

# News event goes sour with opposition missing

I sat in the sanctuary of Adat Shalom Synagogue in Farmington Hills, disheartened, wondering when the hatred and killing would end.

The tension could have been cut with a knife. It always can be when the crisis in the Middle East is discussed — not even debated — just discussed.

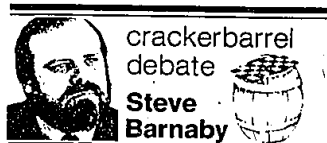
A person expects heightened emotions when a debate occurs. But for too many years there hasn't been enough middle ground for debate. Debate is impossible for many persons — Arab or Jew — when it comes to the Middle East.

The discussion at Adat Shalom, sponsored by the Jewish Welfare Federation, last Sunday wasn't any different. It was just a discussion between persons who generally agreed. But, nevertheless, the rancor was evident.

As thousands gathered, a group outside passed out pamphlets which accused the panel of being "loaded against Israel."

The panel was composed of U.S. Sen. Henry Jackson, former ambassador Sol Linowitz, former undersecretary of state Joseph P. Kamp, acting as moderator, Michigan's U.S. Sen. Carl Levin.

Each of these persons has stood in defense of Is-



rael countless times. The protestors' assertions were absurd. But the pamphlet maintained that because the speakers didn't agree totally with the aims of the present Israeli government, they were anti-Israel.

Absurd — utterly absurd.

Inside the guest speakers dealt with the various questions currently surrounding the Middle East-Palestinian autonomy, West bank settlements, U.S. Marines in Lebanon, the investigation into the murder of hundreds of Palestinians in the Lebanese refugee camps.

For a time, the speakers, experts in foreign affairs, were psychological hostages — invited to speak, but not too loudly and certainly not against the common wisdom which permeated the building.

Linowitz dared to note that the dismissal of the Palestinian mayors by the Israeli government was a mistake which hindered the peace negotiations.

Someone in the audience yelled an obscenity while many others groaned loudly in disagreement with the Linowitz statement.

Others groaned just as loudly when he noted that an agreement must be reached which would leave the Palestinians with their dignity.

Others repeatedly and rudely yelled out that the West Bank be called Samaria, despite the fact that even Menachim Begin agreed to call that region the West Bank in the Camp David agreement.

The big event was quickly degenerating into a non-news event, saved only by the fact that more than 2,000 persons came out on a quiet Sunday morning in February to listen to these experts tell them what they wanted to hear — and only what they wanted to hear, thank you.

The experts obliged, deviating only ever so slightly.

Jackson boasted that Israel was proving itself a sound member of the democratic community of nations by conducting its own investigation into the Palestinian massacre.

Linowitz noted that to make the peace negotiations bear more fruit, all sides must be included — especially the Palestinians.

But the voice of the Palestinian or Lebanese was missing from this discussion.

What has happened in the Middle East for these many decades is nothing short of tragic. Millions have been displaced from their homes. Thousands have been maimed and killed. Our own economy is drained because of it.

Yet the debate is yet to begin — even in this country where we pride ourselves on free and open thought. The least they could have done was to invite in the hardline Israeli supporters handing out the pamphlets in the cold. Then, at least, the speakers would have been forced to earn their stipends.



Tim Richard

## How to make good county even better

JUST WHY the Michigan Legislature decreed county politics must be partisan is quite beyond serious students of government.

Cities may have nonpartisan systems, and most do. School and community college boards must be nonpartisan.

But counties must have partisan elections, whether they want to or not, whether it makes sense or not. Even a county which adopts a home-rule charter must go the partisan route.

Counties deal in roads, drains, jails, health services, troubles with trouble, parks, legal records, courts and those things — not in labor legislation, economic incentives, defense and other partisan issues.

THOSE THOUGHTS occurred to me as I read our accounts of Oakland County government and personally observed the excruciating machinations of Wayne County government.

In recent years, Republicans in Oakland County have moved steadily to make most major board appointments partisan. Their strident partisanship upsets the Democrats and puzzles the detached observer. Worse, it wastes good talent from the 45 percent of the population which isn't Republican.

The Road Commission is now 3-0 Republican. The county's delegation to the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments used to be 2-1 Democratic when Democrats were in power and then 2-1 Republican when the GOP gained the ascendancy. For the last few years, it has been 3-0 Republican. Given the political complexion of the region and the need for some continuity, a one-party delegation is unwise.

Consider state government, where by law certain commissions, such as Natural Resources, must be bipartisan.

THE SUGGESTION of less fanatical partisanship is offered in the spirit of making a very good county government even better. But even partisan politics can't explain Wayne County government. There is no way Oakland County government can be considered bad — not when you've watched Wayne County in operation.

Oakland's solid waste plan is in place after more than two years of work. Wayne is just getting around to appointing a committee.

When Oakland County Executive Dan Murphy asks for money, he offers a funding source — usually an account which wasn't used up. When Wayne County Executive Neil Lucas needs money for more jail guards, his administration hadn't the foggiest idea where it should come from and wound up looking foolish.

Murphy attends meetings of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners — even his party's caucuses. He and his top people are available to answer questions. Lucas doesn't attend, and his people are poorly prepared.

Murphy drives his own car. Lucas has a limousine, a chauffeur and an entourage at all times.

OAKLAND COUNTY'S Road Commission, though it clings to the 18th century on public transit issues, does a highly conscientious job on road issues — seeking public comment, plugging those comments into next year's efforts where possible, engineering safer intersections, carrying out a positive public information program.

The Wayne County Road Commission has no vision, no programs, no courtesy in responding to information requests — nothing but cronyism and self-protecting contracts.

Though imperfect, Oakland County government offers a day-and-night contrast to Wayne County. You may either make my word for it, or wander down to the City County building in downtown Detroit to see the debilitating spectacle for yourself.

