

Complaint in Nazareth

- 8 -

1962

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SW Asia

Series Vol II, #2

Arab team, coming chiefly from farm villages in Galilee. Their opening night at the festival, in which they shared a program with Yemenite and other Jewish dance teams, was a critical success and the performers celebrated, Arabs and Israelis together, afterward. For the moment, it was comforting evidence of integration.

But not for long. At dawn the next morning, when the bulldozers began to dig the trenches for section of pipeline carrying Jordan river water to the Negev passing through their villages, these same dancers lay down in the path of the machines to block the project. The protest seemed a demonstration of solidarity with the Arab states, even though it may have had some local aspects also.⁶ One thing was clear, however, it was not the action of a co-operative Israeli citizenship—it was a reminder of the same durable resentment that had caused the slowly fused May Day riot in Nazareth in 1959.

The story impressed upon me, in the midst of seeking evidence for a definition of the emergent Israeli personality, the presence of four distinct and separate culture groups that exist in the society—each, no doubt, divisible into several subcultures. Historically, one begins with the enlightened immigrant European who, if aging, still dominates the management of the country; second, his sons and daughters, the "sab-ras" whose devotion to Israel is modern and whose outlook is nationalistic rather than religious; then the million or more oriental Jews, fathers and sons alike, whose involvement with the contemporary world of the European is still largely a novel adventure; and lastly the Arab, in the society, but not of it. Proportionately, the Arab's entry into Israeli modernity shows some evidence of being slightly more dynamic than that of the oriental Jew. One Arab out of two thousand is a student in Hebrew University, while only one oriental Jew out of ten thousand has been graduated. It would be surprising, considering that most oriental Jews originated in underdeveloped Arab countries, if these two groups were not closer in "culture time" to each other than to the European. But nonetheless, the oriental Jew is mystically, at least, part of the dominant society, while the Arab is not. The gulf is wide.

When our Arab host, with pleasant ceremony, had welcomed us

⁶ One press report, see The Jewish Observer and Middle East Review (London, September 14, 1962), blamed the incident on Israeli Communist agitation based upon allegedly inadequate government compensation for land rights. Many Arabs, now vociferously against the project, have already received acceptable payments in quiet transactions with the pipeline authority, according to the same report.