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Box 15, Folder 7, Christians in Arab countries, 1965.

PERSONAL AND

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M E M O R A N D U M on  
ARAB THREATS AND PRESSURES

Summary:

The current Arab campaign against the "Jewish declaration" of the Ecumenical Council has included threats of retaliatory action against Christians and Church institutions in the Arab world. This is only the most recent instance of the Arab use of the tactics of pressure and intimidation.

This memorandum presents documented examples of previous threats by the Arab states which turned out to be empty bluff when met with firm resistance. Among the illustrations of Arab intimidation and subsequent retreat examined below are the following:

1. West German establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel. (The Arabs threatened to retaliate by recognizing East Germany, boycotting West Germany, and seizing German schools and assets. None of these threats was carried out.)
2. The 1952 German Reparations Agreement with Israel. (The Arabs threatened to boycott West Germany and break diplomatic relations with Bonn. The \$822 million agreement with Israel was signed and implemented, but none of the threats was carried out. German-Arab trade increased.)
3. Controversy over the Jordan Waters. (The Arab League threatened to prevent Israel's drawing Jordan River water. Elaborate Arab diversion plans were announced. Firm international opposition led to indefinite "postponement" of the Arab plans. Israel is drawing Jordan water unhindered.)
4. Nasser's insulting declaration with regard to the U.S. and his subsequent apologies.
5. Examples of successful resistance to the Arab economic boycott. (Warned that they would be barred from the Arab world unless they ceased business in Israel, firms that refused to yield have continued to operate simultaneously in Israel and the Arab countries. Cases documented include the Chase Manhattan Bank, Hilton Hotels International, the Sheraton Hotel Corporation, and effective opposition to the boycott in Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, France and other countries.)

## M E M O R A N D U M

### ARAB THREATS AND PRESSURES

Many persons concerned with the position of the Catholic Church and the welfare of Christians in the Middle East have been dismayed by the intensive Arab campaign threatening dire consequences for Christians and Church institutions in the Arab world in retaliation for favorable action by the Ecumenical Council on the so-called "Jewish declaration."

Veteran observers note, however, that this is only the latest instance of the use of extravagant threat and intimidation by the Arab states as a tactic of their international relations. A survey of similar Arab attempts in the past reveals that where they were met with firm resolution, the Arabs almost invariably backed down and their threats proved to be empty bluff and bluster. But where their threats were met by appeasement, the Arabs were emboldened to demand additional and more far-reaching concessions.

The following are a few examples of such Arab efforts in recent years:

#### I. The Arab Threat to Recognize East Germany.

At the conclusion of a four-day conference of Arab prime ministers in Cairo, on January 12, 1965, the Associated Press cabled that "it was reliably reported today that all 13 Arab League nations would recognize East Germany if West Germany established diplomatic relations with Israel." Rumors had circulated that Bonn was contemplating such a step.

On January 24, 1965 the authoritative Egyptian daily, al-Ahram, announced that the East German chief of state, Walter Ulbricht, who had long expressed a desire to visit Cairo, was expected to arrive in the United Arab Republic on a state visit in February. When West Germany protested the Ulbricht invitation, U.A.R. President Gamal Abdel Nasser demanded that Bonn immediately

stop its shipment of military equipment to Israel, which it had been doing since early 1961. Nasser further threatened to open formal diplomatic relations with East Germany unless his demand was complied with at once.

The Marquis de Nerva, a high Spanish Foreign Ministry official sent by Bonn to mediate the dispute, announced in Cairo on February 10 that West Germany had already stopped all arms deliveries to Israel and would cancel the remaining 20 per cent due under the existing agreement. Diplomatic sources added that Bonn had also given assurances that it would not recognize Israel "in the near future." The Marquis said that President Nasser had agreed to reciprocate with "several good-will gestures" to West Germany.

Having won his demands, Nasser was generally expected to cancel the Ulbricht invitation or at least tone down its official nature. To the consternation of West German officials, Ulbricht arrived as scheduled on February 24 and the East German Communist leader was accorded the full ceremonial pomp and warm reception reserved for visiting heads of state. As New York Times columnist C.L. Sulzberger commented on February 26, "now, having paid one blackmail installment, Bonn faces new bills, while Ulbricht is already Cairo's official guest."

On March 7, 1965, West Germany announced that it had decided to cut off economic aid to the U.A.R. and that it would establish formal diplomatic relations with Israel.

#### A. New Arab Threat:

In response to the planned West German recognition of Israel, the Egyptian President declared on March 10 that the 13 Arab League states had approved immediate withdrawal of their ambassadors from Bonn, the breaking of all diplomatic ties with Germany if it established relations with Israel, and the severing of economic relations if Germany "persists in an aggressive stand against the U.A.R."



President Nasser threatened that Egypt itself would go even further:

We shall recognize East Germany if West Germany recognizes Israel, we shall also seize all German property and German schools, and we shall put all German funds under sequestration. (New York Times, March 11, 1965.

B. German Response:

The German Federal Republic refused to yield to these new threats, and on May 12 Bonn and Jerusalem jointly announced plans to establish diplomatic relations between West Germany and Israel. In mid-August the newly named ambassadors of the two countries officially presented their credentials and assumed their posts.

C. Arab Retreat:

To this day Nasser has failed to carry out his threat to grant diplomatic recognition to East Germany. He has neither seized nor sequestered West German schools or other property in Egypt. The U.A.R. and several of the other Arab states did recall their ambassadors from Bonn, yet many of these countries continue to maintain relations with West Germany, especially on the economic and cultural level. For example, Egypt has maintained a consulate, Jordan an attaché for tourism, Syria a commercial mission.

The North African Arab states of Tunisia, Morocco and Libya have refused to take any diplomatic action against West Germany. Indeed, several Arab leaders expressed their opposition to Nasser's attempt to dictate their foreign policy. The declarations of Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba, which were widely reported, included his May 21 statement that "Nasser wants to act with regard to the Arab states as though they were his satellites."

At the end of August it was reported from Bonn that a number of Arab countries, including Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Saudi Arabia, had informally indicated a desire to resume full relations with West Germany. Even Egypt has hinted

at such a possibility if West Germany would consider a resumption and increase in its economic and technical aid to Cairo.

## II. Arab Threats and the German Reparations Agreement with Israel.

In the early 1950's the Arabs conducted an intensive campaign to prevent West Germany from concluding an agreement with Israel providing material reparations for Jewish victims of Nazi persecution.

On September 27, 1951 Chancellor Konrad Adenauer told the West German Parliament that his Government was prepared to negotiate a reparations agreement with Israel. In a dramatic standing vote, the Bonn Parliament endorsed this offer. In the Spring of 1952 negotiations were held and on September 10, 1952 a reparations agreement with Israel was signed. Germany agreed to pay \$715 million to the State of Israel in goods and services, plus an additional \$107 million earmarked for the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, representing Jewish organizations outside Israel. Furthermore, Germany agreed to make restitution and indemnification payments to individuals who had suffered under the Nazi regime. The total of such payments to persons living in Israel has exceeded \$100 million per annum.

### A. Arab Threats:

An intensive campaign of Arab protests and pressures was waged -- first against the negotiations, then against ratification of the agreement by the German Parliament, and finally against its implementation. For example, early in April 1952 Syria and Lebanon presented notes to the British, French and United States Governments, asking that no German reparations be allowed to go to Israel until Arab claims against Israel had been settled. This demand was subsequently echoed by the Arab League and the Palestine Arab Higher Committee. In August 1952, the Arab League threatened "marked deterioration of the good relations existing between Germany and the Arab nations, " in the event of German payments to Israel. The Palestine Arab Higher Committee



warned the German Union for Foreign Trade that it might institute a general boycott of German goods. The ex-Mufti of Jerusalem and Arab diplomatic representatives in Germany issued similar warnings of economic boycott and the breaking off of relations.

B. German Response:

The West German Government sought to explain to the Arabs the moral obligation it felt to aid the survivors of Nazi persecution, promised that reparations payments would not include military equipment, and sent a trade delegation to Cairo in January 1953 with offers of generous trade and credit concessions. But, interpreting the German good-will action as signs of weakness, the Egyptians made additional demands and attempted to put pressure on the West Germans by inviting a trade delegation from East Germany at the same time. This action led West Germany to suspend the Egyptian talks on February 12.

The following day, the reparations agreement with Israel was submitted to the Bundestag, which adopted it by an overwhelming majority on February 20.

Despite continuing Arab verbal protests in subsequent years, the terms of the twelve-year reparations agreement were scrupulously carried out, and Germany recently completed its last scheduled payment to Israel.

C. Arab Retreat:

None of the Arab threats against West Germany was carried out. Diplomatic relations were not broken nor was an economic boycott instituted. On the contrary, trade between Germany and the Arab League states, which had totalled \$143 million in 1951, continued to increase steadily in the years after the reparations agreement was signed, more than doubling within the next four years.

III. Controversy over Jordan River Water

A. Arab Threat:

For years Arab leaders have declared that they would

never allow Israel to use the waters of the Jordan River. The Syrians have been the most militant, frequently proclaiming their readiness to fight to prevent Israel from drawing Jordan water.

In January 1964 an Arab "summit conference" in Cairo unanimously approved plans to divert two chief sources of the Jordan to prevent their flow into Israel. A Unified Military Command was set up with a budget of \$42 million annually to back the diversion militarily if necessary. An Arab Board for Exploiting Jordan River Waters was also created. After a three-day conference in Beirut, the Arab water diversion board on April 9 estimated the total cost of the diversion at \$235 million. "The project is designed to divert 35-40 per cent of the Jordan water away from Israel territory so as to foil the impending Israel diversion scheme." (Middle East Forum, Beirut, May 1964, p.5.)

In May, Kuwait's Foreign Minister, Sadah al Ahmed, announced in London that the blueprints for the Arab diversion plan had been drawn. A second Arab League summit conference, held in Alexandria in September 1964, unanimously approved "the liberation of Palestine" and called for implementation of Arab plans, "especially in the technical and military fields, including embarking on immediate work on projects" for the diversion of "the waters of the River Jordan and its tributaries."

#### B. International Reaction:

In May 1964 Israel began test pumping of its \$100 million National Water Carrier to convey Jordan water from Lake Tiberias to the Coastal plain and the Negev. A few weeks later the 70-mile system of canals, tunnels and giant pipelines was fully operational.

The Israel Government has pledged that it will take no more water than was allotted it under the Unified Water Plan of 1955, negotiated by U.S. special envoy Eric Johnston and approved by Arab water experts at the time. Israel has responded to Arab



diversion threats by declaring that it would take all necessary action to ensure its fair share of the Jordan waters.

The United States Government has publicly and through diplomatic channels made it "unmistakably clear" to the Arab states that it firmly supports the Israel project as consistent with the Unified Water Plan, that it opposes any threat or use of force, and that it would oppose any Arab "attempt to frustrate the Israeli plan by other counter-diversion projects" which exceeded the water allotment to the Arabs under the 1955 Unified Plan. (Statement by Assistant Secretary of State Frederick G. Dutton, June 17, 1964.)

