



# Marginalia



## Letters:

### ARABS & JEWS

SIRS: Bravo for "Arabs & Jews: An Editorial" [July 1967]. RAMPARTS' objectivity is hard to achieve on an issue about which nobody else is even trying to be objective. As a member of the predominantly Jewish faculty of a high school on the Lower East Side, I have heard many a discussion which saddened me from the point of view that, however objective one's thinking ordinarily, there is no case where he can safely assume that he is so, without first looking to see if there are any emotional prejudices hiding behind his logical arguments!

How amazing that so many larger questions of international affairs are, at bottom, very personal. Wherever there is tension, there is a responsibility on *both* sides to use reason to overcome the tension, whether it is in the Middle East or here, in the everyday personal encounters between Jews and non-Jews.

MRS. JOHN BENDER

New York City

SIRS: Allow me to congratulate you on your editorial of July. It is undoubtedly one of (if not *the*) best editorials to have appeared in the American press dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict. It has demonstrated an accurate and objective grasp of the magnitude and ramifications of the issue. It was indeed most heartwarming to see that at long last, someone was willing to raise the voice of reason and truth in a press where prejudice and hypocrisy remain the prevalent character.

ISMAIL SERAGELDIN

Organization of Arab Students

New York City

SIRS: How distressing it is to find RAMPARTS indulging in the vague cold-war gobbledy-gook so popular today (re: "Arabs & Jews," an editorial). Yes, perhaps the European Jews were hunted and

destroyed at one time, but how long must we hear this as an excuse for every kind of crime? It looks painfully like the so-called persecuted Puritans of the 17th century (I wonder if they thought God had given *this* land to them?) who escaped to the North American continent only to begin systematically killing the (indigenous) Indians and running them off the land. Over whose dead bodies did God give Israel to the Jews?

KAY L. JACOBY

New York City

SIRS: Abdul Nasser's latest quote from the recent Arab summit is, "All Arab resources are now to be mobilized, and the remnants of colonialism and Zionism will be destroyed."

Nasser has been talking like this for over ten years. Yet, when he closed off Israel's outlet to the Indian Ocean and began mobilizing his Army on the Israeli border, and when the Syrian Arabs sent yet another—this time larger and more murderous than usual—company of *fedayeen* into Israel, and Israel finally, after years of forbearance, small scale reprisals, and complaints to the U.N., undertook to defend itself against all of these, still RAMPARTS can find it in its editorial heart to say, "Israel resorted to preemptive war." Which can only mean you do not consider a blockade to be an act of aggression.

By this standard RAMPARTS loses its New Left credentials, since even *it* is now seen to have a limit beyond which it will not call a spade a spade.

R. GREENGARD

Long Beach, California

SIRS: I read your July issue with great interest. Unfortunately, I think that in all the articles dealing with Israel, you confused reality with dreams (except for the historical sections, which made up the bulk of those articles). Israel is a fact; as such, it needs no justification. The same applies to the attitudes of the Arab states to Israel.

As to the "Arab" point of view, the most common mistake is to confuse Arab states and the Palestinian refugees. No one has ever asked them what they want. They are always spoken for. And the sad fact is that no one knows what they want. Do they want to return to Palestine, or are they willing to settle for monetary reparations? Do they want an independent Arab Palestine, a federation with Israel, or a bi-national state? These are the people with whom Israel must bargain first.

It must, however, be admitted that neither side has really tried to achieve peace. Here, two brands of nationalism are in direct conflict. The Arab brand is obvious; the Israeli is not recognized abroad. Nevertheless, it is just as real, and perhaps even more fanatic, at least among several groups. I do not, at present, believe that Israel will return any of the conquered areas. And at present no Arab leader has the perhaps foolhardy courage to attempt making peace with Israel. Only time, I believe, can lead to a solution, but time may be running out for Israel. The death toll in the Sinai campaign was less than 200; this time it was 800. What will it be in the next round? So it is that Israel must show more of a willingness to make peace.

