

TALKING TO THE P.L.O.

Turning Andrew Young's resignation into a Black-Jewish issue was a swindle. Both Jews and Blacks were taken in by it.

Another game was being played. The Administration and the State Department were flirting with the P.L.O. all over the place. When Andrew Young was caught at his piece of it, he became the scapegoat, to take the heat off the Administration.

In quick turn, the Jews were made the super-scapegoat, given the blame for Young's resignation, although he presumably left the job because he had violated official U.S. policy. More accurately, he resigned because he had been caught at implementing back-door U.S. policy.

Various "sources" in the White House played up their "concern" with Black-Jewish conflict, and that turmoil grew. The Jews were diverted by the side-show, and a sizeable backlash developed against what was seen as the stiff-necked Jewish opposition to the P.L.O., dramatized by the presumed Jewish hatcheting of Andrew Young.

It then became easier for the Carter/Vance move towards the P.L.O. to come out of the closet. It was announced that the U.S. would offer to amend U.N. resolution 242, in order to woo the P.L.O.

Many Americans -- indeed, many Israelis -- believe it inevitable that we "talk with" the P.L.O. Israeli journalist Meir Merhav recently wrote that "ultimately, peace, even with Egypt alone, is not possible without talking to the Palestinians -- and that means talking to the P.L.O."

Another Israeli journalist, Yosef Goell, suggest caution. He agrees with Merhav that at the present time, "the P.L.O. is truly the only representative of the Palestinian people." He agrees that one should not use the term "never" in politics. But he points out that the P.L.O.'s representative status is "to no small degree

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due to the internal legitimacy" given to it by the West in recent years. The Palestinian moderates will emerge only when they are convinced that they will not get what they want through the P.L.O.

Furthermore, the P.L.O. itself will certainly not become any more moderate by way of appeasement. It will become more moderate, if it ever does, only by becoming convinced that it will not get any concessions or any legitimacy *until* it becomes more moderate. In short it is a classic mistake, even when it is innocent, to reward the extremists in the hope that they will thereby turn into moderates.

It is such a mistake for the U.S. to introduce a U.N. resolution with the acknowledged purpose of appeasing the P.L.O. And it is a mistake for top U.S. officials to parley with the P.L.O., violating an agreement with Israel, and giving the P.L.O. a diplomatic victory. This does not mean that no one will ever talk with the P.L.O. anyplace. Timing and circumstances are critical.

Meanwhile, Black-Jewish relations are left in a temporary shambles. Andrew Young is an important figure for the Black community. The U.N. ambassadorship was the highest rank held by a Black American. Many Black leaders have been conned into thinking that the Jews were at fault, rather than a double-headed administration policy.

It is a classic situation, wherein two minorities have been set up to scrap with each other, taking attention away from the main issue. This will take some repairing, and efforts are being made. For that purpose as well, the main issue has to be addressed: the real nature of the P.L.O.

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The center double-page of the *Bulletin* detailed that subject two weeks ago. The P.L.O. is the extremist, anti-American, war party in the Middle East. That situation may change some day. But it will not be changed by unilateral appeasement. One Munich in our history is enough.

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