

The Palestinians

The Palestinians are an Arab people, largely Moslem but with important numbers of Christians, who live in, once lived in, or trace their descent through parents or grandparents to the land once known as Palestine, which came under a British mandate in 1922, and now is the land of Israel, the West Bank of the Jordan and the Gaza Strip.

In this century, Palestinian nationalists have conducted a largely unsuccessful struggle against Zionism and, after 1948, Israeli nationalism.

The first wave of Palestinian refugees fled to Arab countries during Israel's war for independence in 1948. The second great Palestinian exodus was sparked by Israel's conquest of East Jerusalem, the West Bank of the Jordan River, the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula in the 1967 war. In 1964 Egypt and other Arab countries encouraged the founding of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, dedicated to the recovery of Palestine and first led by Dr. Ahmed Shukairy. In 1969 Yasir Arafat's Al Fatah, rankling over alleged manipulation of the Palestinian cause by other Arabs, took over the P.L.O. and has maintained leadership ever since.

A People Scattered, Bewildered and Divided

By James M. Markham

BEIRUT, Lebanon— "I imagine it as a land . . ." said Ismail Abdullah, hesitating as he reached for the right word. "I imagine it as a paradise." A 17-year-old Palestinian in a refugee camp near the Lebanese port of Tyre, he spoke with the yearning on which he had been nurtured for a village he had never seen— the village where his father was born, 25 miles down the coast near the Israeli city of Acre.

In a luxury apartment in Beirut, Mohammed Othman, speaking Arabic in a distinctive accent of rural Palestine, voiced the fear that his land might be "liberated" before he was old enough to fight in a war. Mohammed Othman is 9½ years old.

His father, Ali Othman, a prominent educator here who comes from a village near Jerusalem, commented, "To be in a place where you say: 'This is my home' — this is something that is more important to

the Palestinian than any material thing. No matter how successful he may be outside, the Palestinian is still in transit."

The question of whether there will be wars to be fought in the Middle East when Mohammed Othman is old enough to fight them turns in part on the question of whether the cause of Palestinian nationalism will have found a measure of fulfillment for at least some of the roughly 3.5 million Palestinians scattered throughout the Middle East and beyond.

Not all Palestinians are raised to fight, of course. Deadly acts of international terrorism— and vicious civil wars in Jordan and Lebanon— created the idea that Palestinians were a desperate people prone to violence. But there is another reality.

It is the reality of a thriving middle class in exile, with the highest levels of literacy and academic achievement in the Arab world, dominating the economy of Jordan, filling key positions in the Syrian bureaucracy, forming the professional backbone of oil states like Kuwait, reporting and editing for a disproportionate number of periodicals that mold Arab opinion.

Further down the class ladder, there is a vast Palestinian proletariat — sometimes defiant, sometimes resigned— that provides a pool of cheap labor not only for Jordan, Lebanon and Syria but also for Israel. These are the mercurial constituencies of Palestinian nationalism, which found themselves in intense emotional conflict when President Anwar el-Sadat of Egypt made his stunning visit to Jerusalem on November 19.

The Sadat initiative came at a time when the Palestinian cause — battered militarily in the Lebanese civil war and tarnished in the eyes of many Arabs — seemed to be at its lowest ebb. As they surveyed their losses after Lebanon, a majority of Palestinians scaled down their once-passionate hope of destroying Israel by force.

However incoherently and conditionally, leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization and most of their followers came to accept the idea of a miniature Palestine that would be built on the Israeli-occupied West Bank of the Jordan River and the Gaza Strip. This state— which could not physically accommodate all Palestinian Arabs any more than Israel can accommodate all Jews— would be born of diplomacy, not war.

But this consensus is unstable, a team of New York Times reporters found. Some Palestinians, especially those in Jordan and the occupied territories where two-thirds of all Palestinians live, incline to a moderation that comes from confronting the reality of Israel. But many others, the poorest and most desperate, still harbor the dream of returning to the land that is now Israel.

Viewed from the perspective of the Palestinians, the paradox of the Sadat initiative is this: Although it came at a time when the moderate view that compromise with Israel is possible seemed to be prevailing, it may end by giving Palestinian extremism a new lease on life.

Moderates and Extremists Divided

At bottom, Palestinian moderates and extremists have divided on the question of what they might expect to receive in a settlement with the Israelis. The extremists argue that Israel would never accept any Palestinian demands unless forced to do so. Now, with the Sadat initiative nearly grounded, they can claim to have been right all along.

Other Palestinians, whose hopes were initially stirred by the prospect of a negotiating breakthrough, now tend to see the Egyptian President as yet another Arab leader who speaks in their name but puts his own interests first. Still others more charitably see

Looking at Reality

By Anthony Lewis

BOSTON— In the folklore of journalism, scoops are overrated. It is entertaining to steal a beat on a story that is about to break anyway, but the knockabout spirit of "The Frontpage" cannot justify the great freedom of the American press. What does is the uncovering of concealed official business or—less romantic but just as important—the exploration of open but unrecognized social or political conditions. We all have partial vision, and it is one function of the press to make us see.

A good example of the press in that last role was a series of articles this week in *The New York Times*: a study of the Palestinians. Correspondents around the Middle East brought convincing detail and breadth of perception to a subject on which most of us have blinkered vision.

Palestinians make us, typically, think of terrorists. But there is "another reality," the correspondents said: "the reality of a striving middle class in exile, with the highest levels of literacy and academic achievement in the Arab world," as well as a hard-working

Mr. Sadat as a desperate or generous man doomed to failure.

"I think he will fail," said Dr. Hatem Abu Ghazaleh, a member of the Municipal Council of Nablus on the West Bank. "We must take in a new phase of the struggle. We think from month to month they will withdraw," he said of the Israelis. "Now we know they won't. Sadat's visit unified us. Those who thought there will be peace will now understand."

Strongly felt throughout the Palestinian diaspora— which has striking parallels with the Jewish diaspora of an earlier age— Palestinian nationalism would most likely splinter along geographic and political lines if self-determination in the Israeli-occupied territories seemed genuinely to be in the offing.

"If the Israelis had any brains they could neutralize Palestinian irredentism just by giving back the West Bank," asserted Rashid Khalidy, an American-educated

proletariat.

What they almost all have in common is a desire for a place they can call their own: a homeland. Some still dream of displacing Israel. But most, the correspondents found, have come to accept "the idea of a miniature Palestine that would be built on the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip." In short, most Palestinians envisage a state of their own co-existing with Israel.

A West Bank lawyer who negotiated with Israel thirty years ago, Aziz Shehade, is quoted as saying: "There was a time, after the war in '67, when I called for a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza and I was called a traitor. Now easily 80 percent of the people support it."

The same is true of the Palestine Liberation Organization's leadership, the correspondents said: There is a consensus for the mini-state. If it materialized, even some extremists would accept it and turn to ordinary politics. But the consensus is unstable. It depends on the hope of getting some sort of homeland in a peaceful settlement with Israel.

And here the correspondents found a paradoxical danger arising from President Sadat's peace initiative. It came at a time of growing strength, among Palestinians, for the moderate view that reasonable compromise with

Palestinian who teaches political science at the American University of Beirut and also works for the P.L.O. "It would split us."

West Bank Palestinians want, above all, to throw off the Israeli occupation— even if that means a generally undesired federation with King Hussein's Jordan. Significant numbers of Palestinian professionals, dispersed now throughout the Middle East, want a passport— an identity— more than actual residence in a state known as Palestine. Many poorer refugees say they would return instantly to a new state, no matter how small, but those holding decent jobs might in fact stay where they are.

The various guerrilla groups, which would not be so easily satisfied, are already embryonic, disputatious political parties. Should a Palestinian homeland fall under some form of international supervision, there would be little peace in it for their Kalishnikov-wielding guerrillas who are now in Lebanon.

Israel is possible. But as the initiative falters, support for extremism grows.

An article written from Ramallah in the West Bank said: "For the moment, what is perceived by West Bank residents as intransigence on the part of the Begin Government has undercut the moderates and strengthened the hand of the few radicals who still maintain that the 1967 lines are not enough for a Palestinian state."

Dr. Hatem Abu Ghazaleh, a member of the Nablus Municipal Council, put the feeling bluntly. "We think from month to month they will withdraw," he said. "Now we know they won't. Sadat's visit unified us. Those who thought there will be peace now understand."

A last point that comes through clearly in the articles is the breadth of support among Palestinians for the P.L.O. In the West Bank, "scores of people interviewed said the P.L.O. was the only voice that represented them." People differ on the leadership but, the correspondents found, see "the organization itself as the embodiment of Palestinian identity and nationalism." It is a collection of many groups and interests, and its strength lies in "its amorphousness." People bristle when it is suggested that they should abandon the P.L.O.

What does all this tell us about the hope of peace in the Middle East? It

tells us first, I think, that the stakes are enormously high in the next few weeks and months. If diplomacy fails now, the situation will not just go back to where it was before the Sadat visit to Jerusalem. The very idea of negotiation will have lost credibility.

Second, there is an urgent need to deal with the moderates. The Palestinians need a stake in peace. Mr. Begin really recognized the principle when he proposed "self-rule" for the West Bank and Gaza, but that did not go far enough to change the Palestinians' sense of where their interest lay.

Rashid Khalidi, a Palestinian who teaches at the American University in Beirut and also works for the P.L.O., told *The Times* correspondents that Israel "could neutralize Palestinian irredentism just by giving back the West Bank." Some will be skeptical of that view, but surely the aim is to give the Palestinians some status that they can be for.