Otherwise, Jerusalem is going to be one hell of a great city. I wish I didn't feel guilty about it.

SHNEOR SHERMAN

Jerusalem, Israel

SIRS: I. F. Stone's article, "The Future of Israel" [RAMPARTS, July 1967] is the best that has appeared on the subject in the entire American press. His plea for Jewish-Arab understanding is unanswerable. He ends on a false note, however, when he implies that Israel can presently alter its relations to the Arab world if it tries hard enough.

Israel has few options. Faced with an unbroken wall of hostility on the Arab and Soviet side, it clings to its so-called friendship with the United States (for its

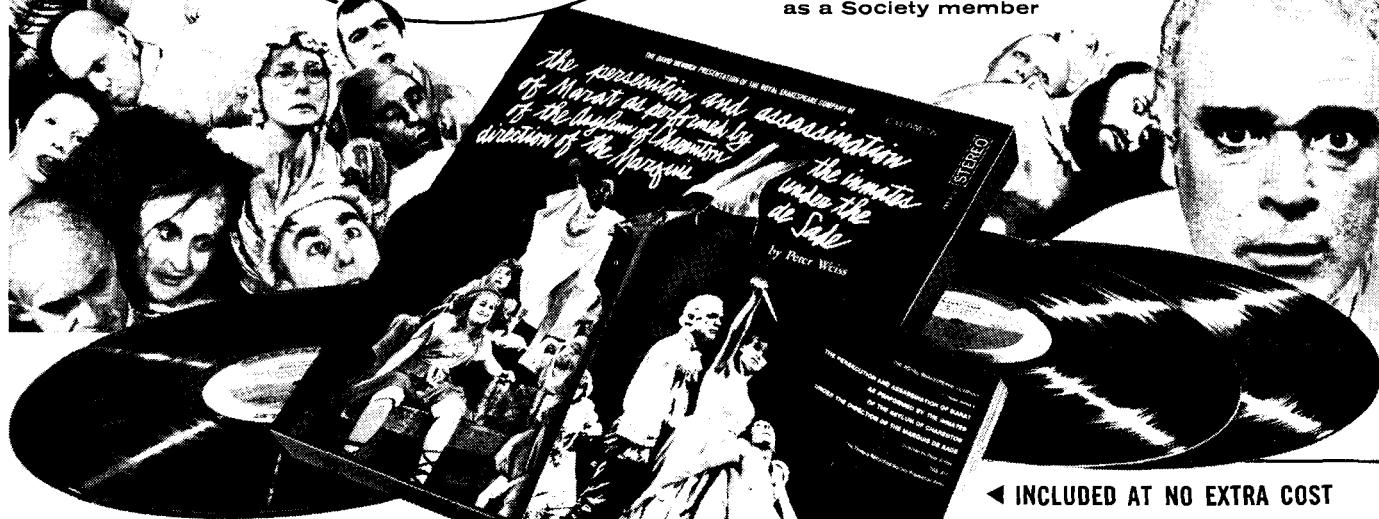
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arms and material and diplomatic support), which in turn seeks to use Israel as a catspaw of its oil and cold war diplomacy.

BERT COCHRAN

New York City

SIRS: As an ex-student of both Michael Walzer and Martin Peretz ["Israel is not Vietnam," RAMPARTS, July 1967], I would like to dispute their apology for Israel and their hypothetical argument for American intervention on Israel's behalf. Like nearly all of the intellectual Left, both Jewish and non-Jewish, they have allowed their admittedly understandable "emotional loyalties" to overcome the anti-colonialist principles which they would otherwise support.

While the factual settings of the Vietnamese and Middle Eastern wars are obviously different, in basic ways "Israel is Vietnam" for the U.S. The authors attempt to draw a number of distinctions between the two situations, all of which seem to me to fail to distinguish.

