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Peter Harrison Smith

Civil Rights in Israel

An Arab Voice: Sabri Jiryis

*Sabri Jiryis is an "Israeli Arab," a Palestinian who (until this year) lived all his life in the Jewish state. After graduating in law from the Hebrew University, he was an active barrister, working within the Israeli legal system to try to better the lot of his fellow Arabs. He is the author of *The Arabs in Israel (Beirut: The Institute for Palestine Studies, 1969)*, a study of the status of Arabs living under Israeli rule from 1948 to 1966. Following three months of administrative detention and other experiences that persuaded him that he had probably done all he could effectively do under the prevailing conditions of repression, in September of 1970 he made his way to Beirut where he has joined the staff of the Institute for Palestine Studies.*

This article is a condensation of an interview with Mr. Jiryis conducted for the Newsletter by Rudolf Nassar and L.R. Scudder, Jr.

Mr. Jiryis, since 1967 what has been the status of the Arabs living within the frontiers of 1948? With special reference to the supposed lifting of military rule in 1966, what is the actual citizenship status of the Arab individual?

One of the biggest decoys put out by Israeli propaganda is the formal abolition of military rule. Actually the Israelis have never lifted military rule; since 1948 it has never ceased to exist. It consists of special defense regulations which are very harsh and contradict even the basic human freedoms. These laws were first enacted by the British in 1945 in order to suppress Jewish resistance against them, though they had had forerunners in the regulations enacted in 1936 to counteract the Arab revolt. The 1945 code remains in force today. The Israelis applied it, so to speak, in "military dress"; 13 to 15 officers, distributed in Galilee, in the Triangle,¹ in the Negev, wherever the Arab minority was concentrated, administered the Military Government. In early December of 1966 the Israeli government attempted to reorganize the Military Government by issuing a decree abolishing it. All the military were told to go home, to find other jobs, or else be absorbed by the army. Now the military commanders of the various districts are the only personnel left from the old Military Government. All the others were sent home and demobilized, their duties handed over to the police.

In Israel today they have what they call the "Special Duties Department." I prefer to call it the Political Police. This department deals with Arabs, tourists and espionage—in that order. Now this Special Department, or security service, is made up of the same people who

had been implementing the Military Government before the re-organization; they were the ones responsible for informing the Military Governor that this person should be put under house arrest, this other should be exiled, and so on. Now instead of operating in a round-about fashion through the façade of the Military Government, they act through this department.

Some time back a great issue was made of the lack of freedom of movement within Israel. Every Arab had to get a permit to move from one place to another, and this caused quite a commotion. The Israelis were saying: Why do it this way? They felt it was undemocratic and so blatantly obvious to other people that they had to change the system—so they turned it inside out: they lifted all special restrictions on travel between the various regions and issued a general permit to the Arabs, stating that they were all free to travel from one region to another without hindrance, except those persons who were to be notified that they would not enjoy these travel conveniences.

Before they put this new system into effect, before the first of December, hundreds of these restriction notices were issued and distributed to all of those persons for whom, as Ben Gurion says, "the Military Government was established." Thus freedom of movement was granted to the simple worker, the common man, or any other person who did not or does not care to be politically active—while for the others the old system remained in force. For example, most of the members of the editorial board of *al-Ittihad*, the organ of the Communist party, are restricted. So are over half of the thirty Arab lawyers in Israel.



The restrictions applied under the old Military Government are still in force. The most familiar of these is that, without a permit, a person is not allowed to leave his home town: if you are in Haifa, you stay in Haifa. Without a permit you cannot get out.

For those they consider really troublesome, the Israeli authorities go a step further: they have what they call "house arrest." People under house arrest are never allowed to leave town without a permit. From one hour after sunset until sunrise they are to stay indoors. Police can check on them at any time. And usually they report to the nearest police station once a day at a given time. I myself reported daily between 3:45 and 4:30 p.m. This can go on for one year, two years, three years ... indefinitely.

If you are considered even more troublesome, they have what is called "administrative detention," an order of imprisonment issued by the Military Governor without public charges or trial.

Thus all the measures applied before they revamped the system are still applied. But, as you can see, the present system is more selective and politically discriminatory; it is even more political. For example, according to Dayan himself, 900 people are now restricted. If these 900 should be somehow isolated from the rest of the Arab community in Israel, you would have nothing but a very obedient community devoid of politics and without leadership, a community of simple people content to live from day to day.

Mr. Jirjis, we would like to clarify the last part of your remarks about the Military Government. Does this mean that the Israeli citizenship of an

Arab is still a matter of paper rights rather than actual rights?

I would not put it quite that way. Perhaps it could be seen as such as long as you were speaking in a political context. Insofar as citizenship involves the right to work, to practice a trade, to build a house, to buy a new car, or anything of this sort, one does not necessarily feel discriminated against. Entrance to the university is also open to all Arabs who have the means, and, of course, on condition that they do not pick sensitive subjects such as electronics, aeronautics, and so on.

The university, for example, takes around 60 medical students a year, but according to something of an unwritten law, only three to four Arabs are accepted. It is the same at the Law School. I myself would not call this discrimination.

However, the moment one begins to speak of any connection with the Palestinians or about the policy of the government or about how they are expropriating land or about how they should not be erecting a settlement in a certain locale, then the situation changes radically. Then, citizenship is something on paper, no more than that.

I have myself—how shall I put it—"enjoyed" these reactions when we tried to form something of an Arab party. It's a good case in point. I am referring of course to our experience in attempting to establish the *al-Ard* movement² as an Arab party. The Higher Court handed down three decisions against me. One of them said that I could not get a permit to publish a newspaper without the permission of the District Commissioner, who, according to the regulations of the Military Government, has absolute discretion to refuse. The second decision was that I could not form a political party without the approval of this same District Commissioner. And the third was that I could not run for Parliament without the prior approval of the Central Elections Committee. This is all in black and white. I have brought these three decisions with me.

In short, and putting it bluntly, as long as your actions have anything to do with politics or with asserting your rights as an Arab and as a Palestinian, you cannot—absolutely cannot—hope for anything.

You spoke of your experience in the *al-Ard* movement, and some of the problems you had in trying to form a vehicle for your own expression. What are the problems of a party or movement such as *Matzpen*? Are they similar to yours?

I regret to say that here you must distinguish sharply between Arabs and Jews. The state of Israel was built up by Jewish parties. These parties now govern Israel. They are *Mapai* (now *Avodah* or the Workers' Party), *Mapam*, and *Gahal* (a coalition between *Herut* and the Liberals). These are the parties which built the Jewish National Home in Palestine during the Mandate days. They are composed of the men who established the state of Israel. Moreover these parties had their early origins outside Palestine—in Russia, in Poland and so on. During these years, during this half-century of activity, a spirit of coexistence has developed between these parties, even though one party may claim to be leftist and the other rightist.

