

Martin Kramer, "In the Words of Martin Luther King," in Martin Kramer, *The War on Error: Israel, Islam, and the Middle East* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2016), 253-67.

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In the Words of Martin Luther King

As the veneration of Martin Luther King, Jr. has deepened in America, he has been recruited posthumously to more causes. This is encouraged by his memorial in Washington. Inscribed on the pedestal of King's statue, and on the walls of the surrounding enclosure, are quotations attributed to King. Although he spoke all of these words in specific contexts, they are assembled as though they convey eternal verities, much like the biblical passages which King himself quoted. What would King think about this or that matter in the present? Just conjure up a quote from King in the past.

Both Israelis and Palestinians (and their supporters) are avid recruiters of King, presuming that something he once said more than half a century ago justifies this claim or that policy today. This appropriation is done piecemeal, perhaps because there is no comprehensive study of King's views on the Middle East. As a result, not a few errors and omissions of fact mar most efforts to press King's ghost into service.

Many of these surround the events of 1967, the year before King's assassination. The Six-Day War fully mobilized many of the American Jews who had embraced the civil rights struggle and who marched with King. They now looked to King in the expectation that he would show his support for the cause of Israel. At the same time, the war broke out at a time when King's leadership was being challenged by the militant Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). SNCC strongly sympathized with the Arabs, and took a stand against Israel in the war's aftermath. King, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate and a pacifist, found himself caught between these antagonistic forces, and torn by the war and its consequences.¹

King supported Israel's right to exist, and said so repeatedly. "Israel's right to exist as a state in security is incontestable," he once wrote. And

this: “The whole world must see that Israel must exist and has the right to exist, and is one of the great outposts of democracy in the world.”²

But did he support Israel in the war? Why didn’t he visit Israel? And did he really say that anti-Zionism was tantamount to antisemitism? These three questions have given rise to discussion, much of it marred by factual errors. The questions cannot possibly be answered, unless and until the errors are corrected.

The Six-Day War

Did King support Israel in the 1967 war? The belief that he did rests in part upon his signing a statement by prominent Christian theologians that began to circulate on May 28, 1967, and that eventually appeared as an advertisement in the *New York Times* on June 4, the day before Israel went to war. At the time the statement was formulated, the Johnson administration seemed to have left Israel to face its enemies alone.

Entitled “The Moral Responsibility in the Middle East,” the statement found the Middle East to be “on the brink of war.”

President Nasser of Egypt has initiated a blockade of an international waterway, the Straits of Tiran, Israel’s sea lane to Africa and Asia. This blockade may lead to a major conflagration.

The Middle East has been an area of tension due to the threat of continuing terrorist attacks, as well as the recent Arab military mobilization along Israel’s borders. Let us recall that Israel is a new nation whose people are still recovering from the horror and decimation of the European holocaust.

The statement went on to “call on the United States government steadfastly to honor its commitments to the freedom of international waterways. We call on our fellow Americans of all persuasions and groupings and on the administration to support the independence, integrity, and freedom of Israel. Men of conscience all over the world bear a moral responsibility to support Israel’s right of passage through the Straits of Tiran.”

Among the endorsers of this statement were the renowned theologian and ethicist Reinhold Niebuhr (a steadfast supporter of Israel), and John C. Bennett, theologian and president of the Union Theological Seminary (who initiated the statement).³ Distinguished they may have been, but in an article about the statement in the *New York Times*, there was only one subheading: “Dr. King Among Signers.”⁴

By any objective reading, this statement was a call—perhaps even a call to arms—to the United States to stand by Israel. The reaction was swift in coming. “What is saddening,” wrote one critic in a letter to the *New York Times* on June 2, “is that respected public leaders like Martin Luther King who have courageously opposed American actions in Vietnam should now associate themselves with vague calls for American intervention on behalf of Israel.”⁵ Not only did King stand accused of abandoning his antiwar pacifism. He was thought to have ignored the claims of the Arabs, a perception that has persisted. For example, as recently as 2010, Ussama Makdisi, a prominent Arab-American historian, criticized King’s signing of the “Moral Responsibility” statement:

That a man like Martin Luther King could stand so openly with Israel, despite his own private qualms and criticism by younger, more radical, black Americans who had discovered the plight of the Palestinians, indicated the degree to which Zionism was embraced by the American mainstream. . . . One of the ways [King] reciprocated Jewish American support for desegregation in the United States was by turning a blind eye to the plight of the Palestinians.⁶

Makdisi thus spread the notion that at a crucial moment in 1967, King suspended his conscience to cut a deal with the Jews.

