

May 8, 2006 William B. Quandt responds:

To the Editor:

If William B. Quandt is to have any credibility as an expert “on the peace process in the Middle East” (published in the Spring 2006 issue of *Dædalus*), he should at least know that the first name of former Israeli Prime Minister Barak is Ehud (the same as current Prime Minister Olmert’s) and not Aharon. He fails to mention that among those blaming Arafat for the failure of the Camp David talks were not only Clinton and Ross, but Saudi Arabia’s Prince Bandar. While mentioning the unfounded speculation that Arafat’s death was due to poison, he fails to mention the more plausible speculation that it was due to AIDS. He conveniently ignores the fact that the charter of Hamas declares that the elimination of Israel as a political entity is an unalterable principle that cannot be amended or moderated. He joins the far right in Israel when he blames rather than praises Ariel Sharon for turning over the entire Gaza Strip to the Palestinians. It is naïve in the extreme to believe that “peace” can be achieved when one of the parties refuses to recognize the other party’s right to exist.

– Solomon W. Golomb

Solomon W. Golomb, a Fellow of the American Academy since 2003, is University Professor at the Communication Sciences Institute of the University of Southern California.

Solomon Golomb is of course correct that former Israeli Prime Minister Barak’s first name is Ehud. I stand corrected. The rest of his intemperate letter is either a matter of opinions on which we differ, or a significant distortion of what I actually wrote. I’m not sure that anyone knows what caused Yasir Arafat’s death, but it is certainly accurate to say that many Palestinians believe that he was poisoned. I have no knowledge or opinion on the matter.

More seriously, I fail to see how he can say: “He joins the far right in Israel when he blames rather than praises Ariel Sharon for turning over the entire Gaza Strip to the Palestinians.” Even a casual reader of my short article will see that I neither blame nor praise Sharon for evacuating Gaza. Instead, I merely state that his decision seemed to reflect his “vision of the future – one that does not involve a negotiated peace with the Palestinians.” That also is, I believe, an accurate statement of how Sharon saw the future, even before the election of a Hamas-led government.

Mr. Golomb seems very intense in his views, but that does not absolve him of the obligation to state my views accurately when he chooses to criticize them.

On teaching in European universities

May 14, 2006

To the Editor:

In their essay, “American philosophy in the twentieth century,” which appeared in the Spring 2006 issue of *Dædalus*,

Professors Dagfinn Føllesdal and Michael Friedman write: “Unlike their European counterparts, American [graduate] students hand in written work several times a term and receive detailed comments from their teachers. European universities are too understaffed to give similar attention and feedback to their students” Of my own university, Oxford, this is completely false, in respect to undergraduates as well as graduate students. How am I to tell of how many other European universities it is equally false?

– Michael Dummett

Michael Dummett, a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy since 1985, is Emeritus Professor of Logic at the University of Oxford.

May 24, 2006

Dagfinn Føllesdal and Michael Friedman respond:

Sir Michael Dummett is right. Oxford, and also Cambridge, gives attention and feedback to its students similar to what students receive in good American universities. Unfortunately, this is not generally the case in European universities. While American colleges and universities, all 3,500 of them, have an average student/teacher ratio of ten students per teacher, similar to that of Oxford and Cambridge, most European universities have two to four times as many students per teacher with far less feedback for each student. And the situation in Europe is getting worse rather than better: Many countries are introducing a three-year B.A. without increasing teaching resources; East European countries, and also France and Germany, draw the best researchers out of the universities and

offer them good research conditions, while the university teachers become second-class citizens; Germany increases the teaching load for those who remain in the universities from eight to nine hours of teaching per week. With policies like these, good European students will continue to go to America for their graduate work, and America will retain its dominance in science and scholarship.

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