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## MEMORY LAPSES OF THE PERILOUS KIND

PROFESSOR Walter Laqueur's letter (Jerusalem Post, July 23) in which he pointed out, correctly, that he and no other is the author of *A History of Zionism* (1972), evokes recollection of an occasion when Laqueur himself apparently forgot that he had written his *History*.

On March 3, 1986, the Washington weekly *The New Republic* published Laqueur's review of *The Siege*, Conor Cruise O'Brien's book on Zionism. There, he gave O'Brien some schoolmasterly instruction, including a long paragraph about Jabotinsky. Allowing that Jabotinsky was "the best orator of his time and a brilliant essayist," he went on: "But he was, in the final analysis, only a litterateur, if a very gifted one, who appeared on the scene after the theoretical foundations of Zionism had already been laid by another litterateur named Theodor Herzl, and after a scientist named Chaim Weizmann had persuaded the British to issue the Balfour declaration.

At this stage in the history of Zionism the emphasis shifted from speeches and literary essays to practical work. And in this respect, Jabotinsky and his followers had not that much to contribute. In short, Jabotinsky's role, in retrospect, was modest." This kind of sorry stuff was no doubt good enough for the pseudo-intellectuals in the "historic" Labor movement and in the Zionist "establishment" in Jabotinsky's own day, and perhaps for a generation after his death.

But for a serious historian? Who indeed could have believed that the writer of those silly sentences was in fact the author of *A History of Zionism*? Laqueur devotes 47 of its 600 pages to Jabotinsky - almost as much as to Herzl. It is, moreover, a quite comprehensive account of his Zionist activities and, for an opponent, a reasonably balanced profile. It should be enough here to conclude with one relevant quotation: "The [First World] war openly said that the map will never again be the same as on June 4, 1967. For us, this is a matter of security and of principles. The June map is for us equivalent to insecurity and danger. I do not exaggerate when I say that it has for us something of a memory of Auschwitz.

"We shudder," Eban went on, "when we think of what would have awaited us, in the circumstances of June 1967, if we had been defeated: with the Syrians on the mountain and we in the valley, with the Jordanian army in sight of the sea, with the Egyptians who hold our throat in their hands in Gaza. This is a situation which will never be repeated in history." Eban did not then add - what in essence he is adding now: "Of course, if some decent-sounding Arabs come along and promise us faithfully that they will 'give' us peace if we but go back to the 1949 lines, forget the smell of Auschwitz, and depend on their friendship and goodwill (and on the goodwill of their successors), we shall gladly "withdraw from all the territories." Eban's political importance and clout are of course much diminished. He remains, however, an articulate spokesman for a school of thought; his views coincide with the policy and behavior of our present government; and that policy and that behavior, carried to their logical conclusion and consummation, will bring us not peace but war.

Abba Eban and the members of our government may have forgotten the lines that remind him of Auschwitz, but they are still there. They are there at the foot of the

heights of Golan, at the approaches to Kfar Sava and Petah Tikva and Ashkelon. We, however, are the Zionist settlers of Tel Aviv and Ariel, of Gush Katif and Kiryat Shmona, of Jerusalem and Herzliya and Kiryat Arba - and our memories have not evaporated, nor has our sanity forsaken us.

We see those lines every day, and their meaning has not changed. We see, moreover, our Arab neighbors, hearing daily the ever sweeter-sounding proposals and offers and concessions of the Israeli negotiators - who think they are talking of peace. They see their dream of a repetition of the 1967 scenario coming nearer and nearer.

Why else are all of them, the millionaire Saudis, the poor Syrians and the super-paupers, the Egyptians, who are threatened by nobody, spending precious billions of dollars on arms?

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