But did the “Moral Responsibility” statement accurately reflect King’s position? King claimed in private that he never saw the text as published, and would not have signed it if he had. This is documented by the FBI wiretaps of Stanley Levison, one of King’s advisers, whose communist past made him a target of government surveillance. The declassified transcripts contain the verbatim record of conference calls conducted among King, Levison, and two other confidants, activist Andrew Young and legal counsel Harry Wachtel.

On June 6, 1967, the day after the war began, King said this to his associates:

Did you see the ad in the *New York Times* Sunday [June 4]? This was the ad they got me to sign with [John C.] Bennett, etc. I really hadn’t seen the statement. I felt after seeing it, it was a little unbalanced and it is pro-Israel. It put us in the position almost of setting the turning-hawks on the Middle East while being doves in Vietnam and I wouldn’t have given a statement like that at all.

None of King’s advisers asked him how his name wound up on a statement he “really hadn’t seen,” but they instead looked ahead. Levison

urged him to stay away from details (“they are not being discussed rationally”). The aim was “to keep the Arab friendship and the Israeli friendship at the same time.” If King called for negotiations while asserting Israel’s “incontestable” right to a homeland and its territorial integrity, it would be enough for Israel’s supporters.⁷

Two days later, on June 8, King told his advisers he had come under growing pressure to make his own statement on the Middle East.

The statement I signed in the *N.Y. Times* as you know was agreed with by a lot of people in the Jewish community. But there was those in the negro community [who] have been disappointed. SNCC for one has been very critical. The problem was that the *N.Y. Times* played it up as a total endorsement of Israel. What they printed up wasn’t the complete text, even the introduction wasn’t the text. I can’t back up on the statement now, my problem is whether I should make another statement, or maybe I could just avoid making a statement. I don’t want to make a statement that backs up on me[;] that wouldn’t be good. Well, what do you think?

King’s confidants went back and forth, suggesting that he say as little as possible, that he urge an end to the fighting and refer to the role of the United Nations. “I don’t think you have to worry too much about losing the support of the Jewish community at this time,” advised Wachtel. “They’re very happy at this point, with their apparent victory. I think you should just stride very lightly and stress the end of violence.”⁸ So over the next days, King worked to avoid the subject and keep attention focused on Vietnam.

But Wachtel was wrong: supporters of Israel, who followed his words closely, noticed the silence. An internal memo of the American Jewish Committee reported that he spoke twice in Washington during the week of the war, and made no reference to it. “The fact that King twice in the week failed to discuss the war has a variety of implications, which I think the recipients of this memo can infer on their own.”⁹

It was only on June 18, when King appeared on the ABC Sunday interview program “Issues and Answers,” that he finally answered direct questions on the subject. After giving boilerplate replies about the importance of Israeli security and the need for Arab economic development, one of the interviewers cut to the quick: “Should Israel in your opinion give back the land she has taken in conflict without certain guarantees, such as security?” King gave this answer:

Well, I think these guarantees should all be worked out by the United Nations. I would hope that all of the nations, and particularly the Soviet Union and the United States, and I would say France and Great

Britain, these four powers can really determine how that situation is going. I think the Israelis will have to have access to the Gulf of Aqaba. I mean the very survival of Israel may well depend on access to not only the Suez Canal, but the Gulf and the Strait of Tiran. These things are very important. But I think for the ultimate peace and security of the situation it will probably be necessary for Israel to give up this conquered territory because to hold on to it will only exacerbate the tensions and deepen the bitterness of the Arabs.¹⁰

It is remarkable that this last sentence does not figure in the latter-day polemics over King and Israel, even though King spoke it on national television. It goes far to clarify King's position on the consequences of the Six-Day War: King supported Israeli actions to assure its "survival," but did not favor Israel's continued hold on the territories it had conquered.