For instance, they argue that the Middle East war, unlike the Vietnamese, is not a civil war. Both wars are civil and in parallel, although not identical fashions. In each case cease-fire lines have been drawn on the basis of outside determinations which have not been accepted as valid by the indigenous populations.

Then, the authors assert that they are against any peacetime blockade. Calling the Egyptian action a "blockade" assumes that Egypt has no right under international law to do what it did. Egypt probably did have that right.

The authors argue that Israel is not imperialistic because it was not created with the support of the "so-called imperialist powers." Israel is imperialistic because it is the creation of Europeans who took non-European territory by force of arms from the local inhabitants. This occurred with the continuing financial and political support of European and American Zionists. It seems clear that Israel could never have been created by non-European Jews, who lacked the essential technology.

JOHN C. GRAY JR.

Cambridge, Massachusetts

SIRS: Messrs. Walzer and Peretz deserve pity. Israeli actions in recent weeks undercut almost every line of their poor apoloia.

It seems that Israel is too much of a "bad faith" not only to the anti-Semitic "right," but also to the guilt-complexed Western "left." As for the Western Jewish community—the right, left, center, top and bottom—all are glued up with the "mystical Jewishness" whose irrationality surprises even a philistine.

BILAYET HOSSAIN

Norman, Oklahoma

**STILL, THE HIPPIES**

SIRS: My son Stan (Mouse) tells me his beautiful features were on the cover of your March issue. Incidentally, he has his mother's hair (he will have to braid his soon) and here is the proof:



STAN MILLER, SR.

Livonia, Michigan

SIRS: May I ask that you allow me space in your letters column to disassociate myself from the article on the Hippies which appeared in the March issue?

I was not consulted on the article, did not contribute to it in any way whatsoever, despite being listed in your credits, and wish to make it clearly understood that I bear no responsibility for it.

RALPH J. GLEASON

Berkeley, California

**THE MILITARY**

SIRS: We read Don Duncan's article "Sanctuary" in the May RAMPARTS with no small interest, since more than a few of our fellow G.I.'s have told us that they had seriously considered emigrating to Canada to avoid the draft. In a way it is a pity that so many young men flee the country rather than enter the Army and organize against the war. Although our efforts to build an anti-imperialist movement among the other soldiers have caused us to lose our former job qualifications (one of us, awaiting appointment



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# (SURVEY)

## Question #1

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It was a way of thinking about the value you *really* placed on a thing.

One of the first things you learned was that "features" had very little to do with it. (For example, if your country had had 20 more rivers, or your dog's tail wagged at 86 Per Minute—six less than an "average" dog's—the answer would hardly have changed.)

When KLH began making stereo equipment ten years ago, our founders (K., L., and H.) noticed that grownup manufacturers talked as though features had *everything* to do with value. We hated that. We still do.

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Or Again: Advertising 300 watts of power in a high priced stereo console unit to give it the *appearance* of value. (Neglecting to mention that large numbers of watts have nothing to do with hearing the music accurately, or even loudly, both of which depend on what kind of equipment you've squeezed the watts

into. 35 watts in good equipment will do far better.)

42-22-36

To define worth solely in terms of features is like determining the "market value" of a wife from her height, age, weight, width of smile, tendency to suntan evenly, and the number of pounds of food she is capable of cooking up in an evening.

It's true enough we all like to have *something* explicit to help our thinking. Even Consumer Reports will sometimes find itself detailing competitive features and statistics; akin to Playboy's 42-22-36 ratings.

But studying the centerfold and accompanying data simply doesn't give us all the information we really need. What does? Well, probably nothing short of a few years in the same house together.

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Packard had it right, way back in the twenties, when its advertising rested on the confident slogan "Ask The Man Who Owns One."

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Still, the principle of determining value through testimonials makes very good sense:

Economists, for instance, say value can be understood as "some measure of the sense of loss one experiences after being deprived of a commodity or service," or, ask the man who owns one how much he'd dislike losing it. (The boy contemplating his dog's worth figured it out the same way.)