Finally, the series of articles tells us that there *are* Palestinians—human beings, caught in a diaspora of their own, suffering human emotions that anyone should be able to understand, feeling a national identity. That may sound obvious. But there evidently are Americans who believe, as one wrote me a while ago: "The so-called Palestinians do not exist."

Across the Jordan River in Amman, the Rev. Elia Khoury, a Palestinian activist, said, "If I am to choose between the land and persons, I'd rather choose the land."

But many Palestinians bristle when it is suggested that they should abandon the P.L.O. "Whoever is telling us to find someone else than the P.L.O is asking us to find someone who will turn his back on us and sell us more cheaply to the Jordanians and the Israelis," said an intense young professor at Bir Zeit University on the West Bank.

The currently dim prospects for any kind of self-determination produce an artificial solidarity in the Palestinian ranks, drawing together the rich and poor, radicals and moderates, those on the "inside" and those on the "outside," those who fled Palestine as Israel came into being in 1948, those who fled in 1967 when the Israelis captured the West Bank from Jordan and the Gaza Strip from Egypt and even those born after these searing

experiences.

This veneer of unity masks differing priorities and needs among Palestinians in different places. With his potential adherents dispersed "in transit," Mr. Arafat finds himself speaking in many voices to reach a subtly varied constituency — Palestinians who, perhaps like himself, would like to believe that a negotiated settlement is possible and many who, in the failing light of the Sadat initiative, now fear, or are convinced, one is not possible.

An Uneasy Relationship

Wherever they live, Palestinians find their relationship with the host country uneasy—and often taut.

Al Fatah, Mr. Arafat's own group within the P.L.O. and by far the largest within the organization, has said that it would accept the creation of a state on the West Bank and Gaza. This stance has put special strains on the 650,000 Palestinians in Lebanon and Syria, who are from or trace their heritage to places now part of Israel. These people stand little chance of living in their "homes" under proposals now being talked about by peace negotiators, although the P.L.O. regularly insists on "the right of return" for at least some refugees and compensation for lost property.

A rundown of the situation of Palestinians in the Middle East now follows.

Lebanon

Although Palestinians in Jordan and the occupied territories will probably have the decisive say in a settlement, extremists in Lebanon constitute Mr. Arafat's immediate environment, which sharply restricts his ability, for example, to acknowledge Israel's right to exist.

Extremist sentiment is strong in the gutted coastal town of Damur, which two years ago in the civil war was sacked and burned by Palestinian-led forces and is now a makeshift home for 10,000 Palestinian and 4,000 Lebanese refugees. Most of them are survivors of the Christian siege and capture in 1976 of the Tell Zaatar refugee camp in East Beirut.

'P.L.O. Is the Framework'

In Jordan and the occupied territories a fine shading of opinion was found, a willingness to make potentially important distinctions between the P.L.O's Beirut-based leadership and the organization itself as the embodiment of Palestinian identity and nationalism.

Yet a fundamental strength of the organization is its very amplexness, its amorphousness. "The P.L.O is the framework of Palestinian peoplehood," said Clovis Maksoud, an Arab nationalist close to Yasir Arafat, the leader of the P.L.O.

"We are speaking about aims, not names," said Jahed al-Quawasmi, the mayor of the West Bank town of Hebron, who was overwhelmingly elected in April 1976 on a pro-P.L.O. slate. "The names will change over time."

Fatima Najamy recalls fleeing her village near Haifa in 1948 at the age of 16. Twenty-eight years later she survived the nightmarish, 52-day encirclement of Tell Zaatar, during which her husband, daughter and son-in-law were killed.

She expresses approval of Mr. Arafat, known widely by his nom de guerre, Abu Amar, but when asked what would happen if he were to accept a West Bank-Gaza state, she answered, "If Abu Amar said this, it would mean his life was finished and we will have to kill him. Then we will get another Abu Amar who will demand all of Palestine."

Such sentiments perhaps help explain Mr. Arafat's somewhat blurred positions.

"Maybe Sadat has gained a lot from Western public opinion," conceded Salah Khalaf, the number two man in Al Fatah.

But even at the extremist end of the Palestinian spectrum, positions have been softening, largely as a result of the Lebanese civil war. Mahmoud Darwish, a leftist Palestinian poet, argued that the traumatic war brought many extremists to accept the idea of a ministate, if only to get out of Lebanon.

"You know, before the war a Palestinian state was condemned," said Mr. Darwish, who left Haifa for Moscow and Beirut in 1970 after being put under house arrest by the Israelis. "It was a crime to call for a Palestinian state."

But the building consensus in favor of a state in the West Bank and Gaza rests, in the minds of many extremists and others, on the unvoiced premise that it would be only a stage—the end of "armed struggle," maybe, but the beginning of a period in which the sheer force of demographics would be on the side of the new state and against Israel.

Statistics on the actual number of Palestinians are a matter of dispute, but in Lebanon there are thought to be roughly 400,000. Half of them are registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees, and of those a little under half live in camps. Between 60,000 and 100,000 Palestinians, mostly Christians, obtained Lebanese passports in the years after Israel gained independence, since local Christian politicians wanted to expand their own religious ranks.

The United Nations agency,

established in 1950 to cope with the Palestinian refugees, lists 1.7 million people as qualifying for some sort of assistance. Of this total, only 35 percent live in "camps," which typically are anonymous lanes of cinderblock dwellings. Half of the people on the agency's rolls are 20 years old or younger.

Although individual Palestinians have prospered in Lebanon—Assad Nasir, chairman of Middle East Airlines is a Palestinian—the community is perhaps the least assimilated in the Arab world. "I've been a Lebanese citizen for exactly 20 years and 6 months," said a successful journalist born in Jaffa, "and I don't feel Lebanese and the Lebanese don't feel I'm Lebanese. The Lebanese, and I don't entirely blame them, have gotten fed up with us."

In the 19-month civil war, which ruined the Lebanese economy and took possibly 60,000 lives, Palestinian guerrillas formed the spine of a heavily Moslem coalition that battled Christian forces, armed in the latter stages of the conflict by Israel. In the summer of 1976, Syrian troops and tanks intervened against the Palestinian-led forces when it appeared they might triumph, install a radical state and incite a war with Israel.

Now, many Lebanese Moslems have turned on their one-time Palestinian allies, particularly in southern Lebanon, where leaders of the Shiite Moslem community blame the guerrillas for huge population shifts caused by the guerrillas' clashes along the border with Israeli-supported Christian forces.

Syria

A more hospitable climate prevails in Syria, where some 250,000 Palestinians live, but President Hafez al-Assad's decision to intervene in Lebanon in 1976 embittered many Palestinians. During the war, two Palestinian pilots serving in the Syrian Air Force defected to Iraq with their planes, and several others were said to have been executed. Syrian-based units of the Palestine Liberation Army threw off Syrian control when they were sent to Lebanon and joined Mr. Arafat's forces. Damascus closed guerrilla training camps and bases on the Golan Heights, and scores of Palestinians were jailed. Most have

been released.

Now that President Assad and Mr. Arafat have mended what has been rather implausibly termed "a family quarrel," the situation has eased. "We don't feel like foreigners here," said Khaled al-Fahoum, the Damascus-based head of the P.L.O.'s Central Council, who is married to a Syrian. Successive Syrian governments have absorbed many Palestinians into the bureaucracy, military establishment and economy. Assad Elias, the President's Christian-Palestinian translator and constant companion, gently reminds visitors that at the turn of the century Palestine was considered a southern province of Syria.

Among Palestinian militants, though, mistrust persists and it is reciprocated by an edgy Assad Government. The suspicion lingers in Al Fatah that Syria would like to control the guerrillas in Lebanon as a step toward having a major voice in whatever Palestinian "entity" one day emerges. "All the Arab states want to have a finger in this Palestinian state," said Shafiq al-Hout, a journalist and envoy for the P.L.O.

Saudi Arabia and Persian Gulf

Unlike Syria, which must constantly worry about the guerrillas embroiling it in an untimely war, Saudi Arabia and the oil states of the Persian Gulf are far enough away from the "confrontation" with Israel to have slightly more relaxed relations with their sizable Palestinian populations.

In the shifting politics of the Arab Middle East, Mr. Arafat and his closest aides at times set important and wealthy Palestinians in the Gulf area against radicals who have their strongest followings in Lebanon, Libya and Iraq.

About 250,000 Palestinians make up nearly a quarter of the population of Kuwait, another 50,000 work in Saudi Arabia and roughly 50,000 live in other states on the Arabian peninsula. Many have family ties to the West Bank and as one P.L.O. militant put it, it is in this area that the "illusion" that a negotiated settlement is possible is strongest.

"There is a silent tension between

the Palestinians and those states," said a Palestinian consultant who works throughout the Gulf area, "because those states are always afraid that the Palestinians will do something mischievous."

In the rest of the peninsula the pattern is mixed. The Sultan of Oman is highly suspicious of Palestinians and lets few into his sultanate; in Abu Dhabi, a Palestinian is a key adviser to the ruler, but generally, Palestinians are kept out of the armed forces and the police.

Jordan

While the Arabian peninsula is the source of the P.L.O.'s money, the largest single concentration of Palestinians is beyond the reach of the organization—in Jordan, where Palestinians comprise more than half of the East Bank's population of two million. Some 364,000 refugees on the East Bank arrived or are descended from those who fled in 1948; 473,000 others arrived at the time of the June 1967 war.

The P.L.O. has been effectively banned from Jordan since September 1970, when King Hussein's army, goaded by the guerrillas' open flouting of Jordanian authority, suppressed them and later drove them from the kingdom. After the 1974 meeting of Arab leaders at Rabat, Morocco, proclaimed the organization "the sole legitimate representative" of the Palestinian people and gave it responsibility for the West Bank, King Hussein has accelerated a process of "Jordanization" in sensitive areas of the armed forces and the bureaucracy.