## 'Help!'



Bob Wisler

## State crisis is no time to grandstand

GOV. BLANCHARD'S proposal to deal with a state government deficit of more than \$600 million dollars was only a few days old before state lawmakers began prophesying that the Legislature would not pass a 1.75 percent personal income tax increase.

State Rep. Jack Kirksey, R-Livonia, predicted the Legislature would not pass a tax bill until 4 a.m. Good Friday.

Kirksey said he based his prediction on past legislative struggles to deal with tax issues and particularly on the passage last year of a six-month 1 percent hike in the state income tax.

The measure was approved, with hardly a vote to spare, but it took all of Gov. Milliken's and the legislative leadership's determination, perseverance and arm-twisting ability to get the last few votes.

MANY LEGISLATORS were convinced of the need for that increase to stave off the looming disaster. Others philosophically opposed a tax increase.

But too many legislators opposed it simply because they felt that a yes vote would hurt their chances of re-election. Some legislators fear losing an election even more than state financial disaster.

Perhaps now circumstances are too dire and the elections too removed for more political posturing. The 1982 elections are history, representatives do not have to face another vote until 1984, senators are free until 1986.

Yet there is already ample indication many legislators intend to attempt to make political hay with the state's current vexing problems. Political rhetoric is being used to denounce Blanchard's economic plan calling for a 1.5-percent income tax increase for operations and another 0.25-percent increase for debt retirement.

BLANCHARD'S appointees say that the state needs more than a temporary tax. Whether a tax should be of a permanent nature may be debatable.

But there is ample evidence for thinking that a tax increase is necessary if Michigan's state government is to be even a pared-down version of a reasonable state government.

Some claim the problem can be solved by cutting services further, as if burgeoning bureaucracy were responsible for the present financial dilemma.

No doubt some programs can be considered non-essential. But the real problem is the drastic decreases in tax revenue because of economic stagnation and unemployment. Falling employment has meant falling income tax revenue.

Government cannot be made solvent by merely cutting programs. And more cuts than those already proposed would damage the state in a serious way.

THESE ARE such serious matters that our elected officials should resist any temptation to flirt with shallow political gain at the cost of making headway on easing the state's financial problems.

Perhaps, as some legislators have already declared, any tax measure should be geared to the economy so that if and when the economy improves, the tax rate could be decreased.

But what is most necessary is individual and collective decisions by the entire Legislature and state government to act with diligence and statesmanship in dealing with the fiscal problem. We should be looking soberly and seriously at the alternatives without considering whether a vote can be lost here, or gained there.

Partisanship, grandstanding and publicity releases should be forgotten in a sincere desire to get a handle on state government.

## from our readers

### One test unreliable

To the editor:

One crucial aspect deserving attention regarding the Farmington school testing program for gifted students reported Jan. 27 involves the suitability of the Slosson Intelligence Test as a selection instrument.

Developed by Richard L. Slosson as a brief individual test of intelligence, it has been critically evaluated by testing authorities as an inappropriate instrument for use in special class placement decisions. Independent reviews of the Slosson published in the "Seventh Mental Measurements Yearbook" by Professors Philip Haimstein of the University of Texas at El Paso and Jane V. Hunt of the Institute of Human Development, Berkeley, raise serious questions about the value of the Slosson as anything but a preliminary screening device. They particularly note an absence of psychometrically acceptable research regarding the test's norm groups and basic validity, as well as inadequate technical information in the Slosson manual related to its construction as a testing instrument.

Hunt notes that it "... can be a useful tool in selecting individuals for more comprehensive evaluation of mental ability, but extreme caution should be taken in relying on SIT test scores in situations where important diagnostic decisions are required, such as special class placements." Haimstein cautions that while the Slosson

appears valuable as a quick screening device, "the uncritical use of the SIT as a substitute for Wechsler or Binet instruments is ill advised."

It is the present policy in the Farmington schools, however, to require a student to perform at the 88th percentile or above on the Slosson to qualify for gifted programming placement. It would appear that the sole reliance on an instrument such as the Slosson for educational decisions of such importance is as crucial an issue as is the matter of who administers it.

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### Auto opinion bugs reader

To the editor:

After reading this article (editorial, Jan. 12) published in your paper, I felt that I must take time to respond.

I will admit that there have been problems within the automotive industry — but to throw in the towel, ... The American public has been in love with this iron mistress. No one has ever forced anyone to purchase a vehicle they didn't want. That is the key issue here. The American public wanted with the glamor and prestige that went with owning a new, big, and fast automobile. I would like to know how a small, unutilized subcompact car can ride more comfortably or safely than a large body-frame car? If (Steve) Barnaby

would have done any research, he would not have made such a ridiculous statement.

The Japanese are realizing that the U.S. market doesn't want small cars because they are introducing larger units into their product line. A closer look at U.S. sales figures reflects a movement back to the larger domestic offering. This movement is by choice, not by the directive of the automotive marketing executives (as Barnaby would like us to believe). One case in point: The sales figures of the Mercury Marquis is up over 60 percent.

The mere thought of destroying the U.S. automobile industry staggers the imagination to no end. I suggest that this bleeding-heart liberal take a course in macro-economics in order to comprehend the effects of "throwing in the towel." First of all the State of Michigan would go bankrupt within a year; this is just from the jobs lost directly from the auto industry. Now take into consideration the jobs that would be lost nationwide in the steel, plastics, oil, tire, and other supportive industries. The effect would be felt throughout this country. Who would provide meaningful jobs for these people?

This article like most of the articles written by this highly opinionated individual contains too many one-sided, half-truths with no merit on their own and are not worth publishing, let alone reading. I suggest that Steve Barnaby should look for a position in one of the underground papers that feed off of this sort of trash.

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