Any other way of measuring value, like establishing a ratio between features and price, is at best only a guess, made *before* anyone could possibly know.

### DEPRIVED OF YOUR WIFE

What we propose, then, is a technique of *measuring* the sense of loss as a way of thinking about "Subjective Value;" i.e., what a commodity means to someone who has it.

So. Assume for a moment that you are about to be deprived of your wife. (Substitute

husband or "good friend" where applicable.) How much would you pay in dollars to keep her one more year? When you're through thinking about that one, fill in No. 1 and have a look at the rest of the questionnaire.

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Doubtless the same situation exists among magazines—some are surely valued more than others—or sewing machines, or autos, or toothpaste. Toothpaste? Well, we'll soon see, and if you're interested we will be pleased to let you know what we learn.

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- 4 The automobile you now own was purchased in what year? \_\_\_\_\_. At what price? \_\_\_\_\_. What make? \_\_\_\_\_. Assuming it's in good running order, and that you couldn't get another one like it, how much would you be willing to pay to keep from being deprived of it during the upcoming year? \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Do you own a piano? \_\_\_\_\_. Grand? \_\_\_\_\_. Baby Grand? \_\_\_\_\_. Standup? \_\_\_\_\_. Spinet? \_\_\_\_\_.  
How much did you pay for it? \_\_\_\_\_. How long ago? \_\_\_\_\_. How much would you pay to keep from being deprived of it? \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6 Do you regularly use a particular brand of toothpaste? \_\_\_\_\_. If yes, which brand? \_\_\_\_\_.  
Assuming you were informed that because of financial difficulties your brand of toothpaste might go out of business. How much would you be willing to pay, above its present cost, to have one more tube, rather than be deprived of it? \_\_\_\_\_.

- 7 Assume for the moment that an offer was being made for your wife's wedding dress. How much would you be willing to sell it for? \_\_\_\_\_. What does your wife say? \_\_\_\_\_.
- 8 Do you own stereo equipment at home? \_\_\_\_\_.  
A console? \_\_\_\_\_. A one-piece table model? \_\_\_\_\_.  
A three-piece system? \_\_\_\_\_. Components? \_\_\_\_\_.  
Which make(s)? \_\_\_\_\_.  
How much did it cost you to buy? \_\_\_\_\_. How long ago? \_\_\_\_\_.  
If you were about to be deprived of the set you now own, and knew you could not get another of the same kind, how much would you be willing to pay to keep it? \_\_\_\_\_.

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to Officer Candidate School, was the battalion's red-eye missile man, and, as chief of the Fire Detection Center, was signed for \$20,000 worth of equipment; one was on orders for French language school; and one was trained to operate the FADAC computer), they have been modest indeed compared to the actions of the heroic Fort Hood Three and other G.I. war resisters similarly imprisoned. Nor have we forgotten Dave Mitchell and other anti-draft fighters confined in federal penitentiaries. It would seem that the stripes in the American flag symbolize prison bars as M.S. Arnoni has suggested.

Recently an officer in our battery underwent a Congressional investigation, brought on by complaints about his pro-Nazi leanings. And during the course of the whole investigation the officer in question continued to sport, beneath the glass on his desk, a picture of Nazi bombers raining explosives on the British troops at Dunkirk. Since this lieutenant will soon leave for flight school, it won't be long before his *ubermensch* fantasies become reality above the rice paddies and villages of Vietnam.

Now, when the neo-fascist National Review demands the suppression of RAMPARTS for the "treason" it committed by exposing the machinations of the invisible government, we on the left must redouble our efforts to crush those who would turn our land into a latter day version of Hitler's Reich.