Before the Rabat meeting, Palestinians traditionally held half the cabinet posts in Jordan; today they hold a fifth. Palestinians are excluded from divisional and some lesser commands in Jordanian infantry, artillery, tank or special-forces units. Palestinians, however, make up a part of the technical and support services of the Jordanian Army and Air Force—although they cannot be pilots.

Yet Jordan is the one Arab country that systematically offers its Palestinians nationality — passports — and an economic boom has eased the militancy of many middle-class Palestinians, who find good things to say about the King.

"We admire the man as a leader; we disagree with him, but we admire him," said Sari Nasir, an Illinois-educated Palestinian who is chairman of the sociology department at the University of Jordan in Amman.

Mr. Nasir said he was delighted that "this madman Sadat did such a great thing" by going to Jerusalem and, he maintained, showing that the Israelis did not want peace.

"The more I watch Sadat's initiative, the more I am drawn toward George Habash," he said, referring to the radical Palestinian leader who rejects a negotiated settlement. "Seeing the attitude of the Israelis is definitely driving me toward the extreme, toward George Habash's camp. This is true of Palestinians across the board."

Paradoxically, it is also true that Palestinian opinion, a fluid commodity, would be moving away from Mr. Habash and toward the so-called "moderates" like Mr. Arafat had Mr. Sadat wrested significant concessions from the Israelis.

Palestinians still constitute Jordan's intellectual and business elite and have a strong foothold in the state-controlled press. While top government posts often elude them, the governor of the central bank is a Palestinian, the head of the National Planning Council is a Palestinian, and so is the director of the national television network.

Moreover, the distinction between Palestinians and Jordanians is somewhat artificial, since many of the "best" Jordanian families are only a few generations removed from the West Bank and still have relatives there. "There is and have been so many relations between the Jordanians and the Palestinians," said a Palestinian executive from Bethany, "that it is going to be difficult to separate them whether the King likes it or not, or whether Arafat likes it or not."

Anti-Jordanian, pro-P.L.O. sentiment runs high in Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, which the United Nations refugee agency says have a population of 298,000, and among poor Palestinians outside the camps, but it has mellowed since September 1970 when the King's soldiers battled guerrillas in the streets of the capital.

In his office overlooking Amman's rooftops, which bristle with television antennas, Mahmoud el-Sherif, who

was born in El Arish in Sinai and now publishes the daily Ad Dustur, said he believed many Palestinians in Jordan "still follow the P.L.O. to a degree" but had begun to realize that the organization was being excluded from the Middle East negotiating process.

No Other Organized Representative

"After all," he said, "what they want is the land, and if King Hussein can get it back for them, that's all right with them."

Even so, no "alternate" or "moderate" leadership has emerged within Jordan to counter the P.L.O. "There is no other organized body to represent the Palestinians," said Anwar Nashashibi, a member of a prominent Palestinian family who has served as an ambassador for King Hussein. "The P.L.O. revived the Palestinian question when it was almost dead, and they sacrificed their young men by the thousands, whereas other people like me were just talking. How can the non-P.L.O. people deny them a say?"

It is far too soon to say that the Palestinians will have the chance to have a say in deciding their future. But if a building international consensus prevails, it would probably not be in Beirut, Damascus, Kuwait or Amman that "self-determination" would be gauged.

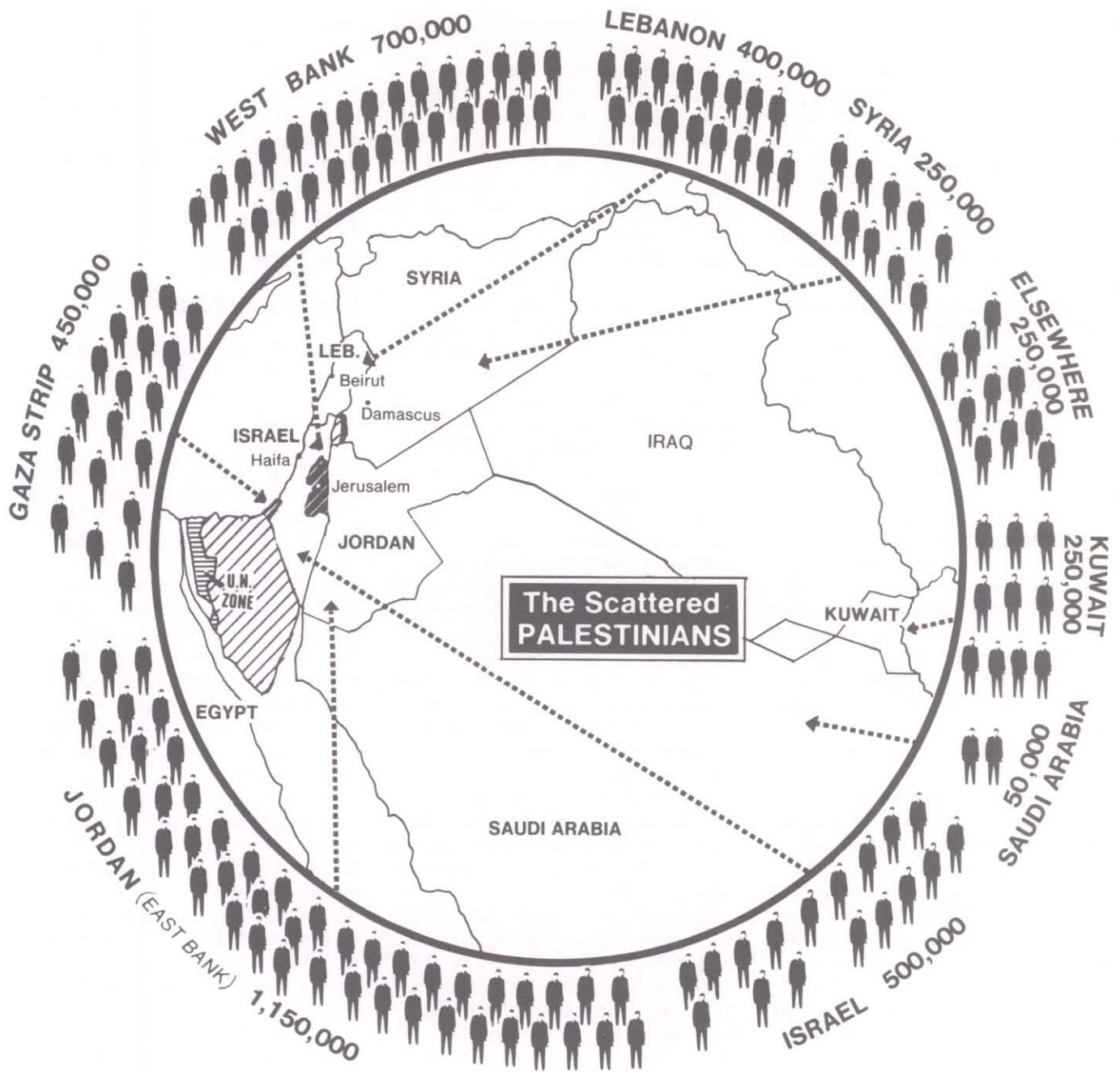
Most likely it would be on the other side of the Jordan River, where 1,150,000 Palestinians, living under Israeli control in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, would by proxy, cast their ballots for the rest of their scattered brethren.

Kuwait

Of all the Palestinian communities in the Middle East, perhaps the most well-to-do lives here in this opulent, torrid desert sheikdom.

The 250,000 Palestinians of Kuwait—the largest foreign community here—account for nearly a quarter of the sheikdom's population, and many are prominent in the bureaucracy, business, the professions, industry and the press.

"This place," Kuwait's ruler, Sheik



Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah, once observed, "was built on the shoulders of the Palestinians."

Still, the Palestinians here are aliens and are regarded with some suspicion, even though Kuwait is one of the firmest backers of the Palestinian cause in the Arab world. Palestinians hold almost no sensitive policymaking positions here and are kept under close watch by the authorities.

Feeling of Alienation

As a result there is a widespread feeling of alienation among them.

"When Egyptians are fed up, they

can pick up and go home, but where can we go?" a Palestinian civil servant asked angrily.

The majority, according to a Palestinian physician, would go "home" if an independent Palestinian state was formed on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, now occupied by Israel. Mussid al-Saleh, a Kuwaiti who is editor in chief of the daily Al Watan, said he thought that 90 percent would do so "because we look at them as foreigners."

Conversations with scores of Palestinians here elicited many expressions of the desire to become part of a Palestinian state, but some also said that they would first wait

and see what the prospects of finding work there would be before making a move. However, an engineer at the state radio network and a young man who works in the hotel industry said that they would rather stay in Kuwait.

Leila Kattan, the wife of a wealthy Palestinian who heads a large construction concern, said when asked what she would do if given a choice between a Palestinian and a Kuwaiti passport, "I would take the Palestinian passport though there are many advantages to being a Kuwaiti."

Her husband, Abdul Muhsin Kattan, whose firm built the golden-domed Kuwait Central Bank, a new airport, a new television station and a

number of schools, is one of the few Palestinians here to have been granted Kuwaiti nationality. The Kuwaitis, who are a minority in their own country, numbering half a million out of a total population of 1.1 million, willingly use foreigners as the movers of their economy but generally do not assimilate them. Citizenship, awarded on the basis of "value to the state," is granted to fewer than 50 foreigners a year.

