

but by minutiae of the technicians' clothing, diet, and chit-chat.

Yet one is inclined to forgive Mallon for going on about space, since he is obviously a man in love. His novel *Aurora 7* was an affectionate look—through the eyes of a rocket-intoxicated youngster—at the early days of NASA. Here, in a sometimes stirring piece on the space shuttle, he all but declares it America's Manifest Destiny to colonize Mars. One even suspects that his sympathy for Dan Quayle, whom he shadows at a golf tournament and a Fourth-of-July parade, is clinched by Quayle's advocacy of the space program.

If occasional overthoroughness is Mallon's vice, it is only the complement of the virtue of thoughtfulness. On a visit to Pearl Harbor, Mallon considers the theory that FDR let the Japanese attack so that the U.S. would join the war, and compares it to the endless speculation on the Kennedy assassination:

The "investigators" of each "conspiracy" claim to be engaged in useful historical revisionism, but what they are doing might better be characterized as historical *pre*visionism. For the Pearl Harbor contingent it is always 7:54 A.M. on that Sunday morning, a minute before the Japanese planes come through the clouds, and for the JFK gumshoes the Hertz sign in Dealey Plaza says 12:29, not 12:30. . . . The buff can keep scanning the skies or peering over at the grassy knoll happy in the knowledge that this awful, sublime moment doesn't yet have to be over.

After such a passage, the reader is apt to pause and ponder the suggestive truth of what he's read. Yet this writer's most distinctive trait is not thoughtfulness but tenderness. He thinks back fondly to the days when Hollywood movies left audiences in tears, and he likes to end his pieces on an emotional note, if not always a sad one. Sometimes he lapses into sentimentality, but his intention is to leave the reader both moved and reflective. The book closes at an auction of the late Rex Harrison's personal effects, where Mallon muses: "In life, possessions give their owner status. In death, it's more like the reverse, the owner's celebrity, if he had it, electrifying the object with a personal history." It is a sound idea, and one both sad and oddly heartening. □

## A PLACE AMONG NATIONS: ISRAEL AND THE WORLD

Benjamin Netanyahu

Bantam/467 pages/\$24.95

reviewed by JOSEPH SHATTAN

In 1985, the Kuwaiti newspaper *Al-Rai Al-Am* called Benjamin Netanyahu "the enemy's most dangerous agent abroad." ("The enemy," of course, being Israel, not Iraq.) More recently, State Department officials, according to Evans and Novak, have warned of "a potential tragedy" should Mr. Netanyahu—the newly elected leader of Israel's principal opposition party, the Likud—become prime minister.

What is it about Benjamin Netanyahu—Israel's MIT-trained former U.N. ambassador, deputy foreign minister, and principal spokesman during the Gulf War—that inspires such alarm among Arabs and Arabists alike? Perhaps it has something to do with his extraordinary effectiveness in presenting Israel's case to the world. As Israel's advocate, he merits comparison with the brilliant Abba Eban. But while Eban, who began his career in the mainstream of Israel's Labor Party, has moved steadily to the left over the past twenty years, the 43-year-old Netanyahu—whose brother, Jonathan, was killed leading the 1976 Entebbe rescue mission—is a staunch partisan of the "Revisionist" right.

I met Benjamin Netanyahu while we were both students, nearly two decades ago. Back then, I considered myself a Social Democrat and admired Israel's socialist economy. Netanyahu told me that Israel's Labor leaders were a bunch of economic illiterates whose "Bolshevist" policies were ruining his country. He also predicted that Israel's military victories would prove hollow if it didn't win the struggle for Western public opinion. He was right on both counts.

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Fittingly, then, *A Place Among Nations* contains a stinging indictment of Israel's economic policies—both "Bolshevist" (Labor) and "Peronist" (Likud)—and describes Israel's failings at propaganda.

One of the most enduring myths about the Middle East is that all the strife in that violent region is related to the Arab-Israeli dispute. This perception is reinforced by the media, whose focus on Israel borders on the obsessive; and the United Nations, which managed for years to avoid even discussing the Iran-Iraq war, but regularly bashes Israel in the Security Council, the General Assembly, and countless Committees. Netanyahu writes:

There is something uncanny about the world's capacity to focus on the Arab-Israeli dispute (with total casualties estimated at 70,000 dead over five decades) in the face of the carnage of the *other* Middle Eastern conflicts, such as the Egyptian invasion of Yemen (250,000 dead), the Algerian civil war (1,000,000 dead), the Lebanese civil war (150,000 dead), the Libyan incursion into Chad (100,000 dead), the Sudanese civil war (at least 500,000 dead), and the Iran-Iraq war (over 1,000,000 dead). . . . Especially after the Gulf War (at least 100,000 dead, and possibly many more), no fair-minded person can accept the pretense that the turbulent conflicts raging everywhere in the Middle East can be forced into the Palestinian straitjacket.