SP/4 RICHARD WHEATON

PVT. ANDREW STAPP

SP/5 PAUL J. GOODTHE

Headquarters Battery, 2nd Howitzer  
Battalion, 2nd Artillery  
Fort Sill, Oklahoma

SIRS: As one of Howard Levy's attorneys, I found the RAMPARTS account of his court-martial [July 1967] blemished only by its imputation of anti-Semitism to members of my immediate family. Such imputations were both inaccurate and irresponsible, and so I believe, unintended by Messrs. Duncan and Dunn. Apparently they as well as I were the victims of fanciful editing. My father, a practicing attorney, stands to be substantially damaged professionally and otherwise as a result of the article. I hope you will want to correct the record.

LAUGHLIN McDONALD  
Atlanta, Georgia

EDITOR'S NOTE: In describing the atmosphere of anti-Semitism in which the Capt. Howard Levy court-martial took place ["Notes toward a Definition of Military Justice," RAMPARTS, July 1967], certain statements suggest that Mrs. McDonald is anti-Semitic. There was no intent to attribute anti-Semitism to any individual, least of all, members of the McDonald family. At no time did any member of the family make anti-Semitic remarks or say anything to suggest they held such feelings. It was not the intention of the story to give such an impression, and the editors regret it if any such impression was given.

SIRS: Your July article about Dr. Levy's trial was kind of idiotic. I think that was worse than his court-martial.

When Donald Duncan writes that Dr. Levy "once cried when the petals fell off a rose" and that "he chose dermatology" because "skin patients don't die," I felt sort of a stomach ache. (Skin patients die, and from horrible diseases.)

I think Duncan should be fired from RAMPARTS and go sell popcorn.

ALONSO V. CORREA

Kew Gardens, New York

SIRS: My brother Dennis Mora is one of the Fort Hood Three now serving time in Ft. Leavenworth for refusing to go to Vietnam. I received a letter from Dennis dated May 9, 1967. The following is a quote from his letter: "After receiving three issues, they've decided to declare RAMPARTS contraband, and we are hurting for it. It would give us a lot of satisfaction to see a mention of it and maybe even get it back on the approved list."

GRACE MORA NEWMAN

Bronx, New York

SIRS: You are certainly aware of the important gap in our news media which RAMPARTS helps to fill; and that there is ample material which can and should be presented to the public. So why clutter your magazine with hackneyed tripe, i.e., "The Unknown Soldier and His Wife"? [RAMPARTS, July 1967]. It seems to be the mode to write intentionally pretentious plays or poems on war. I hope you do not intend to use such stuff whenever your article writers fail to come through with something significant.

GENE PAULS

Chicago, Illinois

## Opinion:



### SWINGING AMERICA

by Andrew Kopkind

THOSE THAT DID NOT live before the Revolution will never know how sweet life is, Talleyrand said, and perhaps for such knowledge there is a desperate sweetness as the disaster spreads in this summer of the American crack-up. *Sergeant Pepper* blares from ten million phonographs, they're feeding the bears in Yellowstone Park, and the odor of barbecue wafting over the suburbs is suddenly mixed with the fragrance of pot. Hear it, see it, smell it while there is still time. For although there will be no revolution in the ordinary sense, the quality of life in the society—the values, expectations, perceptions—is radically changing. Things are not likely to be so sweet again.

For people who have difficulty seeing it all clearly, the gods have created a ghastly metaphor in the disaster of the USS Forrester. That mighty engine of war, that marvel of technology, that brilliantly organized institution exploded and burned, not from enemy attack but from its own mundane malfunction. As an airplane prepared to take off for North Vietnam on a bombing mission, fire from its jet afterburner ignited a missile on a nearby plane. Then its fuel tank exploded, and a chain reaction of explosions was set in motion. We have been accustomed to think about America as the same kind of invulnerable fortress of power and technique. It is a tightly run ship, flexible when necessary, but always under control. If bugs develop, they can be worked out: if attack threatens, it can be resisted.

But now the bombs are bursting and the flames are shooting. The well-laid plans cannot be followed; the fail-safes fail. The technological marvels have only limited value, if that: perhaps they do more harm than good. Above all, the