Despite their Kuwaiti nationality, Mrs. Kattan said she and her husband felt that they were "not considered Kuwaitis." She said they were "very close to the Kuwaitis" but not really part of the society.

"The children love Kuwait," she said, "but they don't feel secure. They identify themselves with other Palestinians."

Interviewed in the Kattan's palatial walled villa, which is equipped with a swimming pool, Mrs. Kattan said:

"Not everyone is rich here. I've worked with Palestinians in the slums of Abrak Khaitan where you find two big families in two rooms. It's all right now but unbearable when the heat is strong."

Dr. Subhi Ghoshen, the physician who said that a majority of Palestinians in Kuwait would go "home" if they could, has his own clinic in the middle-class neighborhood of Salmieh. He said children in Kuwait developed nervous problems from being cooped up in air-conditioned rooms eight months of the year.

Mrs. Siham Sukkar, the headmistress of a girl's school, said she would leave her job immediately and go home to Nablus if an independent state was set up on the West Bank, but stressed that she would not go back if the new state was put under Jordanian rule.

"We remember King Hussein," she said grimly. "He was very unjust and responsible for the Israeli occupation."

However, Palestinians in Kuwait generally see their future state as an independent entity having close links with Jordan.

Separate Institutions

Palestinians have their own recognized unions and clubs here, and they even ran their own schools until the Government closed them down a year and a half ago as tensions increased in

the Arab world during the Lebanese civil war.

Mrs. Sukkar's principal complaint, and that of most Palestinians here, concerns the education system. There are not enough places in Government schools to go around and so many foreigners, including Palestinians, have to send their children to private schools. In addition, there are strict quotas for Kuwait University: 50 percent of the places go to Kuwaitis, 20 percent to Arabs from elsewhere on the Persian Gulf and the remaining 30 percent to other foreigners. This means that only about 10 percent of the Palestinians who want to go to college can get into the university.

Palestinians feel this is grossly unfair particularly since their children regularly finish at the top of their classes. Out of the top 50 high school science students, for example, 48 are Palestinians.

Palestinians also resent a system of unequal pay for equal work.

"A Kuwaiti charwoman is paid more than a non-Kuwaiti teacher," a 40-year-old civil servant said. He said Kuwaitis generally get between \$175 and \$350 a month more than foreigners, while Kuwaiti teachers earn \$450 a month more than their foreign counterparts.

Palestinians also complain that foreigners are not allowed to buy shares in Kuwaiti companies, purchase property, open stores without a Kuwaiti partner, or vote in Kuwaiti unions.

Yet many Palestinians have risen to places of prominence. Among them are Khaled Abu Suud, financial adviser to Sheik Jaber, Dr. Zaki Abu Eid, chief engineer of the Ministry of Electricity and Water, Yussef Shuhaibi, assistant under secretary in the Ministry of the Interior and Dr. Isham Naqib, dean of the Kuwait University College of Graduate Studies.

"The Palestinians," the Foreign Minister, Sheik Sabah al-Ahmed al-Sabah, said in an interview, "are considered among those nationals who have participated in the development of Kuwait and served Kuwait well."

Marvine Howe



"I'm talking now as a Palestinian," said Masuri Kardosh, the owner of a toy store in this Arab town [Nazareth]

in Israel, which Christians visit because it was where Jesus grew to manhood. "Afterwards, I'll talk as a Palestinian with an Israeli passport."

It was the beginning of a relaxed, rambling interview and early in it Mr. Kardosh touched on the essential dilemma of Israel's largest minority group—where does the ultimate allegiance of the 500,000 Arabs with Israeli citizenship lie, particularly after a decade of exposure to the Palestinian Arabs of the West Bank of the Jordan River and Gaza Strip since Israel captured those territories during the 1967 war?

The question, always vexing and tortuous for those Arabs who remained in what became the state of Israel in 1948 while hundreds of thousands of their fellow Arabs fled, is particularly so now at a time when the demands of the Arab world for a separate Palestinian state are so insistent.

A Quiescent Minority

For a long time, the Israeli Arabs were a quiescent minority in Israel. They were often vilified in the Arab world for having accepted citizenship in the Jewish state. During Israel's wars they docilely sat out the fighting and kept their inner allegiances to themselves.

But in the last several years, the basic, nagging question of "who am I?" has come to the fore. This is partly because there has been contact between the Arabs of the West Bank and Gaza and the present generation of young Israeli Arabs, stimulating a growing nationalism and a sense of identification on the part of some of the latter with the Palestinian struggle for a state.

In addition, many Israeli Arabs chafe at their status as Israeli citizens, which they regard as "second-class." While some channel this anger into an effort to resolve the Palestinian problem in general, others argue that the struggle should be to gain parity with Israeli Jews—a deeply disturbing question in a state dedicated to "the ingathering of the Jewish people's exiles" and "living the life of a Jewish state."

This dissatisfaction with Israeli citizenship has been reflected in the growing number of Israeli Arabs who

vote Communist, less because of support for the Communist Party's doctrines, but because it provides an avenue for non-violent protest.

Many of the Israeli Arabs prefer to retreat from the difficulties of their status and push ahead to further the considerable economic gains that have been made over the years. But many others are caught up in these complexities and realize that none of their choices are easy.

For a long time, the Arab states told them to wait to be "liberated." But after the 1967 war, they were importuned by these same Arabs to be more active—a suggestion that intensified the concern of the Israelis about this growing minority that now constitutes 15 percent of the population of Israel.

Rayek Jarjoura is deputy mayor of Nazareth, which has a population of 44,000 and is the largest center of Arab population in Israel.

Like a number of others interviewed at random, Mr. Jarjoura believes that the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza have a right to a state and that their legitimate representative is the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Both of these ideas are rejected out of hand by the Israeli Government.

While many Israeli Arabs were buoyed by President Anwar el-Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, Mr. Jarjoura was not. He feels that Mr. Sadat showed scant inclination to include the Palestinians in deliberations on their future.

U.N. Partition Resolution

Like Mr. Kardosh, Mr. Jarjoura harked back to the United Nations partition resolution of 1947, which called for two states in Palestine, one Arab, one Jewish, an option that the Arabs rejected.

"This refusal led to the dispute in which we are now living," Mr. Jarjoura said. "It was a mistake of the Arab leadership of 1948 to refuse the partition of land. Palestine should be the home of two states. And I'm afraid the Jewish leadership is making the same mistake of the Arab leadership of 1948. They are refusing to recognize the right of the Palestinian Arabs to a state. This will lead to more bloodshed."

Mr. Jarjoura was asked what the

Israeli Arabs might do if a Palestinian state came into being. Would they join it, or retain their Israeli citizenship?

His answer in a sense predated the idea of either a Jewish or a Palestinian state. "We are Palestinian Arabs," he said, "and we are living in our country—our homeland. The land is ours."

Mr. Kardosh, who besides being a small businessman is also active in leftist politics, said: "We are the bridge between the Arabs and the Jews."

And if a Palestinian state came into being?

"We believe our duty is to stay where we are—to hold fast our possessions and to improve our general condition. We are Palestinians living on Palestinian soil. On the other side there are many learned people able to run a new democratic Palestinian state."

Among rank-and-file Israeli Arabs the warm response engendered by Mr. Sadat's trip to Jerusalem has cooled off in part because the Israeli Foreign Ministry declined to allow a "good-will" delegation of Israeli Arabs and Jews, mostly members of the Israeli left, to go to Egypt. At the same time, the Arab sponsors of this abortive trip were treated contemptuously by militants among the Israeli Arabs, who are typified by the "Sons of the Village," a group that finds the Communists too conservative since they take part in the Israeli electoral process.

As it is, many essentially conservative Israeli Arabs tend to vote Communist in order to vent their frustrations rather than because of any ideological affinity.

While Mr. Sadat's effort is viewed by some, including Mr. Jarjoura and Mr. Kardosh, as a usurpation of Palestinian prerogatives, other Israeli Arabs are favorably disposed because the Egyptian leader keeps insisting that any peace must involve the right of Palestinians to self-determination, and to statehood if that is what they choose.

Those favoring Mr. Sadat's effort also support his contention that the Israeli Government's posture now is one of "stubborn haggling" that might well scuttle a chance to end 30 years of enmity.

If a referendum on the question was held among Israeli Arabs, they probably would vote in favor of the creation of a Palestinian state, since many of those on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are relatives and friends. But whether

they themselves would vote to be a part of such a state in such a referendum is much less clear.

High Arab Birth Rate

Also not very clear is the question of how seriously they take Israeli citizenship. In 1948, there were 150,000 Arabs who remained in what is now Israel. That figure has more than tripled and is growing by leaps and bounds as the Arab birth rate remains far greater than that of the Jews. Since statehood, the Arab illiteracy rate has dropped from 85 percent to 15 percent; housing has improved; inaccessible villages are reachable by decent roads; there are jobs.

According to Shmuel Toledano, an Israeli Jew and a former long time Government adviser on Arab affairs, college graduates among the Israeli Arabs numbered only 340 for the entire decade between 1960 and 1970, compared with a total of 340 for 1977 alone. Yet this is still far below the Israeli average.

Social mingling between Israeli Arabs and the Israeli Jews is rare. They neither live nor play together, something that social scientists here are constantly pointing to as a serious impediment to closing the gulf between the majority and a growing minority. But numerous Israeli governments have done little to deal with this problem, partly because there are major social bridges to be built among the Jews themselves. For instance, a Jewish immigrant from Yemen has very little in common with a Jewish immigrant from Europe.

