

ANTHOLOGY SERIES NO. 3

# Israel and the Geneva Conventions

THE INSTITUTE FOR PALESTINE STUDIES  
BEIRUT, 1968

## THE INSTITUTE FOR PALESTINE STUDIES

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CONVENTIONS

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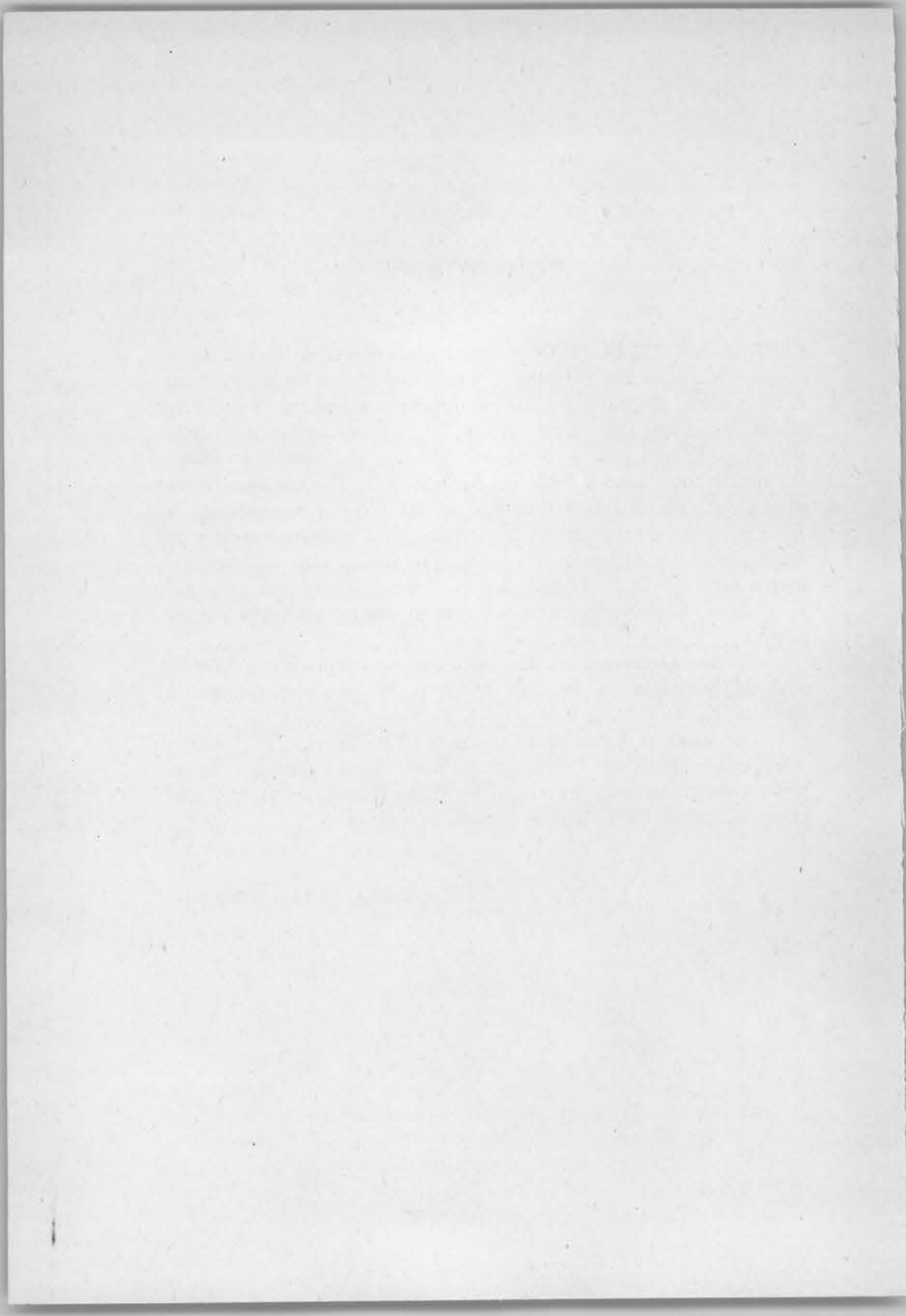
## FOREWORD

THIS IS A COLLECTION of articles, memoires, letters and documents, which appeared between July 1967 and March 1968, pertaining to the conduct of Israel's occupation forces since the June War. Three of the documents (*West Bank Story*, p. 33, *Open Letter by Israeli Intellectuals*, p. 52 and *Letter by an Israeli Officer*, p. 62) come from Israeli sources, the rest are all from non-Arab sources. The common theme of this collection is Israeli disregard of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 covering the treatment of civilians and resistance groups in territories under occupation. This conduct has become such a grave matter that the U. N. Commission on Human Rights and even the U. S. State Department have both issued strong warnings on the subject.

All the documents in this collection are reproduced in full, with the exception of *Jerusalem Diary*, p. 18, which is printed in extracts due to its length.

The Institute would like to thank *The Times*, *The Observer*, *The Sunday Times* and *Private Eye* for their kind permission to re-print articles originally published by them. References to these and other sources and the dates are given in footnotes.

Beirut, 10 May 1968.





# OCCUPATION AND THE LAW

by R. de Geouffre de la Pradelle\*

IN VIEW of the intensification of acts of resistance in occupied Arab territories and the reprisals resulting from them, it seems the right moment to remind world public opinion of the essential rules of Human Rights.

The basic argument on which the Nazis based their defence after the Second World War was that no texts of penal law, no international conventions protecting civilian populations existed at the time. We have never shared this point of view, for the rights of man need not be stipulated by specific written texts, nor need there be any such texts to define what are universally considered to be crimes against humanity.

We know that the Jews were the main victims of Nazi activities. It was, therefore, in order that such crimes should not be perpetrated anew and that those who in future might be tempted to commit them should not escape punishment by using this same argument, and that there should be no sentence passed on anyone in the absence of a previously existing text, that the Geneva Diplomatic Conference was convened in 1949.

This Conference on the one hand established a new, positive principle in international law: that of the human individual as a holder of certain specific rights. Until then, conventions were mutually binding only to the states that signed them, and individuals had no protection except through their own governments. Today, *even if*

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\* The author is a French lawyer and writer. The article first appeared in French in *Le Monde* (Paris) 8 February 1968. The English translation was published in the February 1968 Supplement to *The Facts about the Palestine Problem* issued by the Arab Women's Information Committee, the Friends of Jerusalem, (Beirut).

## 8 Israel and the Geneva Conventions

*certain governments should denounce these conventions, individuals remain protected under their articles.*

The Conference also elaborated a convention concerning the protection of civilians in wartime. This was the Fourth Convention. Its fourth article thus defines what is meant by a "protected person":

*"Protected by this Convention are those persons who, at any moment or in any manner, find themselves, in the case of conflict or occupation, under the jurisdiction of one of the parties to the conflict or of an occupying power of whom they are not citizens."*

The young State of Israel participated in this diplomatic conference and was among the first to sign and ratify the Conventions on 12 August, 1949, along with Egypt, Lebanon and Syria. Jordan later adhered to these Conventions on 29 May, 1951.

The rules of occupation are stipulated in the 3rd chapter of the Fourth Convention (Articles 27 to 78) and it is enough to recall certain passages to the reader, so that he can place any information that reaches him concerning this situation in its juridical context.

### ARTICLE 31:

*"No physical or moral coercion shall be exercised against protected persons, in particular to obtain information from them or from third parties."*

### ARTICLE 32:

*"The High Contracting Parties specifically agree that each of them is prohibited from asking any measure of such a character as to cause the physical suffering or extermination of protected persons in their hands. This prohibition applies not only to murder, torture, corporal punishments, mutilation and medical or scientific experiments not necessitated by the medical treatment of a protected person, but also to any other measures of brutality whether applied by civilian or military agents."*

### ARTICLE 33:

*"No protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited.*

*Pillage is prohibited.*

*Reprisals against protected persons and their property are prohibited."*

ARTICLE 53:

*“Any destruction by the Occupying Power of movable or immovable property belonging individually or collectively to private persons, or to the State, or to other public authorities, or to social cooperative organisations, is prohibited except where such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations.”*

The razing to the ground of the installations of refugee camps and beduin tents in the Gaza Strip as reprisals against acts of terrorism, and the systematic destruction of houses as reprisals against acts of resistance, are violations of these conventions. *The perpetrators of these acts could be prosecuted regardless of whether they were carrying out orders given to them by their superiors or implementing injunctions from their governments.*

It is sad to note that these texts which were specifically formulated in order to prevent the recurrence of crimes of which the Jews were the unhappy victims during the Second World War, are transgressed by these very same people.

By a bitter irony of fate, the victims of today have no links with the perpetrators of yesterday's crimes. And it is to the prejudice of these innocent victims that the sons of yesterday's victims today commit some of those crimes which vengeance in itself could not excuse.

It seems urgent for us to remind world opinion of the necessity for opening negotiations immediately, and that a powerful current should be started that would gather enough momentum to put an end to a situation which ultimately would mean the end of Israel. For the longer the methods of occupation now practised by the Israelis last, the more resistance there will be against the occupying power and the more the latter will tend to commit excesses which will in turn increase the hatred of those under occupation.

Apart from the facts we have mentioned, it seems that up till now Israeli forces have had enough self-control to avoid summary executions and the taking of hostages. But if the occupation continues without a diplomatic settlement, the situation will deteriorate very rapidly. The first phase of an occupation is always the mildest.

# AN OPEN LETTER

by Winifred White Nucho\*

*Dear Friends,*

THIS IS a far different letter from our usual newsletter describing hospital activities. In the past few weeks we have found ourselves in the midst of a tragic situation in the Middle East – unbelievably misrepresented by the western radio and press. We cannot but speak:

Since the outbreak of hostilities between Israel and the Arab nations on June 5th we have been bombarded from all sides by news reports – most of which were contradictory in the extreme. What was the truth of the situation? To be absolutely certain that we were not disseminating rumors, we have waited until certain friends of ours have arrived from Jerusalem. These are friends who have lived there throughout the hostilities and who can be relied on to report the situation as it was.

One such friend is an American housewife. Enclosed is her first hand report of the situation as it was up to the day she left – two weeks after the war.\*\*

Another friend who has recently come to us on her way to the United States is the wife of the warden of the Garden Tomb, Mrs. Mattar. The Mattars are of Jordanian nationality and for many years have been entrusted with the care of this beautiful spot which many believe may be the actual place where Jesus was buried. They have tended the garden there, have arranged for Christian groups to hold services, have preserved a quiet, dignified atmosphere for those who wish undisturbed meditation, and have personally accom-

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\* The authoress is the American wife of Dr. Charles K. Nucho, head of the Hamlin Hospital in Hammana, Lebanon. This letter, written on 4 July 1967 was addressed to the friends of the Hospital abroad.

\*\* See Page 14, *Open Letter* by Nancy Abu Haydar.

panied the hundreds of pilgrims who have visited daily. Their tour of the Tomb and neighboring Golgotha was no mechanical repetition of the historical facts for the benefit of tourists. It was a religious experience! Along with the impact of their words was imparted the conviction of believing Christians.

It had come time for Mr. Mattar to retire and his wife had expressed a longing to visit their married children and grandchildren now living in the States. But every time a new group of visitors would knock at the gate he would leave his dinner or whatever he was doing, thanking the Lord for the new opportunity of spreading His word. Mr. Mattar's wish was to remain at his post, and this wish was granted, for he is buried in the Garden today.

On June 5th, when the war broke out and shells were falling all around them, the Mattars and their German assistant, Sigrid, found their best place of refuge to be the Tomb itself. They stayed there all of Monday and Monday night. Early on Tuesday morning Mr. Mattar said, "My heart is at peace today and I am not afraid. I feel that I am ready to meet my Master." During a lull in bombardment he said he was going across the compound to the house - a hundred yards away - to make some tea for them. Before he left he providentially gave his wife the money he was carrying. Some time later Mrs. Mattar and Sigrid heard someone banging on the garden gate. They heard Mr. Mattar walking out to answer and heard him say, "Good morning" and then a blast of machine-gun fire. The Israeli soldiers then came into the garden and shot into the tomb where the two ladies were. When she heard them reload, Sigrid dashed out screaming. The soldiers, taken aback by the presence of an obvious foreigner, moved on with a word and wantonly machine-gunned the house from top to bottom. They emptied the remaining few dollars from Mr. Mattar's wallet.