This policy, initiated under the Eisenhower administration, has been consistently followed by Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. The United States has been joined in its diplomatic efforts by France and other Western states.

#### C. Arab Retreat:

Jordan water has been flowing through the Israeli conduit for more than a year, and none of the Arab headwater diversion projects has yet materialized. Despite the superficial unity in the Arab summit resolutions, the Arab states have failed to carry out their threat to deprive Israel of Jordan water.

Jordan, Syria and Lebanon -- the three Arab riparian states -- have refused to allow the troops of the Egyptian-led Unified Military Command on their soil to "protect" their diversion projects. Fear of Egyptian interference in their internal affairs is reportedly greater than their concern over possible Israeli attack.

In a speech to a Congress of the Palestine Liberation Organization, meeting in Cairo on May 31, Nasser alluded to this when he said, "Today each Arab state is afraid of the others. We are beset by suspicions, contradictions and distrust." He then admitted that the Arab diversion project would have to be "postponed." According to the United Press, Nasser declared:

We are not able to defend some parts of the Arab world. In view of this how can we speak of attacking? If we are not able to divert the Jordan River, then we must postpone it until we are ready to defend ourselves.

The militant Syrians also backed away from the diversion plan. Syrian Premier Amin Hafez replied the following day in Damascus that he would not have attended the summit conferences if he had known that mere water diversion and not immediate attack on Israel was to be the plan. "We do not believe in this project," he said. "It is a tranquilizer...appeasement. We accepted it because we wanted to preserve Arab unanimity."

Meanwhile, however, Lebanon had begun to construct a canal which could be used to divert one of the sources of the Jordan. Israel brought this to the attention of the great powers as a potential source of tension. Following Western diplomatic interventions, the Lebanese press announced in early August that the Lebanese government had suspended excavation work "for lack of funds."

#### IV. Nasser's Declarations and U.S.-Egyptian Relations

##### A. The Arab Boast:

On December 23, 1964 in a speech at Port Said, President Nasser said that if the American ambassador did not like Egypt's conduct he could "go drink up the sea. If the Mediterranean is not sufficient, there is the Red Sea, too. We can give him that as well." Nasser boasted that he could do without American food shipments and warned that "he who speaks a single harsh word to us will have his tongue cut off."

He further confirmed with pride that Egypt had been supplying arms to the Congolese rebels, and to other "national liberation" movements.

Nasser's Port Said speech came only a few days after two other incidents marring U.S.-Egyptian relations: Egyptian fighter planes had shot down an American civilian plane flying



on a regular civil air corridor route over Egypt, and mobs of demonstrators had burned down the USIS library in Cairo.

B. The U.S. Reaction:

There was an outcry of indignation in the United States Congress, echoed in the press, reflecting the views of all sections of the country and of both major parties. Secretary of State Dean Rusk referred to the "furnishing of arms illegally to rebel elements" in the Congo as contrary to the "continuing UN resolutions" to give assistance to the Congo and its Government. He also expressed deep U.S. concern over the destruction of the library and the shooting down of the plane. He added pointedly that U.S.-Egyptian relations must be reciprocal and that "if relations are to be good, both sides must make important investments in these relations." The White House for a time held up the shipment of the remaining \$37 million U.S. surplus food due Egypt under the three-year agreement expiring in June 1965. It was reported from Washington that U.S. officials were reluctant to conclude a new agreement. To date no further U.S. aid has been approved.

C. Arab Retreat:

Within the last six months the following developments have occurred:

1. Egypt has apologized for the burning of the USIS library, offered a building as a temporary rent-free site until a new library could be constructed, and President Nasser himself has promised 1,000 books.

2. The State Department reported that Egypt has stopped furnishing aid to the Congolese rebels.

3. Egyptian diplomats explored with U.S. officials the possibility of new American aid. Nasser himself told the American people, in an interview with CBS correspondents telecast July 11, that he was now prepared to accept additional U.S. aid, providing it was "unconditional."

V. Examples of Effective Resistance to the Arab Boycott

The Arab states have made continued threats to impose an economic boycott against individuals, corporations and even governments conducting economic relations with Israel. Spearheading this drive is the Arab League's Central Office for the Boycott of Israel, with headquarters in Damascus. National boycott agencies operate in each of the Arab states.

While some companies have bowed to these threats and pressures, many have firmly resisted the Arab demands. When met with vigorous opposition, the Arabs have often quietly backed down and allowed the company to continue to do business simultaneously with the Arab states and Israel. The following are a few examples:

1. The Chase Manhattan Bank.

A. The Arab Threat:

A meeting of boycott officials in September 1963 reportedly had "under study" a resolution requiring Arab banks to abstain from all transactions with foreign banks having branches in or dealings with Israel. (Business International, January 24, 1964)

The Chase Manhattan Bank, which has extensive business in the Arab world, was chosen as the first target of the new campaign. On July 4, 1964 Mohammed Mahmoud Mahgoub, Commissioner General of the Central Boycott Office, warned that the bank would be barred from doing business in the Arab world unless it ceased all its activities with Israel within six months. The specific charge against Chase Manhattan was that it has acted as a major financial agent for Israel Bond issues in the United States and that it helped to underwrite a loan to Israel for the purchase of Boeing airliners.

B. American reaction:

John J. McCloy, member of the bank's board and an adviser to President Johnson, visited Nasser in October. The



State Department gave behind-the-scenes diplomatic support, reiterating traditional American Government opposition to the boycott practices. Meanwhile the bank continued its business with Israel.

#### C. Arab Retreat:

The Arab states soon had second thoughts about a cessation of business with Chase. Egypt had received a \$10 million credit from the bank, which would fall due if the boycott went into effect. Also, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, which have large deposits with Chase, reportedly opposed a boycott. In the showdown boycott meeting in Bahrein in December, only Syria was reported to be adamant in pressing the boycott -- allegedly out of pique at having been refused credit by the bank and in order to embarrass Nasser by showing that Syria was more militantly anti-Israel. (Dispatch from Cairo, New York Times, December 27, 1964).

On January 4, 1965 Mr. Mahgoub announced in Damascus that the Boycott Office had decided to "suspend" its ultimatum, because it had received "certified documents" showing that the bank's relations with Israel were of "a purely banking nature." He said that the boycott threat would be dropped if the documents were found satisfactory by the local boycott offices; otherwise it would start in July 1965.

Apparently this rationalization proved acceptable. As of September 1965, Chase continues to serve the Arab world and Israel. Some eighty international banks, including the venerable Barclay's of London, are also reported to be doing business simultaneously with Israel and the Arab countries. This holds true as well for major insurance companies, including Lloyd's of London, and leading international airlines including TWA, BOAC, Air France, KLM and SAS.

## 2. Hilton Hotels International, Sheraton, and Ring Hotels

#### A. Arab Threat:

In 1961, several years after it had opened the Nile

Hilton in Cairo, Hilton Hotels International decided to construct a hotel in Tel Aviv. On November 24, 1961 the secretary and counsel of the American-Arab Association for Commerce and Industry wrote to Conrad Hilton, relaying a warning he had received from officials of the Arab Boycott Committee. The letter declared:

Should Hilton Hotels persist in going ahead with its contract in Israel, it will mean a loss of your hotels in Cairo and the end of any plans you may have for Tunis, Baghdad, Jerusalem or anywhere else in all Arab countries.

The letter also put Mr. Hilton "on notice" that Arab officials and businessmen visiting the United States would boycott his hotels here. He was given a three-month grace period "to review the decisions which have been made and to redress this serious situation."

B. Mr. Hilton's reply:

On December 7 Mr. Hilton replied, terming the Boycott Committee's proposal "absolutely counter to the principles we live by and which we hold most dear." Pointing out that "there was no threat from Israel when we opened our hotel in Cairo," Mr. Hilton declared, "our Corporation finds it shocking that the Committee should invoke the threat of boycott condemnation in the case of our contract with the people of Israel."

C. Arab Retreat:

Mr. Hilton refused to yield and the Tel Aviv Hilton opened in mid-September 1965. Meanwhile, the Nile Hilton has continued to do a thriving business; in fact it served as the site of the January 1964 Arab summit conference!

Not only has no retaliation been taken against Mr. Hilton's existing hotels in the Arab world, but he is now completing a hotel in Tunis, scheduled to open at the end of September, and the Egyptian Government recently contracted for new Hilton



hotels in Alexandria, Aswan and Luxor.

Arab spokesmen have tried to explain their capitulation to their own people as follows; The new hotels in the Arab world will strengthen the Arab economies by attracting tourists who bring in foreign currency. As for the Tel Aviv Hilton, the profits which Hilton is taking out of Israel create a drain on the Israel economy. This rationalization was also offered when it became known in the Arab world that the Sheraton Corporation had defied the boycott threats and constructed a hotel in Israel. The Tel Aviv Sheraton has been successfully in operation since March 1961. This has not deterred an Egyptian Government agency from entering into partnership with the Sheraton Corporation to construct a new hotel on the Nile, the Nefertiti-Sheraton, scheduled to be completed next year.

The boycott organization apparently does not accept its own rationalization for it continues to try to intimidate other hotel corporations from doing business in Israel. On October 22, 1964 Mr. Mahgoub wrote the Ring Hotel Finance Corporation of Basel, Switzerland, that a boycott would be instituted against it in all the Arab countries unless it decided within three months to give up its operations in Israel. The firm was specifically charged with financing the construction of four hotels in Israel in partnership with American and Israeli firms.

Some excerpts from the reply sent by Dr.E. Ring, president of the Swiss firm, are worthy of note:

The Ring Hotel Finance Company in Basel is a Swiss organization which conducts its business in accordance with the moral concepts of a country which can look back at a long liberal and democratic tradition...

On the basis of the rights guaranteed in our Constitution and on the basis of our own personal attitude, we must, therefore, resent being put by you in face of an ultimatum, and be asked to decide to break off our business relations with Israel or to be put on the boycott list of the Arab states.

We hope that you too are people who live in the spirit of the 20th century. The historical developments since 1900, with two horrible world wars, have demonstrated to all reasonable persons that human beings can have a chance for development and survival only when one state will live in friendly coexistence with the other; and when one religion will respect another....

The undersigned, as well as the entire management of the Ring Hotel firm, who are not Jews, have convinced themselves by numerous visits to Israel that it is a democratically administered country;....

We hope that you do not desire to continue the bloody tradition of the German Nazi epoch which saw as one of its main purposes the extermination and destruction of the Jewish people. We do not dare attribute to you such a barbaric way of thinking...

We should like to inform you that our worldwide organization can go on living without hotels in Arab states. However, as cultured people of this century, we cannot understand why we cannot collaborate with you because we are building Ring Hotels in Israel in order to provide opportunities to tourists, Jewish as well as non-Jewish, to get acquainted with the natural beauties and historic development of this holy land...

(Translation from the Allgemeine Wochenzeitung der Juden in Deutschland, which published the full text of both letters on December 11, 1965.)

### 3. European Authorities Resist the Boycott

One of the weapons in the Arab boycott arsenal is the demand that exporters to Arab countries furnish a negative certificate of origin, attesting that no Israeli raw materials are being used in their products.