Assimilation seems unlikely, since the notion of a Jewish state is antithetical to assimilation. Whereas in the United States the phrase "melting pot" was used to bridge racial and ethnic diversity, the term "mosaic" tends to be used here, meaning, officials hope, that each different group will cling to its distinctive ways but live in harmony.

Underrepresented in the power centers of the country in which they hold citizenship, the Israeli Arabs are not really part of the Arab world either. There is truth yet in the utterance some years ago of an Israeli Arab official who said: "When I go to Tel Aviv, people look at me as an Arab and suspect me. When I go to Nablus on the West Bank, they look at me as an Israeli and suspect me." ■

William E. Farrell

Palestinians Cling to Vision of a Homeland

By John Darnton

RAMALLAH, Israeli-occupied West Bank—If there is to be a Palestinian homeland, it will most likely come about on the West Bank of the Jordan River and in the Gaza Strip, along the rocky slopes that step down to the Dead Sea and on the sands of the Mediterranean coast.

An international consensus—including the United States, most Arab countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization—is developing around the idea of creating a “homeland” or some other “entity” in these two noncontiguous territories conquered by Israel in June, 1967.

Such an entity, its proponents argue,

would satisfy the Arab demand for return of the land lost in the six-day war of 1967 and at the same time, perhaps, pacify the troublesome Palestinian refugees whose presence has so destabilized the Arab world and whose terrorism has outraged and puzzled the West.

The West Bank-Gaza solution, however, seems to raise as many questions as it resolves. A key one, in the minds of American negotiators, is whether such an entity should in fact be independent. Making up only 23 percent of the area of the British Palestine mandate, would it be radical and harbor designs on its neighbors' territory?

Should it be placed under the control

of Jordan, a country that has a predominantly Palestinian population but is ruled by a conservative monarch despised by the exiled Palestinian left wing and disliked by many on the West Bank as well?

Some day, the 1,150,000 Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip may be asked to express their political sentiments in a referendum. In a sense, those “inside” would be casting a proxy for the more than 2 million Palestinians “outside”—a minority speaking for a majority. Although the two groups now share a sense of history, family ties and a fervent nationalism, at some point their views may diverge.

“How can I speak for my brother carrying a gun in a camp in southern Lebanon?” asked a pensive, 30-year-old professor at Bir Zeit University, a cauldron of nationalist thinking on the West Bank. “Our desires, our hopes are identical. But the fact that he is there and I am here makes us different.”

Slogans of solidarity with those in the Palestinian “diaspora” are proclaimed, but distinctions are drawn.

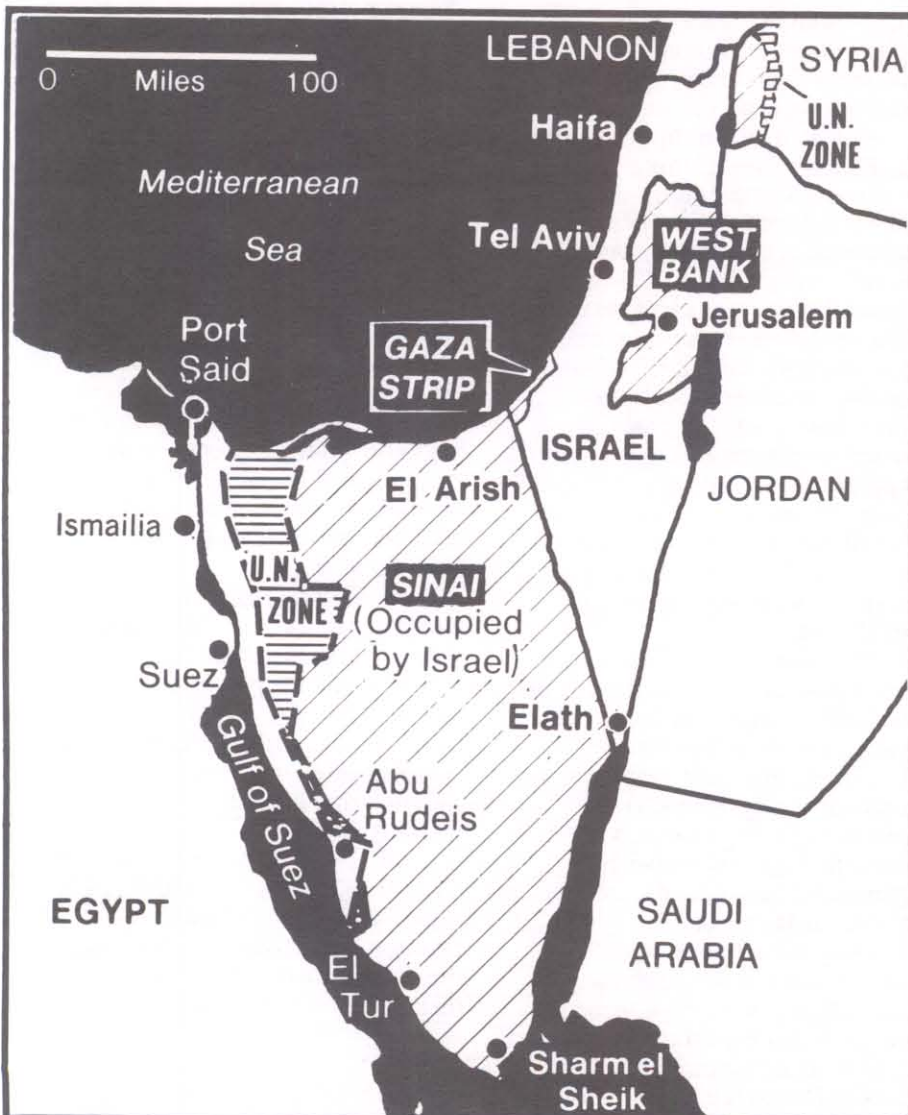
“We are desperate,” said a shopkeeper here, pouring a cup of tea in a back room. “Even more desperate than those on the outside. We have a saying in Arabic: ‘It is not the same for the man who gets the whipping as for the one who counts the strokes.’”

The peace initiative of President Anwar el-Sadat of Egypt, and especially his visit to Jerusalem last November 19, sent ripples of confusion through the West Bank. It stirred a stronger response here than among Palestinians elsewhere.

The fears of being “betrayed,” in an agreement that would return the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt in exchange for thinly disguised Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, clashed against hopes, often unexpressed, that a proven ally would bargain a viable settlement.

“It was all so confusing,” said Raymonda Tawil, a staunch P.L.O. supporter whose outspokenness has meant arrest in the past. “I feared a sell-out, but at the same time, I felt this man is taking a courageous step. His speech at the Knesset was good—it was thrilling to hear Arabic spoken there—but he did not mention the P.L.O.”

“That he should pray at the mosque under Israeli protection, this was like a shot to us. It was humiliating. But at the same time, he had a kind of forgiveness, almost divine. Here is the hero of the October war! Such humiliation. Such greatness! It was confusing.”



Outwardly, the Palestinians present a united front, engendered no doubt by their anger over the 48 Israeli settlements that have sprung up inside the two territories, the annexation of East Jerusalem, and the daily humiliations and outright injustices that are inevitable under a military occupation.

Indeed, some regard Israeli tax levies, land confiscation and security arrests not as administrative measures but as a plot to drive out the Arab population—an “occupation of elimination” in the words of a prominent Palestinian who once served in the Jordanian Cabinet.

Support for the P.L.O. is widespread. From the northern town of Nablus, ringed with terraced hills and olive trees, to the ancient biblical city of Hebron in the south, scores of people interviewed said that the Palestine Liberation Organization was the only voice that represented them.

Slogans on the Walls

P.L.O. slogans are painted on village walls. The Voice of Palestine blares out of radios in Arab-populated East Jerusalem. Anti-Israeli literature circulates underground.

One explanation for the P.L.O.'s popularity is its character as an all-embracing assembly with representatives from almost every West Bank town, leading family and political view. Another is an almost visceral identification with the symbolism of the organization; the facts that the organization has been recognized by Arab states and has achieved observer status at the United Nations are cited frequently here, almost as a surrogate for statehood.

When other nations attempt to cast doubt on the status of the P.L.O., said the Rev. Audeh G. Rantisi, an Episcopal clergyman in the heavily Christian town, they are trying “to make us lose our identity, our nationality, to make us less than ourselves.”

A waitress here declared, with a trace of anger: “For years journalists used to ask, ‘do you have anyone to represent you?’ And we always used to hesitate because in fact there was no one. Now circumstances have changed and we do have someone. Now the journalists say: ‘But these people are extremists, they can’t really represent you.’”

Support for the P.L.O. does not necessarily mean support for the leadership based in Beirut, Lebanon. No, said Ali Keishe, city manager of Al Bireh, shaking his head slowly, there is

no special allegiance to Yasir Arafat.

“Most of us are not concerned about persons, but about the symbol of representation,” he explained.

If there was any doubt about the P.L.O.'s hold on the West Bank, it was dispelled in April, 1976, when the Israeli Government held elections and watched as every town but tourist-oriented Bethlehem voted in mayors and councilmen who supported, or were supported by, the P.L.O.

Mostly teachers, lawyers and engineers, the new mayors replaced older, more conservative members of the aristocratic land-owning families that had risen during the period of Jordanian rule from 1948 to 1967. Their campaigns were conducted in a kind of code. “We didn’t speak for the P.L.O. out loud,” said Mayor Jahed al-Quawsmi of Hebron, sitting back in his drafty office. “A small town like this, they all know how you feel.”

Once installed, the mayors openly proclaimed their support of the P.L.O. They became embroiled with the military administration in innumerable disputes over electric power lines and water pipes because they attempted, usually without success, to remain independent of Israeli supply systems. They have not forged strong constituencies of their own.