Mrs. Mattar spent the next two days in the Dominican monastery next door. No one was allowed to remove her husband's body from the ground for more than two days. On Friday he was buried in the garden near the place so dear to him. During that time the house was thoroughly looted. On a trip back to the house Sigrid was told to wait outside for a half hour until the soldiers had finished their "searching for arms," which was the general pretext for looting in the city.

While a number of families were huddled in the blackness of the Dominican cellar, an Israeli soldier came down and ordered all

the children to be brought upstairs. They were to be used as hostages in the face of Jordanian fire. The youngsters clung to their mothers in terror as the soldier's flashlight placed into all the corners. Then to the credit of this particular soldier at least, let it be said that he remarked, "I am the son of a mother, too," and changed his mind.

By the 15th of June Mrs. Mattar was given the opportunity of leaving. She no longer had a house or family and most of her belongings were stolen. What was there to stay for? With one small suitcase and a plastic bag full of items salvaged from the ravaged house, she walked down to the center of town where Israeli buses were waiting to take refugees to the Jordan border - a distance of about 25 miles through parched country-side. Along the way were the remains of bombed ambulances with burned stretchers still in place. Near the border the bus stopped and the occupants were asked to get out. Before them was a water truck with faucets where the refugees were allowed to drink. Some smiling soldiers were passing around crackers. The bus passengers were bewildered by all this attention and wondered at the change of attitude of the Israelis until the reason became plain. Nearby were grinding the cameras of a number of television and newsmen. Mrs. Mattar describes one with the word "Life" written on his shirt-front. Israel was to be proclaimed to the world as the humane victor "feeding the refugees"! The newsmen were also busy taking pictures of nearby gypsies. These are often represented to the world as typical Arabs.

At the Jordan river the broken ends of the bridge protruded from the unusually high waters. A rope was stretched from shore to shore. The refugees were obliged to shoulder what possessions they could and, holding on to the rope, wade through the deep water to Arab-held Jordan on the other side. A trip back for more belongings was not permitted by the Israelis who have since been seen (by a British correspondent) to kick and slap and occasionally fire upon anyone attempting to return.

During Mrs. Matter's brief stopover with us in Lebanon, we were privileged to witness a superb example of the wonderful sustaining power of faith. Here is a family which lost house and possessions in 1948 when Israel first took over Palestine. During the Suez crisis in 1956 they lost a piece of land. Now Mrs. Mattar has lost not only possessions but what was infinitely more precious. And yet she is not bitter and during the time she spent in the Dominican cellar, when those around her were voicing their deep resentment of the

Israelis, she remembered that God would not listen to her prayers when her heart was full of hatred. On her knees she prayed for the forgiveness of the soldiers that had shot her husband – not knowing what they were doing. She showed us the passage that was quoted in her book of daily devotions on that terrible Tuesday:

When through the deep water I cause thee to go,  
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;  
For I will be near thee thy troubles to bless  
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

This was another example of the guiding hand that has been so evident in her life during the recent days. It is interesting to note that her special visa for entering the United States given her years ago, was valid until only a few days after she so unexpectedly needed it. Mrs. Mattar has now gone to her daughter who is studying for her PhD at Columbia University. She is going to need every bit of the consolation of the words above to sustain her in a New York delirious with happiness over the Israeli victory!

When those of you who live in the West see and hear of Arabs being described in belittling terms, remember that there are also many Christians among them like the Mattars, whose families have been Christian for centuries and whose roots are in Palestine. They are now being forced to flee through intimidation and starvation. Two days ago the Israelis announced that anyone wishing to return to his home may do so until August 10th. When the refugees left, the Israelis took away all of their papers and yet now the evacuees must prove that they have lived in Jordan in order to return. And to what will they return? To houses looted of foodstuffs and other belongings with no possibility of work and no chance of help since even the International Red Cross is not permitted by the Israelis to enter the occupied zone.

As an unfortunate by-product of our western policy, many Arabs are finding Christianity and Zionism to be synonymous and are turning away from anything Christian.

It is our earnest hope that all of you will share these letters with your church groups, and will join your prayers with ours that a solution to the tragedy of the Holy Land may be found compatible with the principles of Christian love.

Winifred White Nucho  
(Mrs. Charles K. Nucho)

# AN OPEN LETTER

by Nancy Nolan Abu Haydar\*

*Dear Editor:*

MY HUSBAND AND I, along with our three children, lived in Jerusalem from September 1966 until June 19, 1967. During this time, my husband, a physician, was spending his sabbatical year of leave from the faculty of the medical School of the American University of Beirut at the Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem. There he was engaged in research work concerning malnutrition in Arab refugee children. Up to three weeks ago we knew Jerusalem as it lived in peace and security, its people happy and contented as they began to experience a taste of prosperity which they have worked so hard to attain in the 20 years since disaster struck them during the Arab-Israeli war of 1948.

Today Jerusalem is an occupied city, ruled over by an enemy determined to irrevocably change its physical appearance and break the spirit of its people. These objectives are being pursued in many ways with the utmost speed and precision as we saw very clearly. After three hours' notice to evacuate their homes, the homes of approximately 250 families were bulldozed down in the Moroccan Quarter of the Old City to make way for a paved square in front of the Wailing Wall. In like manner the Jewish Quarter, so called after the Jews who rented land there prior to 1948 from the Arab land trusts, was destroyed so that a road leading directly to the Wailing Wall might be built. The 2,000-3,000 people made homeless by these combined operations, which were accomplished within 24 hours, wandered the streets with the few possessions they were

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\* The authoress is the American wife of Dr. Najib Abu Haydar of the American University, Beirut. The letter was written on 26 June 1967.



able to snatch up and carry until finally, in desperation, most of them had no alternative but to board buses which took them to the banks of the Jordan River where they crossed over into what remains of Free Jordan. The Israeli authorities made absolutely no attempt to find or provide any kind of alternative housing for any of these people.

Still more terrible than such forced dispersals is the immediate danger of starvation which faces the 30,000 people who live within the old walled City of Jerusalem. Many of these people have been impoverished as a result of the looting of stores and homes and of being robbed of the money they carried in their pockets. As a result of all these factors the vast majority of these people have no money with which to buy the remaining stocks of foodstuffs. We have, with the help of friends, canvassed much of the Old City population and have neither talked to nor heard of anyone who has received food from the Israeli authorities, in spite of the announcement in the June 21st issue of *The Jerusalem Post* saying that "thousands of loaves of bread and bottles of milk" had been distributed free of charge to the residents of the Old City. Unless these people do receive help from the outside world within a very short period of time they will have to choose between starvation and emigration to Free Jordan, thereby abandoning their homes and businesses. This pathetic situation has been deliberately contrived, I feel, as a means of forcing these people to leave. The Israeli authorities can so destroy and confiscate more and more property until the demographic structure of the Old City has been completely remodeled to suit the long term objectives of the Israeli Government.

Since, up to the day of our departure, there was no international relief agency working in Jerusalem, or in any other section of occupied Jordan, which could report to the world about these violations of all humanitarian principles, the Israeli authorities can pursue their aims unwatched and unhindered. All attempts of the Red Cross and its Moslem counterpart, the Red Crescent, to give material aid to the population of occupied Jordan have been ignored by the Israeli authorities. This attitude has been dramatically demonstrated in the incident of recent days when a Red Cross unit trying to enter the West Bank of Jordan across the ruined bridges over the River was fired upon by Israeli soldiers. At the same time all efforts by the people of Jerusalem themselves to organize relief have been thwarted. The Greek Patriarch in Jerusalem called for a meeting of all heads

of religious communities in the Old City so that they might make plans to help their people. He promptly received a summons from the office of the Israeli military governor who told him that such meetings were forbidden and would only bring trouble to everyone involved. To emphasize this point the Patriarch, a man of about 80 years, was denied the use of his official car and returned to the Patriarchate, a distance of about two miles, on foot.

While the Israeli authorities proclaim to the world that all religions will be respected and protected and post notices identifying the Holy Places, Israeli soldiers and youths are throwing "stink bombs" in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Church of St. Anne, whose crypt marks the birthplace of the Virgin Mary, has been virtually destroyed and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem was damaged. The wanton killing of the Warden of the Garden Tomb by the Israelis was followed by shooting into the Tomb itself in an attempt to kill the Warden's wife. The desecration of the Christian churches, especially the Church of the Nativity and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, included smoking in the churches, littering the churches and taking dogs inside. Moslem worship has been drastically curtailed.

The deliberate bombing of hospitals in Bethlehem and Jerusalem, destruction of ambulances clearly marked as such, the strafing of doctors retreating on foot from an army hospital, napalm bombs used on retreating soldiers and civilians, terror tactics such as threatening the use of gas in Bethlehem and the kidnapping of children from the Old City of Jerusalem, are all calculated to drive the people out of their homes and country. And the widescale, organized looting of stores and homes are some of the other terrible things which we have seen ourselves. It should be stressed that all of these things are being done by Israeli Army personnel, many of them officers.

While Jerusalem struggles to survive, the world's attention is absorbed by political discussions and the world Christian conscience is being deluded and poisoned by a world-wide hate campaign directed against the Arabs. The fact that this psychological warfare is raining indignities upon people from all Arab countries, and in many instances, involving people we know who have recently returned from Western countries, makes it all the more diabolical and destructive in its implications than any of the heartbreaking effects of the recent war. This massive propaganda effort launched by world Zionism must be recognized as a diversionary tactic whose ultimate aim is to do

nothing less than to finally and completely sever all relationships between the Western world and the Arab world by engendering bitter hatred between the two.

I appeal to every person who reads this letter to answer this campaign of hate with a campaign of Christian love and concern for all the people in the Arab world who are suffering from the effects of aggression, deprivation and malice. I believe that only the immediate and concerted action by people of all faiths the world over will save Jerusalem from demographic and spiritual obliteration.

Sincerely yours,  
Nancy Nolan Abu Haydar

Beirut, Lebanon

# JERUSALEM DIARY

of Sister Marie-Terèse of the Companions  
of Jesus\*

(EXTRACTS)

WE HAVE JUST EXPERIENCED a war in the one place in the world which is dearest to our hearts, in a place where its horror, its monstrosity and its senselessness seemed the most intolerable: We have just lived through the war in Jerusalem.

*June 8*

— Dozens of people whose houses had collapsed ran crying in the street. The children followed as best they could. . . . A hundred people took refuge in the abbey. Father Paul asked them to shed their arms if they had any. One man brought out a small pocket knife! Everyone went down into the cellar.

The firing grew louder, quite near us. . . . Would they fire on us? Finally we heard the first words in Hebrew. . . . I looked through a crack in the door and saw the first two Israeli soldiers. Helmeted, machine-guns in hand, they advanced stealthily.

Father Paul said: "It is over—they have passed." We opened the door again so that the menaced people might enter. A poor father said he had to leave, that his wife and five children were still trapped in the ruins. . . . Father Paul went with him.

. . . . When Father Paul returned he carried three dying children on a stretcher. He had found the Muslim quarter where he lived bombed by Israeli planes. The man he had accompanied found his

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\* Published in *Témoignage Chrétien*, (Paris) 27 July 1967.

wife and five children crushed, mutilated by a bomb. I took the handle of the stretcher to help them to the hospital. . .

Inside the hospital the father who had already lost all his children tearfully embraced a dying child. The hospital staff was terrified by the arrival of the Israelis.

. . . Scarcely did the children arrive at the hospital when they were handed to me dead. . . A terrible odor emanated from somewhere. I opened a door and recoiled in fright: a mountain of dead bodies. I closed it and waited at the door.

. . . On one side of the hospital was a demolished Jordanian cannon. It was this which had attracted the planes, but three innocent families who suffered. One woman had to have her arm amputated. All their faces were covered with severe burns which made black holes in their skin. They said nothing, they did not even move. They lay there with their black eyes, terrified and stunned, wide open.