#### (a) Resistance in Italy

In August 1963 the Union of Italian Chambers of Commerce instructed all its members not to issue or to validate negative certificates of origin. Jordan Foreign Ministry sources



later confirmed that Italian commercial authorities were refusing to certify the non-Israeli content of Italian products to be sent to Arab countries.

According to the New York Herald Tribune, May 16, 1965:

At first, some Arab nations refused to accept Italian shipments without the certificates. Italian goods accumulated at the port of Basra, Iraq. The signing of an Iraq-Italy trade pact was postponed a week. Finally, the Iraqis accepted the goods without the certificates.

(b) Firm Dutch Opposition

The Netherlands Government, through Prime Minister Willem Drees, declared on September 23, 1957 that it would resist "boycott measures aimed at Israel or Jewish firms which threaten infringement of Dutch interests." This policy has been continued by all succeeding Dutch governments.

(c) Belgium Expresses its Displeasure

On June 8, 1964, Paul Henri-Spaak, Belgium's Foreign Minister, told the Belgian Senate that he had called in an Iraqi diplomat to express Belgium's displeasure over Arab threats against Belgian firms planning to participate in the forthcoming International Trade Fair in Tel Aviv. The Foreign Minister added that Belgium's Minister for External Trade would be present at "Belgium Day" at the Fair on June 13, and that he himself would visit Israel from June 17 to 21, 1964.

(d) International Chamber of Commerce says No

The Executive Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce adopted a resolution in opposition to the Arab boycott practices at its meeting in Paris on November 5, 1964. The resolution declared that "under no circumstances should Chambers of Commerce and Industry agree to deliver negative attestations" of the kind being demanded by the Arab states.

VI. Resistance to Arab Intimidation of Company Directors

In recent years the Arab states have attempted to demand

the resignation of company directors who were Jewish or were identified with pro-Israeli activities.

1. Reaction in England:

The public furor aroused in England over the "Mancroft Affair" is well known. In December 1963 Lord Mancroft resigned from the London Board of Norwich Union Assurance Societies to save the company from Arab pressure. Following expressions of resentment among the insurance company's policy holders in Britain, the United States and other Western countries, and criticism in Parliament and the press, the company invited Lord Mancroft to rejoin the board. He said no.

2. The Boycott and General Koenig

A. Arab Threat:

In 1964 General Pierre-Marie Koenig, a noted French war hero, received a letter from the Arab Boycott Committee in Damascus warning him that unless he resigned from the presidency of the France-Israel Alliance, five commercial firms with which he is connected would be boycotted by the Arab states. One of the companies he heads is the Société Industrielle et Financière des Petroles, an oil prospecting and refining combine operating in the Sahara Desert together with the Government of Algeria.

B. French Reaction:

The threat against General Koenig aroused indignation in the French Parliament, the press and among the French people. The general, a Roman-Catholic, is an illustrious public figure, and a recipient of France's highest award for military heroism as leader of Free French forces during World War II and his victories during the North African campaign against Rommel. He is a personal friend of General de Gaulle, and the Alliance France-Israel includes several Government ministers and about 200 deputies in the Parliament.

In response to the Arab demands, members of Parliament warned the Arab states that only by dropping their boycott threats could they "preserve their ties with France." A



spokesman for the French Foreign Ministry declared:

We are treating this Arab threat with the disdain which it warrants. The affair is too sordid and ugly to call for our intervention.

General de Gaulle himself was reported to have sent General Koenig a letter expressing support for his resistance to the boycott pressure.

The newspaper Combat on December 12, 1964 called the demand "quite inadmissible," and pointed out that "to accede to an injunction of this kind would be to legitimize it, and to bring about further blackmail."

The General did not resign from any of his posts.

#### C. Arab Retreat:

Arab diplomats in Paris, including the Syrian ambassador, all disclaimed any knowledge of the letter, and sought to dismiss it as the work of some "minor official." (In fact, the Alliance France-Israel declares that approximately 25 similar letters had, to its knowledge, been received by various French firms in the previous few months, asking for formal pledges not to trade with Israel and not to hire Jews.)

In the face of this firm French resistance, the boycott threat against General Koenig's petroleum corporation in Algeria was never carried out. In fact, Algeria signed a comprehensive oil and gas agreement with France, on July 29, 1965.

#### Conclusion

The above examples make it clear that when Arab threats and demands are met with determined opposition and unyielding refusal to compromise, the Arabs retreat and their threats remain unfulfilled. This has been the result not only when the Arab pressures were directed against powerful states but even where corporations and individuals were willing to take a stand. On the other hand, as the recent experience of West

Germany shows, yielding to the initial Arab threats does not bring the desired results; it simply leads to new demands and pressures.

The influential Swiss daily, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, on December 9, 1964 stated the moral principle involved and the positive benefits for peace and stability that may result from resistance to Arab threats and intimidation:

It is hardly likely that a firm which is anxious to safeguard its freedom of action in business - and which does not base its conduct purely and simply on the principle of cold-blooded economic calculations but takes ethical considerations into account as well - would allow itself to be put under pressure by clumsy methods of this kind.

The fearless attitude of firms which have refused to become involved in the Arab boycott has also produced a positive political result, in that economic tensions in the Near East have been reduced and that a campaign conducted by the Arab states with a view to maintaining a politically unstable situation has been discredited.

September 1965



THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE  
Community Leadership Delegation to Israel  
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THE ARAB MINORITY IN ISRAEL

By George E. Gruen

The status of the Arab minority in Israel may be considered from two different viewpoints. One approach is to see the problem of the local Arabs as essentially an extension of the unresolved conflict between Israel and the neighboring Arab states. In this view, the rights and liberties of the individual Arab must be subordinated to the security needs of the State.

The other approach is to consider the treatment accorded the Arabs as a fundamental test of the democratic principles upon which Israel was founded. It has been pointed out that Israel's Declaration of Independence proclaimed "complete equality of social and political rights for all its citizens, without distinction of creed, race or sex," and called upon "the Arab people dwelling in Israel to keep the peace and to play their part in building the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its institutions. . ."

It is by no means easy to reconcile the requirements of justice and security. The treatment accorded the Nisei -- United States citizens of Japanese origin -- during the Second World War and the investigations of the McCarthy era are recent illustrations of the corrosive effect that an assumed threat to the national security can have on individual civil liberties even in so deeply rooted a democracy as the United States. It is argued, however, that precisely because the Jews were for centuries a persecuted minority, accorded at best second class citizenship, a state in which the Jews are the governing majority must be especially scrupulous to protect the rights of minorities. It is an

obvious fact that Israel's actions receive worldwide attention and reflect upon the Jews in other countries. But of more fundamental importance is the example that Israel's leaders will set for the new generation growing up in freedom, and whether they will be able to transmit to the youth a sense of the prophetic ideal of social justice or merely a narrow and chauvinistic nationalism.

The policies adopted by the Government in dealing with the Arab minority and the attitudes of the country's opinion leaders will thus have an influence far transcending the solution of this specific problem. For only if they are guided by sound democratic principles and adopt liberal policies will they provide the climate of social equality and civil liberties in which democracy can take firm root and flourish. It is thus quite natural that the American Jewish Committee, which has had a long tradition of working for equal rights and improved intergroup relations, should take great interest in the development of political and social institutions in Israel to safeguard and advance the spirit of democracy.

While good will on the part of the ruling elite is a precondition for the attainment by the Arabs of full equality, there are two other elements of equal importance. First of all, suitable objective conditions must be created. What has already been noted in regard to the Jews of non-Western origin holds true for the Arabs as well. It is meaningless to talk in abstract terms about social equality for them unless scholarships and adequate facilities are made available to train them in the technical and professional skills which will enable them to fill positions other than those providing the lowest pay and social status.

Secondly, the good will and comprehension of the country's leaders must be met by a positive attitude on the part of the presently disadvantaged group. It is futile to expect, for example, that the Government will go far to



eliminate permanently the restrictions on the movement of the Arab minority in Israel unless it sees evidence that the Arabs are willing to link their fate to that of Israel rather than to the promises of Gamal Abdul Nasser to liberate them. It is, of course, easier to state the dilemma than to solve it, for one of Israel's most intractable problems, both domestically and internationally, has been to find a way out of the vicious circle of mutual suspicion and mistrust built up over the years between Arab and Jew.

Signs of Progress:

In a material sense, the position of the Arabs in Israel has improved considerably since the establishment of the State of Israel. At the end of 1948, there were approximately 108,000 Arabs remaining in Israel; at the start of 1964, they numbered 273,000, or 11 percent of the population. About 190,000 are Moslems, 56,000 are Christians, and 27,000 are Druzes -- a religious group that split off from Islam in the Middle Ages. Some 71,000 Arabs who had fled their homes during the Arab-Israel war were accepted by Israel as a result of the Armistice Agreements or under the plan for the reunion of families. Natural increase accounts for the other 94,000.

Government and Politics:

The Arabs are citizens and participate in the country's political life. In the last elections to the Knesset in 1961, 85.1 percent of Arab electors voted. There are eight Arab Members of the Fifth Knesset, out of a total of 120. Three are Moslems, four Christians, and one Druze. Four belong to Arab parties affiliated with Mapai, and the others were elected on the Communist and Mapam slates. Arabic is an officially recognized language for use in the Knesset, the courts, and for the conduct of business with Government agencies. The separate Moslem, Christian and Druze religious councils and courts are fully autonomous in matters of religion and personal status.

Health:

The rate of Arab mortality in Israel has dropped from about 20 per thousand in 1948 to 6.3 in 1963. This is only slightly higher than the Jewish death rate of 6.0 and compares favorably with the United States death rate of 9.6 in 1963. Infant mortality has dropped from a high of 67.9 per thousand live births in 1952 to 44.6 in 1963, and reached a low of 35.3 in the first half of 1964. However, this is still higher than the rate among Jews, 22.7 in 1963, or the average in the United States of 25.2. On the other hand, the infant mortality rate in Egypt in 1959 exceeded 150.

Agriculture:

Agriculture is still the main source of livelihood of the Arab population and in 1963 some 48 percent of employed Arabs worked on the land. While before the creation of Israel many were sharecroppers or tenant farmers, it is estimated that today some 80 percent of Israeli Arab farmers till their own soil. However, only 28 percent of individual farms exceed 30 dunams (4 dunams = 1 acre) in area, which is considered the minimum to make a Jewish farm self-supporting, according to the Ministry of Agriculture. A similar problem of the fragmentation of land holdings exists in many of the Arab states.

The Government has financed irrigation and land reclamation schemes and has introduced modern, mechanized farming methods and agricultural training. For example, in 1948 there were only five tractors in use, today there are nearly 50 times as many.

The growth of the largely urban Jewish population has also stimulated demand for agricultural products and the opening of new roads has enabled the Arabs to market their produce. As a result of these factors, Arab land under cultivation has increased from 340,000 dunams in 1948/49 to 890,000 dunams in 1963/64, and in the same period irri-



gated land has increased from 8,000 to 32,000 dunams. Areas under field crops trebled, areas under vegetables increased sevenfold, milk output trebled, beef production increased eightfold and mutton roughly ninefold. All in all, Arab agricultural production has increased six-fold since 1948.