King also passed over an opportunity to make an exception of Jerusalem. He perfectly understood the Jerusalem issue, having visited the Jordanian side of the city in 1959. (In a sermon following that visit, he explained to his congregants that "the holy city has been divided and split up and partitioned.")¹¹ Israel annexed East Jerusalem on June 28, 1967, reuniting the city and setting off debates within and among churches.

On July 12, a statement by sixteen leading Protestant theologians appeared in the *New York Times*; the signatories once more included Reinhold Niebuhr. "During the past twenty years the City of David has experienced an artificial division," the statement announced. "We see no justification in proposals which seek once again to destroy the unity which has been restored to Jerusalem." The statement went on to praise Israel, "whose record over the last twenty years in providing free access to Christian shrines within its jurisdiction inspires confidence that the interests of all religions will be faithfully honored."¹² This time, King did not appear among the signatories.

The day after the cease-fire, King had told his advisers that Israel "now faces the danger of being smug and unyielding."¹³ As his concerns grew, he now faced a practical question: whether to carry through on a planned trip to an Israel flush with victory.

The Visit That Wasn't

Why didn't King visit Israel? This was the question posed by Yaacov Lozowick, director of the Israel State Archives, on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, 2013. On that occasion, the Israel State Archives published a batch

of Israeli documents from before the Six-Day War, about a possible visit by King to Israel.¹⁴ The correspondence made for fascinating reading, but left a question hanging, as explained by Lozowick:

In a nutshell, the Israelis thought it would be a fine idea to host MLK in Israel, and the more important he grew, the more convinced they were that it was something they should make happen. King, from his side, kept on saying all the right words, but kept on not coming. Those are the facts. What do they mean? Hard to say.¹⁵

In fact, it is not hard to say. But the answer lies far from the Israeli archives, in the FBI wiretaps.

In 1966, King entered an agreement to lead a Holy Land pilgrimage, in partnership with Sandy Ray, pastor of a Baptist church in Brooklyn, who took up the promotion of the trip. King's assistant, Andrew Young, visited Israel and Jordan in late 1966 to do advance planning with Jordanian and Israeli authorities. The pilgrimage was rumored to be in the works from that time, and King received letters of encouragement and invitations from the prime ministers of Israel and Jordan, and from the Israeli and Jordanian mayors of divided Jerusalem. On May 16, 1967, King publicly announced the plan at a news conference, reported by the *New York Times* the following day.¹⁶

The pilgrimage would take place in November, and King insisted that it would have no political significance whatsoever. The organizers hoped to attract five thousand participants, with the aim of generating revenue for King's Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC). King was slated to preach on the Mount of Olives in Jordanian East Jerusalem (November 14), and at a specially constructed amphitheater near Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee in Israel (November 16). The pilgrims would pass from Jordan to Israel through the Mandelbaum Gate in Jerusalem. King, who knew the situation on the ground, thought he could strike just the right balance between Israel and Jordan.¹⁷

The Six-Day War threw a wrench into the plan. Ray was still keen on going forward, and he immediately sent his own tour agent to Jerusalem to get a read on the situation. She came back enthusiastic: "I firmly believe that Dr. King's visit will prove to be a much more historic event than we ever dreamed possible. Everyone, from the Governments down to the people on the streets were asking me about Dr. King. . . . We desperately need a new Press Release from Dr. King reaffirming the Pilgrimage plans."¹⁸

So what happened? King got cold feet, and this isn't a guess. We have it straight from King himself, again in the FBI wiretaps. In a conference call among King and his advisers, on July 24, 1967, King noted that the responses to the pilgrimage promotion had been "fairly good." (Andrew Young said about six hundred people had sent in deposits.) But if King went to the Middle East, "I'd run into the situation where I'm damned if I say this and I'm damned if I say that no matter what I'd say, and I've already faced enough criticism including pro-Arab." He had met a Lebanese journalist who told him that the Arabs now had the impression he was pro-Israel, and that "you don't understand our problem or something like that. And I expect I would run into a continuation of this." King asked for advice, but set this tone:

I just think that if I go, the Arab world, and of course Africa and Asia for that matter, would interpret this as endorsing everything that Israel has done, and I do have questions of doubt.¹⁹

King added that "most of it [the pilgrimage] would be Jerusalem and they [the Israelis] have annexed Jerusalem, and any way you say it they don't plan to give it up." After some to-and-fro among his advisers, in which it was suggested that he balance an Israel trip with a visit to King Hussein in Amman or Nasser in Cairo, King announced that "I frankly have to admit that my instincts, and when I follow my instincts so to speak I'm usually right. . . . I just think that this would be a great mistake. I don't think I could come out unscathed."²⁰

King procrastinated out of deference to Ray, who had laid out money on promotion of the pilgrimage. But on September 22, 1967, he wrote the following to Mordechai Ben-Ami, the president of the Israeli airline El Al, which was to have handled part of the flight package:

It is with the deepest regret that I cancel my proposed pilgrimage to the Holy Land for this year, but the constant turmoil in the Middle East makes it extremely difficult to conduct a religious pilgrimage free of both political overtones and the fear of danger to the participants.

Actually, I am aware that the danger is almost non-existent, but to the ordinary citizen who seldom goes abroad, the daily headlines of border clashes and propaganda statements produces a fear of danger which is insurmountable on the American scene.²¹

He ended by promising to revisit the plan the following year, but he never did.

The Quote

“When people criticize Zionists, they mean Jews. You’re talking anti-Semitism!” These words, reportedly spoken by King in the aftermath of the war, are often quoted by supporters of Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu quoted them in his address to the Knesset on International Holocaust Remembrance Day in 2011.²² The quote also appeared in a State Department report on antisemitism.²³

But some Palestinians and their sympathizers, who resent the stigmatizing of anti-Zionism as a form of antisemitism, have tried to discredit the quote. Just what sort of anti-Zionism crosses that fine line is a question beyond my scope here. But what of the quote itself? How was it first circulated? What is the evidence against it? And might some additional evidence resolve the question of its authenticity?

King’s words were reported by Seymour Martin Lipset, at that time the George D. Markham Professor of Government and Sociology at Harvard, in an article he published in the magazine *Encounter* in December 1969—that is, in the year after King’s April 1968 assassination. Lipset:

Shortly before he was assassinated, Martin Luther King, Jr. was in Boston on a fund-raising mission, and I had the good fortune to attend a dinner which was given for him in Cambridge. This was an experience which was at once fascinating and moving: one witnessed Dr. King in action in a way one never got to see in public. He wanted to find what the Negro students at Harvard and other parts of the Boston area were thinking about various issues, and he very subtly cross-examined them for well over an hour and a half. He asked questions, and said very little himself. One of the young men present happened to make some remark against the Zionists. Dr. King snapped at him and said, “Don’t talk like that! When people criticize Zionists, they mean Jews. You’re talking anti-Semitism!”²⁴

For the next three-plus decades, no one challenged the credibility of this account. No wonder: Lipset, author of the classic *Political Man* (1960), was an eminent authority on American politics and society, who later became the only scholar ever to preside over both the American Sociological Association and the American Political Science Association. Who if not Lipset could be counted upon to report an event accurately? Nor was he quoting something said in confidence only to him or far back in time. Others were present at the same dinner, and Lipset wrote about it not that long after the fact. He also told the anecdote in

a magazine that must have had many subscribers in Cambridge, some of whom might have shared his “fascinating and moving” experience. The idea that he would have fabricated or falsified any aspect of this account would have seemed preposterous.

That is, until almost four decades later, when two Palestinian-American activists suggested just that. Lipset’s account, they wrote, “seems on its face . . . credible.”