But already in the 1930s, British Arabists argued that Zionism was responsible for all their troubles in the Middle East. To secure Arab and Islamic loyalty to the Crown, Britain would have to repudiate the Balfour Declaration and

scuttle the Jewish National Home. The result was a “white paper,” adopted by the Chamberlain government four months before the outbreak of World War II, that placed sharp restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine (Arab immigration to Palestine, of course, went unimpeded), and was strictly enforced by British authorities throughout World War II. But sending boatloads of Jewish “illegal immigrants” back to Europe—and certain death—failed to win Arab affections or guarantee Arab loyalty. On the contrary, while Britain fought for its life, Arabs in Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Palestine allied themselves with the Nazis, eventually forming an Arab Legion that became part of the SS.

Whatever Israel’s sins of omission or commission, then, it cannot logically be blamed for the crisis of legitimacy afflicting the Arab world and the political pathologies ensuing therefrom. But after years of brainwashing, who does *not* believe that the principal victims of the Middle East are the Palestinians, a stateless people whose plight mirrors that of the Jews before Israel’s establishment? “There is no way to escape the reality,” writes former President Jimmy Carter, “of how intimately intertwined are the history, the aspirations and the fate of the two long-suffering peoples, the Jews and the Palestinian Arabs.”

This equation of Palestinian and Jewish suffering would make slightly more sense if Palestinians were in fact stateless. But they have a state. King Hussein’s grandfather Abdullah wanted to call this state the “Hashemite Kingdom of Palestine,” but at the suggestion of his British advisers named it the “Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan” instead. Whatever its name, however, present-day Jordan encompasses 80 percent of the area known after World War I as Mandatory Palestine. In Netanyahu’s words:

It is absurd to pretend that an Arab in eastern Palestine (“Jordan”) who shares language, culture and religion with another Arab some ten miles away in western Palestine (the “West Bank”), an Arab who is often his close relative if

not literally his own brother, is a member of a different people. Indeed, the PLO’s officials and Jordan’s rulers have been the first to admit this.

The PLO’s demand for a Palestinian state on the West Bank is in fact a demand for a *second* Palestinian state—to be used as a springboard for the eventual destruction of Israel, as laid out in the PLO’s Phased Plan. Not surprisingly, Netanyahu doesn’t think that destroying Israel is a very good idea. But if Israel is to avoid destruction, he thinks it must control the West Bank.

Of course, some Israelis believe that if Israel is to be true to its ideals, it must *relinquish* the West Bank. All they would demand of

a Palestinian people, there is no Palestinian entity, there is only Syria. You are an integral part of the Syrian people, Palestine is an integral part of Syria. Therefore it is we, the Syrian authorities, who are the true representatives of the Palestinian people.” An Israeli demand for a demilitarized West Bank state might have to be accompanied by a pledge to defend such a state against its “legitimate” Syrian rulers.

Netanyahu’s insistence on Israeli control of the West Bank does not mean that he is insensitive to the plight of West Bank Palestinians. He would grant the inhabitants of Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, and Hebron—the great majority of the West Bank’s Arab population—control over commerce, religion, education, health, and social welfare. Netanyahu calls this plan, somewhat grandiosely, “the largest-scale experiment with democracy ever conducted in the Arab world.”

Netanyahu has relatively little to say about the current “peace process.” But his approach can, I think, be summarized as follows: to the extent that the peace process reinforces Israel’s capacity to deter Arab attacks, he’s for it; to the extent that it undermines Israeli deterrence, he’s against it. What he strongly rejects is the notion that Arab-Israeli peace depends on the peace process. In Netanyahu’s view, it depends, first and foremost on Israel’s strength.

Unfortunately, the entire thrust of the peace process, as currently conceived, is directed at undermining Israeli deterrence. When

American officials speak of “land for peace,” it’s understood that only Israel will be surrendering land. To suggest otherwise—to argue, as Netanyahu does, that for the sake of peace the Arabs, who have waged an unrelenting war of aggression against Israel for nearly fifty years, might have to make territorial concessions of their own—is quite beyond the pale of reasonable discourse. For if U.S. policy-makers ever took Netanyahu’s arguments seriously, they might have to entertain the possibility of bringing sustained pressure to bear on the Arabs. And that, alas, is unthinkable.



the rulers of a second Palestinian state is a pledge that this state be demilitarized. Netanyahu, however, is justifiably skeptical: demilitarizing even *part* of a sovereign state—Germany’s Rhineland after World War I, for example—has usually proved impossible over the long run. But demilitarizing an *entire* sovereign state “is something unheard of in the annals of nations.”

