-and-activists-focus-on-arabs-and-islam.html; *Washington Post*, 28 January 1991, A16; Roger Wilkins, "Black Leaders' Meeting: 'Watershed' Effort for Unanimity," *New York Times*, 24 August 1979, A11.

[54] Kayyali, *Arab Americans*, 142; Joseph, "Against the Grain," 266–7; *New York Times*, 20 July 1988, A21; *Arab American News*, 13–19 September 2008, 4; ibid., 27 September 27–3 October 2008, 5; ibid., 8–14 November 2008, 2.