This tolerance does not extend to the Arabs in Israel. I see the relationship as similar to the one between MacBeth and Duncan's ghost. For Israelis the

ghost is Palestine and the Palestinian. "We want peace with the Arabs," the Israelis say. "We want good relations with them. We want to live here in peace. But you've got to leave this Palestinian thing alone—we don't like it; we don't want to hear about it." I dare say they feel guilty. Today, the moment you start speaking about Palestine or the Palestinians, you are finished.

One can, of course, go to one of the established Jewish parties in which Arabs are accepted to a greater or lesser degree. If nothing in this "political market" suits you, you have no alternative but to withdraw. Many Arabs do just that.

As for the people who make up *Matzpen*, I am very sure that had they been Arabs, they would have been in prison long ago. But they are Jews, and the Israeli authorities can hardly persecute Jews. So they are pretty much left alone. Attempts are made now and then to keep them in check and to hinder their activities. For instance, *Matzpen* has the legal right to distribute pamphlets and leaflets in both Arabic and Hebrew. When I was in Nazareth I remember that whenever *Matzpen* members were sent there to distribute leaflets, the police arrested them, confiscated their material, detained them for three or four days on grandiose charges of sedition, revolt and so on, and then quietly released them. I am sure that, had the authorities treated us in this way, we would have flourished and created a very large party. But for us the story is different. The law stretches in such a way as to make everything illegal. If you press your luck, you will get four, five, or ten years imprisonment.

What is the effectiveness of the plea for human rights? What responsive political channels do the Arabs have for voicing grievances? What are the alternatives for making grievances heard and having them acted upon? How are these grievances made known within and outside Israel? And what general effect does such publicity have?

The Arabs in Israel have recourse, in some cases, to the traditional leadership of persons with long established contacts with the authorities and with people in government. These can intercede and mediate on behalf of individuals or groups by calling on the Military Governor or the District Commissioner. They are the older kind of contact men, people accustomed to the ways in which the Mandate—or still earlier, the Turks—operated. In some cases these contacts prove useful, but only with regard to certain types of people and in particular contexts.

Then again the Church and the religious leaders have some influence. Most of them are on fairly good terms with the authorities and the authorities in turn endeavor to keep on good terms with them. This makes for a situation which permits a question to be settled from time to time on the quiet through the good offices of a religious leader or churchman. In some rare cases they have been singularly successful in effecting the release of innocent people from prolonged detention.

Now if the Israeli authorities have proof against a person, nothing will help. I acted as counsel for one of the persons accused of planting bombs at the cafeteria of the Hebrew University. My client was accused of knowing about and not preventing the incident. The leaders were charged with grave charges for which they could have received a death sentence but since Israel

does not employ the death sentence, they both got life imprisonment. The new Greek Catholic Bishop of Rayya, my bishop, was asked to come and speak to the court on their behalf. He actually came and delivered an excellent speech; he was welcomed, listened to, and left. But the verdict remained the same.

To the Israelis, it is very important indeed that the outside world not hear complaints from inside. They are very sensitive about publicized complaints. During our activities with *al-Ard* and our experiences in the courts, we sent a ten-page memorandum to the United Nations about the Arabs in Israel.⁴ It was taken up by the Arab League, published, and circulated. I was told that this was one of the main reasons why they decided to dissolve *al-Ard*.

Whenever anything unfavorable about it is published abroad, Israel feels it has lost a battle. The Israelis want their image abroad to come across with the message: "We are a small state. We are a democratic state. And everything is going well inside here." When some action of the authorities mars this image, they become nervous and try to hide such action from the public. I was held for three months in administrative detention. Then there was a great commotion about it in France and elsewhere. Many articles were written and the news got into *Le Monde*, as well as into the Beirut papers. I was released from prison on Sunday, the 24th of May, this year. Four days before my release, they sent a high-ranking officer of the security service to me. He told me frankly, "We want to get your affair over with. Too much fuss is being made about it abroad." I had known him for four or five years and so he could speak frankly to me. "We just want you to do us one favor," he said; "When you get out, do not get into contact with journalists." He put it frankly: "You can go home, you can do whatever you like, but just do us this one favor; don't get into contact with them." I told him that I don't usually seek out journalists, but however that may be, I gave him my word. Later, when I got back home, I learned that *Kol Israel* had been searching all over for me for an interview.

One can publicize things inside Israel itself. The Israeli authorities are also very sensitive to public opinion within Israel itself, and the Israeli press itself often campaigns against an injustice. It is only fair to say that many journalists in *Ha-Aretz*, also in *Davar* and to some extent in *Ma'ariv* as well—in other words in the big dailies—will publish a gross injustice if you let them know about it.

Thus the best way to voice grievances about oppression or about state and police restrictions on persons is to publicize them as widely as possible—and here I speak out of at least twelve years experience. We were once able to arrange a press conference to tell the public how we were being treated: not only were the Israeli authorities restricting us but they were not giving us work and travel permits. This was published in the papers. The results were immediate. Although the Inspector General of Police immediately denied our charges, about a week later the authorities relaxed the restriction regulations.

Another way of redressing wrongs, one being considered especially after 1967, is the use of arms. There are people who are working underground in this connection, who seek a solution by force.

What are the dominant political aspirations within the Arab community? How do people really think? What are the main trends in the general Arab society of Israel?

In one way or another, all Arabs in Israel are linked to those outside Israel. I don't think you can find a truly independent political opinion. Most want to see the Israeli-Arab problem solved; they desire this more intensely than do other Arabs.

Political opinions among the Arabs in Israel vary widely for several reasons. There is a lack of confidence in the Arab World. Within Israel we have become accustomed to hearing stirring speeches and declarations of intent—the Arabs will do such and so—and seeing nothing come of it. On the other hand, we were greatly surprised by what the Palestinians were doing outside Israel. Within Israel today you get the impression that people are inclined to listen more to what other Palestinians are doing outside than to what the Arab states are doing.

There is, however, nothing which might pass for clear political vision among the Arabs in Israel. The majority of them, like the majority in most societies, merely want to carry on with their own work as best as they can and mind their own affairs.

Of course, you have a very small minority of the people who do collaborate with the authorities, and who think Israel can do no wrong. But they do not have their own opinions; they get them from the authorities, from the political departments of *Mapai* (now *Avodah*) or from the police.

