



RAPHAEL'S "VIRGIN AND CHILD"
(National Gallery, London)



"Collage" by an Israeli soldier - exhibited in Tel Aviv at the "Gallery 220" and reproduced in the "Jerusalem Post Week End Magazine " of 1 March 1968.

Pretty, isn't she ?

But not really the Virgin Mary (however far one stretches the term " art "); rather a deliberate blasphemy reflecting the typical outlook and feelings of the military junta now ruling the Holy Land.

EXTRACT OF AN INTERVIEW
by Elisabeth Girvin

of HIS BEATITUDE
MAXIMOS V. HAKIM
Patriarch of Jerusalem, etc.

during his visit to the U.S.A.

"Our losses though, are only a small part of the total picture of the loss of Christianity. When the Israelis speak of guaranteeing free access to Christian Holy Places, they are speaking in terms of foreigners only. Middle East Christians, that is Arab Christians are afforded no such liberties.

Before the June War, half of the Holy places were under Israeli jurisdiction, and Arab Christians there could not visit freely. A Christian in Nazareth, for example, needed a permit to visit the Sea of Galilee. In the same way, a Christian in Haifa needed a permit to visit Nazareth, and no Arab Christians could enter Israel from outside to visit the places Holy to Christianity there..... The lack of concern for Christianity was and is still plainly evident. Many Churches were damaged during the war, and desecration - soldiers with arms, women with dogs visiting the Holy places - was rampant during the first days of the occupation. Adamant protests from Christian and Muslim groups put a stop to this, though.

Even so, my encounter with Israel Government officials, particularly since the war, have been completely disheartening. On June 21st. 1967, I met with Pope Paul at the Vatican to discuss the Vatican stand on the situation and the problems facing the Christian community within Israel and the occupied territories. From the discussion I learned the Vatican offers 100% support for the U.N. resolution on Jerusalem, particularly that the City's status should be international rather than the object of any further discussions.

Upon my return to Israel, I presented this stand to the Government, and a high Israeli spokesman, who I prefer not to name for my own sake, made this remark: ' Your Pope is a foolish man. He is the only one who believes in the United Nations. If the Pope has an army, let him send it. We will give up Jerusalem only in defeat.'

Such an Israeli attitude combined with their restrictions upon the indigenous Arab Christian population cannot help but doom Christianity in the Holy Land. This is why I feel that there must be a change.....We cannot wait for peace - that may take years. In the meantime the Holy Places should be accessible to all.

What must be changed, is the lack of interest in the Holy Land among the Christians throughout the world. If Christians were for the Holy Land as the Jews are for Israel, then there should be no problem. After the June War, the Christian silence around the world, particularly in the United States, was supposedly in deference to the ecumenical spirit. The ecumenical spirit should have nothing to do with this situation. The ecumenical spirit is against injustice and should in no way be used as camouflage or excuse for the injustice in the Holy Land today.

The main problem is that the Christians have not been allowed to realize the enormity of the threat to their faith. Zionist propaganda has lavishly publicised the 10% good and carefully buried the 90% bad which is happening to the Christian community in the Holy Land.

The most important step to take now is to correct the misinformation which has blinded the world Christian community before we lose all ground in the Holy Land, a definite possibility within the next ten years. Also, we must rekindle that policy of friendship mutual respect and sincere confidence which long ago was America's trademark there."

Speaking of Jerusalem specifically, the Patriarch said, " It should not become a political pawn nor the spoils of war. We should make of Jerusalem a place sacred and apart, a place international in character, a place where the shrines of all faiths will be equally accessible to all."

Copy of the telegram to the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY
from the Reverend Shafic Farah, Secretary, Church Council,
Amman, March 6th., 1969

LT RIGHT HONOURABLE DR RAMSEY LAMBETH PALACE LONDON

THE CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE EVANGELICAL COMMUNITU OF JORDAN SYRIA AND LEBANON WITH DEEP SORROW AND INDIGNATION WISHES TO CALL THE ATTENTION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND WORLD LEADERS TO THE BRUTAL AND INHUMAN TREATMENT OF THE ARAB CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES BY THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION AUTHORITIES STOP THESE AUTHORITIES IN ABSOLUTE DISREGARD OF THE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS OF FREEDOM OF WORSHIP ARRESTED ON THE MORNING OF SUNDAY MARCH SECOND AT 1.30 AM A MEMBER OF OUR CLERGY THE REVEREND ELIA KHOURY PASTOR OF THE RAMALLAH EPISCOPAL CONGREGATION STOP FURTHERMORE THEY CONFISCATED CHURCH KEYS THUS COMPELLING THE BEWILDERED CONGREGATION TO HOLD THEIR SUNDAY WORSHIP IN THE YARD OUTSIDE THE CHURCH STOP THE BRUTAL POLICY OF REPRESSION APPLIED BY THE ISRAELI AUTHORITIES AGAINST THE ARAB INHABITANTS OF PALESTINE CONSTITUTE A FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF THE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS STOP WE APPEAL TO YOU AND TO ALL CHRISTIANS THE WORLD OVER TO ALERT THE GOVERNMENTS AND PEOPLES OF ALL NATIONS TO THE GRAVE INJUSTICES BEING PERPETRATED DAILY AGAINST THE SUFFERING PEOPLE OF PALESTINE WHOSE ONLY CRIME IS THEIR REFUSAL TO SUBMIT TO UNLAWFUL AND OFFENSIVE OPPRESSIVE OCCUPATION OF THEIR HOMELAND

REVEREND SHAFIK FARAH SECRETARY CHURCH COUNCIL