

New Directions

Volume 7 | Issue 1

Article 1

10-1-1979

Notes

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Recommended Citation

Staff, Editorial (1979) "Notes," *New Directions*: Vol. 7: Iss. 1, Article 1.

Available at: <https://dh.howard.edu/newdirections/vol7/iss1/1>

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2 The Palestinian Question

The resignation of Andrew Young over the Palestinian issue may have helped generate a new interest in the question of statehood for the people of Palestine. Prior to Young's resignation, the Palestinian question in the United States was usually relegated to the back rooms of diplomacy—away from the public arena.

In the Black communities of America, the Palestinian question found awareness only among a few internationally-minded groups whose vision extended beyond the immediate problems affecting their neighborhoods.

The fallout from the Young resignation may have compounded the political crisis of an approaching election year for the Carter Administration, particularly among a large segment of the Black voters who feel Young was forced out of his post as U. S. envoy to the United Nations.

The reaction of most Black Americans, particularly among the national Black leadership, has not set well with the Administration, the Israeli government, and the media.

Following Young's resignation, other Black leaders have taken up the Middle East peace drive. This, too, has alienated the Israeli leadership as well as those of the Jewish communities in America. Accusations that border on racism have been leveled against some of the Black leaders.

The issue, as we see it, is not whether Black leaders possess the expertise or the farsight to engage in international diplomacy with the objective of seeking a lasting peace in the area, and a just solution to the Palestinian question. Rather, the focus should be on the question of that which is morally right. It is morally right to seek an end to terrorism, political repression, torture, and refugees. Hence the effort by the Black leadership to bring the two sides together.

The ultimate objective of the Palestinians, without a question, is for an independent nation of their own. As for the Israelis, their ultimate objective would have to be for an orderly continuance of their nation.

It would be correct, therefore, to hope that these objectives can be reached provided the parties in the conflict are sincerely seeking a just solution. But in the absence of a dialogue between the parties, there can be no progress. The time for such a dialogue is now at hand.

Andrew Young's celebrated contact with the Palestine Liberation Organization observer to the United Nations—although it may have been contrary to standing U. S. policy (change is overdue here)—deserves credit. (For detailed analysis on this, read Ronald Walter's article elsewhere in this issue).

It has been said before, there can be no lasting peace in the Middle East without a just solution to the Palestinian question. And the solution to the problem should not necessarily lead to the destruction of Israel.

When Pope John Paul II addressed the United Nations General Assembly during his recent tour of America, he had the following to say about the Palestinian question:

"It is my fervent hope that a solution to the Middle East crises may draw nearer. While being prepared to recognize the value of any concrete step or attempt made to settle the conflict, I want to recall that it would have no value if it did not truly represent the 'first stone' of a general overall peace in the area, a peace that, being necessarily based on equitable recognition of the rights of all, cannot fail to include the consideration and just settlement of the Palestinian question." □

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