Then you have that small minority who are on the black lists. They are those for whom the Military Government is responsible. Among them you will find a variety of opinion. They, however, do not have—and this applies to me as well as to the others—any definite political solution to the Israeli-Arab problem. Most of them incline to the left. Most of them are middle class—none of them represent large industry or capital. They seem to be waiting for a solution from abroad, not one from within, for they feel that they are a minority and as such cannot effect very many changes. So they wait. They are, however, generally very fine people: after two generations . . . in fact more than two generations of Israeli domination, you still find people with independent and organized minds capable of clear thinking about political issues. Because of their history, because of their political situation, the weak among them have been weeded out. What activists remain are mature, tempered and tough.

In other words would you say that they have preserved their identity as Palestinians?

They have more than preserved their Palestinian identity. Most of the people arrested by the Israelis and convicted for guerilla activities were born after the state of Israel was established. They not only preserved their identity; they were even able to preserve the identity of the coming generation. Although this new generation has been educated in Israel, subjected to Israeli propaganda and policy, its identity could not be compromised. In adhering more closely to their identity as Palestinian Arabs, the young are far better than their elders. The Israeli authorities themselves admit this, and one reads about it in the Israeli press from time to time. The Minister of the Police admitted as much in

interviews with the Israeli daily, *Ma'ariv*, and the same things have been said by Yigael Allon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, who is now trying to effect changes in the education of the Arabs in Israel. He has said that, if after twenty years, Israel still has people who collaborate with the "terrorists," there must be something wrong with its educational system and it must be changed.

But I do not think such educational changes will help Israel. For the impact of the Arab World, of Arab radio and television, is strong, and along with their own political ideas and feelings, helps to maintain the identity of the Palestinian Arabs. The development of the sense of identity on the part of the Arabs in Israel depends to a great extent upon the developments and political situation in the Middle East as a whole. Conditions never give the Arab in Israel a chance to forget that he is an Arab. He feels it even more intensely than, perhaps, he should. This sense of Arab identity is found among all the Arabs in Israel—educated and uneducated, teachers and workers, all kinds of people.

How has the emergence of Palestinian resistance since 1965 affected the Arab community generally?

We of the *al-Ard* movement are the right men to be challenged with this question. We began our movement for one principal reason: we thought that we, the Arabs within Israel, were the only ones who had retained the Palestinian identity. It seemed that everything outside was finished, and we felt it our duty to give political substance to this identity. We were astounded when we heard that those outside were still living, still working and still striving, that they had not lost their Palestinian identity. Most of the Arabs in Israel welcome the Palestinian resistance movement. They feel that, in the long run, it will be to their advantage: if their brethren outside achieve a certain status, whatever that may be, it must affect their status inside Israel. This does not mean that most of them are ready to work with it, or go along with it no matter what. But I do believe that most of them hope that it will succeed, that it will go on, that it will improve, that it will acquire more power and receive greater recognition. Because, although they are separated from it, they feel that it is part of them, and that one day it will have a beneficial effect on their future.

Since the war, how do the Arabs in Israel view the lot of their brothers in the occupied territories?

I think that Israel itself has learned from its past experience. I am sure the Israelis do not want to make the same mistakes they have made in the past. We Arabs inside Israel were even more convinced of this. We felt pity for those Arabs who would have to face the same future which we have had to face in Israel.

In 1948 Israel had its own Arab minority and felt that since, in the near future, this situation would not change, it could formulate its own policy for the Arabs in Israel. Now, in 1967 it was not the same at all. They had on their hands a large Arab population. These could not be treated as the Arabs of the Triangle and Galilee had been treated in 1948 when land was expropriated in thousand and five hundred hectare lots. Besides, the Arabs of the occupied territories might serve to establish certain contacts with the Arab World. Perhaps they would be able to help Israel extricate itself from its impasse with the Arab World. So they have attempted to treat them well.

Can the Israeli establishment find some way of accommodating and living with the Arab entity?

This is *the* major problem. In the short run Israel constitutes a danger to the Arab World, but in the long run it constitutes a danger also for itself. The Israeli position is very simple; and sometimes it looks very logical. The same lines or ideas which were drawn up at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century by the founders of the Zionist movement are still operative today.

The ostrich puts its head in the sand and believes that no one can see it. In the same way, the Israelis today try to ignore the fact that there is a clash of interests between them and the Arabs. They want to convince themselves and the Arabs that there exists no essential conflict of interests. They say that they can make peace, that they do not intend to harm anyone, and so on; while at the same time they persist in their policy of uprooting Arabs, taking their land, and committing what I would call genocide. Since 1948, for example, about three hundred Arab villages have been demolished by the Israelis within the pre-1967 frontiers. They occupied the villages first, then destroyed them (taking away even the stones), and on the sites of some of them you will now find apple trees. Where once a village stood, you now find very fine fruit trees. I call this genocide—no more, no less.

Although they admit that a Palestinian problem does exist, they persist in ignoring it. They are building their house on sand. In the long run, if the Israelis persist in this, I think their fate will be the same as that of the Crusaders.

We used to hear Zionists equate Nasser to Hitler. What is the image of the Arabs fostered in Israeli and Zionist circles today?



OLD JERUSALEM TODAY:

an Israeli policeman in a market street

Photo by Dagilaitis

To give them credit, except for the crack-pots among them, they have long since ceased saying that Nasser is Hitler. They evaluated Nasser rather positively. He was a respected enemy.

As for the Arabs in general, the Israelis complain that the Arabs do not understand them, do not understand that they have their right to Palestine, that they must live there and that they must do such and such, a line which repeats itself *ad nauseam*. Then again, they tend to ignore everything in the Arab World which might work against them such as the prospect of encountering competent Arab pilots and an effective air force. Instead they say: "Oh, that will never be; the Arabs by nature are incapable of it." They underrate Arab potential, or out of fear ignore it. They were once convinced that time would settle things. Now they are convinced that time will only make them worse. Day after day the Arabs grow stronger, and, at least in the Palestinian sphere, more dangerous to them. This they now admit frankly. Had you told them the same thing three or four years ago, they would have laughed in your face. Now they admit that they cannot go on indefinitely in this way. They once thought that with the passing of the older generation, the younger generation would forget everything and the road into the Arab World would be short. Now they recognize that the younger generation, in Israeli terms, is worse than the older.

To what extent is the idea of a democratic state in Palestine, as proposed by the Palestinian resistance movement, a live option for Israelis?

It would require a very great deal of pressure to get it. They would never agree to it of their own volition without the outside pressure. This is because their state itself is based on racism. I have some acquaintance with their political literature. I am now writing a new book on the subject of Zionist political thought. All their political thinkers, from the extreme left to the extreme right, have what one might call "Zionist-Jewish glasses" which they put on before they start looking either to right or left. To them the Jewish state is something sacred; one may not touch it. I am sure that they will never agree to a democratic state by pure intellectual persuasion. They would only accept under duress, under the pressure of Palestinian resistance. They would rather have a state only half the size of Israel but Jewish, than a larger democratic state. The idea of a separate Jewish state runs through all their policy. In *Mapam*, in *Makki*, in *Mapai*, in *Herut*, they say: "We have our state, we want Jewish immigration, and we want to be strong." This is where they start; this is where they conclude.