Employment in Industry:

The Arabs have benefitted from the rapid expansion of Israel's industry and the labor shortage in the country. About 30 percent of all Arab wage-earners were employed in industry in 1963, as compared to only 13 percent in 1948. Since 1960, full membership in the Histadrut (The General Federation of Labor) has been open to Arab workers. At present, some 30,000 Arabs, or more than half of the Arab labor force, belong to the Histadrut. In addition, the Histadrut has encouraged Arab workers to set up consumers' and producers' cooperatives, and more than 5,000 Arabs belong to cooperative societies.

The Arab villages do not yet generate sufficient employment opportunities for the Arab workers. A survey published in June 1963 showed that 23,500 men and 3,500 women of the 54,000 Arab and Druze wage-earners were peripatetic, seeking and filling jobs outside the towns and villages where they normally live. Many of the better educated and skilled Arab workers tend to move to the larger cities where opportunities are greater. As a result, their villages lose the benefit of their most productive and culturally advanced elements. This is, of course, a problem that faces many underdeveloped societies.

In a statement to the Knesset, on March 9, 1964, Prime Minister Eshkol appealed to the Arab youth educated in the concepts of a modern state, "not to be ashamed of its villages and not to abandon them." It was the task of the enlightened Arab youth, he said, to return to the Arab community to help "uplift it and to truly integrate it into the life of the State."

Development:

A Government five-year plan for the development of Israel's Arab and Druze villages was launched in 1962/63. Intended to help close the economic and social gap between Jewish and Arab villages, the plan is estimated to cost IL 70 million (\$23 million), of which IL 33 million (\$11 million) is to be provided by the Government directly and the rest is to come from locally generated capital. The plan, prepared by the Adviser on Arab Affairs in the Prime Minister's Office in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance -- then headed by Levi Eshkol, concentrates on improving the infrastructure of the Arab communities, i.e. by providing internal and approach roads, water supply, electricity, sanitation facilities, telephone lines, parks and, of course, schools.

According to a progress report issued in January 1965, the development program is running well ahead of schedule. About two-thirds of the Arab villages are today linked to the national highway system, and at the end of 1963, regular water supply was available to 72 out of the 104 Arab villages in the country. In 1948, only five had tap water. The national electricity grid has been extended to some twenty additional villages.

Nevertheless, some Arab villages still exist on a most primitive standard. This was most tragically shown in January 1964 when a measles epidemic in an isolated Druze village resulted in the death of several children. As Prime Minister Eshkol told the Knesset in March 1964, the most shocking part of the story was not the outbreak itself, but that a village in modern Israel could be so cut off that no word reached the Ministry of Health for more than a week. The spontaneous public outcry of shock and indignation that followed in the Jewish press in Israel and in the Knesset are hopeful signs of concern among the Jewish majority for improvement of the welfare of the non-Jewish minority



Education:

Arab education has shown a remarkable expansion in the last sixteen years.

There is allegedly not a single Arab village today without an elementary school, and two hundred additional classrooms are to be built in 1964/65 with grants and loans from the Ministry of Education.

In 1948 there were in the Arab communities of Israel eleven kindergartens, 60 state primary schools and one secondary school. By the 1963/64 academic year, these numbers had increased to 139 kindergartens, 166 primary schools, 10 regular secondary schools plus 4 vocational training and 2 agricultural schools. The number of pupils at the three levels grew from 7,417 in 1948 to 48,045 in 1963/64. Another 11,443 students attended the 45 Christian and one Moslem denominational and Mission schools so that altogether, nearly 60,000 Arab and Druze children were in school last year.

When the British Mandate in Palestine ended in 1948, only 65 percent of Arab boys and 15 percent of the girls attended school, some for as little as five years; today the figures are 95 and 70 percent respectively. In 1963/64, IL. 500,000 was allocated to build a new Arab teachers' training college in Haifa.

The Problem of Higher Education and Employment:

Although the proportion of Arab school pupils to Jewish students is more or less equal to their numerical proportion in the population. (about 11 percent), this applies in practice only to kindergartens and elementary schools. As against some 90,000 Jewish boys and girls attending post-primary and secondary schools, there are only 1,912 Arabs -- or only about two percent. Out of the 14,000 students attending the Hebrew University, Tel Aviv University, and the Technion, less than 200 are Arabs or Druzes.

While this situation is deplorable, the fact that it is remarkably similar to the educational pattern of the Oriental Jewish communities indicates that this is not strictly an Arab-Jewish problem. It is rather that both the Jewish immigrants from the Islamic countries and the Arabs of Palestine have lived for centuries in what are now politely called underdeveloped countries. They thus have similar problems of cultural, social and economic adjustment.

One such common feature is a tendency to look down on physical labor. The educated seek positions in the professions, the administration and other services. Both the Arabs and the Oriental Jews face the problem that in Israel, engaged as it is in a process of rapid economic development, the Government seeks to encourage constructive activity rather than expansion of administrative institutions. A somewhat similar problem exists in Jordan and other Arab countries.

In the field of private employment, to some extent both Arabs and Oriental Jews, but primarily the Arab applicants, still encounter reluctance among employers to hire them for responsible positions because of the old stereotype that Arab workers, and non-Westerners in general, tend to be unreliable and inefficient.

The educated Arab in Israel, in addition, faces an employment barrier to which the Oriental Jew is not subject. A career in the Army or in important branches of the civil service is at present closed to him. The obvious explanation for this is stated by the Government as follows:

The Arab States, which daily proclaim that they are in a state of belligerency with Israel, disseminate their poisonous propaganda among these young intellectuals in the form of printed matter as well as over the air. In this situation (and it is only the Arab States themselves that can alter it), there is obviously no possibility



of employing those meant to be the vehicles of this hostile propaganda in Government offices concerned with security matters.

While there remains much to be done, the material and educational position of the Arab community in Israel has certainly improved greatly in the sixteen years since the establishment of Israel. But as Professor Martin Buber pointed out in a letter to then Prime Minister Ben-Gurion in January 1962, Zionism always maintained as a basic tenet that there could be no material substitute for a lack of personal and national dignity. And as increasing numbers of young Arabs are educated, their sense of bitterness and frustration at the lack of social, political and career opportunities will continue to intensify.

The Arabs today feel themselves second-class citizens and are viewed with suspicion by the majority of Israel's leaders, and large segments of Israel's public. Former Prime Minister Ben-Gurion went so far as to declare, in an interview published in Le Figaro on January 5, 1962, that most of Israel's Arabs, "if given the opportunity, would help destroy Israel." Dr. Shimon Shereshevsky, head of Ihud, an Israeli organization calling for friendship and equal treatment for Israel's Arab minority as a first step in Arab-Israel peace, has taken sharp issue with Mr. Ben-Gurion. "If you hate a minority, and are suspicious of it," he has pointed out, "then you will intensify the cause of suspicion, and bring it to new courses."

These opposing views have centered on the continuing debate over the future of Military Government.

#### Military Government:

The official position of the Government, as contained in a pamphlet issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is as follows:

Military Government has been criticized on the ground that it represents a restriction of civil rights. Neither the Government of Israel nor the country's population is happy about the necessity of maintaining this limitation. So long, however, as the neighbouring Arab States will not abandon their attitude of belligerency towards the State of Israel and continue to maintain tension through the despatch of agents and infiltrators, and so long as there is a danger that some irresponsible elements of the population might be induced or intimidated to serve as agents of neighbouring States, there is no escaping the presence of a military administration that will see to the observance of indispensable Defence Regulations.

The Government program approved by the Knesset on December 17, 1959, stated as a principle that:

Security measures in border areas, which are inevitable in view of the refusal of the neighbouring Arab States to make peace with Israel, will be limited to actual and vital security requirements, and will not, unless absolutely necessary, affect the freedom of movement of the inhabitants of these areas.

There has in fact been a progressive relaxation in the application of the restrictions of Military Government. It should also be remembered that the regulations relate to defined areas and not to ethnic or religious groups. There are, however, only a few Jewish villages located in the security zones and in practice the regulations are not enforced in the case of Jews. On the other hand, the approximately 60,000 Arabs living in such towns as Haifa, Acre, Jaffa, Lod, and Ramla, have always been free from the restrictions of military rule.

In 1948 a permit was necessary for a resident in a security zone to move from one village to the next within the jurisdiction of Military Government. Since 1954 movement within these areas has been free, and since 1959 no permit has been needed to visit a major city or coastal



settlement. The number of restricted areas has also decreased. In 1954 there were 54 such areas in the Galilee alone, in 1962 there were only 17.

In February 1962, after a stormy debate in the Knesset, Prime Minister Ben-Gurion announced that permits valid for an entire year would be given to Arabs enabling them to move freely in and out of the restricted areas. The restrictions in the villages of the Druzes, an Arab-speaking but distinct religious community, whose members have proven their loyalty to Israel by voluntary service in the Army, were to be removed entirely.

In March 1962 there was also lifted the remaining night curfew, which had been enforced since 1949 along an eight-mile strip of the Israel-Jordanian border and which affected 45,000 of Israel's Arabs. The curfew had been gradually relaxed and was finally enforced only between 11 P.M. and 3 A.M.

In May 1962, the Government announced that special review boards were being set up to handle Arab complaints against restrictions imposed upon them by the military authorities. Each board was to consist of one military representative, one Interior Ministry representative and one local Arab resident. In addition, certain decisions of the military authorities can be appealed to the High Court, and parliamentary questions about the working of Military Government in individual cases are frequently put in the Knesset to the responsible Cabinet ministers.

The most far-reaching liberalization of the Military Government regulations was announced by Prime Minister Eshkol on October 21, 1963, shortly after he assumed office. This was the lifting of travel restrictions on the Arabs living in Galilee in the north and in the "Triangle," the thin coastal strip in the center of Israel between the Jordanian bulge and the Mediterranean. The

vast majority of Israel's Arabs live in these areas and it was variously estimated that between 170,000 and 210,000 Arabs would henceforth be able to move freely to all non-military zones throughout the country without any special permit. In addition, the internal zoning of military areas was partly lifted and reduced from 17 to 9 areas, thus allowing for greater freedom of movement within some military areas as well. Movement continues to be restricted in areas of military maneuvers and in five Arab villages located on the borders with Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. About 700 persons whose records show them to be "security risks" will also have to continue to apply for travel permits.

The Continuing Debate over Military Rule:

Despite these progressive relaxations, which have taken much of the practical sting out of the regulations, there has been a persistent and growing demand to abolish Military Government entirely. This has been supported not only by the Arabs but by influential segments of the Jewish parties, both within the coalition Government and in the opposition. In recent debates, the Knesset has approved the continuation of Military Government by such narrow margins as one to four votes. The opponents of the present system have included such diverse political personalities as Moshe Sneh (a leader of the Communist party); Moshe Carmel and Yigal Allon (both former Army commanders and members of Ahdut Ha'Avoda, which is presently in the Government coalition -- Carmel was formerly Minister of Communications and Allon is currently Minister of Labor); Menahem Beigin (leader of the opposition Herut party); and Liberal Party leader Pinhas Rosen.

