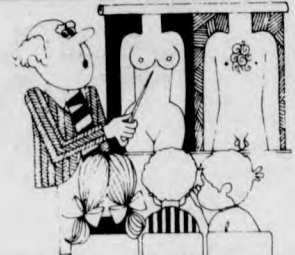


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Symposium tries to unravel Middle East

By Paul Stuart As the world breathlessly watched the progress of the Israeli-Egyptian peace-talks, a timely U of T symposium entitled, "What's What in The Arab-Jewish Conflict," examined the issues which have made the Middle East a powder keg. The symposium, held February 1, saw renowned Jewish philosopher Emil Fackenheim - whose lecture "Anti-Semitism and Western Consciousness," climaxed the evening - tell a hushed audience of 600 how the Soviet secret police, the KGB, confiscated papers from his wife and himself at Moscow airport in May 1977. The papers bore the wordings of inscriptions from the visitors' book at a Nazi death camp at Rumbala in the USSR.

One of the inscriptions, translated from Arabic into English in the visitors' book, urged the Russian people "to join with us in the struggle against Zionism wherever they may be found." But before Fackenheim spoke, two other speakers launched the symposium. The first was U of T's visiting professor from the University of Haifa in Israel, Gabriel Warburg. After providing a historical back-grounder, Warburg set forth his analysis of the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

He divided the PLO into "extremists" and "so-called moderates." The aim of the moderates being to "establish a Palestinian homeland" as a base from which "to carry on their fight to liberate all Palestine." He said the extremists' "fear is that any compromise with the Israelis would mean the end of the Palestinian revolution."

Warburg ended his talk on a pessimistic note, pointing out that PLO is the only leadership of the Palestinians recognized by the Arab states. "As long as this decision holds, I don't think any Israeli government would agree to a Palestinian state, with its close ties to the Soviet bloc and its commitment to the destruction of Israel," he said.

Next at the rostrum was McGill law professor Irwin Cotler. A press release from the symposium's organizers, the Toronto Student Zionists, stated that "Cotler was reported to have been the bearer of an important message" from Begin to Sadat "just prior to Sadat's visit to Jerusalem."

The core of Cotler's talk consisted of his setting forth of the six Arab conditions for peace which, he contends, Sadat will propose, in addition to the well known Arab demands that Israel abandon the territories it occupied during the '67 war and recognize the right of Palestinian self-determination. These conditions are:

- That Israelis agree to withdrawal and Palestinian self-determination not after negotiations, but as a precondition to further negotiations.
• That the normalization of relations not be "a true state of peace," but simply the termination of the technical state of war between Israel and the Arab states.
• That Israel negotiate with Egypt on considerably more than the question of the Sinai, since "if Egypt negotiates for all of the Arabs, concessions on the Sinai may not be enough."
• That there be no agreement prejudicing the rights of the Palestinians, i.e. the PLO.
• That Israel "conform to international law" in the dismantling of illegal settlements. Cotler said the Arabs emphasize that President Carter calls them illegal.
• That Israel cease being a racist state, or "dezionize" itself. Cotler told the gathering that this is what Sadat meant when he told the Israeli parliament (Knesset) that Israel "must not only be in the middle east, but of the middle east". According to Cotler, Sadat hopes to turn Israel into an Arabized "middle eastern state."

Cotler said that Arab aims stem from "deep belief systems." Basing his views on trips to Syria, Jordan and Egypt in the past three years, he

said the attitudes of the officials and intellectuals he talked to did not stem "from anti-Jewishness, but from understanding Jewishness in a certain way."

For Cotler, the Arab understanding runs like this: "Judaism is not a people but a religion... therefore Jews do not have the right to self-determination... therefore that state is illegal and Zionism is a false ideology which has subverted "Judaism". Cotler visited Cairo just after Begin's election and encountered the view that his ascent would split American Jews and weaken support for Israel. He said the Egyptians felt the Begin victory would "make the Arab war option a more credible one," and that "if we break Begin we break Israel."

Injecting a note of pessimism concerning the Israeli-Egyptian talks, he forecast that they "may break down again and again". But he added that the Mid-East "which has exploded into war, may yet explode into peace."