The Israeli authorities and media, exasperated at the mayors, have tried to bolster “alternate leaders.” Some of them receive frequent exposure on television and others are able to help people out in special ways, such as by obtaining travel permits. But these leaders, less than half a dozen in number, seem to be generally regarded as opportunists and do not wield great popular influence.

Israeli commentators often assert that the P.L.O. maintains a grip upon the West Bank through terror and intimidation.

Since December, there has been a series of political assassinations on the West Bank. At least two people, and possibly as many as five, have been killed. In two instances, responsibility has been taken by the P.L.O., apparently operating through a subgroup called the “November 19th Organization” after the date of President Sadat’s visit.

The surprising thing about the killings is how few people condemn them. “There is some thought on the West Bank that the P.L.O. doesn’t engage in enough intimidation,” remarked Hanna Nasir, the Purdue-

educated president of Bir Zeit University who was deported in 1974 and now lives in Amman, Jordan.

A handful of moderates on the West Bank have proposed a period of United Nations supervision for the territories, coupled with guarantees of self-determination. Very few can be found who will voice support for the autonomy plan presented by the Israeli Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, to the Israeli Parliament on December 28.

The plan, under which Israelis could buy land here and Israel would retain the right to station troops on the West Bank and veto the repatriation of Palestinians from the outside, has aroused deep-seated fears that the Likud Government has no intention of relinquishing the land it calls Judea and Samaria, Biblical names that suggest the West Bank belongs to “Eretz Israel,” the land of Israel.

Worse Than Annexation

“His plan was much worse than the continuance of the occupation,” said Tayseer Kanaan, “or even outright annexation. If they annexed the West Bank, it means they have about 2 million Arabs in Israel. It means the color of Israel is changed and in a decade it becomes a secular state. This was a plan to annex the land without the people.”

For the moment, what is perceived by West Bank residents as intransigence on the part of the Begin Government has undercut the moderates and strengthened the hand of the few radicals who still maintain that the 1967 lines are not enough for a Palestinian state.

West Bank residents have always tended toward the moderate end of the Palestinian political spectrum. Rejectionism, the political current that dismisses the idea of negotiating with Israel, exists, particularly among the young; it gains and loses strength as the situation changes but it is clearly a minority view.

Unlike Palestinians in exile or in the Gaza Strip, a densely populated, 140-square-mile ribbon along the Mediterranean coast, most people in the West Bank have never had to flee their homes. Their primary objective is to throw off the occupation.

In the Gaza Strip, about 300,000 of the area’s 450,000 people are refugees

from the fighting of 1948 and almost two-thirds of them live in teeming and squalid camps.

On the West Bank, according to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, there are a little more than 300,000 refugees out of about 700,000 people. One quarter of them live in camps that are more like villages, substandard but not altogether destitute or unassimilated into the surrounding society.

In early 1974, a group of professionals on the West Bank with links to the Communist Party in Jordan came together to form the West Bank Palestine National Front. The movement advocated accepting a state in the occupied territories—an idea that implicitly recognized Israel's existence—and provided the impetus for the Palestine National Council, the Palestinian parliament-in-exile, to move toward this more moderate position later that year.

'We Have to Face the Facts'

"We have given up the idea of realizing our dream by force," said Zuhair el-Rayess, chairman of the board of the

leftist Arabic daily Al Fajr, "We have to face facts. The facts are that there's now a Jewish people living here, and we can't ask them to go back or kick them into the sea."

Aziz Shehade, a lawyer from Al Bireh who faced Israeli negotiators across a table in Europe 30 years ago, said: "There was a time, after the war in '67, when I called for a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza and I was called a traitor. Now, easily 80 percent of the people support it."

Mr. Shehade, noted, however, that the Israeli Government's response to the Sadat initiative so far may radicalize Palestinians.

"I heard Begin speak at the Knesset and I was furious. What are we? Are we just beasts living here hundreds of years? He is from Poland and he thinks he has more right to live here than me. I'm supposed to be one of the more moderate Palestinians. Begin is not making me any more moderate."

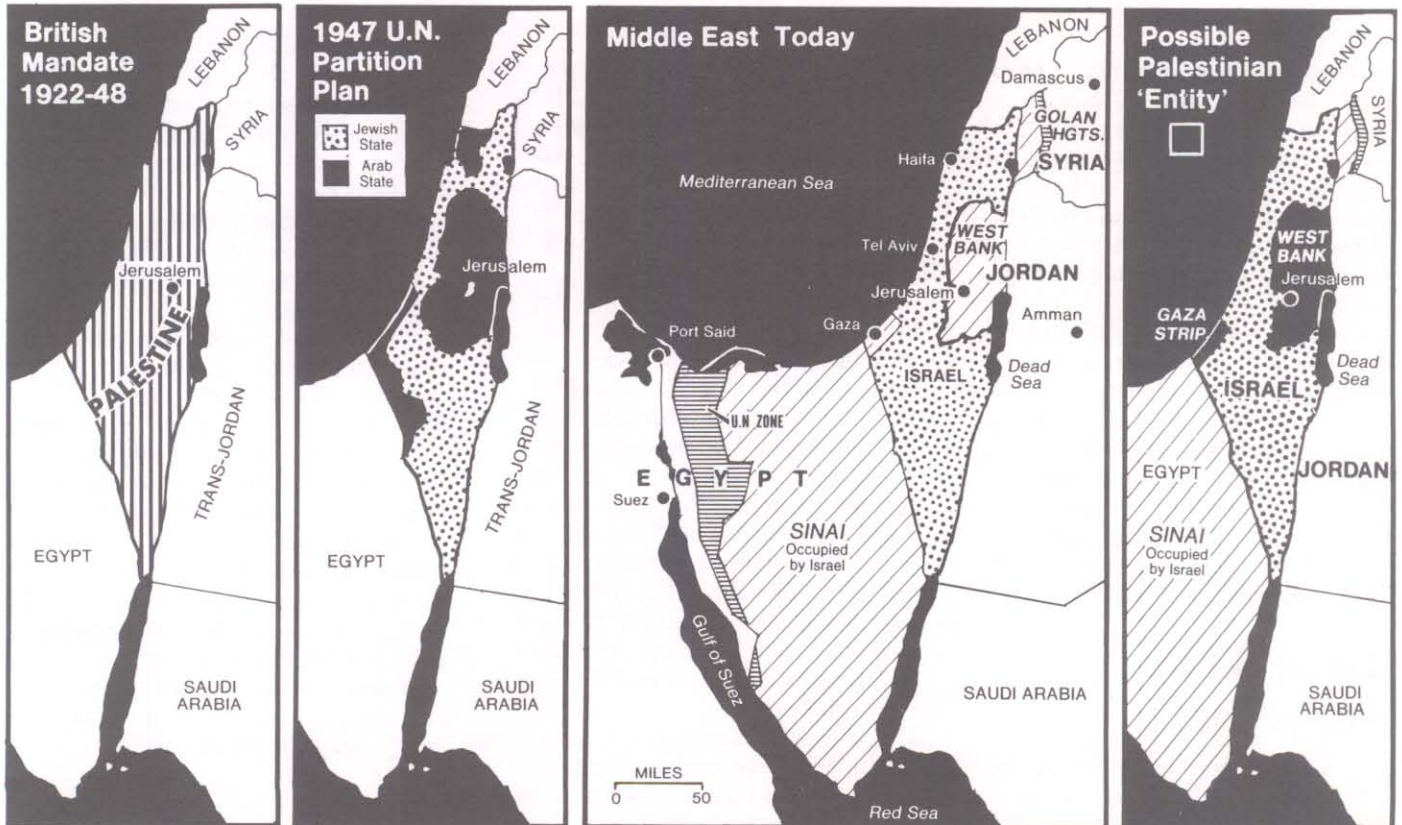
On the West Bank, tensions flare from time to time, causing localized disturbances, but there have been no widespread strikes or demonstrations for 18 months. In part, this may stem from tighter, and in some ways more sophisticated, control by the Israeli forces.

Many Palestinian leaders have been put out of action. Between 1967 and 1976, according to a study by a foreign religious organization active in the area, over 1,100 people were deported, in a few cases simply by being blindfolded and carried over the border.

Last February the Israeli prisons service commissioner stated that there were 3,227 people in prison on security charges. The number being held without charge in short-term detention can only be guessed at, but is believed to be high.

Schools are still arenas for confrontation, but when problems erupt they are rarely reported in the heavily censored Arab press. Whereas two years ago Israeli soldiers used to break up demonstrations with a show of force, the authorities now try to head them off; parents are warned that they face heavy fines if trouble occurs and students are called in for interrogation in twos and threes.

The Gaza Strip has been peaceful for years. In 1972 the Israeli authorities completed a project to crisscross the camps with wide roads, demolishing structures that housed 16,000 people as a security measure to cut the camps into segments that could be effectively



patrolled. It has been effective.

There is an impressive array of statistics to show that West Bank and Gaza residents have benefited economically from Israeli occupation, chiefly by finding employment in Israel. In 1973, when employment of Arabs from the occupied territories in Israel peaked, about 60,000 people worked there. Most commuted daily and worked in construction and other low-salaried jobs.

In recent years, however, these workers have seen their gains eroded by taxes and inflation. Capital investment inside the occupied territories has been meager, and some view the economic relationship as exploitative.

Among many residents of the occupied territories, there is a deepening mood of resignation and apathy.

Faiz Abdinnour, a member of the Arab Chamber of Commerce who runs a tourist agency in East Jerusalem, said he could not bear the thought that his taxes went to buy American planes that might be used for reprisal raids across the border and "hit my brothers in Lebanon." But he said he no longer believed in antitax strikes.