There are, of course, differences in the reasons they advance and the alternatives they propose. The main objections are moral and practical. The moral argument



is that the present system deprives one part of the population of the equal rights enjoyed by the rest and is incompatible with the requirements of democracy. In addition, it is considered especially objectionable that the Defense (Emergency) Regulations of 1945, under which Military Government is authorized, were first promulgated by the British to quell Zionist resistance. It is pointed out that these restrictions were bitterly opposed at the time by the same Jewish leaders who now use them against the Arab minority.

The main dispute is over the practical necessity and effectiveness of Military Government. Mr. Rosen, who at one time headed a Ministerial Committee which examined the military rule and decided to suggest its liquidation, concluded that Military Government was not necessary for security purposes. All it achieved was to widen the split between Israel's Arabs and Jews. Former Colonel Moshe Carmel has stated that "the complete abolition of the Military Administration would not harm security matters at all."

Former Colonel Yigal Allon, who sits on the Ministerial Committee for Security Affairs, has stated:

Lacking direct military tasks, the Military Governors concentrate on matters which are mainly political and domestic in character. The Military Administration has been one of the elements behind the nationalist stirring and incitement among the Arab population in this country. Israel's enemies could never hope for a more effective propaganda weapon against her than this phenomenon of prolonged discrimination. Of all the dangers and risks that I have known until now, the liquidation of the Military Administration would be the smallest risk of all, especially since it also holds out real potentialities.

The opponents of the abolition of Military Government, including former Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, argue

that although at present only about three of the 150 Defense Regulations are being applied, the continued existence of the others is vital should a new emergency arise. Moreover, the fact that Military Government exists acts as a deterrent to extremists in the Arab communities and promotes the peace and tranquility necessary for normal progress and development, and thus paves the way for eventual reconciliation between Arabs and Jews in Israel.

Prime Minister Eshkol also believes that the framework of Military Government must be retained. As he explained in his October 21, 1963 statement to the Knesset:

To my regret, the incitement and hostility of the Arab countries compel us to keep a close watch on areas that are particularly sensitive from the security point of view. We shall not be able to do away with military control, as such, as long as there is no fundamental change in Israel's security situation.

In a further statement to the Knesset, on March 9, 1964, Mr. Eshkol emphasized that the removal of travel restrictions from more than 90 percent of the Arab population was evidence that "the Government does not see the existence of Military Government as an end in itself." He pledged that "to the extent that security considerations permit, we shall continue to reduce the few remaining restrictions in the Military Government areas."

While it is a matter of dispute as to whether military rule incites or restrains Arab extremist tendencies, there is no doubt that there are radical elements at work among the Arabs in Israel. Many of the Arabs vote Communist, although this is less a matter of ideology than a protest against the existing regime. An Arab nationalist movement called el-Ard (The Earth) was recently refused permission to register as a legal public organization and



ordered disbanded by ruling of Israel's High Court of Justice on November 11, 1964. The Court cited evidence that the group had sent a memorandum to the United Nations Secretary-General charging the Government with "oppression, discrimination and persecution" of the Arabs, and that it had reprinted articles calling the Arab countries "the spearhead of a free Palestine." The Court found that the declared program of the group "expressly and totally negates the existence of the State of Israel." The Court declared that "it is the elementary right of every state to defend its liberty and very existence against enemies from without and their supporters from within."

The Problem of Compensation for Arab Lands:

Aside from the Military Government regulations, Arab resentment centers on the Arab property that has been taken over by the Israel Government, either because its owners were considered to have abandoned it during the Arab-Israel war or because it was expropriated under the right of eminent domain. The Arab position was stated bluntly by Archbishop George Hakim, head of the Greek Catholic community in Israel, in a memorandum allegedly prepared at the time of the visit of Pope Paul VI to the Holy Land. According to the Italian magazine Oggi, Archbishop Hakim had declared that "a large part" of Arab landed properties had been expropriated, by virtue of Israeli laws promulgated from 1948 through 1962, "in order to give them to Jewish immigrants." The compensation offered owners of expropriated lands was "so unjust" that it was generally refused.

Touching on the problem of Arab land claims, Mr. Eshkol declared in October 1963 that it was "the Government's desire to settle the problem of compensation once and for all, and it is ready to set a final date for the presentation of claims and to set aside the necessary funds

and lands for the purpose." According to the Israel Government Yearbook, 1963/64, up to November 1, 1963, 9,721 Arab property claims for 142,000 dunams had been settled by payment of over IL. 14 million, plus more than 37,000 dunams in exchange. "This means indemnification of two-thirds of all possible claimants for more than half of the area involved."

Efforts to Integrate the Arabs in Israel's Society:

Because of the religious and social differences and the mutual suspicions resulting from the Arab-Israel conflict, the Arabs are even less integrated into Israel's society than are the Oriental Jewish communities. There have been some small attempts at a communal rapprochement, including the establishment of an Arab-Jewish center in Haifa, a joint summer camp, the teaching of Arabic and Islamic culture in the general schools and some joint Arab-Jewish business ventures. However, none of these efforts have so far made a really substantial dent in the problem. Yet failure to integrate the Arab community is not only politically explosive but will accentuate the social problems, discussed in a separate paper, resulting from the large-scale immigration to Israel of Jews from non-Western underdeveloped countries. Despite the vast improvement in educational facilities for Israel's Arabs since the days of the British Mandate, the general cultural level of the Arab communities is still far below that of Israel's Westernized Jewish leadership.

The Arab Minority in Israel and the Arab Refugees:

In view of the basic fear among Israel's leaders of a general lowering of Israel's cultural level, the rapid increase in Israel's Arab population has influenced the Government's policies with regard to the Arab refugee problem as well.



In earlier years, Israel had offered to readmit about 100,000 Palestinian Arab refugees as part of a solution of the problem. Now, Israeli officials firmly maintain this is no longer feasible and that all the refugees must be resettled in the Arab lands, with the exception of a token number that may still be admitted under the Reunion of Families Program. The hardening of the Israeli position is partly in response to the evidence of continued Arab belligerence toward Israel, most recently demonstrated by Arab League approval of plans to divert the headwaters of the Jordan River and to create a "Palestine Liberation Army" to be recruited from among the Arab refugees. But Israel's refusal to repatriate the refugees is also based on developments within the Arab minority in Israel itself.

As noted above, Israel's non-Jewish, mainly Arab, population has grown from about 108,000 at the end of 1948 to 273,000 at the start of 1964, and reached 285,000 by the end of the year. While part of the increase has been the result of repatriation of refugees, the bulk of the population growth has been due to natural increase. The high standard of health services in Israel has lowered the Arab death rate, while the birth rate has continued at a level far above that of the Jewish population, including that of the Oriental Jewish communities. The rate of natural increase (births minus deaths) of the Jewish population in 1963 averaged 15.9 per thousand, while for the non-Jewish population it was 42.6. The highest rate was among the Moslems (47.2), followed by that of the Druzes (43.4) and the Christians (27.0). The Arab population is also younger, the median age for Israel's non-Jewish population being 15.8, as against 25.1 for the Jewish population.

Deputy Prime Minister Abba Eban recently estimated that the number of Arabs in Israel would reach half a

million by 1975. Aside from the potential security problem this will create in the absence of Arab-Israel peace in the meantime, the growing number of local Arabs is seen as adding to the preponderance of unskilled and non-Western elements in the country.

Although the number of Arabs has more than doubled since 1948, they still represent little more than 11 percent of the total population, because massive Jewish immigration has so far more than compensated for the lower Jewish rate of natural increase. However, should the pace of Jewish immigration slacken, as it did in the early 1950's, the percentage of the Arabs among Israel's population would rise rapidly. The likelihood of a decline in the number of Jewish immigrants is already a subject of growing concern to Israel's leaders, for, as Prime Minister Eshkol told the World Zionist Congress in January 1965, "immigration from the lands of distress is nearing exhaustion."

Jewish Agency officials have estimated that if immigration continues at the present rate, within four to five years virtually all the remaining Jews who wish to emigrate will have left those countries of North Africa and Eastern Europe which currently allow emigration.

There is little likelihood of any substantial immigration to Israel from the Western democracies. Moreover, while Israeli leaders have not abandoned hope that the Soviet Union will eventually ease its policy on emigration, there is no evidence at present that the Soviet authorities will allow any significant number of Russia's Jews, estimated at around three million, to emigrate in the near future.

Thus Israel faces the prospect that its Arab minority will grow both in absolute numbers and in proportion to the population as a whole. This makes it all the more



urgent for Israel to succeed in integrating the Arabs as loyal and educated elements in the society. (Attached are a report by Maximo Yagupsky, Director of the Israel Office of the American Jewish Committee on a recent private initiative to bring about a rapprochement among Arabs and Jews, and also a summary of an article by one of Israel's younger Arab intellectuals, outlining his proposals in this direction.



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PROBLEMS OF INTEGRATION AND ACCULTURATION  
FACING ISRAEL TODAY

A Background Paper

By George E. Gruen,  
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Prime Minister Eshkol recently reported to the Knesset on what the Israel Government had been doing to cope with a "central problem of our lives." He was referring neither to Israel's constant struggle to maintain an adequate defense against the neighbors threatening its destruction nor to the difficulties that continue to hamper the attainment of a stable and self-sufficient economy. He was speaking of the social, economic and educational gap that exists between Israel's citizens of Western origin and those coming from Asia and North Africa.

At the conclusion of the debate, on January 18, 1965, the Knesset adopted a series of motions calling for intensified efforts to aid the integration of non-Western newcomers, by making available greater educational, economic and social opportunities to them, and assuring against any discrimination in practice. The resolutions, adopted by overwhelming majorities, also called for greater representation of members of the "Oriental" communities on official and institutional bodies.

The crucial significance of this problem for Israel's future was dramatically stated by former Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion in October 1962, when he warned that if the "ominous gap" in Israel's society was not bridged "in the next ten or twelve years, we may all be engulfed in the dividing abyss. If we do not lift the cultural level of



Israel's young generation, of all origins, to that peak on which alone our ethical and cultural superiority is tenable, the State of Israel is lost."

The Changing Structure of Israel's Population:

The ethnic composition and with it the social and cultural background of Israel's Jewish population has changed greatly in the last sixteen years. This fact compounds the difficult problems Israel faces in absorbing continued large-scale immigration and in providing adequate education for its growing population.

At the time of the first census in November 1948, less than 10 percent of the Jewish population of Israel had come from countries in Asia or Africa. Nearly 55 percent of the total had been born in Europe or America, and the overwhelming majority of the 35 percent of native-born were the children of these Western or "Ashkenazi" Jews. Thus, the "Oriental communities" -- the popular name used to denote Jews of Asian and African origin, together with their Israel-born children -- accounted for no more than 15 percent of Israel's Jewish population.

