

Europe and the Arabs: A Developing Relationship

By John P. Richardson

As America watches from the sidelines with mixed surprise and consternation, relations between Western Europe and the Arab World warm and flourish. Hardly an overnight occurrence, the relationship reaches back to the early stages of European exploration and commercial development, and extends into the era of colonialism and imperialism to the politically independent Arab World of today.

Unlike the United States, whose dealings with the Arab World are still in an immature phase, the Europeans and Arabs are more comfortable with one another. The bond stems in part from geography, with Europe dominating the West and North of the Mediterranean, and the Arab World controlling its East and South. In the heyday of the Arab Empire, the Arabs were teachers and conquerors while the Europeans were the students and the conquered. In more recent times the roles reversed, and in our era extensive cooperation between these two vital regions is taking shape.

The United States, by dint of its ties to the state of Israel, is less able to play a significant role in Arab regional affairs and in fact has worked consistently to frustrate progress of Euro-Arab relations, demonstrating a lack of understanding of major historical forces at work. The Arabs in

turn regard the superpowers, America and the Soviet Union, with roughly equal levels of suspicion, whereas Europe, more recently the principal foreign meddler in the Arab World, is viewed as a relatively attractive "Third Force," without superpower ambitions and able to assist in developing and achieving Arab aspirations.

European nations, who deferred to

the United States for most of the third quarter of this century, are now unwilling to take American direction any longer. They regard American policies as solicitous of Israel to the point of disregarding American national interests in the region, and they do not intend to be dragged down when they have such extensive interests of their own in the area.

Delegates representing the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation met at The Hague in September 1980.



About This Issue

John P. Richardson is currently director of public affairs for the National Association of Arab Americans in Washington. Professionally active in Middle East issues for most of the past 20 years, John previously served as president of American Near East Refugee Aid, and lived in Beirut from 1966-68. In recent years he has worked closely with British and European organizations involved with the Middle East.

In this issue John traces the historical contacts between Europe and the

Middle East, looks at how Europe's independent dialogue with the Arab countries evolved and the effect it might have on United States foreign policy.

Photos are courtesy of Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation (Paris); Central Office of Information (London); F.R.G. Press and Information Office (Bonn); and Votavafoto (Vienna).

Three books are reviewed on pages 13-16: *Dispossessed: The Ordeal of the Palestinians* by David Gilmour, *The Crossing of the Suez* by

Lt. General Saad El Shazly, and *In Quest of Justice and Peace in the Middle East: The Palestinian Conflict in Biblical Perspective* by Hagop Chakmakjian.

The April/May issue of *The Link* will focus on the three Palestinian universities on the West Bank and their status under Israeli occupation.

John F. Mahoney,
Executive Director

Centuries of Interaction Contribute To Present-Day Partnership

Present-day Western technology and military capability make Europe in many respects the "senior partner" of the Arab World. Looking back into history, one finds a dramatically different picture.

The explosive outreach of the Islamic conquests during the seventh and eighth centuries carried Arab culture and society to the mainland of Europe. The military drive ended when the armies of Mohammed's followers were checked at Tours in 732 in their northernmost thrust beyond the Iberian Peninsula.

For the next seven centuries Arab influences dominated Spain and Portugal, resulting in Spain's proudest and most creative era in architecture, literature and the sciences. In those days the Arabs and the liberal environment they encouraged produced not only the great Arab contributions in math, medicine, astronomy and other fields, but also translations of the Greco-Roman classics at a time when Europe was still a primitive, barbaric place. Jews, protected by Spain's Arab rulers, added greatly to the output.

The next major phase of European-Arab interaction occurred during the Crusades, initiated by Pope Urban's appeal in 1095 for Christians to rescue Jerusalem from the hands of the Moslem "infidels." Tens of thousands of Europeans responded and those who survived brought back tales of a wondrously sophisticated world and culture. The Post-Crusade era left Jerusalem in the more charitable hands of Moslem and Christian Arabs, and today only the marvelous Crusader architecture attests to that interlude in the life of the Arab World.

The next wave of European travelers to the Arab World emphasized commerce. Merchants from the Italian city-states of Venice, Pisa, Genoa and Florence set the pace, raising their flags in the far-flung regions of the Turkish-dominated Arab World in the 14th and 15th centuries. The Portuguese, too, were intrepid explorers, controlling key points around the Arabian Peninsula—Socotra Island, Muscat, Bahrain and Hormuz. Spain extended its reach into North Africa.

France, with Britain, became the

dominant European influence in the Arab World well into this century. From France's earliest successes in the 16th century, it established a pattern of exporting culture and religion while importing goods of the East.

England pushed the Portuguese out of the Gulf and created a strong commercial base in Persia. France and England spent much of the 17th and 18th centuries challenging each other for prizes in the New World and in India. By the end of the 18th century, England, however, turned its attention principally to the East to consolidate its power in India after its major failure in North America. Egypt held special interest for the British as a bridge between Europe and Asia. Anglo-French rivalry dictated that France should also become interested in Egypt.

Many historians date modern Arab-European interaction from the time of Napoleon Bonaparte, whose audacity and vision changed relations between the two regions for all time. The brash Napoleon drafted his own orders to take Egypt and dig a canal from the

Gulf of Suez to the Mediterranean. Arriving in Egypt in 1798, accompanied by French scientists, engineers, historians and other scholars, he declared Egypt liberated from its feudal Mamluk overlords. The subsequent documentation of Egyptian society, flora, fauna and history by the French was impressive, including discovery of the famous Rosetta Stone that unlocked the secrets of the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics. The French stay in Egypt was cut short by the British, who destroyed the French fleet near Alexandria, forcing Napoleon in 1802 to sign a peace treaty and to relinquish France's hold on the region.

