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To DANIEL G. ROSS
Chairman, International Planning Committee,
Institute of Contemporary Jewry,
on the occasion of his eightieth birthday,
in recognition of his inspiring and valuable service,
and to his wife, GRACE, for her continuing support.

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hazardous nature of his enterprise and it is much to his credit that he decided to undertake it despite the risk. I wish I could report that his effort proved successful: I am afraid that it has not and that Polish-Jewish relations in the postwar period still await their historian. In fact, I found the book rather disappointing, considering the background and credentials of the author who, in addition, claims to have interviewed eighty high-ranking Communist Party officials, secret police and military officers, and leaders of Jewish cultural and economic institutions in Poland.

Mr. Checinski apparently hoped to throw new light on such key stages and events in Communist Poland as the Stalinist period, the so-called Polish October of 1956, the factional conflicts in the 1960s, including the outburst of antisemitism in the spring of 1968, and finally, “what was behind the crackdown on Solidarity in December 1981.” The last desire turned out to be wishful thinking since the author ends his narrative in the late 1970s and mentions “Solidarity” only in passing. His discussion of the other events is essentially based on secondary sources and to this reviewer, at least, the references to personal interviews mentioned earlier do not substantially affect the gist of the argument. To put it differently, with some minor exceptions, unfortunately the author did not, despite his specialized experience, succeed in providing us with a “deeper understanding” of various events. Altogether a unique opportunity was missed to contribute to a better understanding of the highly complex question of Polish-Jewish relations in a historical perspective.

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Eleven minutes after the State of Israel was proclaimed on May 15, 1948, President Truman announced American recognition of the new-born state. This dramatic step stunned the diplomatic community. Even the American Ambassador to the United Nations, Philip Jessup, was caught by surprise. Jessup was at the rostrum of the General Assembly in the midst of proposing an American-sponsored
trusteeship scheme for Palestine when someone brought him news of the act of recognition. He dismissed the report as a poor joke, only to be corrected by his assistant who had, in the meantime, retrieved a crumpled wire-service ticker tape from the wastepaper basket confirming the report. Near-pandemonium broke out on the floor of the General Assembly. In Jerusalem, Walter Eytan, the director of the newly formed Israeli Foreign Ministry, also reacted with complete disbelief to the report of U.S. recognition conveyed to him by a BBC reporter. But, as Cohen relates, Truman had earlier informed Chaim Weizmann that upon the establishment of the Jewish state he would accord it recognition.

In effect, the present study represents an attempt to portray the background to the President's dramatic pronouncement and to place it in historical perspective. This book is a successor volume to the author's earlier study, *Palestine: Retreat from the Mandate*, which left off the story in 1945. Cohen, in the present volume, traces the American role in the Palestine issue from the end of World War II in 1945, when Truman assumed the presidency upon the death of Roosevelt, through the various vicissitudes which marked American policy up to the act of recognition. He illustrates the manner in which Washington ultimately assumed the primary role at the United Nations in seeking an international solution to the Palestine problem.

Historians have long been divided over President Truman's motives in promoting partition and according diplomatic recognition to the fledgling Jewish state in 1948. One school argues that it was all politics—that in succeeding to the presidency in 1945 Truman immediately set his sights on election to the presidency in his own right. Cultivation of the Jewish vote was crucial, and from the very beginning Truman acted in a manner designed to endear himself to the Jewish electorate. A second school maintains that, while not unaware of the political implications of his pro-Jewish actions, Truman was deeply stirred by the horrors of the Holocaust and was sincerely dedicated to alleviating the plight of the thousands of DPs incarcerated in the refugee camps in Europe. This compassionate concern for the fate of the Holocaust victims was subsequently linked to implementation of the partition plan for Palestine adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations. The world organization, according to Truman, was created precisely to resolve such issues as the Palestine problem, and there was a moral, if not a legal, obligation to see the plan through if the United Nations was to succeed in its primary task of preserving international peace and security. Thus, humanitarianism combined with a dedication to international organization dictated the need to promote the U.N. partition plan for Palestine.
Cohen, it would appear, had some difficulty in deciding between these two schools of thought. Thus, in the matter of recognition, Cohen writes (p. 389): "Truman's decision on May 14 [1948] to recognize the State of Israel derived from a rare mixture of common sense and political opportunism." And yet on p. 395 we read: "Truman's precipitate recognition of Israel, masterminded by Clifford, seems to have been motivated primarily by the . . . desire to forestall the Soviets."

However, Cohen's overall assessment is decidedly negative. He attributes Truman's Palestine policy more to politics than to goodwill. Thus, on p. 389 we read:

Truman is generally recognized to have been one of the great presidents of the United States. But his reputation must stand on spheres other than Palestine. . . . "Despite his great attachment to the Bible, Truman lacked the vision, the perception and the historical outlook to grasp fully the significance of his act" [of recognition].