In the years since the 1948 census, the Jewish population has multiplied more than three times -- growing from 715,000 to an estimated 2,240,000 at the end of 1964. Most of the increase has been the result of large-scale immigration, and the majority of the new immigrants have come from Asian and African countries. They have tended to be younger than the immigrants from Europe and America, the median age for Western immigrants being 47.2 as compared to 25.5 for those coming from Africa and 32.9 for those from Asia. The Jews of Oriental origin also tend to have much larger families. In 1963, less than 15 percent of Israeli families of European or American origin had more than four members, while over 50 percent of the Oriental families consisted of five or more persons.

As a consequence of these factors, it is estimated that members of the Oriental communities, immigrants and their Israel-born children, today make up roughly half of Israel's Jewish population.

Louis Pincus, the Treasurer of the Jewish Agency, recently reported that from 1961 through 1964 almost 250,000 immigrants had entered Israel, marking "the longest period of uninterrupted high level immigration in the annals of Palestine and Israel." Of this total, 92 percent were destitute when they arrived. About 150,000 of the immigrants, or 60 percent, were of Oriental origin, and of these 100,000 came in large family units of 5-16 members.

The percentage of Jews of non-Western origin is thus likely to increase even further in the future. Moshe Sharett, former Prime Minister of Israel and now Chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive, stated in 1962 that barring unforeseen changes, such as massive emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union, the percentage of Jews of Oriental origin would rise to 75 percent within ten years. This also assumes that the current demographic trends will not change significantly. At present, immigrant women from Oriental countries are having more than twice as many children (an average of 5) as those from Europe and America (2.3). The rate for native-born mothers, most of whom are of European descent, is 2.7. It is possible, of course, that as a result of Western cultural and social influences at work in Israel, Oriental families will also tend to become smaller. There are already some indications that such a trend is beginning. For the time being, however, the prospect of three-quarters of Israel's Jewish population being of non-Western origin has caused great concern among Israel's leaders. In addition, the high rate of natural increase among Israel's Arab population also is adding to the proportion of Israel's society with a non-Western cultural background. (This aspect of the problem is considered in a separate paper on the Arabs in Israel).



"Orientals" and "Sephardim":

Technically speaking, not all non-Ashkenazi Jews belong to the Oriental communities. The main exception consists of the Sephardim, who claim descent from the Jews of Spain and Portugal. After the expulsion from the Iberian peninsula, they settled in Holland and in various countries along the shores of the Mediterranean, including Palestine. Some of the Sephardim have lived in Palestine for many generations, and certain families have achieved prominence. They have retained their own cultural traditions, in such matters as ritual and in their popular use of Ladino, a Spanish-Jewish dialect, in contrast to the Oriental Jews who, coming primarily from the Arab countries, largely spoke Arabic among themselves. However, even the Jews from the Arab world do not form a single homogeneous group. The Jews of Morocco, Yemen and Iraq, for example, each brought with them distinct customs and traditions.

Despite the differences among them, the various Oriental and Sephardi communities are generally considered together as "Orientals" in popular parlance and even in certain official statistics, such as those concerning marriage. The ethnic distinctions among the various Oriental and Sephardi communities are diminishing in importance. In religious matters, for example, the Sephardi Chief Rabbi is the recognized representative of the Oriental community as well and the present incumbent, Rabbi Itzhak Nissim, is himself of Oriental origin, having been born in Iraq.

The attitudes of the dominant Ashkenazi group have, no doubt, also increased the tendency of the Sephardim and Orientals to regard themselves as being a common group. In an objective sense, as well, it is logical to consider them together. Although a few are veteran settlers, most of the Sephardim, such as the 40,000 from Turkey, are new immigrants who have come from underdeveloped countries and who thus face

problems of occupational, cultural and social adjustment similar to those of the Oriental immigrants.

Statement of the Problem:

In an address to the Knesset on October 24, 1960, former Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion noted that in contrast to the educated, idealistic, modern Western Jews who had pioneered in the establishment of Israel, the recent immigrants from the Islamic countries of Asia and Africa had for centuries "lived in a society that was backward, corrupt, uneducated and lacking in independence and self-respect." Israel's leaders have reconciled themselves to the fact that the older generation among the immigrants will not basically change their familiar cultural patterns, for "the damage done over hundreds of years cannot be repaired in a day."

The younger ones, however, must be imbued with the "superior moral and intellectual qualities of those who created the state." Mr. Ben-Gurion warned that "if, heaven forbid, we do not succeed, there is a danger that the coming generation may transform Israel into a Levantine state."

Foreign Minister Golda Meir spoke to a London Jewish audience in a similar vein on March 8, 1964. She noted that "our future social structure is worrying us," because "we have immigrants from Morocco, Libya, Iran, Egypt and other countries with a 16th century level. Shall we be able to elevate these immigrants to a suitable level of civilization? If the present state of affairs continues, there will be a dangerous clash between the Ashkenazim, who will constitute an elite, and the Oriental communities of Israel."

Such statements, although well-intentioned, illustrate both the supercilious attitude that characterizes the thinking of many members of the Establishment in regard to the Oriental newcomers as well as the tendency to raise the



spectre of "Levantinization," a term never defined precisely but apparently synonymous with all the worst features of the neighboring Arab countries and the antithesis of modern Western civilization.

The Charge of Discrimination:

The members of the Oriental communities have naturally resented the rather patronizing tone in which they are referred to in statements by Government officials and by others in responsible positions in the country's educational, cultural, business and professional life -- popularly known as "the Establishment" or "the ruling elite". The more articulate among the Orientals have argued that there is an ingrained feeling among the Ashkenazi elite that the Oriental Jews are inherently inferior to them, and that this is reflected, consciously or not, in the actions of the members of the Establishment, who hold the keys to housing, employment and the various symbols of social status. Some have even charged that the stereotyped attitudes of the Ashkenazim toward the non-Western Jews are essentially an ugly manifestation of racial prejudice and that the Ashkenazi Jews, in an ironic example of cultural interchange, have adopted the racial attitudes of their European persecutors.

Israeli leaders have always vigorously denied that there was any substance to this charge. A sensation was therefore created in Israel by the publication, in March 1964, of a book entitled The Ashkenazi Revolution, which bluntly and in detail elaborated the author's view that the Ashkenazi Jews are far superior to the "Sephardo-Orientals," that they are destined to remain that way, and that a communal gap "in favor of the Ashkenazim" is in fact desirable. In addition, he claimed that there is a bitter mutual hatred between the two groups in Israel. The author, Kalman Katznelson, is a veteran Israeli of European origin, an ex-Revisionist and author of several other books. Other unorthodox views ex-

pressed by Katznelson in this book are that the replacement of Yiddish by Hebrew represents a cultural catastrophe and that had Theodor Herzl's plan for a Jewish state in Uganda been accepted, the calamity which befell European Jewry could have been averted.

The book was immediately and unanimously condemned. Newspaper editorials dismissed it as "trash"; Prime Minister Eshkol urged the public to ignore it and branded it as anti-Zionist and even anti-Semitic; Mr. Ben-Gurion called its author a "chatterer"; and three Israelis, including a Sephardi member of the Knesset, instituted libel action against the author. The book was one of the immediate factors precipitating the recent Knesset debate on the problems of communal integration in Israel, in which all the major political parties reaffirmed the view, as stated by Prime Minister Eshkol, that "this is mainly a social problem" -- not a racial one -- to be solved by economic and educational measures.

Nevertheless, it is dangerous to dismiss the publication of the Katznelson book as merely the work of a crackpot. Nissim Rejwan, an Israeli editor and writer of Iraqi origin, states the following in his recent article "Israel's Communal Controversy: An Oriental's Appraisal" (Midstream, June 1964):

Yet there is no escaping the conclusion that the book has not been written and produced in a complete vacuum -- no book of this kind ever is. It gives expression, extreme and obsessive though this may be, to tensions both existing and latent, and it may therefore be a good thing that the book has appeared at this juncture since it may constitute a timely warning.

Whether or not there is any objective basis for the charge, the continued existence among the Orientals of a feeling of being discriminated against, is a dangerous source of social tension. It can again erupt into violence, as it did in Wadi Salib, the North African slum quarter of Haifa, in the summer of 1959. The parliamentary inquiry commission,



appointed by the Knesset to probe the cause of these riots, confirmed that among large sections of the North African immigrant community and "especially in the Moroccan community, there exists a deep feeling of inequality and discrimination, even a feeling that discrimination is deliberate."

The five-man commission, which consisted of a district judge, a professor of sociology at the Hebrew University, a rabbi who was himself of Moroccan origin, a Haifa attorney, and a Knesset member of the General Zionist party, found nevertheless that "there is absolutely no deliberate discrimination against North African immigrants on the part of the public and state institutions." On the contrary, "there exists on the planning and policy level a genuine desire and clear tendency to give special care and priority to Oriental immigrants, and attempts to integrate them in all areas of Israeli life."

In a recent interview with the Jewish Press (New York), Sephardi Chief Rabbi Nissim was asked whether the apparent absence of Sephardi and Oriental Jews, with few exceptions, from prominent positions in the Government or in private industry was "due to a policy of discrimination on the part of the Government." He replied that there were basically two reasons for the present situation:

First of all, the bulk of Sephardi Jews arriving in Israel were not very learned. The countries they came from did not offer much educational opportunity for Jews. Secondly, when the Jews left their native countries, they were forbidden to take out more than a few meager possessions. They arrived in Israel penniless . . . On the other hand, Ashkenazi Jewry was better educated, experienced and comparatively more wealthy. This led to the elevation of Ashkenazi Jewry's position in Israel.

This view is also supported by Dr. James Madison Nabrit, President of Howard University and one of America's leading Negro educators. In an interview with the Jerusalem

Post, Dr. Nabrit recalled that he had spent much of his life fighting for civil rights and was naturally "very sensitive to the color problem." He had heard that there was color prejudice in Israel but upon visiting the country he was convinced that this was not true:

When Yemenites or other dark-skinned groups don't move as fast into high-level jobs as others, people say it's color prejudice. That just isn't so. This country is trying to amalgamate cultures and it's perfectly natural that Jews from more backward countries should for the time being be found in lower positions in society.

The Knesset inquiry commission conceded that "despite equal conditions offered all citizens and all immigrants, some of them are de facto, unable to compete on an equal level with other citizens, particularly in the field of primary education." The commission enjoined Israel to give special assistance to immigrants from underdeveloped areas to aid their "speedy attainment of the ability to utilize equal opportunities."

#### The Position of the Oriental Jews in Israel Today:

Even assuming that there is no official discrimination or popular antipathy to the Orientals among the dominant Ashkenazi group, the objective situation of social and economic inferiority of the non-Western Jews is a problem of the gravest concern. Dr. N. A. Chouraqui, who served for a time as Adviser to the Prime Minister on Integration of Immigrants, in 1962 published a report giving some figures that illustrate the scope and seriousness of the underlying problems:

##### I. Employment:

Although they comprise half of Israel's population, Dr. Chouraqui found that only 250,400 individuals of Afro-Asian origin were employable, physically or psychologically, while the corresponding figure for individuals of



Western origin was 375,500. Only 60 percent of the Orientals held permanent jobs (147,200), while 90 percent (326,200) of the Europeans and Americans were fully employed.