(1) The Triangle is the name given to a region in Israel in which there are many Arab towns; it is so-called because of its shape.

(2) The name *al-Ard* means "the earth" and is intended to express the concept of the land of Palestine forming an integral part of the Arab heritage. The aims of *al-Ard* are (or were in 1964) equality for the Arabs within a state of Israel based on the provisions of the original UN Partition Plan of 1947.

(3) *Matzpen* is a Marxist movement, not a political party. It is the only Jewish organization in Israel known to have established contact with the Palestinian resistance.

(4) Extracts from this report appeared in *M.E.N.* II, 9 (November, 1968).

Civil Rights in Israel

An Israeli Voice: Israel Sharhak

WITH HIS ROUND, cheerful face, enormous, ungainly build and little blinking eyes, Professor Israel Sharhak looks like a snowman, or like one of the absent-minded old scientists one used to see in the strip cartoons of the last century. He is a lover of classical music, and the songs of Mozart's Don Juan formed the background to our conversation in his Jerusalem apartment. Mr. Sharhak teaches chemistry and manipulates the most explosive ideas with a passionate interest.

He is a Spinozist who never leaves for his period of army reserve training without the *Ethics* in his suitcase. In his view Israel, "by putting its material survival as top priority, is denying two thousand years of Jewish tradition." Anxious to defend the humanitarian values of this tradition, he has just accepted the presidency of the Israeli League of Human Rights, which is resuming its activities after three years of silence. The League will devote its efforts to fighting the Emergency Laws inherited from the British Mandate and still applied in Israel.

The new president has a long list of files: "Collective punishment, destruction of houses, ill-treatment of prisoners, administrative detention, we protest against them all."

On the subject of administrative detention he cites the case of an Israeli Arab, Mohammed Yusuf Sadik, author of a play in Hebrew about Arab-Jewish relations, which the University drama group had decided to put on (because they thought it excellent). "The author was arrested shortly after the first night and the rest of the performances were stopped. Mr. Sadik stayed in prison until August 1969 and wasn't let out until he agreed to emigrate to the USA. Then he was helped by a professor of comparative religion, Mr. Ber-bloski, to get his visa."

"Kashua Darwish has been in prison for more than a year after having been arrested without a reason. We held a meeting with the Arab students to insist that he should be released or put on trial. We delivered a petition to this effect to the dean, who has never replied."

(*) Israel Sharhak is President of the Israeli League of Human Rights. This article is the report of an interview conducted with Prof. Sharhak by Paquerette Villeneuve and published in French in *Témoignage Chrétien* on August 13, 1970. The English translation was provided by the Fifth of June Society, Beirut.

Another source of anxiety for the president of the League: mass emigration. "Uri Avnery—author of *Israel Without Zionism*—recently noted something rather strange in his newspaper: the tourist agency Petra, subsidized by the Israeli Government, gives away almost free oneway tickets to Brazil, to stimulate Arab emigration. It is openly admitted that the aim of the agency is to 'empty' the Gaza zone."

"The action is shocking," continues Mr. Sharhak, "But the expression is a hundred times more so. Here is another example of the same attitude, taken from the daily paper *Haaretz*: An important official who signs himself X proposes that Israeli society should be cleansed of all foreign elements.

"To see something like that written in Hebrew! I lived as a child in Hitler's Europe, and I can't prevent myself remembering the 'Reich cleansed of Jews.' To apply such words to human beings is depraved.

"I have talked about these things twice in public. First, to a committee of 'old liberals' to which I still belong because I don't like burning bridges unnecessarily. At a recent meeting the chairman declared himself 'against annexation but for a cleansed Israel.' I told him that if one can openly publish such an expression in a newspaper, and if even a liberal doesn't hesitate to employ it, then the spirit of Hitler and Goebbels has eaten into us. My words were met with disapproval, but in silence."

And the second time?

"I spoke again on the same subject at a meeting of young people a few days later and on that occasion—it's a hopeful sign—everyone was revolted. When we asked for volunteers to set up a committee in Tel Aviv, more than thirty people spontaneously offered their services."

Has this (anti-Arab) hostility developed recently?

"In an issue of the Histadruth journal in September 1967 an important Zionist, who had been director of the Settlement Department for years and who was then advisor on Arab affairs to the Prime Minister, wrote: 'Between ourselves, it must be clear that there is no room in this country for two nations. As long as the Arabs are here we shall never reach our aim, which

(Continued on page 10)

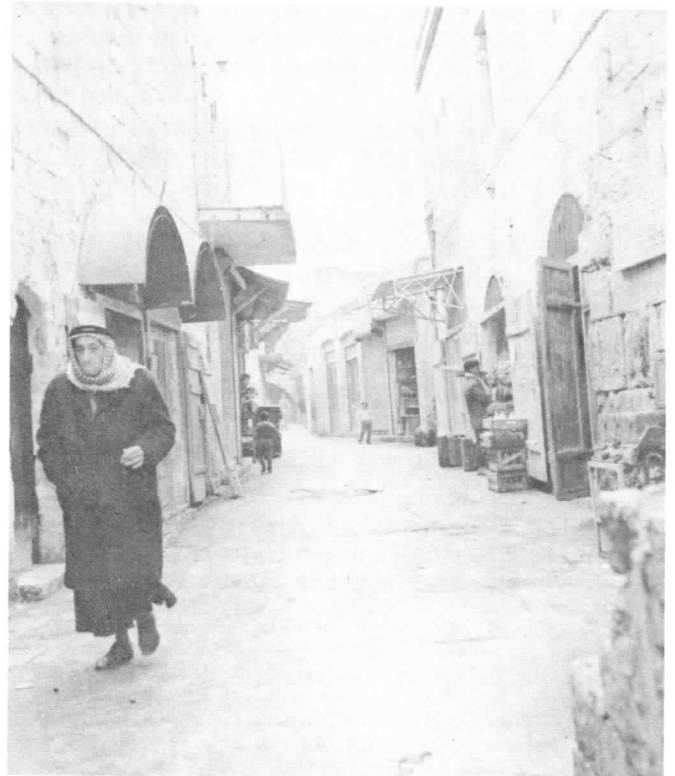
FACES



An Arab grandmother, shopping for bread, intersects the steady gaze of an Israeli real estate inspector

The sign on the wall at right informs the resident Arabs of the old Jewish Quarter that they are being evicted

*Now lonely is the city
that was full of people!
Now like a widow has she become
she that was great among the nations!
Lamentations 1:1*



of JERUSALEM

*And he looked for justice
but behold, bloods had;
for righteousness,
but behold, a cry!*

Isaiah 5:7



Arab orphans of the six-day war find shelter within the sacred Dome of the Rock compound and a place to warm their hands.