Father Paul organized more teams of men to find the wounded. In the streets filled with the sound of mortars and broken windows, the Arabs had hastily torn up and thrown out photographs of their relatives in military uniform. How they must have been afraid!

. . . On our way back to the hospital we discovered a child walking slowly at the end of one street, his arms outstretched. The Israeli soldiers cried out to him: "Get out—Go back!" The child walked on. I went to his side. He was barefoot, with pieces of glass lodged in his feet. I asked him: "Where are you from?" He replied: "Where are you from?" Again I asked, "Where are you from, where is mother?" He repeated with haggard eyes, "Where is mother?" He had gone mad. I brought him to the abbey. When we reached the door he saw the hand used as a knocker and cried: "Ah! Id Allah!" — "Ah! The hand of God!"

I continued down the street and found Father Paul near a wagon with three wheels. Over it was a plank covered with a blanket. We raised the blanket: it was a young woman, dead, and completely white. We brought the wagon back to the hospital. How heavy it was! Once arrived, we removed the plank to bring it to the entrance. I turned back to the wagon which I had thought empty and uttered such a cry that Father Paul and the Israeli soldiers came running: five small children, one of them a two-week-old baby, lay there dead, as white as porcelain statues. It was horrible. One by one I brought them out, placing them on the plank with their mother. These we left in the ruins while we took care of the wounded children who were

still alive. The father, arrested by the Israelis, had not been able to bring his family any farther. Father Paul gently picked up a tiny red baby shoe and tucked it in his pocket.

### *June 9*

... We went to the hospital to bury the dead which were piling up at the entrance, but we had no car or ambulance.

The odor was so awful in that heat that we had to wear masks. Father Paul and Father Raynier, from Sainte-Anne, did the hard work. I handed them the blankets. We walked in the blood and worms. In our despair of not having any sort of vehicle, an Israeli military ambulance came to take away the body of a wealthy Englishman... For the rest of the dead there was no help; we begged them for assistance, but to no avail.

So, one by one we carried them. ... As we approached the Muslim cemetery, the Jewish authorities arrived: Dayan and Eshkol. The Israelis applauded the procession of cars going to the temple. I decided to uncover the wagon where the woman and children lay dead. Some Jewish women and a soldier recoiled in horror: perhaps they will remember. Then an Israeli soldier, machine gun in hand, leaped at me and shouted: "Hide that! Hide it!" I obeyed more out of respect for the dead than for that voice and that expression which brought back memories of World War Two.

We went to a cemetery where a man was burying his wife and daughter... My habit was soaked with blood. Upon leaving the cemetery I saw some Israeli girls with revolvers in their hands. They were standing there laughing, drunk with triumph.

One Israeli came up and addressed Father Paul, who had not recognized him. "I am your friend, B., from Haifa."

"Ah! But you look so weary!"

"No—just disgusted by these Israeli bandits who have pillaged and sacked like vandals. In the G... area our soldiers killed two women to steal their jewelry... I could tell you much more, but I must leave"... An Israeli soldier asked from a jeep, "What's this? Haven't all the Arabs left yet?" —

We wanted to go to Bethlehem... so we went down to the street to find a car which would take us there... The odor of death was everywhere. A car driven by the son of a very well-known Israeli stopped and he offered to drive us. I noticed that this stolen car was

a Jordanian ambulance, the one which we needed to carry the wounded and dead. We stopped in front of a store which was being looted. Israeli girls were leaving with arms full of packages of detergents and all sorts of things. . . On the road we passed a dead woman in a ditch.

Bethlehem had undergone a full half-hour of bombing including the hospital. There were 30 dead.

Israeli tanks were in front of the Basilica, their guns pointed at the village. The people of Bethlehem were terrified. Since the arrival of the Israelis, cars had circulated announcing through their loudspeakers: "You have two hours to leave your homes and flee to Jericho or Amman. If you don't, your homes will be destroyed." This time, we decided to note everything and make a report to the Israeli officials to save what could be saved of peace for the future, for these incitements and psychological pressures to make the Arabs leave were very serious. We began to think that the Israelis may very well have done the same the first time, creating the original refugee problem.

. . . We left for Jerusalem. . . going slowly to find the dead woman we saw the night before in the ditch. She was still there. We stopped and got out: she was still clutching two loaves of bread she had gone to get for her children during the battle. We made a hole under a rock and buried her with the bread. Two Muslims came to help us cover her, repeating their prayer: "God is great; only God is great." We prayed with them. They embraced us and thanked us. We left. Two miles farther we found two wounded Arabs on the roadside who had been lying under the sun for three days. Many Israeli cars had passed but none stopped. We brought them to Jerusalem.

### *June 12, 13 and 14*

We had an argument with Levi, an Israeli administrator sent to the Old City. He would not let us speak and said he wanted to requisition the abbey. . . Impossible to speak of the Geneva Convention. The attitude of the Israelis became unbearable.

. . . We visited occupied Jordan and saw Jenin, Nablus and the surrounding villages. We brought the wounded to hospitals since the ambulances had no gasoline; there were no cars as they had all been stolen. Everywhere we observed pillage, misery, and at Nablus, people burned by napalm.

Jordanian soldiers, dead in the fields, had not yet been buried;

the stench was foul. There was curfew everywhere: the Jordanians could not circulate or work. We could not help but note that if the first wave of Israelis . . . avoided unnecessary destruction, the second was formed of thieves, pillagers and sometimes murderers, and the third was even more disturbing, for it seemed to concentrate on systematic destruction.

At Nablus we saw hundreds of families under the olive trees; they slept in the open. They told us they were from Qalkilya and were not allowed to go back. We went to Qalkilya to see what was happening; we received a sinister impression. The city was being blown up by dynamite. Israeli civilians came to loot. Two of them were walking in the street with skull-caps on their heads and a suitcase in their hands. We watched them approach. As they came nearer one put his finger on the trigger of his gun. I, who had not seen his gesture, asked him in Hebrew: "Is it heavy?" For a moment, we stayed face to face. Then they turned away. The Devil was on the prowl.

An Israeli officer stopped his car and looked out the window. We asked him as innocently as possible where we were. He looked at us disdainfully and said in Hebrew: "It was Qalkilya; now it is Kfar Saba." (Kfar Saba is the Israeli location nearest Qalkilya.) We felt we had better leave before we met the same fate as Qalkilya.

In Jerusalem, 400 poor families were expelled without the least idea where to go . . . now what is their future? The Israelis had won the war. Were they going to lose the peace?

We brought a young woman who was injured from Jenin to Nazareth's hospital. The next day there was a commotion about her among the Arabs of Nazareth: the Israelis wanted to take her to Jenin. She replied: "I want to go with those who brought me."

### *June 15*

. . . We left for Jenin, bringing the woman with us, but in the hospitals of Jenin there were no more antibiotics or antigangrene medications, and the International Red Cross had not yet received authorization to work in this zone occupied by the Israeli army.

. . . When we arrived back in Jerusalem, we found that the abbey had an extra window. The bombardment had blasted a hole in the wall of the kitchen. Father Paul, who was extremely exhausted, had become quite ill.

During this time we observed the expulsion of hundreds of families



from Jerusalem. Father Paul, still very sick, helped us from his bed to make the report of what we saw and verified for ourselves.

..We went to see General Rabin, the Israeli Chief of Staff. He told us that although the situation was not entirely under control in the occupied areas, he was willing to see our report. He said he had not realized the seriousness of the situation...he gave orders over the telephone...I believe that he knew very well what was going on but that he did not realize we knew enough to make such a report. It is much better for peace that they feel they are under observation...

### *June 23, 24 and 25*

Anguish has seized us like a beast which strangles and crushes the heart. The war is over, but we have seen the slaughtered lamb too closely. I constantly imagine myself holding that two-week-old baby, crushed and covered with blood. When I awake at night, these images run through my mind, and I want to scream. Father Paul is so shaken that he can do nothing.

### *July 1*

We decided to go back to the occupied territories...In Nablus, life was beginning to revive, but there was still no work. The Red Cross had not yet arrived: supplies were almost exhausted. Exports had been stopped; farmers were obliged to sell at extremely low prices. Many families whose sons work in Kuwait, had to leave for Amman. The Israelis were far from restraining them. They only asked that they sign papers saying that they were leaving of their own free will. But after the provocations and the expulsions which we witnessed, this seemed to us but a political maneuver.

We then went to Qalkilya. At one point we came across a sign which read: "Do not use this road. There is no security," This told us we were going the right way. Fortunately there were no army outposts.

We arrived by way of the forbidden road: the first houses to be destroyed were there. Some people had returned; then it was true! They came back to the ruins...The children slept under demolished roofs. There was no water or very little. Some 7,000 people of the 16,500 of Qalkilya had come back. ...But to what did they return!

It was inhuman.

The former mayor of Qalkilya had come back, too. We went to see him. He told us everything:

"During the fighting, five per cent of the villagers were buried alive, and half the people fled to the hills when the Jordanian army left. The Israelis expelled the second half of the population, but not immediately. First they forbade the people to leave their houses for three days. Wednesday, at 4:00 p.m. an officer came to say: 'Leave the village because Iraqi planes are going to bomb it.' Then they took them by bus to Azzun, about 25 miles away." The mayor was the last to leave.

Meanwhile, the Israelis, under orders, undertook the destruction of the city. Sunday, the mayor asked to see General Dayan to get permission for part of the population to return to the ruins. About 2,500 of these people were refugees from the first war. UNRWA had helped them to rebuild their small houses, now once again in ruins.

In front of the mayor's house the people lined up to receive bread. Meanwhile, "Kol Israel", the Israeli radio station, broadcast lies about Qalkilya. For example: "Qalkilya's population has returned to the city. Those whose houses were destroyed are being helped to rebuild them. Normal life is reviving..." We thanked the Arab mayor of Qalkilya, who resembled a patriarch watching carefully over his flock. He gave us his final information under the black, angry eyes of an Israeli officer. We thanked everyone, including the officer, and returned.

We now had a most difficult task before us: to get to Latrun. We had heard that it would be very difficult: all ways of access were forbidden and watched more closely than those at Qalkilya. At Ramallah, we encountered the outpost guarding the route. Although we represented an improvised Red Cross...the commander refused to let us pass. After an hour-long argument, we turned back to Jerusalem...

## *July 2*

We awoke the next day thoroughly determined to get to Latrun. The sun was shining, and the Israeli flag flew over the Wailing Wall. The space once occupied by the 400 expelled families had been razed to make room for the crowds of Jewish schoolchildren and others who came to contemplate the Wall. They knelt in front of the stones.

But because I had watched children dying under the bombs, no stone in Jerusalem held any value for me any longer; only the immense suffering of the children of this earth, whether they be Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist or communist, black or white, yellow or brown.

Why was it impossible to get to Latrun? We went to get a permit from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to circulate freely...we asked if it were necessary to specify Latrun... 'No,' they replied. "This is all you need."

With this paper we returned to Ramallah and saw the commander...But this time, too, he refused to let us through, saying there were still troop movements in the area and it was dangerous.

We left his office and decided to try to get by the post even though the word "Latrun" was not marked on our pass. Maybe the soldiers would not be the same ones as yesterday...Our Arab friend driving the car said suddenly: "Father, there is no army. It looks like no one is there. I am going ahead!" He had scarcely finished when we passed through! He was right. The soldiers had been replaced by military police. Two policemen were seated calmly at the entrance of the guard-house about 50 yards from the road. Thank God, they had no time to act. We entered Latrun.

And there was what the Israelis did not want us to see: three villages systematically destroyed by dynamite and bulldozers. Alone, in the silence, mules wandered about the debris. Occasionally a piece of crushed furniture or a torn cushion would be sticking out of the mass of plaster, stone and cement. A pan and a blanket lay abandoned in the middle of the road...They had no time to save anything!

Israeli tractors from a neighboring kibbutz hurried to work the Arab land.