He made a distinction between the Arab and Egyptian desire for peace, saying that "in Egypt there is a

genuine desire for peace". Fackenheim began his talk with a quotation from Sartre's Anti-Semite and Jew, about the democratic friend of the Jew, who reproaches the Jew for "wilfully considering himself a Jew." Fackenheim said that this sort of democratic friend has, since the time of the French Revolution, led left-wing Jews to demand that the "Jews and Jews alone dissolve themselves into mankind."

He cited the example of Rosa Luxemburg, a German revolutionary executed by Germany's social-democratic government after the first world war, as one affected by democratic friendship. He said she was a "most remarkable person of profound ethical concerns," and that she had "three strokes against her: she was Polish, she was Jewish and she was a woman."

In a letter to a Zionist friend, Luxemburg once asked, "why do you bother me with your petty Jewish sufferings?" and went on to write about the sufferings of the Zulus. Fackenheim noted with irony that "for all their sufferings," the

Zulus still existed as a people by 1945, when the Jews of Europe were almost completely exterminated.

For Fackenheim there have been vast changes in the situation of Jews in Western society in the "past 30 or 40 years." He attributed this to the existence of the State of Israel:

"It is as a result of the State of Israel that all Jews, even the most anti-Zionist Jew can walk more erect."

He maintained that only the existence of Israel could explain the improvement in the situation of Western Jews, since after the Holocaust they would not have been in a position to make progress on their own.

Fackenheim told the audience he had been deeply moved on a visit to the Nazi death camp at Salspils in the USSR last year, because the camp was an indication of "how the Russian people had suffered at the hands of the Nazis, second only to the Jews." But he said there was no mention that Jews were among the victims at Salspils. He had been guided to the Salspils site, but had to ask to go to Rumbala where only Jews were killed.

Again Jews were not mentioned on the memorial and Fackenheim said this was not accidental:

"On the other side of the Iron Curtain the memory that there ever was a holocaust has been systematically wiped out."

He urged the audience to write to Col. Lev Ovischer, a Soviet army officer who has been persecuted since he refused to denounce Israel as an "imperialist aggressor," following the '67 war. Ovischer has been denied permission to emigrate to Israel and has sent back 17 medals he won in World War Two, some of them at the Battle of Stalingrad.

On a visit to Jerusalem last year, Fackenheim said he wondered how the "so-called Arab quarter" could bear its name, when before the Jordanians invaded in 1948, it contained 50 synagogues which were destroyed and desecrated. He told the audience that some synagogues with fine carvings and marble floors had been used as urinals by the Jordanians. After the meeting a man talking to Dr. Fackenheim told Excalibur that "this was done from 1948 to '67, so they can't say it happened in battle."



Feature

In March, women march for "bread and roses"

"As we go marching, marching in the beauty of the day, a million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill lofts gray are touched with all the radiance, that a sudden sun discloses. For the people hear us singing: Bread and Roses! Bread and Roses!"

For over 50 years March 8 has been celebrated by marches, meetings and protests. Today the tradition of our day is re-emerging as the symbol of international solidarity. The celebration is becoming a thread in our history of struggle.

This day came about in the early 1900's when the demand for women's suffrage was becoming loud and clear. In order to make the campaign for the vote most effective an international campaign was built and organized. In 1910 Clara Zetkin, a leader in the socialist and women's movements, called for an international day of action demanding international female suffrage.

This day was chosen to commemorate the garment and textile women workers who struck in New York in 1908 when the 8 hour day was still a dream - an event in history about which the song 'Bread and

Roses' was written. Bread referring to the demand for economic security. Roses for a better life.

There was a tremendous response: In Germany and Austria one woman described "a seething, trembling sea of women, meetings were organized all over the country." 30,000 men and women demonstrated in Austria.

1908 was by no means the first time women had come together to protest their oppression. As early as 1647, maids in London had signed a petition for the institution of the day off "to shut up our kitchen doors from eight in the morning till eight at night every second Tuesday." Women's oppression was not a new idea in 1908. What grew after the 1908 march was the international solidarity of the struggles of women.

In Russia, although demonstrations and meetings were illegal women organized an International Women's Day in 1913 around the woman question. Right after the March 8 forum the police arrested the main speakers. But they could not kill the essence of March 8.

These events paved the way to the 1917 demonstration in Russia where Petrograd women, led by the women textile workers, poured into the streets demanding bread. This

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY '78



action was the straw that began to break the Czar's back and marked the first day of the Russian revolution. March 8 celebrations continued

on all over the world, but as the quiescent 50's approached, the day's history faded in the sluggishness of the woman's movement. The economic boom

sapped the strength of March 8 as a day of protest.