There are still, however, a few reasons for casting doubt on the authenticity of this statement. According to the *Harvard Crimson*, “The Rev. Martin Luther King was last in Cambridge almost exactly a year ago—April 23, 1967” (“While You Were Away” 4/8/68). If this is true, Dr. King could not have been in Cambridge in 1968. Lipset stated he was in the area for a “fund-raising mission,” which would seem to imply a high profile visit. Also, an intensive inventory of publications by Stanford University’s Martin Luther King Jr. Papers Project accounts for numerous speeches in 1968. None of them are for talks in Cambridge or Boston.²⁵

When Lipset’s integrity was called into question, in 2004, he was probably unaware of it and certainly unable to respond to it. He had suffered a debilitating stroke in 2001, which left him immobile and speech-impaired. (He died of another stroke in 2006, at the age of 84.) Since then, others have reinforced the doubt, noting that Lipset gave “what seemed to be a lot of information on the background to the King quote, but without providing a single concrete, verifiable detail.”²⁶

To all intents and purposes, this constituted an assertion that Lipset might have fabricated both the occasion and the quote. Such an extraordinary claim raised this question: could Lipset’s account be substantiated with “concrete, verifiable detail”?

Bear in mind Lipset’s precise testimony: King rebuked the student at a dinner in Cambridge “shortly before” King’s assassination, during a fundraising mission to Boston. Note that Lipset didn’t place the dinner in 1968. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968, so “shortly before” could just as well have referred to the last months of 1967.

In fact, King did come to Boston for the purposes of fundraising in late 1967—specifically, on Friday, October 27. Boston was the last stop in a week-long series of benefit concerts given by Harry Belafonte for King’s SCLC. In the archives of NBC, there is a clip of King greeting the audience at the Boston concert.²⁷ The *Boston Globe* also reported King’s remarks and the benefit concert on its front page the next morning.²⁸

Greetings by Martin Luther King, Jr., sandwiched between an introduction by Sidney Poitier and an act by Harry Belafonte, before nine thousand people in Boston Garden—it would be difficult to imagine any appearance more “high profile” than that.

And the dinner in Cambridge? When King was assassinated, the *Crimson*, Harvard’s student newspaper, did write that he “was last in Cambridge almost exactly a year ago—April 23, 1967.”²⁹ That had been a very public visit, during which King and Dr. Benjamin Spock held a press conference to announce plans for a “Vietnam Summer.” War supporters picketed King.³⁰

But in actual fact, that was not King’s last visit to Cambridge. In early October 1967, when news spread that King would be coming to Boston for the Belafonte concert, a junior member of Harvard’s faculty wrote to King from Cambridge, to extend an invitation from the instructor and his wife:

We would be anxious to be able to sit down and have a somewhat leisured meal with you, and perhaps with some other few people from this area whom you might like to meet. So much has happened in recent months that we are both quite without bearings, and are in need of some honest and tough and friendly dialogue. . . . So if you can find some time for dinner on Friday or lunch on Saturday, we are delighted to extend an invitation. If, however, your schedules do not permit, we of course will understand that. In any case, we look forward to seeing you at the Belafonte Concert and the party afterwards.³¹

Who was this member of the Harvard faculty? Martin Peretz.

In October 1967, Peretz was a twenty-nine-year-old instructor of Social Studies at Harvard and an antiwar New Leftist. Four months earlier, he had married Anne Farnsworth, heiress to a sewing machine fortune. Even before their marriage, the couple had made the civil rights movement one of their causes, and Farnsworth had become a top-tier donor to the SCLC. A year earlier, Peretz had informed King that a luncheon with him was “one of the high points of my life”—and that “arrangements for the transfer of securities are now being made.”³² As Peretz later wrote, “I knew Martin Luther King, Jr. decently well, at least as much as one can know a person who had already become both prophet and hero. I fundraised for his Southern Christian Leadership Conference.”³³ Much of that charity began in the Peretz home.

But as Peretz noted in his invitation, “much has happened in recent months,” necessitating “some honest and tough and friendly dialogue.”

Peretz was then (and subsequently remained) an ardent supporter of Israel, and he was alarmed at the manner in which black militants denounced Israel following the June war. In August, the radical SNNC issued a newsletter claiming that “Zionist terror gangs” had “deliberately slaughtered and mutilated women, children and men, thereby causing the unarmed Arabs to panic, flee and leave their homes in the hands of the Zionist-Israeli forces.” The newsletter also denounced “the Rothschilds, who have long controlled the wealth of many European nations, [who] were involved in the original conspiracy with the British to create the ‘State of Israel’ and [who] are still among Israel’s chief supporters.” Peretz, who a few years earlier had been a supporter of SNCC, condemned the newsletter as vicious antisemitism, and Jewish supporters of the civil rights movement looked to King and the SCLC to do the same.³⁴

King’s secretary, Dora McDonald, replied to the Peretz invitation on King’s behalf: “Dr. King asked me to say that he would be happy to have dinner with you.” King would be arriving in Boston at 2:43 in the afternoon. “Accompanying Dr. King will be Rev. Andrew Young, Rev. Bernard Lee and I.” And so it was that King came to dinner at the Peretz home at 20 Larchwood Drive, Cambridge, in the early evening of October 27, 1967.