We arrived at the monastery of Latrun. Israeli soldiers were guarding the entrance. They looked at us suspiciously. Then, since we had passed the other barriers, they let us through. The monks seemed like prisoners, so closely were they guarded. The Father welcomed us warmly, surprised at this un hoped-for visit. He told us:

"On the evening of the fifth, the Jordanian soldiers began to leave, advising the people to go, too. Some of them left, some took refuge in the monastery, and the rest stayed in their homes. Since the sixth...Israeli soldiers took them away in tractors...they said they would be taken to Jordan. After that, the tractors stayed at the monastery. The Israelis said they were for the kibbutz. On the

night of the 26th or 27th, eight bulldozers razed Amuas, two destroyed Yulo and two Beit Nuba."

### *July 4*

... What matters to us now is to understand the reason for hate. At the time of the creation of Israel, were things as we saw them today? How many villages were razed? How many families expelled? Now we know that it was not the Arab armies who made the population flee and leveled the villages: they did not have time.

At nightfall we reached Bethlehem, where we found the same problem as in Jerusalem: no work. . . Jordanian currency was worthless, and Israelis were buying out the stores. When Arab stock has been exhausted, the new stocks came from Israeli stores, but at three times the regular price. The Jordanian banks were still closed.

The next morning we left for Hebron and the village of Suriff. Thirteen houses were destroyed after the Israelis warned: "This is a time to settle old accounts; leave your homes if you want to live." In fact, one man who lingered a little too long was shot down.

In the afternoon, we left for Jericho and the Allenby Bridge. It is there the refugees must cross. They must walk on a broken bridge carrying their children and baggage, sometimes having to walk in water with only a rope stretched from side to side to help them. Israeli soldiers sitting in easy chairs have been watching them pass like this for weeks. If they had wanted to move their tanks over the river during the war, the bridge would have been repaired in a matter of hours! Why should they humiliate these people so? Below, on the bridge, expressions of hate; above the bridge, looks of disdain. But it is the terrified expressions on the faces of the children before the demolished bridge which wound the most.

As we were about to leave, a sobbing woman approached us. She said she just crossed the bridge to help part of her family which was leaving, but she had to go back to Bethlehem where her children were. The soldiers told her she could not return. We thought this could be easily arranged, but the officer, sitting in his armchair, told us: "This woman signed. . . and they know if they sign they cannot return." We had no success. She had to leave with the others. So much for her husband and children in Bethlehem!

We returned to Jerusalem. Just outside Jericho, we came across a blackened vehicle of the Jordanian army. On top of the car a mark

was still discernible: the Red Crescent. It was a Jordanian ambulance transporting the wounded. Napalm killed them all.

When we arrived in Israeli Jerusalem, we went to see the International Red Cross representatives. From them we learned that the Red Cross did not have permission to go anywhere and that no representative could move without an Israeli officer by his side. Moreover, the messages they tried to transmit between divided families had to go to the censor's office where they were unduly delayed. They had not received permission to go to Qalkilya or Latrun, and when they tried to reach the Allenby Bridge, they received permission for a few hours only. They were, therefore, concentrating their efforts on exchange of prisoners.

### *July 3*

Three professors from Scientific Research came to visit us. They were doing research in Israel for UNESCO. They asked questions and reflected upon them, for, they said, "this problem has been very hard for us. We could not see it clearly in Europe, and we think that we must make an effort to understand where the truth is in the Arab-Israeli conflict."

We told them what we had seen in the past few days, which shed a dreary light on the drama we had witnessed for almost ten years. We tried to explain the basic causes of the conflict so that effective remedies might be applied for peace with justice: first, the refugees, beginning with the Israelis who were victims of anti-semitism; then the international imperialism of money of which the Arabs are the victims, and Israel, too, in the long run; and finally the danger inherent in the pretensions of a people to territorial acquisition in the name of Divine Right.

But where are there men who are free enough and strong enough to bear the truth?

# THE FATE OF THE REFUGEES

by Ian Gilmour, M.P., & Dennis Walters, M.P.\*

GENERAL DAYAN, the Israel Defence Minister, told the press on July 25 that "If I had to make a choice to live under my own people—whether I admire kings or not—or under foreign occupation, I would have gone to my own people." General Dayan has not seen the appalling conditions in the new Jordanian refugee camps, nor has he spoken to their inhabitants. We have.

Certainly they wish to live with their own people and in their own country, but they do not wish to remain as refugees. In fact, the overwhelming majority wish to return to their homes even in the present situation. At present, however, so far from returning to their homes, Jordanians are still leaving them in streams.

The new refugee camps are dotted over Jordan. In spite of the heroic efforts of British and other voluntary workers and the courageous activity of the Jordan authorities, the conditions in these camps inevitably vary only from the appalling to the impossible. There are not even enough tents, and many of those that there are unsuitable—being of thin white nylon, what a Jordanian called "American Sunday picnic" tents.

We saw children being medically treated in tents in which the temperature was 120°F, with totally inadequate facilities. So far, there has been no epidemic worse than measles and rampant gastroenteritis. But unless the camps are soon emptied and the refugees

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\* The authors are members of the British House of Commons. Their article was published in *The Times*, (London) 27 July 1967. It is reprinted here by permission.

allowed to return to their previous homes, nobody can foresee what outbreaks may occur. One camp we visited contained 12,000 inhabitants; with even 5,000 it would have been over-crowded.

Mr. Christopher Sykes, in his book *Crossroads to Israel*, a work which is certainly not unfriendly to the Zionist case, wrote of 1948: "But if the exodus was by and large an accident of war in the first stage, in the later stages it was consciously and mercilessly helped on by Jewish threats and aggression towards Arab populations."

The Israel argument again is that the refugees left of their own accord. And certainly many of those who were in the refugee camps at, for example, Jericho, left because of sheer panic caused by the war. Equally certainly the Israelis have not used the terrorist methods that were used in 1948 by the Irgun, whose leader, Mr. Menachim Beigin, is now a member of the Israel Cabinet. This time, though rifle butts do seem to have been used in some cases (we saw their imprint on some of the refugees), psychological methods have in general been employed.

According to refugee witnesses a carpenter and many others of the former residents of Bethlehem were told that unless they left within two hours, they and their houses would be blown up. They left.

At one village, in which a United Nations Relief and Works Agency employee was living, after the leading Arab was seen talking to the Israel commander, a rumour suddenly spread that anybody remaining in the village one hour later would be killed. All the inhabitants left, and, by a fortunate coincidence, they found just outside the village buses provided to transport them to the River Jordan.

In other cases, the intimidation that the refugees allege has been longer drawn out; for example, soldiers knock at houses a number of times each night; after a bit the children are reduced to nervous wrecks and the family decides to leave. As an English charitable worker at one of the Jordanian refugee camps that we visited said: "There are any number of ways of so threatening people that they feel forced to leave."

After talking to a great many of the refugees, a surprising number of whom, including the children, speak English, and to many neutral observers in the camps, we are convinced that after the initial panic the bulk of the refugees have been and still are being forced out.

Many, of course, have left not because of physical but because of financial pressure. Deprived of their homes, sometimes with their

possessions looted, with the banks closed, and with contributions from Kuwait and other parts of the Arab world cut off, some of the refugees were compelled to opt for the meagre rations of the refugees camps as preferable to total destitution at home.

Others, too, have left because their houses were blown up or knocked down. Not only has much of Qalqiliya been bulldozed; about 10 other villages have suffered the same fate. In Jerusalem we saw the rubble of Arab houses which have been demolished to make a large piazza and a car park in front of the Wailing Wall.

The Israeli attitude to the refugees becomes clearer when their return rather than their expulsion is considered. Most people in Britain probably believe that Israel has agreed to their return and that repatriation is now satisfactorily proceeding. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Certainly on one day, in front of television cameras, 144 were allowed to return over the Allenby Bridge. Unfortunately, there was no television to record that over other bridges on that same day, more than three times that figure were still going in the other direction. And since July 10 so far as we could establish, not one single refugee has been allowed to return, and the sad traffic to exodus has continued at a rate of about 1,000 a day. A fortnight ago, the Red Cross gave to the Israelis a priority list of 450 hardship families, and they have daily submitted further lists; when we left Amman on Tuesday no reply had yet been received.

We, together with two Labour colleagues, crossed the Allenby Bridge, on which we waited two and a half hours for permission to enter what was variously called "Israel" or "Israel territory". We were able to observe Israel's behaviour to the Arab population, behaviour which, because of our arriving unexpectedly, had not been suitably adjusted so as to make humanitarian reading in the western press. The arrival of Arab families with their children and all their possessions—other, of course, than their land and houses which they had left in the hands of the occupying power—piled perilously high on ramshackle lorries, and the hazardous passage over a broken-down bridge into an uncertain and possibly desperate future, was saddening enough. But the arrival of batches of prosperous Israel tourists to witness this scene of human misery did little to cheer us.

The contrast between the indulgence granted to Israel trippers and the attitude of the guards to the Arabs was shocking. Tourists can go to the Israel end of the bridge and photograph the departing



refugees. Arabs who have been separated from their families are not allowed to go to the same spot to see if their children are alive.

By devious means they send messages across and arrange to be at the bridge at the same time: but the Israelis do not permit them to keep the rendezvous. While we were there, a young Arab mother was refused permission to go to the place where she could wave to her family from whom she had been separated for seven weeks. Vehement protests from us at this inhuman behaviour drew no response; but after the commander returned from Jericho he finally relented.

When we returned to Amman, we traced the girl's father. We found that he had left his home in 1948 with the girl, then aged two. Then he had three children: now he has eight. And his capacity to rebuild his life and his earning power is much less than it was 20 years ago. Fearful of the future, he is not even confident that he will not be driven out a third time. There are many like him.

All refugee cases are hard and the separation of families is a particularly cruel and common aspect. But some are especially agonizing and it is only from these that the Red Cross list is compiled at the moment.

The Israel offer to allow repatriation applies only to those who crossed the Jordan before July 4. Refugees who crossed after that day have to sign a form saying they left voluntarily. Anybody, therefore, who leaves now loses his or her right to return.

According to the Israelis, the present horrifying position is due to Jordan's intransigence. This is false. Jordan has accepted the internationally recognized Red Cross forms; Israel has not. The Israelis have devised a new style form. This elaborate form, including such vital matters as the name of the refugee's grandfather, begins with the words, "State of Israel" followed by "Application for Permit to Return to the West Bank". This carried the implication that the West Bank is now part of Israel and that the Jordanians were dealing directly with Israel.

Acceptance of the Red Cross forms would have involved none of these complications and would have already settled the worst hardship cases. The Israelis appear to be attempting to barter the fate of 200,000 refugees for a document implying some kind of probably worthless recognition by Jordan.

Why then is Israel behaving in this way? The thinning out of the Arab population on the west bank serves Israel's objectives. Mr.

Ben-Gurion has in the past made little attempt to conceal Israel's territorial ambitions; nor in an extraordinary speech in Paris on July 18, did Mr. Walter Eytan, the present Israel Ambassador and a former Director General of the Israel Foreign Office. Mr. Eytan, a charming and highly civilized man, told his audience that save perhaps for Sinai, Israel had not taken anything that belonged to anybody else.

The most likely next territorial claim for Israel is the Israel-occupied west bank. The difficulty, as Mr. Eban, their Foreign Minister, has pointed out, is that "there is a conflict between Israel's demographic and her territorial interests". In other words, the territory which she covets is inhabited by Arabs and, to quote General Dayan, she wants her land to be absolutely Israeli. However, the conflict would be resolved if the Arabs were removed from the west bank in sufficient numbers. As in 1948 it is in the interest of Israel to reduce the Arab population in Israel-occupied areas.

Whether or not Israel wishes to preserve a Jordanian regime, the one-way flow of refugees is a gain for her. At present, Israel has achieved an important foreign policy advantage—the near-identification of herself with the west and of the Arabs with the east. The survival of Jordan is one of the chief obstacles to this achievement. Before, the survival of Jordan was an obvious Israel interest. Now, to judge from her behaviour, this is no longer so. King Husain still retains much western sympathy. A revolutionary regime would present no such problems.

All Israel's immediate objectives are furthered by the continued flow of refugees. Yet the exodus is not in Israel's long-term interests. It creates another obstacle to the pacification of the Middle East. That pacification, if it is to be achieved at all, must include the speedy removal of the first most obvious and profound source of Arab bitterness and resentment. As one harassed official in Amman said to us: "There is a great deal of talk about peace on the other side, but none about justice."