In this decade, with the women's movement coming to life on a global scale, International Women's day is rising again. It was celebrated in 1970 in Uruguay by an all-women jailbreak organized by the Tupamaros.

All over the world, women are reclaiming our day, using it to build our struggle. On March 8, 1977 in Spain, over 8,000 factory workers demonstrated to demand equal pay, contraception, abortion and amnesty. Seven thousand people marched in Belgium.

In Quebec, since 1976, March 8 has been marked by large demonstrations led by the women's movement and trade union women's committees. The essence of March 8 has returned.

Here in Toronto many diverse groups inside and outside the women's movement are building for an action to celebrate March 8 - part of a cross-Canada International Women's Day 1978. Once again we will be singing Bread and Roses! Bread and Roses!

Mary Ellen for the Media Committee International Women's Day Coalition, Toronto

But will men watch the Leafs instead?

Cleveland and Los Angeles play boring hockey. Hopefully that will mean good things for International Women's Day actions across Canada, or at least in Ontario.

What does hockey have to do with IWD? Well, March 8 and March 11 are the two days when IWD is going to be celebrated this year, and on the eighth the Leafs play L.A., and on the 11th they play Cleveland. The games are not crucial, they'll probably be dull, so it might be easier to persuade a few men to participate in and support IWD actions instead of watching the games.

And there are many reasons why we men should support International Women's Day.

First of all, because it's going to be inspiring. This will be the biggest IWD celebration in Canada in many years. Canadian society is in one hell of a mess, and while the system's crisis is hurting all of us, it is really hammering women.

To begin, with many women have forgotten what it's like to get a good night's sleep. 40 percent of women over age 14 are wage-workers, and a



good number of them also hold another (unpaying) job as housewives.

Holding down two full-time jobs five days a week, and one on the weekend does not leave time for too many nights of seven, or even six hours sleep.

On top of this, the jobs women get

are traditionally the lowest paying ones, and these days, even these are hard to get. Unemployment is hard on men, but it is devastating for women wage-workers. This is obviously true for women who head single-parent families (and 60% of all such families are headed by women) but also for those in 2-parent families. Those "second" incomes earned by women are not used for luxuries and "extras". With prices like they are today, nine times out of ten they're a god-damned necessity.

Talk to the wives of the 1200 (mostly) men who were laid off two weeks ago in Sudbury. Those earning "second" incomes now aren't using their pay to buy caviar!

Given all this, it's no wonder there's a women's movement, and no wonder that March 8, International Women's Day traces its history back to 1908, to the streets of New York's lower East Side and a demonstration of women garment workers, women wage-workers.

Because there is a feminist movement, we know a little about what our society does to women. It

tells them to be mothers and housewives, to be submissive and passive, to service the needs of men in the home and, in the workforce, to take jobs of service and support to a male-dominated world. Women are told that the public world of work and power is for men and that their role is to service men's needs.

They are told that they are to accept being excluded from the public world, and to be alone responsible for seeing that the personal, private world of home and relationships keeps functioning.

But if men are allowed sole right to the public domain of work, power, domination and control, we know from nothing when it comes to the private world of love and relationships. That's supposed to be women's problem and responsibility. Somehow, relationships are supposed to happen and grow without our help and effort.

International Women's Day and the women's movement it represents is serving notice that women are reclaiming their right to that half of being human that our society says

they can't have. Women are saying that they no longer accept being kept in the home and excluded from the world of work, control and power.

But the other side of that coin is men reclaiming our right to a world our society has kept us out of. The world of emotions and relationships, the so-called "private" world.

The other half of women's liberation is men's liberation, and if women's liberation means driving the Farrah-Fawcett Major curse from the world, then men's liberation means purging ourselves of Charles Bronson, Telly Savalas, and Clint Eastwood.

So we should miss the Leafs game and participate in IWD activities.

Our society, in order that we conform to its profit-making imperative, divides us one from the other and tries to make us into passive "half-people." It reaches inside our personalities and steals half our humanness from us.

Because we can learn from our sisters a few things that might help us in our own liberation, in our own struggle to be a whole person in spite of this crazy, inhuman world.

Paul Kellogg

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