In civil service jobs, the Oriental Jews occupied only 5.4 percent of the positions in the five highest grades. In the three lower grades, this proportion rose, but still to only 19.5 percent. Similar disproportions were found in other fields of the economy. Since they generally hold positions of lower rank, the average pay of Oriental workers has tended to be considerably below that of Ashkenazi workers. Prime Minister Eshkol reported to the Knesset, in December 1964, that the average monthly income of new settlers from Oriental countries was IL 100 (\$33) less than that of Western immigrants who have come since the establishment of the State. Moreover, the earnings of the Western immigrants themselves were still about \$65 a month below those of workers who had been born in Israel.

## II. Housing:

The majority of new immigrants no longer live in immigrant camps, as they did during the period of mass immigration in 1949-50. This is a measure of progress. There are, however, still great differences in the housing conditions of Ashkenazi and Oriental Jews. Dr. Chouraqui found that nearly three times as many Western Jews (268,120) as Orientals (91,182) were living in apartments with three or less persons per room. At the same time, there were three and one-half times as many non-Westerners (85,816) crowded four or more to a room, than Europeans or Americans (24,474).

The Treasurer of the Jewish Agency reported in January 1965 that because of the renewed flood of immigration in the last few years, the construction of housing had not been able to keep pace, and in certain respects the situation had become even worse than indicated in earlier surveys.

At the start of 1965 some 13,000 immigrants were still living in asbestos and tin-hut Ma'abarot (transient camps), and these would not be housed before the end of 1966. Even more serious was the fact that some 200,000 or more immigrants -- comprising about 30,000 large families, most of them Oriental -- have to continue to live in one room, because no other housing is available.

The Government, in conjunction with the Jewish Agency, has given priority to an intensified housing program, about three-quarters of whose cost is borne by the Israeli taxpayer. Reporting on progress so far, Prime Minister Eshkol told the Knesset, in January 1965, that apart from some 15,000 new dwellings a year for immigrants, about 2,000-2,500 were being built by the Government for slum clearance and another thousand families were being housed with Government aid. Larger families were being enabled to construct extensions to their dwellings, and about 7,000 large families in the past few years had been able to transfer to larger quarters.

But, unfortunately, this is only the beginning of a solution. If the Jewish Agency figures are correct, for each family that has been able to move to a larger apartment, there are still more than four families waiting to leave their cramped one-room flats.

The housing problem illustrates the vicious circle in which the Oriental immigrant is often caught. His family unit may consist of three times as many children as his Ashkenazi neighbor and he therefore needs a larger apartment. But precisely because of the many more mouths to feed, he lacks the money to pay the higher rent. The problem is accentuated by the fact that the Oriental immigrant tends to be unskilled, or to possess skills not in demand in Israel, and consequently, as already noted, has greater difficulty in finding work, and gets less pay when he does work than the



Ashkenazi. If he moves out of an immigrant camp to a housing development, he must pay a higher rent, and if he becomes a home-owner, which is usually far beyond his means, he must pay taxes. The result is that he may end up in a place like Wadi Salib, which the Knesset commission described as a "densely populated slum, where living conditions are very difficult, most of the population is unskilled and, therefore, the employment situation is poor."

It is generally recognized that the only way to make the Oriental immigrants' legal equality effective in practice is to provide them with the means of competing on equal terms in a modern, Western, industrial society. Education, in the broad sense of the word, is the key. Yet this too poses many almost insuperable problems.

### III. Education:

Over 60 percent of the children in kindergarten were from the Oriental communities and they represented over 55 percent of all first grade pupils, according to a 1962 survey. Yet children of Oriental descent comprised only 27 percent of those in the eighth grade. The disparity was progressively worse higher up on the educational ladder.

Children of Asian and African origin comprised less than one-quarter of all high school students and even half of that small number were reported to have dropped out before completing their studies. In institutions of higher learning, the students of non-Western origin comprised only 4 or 5 percent of the student body.

There has been some progress in the last few years, and Education Minister Zalman Aranne reported recently that while the total number of students at institutions of higher learning had risen by almost 80 percent in the last five years, to nearly 20,000 in 1965, the percentage of university students of Asian and African origin had increased from 5 to

14 percent. However, since the total number of university students is expected to double again within the next five years, even greater progress must be made if the percentage of students from the Oriental communities is ever to reach a point approaching their share of the population.

At present, the Ashkenazi half of Israel's population still provides over 85 percent of the university graduates. Nor is the problem limited to educating the young. While almost all new immigrants, whether European or Oriental, face the task of learning modern Hebrew, many non-Western adults have an added burden. In the summer of 1963, the Government began an intensive program to combat illiteracy after the 1961 census had revealed that 12 percent of adult Israeli Jews were unable to read or write in any language. The disproportion between the Ashkenazi and the Orientals was most marked: while among the Israeli-born the illiteracy rate is only 2.9 percent and 3.8 percent among immigrants from Western countries, the figure for immigrants from Asia and Africa is 43.4 percent. The great majority of the illiterates are women. It was found that in 120 agricultural settlements between 50 and 80 percent of the population was illiterate.

The Government has worked with the Israel Defense Forces to create special task forces to wage the war against illiteracy. The Army now conducts a special teacher's seminary at which qualified girl soldiers who volunteer for the program are trained in techniques of adult education. Graduates spend the remaining portion of their 22 months of military duty on teaching assignments in settlements with high rates of illiteracy. Some 120 girls complete the program each year.

The dangerous implications of this problem were pointed out by Ishak Navon, formerly political secretary to Ben-Gurion and now head of the special campaign to combat



illiteracy. In an interview with the New York Times last year, Mr. Navon observed:

In Tel Aviv 16,000 people signed with thumb-prints in the last census because they couldn't write their names. That's bad, of course, but in a city of nearly half a million, those 16,000 don't set the cultural tone. But take a remote village near the border with 300 inhabitants of whom 200 can't read nor write; the illiterates there determine the standard of civilization. That's intolerable.

Unless this situation can quickly and drastically be remedied, Israel's democracy faces a harsh dilemma. Either political power commensurate with its numbers will be given to the actual Oriental majority even though it is poorly educated and unskilled, which would mean a dangerous deterioration in the quality of the administration; or else the Establishment will continue in the hands of the present Ashkenazi elite, who comprise the overwhelming majority of the college graduates, and who would naturally get the civil service jobs on the basis of a strict merit system, without any need for discrimination.

The Oriental Jews are in fact becoming increasingly aware of their political power, and some veteran politicians of Sephardi origin have already successfully exploited the resentments of the non-Western immigrants to win election to municipal posts. For example, in the summer of 1963 in both Ashdod and Beersheba, Mapai party officials of Sephardi origin, who had disagreed with the party and decided to create independent communal slates, succeeded in defeating the regular candidates Mapai set up to run against them. Both development towns are new immigrant centers. In Beersheba, 40 percent of the population is originally from French North Africa, 10 percent comes from Iraq and smaller groups are from Iran and Egypt -- giving the non-Western immigrants a clear majority.

The widespread emergence of new parties on an ethnic or communal basis would be an unhealthy development, for it would tend to accentuate the existing divisions in Israel's society and lead to even greater political and social fragmentation. However, the evidence of growing political consciousness among the Oriental Jews may have a positive effect if it makes the existing political parties realize that unless they broaden their base and adopt constructive programs of action to meet the justified demands of the non-Western Jews, they will not continue to receive their votes.

Moreover, success by the non-Western Jews in the use of legitimate channels of political action for the redress of grievances may act as a safety valve against a dangerous buildup of social tensions -- pressures which might otherwise be released in destructive riots and other expressions of blind fury and frustration.

But will it prove possible to raise the non-Western population's cultural level and sense of civic responsibility as rapidly as their growing demands for increased political power? In this, as in other areas of integration, only education can bridge the gap. Yet, here, too, the person of non-Western origin is handicapped in many ways.

#### The Special Problems of the Non-Western Student:

The problem facing the Oriental student is in large part but not entirely an economic one. Compulsory free education is not in itself the solution, for although eight years of primary school are free, only about half of the Oriental students who enter first grade remain to graduate from elementary school. One of the reasons is that the poor unskilled non-Western immigrant with many mouths to feed cannot afford to give up the earning power of his children, who in traditional Oriental communities begin work as early as the age of seven or eight. These large-sized families either allow each child only a few years of schooling or else select one



or two children to complete their education while the others are ~~sent~~ to work. In certain cases, the Government has begun to offer cash subsidies to the parents to help make up for the temporary lost earning power while the child is in school. Budgetary sources are, however, inadequate to do so in all cases.

There are difficulties other than the purely economic as well. The curriculum in Israel is naturally prepared by the Establishment and incorporates the cultural and social values of the dominant Western group. These values and such basic subjects as the history of European Jewry, the development of modern Zionism, and the struggle for Israel's independence, are alien to the Oriental children, while for the Ashkenazi youth these parts of the curriculum are familiar and almost second nature. It is becoming increasingly recognized by educators throughout the world that much of a child's education takes place outside the school in the informal atmosphere of the home and the play group. Not only is the Oriental child far less likely than the Ashkenazi to pick up bits of information in the home that are relevant to his schooling and his later adjustment to life in the dominant Israel society, but the Oriental's home environment is less conducive to study.

In the United States, the environmental factors hampering the education of underprivileged groups are only now beginning to receive widespread attention as part of the "War on Poverty." It is interesting to note, therefore, that in Israel public attention was already focused on this problem by Mr. Ben-Gurion during a press conference in Tel Aviv on November 30, 1962. After stressing that education was second only to defense in importance, the then Prime Minister and Minister of Defense pointed out the special difficulties facing the non-Western student, declaring:

You can't compare the child who has gone through eight years of schooling and has a corner of a table to work on at home, and parents ready, interested and capable of encouraging and helping him, with the child who has had eight years of school, but without the proper home background.

Efforts Toward a Solution:

Mr. Ben-Gurion suggested that free and compulsory schooling should start at the age of three. In order to provide equality of learning opportunity he advocated lengthening the school day or providing clubrooms where youngsters could do their homework and receive help and advice from counsellors. Such programs, which began on an experimental basis with 500 children in Beersheba, in 1958, have been expanding rapidly. On October 21, 1964, shortly after he became Prime Minister, Mr. Eshkol told the Knesset that his Government would "extend the application of the long school day, the additional school month and supplementary lessons," and take steps to expand free kindergartens. In 1964, some 21,000 three and four-year-olds were attending free kindergartens and 35,000 pupils benefitted from the long school-day program. The additional time in school, which averages three hours per afternoon, is devoted to remedial classes and special individual instruction, as well as group activities, hobbies and preparation of homework.

Another step, taken to lower the number of drop-outs in the higher grades, has been to divide the children in the sixth through eighth grades into separate classes for study of such subjects as Hebrew, English and mathematics, to enable each child to advance at his own rate.