The dinner was attended by Peretz’s senior Harvard colleague, Seymour Martin Lipset, and it was then and there that Lipset heard King rebuke a student who echoed the SNCC line on “Zionists”: “When people criticize Zionists, they mean Jews. You’re talking anti-Semitism!” Peretz would later assert that King “grasped the identity between anti-Israel politics and antisemitic ranting.”³⁵ Lipset preserved King’s words to that effect, by publishing them as a personal recollection. (Just to run the contemporary record against memory, I wrote to Peretz, to ask whether the much-quoted exchange did take place at his Cambridge home on that evening. His answer: “Absolutely.”)

A few days later, King’s aide, Andrew Young, thanked Peretz and his wife

for the delightful evening last Friday. It is almost too bad we had to go to the concert, but I think you will agree that the concert, too, proved enjoyable but I am also sure a couple of hours conversing with the group gathered in your home would have been more productive.³⁶

(I wrote twice to Andrew Young to ask whether he had any recollection of King’s words. I received no response.)

Little more than five months after the Cambridge dinner, King lay dead, felled by an assassin in Memphis. (Peretz delivered a eulogy at the remembrance service in Harvard's Memorial Church.)³⁷ There is plenty of room to debate the precise meaning of King's off-the-record words at the Cambridge dinner. Was he only referring to the clearly antisemitic meaning of "Zionists" in the rhetoric of SNCC militants? Or was he making a general statement? We will never know. And just how much weight should be accorded to words spoken privately and never repeated publicly? (Had Lipset not written an article more than a year after the event, King's words would have been lost forever.) My own view is that this dinner table remark can't always bear the oversized burden imposed on it.

But the assertion that King couldn't possibly have spoken it, because he wasn't in or near Cambridge when he was supposed to have said it, is baseless. Lipset: "Shortly before he was assassinated, Martin Luther King, Jr. was in Boston on a fund-raising mission, and I had the good fortune to attend a dinner which was given for him in Cambridge." Every particular of this statement is corroborated by a wealth of detail. There is a date, an approximate time of day, and a street address for the Cambridge dinner, all attested by contemporary correspondence in King's papers.

The Balancing Act

King's careful maneuvering before, during, and after the Six-Day War demonstrated a much deeper understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict than critics credit him with possessing. The two Palestinian-Americans who sought to dismiss the Cambridge quote suggested that the conflict "was probably not a subject he was well-versed on," and that his public statements in praise of Israel "surely do not sound like the words of someone familiar with both sides of the story."³⁸ Not so. King had been to the Arab world, had a full grasp of the positions of the sides, and was wary of the possible pitfalls of favoring one over the other. He struck a delicate balance, speaking out or staying silent after careful assessments made in consultation with advisers who had their ears to the ground—Levison and Wachtel (both non-Zionists) in the Jewish community, and Andrew Young, whom King dispatched to the Middle East as his emissary.

For this reason, it is an offense to history, if not to King's memory, whenever someone today summons King's ghost to offer unqualified support to Israel or the Palestinians. King understood moral complexity,

he knew that millions waited upon his words, and he sought to resolve conflict, not accentuate it. The pursuit of an elusive balance marked his approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict while he lived. There is no obvious reason to presume he would have acted differently, had he lived longer.