## WEST BANK STORY\*

*And the King of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them: My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them? And he answered, thou shalt not smite them: wouldst thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and thy bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink.. And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away.. And the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.*

*KINGS 11.6. (21-23).*

AMONG THE MANY political problems confronting plucky little Israel in the aftermath of the June war is the principle of one man, one vote. The principle has been rigorously maintained throughout the history of the state of Israel, in which, before last June's war, there were 2.1 million Jews and approximately 200,000 Arabs. In the 'new Israel', however, – that is the old country plus the lands conquered in the war – there are 2.1 m. Jews and approximately 1.5 m. Arabs. Given a higher birth rate among Arabs, one man one vote in a new, bigger Israel could eventually mean an Arab majority, or, at least, a multi-racial state.

No one doubts now that Israel will take over almost all the territory which she took by force. The only serious question is whether or not she will seize the Suez canal, and, 'in the interests of all nations', open it as an 'international waterway'. But the problem for all true-

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\* Published in *Private Eye* (London periodical) on 10 November 1967. Reprinted by permission.

blooded Jews is: how to annexe all that land without giving votes to the people who live on it.

What a pity, then, that, for some unexplained reason, more publicity has not been given to the simple solution as effected by the Israeli army, – that is: first, unsettle the Arab villages in the West Bank area whose inhabitants have not yet flown to Jordan; and second, make sure that the minimum of refugees who have crossed the Jordan return to their homes.

Such a policy is admirably effective. Yet the reports from the Jordan border by a number of reservist soldiers in the Israeli army have not been given full publicity by the Israeli press. The Jewish writer, Amos Kenan, for instance, was called up to serve his country in that area, and, on return, gave a long interview to the Israeli weekly paper, *Haolem Hazeh*. The interview was taken down, typed and signed by Kenan. But it has never been published. Here is an extract:

“The unit commander told us that it had been decided to blow up three villages in our sector; they are Beit-Nuba, Amaos, and Yalu. This was explained by strategic, tactical and security considerations. The objects were, first, to straighten the border at Latrun; second, to punish the bases of murderers; third, to prevent bases from future infiltrators.

“We were told to search the houses of the village, to take prisoner any armed men. Unarmed people were to be allowed to pack up their belongings and to be told to go to the nearby village of Beit-Sura. We were ordered to block the entrances of the village and prevent inhabitants returning from their hideouts, after they had heard Israeli broadcasts urging them to return to their homes, from entering the village. The order was to shoot over their heads and tell them not to enter the village.

“In the houses we found one wounded Egyptian commando officer, and some very old people. At noon the first bulldozer arrived and pulled down the first house at the edge of the village. Within 10 minutes the house was turned into rubble. The olive trees, cypresses were all uprooted. After the destruction of three houses the first refugee column arrived from the direction of Ramallah.

“We told them to go to Beit-Sura. They told us that they were driven out everywhere, forbidden to enter any village, that they were wandering like this for four days, without food, without water, some dying on the road. They asked to return to the village, and said we

better kill them. Some had a goat, a lamb, a donkey or camel. A father ground wheat by hand to feed his four children. On the horizon we could see the next group arriving.

"The children cried. Some of our soldiers started crying too. We went to fetch them water. We stopped a car with a major, two captains and a woman. We took a jerrican of water and distributed it to the refugees. We also handed out cigarettes and candy. More soldiers burst out crying. We asked the officers why are these refugees sent from one place to another and driven out of everywhere. They told us this was good for them, let them go. Moreover, said the officers, why do we care about the Arabs anyway.

"We drove them out. They go on wandering in the south like lost cattle. The weak die. In the evening we found out that we have been deceived, for in Beit-Sura too bulldozers commenced destruction and they were forbidden to enter. We found out that not only in our sector was the border straightened out for security reasons but in all sectors. The promise in the radio was not kept, the declared policy was never carried out.

"Our unit was outraged. At night we were ordered to guard the bulldozers, but the unit was so outraged that no soldier was willing to carry on such duties. In the morning we were moved from the area. None of us understood how could Jews behave like this.

"The chicken and doves were buried in the rubble. The fields were turned into waste land in front of our eyes. The children who went crying on the road will be Fedayeen in 19 years, in the next round. Thus have we lost on that day the victory.

Amos KENAN."

*Haolam Hazeh* and other Israeli newspapers have also been approached by several other reservist soldiers in the West Bank area, with exciting stories of their exploits. Once again, however, only a selection have been published. One statement, from a young soldier in the 5th Reservist Division, was also taken down in the offices of *Haolam Hazeh*, whence it has reached us. Some of the statement was reprinted in a pamphlet called 'Fed Up' which was seized almost as soon as it appeared in Tel Aviv. The distributors are still awaiting trial for breach of security regulations. After an interview with Shalom Cohen, co-editor of *Haolam Hazeh*, the following statement was produced:

Tel Aviv, September 10th, 1967.

"I am a soldier who wishes to remain anonymous. The following information concerns the sector on the Jordan river between the Yarmuk and the Allenby bridge. The time: end of July and beginning of August.

"Every night Arabs cross the Jordan from East to West. We blocked the passages (i.e. the places where the river is shallow and can be crossed by foot) we were ordered to shoot to kill without warning. Indeed, we fired such shots every night on men, women and children. Even during moonlit nights when we could identify the people, that is - distinguish between men, women and children. In the mornings we searched the area and, by explicit order from the officer on the spot, shot the living, including those who hid, or were wounded (again: including the women and children).

"After killing them we covered them with earth, sometimes left them lying until a bulldozer came to bury them. Some of these people are intelligence agents, some are armed infiltrators, some are smugglers, mostly however they are former inhabitants of the West Bank who have not received an Israeli permit to return.

"There were some cases I'll never forget.

"One morning I saw bodies in a heap, among them was a young girl. On another occasion an El-Fatah man pleaded for his life, when he saw it was useless he cursed us and took the bullets. One night a group of about twenty crossed. We shot them. In the morning we found 11 bodies. Some were found hiding, unharmed. We caught them and sent them back to the East Bank, unharmed.

"During the time of my service, long after the war, we fired, in our sector, every night. Every night people were shot, every morning the wounded were killed. So too were those who were caught unwounded."

*For the information of those readers who are kind enough to flood this office with letters pointing out that stories such as the above are clear evidence of our fascist antisemitism, we would point out that Amos Kenan, the anonymous soldier and the prophet Elisha are all Jews.*

# ‘MILITARY OCCUPATIONS ARE APT TO BE NASTY FOR THE OCCUPIED’

by David Holden\*

“YOU KNOW, I was a very moderate Arab. Before the Fifth of June I used to say the Jews were only human beings after all. I never believed till then that these people who were persecuted so much and deserved so much sympathy could be so mean when they were on top. Now, I just hate their guts.”

The speaker was a Christian Arab, educated and experienced in the hard ways of the world. His voice was low, his eyes looked very close to tears. I think he meant—unusually for an Arab—everything he said. After several days on the West Bank of the Jordan, trying to discover what is going on there under Israeli occupation, it is his words that stick most firmly in my memory, voicing the terrible inevitability of Arab hatred. It will need something close to a miracle to banish or subdue it. There are no miracles being worked in the Holy Land today.

If anything, the gulf between Arab and Israeli seems deeper now than it was before. To most Israelis this is a matter for regret, for in the position of master they can afford some generous emotions. To many Arabs it is the last refuge of self-respect. Defeated, humbled, occupied, made to eat their stupid boasts and futile gestures, they are subdued but implacable. They have drawn into themselves, as the

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\* The author is an English journalist and writer on Near Eastern affairs. His article appeared in *The Sunday Times* (London) 19 November 1967. It is reprinted here by permission.

vanquished do, yet they look at the world with eyes that are undefeated. They can still feel pride, because they can still hate, and unhappily, the Israelis—like most conquerors—give them plenty of reasons for doing so.

To hear some of the Arabs tell it, lapsing into their usual hyperbole, you might think, indeed, that the Israelis were the new Nazis bent on genocide. They are not, and it is lucky that there are responsible Arabs who can still recognise that, at least, through the mists of their emotion. But they *are* exceedingly tough and they are almost embarrassingly frank about it. "If you know the Arab mentality" said the official spokesman for the West Bank's Military Commander, General Uzi Markiss, "you know this toughness is probably good. I don't think they really understand any other language."

A white South African could hardly have sounded more uncompromising about the kaffirs. Yet, however unfortunate was the spokesman's choice of words (and in fairness I must record that I never heard anyone else express their private thoughts quite this way) the Israelis have their own justification: their very existence is at stake, they say.

Since June, there have been 75 incidents of sabotage or shooting, chiefly in the occupied areas of Gaza and the West Bank, attributed to the guerrillas known as "Al Fatah" who are believed to come from Syria. Twelve Israelis have been killed and 48 wounded, in addition to more than another 100 killed in sporadic border clashes and military engagements like the sinking of the Eilat. If Israel is to survive the Arabs must be taught that such violence cannot pay. Reprisals are therefore swift and massive.

Houses are blown up and men arrested with remarkable expedition. On November 7, for example, near a village called Sheukh, in the Hebron district, 10 armed men were caught in a cave by Israeli soldiers. Seven were killed, three captured. The next day, the Israelis razed nine houses in Sheukh, damaged 40 or 50 others by the blasts, and arrested eight men of the village, including two of the three headmen and the head teacher of the school on suspicion of helping "Al Fatah".

General Narkiss told me that arms had been found in six of the houses and all the arrested men had been incriminated by evidence found on the men in the cave. The villagers told me they had no arms and knew none of the alleged guerrillas. I do not know who is telling the truth, but 24 hours seems a short time in which to assess it, and



meanwhile at least nine families are left homeless and possibly destitute.

This sort of thing has happened in many other places. Two months ago, in a village three miles from Jerusalem, five houses were blown up because an Arab fired three or four ill-directed shots from one of them. In three refugee camps around Nablus two weeks ago, 200 men were arrested with the aid of hooded searchers who were supposed to be informers. In Gaza, according to UNRWA sources that I believe to be reliable, 144 inhabited houses in a refugee camp were bulldozed in a single night, and a recent communal grave in the camp that was excavated under UNRWA supervision contained 23 bodies.

One Israeli official acknowledged privately that the security forces were even tougher in Gaza than on the West Bank; and this seems to be reflected in the high rate of Arab departures from there to Jordan which UNRWA says are running now at 200 a day.

Along the Jordan river it seems to be generally accepted that about 200 Arabs have been shot in attempting night crossings to the West Bank. How many were "Al Fatah" and how many were just Palestinians trying to return to their homes is not known. But the Israelis admit that numbers of them have been buried without identification in unmarked graves.

In some places there has been sweeping destruction of Arab homes. The case is well-known of the 220 families whose houses were levelled in front of the Wailing Wall immediately after the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem, in order to provide an open space for Jewish pilgrims. Since then, other Arab homes have been demolished in the Old City, without—as far as I know—alternative accommodation being provided for the erstwhile occupants. This week, watching some of the demolition in progress, an old and distinguished Arab friend remarked to me sadly: "Those houses were old and dirty, and perhaps they ought to go. But this is not the way to treat the Old City—with a bulldozer."

In the old Latrun salient, west of Jerusalem, which the Israelis say they intend to keep at all costs for strategic reasons, the three main Arab villages were completely destroyed soon after the war and the inhabitants expelled. Two other villages near Hebron suffered a similar fate, but most of the people have been allowed to return there with the promise of a supply of building material to enable them to repair the damage.

In Qalqilya, where 40 per cent of the houses were destroyed

after the war, some of the people have also returned to live under make-shift roofs in ruined homes. But last week, near the Damia Bridge over the Jordan, bulldozers were at work flattening some of the homes from which 20,000 to 30,000 people fled across the river in June. General Narkiss said he had taken this action because the empty houses harboured rats which threatened his men with epidemics and because they offered shelter to "Al Fatah" infiltrators.

No figures were made available to me for the numbers of Arab homes thus destroyed in the occupied area but they certainly by now run well into four figures. A total of 350 alleged "Al Fatah" men have been arrested and another 600 men are officially admitted to be in prison on various charges, including illegal re-entry from Jordan.