In reaching this conclusion, however, Cohen seems to have relied on some evidence which must be regarded, at best, as dubious. At the same time, he has surprisingly neglected to examine the one aspect of Truman's policy which, more than anything else, raises serious questions regarding the measure of the President's commitment to the cause of Jewish statehood, namely, the American arms embargo imposed on Palestine and the Middle East on December 5, 1947. This matter and its critical bearing on the fate of the Yishuv are barely mentioned by Cohen (there is no reference to the embargo in the index) and yet it is no exaggeration to say that if arms had not been forthcoming from other (mainly eastern) sources, the Jewish state might never have survived. The embargo, it might be noted, was retained even after diplomatic recognition was granted the Jewish state. Any assessment of the Truman Administration's Palestine policy requires a careful review of the embargo episode; a perfunctory reference hardly suffices.

On the other hand, Cohen's analysis of the May 12, 1948, meeting at the White House on the issue of recognition suffers from reliance on a totally unsubstantiated source. This meeting was summoned by the President to decide whether to announce in advance an American intention to recognize the Jewish state upon its proclamation. Present at the meeting were leading State Department officials—Secretary of State Marshall, Under Secretary of State Lovett, Robert McClintock of the U.N. desk—and key assistants to the President Clark Clifford and David Niles. According to Cohen [p. 383], "the main thrust of Clifford's argument, in addition to stressing the wisdom of recognizing reality, was that a prompt American recognition of the new Jewish
state would restore the president's standing with the Jews to where it had been prior to the State Department's trusteeship initiative on March 19." As authority for this assertion Cohen cites John Snetsinger's *Truman, the Jewish Vote, and the State of Israel*, in which it is claimed that Clifford argued that "with a national election less than six months away [the President] should move towards redeeming himself with Jewish voters by immediately recognizing the existence of the Jewish state." But the Snetsinger work was published before the secret State Department documents of this period were opened, and unless corroborated from other sources, cannot be depended upon. The Snetsinger book is essentially based on interviews with participants years after the events took place and is therefore quite unreliable. As an illustration, one should note the following: In footnote 42 on p. 183 Snetsinger, on the basis of an interview with Robert McClintock, states that "during the conference on May 12, 1948 . . . [the] desire to beat the Soviet Union before she could recognize the Jewish state, was never even brought up as a reason for immediate recognition." The files of the State Department, as recorded in at least three places in *FRUS 1948* (pp. 906, 974–75, and 976), demonstrate that the Russian argument was central to Clifford's presentation to the conference. (Interestingly enough, McClintock himself drafted the State Department minutes.) These same State Department minutes confirm quite clearly that Clifford did not highlight any domestic political consideration for recognition. This emerges from the charge by Lovett and Marshall that Clifford's counsel represented "a very transparent attempt to win the Jewish vote." If Clifford had said what Snetsinger attributed to him, there would have been no sense in referring to his suggestion as "a transparent attempt." Clifford's reference to recognition having "distinct value in restoring the President's position for support of the partition of Palestine" related to the utter confusion which marked America's Palestine policy at that point as a result of the State Department's introduction of the trusteeship scheme. Recognition, Clifford argued, would reconfirm basic support for partition. The statement had no bearing on domestic political considerations.

Similarly, Cohen's treatment of the March 19, 1948, debacle on trusteeship regrettably fails to take into account significant evidence relevant to the issue. On that date, it will be recalled, Warren Austin, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, had informed the Security Council of American abandonment of the partition scheme in favor of a temporary trusteeship for Palestine. Just a day earlier, on March 18, Truman had met with Chaim Weizmann and had pledged continued U.S. support for partition. Upon learning of the Austin pronouncement, Truman was furious and charged the State Department officials
(the lower echelons) with wilful insubordination out of a desire "to cut his throat." But the President had authorized the text of the Austin speech on a contingency basis (if the Security Council failed to adopt the partition scheme) and since the contingency was fulfilled, how account for the presidential consternation? Cohen documents the episode but omits to take into account clear evidence of State Department stratagems to ensure Security Council refusal to accept the partition plan. This evidence serves to place the whole episode in a new light and to confirm Truman’s charge of State Department duplicity. It lends support to the view that State Department officials (even senior ones) were unabashedly working to undermine the President’s pro-Jewish state policy.

This is an informative and interesting book, written with style and verve. Cohen’s analysis is invariably challenging and thought-provoking. For instance, he makes out an excellent case for the impact of Irgun and Lehi activities, culminating in the hanging of the two British sergeants, on Britain’s resolve to abandon Palestine. He also notes how utterly indifferent British and American officials were to the Holocaust as a factor underlying the drive to establish a Jewish state. Although one can on occasion take issue with the author’s interpretations of the intentions of some of the leading actors—especially Truman—this work represents a notable contribution to the field and will assuredly command the attention of all those who study this period.

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Percy S. Cohen sets as his purpose in Jewish Radicals and Radical Jews to explore the relationship between being Jewish and being radical. He focuses on two questions: “whether or not Jewishness and radicalism coexist” and “whether there is a causal connection between Jewishness and radicalism and why, if there is, this should be the case.” These questions are explored largely in relation to the radical student movements between 1962 to 1972. The data utilized consists of secondary sources and interviews. The latter were collected between 1971 and 1973 from 52 young radicals of Jewish origin located in the