

Some Sub-Standard Thoughts



Raab

It was interesting to note what was "news" and what was *not* "news" in the Standard Oil Company affair. It was *not* news to anyone that Standard Oil feels generally the way it does towards Middle East matters, as expressed in its letter. It was *not* news to anyone that the oil companies were beginning to "trial balloon" a public campaign on that score. Mobil Oil began in late June with a public statement that the U.S. needed to do more to cultivate relationships with the Arab nations—although that statement, unlike Standard's left slightly open the possibility that there was another presence in the Middle East, besides the Arab nations.

It was *not* news to Standard Oil that a number of people would tear up their credit cards and pass up Standard stations. Standard Oil had already figured that loss in their equation. And it was *not* news to them that the Jewish community would react angrily.

The only unknown in the whole affair was how swiftly the people who make public policy in America—the Senators and Congressmen and public officials — would react. Because *that's* the name of the game. The target is American foreign policy. In this area, the initial reactions were elicited swiftly. Senator Cranston made a ringing statement in support of American interest versus Standard Oil interest, so did Tunney and others. Assemblyman Leo McCarthy phoned to say he was outraged and what could he do? And so forth. The more public officials speak out, the more it is possible that the trial balloon can turn into a boomerang. For the moment, at least.

And, indeed, Standard Oil has announced its recognition of Israel. That may sound facetious, but *it's news!* This is the first time that Standard Oil, or any major oil company has explicitly stated that the legitimate interests of Israel and its people must be taken into account. That's, of course, more than the Arab nations have said, and more than the Arab nations would have liked Standard Oil Co. to say.

This does not mean that Standard Oil is going to become a major purchaser of Israel Bonds—or that it is going to change its basic foreign policy approach to the Middle East. But it does mean that Standard Oil no longer has a more hostile stance towards Israel than do other major oil companies (indeed Mobil Oil has not yet acknowledged the legitimacy of Israel, as has Standard)—and it means that the *public* campaign to try to shape the mind of America against Israel has been given pause for the moment.

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When the Nazis ordered the Jews in occupied Denmark to wear yellow Jewish stars in public, the King of Denmark responded by putting on a Jewish star himself, and many of his non-Jewish countrymen followed suit. A similar kind of impulse ran through the community, especially in San Francisco, last week when a Watergate attorney referred vituperatively to Senator Inouye as "that little Jap". Indeed, if there had been some kind of appropriate symbol,—corresponding to a lapel pin saying "I'm a little Jap"—many of us would have worn it.

As it once was in Denmark, that would have been a signal of solidarity, but more: an expression that whatever our persecuted brother is, we are. And that is not just an ideal but a fact. Anyone who can think of an adversary Senator Inouye as "that little Jap" must just as easily think of an adversary Samuel Dash as "that little Jew."

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According to a recent Louis Harris survey, 84 percent of the American people would favor an agreement to get Russia to allow Jews to emigrate more easily. Only four percent would be opposed. That's a pretty startling indication of how successfully the American people have been informed of what's going on. Not many international issues get that much recognition.