"We tried it," he shrugged. "You know what was the result? The army came and broke the lock on our stores. When we put the locks back, we were brought into the police station and threatened with deportation if we did not reopen the shops. What's the good?"

Ibrahim al-Tawil, the mayor of Al Bireh, looked through his window to the bare summit of a mountain called Jebel Tawil. The Minister of Defense had just requisitioned it, he said, indicating that some time soon an Israeli settlement will appear, the first in his town. "We will not oppose it," he added. "What can we do?"

Certainly some of the Palestinians' dependency comes from having witnessed the fate of fellow Palestinians at the hands of nominal allies, the Arab regimes. Especially traumatic was the Lebanese civil war, in which Syrian troops intervened to defeat the Palestinian guerrillas and their Lebanese leftist allies in their struggle against right-wing Christians.

'Look What Happened!'

"We were brought up all our lives to believe that Syria is the beating heart of Arab nationalism, and look what

happened!" exclaimed a student at Bir Zeit.

The response has been a decline in pan-Arab sentiment and a sense that in order to be secure once and for all, the Palestinians need a country of their own as a first priority.

Paradoxically, for some this has led to rejection of an option that would make such a state more acceptable to the West—union with Jordan—because then the Palestinians' haven would fall under the dominion of another foreign Arab leader.

In fact, the deepest divisions among Palestinian Arabs on the West Bank have little to do with Israel. They center upon attitudes toward Jordan, which annexed the West Bank and ruled it for 19 years until the 1967 war.

To some, King Hussein of Jordan is a fellow Arab and patron. To others he is remembered as the perpetrator of "Black September" in 1970, when his army suppressed and later expelled the Palestinian guerrillas.

The division could come to the surface were a moment of decision ever to arise. If, as seems likely, a possible settlement is in the air that offers something less than total independence, complete Israeli military withdrawal, the return of East Jerusalem to Arab control and unrestricted rights or repatriation or compensation for those in exile, many—possibly most—on the West Bank would be tempted.

King Hussein's influence on the West Bank is difficult to gauge. He still pays the salaries of about 5,000 people who are hold-overs from his administration. Most people carry Jordanian passports. The Jordanian currency, the dinar, circulates together with the Israeli pound.

Under the "open bridges" policy initiated by Israel, there is a steady movement of goods and people between Jordan and the West Bank. In 1976, \$35 million in exports and 348,000 people crossed the bridges to Jordan.

At Israel's insistence, much of the economic aid from the Arab world to the West Bank is funneled through a bank in Amman, thus insuring that it will get to the P.L.O. The sums are substantial, since each town on the West Bank has been "adopted" by a sister city in one of the countries belonging to the Arab League.

Against this economic leverage, there are still harsh memories of Jordanian rule, when the East Bank of the Jordan was favored over the west for

investment, when radicals and nationalists were rounded up and jailed, and curfews were imposed to block demonstrations against Israeli border incursions.

"In 1967, the Jordanian troops withdrew two days before the Israelis got here," said Father Rantisi bitterly. "Imagine how you feel if you hire a guard to protect your house and he turns you over to your enemy."

Point of Division Shifts

But such memories have faded, and now are overshadowed by the daily reminders of Israeli rule. When pressed, most will say they would accept Jordan over Israel.

Eight years ago, the defining issue between moderates and militants on the West Bank was whether or not Israel should be absorbed into a secular Palestinian state. Four years ago it was whether or not to have an independent Palestinian state in the occupied territories. Now it is whether or not such a state can be absorbed into a union with Jordan.

This is a change that has not been followed by Palestinians in the "diaspora"—especially in Lebanon and Syria—where Palestinian radicalism has been kept alive in clashes with Arab states.

The political complexion of the Palestinian "entity," if it comes into being, will depend to a certain degree on how many of the "outsiders" will choose—or be allowed—to return to the West Bank and Gaza.

"The process that brings independence will determine the nature of the state," observed the 30-year-old Bir Zeit professor.

"If the world presses for any plan that falls short of true self-determination on the part of Palestinians, if they press it we are too weak to resist. We would sulk for a while and accept it. And the seeds of future conflict would be sown.

"But if it comes as a result of a prevailing good will toward us, from an understanding of our grievances, if it is not imposed on us, then we are inclined to be a little ashamed of our troublesomeness. You know, if you look back into history, we haven't always been a troublesome people." ■

The P.L.O. Is Palestinians' Only Voice

By James M. Markham

AMMAN, Jordan—Since Yasir Arafat addressed the United Nations General Assembly on Nov. 13, 1974, the Palestine Liberation Organization he heads has attained an impressive degree of international recognition and has put the Palestinian question high on the agenda for a Middle East settlement.

But since President Anwar el-Sadat of Egypt went to Jerusalem on Nov. 19, 1977, the P.L.O. and many Palestinians who give the organization allegiance feel caught in a pincers between Israel and Arab countries, notably Egypt and Jordan, that might be tempted into a Middle East settlement that would shelve or muffle Palestinian aspirations for a state.

For, while it has established itself on the international scene, the P.L.O. has suffered disastrous setbacks in the field. By carrying out its doctrine of armed struggle not inside Israel or the Israeli-occupied West Bank of the Jordan River and the Gaza Strip, but in Lebanon, the organization became bogged down in a devastating, 19-month civil war that brought its guerrillas into open conflict with one of their chief allies and arms suppliers, Syria.

The result is that Palestinian guerrillas in Lebanon are now under the supervision of 27,000 Syrian peacekeeping troops. Weapons continue to pour into Lebanon, and lately bombings, kidnappings and shootings have markedly increased.

Mounting hostility among Lebanese Moslems and Christians has put the Palestinians even more on the defensive. In southern Lebanon Palestinian fighters face a small Christian force supported by Israel, which could mount an operation of its own to wipe out the guerrillas.

Diplomatic Frustrations

The apparent failure of "armed struggle," which for the Palestinians began in 1970 in the streets of Amman when King Hussein began a drive that forced the guerrillas from his country,

has obliged Mr. Arafat and his colleagues to try to advance their cause in the field of Arab and international diplomacy.

But here, too, they have been frustrated. Many Palestinians perceive President Sadat's peace initiative as an effort to outflank the P.L.O. and eventually deliver its constituency to King Hussein. But so unsure is Mr. Arafat of his support in other Arab capitals that he is unwilling to break openly with Mr. Sadat, who he hopes will be forced by Israeli inflexibility to return to a united Arab front.

Last month, the guerrilla leader even went so far as to make a plaintive appeal to President Carter, taking issue with the President's contention that the P.L.O.'s "negative" attitude had removed it from serious consideration in the negotiating process. "We are trying to stress positive views," Mr. Arafat said in a message relayed by a Congressman. "I most sincerely hope that you will not further push me into a corner because I would like to maintain my moderate balance."

However, for his immediate audience in the Middle East, Mr. Arafat must maintain a posture of steadfastness and defiance in the face of what he usually calls "American and Zionist schemes."

There is a foreboding in the higher ranks of the P.L.O. that Mr. Sadat's diplomacy has ushered in a new and dangerous phase in which the Palestinian militants could be the losers. In Lebanon, the guerrillas feel that they have their backs to the sea; there is talk of a revival of international terrorism should Mr. Sadat strike a peace accord that altogether excludes them.

Even so, despite its serious setbacks, the unruly coalition called the Palestine Liberation Organization has managed to survive and, for the moment, has managed to retain the loyalty of enough Palestinians, notably in the Israeli-occupied territories, to prevent the emergence of any alternative "moderate" leadership. What a young Palestinian said about the Lebanese civil war applies elsewhere: "the big win we got from this war is that we still exist."

Scores of interviews over a two-week

period with Palestinians and others in the Middle East indicate that the current absence of challengers to the P.L.O. leadership does not mean that they will never emerge, perhaps within the organization itself. What does seem clear, however, is that significant numbers of Palestinians see no one else capable of delivering what they consider minimal demands: self-determination and a state or "entity" of their own on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, possibly linked to Jordan.

Should someone else emerge who could make these things possible—King Hussein, Mr. Sadat or Mr. Carter—there seems little doubt that the surface unity of the Palestinians would begin to break up. Said one East Jerusalem Palestinian of Mr. Arafat: "Look, if there is a settlement, and he does not adapt himself to a settlement, he will not come back."

Talk of International Plots

The Sadat visit to Jerusalem provided a glimpse of the potential rifts among Palestinians, who are torn between eagerness for a negotiated settlement and the conviction that one is not possible.

"President Sadat would have been praised as a hero by almost all Arab states if, after his unprecedented feat, he had returned with an Israeli commitment to withdraw from the occupied areas or to recognize the rights of the Palestinians," Isam Sartawi, a P.L.O. moderate, reportedly said Dec. 12 at a private gathering in Vienna that was attended by Austria's Chancellor, Bruno Kreisky. "As it was, President Sadat returned from Israel with the pit of the olive and not the branch."

Three weeks after Mr. Sartawi's speech, Said Hammami, the P.L.O.'s London representative, who had openly advocated coexistence with Israel and had initiated a dialogue with leftist Israelis, was assassinated. After receiving death threats himself, Mr. Sartawi, the organization's representative in Vienna, has gone underground.