The U.S. consulate in Arab Jerusalem stands as an official reminder to Israelis that the U.S. does not recognize the legality of Israeli occupation.



Pictures by J.C. Dagilaitis



THE GARDEN TOMB.

Arab homes have
been leveled to
make way for
Israeli business
in the Old City.

is to become an independent nation on this little stretch of territory. The only solution is to have at least western Palestine without Arabs and to achieve this there is no other way except to displace them towards the neighbouring countries, and to displace them all. No Arab must stay here. We shall find the money to do it, a great deal of money, and only if we succeed shall we be able to absorb the millions of our brothers (who are still in the Diaspora). There is no other solution.'

"On the 7th of July 1968 a newspaper quoted the following words of General Dayan: 'The Minister of Defense said that for a century the nation has been constructing a country by receiving Jewish immigrants and implanting colonies with the aim of enlarging our frontiers. Let no one say that we have already fulfilled our programme, let no one say that we are nearing the desired goal!'"

Mr. Sharhak continued his quotations with this extract, dated April 1969, from the official publication of the Rabbinate of the Army: "The Arabs, who are elements foreign to the essence and destiny of this country, must be considered from every point of view like the ancient foreign elements. Our war with them was just as inevitable as were our wars with the nations who ruled the country during our ancient colonisation. To live here with the Arabs is impossible, because the Arab turns to Mecca to say his prayer whereas we turn towards Jerusalem. Only he who turns towards Jerusalem is the true son of this country. The conclusion is simple: either the Arab will cease to honour the ideals of Mecca and will honour those of Zion and Jerusalem or he will return to the country of Mecca and leave the sons of Zion to fulfill their destiny without bothering them.

"The Bible is the sole and unique basis of development for this country, it is its very essence. All our steps must be inspired by it."

"Believe me," added Professor Sharhak after this long quotation, "I was never a great Zionist before 1967, but you could have killed me before making me believe they were capable of that. In 1967, when I

went to war and the Prime Minister and the others told us that they didn't want a single inch of territory, I believed them. How they deceived us!"

Many Zionists neither believe nor practice their religion, even among the politicians who frequently quote the Bible. How do you explain this?

"They *are* religious," Mr. Sharhak replied; "But their God is the Jewish nation. The anti-Christian sentiment that used to be disguised because of fear in the Diaspora is now developing in a very ugly way. They teach us that it is a religion without any originality which owes everything good it has to Judaism.

"They have resuscitated a book in Spanish dating from the 14th century which is used as a manual of religious instruction in secondary schools. It explains why non-Jews ought to be the slaves of Jews 'because Jews are the elite of the human race and were specially created to give homage to the Creator. Because of this they deserve to have slaves, and these must be non-Jews, because a Jewish slave could not devote himself entirely to God. Non-Jews can serve Jews after they have been rid of their idolatry.'

"No culture in the world, except perhaps the Chinese, tries to seal itself off so hermetically. Even the most chauvinist of Frenchmen is conscious of what he owes to Greco-Roman culture. But we are literally convinced that Adam spoke Hebrew in Paradise!

"The worst of it is that during the last three years we have become more and more ethnocentric, more and more hostile to European values."

What reactions do your activities arouse?

"The majority, both here and in the Diaspora, regard us with very little sympathy. The Jews of the Anglo-Saxon countries are the worst."

What do you mean?

"American Jews have an inferiority complex towards Israeli Jews. They deify everything that symbolises the state. An American university professor who talks to you with enthusiasm about the New Left cries with emotion at seeing an Israeli tank. How can you interest him in the fate of the Arabs?"

"In July 1968 I had great hopes. Several hundred Reform rabbis who claimed to be followers of Martin Luther King came here. From the way they talked about the Arabs it was clear that they had absolutely no idea what civic rights are. What hypocrisy!"

Weren't they activists?

"Their action in the USA sprang far more from their contempt for the whites of Alabama than from a desire to help the blacks.

"However, the only way to change Israeli opinion is through the Diaspora. It's useless for a non-Jew to waste his breath criticising Israel. A 'goy' doesn't count here. But if American Jews were to criticise our attitude towards the Arabs we would take notice because we need their money!

"Up to now, unfortunately, this hasn't happened. The fault is certainly the leaders', because American Jewish students can be led to understand the Arab problem. The trouble is that when they come here they are under the thumb of their leaders, are never left alone, never see anything that would help them to understand."

You paint a very gloomy picture ...

"Perhaps there are a few rays of hope. The younger generation in Israel, particularly the older schoolchildren, are beginning to ask questions. I have some confidence too in the Jews of the American New Left, the young ones. They make a better impression on me than their elders. But my greatest hope lies in the Arabs who are now suffering in our prisons. If we fight with them for their rights, we can build something very solid. I have been moved by the profound sympathy built up between the members of our committee and the Arabs with whom we work. I am now convinced of one thing: all the Israeli so-called realists are wrong. We cannot buy our security through power. It is only through the restoration of equal rights for all that we can reach peace. For me, before the war, Israel counted more than anything else. Today I believe that I was wrong and that we could live together with the Palestinian refugees in a democratic state. Before 1967 I agreed that we should let some refugees return. Now I insist that we give them the basic human right of returning to their homes. I am not a master permitting them to return, but an equal, and I demand equality for them."

Aren't you afraid to express these opinions?

"I'm not afraid of anything. Someone has to say these things. Those who act according to their conscience are seldom numerous, but they point the way. If they call me mad, perhaps rightly, I shall reply that I'm a Jewish madman. Then they'll have to listen to me."

DEFIANCE

You may tie me round,
Deprive me of my copybooks and cigarettes
You may fill my mouth with earth
Poetry is my throbbing heart's blood,
My bread's salt and eye's liquid
It will be written with nails, eye sockets and daggers
I will sing it in my prison cell
In the bathroom
In the stable
Under the whip
Between the handcuffs
In the throes of chains
I have a million nightingales inside me
To sing me my fighting song

Mahmoud Darwish

Mahmoud Darwish is an "Israeli" Arab poet whose poetry bespeaks the spirit of resistance which has not died among the community of Arabs who have experienced Israeli rule since 1948. This poem was translated by Ibrahim Muhammad.

PALESTINE RESISTANCE

crisis and reassessment

by Hisham Sharabi

This analysis of the problems and potential of the Palestine resistance movement in the light of the Jordan Civil War of September 1970 is a condensed version of an address delivered in Beirut on November 4 under the sponsorship of Americans for Justice in the Middle East. Hisham Sharabi is Professor of History at Georgetown University and is this year on sabbatical leave in Beirut.