Night searches, threats, and police beatings have been alleged to me by many Arabs. Even when the more lurid descriptions are discounted, I am left with the impression that there is some tough, and at times deliberate, intimidation by the Israelis. One respectable Jerusalem woman, who said her brother had been first imprisoned without charge for five weeks and later savagely beaten, declared that "everyone is living in terror, terror." I doubt that, but there are certainly a lot of frightened people about. The main culprits seem to be the Israeli border police, or "green berets," among whom are some Druzes (non-Jewish) who have acquired a particularly bad reputation. In general, I found the Arabs I talked to agreed that the "Europeans" behaved better than the "Oriental" Jews in the Israeli forces.

Israeli officials themselves admit they make mistakes. Disarmingly, they say, "we are not supermen," and they point out that military occupations are apt to be nasty for the occupied. But to the Arabs, inevitably, every act of violence or intimidation seems part of a Zionist master plan to drive still more of them out of their homeland.

This belief, inflamed enough at the best of times, is further aggravated by Israeli toughness, or tactlessness, in civil matters. The beginnings of four new kibbutzim in the occupied territories is alarming enough, even though Mr. Eshkol's government has so far resisted strong pressure from extremist groups in Israel to open the gate to more.

But still more worrying to the Arabs is the fact that so few of the summer's refugees have been allowed to return. On any juggling of the figures, tens of thousands who have asked to return have been refused permission, including all men of military age, all refugees

from Jerusalem and Jericho, and nearly all refugees of the class of '48 who fled in June for a second time.

At the same time, an Israeli Government custodian is taking over all the property in Arab Jerusalem and the West Bank owned by people who are now "absent" whether or not they have applied to return and whether or not they fled in fear or just happened to be out of the country when the June war began.

Claims to caretaker rights in absentee property by relatives or legal partners are rejected on the grounds that they could lead to disputes if the absentees eventually return. No such property seems to have been disposed of yet—although several Israeli banks have opened branches in empty premises in Arab Jerusalem—but to the Arabs the implications seem obvious. Even a Western diplomat was moved to describe the Israeli actions as "the perfect preparation for highway robbery."

Economically, the West Bank Arabs are severely hit. The Arab banks, with their head offices in Amman, have been unable to re-open; and the introduction of the Israeli pound alongside blue Jordan dinars has resulted in diminished Arab purchasing power. There is heavy unemployment.

In Nablus, the second largest town on the West Bank, after Jerusalem, a quarter of the remaining adult males have no work. In Arab Jerusalem, the depression is more acute, for its annexation to Israel has resulted in a drastic fall in traditional trade, with higher Israeli prices and taxes to be met. There are constant Arab complaints of Israeli discrimination against, for instance, the use of Arab tourist guides, taxis, hotels and travel agencies. Personal observation suggests that some, at least, of these complaints are justified.

In religious affairs also there is Arab resentment and alarm. Apart from some concern over Jewish intentions at the Wailing Wall—which the Muslims claim, paradoxically, to be their property according to an international adjudication nearly 40 years ago—there is the matter of the great Mosque of Abraham, in Hebron, which contains tombs of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their wives. An Israeli soldier with a sub-machine gun on his lap stopped me at the gate of the mosque this week as I was about to enter among a crowd of Israeli tourists and asked me to cover my head in respect for the Jewish faith. He rejected my suggestion that I should take off my shoes as well out of respect for Islam, so I entered, shod but covered; to find most of the place converted into something like a museum.

A carpeted space near the entrance was roped off for Muslims and labelled "holy place." Elsewhere the carpets had been taken up and large signs in Hebrew directed the crowding visitors from one tomb to the next. Flash-bulbs were popping for family snap-shots, while devout Jews pressed their lips to the tombs. There were no Muslims to be seen. They are admitted for prayers four times a day and all day on Fridays when Jews are excluded. A civilised compromise, perhaps, and not to be compared with some of the desecrations of Jewish shrines on the Arab side in recent years. But not a solution calculated to win friends among the Arab population.

The list of Arab grievances could be extended almost indefinitely, for the Israeli supremacy, even when it is exercised with discretion as it often is, grates on every nerve and fibre of their being. Most of all, of course, there is the fate of old Jerusalem. As it is already annexed to the State of Israel, and firmly declared to be non-negotiable, there seems to be no conceivable compromise that Arab and Jew will both accept with decent grace.

Over and over again this week I heard from Arabs how much grief and despair Jerusalem's loss had caused them. Often its citizens declared they could not continue to live there under Israeli masters. Equally often I heard it said that one day they would take it back. Perhaps some of it was just more Arab hyperbole.

But a great deal of it was real and earnest and desperate, and it made me long for miracles. Like somebody coming along to teach the Arabs how not to be always their own worst enemies, or somebody really leading the Jews into the paths of gods or supermen, so that they might find in the hour of victory the generosity that other men never offered them. But so far there have been no miracles. Men are still men, not angels, and peace in the Holy Land seems as far away as ever.

# ISRAELI INTIMIDATION OF ARAB REFUGEES IN THE GAZA STRIP

by Michael Adams\*

IN THE MEASURES it is now taking against the civilian Arab population in the Gaza Strip, the Israeli army of occupation is disregarding the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Convention for the protection of civilians in time of war.

In response to a series of minor incidents in the past three weeks, the Israeli army has imposed collective punishments on the population (mainly refugees from Palestine) regardless of age and sex. They include curfews lasting several days during which no proper provision is made for the distribution of food and water, arbitrary arrests, and the random demolition of houses and property belonging to civilians in no way connected with incidents.

When I left Gaza this morning three refugee camps housing 100,000 Palestine refugees were under day and night curfew, and there was sporadic shooting in the streets of Gaza city which served no apparent purpose beyond the intimidation of the civilian population. UNRWA, which is responsible for the welfare of refugees in the Gaza Strip, is not told in advance of the curfews which have been succeeding each other for the past two or three weeks.

The reasons given for the measures look curiously inadequate. No reason was forthcoming for two of today's three curfews: an army

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\* The author is an English journalist and writer on Near Eastern affairs. The article appeared in the *The Guardian*, (London) 26 January 1968. It is reprinted here by permission.

spokesman, Colonel Mart, told me that the third curfew which was imposed from yesterday morning at Jabaliyeh camp (holding about 40,000 refugees) was a reprisal for the mining of a civilian car containing three Israeli smugglers with a contraband cargo of cigarettes and figs. The incident, in which the smugglers were injured, had taken place the previous night a few miles from the Jabaliyeh camp on the way to the Israeli village of Malfalsim.

The spokesman said that "traces" had led from the scene to the camp over open fields and citrus plantations. He agreed with me that "you and me might find it hard to follow them but experts can."

Shati (Beach) camp on the outskirts of Gaza, which was also under curfew today, suffered a similar fate a fortnight ago for five days and nights. For the first 28 hours no one was allowed on any pretext to leave his house—which in refugee camp means one or two small rooms without a latrine.

On the second day the curfew was lifted for an hour at UNRWA's urging to allow refugees to collect water. The refugees were still forbidden to leave camp and no distribution of food was allowed; not many managed to get water since with the limited number of water points, supplied by hand pump, it takes time to serve the camp's population of 35,000.

During the break all men between 16 and 60 were ordered on to the compound on the seashore where they were held for seven hours during one of the winter's severest storms while Israeli guards repeatedly fired with small arms over their heads.

This form of collective punishment is characteristic of the present series of curfews; at Jabaliyeh camp the male population was held on a stretch of marshy ground for 25 hours without food or water; during much of the time at Shati camp there was heavy rain and four days passed before the Israelis allowed UNRWA to distribute food, and even then the curfew was reimposed before the distribution was completed. Relief workers found many of the women in the camp, particularly those with small children, in a state of near hysteria.

The reason given for the five-day curfew at Shati was the explosion of a tiny home-made petard (the official Israeli account said that it consisted of half a pound of TNT in a Pepsicola tin) near Gaza fish market, causing no casualties. The culprit was said to have run along the beach in the direction of the refugee camp. Failing to identify him the Israelis, besides imposing the curfew, blew up

nine fishermen's storehouses in which they kept their nets and tackle, and destroyed a number of fishing boats.

In a similar incident in Wahda Street, in Gaza, Israeli soldiers demolished four houses (the explosion brought down eight more) after a firecracker had been thrown near one of the houses. The inhabitants were given 10 minutes to evacuate their families, including small children, and can still be seen picking among the rubble to see if anything is salvageable.

These are a few of the many cases which I have checked and verified with neutral witnesses; indeed, they have been reported in the Israeli press. When I asked Colonel Mart how he reconciled them with his Government's signature on the Geneva Convention he showed interest.

"What is this convention?" he asked, and when I explained that it outlawed collective punishment against civilians and the destruction of civilian property even in time of war, he shrugged his shoulders. "Our soldiers don't like this work," he said. "But you must understand they have to protect security."

After last June one would have thought the Israelis would have needed less of a sledge-hammer to crack such an insignificant nut—if there is a nut at all. More of the non-Arab, non-Jewish population of Gaza is unconvinced that there is any serious resistance movement in operation in the area; they find it hard to believe that one of the few serious incidents—where a bomb in Gaza market injured 35 Arabs—could knowingly have been caused by an Arab.

They believe that the only danger to security in Gaza comes from the present determined and often brutal attempts by the Israeli Army to "persuade" the Arab refugees to leave the Gaza Strip, thus opening the way to its annexation by Israel. My observations confirm this view.

I had my ups and downs during four years as a prisoner of war in Germany but the Germans never treated me as harshly as the Israelis are treating the Arabs of Gaza Strip, the majority of whom are women and children.

# ARABS CLAIM: "ISRAELIS ARE DRIVING US OUT"

by Irene Beeson\*

INHABITANTS of the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip are convinced that Israel plans systematically to drive the Arabs out of the area.

That this fear is very real and widespread was evident in conversations and interviews with local inhabitants and foreign residents of the strip and in refugee camps—where Israeli pressure appears to be strongest.

'The Israelis are seeking, by direct and indirect pressure, to break our spirit and force us to leave the Gaza Strip,' the Arab inhabitants told me repeatedly in the course of a four-day visit to the area. Several foreign, neutral observers felt that Israeli reprisals and collective punishment against the Arab civilian population had all the appearances of a campaign of intimidation.

As well as the emotional voices of frightened refugees and dazed homeless people whose houses had been dynamited in reprisal for acts of resistance, the reasoned voices of this city's men of substance—lawyers, teachers and businessmen—described Israel's so-called security measures as a well-thought-out plan to 'empty the strip'. They explained that the methods used by the military authorities included: breaking into houses at night allegedly to search for arms and ammunition, rounding up men for questioning and often detaining them without charges for long stretches, the destruction of civilian houses and round-the-clock curfews sometimes lasting a week or more.

They estimated that between 30,000 and 35,000 people had left the strip partly as a result of these measures. Most have crossed the Jordan and are now in refugee camps on the east bank.

Curfews in refugee camps are often accompanied by the rounding-

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\* The authoress is an English journalist. Her article appeared in *The Observer* (London) 26 January 1968. It is reprinted here by permission.



up of all the male inhabitants between the ages of 16 and 60 and compelling them to spend hours—in some cases up to three days, I was told—in open compounds. In one case, at least, they were herded into a shallow lake.

During curfew hours there are bursts of rifle or sub-machine-gun fire to discourage people from leaving their houses or approaching the area under curfew from outside.

For the strip's 210,000 refugees in camps, these repressive measures are particularly painful. They depend entirely on UNWRA for food and welfare services. During curfew, the distribution of rations is disrupted or stopped, as access to the camp is prohibited and UNRWA staff must request special permission from the military authorities to enter compounds. When Gaza beach camp was under curfew for six days recently there was no food distribution for five days.

There is no running water in camp houses and 75 per cent of of the latrines are in the camp streets. Refugee families, which are usually large, are compelled during curfew to remain in their hutlike houses day and night with a break of one or two hours after the first day. This is not sufficient to allow them to collect water, use latrines and—when permission is granted—receive their rations.