But obviously an elementary school diploma is not sufficient preparation for life in a modern industrial society. Mr. Ben-Gurion told the press in 1962 that one of Israel's immediate goals was to extend free education, including high school and technical training to all "today or tomorrow,"



but he added that, speaking realistically, "today" might be in ten years, and "tomorrow" not before fifteen years. Ultimately, he hoped free education would be extended to the university level as well. In his October 1963 policy statement, Mr. Eshkol said that as a first step in this direction the Government would "undertake a thorough examination of the possibility of enacting legislation to extend free compulsory education for a further two years, namely, up to the age of sixteen."

The cost of secondary education in Israel is quite high, considering the prevailing wage scale. Aside from yeshivot, there are three types of secondary schools: academic, vocational and agricultural. All charge tuition, which averages about IL 500 (\$167) per year. This makes the cost of schooling prohibitive for many families, and especially for the children of non-Western origin, whose immigrant fathers constitute the core of the unskilled labor force and who earn an average wage of IL 300 (\$100) per month.

The Government has sought to provide scholarships for some of the needy high school students. To be eligible for a scholarship, the applicant must pass a battery of tests after completing elementary school. In recognition of the special difficulties facing the non-Western students, the Government "discriminates in their favor," lowering the passing grade from 80 percent to 60 percent for children of recent immigrants.

Some 32,000 pupils were receiving free secondary education in the 1964/65 academic year. This represents about one-third of all post-primary students and is a 25 percent increase in the number of full scholarship holders over the previous year. About 27,000 attend four-year high schools, while the other 5,000 are enrolled in two-year secondary schools. The remaining two-thirds of Israel's post-pri-

mary school pupils are eligible for partial grants, the stipend varying with the family's income.

Aside from the formal educational system, the Army and its military youth corps, called Gadna, have served as important educational and integrative forces. Mr. Ben-Gurion has called the Army "the largest primary and secondary school in Israel." In addition to cooperation in the program to combat illiteracy among the general population, which has already been described, the Army tests all new recruits and those who are illiterate are taught to read and write before being discharged. On a far smaller scale, the Army has begun a program of selecting especially gifted recruits from among the non-Western new immigrants, offering them an accelerated high school equivalency course and then providing scholarships for them to the Technion or one of the universities.

Teacher Shortage Endangers Integration Progress:

Aside from the special problems of the non-Western students, they are affected most severely by the general shortcomings in Israel's educational system in both facilities and staff.

Many elementary schools are little more than humble shacks. In some areas, shortage of space forces the authorities to resort to double shifts. Most critical is the shortage of qualified teachers. According to a survey prepared by the Ford Foundation for the United Jewish Appeal in 1964, 35 percent of the elementary school teachers did not have the minimum academic qualifications set by the Ministry of Education and it has become increasingly difficult to recruit the necessary number of teachers.

The survey found that there was a great dearth of secondary schools in the new development towns, which is where the non-Western immigrants are concentrated. Moreover, at the present time, only half of the teachers in



secondary schools have the required academic background, which is a Bachelor's or Master's degree. Even with the reduced standards, the school authorities are confronted with teacher shortages, especially outside the large cities. In addition, there is a severe lack of facilities such as science laboratories, libraries, gymnasias and youth centers.

This shortage of teachers and facilities, if not soon corrected, would eventually create a danger even greater than the perpetuation of Israel's division into two different social, cultural and economic classes -- what is popularly referred to as "the Two Israels." There is a danger that the two Israels will give way to one -- that of the culturally impoverished group. For without proper teachers, not only the Orientals, but a growing number of children of Ashkenazi origin as well will receive little more than a rudimentary and shallow education. The fact that their grandfathers may have given up university professorships in Europe to till the soil in Palestine, is no permanent guarantee of a high cultural level for their descendents.

This problem is of the gravest significance not only for Israel's internal development but for the future of its ties with Jewish communities in other lands and for Israel's international stature.

While Israel today cannot make even high school education available to all its youth, in the United States two-thirds of the Jewish youth of college age already attend universities, and the percentage is continuing to rise. Dr. Abraham S. Hyman of the United Jewish Appeal recently noted the implications of this educational gap as follows:

This suggests the danger that unless the educational horizons of the young Israelis are broadened, Jewish life will eventually polarize about two centers: one, a culturally depressed community and the other, a community that has had all the advantages of higher education. This twin polarization would be

fatal to all hopes for a permanent bond between Israel and American Jewry.

Abba Eban, Israel's Deputy Prime Minister and formerly Minister of Education, recently declared that "our role in international affairs, and especially our connections with the newly emerging states, proceed on the assumption of our intellectual and scientific advancement."

Mr. Ben-Gurion, who has been called "the prophet of modern Israel's rebirth," summed up the educational goal of Israel's leaders in an article in Look magazine (August 27, 1963) as follows:

Above all, we must build up our greatest asset, the crucial factor in our survival: the quality of our men and women. If we have contributed to world culture out of proportion to our numbers, it is only because we have made up by quality for our inferiority in quantity. . . .

For Israel to survive and develop, to be able to defend itself, to be able to contribute to regional and world progress, education is the keystone -- education equals survival.

In recognition of the fact that Israel could not alone shoulder the financial burden for meeting the country's educational needs, the United Jewish Appeal in 1964 established a special Israel Educational Fund. The UJA has embarked on a five-year capital fund campaign for \$127 million, the bulk of which is to be used to construct and equip 72 comprehensive and vocational high schools and to provide 15,000 additional scholarships for secondary school pupils. Expansion of facilities for teacher training are also assigned a high priority.

Israel's Needs and "The Lands of Affluence":

While solution of the country's educational problems will eventually enable Israel to train the persons it needs to maintain its cultural level, this will take many years. Israel today faces a serious shortage not only of teachers, but also of other persons with professional, technical and



managerial skills. One recent survey estimated that 40,000 such positions were presently unfilled. The problem is growing more acute as the number of trained persons fails to keep pace with the needs of a growing population and a booming economy. In the meantime, while Israel's educational facilities are being developed, Israel's leaders ask themselves, how will the country maintain its economic and scientific standards and how will it be able, in the words of Foreign Minister Meir, to absorb the newcomers from underdeveloped countries and "elevate these immigrants to a suitable level of civilization." Mrs. Meir told leaders of the Zionist Federation of Great Britain, in March 1964, that to help solve these problems and to achieve a "greater equilibrium" in the population, "we, in Israel, need immigrants from countries with a high standard."

This point was also emphasized by Prime Minister Eshkol in his address to the World Zionist Congress, in January 1965, in which he appealed for 40,000 Jewish immigrants to come annually from the Western democracies.

After expressing the hope that the Soviet Union would eventually change its policy and allow a substantial number of its Jews to join their brethren in Israel, Mr. Eshkol declared that Israel was in immediate need of immigrants from "the lands of affluence." He chided his audience of Zionist leaders for the fact that despite the resolutions they had adopted at the last Congress calling for intensified Aliyah (immigration to Israel), immigration from the Western democracies had been "only a trickle." (From January 1960 through March 1964 only 12,491 immigrants had come from Western Europe (3,484), England (2,395), and the United States and Canada (6,612).)

Calling on the Zionists to "provide a personal example," the Prime Minister stressed that "the young intelligentsia, the scientists, the technicians must come

here to help mold the State's character."

(It may be worth noting parenthetically that this statement reflects a significant change from the traditional Zionist arguments and assumptions, which had called for mass immigration from the West on the premise that Jewish life could not long be secure anywhere outside Israel. Mr. Eshkol has indicated that he understands and recognizes that the position of the Jews in the United States is not comparable to that of pre-war European Jewry, and that American Jews feel themselves to be -- and in fact are -- an integral part of American society. His call was, therefore, neither directed to the broad masses nor based on a warning of future persecution. Instead, it was an appeal to the sense of idealism of young persons who are expected to continue to be economically secure and politically free. In other words, it was to the potential Jewish Peace Corps volunteer that the Prime Minister was directing his appeal.)

Integration and Cultural Pluralism:

Several years ago, a detailed plan was reportedly prepared by the Prime Minister's office "to foster oriental art and culture, and encourage youth movements among the Asian and African sectors" of the population. This last proposal, if it were seriously implemented, might hopefully mark a change in the negative attitude of the ruling elite to the cultural patterns of the Orientals. In the past, the pressure to conform, as rapidly as possible, to the dominant culture has been so great that there is an element of sad truth in the anecdote, circulating in Israel, that when an Oriental child is asked what he would like to be when he grows up, he replies, "an Ashkenazi."

Maximo Yagupsky, the Director of the AJC's Office in Israel, contrasted two approaches to integration in an analysis of the problem in May 1962:



The "Levantinization" issue actually disguises a conflict between two concepts of integration -- a monolithic, authoritarian one, and a freer, open one which allows for diversity. The authoritarian pattern requires that people who are considered inferior be "molded" to conform to a model represented and imposed by a dominant group. The other concept is based on the principles that people are capable of growth no matter what their origins, and that people from different cultural areas are bound to retain some of their specific cultural traits and are also bound to influence each other. In this view, the acceptance of cultural pluralism in this period of transition helps rather than impairs integration. It is felt that a genuine Israeli culture and people may emerge from this dynamic exchange, this give-and-take in growing and living together, and that such organic growth holds more promise than the imposition of rigid cultural patterns by one group upon another.

At the present time, the far more rapid pace of cultural integration among the youth than among their elders has sharpened the natural tension between fathers and sons, and has greatly undermined the authority and status of the father in the Oriental family group. In traditional Middle Eastern society, the father was an imposing patriarchal figure; today in Israel, it becomes painfully apparent that his twelve year old son, who has been to school, is better able to cope with life in modern Israel than he. In their frustration, Oriental elders have sometimes directed their resentment against the schools. The adoption of a more pluralistic approach, recognizing that not all non-Western cultural patterns are bad or inherently inferior, would also help to ease the transition period for the new immigrants, and help them preserve their sense of human worth and dignity.

This points to another fact that is often lost sight of. The Oriental youth have absolutely no desire to "Levantinize" the country. The danger is rather that in their headlong rush to gain acceptance, they will discard all the elements of their own ancient cultural heritage,

without the time or opportunity to absorb fully the traditions of Western civilization. They may thus grow up to be men without a culture, possessed only of a smattering of technical skills and the external symbols of modern speech and dress. And unless Israel's educational system is broadened and strengthened, it is likely that increasing numbers of young Israelis of Ashkenazi parentage will also grow up with only a shallow and superficial awareness of Western democratic traditions and institutions.

Alex Weingrod, an anthropologist who has devoted much study to the new immigrants, concludes that:

Despite a great deal of what has been said, there is little psychological and social evidence of "Levantinism" chargeable to the immigrants from Middle Eastern countries: the absorption of these immigrants into the structure has been far greater than any impact they have had on it. Whatever failings are apparent in Israeli society are chiefly the failings of the Europeans who founded it. If embezzlement and thievery are rife, or human relations petty and nasty, it is not because of the new ascendance of Levantinism, but the result of a moral crisis within the Western community.

The solution of these more fundamental problem will thus depend upon the values transmitted to the new generation by the presently dominant Ashkenazi group. In this vital area, the Jews of the United States and other democracies can play a constructive role, through personal example and practical assistance, in the shaping of Israel's future.

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