I. CRISIS

ON THE EVE OF the September civil war in Jordan, the Palestinian resistance movement had reached what was probably its lowest ebb. From the battle of Karameh in March 1968 to the battle of Amman in September 1970, things had come full circle: a period of growth and expansion had been followed by decline.

Like other revolutionary movements, the Palestinian resistance had, in order to establish itself, continuously to transform itself. The circumstances of the period March 1968 to September 1969 favored rapid development. Massive response from the Palestinian and Arab masses made available social and political energy never so fully mobilized in modern Arab history. By the summer of 1969, the movement had established a firm popular base in Jordan and throughout the Arab World.

With mass support at its peak, leadership and organization became the principal determinants of development. Advance from the stage of popular enthusiasm to the higher plane of organized action depended primarily upon the ability of the leadership to devise the framework within which the revolutionary forces could be organized.

Failure to achieve this brought about decline. The challenge posed by popular success was not met by the leadership. The Palestine National Congress, the ideal context in which to hammer out national unity, served instead to increase division, bringing out latent jealousies and disagreements among guerilla groups and particularly between the two most important, Al-Fateh and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. In the open forum of the Congress, divergence on ideology and strategy hardened into hostility. The contradictions of Arab political life entered into the life of the Palestinian revolution. Instead of unification there was proliferation, and by the time the regime in Jordan was ready to deal what it hoped would be the fatal blow in September 1970, inner erosion had greatly weakened the resistance.

One of the forms disruption took was in the lack of any clear pattern for making and communicating de-

cisions. Two formulas, both unsuccessful, were devised to unify command: the Central Committee and the Armed Struggle Command.

The Central Committee, established in the spring of 1970 and hailed as a major step forward, was to have been the supreme executive body joining all eleven guerilla groups. However each organization continued to chart its own course and to abide by Committee decisions only when convenient. As the Jordanian army prepared to attack, the Central Committee found itself engaged not in preparing for the inevitable confrontation but in arguing over doctrine and policy.

The Palestine Armed Struggle Command did not achieve much more in its realm of military planning and coordination: each commando group continued to carry out its own operations and to put out its own military communiqués. Decline was reflected too in a steady loss of credibility: when the fighting broke out in September, people had almost ceased to believe what the resistance spokesmen had to say, military bulletins had become all but unreadable, and confidence even in the fighting ability of the commandos had been shaken. While a year earlier the fedayeen had enjoyed the wholehearted support of almost all social strata, now only the refugee population and the poorer elements in the towns remained loyal to the resistance movement. Zionist predictions that the movement would destroy itself seemed almost to be coming true.

Perhaps the leadership's greatest failure—and perhaps the one with the greatest consequences—was its inability during this period to raise the level of mass consciousness. It seemed unable to cope with the increasing needs of the movement as it grew into a mass movement. Giving a man a gun was not enough to turn him into a revolutionary, and as the movement spread, so did revolutionary illiteracy. The Palestinian masses were allowed to live in the euphoria induced by simply having a guerilla movement; little was done to channel the vast popular energy into laying the groundwork for a truly revolutionary organization.

By the summer of 1970 there was a serious breakdown in discipline. There were ugly incidents in which civilians and members of the Jordanian armed forces were subjected to rough or insulting treatment at the hands of fedayeen. At a time when Al-Fateh leaders were trying to prevent matters from getting out of hand, some commando groups were putting up posters in the streets of Amman calling for the overthrow of the monarchy.

On the eve of what was to be the Jordan civil war, the Palestine resistance was divided as never before.

II. LESSONS OF THE FIGHTING

When it was over, the internecine fighting had resulted in little apparent change in the situation. The heroic moment of the revolution had come and gone seemingly without leaving much behind except bloodshed and destruction. But the fighting did serve to lay bare essential aspects of the reality of the resistance and to point the way to the next stage of development. There were important lessons learned.

— The Palestinian resistance movement cannot be crushed except by crushing the Palestinian people. In military terms the confrontation demonstrated that the Palestinian fighters cannot be wiped out.

— As long as the Palestinian people are armed, *i.e.* as long as the militia in the cities and towns is not dissolved, the resistance can defend itself indefinitely against practically any odds.

— The capacity of the Palestinians to fight superior force was shown to be not *because of* good training or organization or leadership, but rather *in spite of* inadequate training and organization and leadership.

— The Palestinians were finally convinced that when the chips were down they could depend only on themselves—and certainly not on the Arab governments.

— Strategically, two facts emerged. First, Jordan constitutes the irreplaceable base of the Palestinian revolution. Second, Syria constitutes the indispensable bridge necessary to the survival of the revolutionary base in Jordan. The Palestinians realized that they would for a long time be committed to coexist with the regime in Jordan so long as it acknowledges the rights of the revolution and inevitably to clash with it if it does not, and to cooperate with whatever regime is in power in Syria.

— The Palestinians learned that in their struggle they face not only Israel but also the threat of civil war and the threat of foreign intervention.

Politically the Palestinians learned that a policy equating victory with total destruction of the enemy is self-defeating. The aim of all policy should be to effect the enemy's submission, not his destruction; force is but a temporary alternative to political action.

III. POLITICAL SETTLEMENT — PRO AND CON

Future development of the resistance movement is linked to two basic factors: the capacity of the movement to transcend its internal difficulties and to develop, and the prospect of political settlement through United Nations mediation and Big Power support. In the short term, it is the second factor which will determine the fate of the Palestinian revolution.

Strong arguments have been advanced in favor of political settlement; they may be summarized as follows.

First, the argument runs, Israel can no longer be regarded as a mere enclave or bridgehead. A specifically Israeli society has taken shape, albeit on the basis of an injustice. Israel is an established member of the international community and neither as a society nor as a state can it be easily dismantled.

Secondly, Israel is a powerful advanced country, now the greatest industrial and military power in the Middle East. Through intensive scientific and tech-

nological development, it has established a firm economic base; with U.S. military and financial backing it is virtually invincible.

Thirdly, Arab military action against Israel is futile. Proponents of political settlement say that it is unrealistic to hope that the Arab armies would, in the foreseeable future, be able to match Israel. War could mean only another Arab defeat, further Israeli expansion.

Fourthly, the hope that guerilla warfare could do what conventional armies could not is without foundation. After three years of *fedayeen* activity, Israel is militarily unscathed. It has not relinquished one inch of territory. It has sealed off the cease-fire lines and suppressed effective resistance inside occupied territory. Even in Gaza, the only area in which an insurrectionary situation existed, resistance has been contained and is already in decline.