These collective repressive measures are taken in reprisal for acts of terrorism which, from all accounts, are usually amateurish and ineffectual—hand-made grenades thrown in a street or at an Israeli Army car with little or no harmful results.

Non-Arab residents of the strip share the Arab view that punishment is meted out to tens of thousands of people who could not possibly be implicated in the incidents: the destruction of houses whose inhabitants only crime is to be living at or near the spot where a bomb explodes is out of all proportion to the acts committed. They point out also that these measures contravene the Geneva Convention (Article 53) of 12 August 1949, relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war. Article 53 prohibits the destruction by an occupying Power of personally or collectively owned property, and collective punishment.

But at Army government head-quarters in Gaza City, Colonel Mart, whom I saw in the absence of the Governor, said he did not know about the Geneva Convention. In any case, he said, measures taken by the occupying forces were aimed solely at ensuring security in the area.

# PARADOX OF ARAB EXODUS

by Michael Adams\*

TWELVE HUNDRED feet below sea level the swollen waters of the river Jordan tumble over the ruins of the Allenby bridge. In other circumstances the Arabs of Jordan would have considered this a splendid winter, with rainfall well above the average turning the normally insignificant river into a sizeable torrent. Even in the prevailing pain and uncertainty there is a grain of consolation in the thought that pasture lands this spring will be green.

For the moment it is the pain that is uppermost and the Allenby bridge is the focal point of the misery that envelops both sections of the divided Kingdom of Jordan: the East Bank, where a quarter of a million refugees have sought refuge since last June, and the West Bank, where the surviving inhabitants of Old Palestine struggle to hold their ground under Israeli occupation.

Saddest of all is the fact that the two banks are like the two halves of an hour-glass and that the sands still trickle steadily and irrevocably from one to the other—and always in the same direction. “Steadily” means at the rate (depending on the weather and the state of tension prevailing at the bridge) of between 100 and 200 a day, when the bridge is open, so that the refugee population of East Jordan increases by two to three thousand every month. “Irrevocably,” because the Israelis insist that every departing Palestinian sign a declaration that he will never return to the homeland of his ancestors.

Why then do they go, when to stay is so vital to them, and what is to stop the Government of Jordan trying to staunch this haemorrhage by closing the border against any further exodus of refugees? If you go down to the river, even if you have no understanding of the

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\* Published in *The Guardian*, 19 February 1968, and reprinted here by permission.

mythical sense which Arabs have of belonging—with all their often raucous differences—to one unhappy family, you soon understand why no Government on earth, however straitened its circumstances, could close its doors against this pitiful and uncomprehending tide of humanity. They come, for the most part, because they are terrified, and in every case because the pressures of life “on the other side” have become too much for their endurance.

What are these pressures and how can one explain the paradox that people whose whole future depends on their willingness to stay put should prefer to shoulder their few belongings and seek instead the dismal sanctuary of a refugee camp? What element of coercion is there behind their going, and how sincere are the Israelis when they tell you that, while they will put no obstacle in the way of those who wish to leave, they are doing nothing to drive the refugees out of Palestine?

Here it is pertinent to remark that no Israeli, when he deals frankly with you (and many do and accept your criticisms with sincerity and good nature), will deny that he would prefer to accept “the dowry without the bride”—meaning that from Israel’s point of view the ideal solution to the problem of the occupied territories would be their absorption by Israel but without their Arab populations. But this, of course, does not prove that they are seeking by unjust means to achieve this tempting objective: many Israelis, I am convinced, would recoil from such a policy.

The important question is whether other Israelis, some of them in positions of immediate authority today, reject such scruples or are prepared to use varying methods of intimidation—not only physical, but also economic and even racial—to persuade the Arabs that anything is better than life under Israeli occupation.

A second thing to remember is that since the June war there has been much talk in the Arab world of a resistance movement in the occupied territories, and a limited amount of guerrilla activity by infiltrators from across the borders of occupied Palestine. The Israelis themselves say that support for this movement on the West Bank has been slight and they claim considerable success for their policy of “normalisation” in the occupied zone, which covers an area of more than two thousand square miles populated by upwards of three quarters of a million Arabs.

Yet the repressive measures taken in response to the smallest incident are violent in the extreme: villages or refugee camps are

cordoned off and subjected to curfews, during which it is normal for the Israelis to dynamite houses and round up a number of "suspects" usually to the accompaniment of a great deal of apparently aimless shooting in the air.

The result—and it is difficult to believe that it is not the result intended—is to terrorise the local population, especially those who have small children or elderly dependents, and to encourage them to leave the area and make the sad pilgrimage to safety beyond the Jordan.

Apart from the terror, economic factors are often irresistible. The banks in the occupied areas have been closed since last June and normal economic life is at a standstill. Prices have risen very sharply, especially those of basic necessities (rice by 50 per cent, sugar by 90 per cent), since the Arabs are now forced to buy from Israeli suppliers and at the much higher Israeli prices.

What is a woman to do who has five children to support and who has been turned into the street at 10 minutes' notice while her house is blown up and her husband carried off for "investigation"—all because the Israelis alleged that someone had given a drink of water to a member of the resistance? (In this specific instance, the husband was released after a few days as the Israelis said it was "a mistake"—but the house, of course, was not rebuilt).

Three weeks ago I wrote a critical and carefully documented account of the repressive measures being employed by the Israeli occupation forces in Gaza. In a subsequent interview with a highly placed Israeli security officer, I was told that the facts I had presented were accurate but that the impression I gave was misleading.

The intention behind these admittedly severe measures was not to terrorise the population but to make sure that minor incidents were not allowed to grow into a major security problem whose effects could be damaging to all. The officer added that where misconduct towards the civilian population could be proved against a member of the Israeli forces, disciplinary action was taken and that there were in fact 32 officers and men under arrest at that moment on such charges.

It may be true that terrorisation of the Arab population is not the official policy today of the Israeli Government. It is certainly true that intermittently over the past eight months serious attempts have been made (and they are still being made) to terrorise sections of the Arab population in different parts of the West Bank—and the

result has been and still is the continuing flow of refugees across the Jordan river.

The Israelis vehemently deny this interpretation of events. In two weeks of careful investigation in Jerusalem and on the West Bank, I found no impartial observer who did not support it. The only way to reconcile these divergent views would seem to be the dispatch of an independent commission of inquiry to form its own conclusions on the state of affairs in Israeli-occupied Palestine.

# OPEN LETTER

by Israeli Intellectuals  
to the Israeli Press\*

*Dear Sir,*

WE HAVE THE HONOUR to forward to you a declaration, asking you to publish it.

The declaration reads:

**STOP THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN ISRAEL  
AND IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES!**

Details were published in the areas about what is happening in Israel and in the occupied territories:

Confinement orders, limitations of free movement and arrests without trial were recently imposed on Israeli citizens, Jews and Arabs.

The imposition of collective punishments, like the curfew and the dynamiting of houses, continues in the towns and villages of the occupied territories at an alarming rate. Families of workers and fellaheen, children, women and old people, remain without shelter and means of existence. The stream of refugees and escapers from the Gaza Strip and from the West Bank of the Jordan continues unabatedly.

An increasing number of Arabs is driven out of the Western Bank by order of the Israeli military governor. A protest petition

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\* This open letter to the Israeli press and public was signed by 85 Israelis and circulated with a covering letter, dated 3 March 1968, by Mr. Mordechai Avi-Shaul, a Tel-Aviv writer.

published in the Western Bank stated: "These methods are opposed to international standards and to the basic rights of the citizen to live in his home and on his soil. Enforced exile on political grounds reminds us of the British colonial rule."

Where do these methods lead to if not into an abyss of hatred?

Acts like these will only strengthen the resistance and the underground movement, multiply victims on both sides, and lead to another war, with an unforeseeable number of casualties.

The domination of another people exposes the subduing people itself to moral degeneration and undermines its democracy. Any people oppressing another one is bound to lose its own freedom and the freedom of its citizens.

Jewish citizen, remember those courageous gentiles who stood by us in times of distress! Now that disaster has befallen the fraternal Arab people, can you deem fit to remain aloof and to keep silent?

#### RAISE YOUR VOICE AND ACT AGAINST THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS!

Avileah, Joseph, musician, Haifa

Avi-Shaul, Mordechai, writer, Tel-Aviv

Al-Asmar, Fauzai, Poet, Lydda

Albert, Allan, journalist, Gan Shmuel

Altmann, Yaninah, chemist, Haifa

Altman, Dr. Kalman, lecturer at Technical High School, Haifa

Alexander, Israel, clerk, Tel-Aviv

Al-Kassem, Samih, poet, Haifa

Epstein, Prof. Helmuth, lecturer at Hebrew University, Tel-Aviv

Ehrenfeld, David, industrialist, Tel-Aviv

Bithasra, Jacob, student, Kibutz Tse'elim

Bindish, Viola, painter, Kiryath Ata

Ben-Yahuda, Yona(Yebi), poet, Tel-Aviv

Ben-Nun, Yigal, student, Tel-Aviv

Ber, Shmuel, manager, Haifa

Braunstein, Dr. F, physician, Kiryath Haim

Gozansky, Tamar, journalist, Bat-Yam

Goldreich, Arthur, architect, Tel-Aviv

Jerais, Sabri, lawyer, Haifa

Davis, Uri, student, Jerusalem

Gilan, Maxim, journalist, Tel-Aviv

- Gat, Moshe, painter, Haifa  
Danziger, Ytzhak, lecturer, Haifa  
Decker, Aryeh, poet, Tel-Aviv  
Darawsheh, Abed-el-Hafiz, lawyer, Nazareth  
Drori, Tova, assistant stage producer, Tel-Aviv  
Darwish, Mahmud, poet, Haifa  
Heyman, Prof. H.H., chemical engineer and lecturer  
at the Technical High School, Haifa  
Hammerman, Dr. Anna, physician, Haifa  
Hanegbi, Haim, journalist, Tel-Aviv  
Wolf, Edith, journalist, Haifa  
Zehavi, Leon, clerk, Tel-Aviv  
Zayyad, Tawfiq, poet, Nazareth  
Zlotsover, Abraham, lecturer at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem  
Sand, Shlomo, clerk, Tel-Aviv  
Zikhroni, Rafi, journalist, Tel-Aviv  
Hoory, Tawfiq, student, Fassuta  
Hen, Jacob, clerk, Tel-Aviv  
Hamdan, Joseph, student, Jaljulia  
Teiblum, Abraham, graphician, Petah-Tikva  
Yellin-Mor, Nathan, journalist, Ramat Aviv  
Israeli, Dov, architect and engineer, Haifa  
Israeli, Dr. Ella, microbiologist, Haifa  
Yerdor, Dr. Jacob, lawyer, Tel-Aviv  
Cohen, Aharon, orientologist, Sha'ar Ha'amakim  
Kafir, Ghazi, lawyer, Ramleh  
Katz, Prof. Moshe, lecturer, Haifa  
Kasher, Jacob, labourer, Ramat Can  
Levenbraun, Rami, student, Haifa  
Levin, Amos, technician, Tel-Aviv  
Levin, Ruth, writer, Tel-Aviv  
Langer, Felicia, lawyer, Ramat Can  
Lifshitz, Uri, painter, Tel-Aviv  
Makhover, Dr. Moshe, lecturer at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem  
Melamed, Abraham, lawyer, Tel-Aviv  
Naqara, Hana, lawyer, Haifa  
Nikola, Jabra, writer, Haifa  
Salim, Ezeklel, freelancer, Tel-Aviv  
Smorodinsky, Meir, lecturer at the University, Givatavim  
Habib, Amith, lawyer, Haifa



Iram, Gila, student, Haifa  
Ashur, Ali, journalist, Haifa  
Paz, Shlomo, actor, Tel-Aviv  
Fishman, Benjamin, technician, Tel-Aviv  
Pilavsky, Oded, clerk, Tel-Aviv  
Paldi, Tabor, teacher, Tel-Aviv  
Penn, Alexander, poet, Tel-Aviv  
Friedman, Zelma, secretary, Tel-Aviv  
Perlman, Dr. Michael, physician, Haifa  
Patt, Rachel, laboratory worker, Kiryath Bialik  
Isigelman, Victor, journalist, Holon  
Kupperman, Yehuda, teacher, Tamat Aviv  
Kupferachmidt, Dr. A., physician, Kiryath Haim  
Kupiermat, Denise, student, Ramat Aviv  
Korlet, Naomi, teacher, Kiryath Haim  
Klinger, Dr. Ethel, physician, Haifa  
Rabinovitch, Gershon, Farmer, Kibbutz Ruhama  
Rubinsky, Rachel, agronomist, Tel-Aviv  
Romano, Albert, lawyer, Tel-Aviv  
Reiner, Prof. Marcus, lecturer, Technical High School, Haifa  
Rubinstein, Meir, agent, Haifa  
Shamli, Shlomo, labourer, Tel-Aviv  
Sharoni, Tzipora, teacher, Haifa  
Shick, Yashaia, journalist, Alon-Yitzhak  
Shliff, Ilan, farmer, Kibbutz Negbah  
Sasson, Moshe, farmer, Kibbutz Dvir.