Notes

1. Some of the episodes discussed in this article were treated in brief by Murray Friedman, *What Went Wrong? The Creation and Collapse of the Black-Jewish Alliance* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 250–53; and Taylor Branch, *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965–68* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 556–57, 620–21, 624, 632.
2. Jewish Telegraphic Agency, “Dr. King Repudiates Anti-Semitic, Anti-Israel Black Power Stand,” October 10, 1967, archived at <http://web.archive.org/web/20160229154145/http://www.jta.org/1967/10/11/archive/dr-king-repudiates-anti-semitic-anti-israel-black-power-stand>; “Martin Luther King Jr: ‘Israel . . . is one of the great outpost of democracy in the world’” (video excerpt from interview), posted at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvr2Cxuh2Wk>, accessed February 29, 2016.
3. “Dr. King, Other Prominent U.S. Christian Clergymen Urge Support for Israel,” Jewish Telegraphic Agency, May 29, 1967, archived at <http://web.archive.org/web/20160109103941/http://www.jta.org/1967/05/29/archive/dr-king-other-prominent-u-s-christian-clergymen-urge-support-for-israel>; *New York Times*, May 28, 1967.
4. “8 Church Leaders Ask Aid to Israel,” *New York Times*, May 28, 1967.
5. Letter by David Lelyveld, *New York Times*, June 2, 1967. Lelyveld was the son of prominent Reform rabbi and civil rights activist Arthur Lelyveld, at that time president of the American Jewish Congress.
6. Ussama Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S.-Arab Relations, 1820–2001* (New York: Public Affairs, 2010), 268–69.
7. Transcript of conference call, June 6, 1967, in *The Martin Luther King, Jr., FBI File, Part II: The King-Levison File* (microfilm), ed. David J. Garrow (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1987), reel 8 (hereafter: *King-Levison File*).
8. Transcript of conference call, June 8, 1967, *King-Levison File*.
9. Brant Coopersmith, “War in the Middle East,” memo to Harry Fleischman, American Jewish Committee, June 12, 1967, American Jewish Committee archives, quoted by Marc Schneier, *Shared Dreams: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Jewish Community* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 1999), 164. As of January 2016, the archives of the American Jewish Committee cannot locate this memo. I am grateful to Arthur Perler for attempting (unsuccessfully) to locate this memo in Fleischman’s papers at New York University.
10. King interviewed by Tom Jerriel and John Casserly, ABC “Issues and Answers,” June 18, 1967, The King Center Digital Archive, transcript archived at <http://web.archive.org/web/20150304113151/http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/abcs-issues-and-answers-mlk-interview>.
11. King’s Easter Sunday sermon, “A Walk through the Holy Land,” delivered at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Montgomery, Alabama, on March 29, 1959, in *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, vol. 5, *Threshold of a New*

- Decade, January 1959–December 1960*, eds. Clayborne Carson et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 164.
12. “Jerusalem Should Remain Unified” (advertisement), *New York Times*, July 12, 1967.
 13. Transcript of conference call, June 11, 1967, *King-Levison File*.
 14. Shlomo Mark and Hagai Zoref, “Dr. Martin Luther King and Israel: Documents on his Relations with the State of Israel and Efforts to Arrange his Visit to Israel,” Israel State Archives website, archived at http://web.archive.org/web/20150602221743/http://www.archives.gov.il/ArchiveGov_Eng/Publications/ElectronicPirsum/MartinLutherKing/.
 15. Yaacov Lozowick, “What was Martin Luther King Thinking,” *Israel’s Documented Story* [blog of the Israel State Archives], January 17, 2013, archived at <http://web.archive.org/web/20130126073039/http://israelsdocuments.blogspot.co.il/2013/01/what-was-martin-luther-king-thinking.html>.
 16. “Dr. King to Lead Fall Pilgrimage to the Holy Land,” *New York Times*, May 16, 1967.
 17. A brochure outlining this itinerary is preserved in the Andrew Young Papers, Auburn Avenue Research Library, Atlanta, Ga., Box 21, Folder 5: “Pilgrimage to the Holy Land with Martin Luther King, Jr., 1967.” I am grateful to Düden Yeğenoğlu for scanning the brochure for me.
 18. Letter from Emily Ann Fortson, *Records of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 1954–1970, Part 1: Records of the President’s Office* (microfilm), ed. Randolph Boehm (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 1995), reel 3.
 19. Transcript of conference call, July 24, 1967, *King-Levison File*.
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