Moreover, Palestinians might argue, a demilitarized state would be vulnerable to Arab predators. “Never forget this one point,” Syria’s Hafez Assad once told Yasser Arafat. “There is no such thing as

Although fundamentalists and pan-Arab nationalists bloodily disagree over many things, on two issues they concur: Both share an abiding hatred of the West, which from the pan-Arab viewpoint has subjected the Arabs to one humiliation after another since Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798, and from the fundamentalist viewpoint is busily corrupting loyal Moslems with its VCRs and sexual promiscuity. And both believe that the Middle East is an exclusively Arab and Moslem realm. Those

who do not accept Moslem-Arab hegemony—Jews, Kurds, Christians, and others—must be forced to do so.

I don't know whether Netanyahu is capable of changing U.S. policy. I am certain, however, that were he to become Israel's prime minister, my former colleagues in the State Department and the National Security Council would "go ballistic" (to use one of their favorite locutions). For me, that is reason enough to pray for Benjamin Netanyahu's continued success. □

so afraid of giving him something in the bright red .400 zone—that in 1957, when he was already 39 years old, he walked once in every 3.87 at bats, the only player under 4.00 ever. So afraid that he holds the record for the most intentional walks *with the bases loaded*. So afraid because, when he was on, he could make the decision whether or not to swing during the last sixteen feet the ball traveled, and could see the rotation of the seams, and actually see the bat make contact with the ball.

His eye was so good that even the umpires would sometimes ask him to make a close call when he was at bat. At his first batting practice after serving two years in the Korean War, he returned to the dugout and told Joe Cronin that home plate was out of line; sure, his manager ribbed him, sure, sure. Williams insisted, and to humor him Cronin had the field surveyed; the plate was out of whack by a fraction of an inch.

## HITTER: THE LIFE AND TURMOILS OF TED WILLIAMS

Ed Linn

Harcourt Brace/437 pages/\$23.95

reviewed by M. D. CARNEGIE

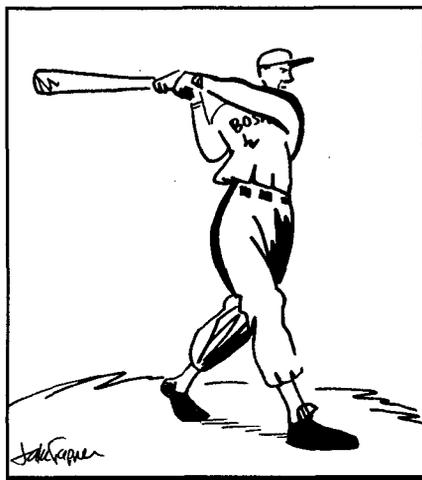
When it came to the science of hitting a baseball, Ted Williams wrote the book. It is called, in fact, *The Science of Hitting*, and the cover features a now-legendary schematic of the Splendid Splinter in batting stance, with the strike zone demarcated into color-coded baseballs of different hitting averages—.400 waist-high and red in the middle; .230 low, outside, and gray. If a hitter were doing his job—and no man has ever done the job like Ted Williams—he would be getting a hit only two out of five times the ball came at him right down the pike.

When you consider, then, that it is the pitcher's precise duty to keep the ball away from that sweet zone in the middle, and that the very best pitchers can often as not hurl the ball some 90 m.p.h. in that .230 gray area, and do it from but sixty feet away, it is nothing short of astounding to consider that in 1941, Theodore Samuel Williams got himself a hit more than two times in five. His .406 average that year was, as everybody knows, the last time a major-leaguer has broken the .400 barrier.

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What everybody doesn't know, and what Ed Linn points out in this absolutely marvelous book, is that Williams outhit Joe DiMaggio during the latter's record 56-game hitting streak that glorious summer, reaching base 55 times out of 100 to DiMaggio's 44; that Williams was the only .400 hitter in history who did not benefit from the sacrifice-fly rule, and with it would have hit .412 (fourth best of all time); and that Williams's on-base percentage that year, and over his career, are also both major-league records.

Pitchers were afraid of Ted Williams—



Williams was also an iconoclast and screwball, in the finest baseball tradition. Sometimes his shortstop would turn around to give him the count, and find he was arguing with someone in the stands or, more often, that his back was to the game as he practiced the perfect motion of his swing. Once he disappeared through the left field scoreboard in Fenway to nip across the street for a sandwich. He had movie-star looks, and once when a reporter in the locker room asked about the women who adored him, he grabbed his crotch and snarled, "All they want is what I've got right here."

It was the sort of behavior that could not possibly endear him to the Boston writers of his day, who were hands-down the meanest, cruellest, most vicious and scabrous journalists the world of sports will likely ever see. If Bobby Bonilla thinks he's got it rough, he might find some solace in the saga of the Kid.

"It seems disgraceful to me," roared Dave Egan, the legendary Harvard-educated drunk who covered the Sox for the *Boston Record*, "that a person such as Williams is to be given the keys to the city. We talk about juvenile delinquency, and fight against it, and then officially honor a man whom we should officially horsewhip. If this is leadership," he crowed, "I'll have strychnine."

Harold Kaese of the *Boston Evening*