# BULLDOZERS, THE SYMBOL OF ISRAELI MASTERY

by Michael Adams\*

FOR MORE THAN A MONTH NOW, Israeli bulldozers have been at work on Mount Scopus, clearing the ground for a housing development on the open hillside overlooking the Old City of Jerusalem.

In expropriating 800 acres of land here in the face of bitter protests from the Arab community, the Israelis have embarked upon their most far-reaching defiance of the United Nations, which last year called on them to desist from any action which would alter the status of the Arab city of Jerusalem.

It is not only the Arabs who are alarmed by the plan to build apartment blocks on Mount Scopus between the Mount of Olives and the suburb of Shu'fat. Reporting a press conference on the subject, the "Jerusalem Post" quoted one Israeli citizen as saying; "My thoughts keep reverting to the nightmare of Mount Scopus and the other hills of East Jerusalem being covered with shikunim," (the concrete tenements which disfigure the western skyline of Israeli Jerusalem).

It is odd, but not inappropriate, that the bulldozer should have become the symbol of Israel's mastery of the Holy City. Before going to war last June, Israel assured the world through its Prime Minister, Mr. Eshkol, that she had no design on "even one foot" of Arab land. Within a week of the end of the fighting the bulldozers were at work in the Old City and before the end of June they had made nearly 4,000 Arabs homeless.

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(The Geneva convention of 1949 states that "any destruction by the occupying power of real or personal properties belonging individually or collectively to private persons or to the capital State... is prohibited, except where such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operation.")

Lately there have been encouraging signs that even prominent Israelis are realising the shortsightedness of trying to bulldoze the Arabs into submission. A month ago Mr Teddy Kollek, the ebullient Israeli Mayor of Jerusalem, defended to me his Government's policies over Jerusalem (including the Mount Scopus expropriation) as being necessary to the development of the city in the interests of all citizens.

Since then he has been quoted by the "Jewish Chronicle" as denouncing "the complete failure of the Government administration," which he blamed on "a complete lack of consideration towards the way of life and the culture of East (that is, Arab) Jerusalem." Certainly this lack of consideration, to give it a polite name, is the overriding impression of the visitor who knew the Old City before the Israeli occupation.

There are, first of all, the trivialities. Was it really necessary or tactful, when the population of East Jerusalem was exclusively Arab, to take down the Arabic signs at every bus stop and substitute for them signs in Hebrew? If taxes for the Arab citizens have to be increased to match the much higher Israeli level of taxation, would it not be more efficient, as well as more courteous, to present the demand for payment in Arabic instead of Hebrew—which scarcely any Arab can read, let alone understand?

Mr. Kollek remarked that the Arab population of Jerusalem "would not accept the hard and sometimes offensive official Israeli attitude"; and I saw what he meant when I called on an old friend, the wife of a former Foreign Minister of Jordan. Her husband, after a lifetime of public service, has just been banished from his home in Jerusalem because he refused to renounce his loyalty to King Hussein.

She herself, lonely and anxious not to put a foot wrong with the Israeli authorities and risk losing her home as well as her husband, asked me to get translated for her some formal documents which had just dropped through her letter box—printed, of course, in Hebrew. It proved to be nothing more alarming than the telephone bill; but in her particular circumstances it does not take a lot of imagination to understand the distress it caused her before we could get it deci-

phered.

Bus signs and telephone bills are only the insignificant reminder of a domination that is relentless and all-pervading. An Arab inhabitant of Jerusalem whose ancestors may have lived here for a thousand years before any of the present rulers of Israel stepped foot in Palestine is now made aware at every turn of the presence of an alien authority which has power to raise his taxes, to expropriate his land, to bulldoze his house out of existence, to arrest him, to expel him—all this while denying him recourse of any kind to any authority which can lift a finger to help him.

Such an Arab has no longer even any clearly established nationality. He must carry an identity card which expressly states that "this certificate does not establish the right to enter Israel"; he has no Israeli passport, yet if he uses his Jordanian passport to travel to any other country he cannot return to Jerusalem. He is not represented in the municipal council which has assumed control of the city's affairs, nor in the Parliament of the country which now seeks to claim his allegiance.

Mr. Kollek again has put his finger on the weakness of Israel's approach to the Arabs, in criticising those of his compatriots who are "trying to induce Arabs to leave the city or to make them second-class citizens." For in Jerusalem, more acutely than anywhere else, Israelis are face to face with the fundamental contradiction between two national ambitions: to expand the State of Israel and to maintain that State as an exclusively Jewish entity.

The contradiction puts the Arabs of Jerusalem, as well as the Israelis, in an impossible position. As one Arab put it to me, with a wry smile, "You British used to say, 'If you can't beat them, join them'—but, you know, you can't join the Jews." What you certainly cannot do with any hope of success is try to build peace on a foundation of injustice; and injustice is rife in Jerusalem these days.

Malcolm Muggeridge, in a recent article, wrote of feeling "abnormally horrified to see in Jerusalem two Arabs, one of them a youth, being arrested, beaten up and then, with black bags over their heads, driven away at top speed in a jeep." The effect is to persuade the victims and anyone who knows what has happened to them that safety lies on the far side of the Jordan River in a refugee camp.

There are some Israelis—I like to think they are a minority, but I'm not sure—who believe that if enough Arabs could learn that lesson, Israel's problem would be solved. They do not always get

their way, but they have got it often enough since last June to do their own country a possibly irreparable injury.

It is fair to report that the Christian communities in Jerusalem come badly out of all this. Moslem Arabs are critical of the failure of Christendom to take a firm stand over the fate of Jerusalem. Christian Arabs, who constitute about 10 per cent of the population of Jordan, feel acutely the lack of support from the Christian world.

"The witness of the Church is much weakened," one Arab pastor told me, "and we don't know how to hold up our heads in front of the Moslem any more." Christian and Moslem alike ask in wonderment how the Western representatives of the churches in Jerusalem can remain silent in a situation which they are better placed to assess than most of us.

Is there then no solution, no way of escape from the impasse into which Israel's defiance of the UN has plunged Jerusalem? Israelis will tell you that no Government in Israel could give up Jerusalem and survive. I doubt if this is true, for Israelis are above all realistic and would accept a fairer solution if anyone were in a position to force one on them. What is unquestionably true is that no Arab Government could under any circumstances renounce Jerusalem as part of any remotely conceivable settlement: nor is there any Power in the world which could force the Arabs to do so.

If one accepts this fundamental reality, the possibilities become clearer. It becomes plain that if Israel insists on retaining physical control of the Old City of Jerusalem, then peace in the Middle East is well out of anyone's reach. If that suits the Israelis, as many Arabs are coming to believe, then they may be well advised to stay in Jerusalem, though they must be prepared indefinitely to hold the city down by methods which many of them already find distasteful and which the world is bound to regard as doubly reprehensible in the context of the Holy City.

Yet there is an alternative which the Israelis might be wise to consider before it is altogether too late. Not withdrawal, which would divide the city once again, not internationalisation, which has little appeal for either side, but a condominium, which could be the starting point for a wider experiment in coexistence and which could preserve the unity of the city—but with no victors and no vanquished, no masters and no second-class citizens, no angry clash of eager but ill-considered ambition. And that, in Human Rights Year, might indeed be the New Jerusalem.

# STATEMENT

by the U.S. State Department\*

“IT REMAINS the U.S. position that the part of Jerusalem which came under the control of Israel in the June War, like other areas occupied by Israel, is occupied territory and therefore subject to the provisions of international law governing the rights and obligations of an occupying power.

“Israel is a party to the Geneva Convention on the protection of civilian persons in time of war. We, therefore, consider the Government of Israel and its armed forces obligated to abide by the provisions of the convention in its actions in the occupied territories.”

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\* Statement by Mr. Robert J. McCloskey, official spokesman of the U.S. State Department, officially released on 8 March 1968.

## TELEGRAM

*To the Government of Israel by the Chairman of the Commission of Human Rights, upon the Decision of the Committee at its 990th Meeting on 8 March, 1968.*

THE UNITED NATIONS Commission on Human Rights is distressed to learn from newspapers of Israeli acts of destroying homes of Arab civilian population inhabiting the areas occupied by the Israeli authorities subsequent to the hostilities of June 1967. The Commission of Human Rights calls upon the Government of Israel to desist forthwith from indulging in such practices and to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

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\* United Nations Economic and Social Council Document. E/CN.4/L. 1040.  
13 March 1968.

# LETTER

by an Israeli Officer\*

“YOU WILL CERTAINLY be surprised to get this letter. Although it is none of my business, still I feel I must write a few words about the things I saw on the Allenby Bridge on 21 February 1968. I am writing as a simple human being who feels and senses. This was the first time that I saw that what was really happening there – and the picture will remain imprinted on my memory for a long time to come.

“I speak as a human being, a soldier and a commander who knows about security problems and that a strong hand is sometimes necessary. But there is another problem – the feelings of those who saw what happened that afternoon, (21 February) when they were arranging for the men to go across. This does not help security. I know the procedures for crossing, and I simply cannot see why what in fact happened, did happen.

“On 21 February, arrangements had been made for the transfer of these men from the Jericho Police to the Allenby Bridge. They were required to sign that they had agreed to their transfer to the other side (Jordan).

“The men arrived in one military lorry. They queued up in front of the officer’s desk to sign the special register. There was a soldier standing next to the officer. He boldly put his hand into one of the men’s pockets, drew out a roll of plaster tape, looked at it and put it back. Two other young men stood with their faces to the wall with a soldier in front of them.

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\* The original Hebrew of this letter was found in one of the abandoned Israeli vehicles on the East Bank of Jordan after the Israeli attack of 21 March 1968. A photostatic copy of the Hebrew text was published in *Al-Nahar* (Beirut) 9 April 1968. This is the English translation of the Arabic version distributed by the Jordanian authorities.



"I myself am not greatly in favour of firm methods, but I'd admit that they have their place in special cases in such a situation. But I still say that nothing could justify the intensive beating and kicking of a young man who had done nothing wrong. After all, within a matter of minutes he would be on the other side of the river. I say there is no reason why young men should be atrociously degraded before their relatives and the public, just because they did not want to sign their transfer to the other side. Even if there was a reason, still they should not have been beaten in front of their relatives, the public, tourists and their refugee friends. These scenes were to be repeated many times between the offices and the Bridge. The men ran from the customs post to the Bridge with a car chasing them and many tourists watching. Can there be a reason for such a thing?

"This is only a brief picture, it's difficult to describe it with complete accuracy, but it does express what I felt on that day. I am one hundred per cent sure about this.

"I saw something else - a soldier returning from escorting a group like the one I just mentioned. His machine-gun was broken.

"I don't think that such treatment can be in our interest. These young men will go on resenting the State of Israel. It's easy to see that every time one of these young men is hit that it creates another black spot. Who can approve of that? Beating them might make them frightened supporters. But they will hate us more, and who knows, it might even spur them into joining terrorist organisations.

"I wrote this letter to try and get it out of my system. In my opinion, the Israeli soldier is different from other soldiers. I don't say that I am a perfect example of the ideal soldier. But in addition to what I've already said, I am a decent man. I won't forget such unforgiveable behaviour which is totally at odds with any sense of ethics."

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