Fifthly, and perhaps most important, Arab rejection of political settlement plays directly into Israeli hands. For Israel would like nothing better than to make the *status quo* permanent. The Arabs, by accepting a political settlement such as the one agreed to by the late President Nasser, could realize gains which they could not hope to attain by force. By abandoning armed struggle and opting for a political solution, the Palestinians could deal Israel's strategy a heavy blow. They could practically overnight turn their military inferiority into political power and put Israel on the defensive. Pressure applied by the great powers and world public opinion would force Israel to withdraw from occupied territory and to make maximum concessions to the Palestinians. Under such circumstances Israel would lose not only its present empire but also the possibility of expanding in future. Furthermore, with its huge military establishment, Israel would be made to pay dearly for peace. Pacifying Israel would deprive it of the pretext of having to defend itself against belligerent neighbors, and would sooner or later reduce it to a minor East Mediterranean state. Though the Palestinians would have to give up their claim to part of Palestine—a claim they are anyway unable to enforce, they would put an end to their destitution and reestablish themselves as an independent and sovereign people.

Palestinian resistance is committed to absolute opposition to this kind of solution. It insists that the only solution lies in the defeat of Zionism and the restoration of Palestinian and Arab rights by armed struggle.

First, the Palestinians feel that what is meant by political settlement is really not settlement at all. For this so-called settlement calls upon Palestinians to surrender their national rights, to give up their identity as a people. No people in history has voluntarily done this. The sovereignty offered them over peripheral areas in Palestine would not constitute sovereignty: Palestinians would live in the shadow of the Zionist state as colonial or semi-colonial people, just as South African blacks live in the shadow of the white-supremacist state. They are asked to pay a price: to recognize Israel and bestow legitimacy upon permanent Zionist occupation of Arab soil. From the Palestinian point of view, Israel is a colonial enclave established, like all colonial settlements, by force of arms. It cannot be dealt with except by force. However, it is not Jewish presence which is in question, but rather the conditions of this presence.

Political settlement must be rejected because any settlement which requires the sacrifice of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians and which legitimizes colonial occupation and aggression will solve nothing and will lead not to peace but to further war and bloodshed. The proposal of a secular Palestinian Arab-Jewish commonwealth is the only rational, just and practical solution. If it now appears somewhat Utopian, it is only because Palestinians are weak while Israel is strong.

Secondly, Israel's conception of political settlement corroborates the Palestinian position. Israel in a political settlement will exact not one iota less than what it considers its position of strength entitles it to. To think that Israel will seek peace and recognition at any price, including the risk of reducing itself to a ghetto state, is without foundation. It is precisely because Israel is a technologically advanced society capable of producing jet aircraft and on the way to becoming the world's sixth nuclear power that it is not likely to submit to this kind of settlement, no matter how strong world public opinion might be. Israel says it wants secure and firm boundaries. By this it means pacified and open boundaries with access to and freedom in its entire geographic environment. Peace with security for Israel means an Israeli peace safeguarded by Israeli might. The conditions of settlement acceptable to the Zionists are those which would usher in a neo-colonial era in the Middle East.

Thirdly, the Palestinians do not deny the fact that the resistance movement will not be able to destroy the Zionist structure overnight. They affirm, however, that through armed struggle the Zionists can and will be defeated. The Palestinian revolution is not the first in which a small force confronts a superior force and in the end defeats it. The Vietnamese example is the proof. Palestinian resistance will succeed when it develops into a people's war. One should not forget that Palestinian armed struggle is still on the threshold of its development. It does, however, already constitute the central threat to the Zionist state on an international scale. On the other hand, so long as Arab regimes are more interested in their own political survival than in fighting Zionist colonialism, the full impact of Palestinian resistance will not be felt. Only when the interests of the masses have replaced the interests of the ruling classes (whatever their ideological positions) will popular war have become possible. The masses will actively side with the Palestinians when they have attained sufficient consciousness and become aware of their true interests. The real contradiction in the Arab World today is not between Zionism and the established *status quo* but between Zionism and the Arab masses. For the struggle against Israel is the struggle against injustice: if the Palestinian battle cry is, "Down with Zionism," its Arab echo must be, "Abolish the *status quo*."

Fourthly, the Palestinians take the long view. They see the world as changing, the *status quo* as subject to sudden radical transformation. Once latent contradictions mature, they will come to the surface and they will have to be resolved. The present balance of forces is not permanent: the weak could become strong, and the strong cease to be so overwhelmingly strong. In this view, history could be moved in such a way as would allow Palestinian liberation to achieve

its goal. The fate of the revolution is inextricably bound to that of the global liberation movement. Liberation, like imperialism, is a world system. If imperialism and colonialism were defeated in the first half of the twentieth century, neo-imperialism and neo-colonialism will be defeated in the second half of the twentieth century.

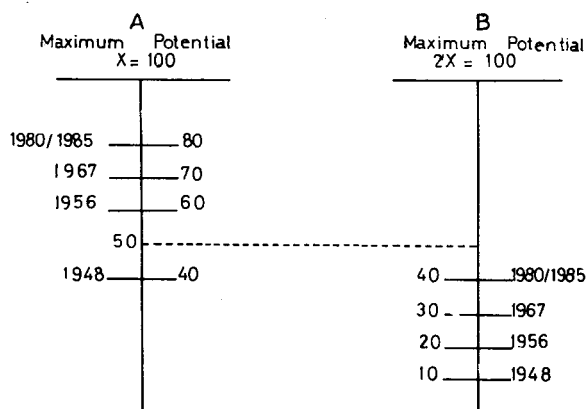
Fifthly, Israel's policy is rational only in the short run; it is irrational in its long term goals. In historical perspective, Israel's undertaking to dominate its Arab environment may be likened to an attempt by Hong Kong to extend its sway over mainland China. Israel's essential rationality lies in its capacity to mobilize and effectively manipulate power. Its irrationality lies in basing its long term security on power. Israel makes the mistake of placing final reliance on the assumption that it can indefinitely maintain absolute superiority over its Arab neighbors.

IV. THE LONG TERM BALANCE OF POWER

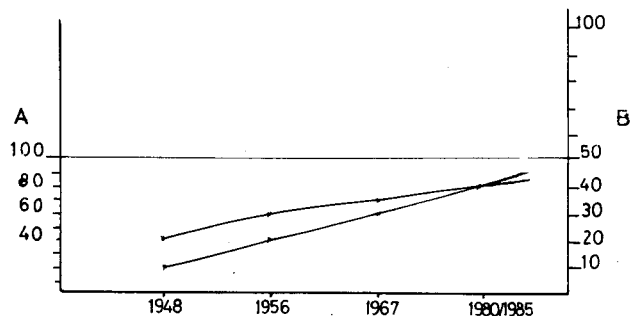
Whether or not Israel can maintain such superiority is crucial to any assessment of the present conjuncture. Let us therefore look more closely at the balance of power that now exists, and that might come to exist in the foreseeable future, between Israel and the Arabs.