One of Mr. Hammami's closest Israeli friends was Uri Avneri, a maverick Israeli politician who at the age of 15 joined the Irgun terrorist

The Palestinian Guerrillas

Palestine Liberation Organization

Serves as umbrella organization for eight guerrilla groups, including four small ones that oppose any negotiated settlement of Middle East conflict. Formed in 1964. Came under control of Al Fatah, the main guerrilla organization, in 1969. Governed by 15-member Executive Committee dominated by Fatah and headed by Fatah leader, Yasir Arafat. Based officially in Damascus but actually in Beirut. Proclaimed by leaders of Arab countries at 1974 conference in Rabat, Morocco, as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Executive Committee

Elected by P.L.O.'s legislative arm, the Palestine Liberation Council, with two of committee's 15 members from Al Fatah, one each from four other guerrilla groups including one of those that oppose peaceful Middle East settlement, and nine independents, most of whom back Mr. Arafat.

Palestine Liberation Army

Organization's regular army, numbering about 12,000 men, with units stationed in Syria, Egypt and Jordan. Headed by Yasir Arafat as "commander in chief of forces of the Palestinian Revolution."

Palestine National Council

Palestinians' 295-member "Parliament in exile." Selected, not elected, for three-year term by Executive Committee from nominations made by Al Fatah and other member organizations. Roughly one-third from Fatah, one-third from other groups and one-third independents, most of whom back Mr. Arafat. Meets periodically in various Arab capitals.

Palestine Armed Struggle Command

P.L.O.'s security or police organization, dominated by Al Fatah.

Palestine Central Council

A 55-member policy-making body selected by National Council to function while it is in recess. Based in Damascus.

group—later led by Mr. Begin—but who now calls for the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

In his Tel Aviv apartment, Mr. Avneri mused on what he saw as ironies of the Palestinian question:

"As a former terrorist, I can tell you they're not very good terrorists—the P.L.O. really doesn't have practical roots on the West Bank and Gaza. It is

P.L.O. Guerrilla Groups

AL FATAH

About 10,000 members. Operates as fighting organization in Lebanon under name Al Asifah. Represented on P.L.O. Executive Committee by Yasir Arafat and Farouk Kaddoumi, the "foreign minister" of the P.L.O.

POPULAR FRONT FOR LIBERATION OF PALESTINE—GENERAL COMMAND

About 500 men. Led by Ahmed Jabreel. Pro-Syrian. Represented on P.L.O.'s Executive Committee.

PALESTINE LIBERATION FRONT

About 150 men. Led by Abul Abbas. Backed by Iraq. Rejects peaceful settlement of Middle East conflict. Not represented on P.L.O.'s Executive Committee.

AS SAIQA

Perhaps 3,000 to 5,000 members, many of them Syrians. Represented on P.L.O.'s Executive Committee by its leader, Zuheir Mohsen, head of P.L.O.'s military department. Sponsored by Syria's governing Baath Party.

ARAB LIBERATION FRONT

Several hundred men. Led by Abdel Rahim Ahmed. Controlled by Iraq's governing Baath Party. Rejects peaceful Middle East settlement. Represented on P.L.O.'s Executive Committee.

PALESTINIAN POPULAR FRONT

About 300 men. Led by Dr. Samir Ghosheh. Not represented on P.L.O.'s Executive Committee.

DEMOCRATIC FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE

About 1,500 men. Led by Jordanian, Nayef Hawatmeh. Marxist oriented, pro-Soviet and close to Syria. Represented on P.L.O.'s Executive Committee.

POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE

1,000 to 1,500 men. Led by Dr. George Habash. Rejects peaceful Middle East settlement. Quit P.L.O.'s Executive Committee in 1974.

a guerrilla movement based on the outside. If the Israelis had allowed the West Bank Palestinians freedom, the P.L.O. would have been undercut. Fortunately for the P.L.O., Mr. Begin seems determined not to see the P.L.O. undercut."

For the present, the Sadat initiative has led to increased solidarity between Mr. Arafat's dominant Al Fatah group,

which espouses a nonideological brand of Palestinian nationalism with a faint Islamic tinge, and avowedly Marxist organizations like George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which formally adhere to the "rejectionist" position, opposing any negotiated settlement with Israel. Mr. Habash's group, which most Arab regimes consider subversive, also

maintains that they must be toppled and replaced by "revolutionary" ones before Palestine can be "liberated."

In private, Mr. Arafat and his group are said to have persuaded Mr. Habash to accept the idea of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and in Gaza, in return for agreement by Al Fatah to reject the idea of Middle East peace negotiations—talks to which they are not about to be invited.

'A Very Strong Front Indeed'

In Jerusalem, Anwar Nuseibeh, an urbane former Jordanian defense minister and ambassador to London, observed: "Even Habash, if he were told today, 'All right, you're getting Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem—for God's sake, shut up,' he would. But a rejectionist front in the face of an initiative which offered the Palestinians nothing, would be a very strong front indeed."

Overshadowing all other guerrilla groups, Al Fatah's cardinal tenet is aloofness from inter-Arab quarrels, a position that enables it to receive substantial financial support from conservative regimes such as those of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Morocco as well as radical governments like that of Algeria. But within Al Fatah's diverse ranks runs a strong current of "rejectionism" that rises and falls with the prospects of negotiations. It is now rising fast.

Mr. Arafat, who believes that without the support of Egypt and Syria his cause cannot be seriously advanced, has studiously avoided personal criticism of Mr. Sadat. This makes his own position within the P.L.O. increasingly uncomfortable. In the words of one Damascus-based Palestinian leader, Mr. Arafat "is now a political captive of the more radical tendencies."

In a shabby office in Beirut's heavily Palestinian Tarik el Jdeideh quarter, Saleh Khalef, the second-ranking Fatah leader, warned that the Sadat initiative had strengthened "radical" forces in the P.L.O. and the Arab world, had helped Soviet influence and could spark "a wave of anti-Americanism."

Mr. Khalef predicted failure for Mr. Sadat and spoke of international "plots" to provoke a resumption of the Lebanese civil war. "But the green light has not been given yet," he continued.

"After the success, or failure, of Sadat, things will start up in Lebanon."

Palestinians in Lebanon recall edgily that the divisions within the Arab world caused by Mr. Sadat's second Sinai disengagement agreement with Israel in 1975 ultimately turned the Lebanese civil war into a Middle East war by proxy, with Israeli-supported Christian rightists battling a coalition of Palestinians and Moslem leftists armed by various Arab states.

Palestinians watch the complex undercurrents of inter-Arab politics closely because their own organizations mirror the divisions among the Arab states and have tended to get swept up in them—disastrously, so far.

Alternative to P.L.O.

"It's a race between the ability of the regimes to put down the Palestinians and the internal risks they face in doing so," said Constantine Zurayk, a thoughtful scholar at Beirut's Institute for Palestine Studies. "This is why the Palestinians are in some kind of fix. What does the West Bank and Gaza represent out of the original area of Palestine? Some 23 percent. If the Palestinians are ready to accept 23 percent of their original homeland, how much farther can they go without losing everything?"

In the vision of many American and some Israeli policymakers, the preferable alternative to the P.L.O. is King Hussein, a tested conservative and anti-Communist who has brought a degree of prosperity and contentment to his discreetly authoritarian kingdom.

Among the Palestinians who make up more than half of his two million subjects on the East Bank, many aspire to see some sort of Palestinian "entity" created on the other side of the Jordan River. On the West Bank, which has been under Israeli occupation for almost 11 years, sentiment is openly favorable to the P.L.O. and, at times, extremely hostile to King Hussein. But, on both banks of the Jordan, Palestinians would prefer a federation with Jordan to continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank.

The King is known to believe that in an election free from intimidation, West Bank Palestinians would produce a leadership that would displace the P.L.O. He dreams of reuniting the West Bank, which he ruled from 1948 to 1967, although within the royal family and his own military

establishment there is resistance to the idea of absorbing and policing 700,000 troublesome West Bank Palestinians.

Whether a kingdom so overwhelmingly Palestinian would survive, more than one East Bank resident has asked privately.

In dealing with the Sadat initiative, King Hussein is no freer of the pressures of Arab politics than is Mr. Arafat. Should he join the Egyptian President's peace initiative, the King would open himself to the wrath of neighboring Syria, not to speak of the P.L.O. The pressures on President Hafez al-Assad of Syria either to stop King Hussein or join him would mount. Should Syria also join, it could face a rebellion from Palestinians in Lebanon, in addition to the violent sniping it already receives from its neighbor Iraq.

'Holding Bag for Separate Peace'

Over the years, King Hussein has held secret talks with several Israeli leaders, and he has an idea of what Israel would yield and what it would not. He feels strongly about recovering East Jerusalem, which Mr. Begin says he will never surrender, and, in the words of one who knows the King well, he is reluctant to enter talks that would "leave him holding the bag for a separate peace."

According to foreign and Jordanian sources in Amman, the King would not want to try to speak for the Palestinians, thus openly repudiating the decision of the 1974 Arab summit meeting in Morocco, which declared the P.L.O. their sole legitimate representative, unless he thought that he stood a good chance of recovering the West Bank. At present, that chance does not look strong.

Who does speak for the Palestinians, then? So far, only the battered, weakened P.L.O., which finds itself diplomatically isolated, physically removed from its constituency in Jordan and the West Bank, and thoroughly on the defensive. The dynamics of the Middle East situation might throw up other contenders, but could this happen without more violence?

As for Mr. Avneri, the former Irgun member, said of the Palestinians: "They've got nothing in their favor, except that they're there. And any peace without the Palestinians will be nonsense and won't last." ■

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The views expressed in The Link are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinion of Americans for Middle East Understanding, Inc.

All correspondence should be addressed to Room 771, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, New York 10027.



Americans for Middle East Understanding, Inc.
Room 771, 475 Riverside Drive
New York, N.Y. 10027