The model below aims at describing this relationship in terms of its development in time. It is based on two fundamental premises: first, that the Arabs' (B) power potential is superior to Israel's (A) (To simplify matters we shall suppose that this superiority is in the ratio of 2:1 in favor of B, so that if A's maximum realizable power is X, B's is 2X); second, that B is capable of steady cumulative growth.

EFFECTIVE POWER CAPABILITY: Israel (A) & the Arab Countries (B)



PATTERN OF POWER DEVELOPMENT: Israel (A) & the Arab Countries (B)



The two criteria for determining power *effectiveness*, i.e., realized useable power, are *mobilization* and *rationality*. Mobilization refers to the system of *organization* and *techniques* which secures maximum useable power from available resources—human, natural, political, military, etc.; rationality to the *methods* and *strategies* best suited to allocate power in achieving given ends.¹

Mobilization Plus Rationality Determines Power Effectiveness.

When the Arabs (B) were defeated in 1948, their effective power was, according to the model, only 10% of potential, while Israel's (A) was 40%.² Thus in 1948 A had a 20% lead over B. By 1956, the date of the next Arab-Israeli encounter, A's effective power had risen from 40% to 60% while B's had risen from 10% to 20%. In 1967 A's power effectiveness was 70% and B's only 30%.³

The next stage represents a crucial change, a break in the previously obtaining pattern. The process of development is not open-ended; a limit must be reached where even if A's power were to continue to rise at the same rate, B would be bound to catch up and at some point to surpass it. Thus when A reaches the 80% mark, say in 1980 or 1985, and B, increasing at the same rate, reaches 40%, then B's effective power would have become equal to that of A.

But is B's breakthrough really inevitable? If it were, the Arabs would surely have long ago altered their strategy and Israel probably have given up its policy of domination in order to seek peace and reconciliation.

In fact this development is not inevitable. The reason lies in that the two premises on which our model is based, A's inferior potential and B's certain capacity for sufficient growth, can both be invalidated by circumstances. Though Israel's power potential may be less than that of the Arab countries, its actual power superiority could be maintained by outside sources, e.g., the United States and World Jewry. As for Arab capacity to equal and surpass Israeli power, there is no guarantee that it can be maintained given the present socio-economic structure of the Arab World and its dependence on more advanced countries.

The Palestinians argue that there is no quick way out of under-development for countries unable to free themselves from economic systems dominated by the advanced nations of the West. Israel, with its superior capability and with the aid of the imperialist powers, will inevitably pursue strategies designed to preserve the *status quo* in the Arab World and the existing inefficient and dependent socio-economic structures. The present balance of power between Israel and the Arab countries could last for decades to come.

With such considerations in mind, the Palestinians argue for a revolutionary alternative to modernization. They hold that the path of development advocated by Western modernizers will prevent the Arabs from re-

alizing quickly and fully their vast social and economic potential, that it will only strengthen outdated structures and prolong existing weaknesses. Arab societies, like all underdeveloped societies, can successfully meet the challenge of superior technology only through qualitative change attainable only through radical, social and political transformation. Israel's military might, though superior, is not unlimited nor is it invincible. The Vietnamese experience has demonstrated this in respect to the greatest of all powers.

Hence for the Palestinians—only within a revolutionary framework can a new leadership emerge; only through revolutionary action can social and economic forces as yet untapped be released; only through revolutionary practice can qualitative transformation of man and society be effectively achieved.



LAST ISSUE'S COVER

The woodcut which appeared as the cover of our previous issue (Vol. IV, No. 8) is the work of Mr. Sadad Hussein. Mr. Hussein is an amateur artist of Saudi Arabian nationality. While a geology student at the American University of Beirut, he entered this woodcut in the Inter-University Art Exhibit which was sponsored by the University Christian Center during the last week of May, 1968. The picture was awarded the first prize in the Graphics Section.

The title of the piece is "JUNE EXILE," and while its inspiration was the human tragedy of 1967, the editors of the NEWSLETTER felt that it powerfully evoked the spirit of sadness, bitterness and determination experienced in the Arab world as a result of the death of President Nasser and the Jordan Crisis of September, around which two events our last issue was built.

L R S

(1) Rationality also presupposes correct perception of priorities and values.

(2) These percentages are hypothetical estimates designed merely to indicate the relative positions of the two sides and their developmental trends.

(3) A's growth by only 10% may be attributed to decrease in the rate of growth as higher levels of advancement are achieved.

Americans for Justice in the Middle East was founded after the June War of 1967 by Americans living in Lebanon who were and are concerned about the tragedy of the Middle East situation. AJME hopes to correct some of the misconceptions about the Arab-Israeli conflict so prevalent in the West. Accepting as premises that American power is a key factor to any possible solution and that a democratic government can be influenced by concerned private citizens, AJME hopes to help bring about a situation in the West—and particularly in the United States—which will allow the Arab case a fair hearing and Arab rights and aspirations the possibility of being recognized.

Interested persons can join AJME by mailing name, address and citizenship (along with a contribution) to AJME; POB 4841; Beirut, LEBANON (by air mail, if possible). Category of participation should be indicated; there are three: Member (for U.S. citizens), Associate

(for persons of any nationality), and Patron. Members and Associates contribute at least \$10.00 or L. Lebanese 30.00 annually; Patrons donate what they wish. Checks should be made out to "Americans for Justice in the Middle East."

Our readers are urged to share the material in the Newsletter with their friends, local newspapers and representatives in government. The Middle East Newsletter is edited by Lewis R. Scudder, Jr. and Anne Ricketson Zahlan. It is published by Americans for Justice in the Middle East.

Robert J. Fraga, President

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The cover for this issue of the Newsletter was designed by Peter Harrison Smith of the Department of Fine Arts, American University of Beirut.

CAN AJME SURVIVE ?

Americans for Justice in the Middle East can go on with its efforts to inform Western opinion about the Middle East only if those who consider these efforts necessary and worthwhile make it possible for them to be continued. Good will alone will not pay for postage and printing. If you feel that AJME's work is important, help us meet our mounting expenses.

I wish to be (please check one):

1. A MEMBER (U.S. citizens only) () 2. AN ASSOCIATE () 3. A PATRON ()
of Americans for Justice in the Middle East.

Name

Address

.....Nationality

My check or money order, made out to "Americans for Justice in the Middle East," in the amount of _____ is attached. (Members and Associates contribute a minimum of \$10.00 or £. Lebanese 30.00 per year; patrons give what they wish.)

I have attached a list of persons who may be interested in receiving AJME publications (please indicate profession where possible) ().

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