From the Congress of Vienna to the end of the 19th century, Western European fears of Russian expansion shaped European actions in the Middle East. Russia, then as now, sought to dominate if not control the Asian land mass south of Russia and to obtain access to a warm water port in that area.

The Ottoman authorities, deteriorating into the "sick man of Europe," made and unmade alliances with the European powers depending on who was overtly menacing them at the time. In contrast, France and Britain established themselves firmly in the Arab World during the 19th century with the French occupying Algeria in 1830, later declaring it a *département* of France as though it were on the mainland. Tunisia was occupied in 1881. In Lebanon the French had previously established a special relationship with the Maronite Catholics of Mount Lebanon, becoming their protector within the dominant Moslem culture. French troops played a major role in assisting Lebanon's Catholics during serious problems with the Druzes and Moslems in 1860.

Britain, at the same time, made major strides in extending its power in the Arab World, taking advantage of the profligate tastes of Egyptian rulers, including grand schemes to dig the Suez Canal, to oust a nationalist army officer in 1882 and to occupy Egypt. The English "temporarily" excluded France from sharing power in Egypt; it never recovered its position. England consolidated its rule in Sudan in part to check French adventurism there.

Germany played a minor role in the Arab World in the 19th century. German Chancellor Bismarck concentrated on strengthening Germany's position in Europe. It was not until 1890, when Kaiser Wilhelm dismissed Bismarck, that Germany

became involved in the Middle East other than attempting unsuccessful Moroccan intrigues, blocked by the French. Germany soon became the principal European adviser to the Turkish Sultan, providing extensive technical and military assistance that culminated in construction of the Berlin to Baghdad railway.

In the decade preceding World War I, France and England realized that their rivalry in the Middle East was only benefitting Germany, and they negotiated the Anglo-French entente of 1904, which traded French non-intervention in Egypt for English non-intervention in Morocco.

The African Mediterranean shoreline divided into French and Italian spheres of influence west of Egypt, with Italy occupying Libya, former granary of the Roman Empire.

The pervasiveness of European influence was felt widely in the Arab World, as Professor Don Peretz has noted:

Western ideas of nationalism had begun to take root in the region; Western cultural influences on government and society were beginning to be evident in parliaments, in governments, in the attitudes of the intellectual elite, and in new concepts of the role of women; Western techniques in industry,

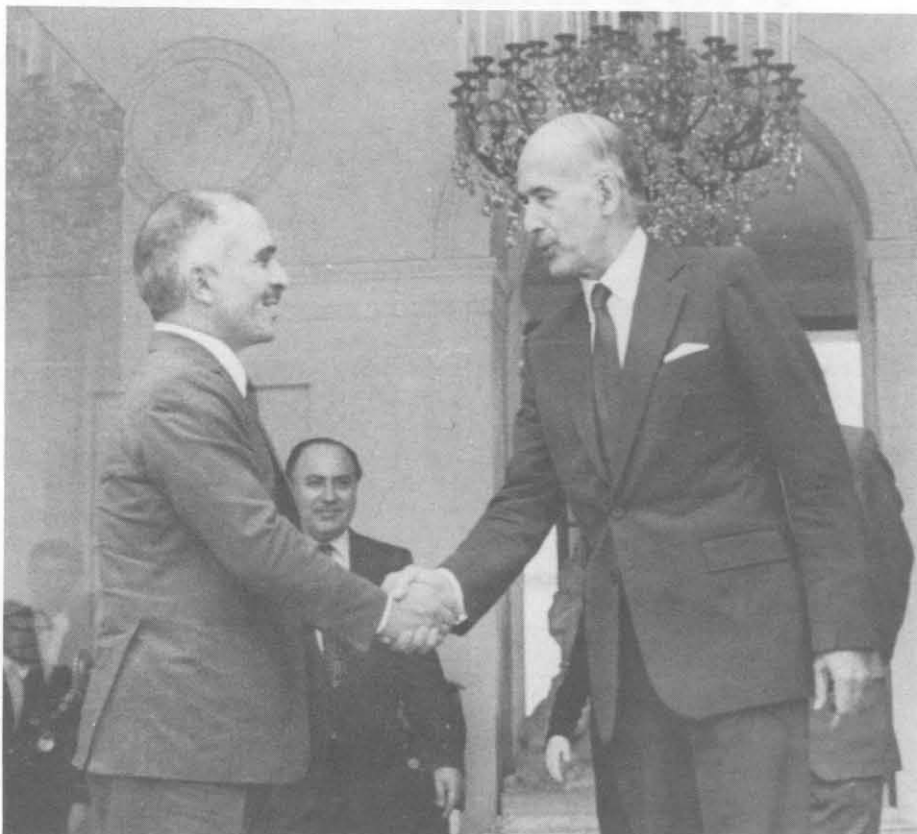
communications, health, agriculture, education and military affairs were being emulated, though still superficially. Islam's ability to deal with these many new perplexing problems was being questioned for the first time. Like the rest of Asia, the Middle East was on the verge of events that would change not only its political relations with Europe but would also alter its own traditional society.¹

Arab nationalism was just beginning to express itself in political terms in the years preceding World War I. Following the inspiration and encouragement of the "Young Turks," Arab nationalists in Syria, Lebanon, and elsewhere in the Arab World began to speak out for independence, only to be crushed by the same Young Turks once they had seized power from the Sultan Abdul Hamid in 1908. Nevertheless, the seeds had been planted.

World War I was devastating for the Eastern Arab World, not only because of its role as a battleground, but also because of: conscription that resulted in deaths of young men; starvation caused by the Turks who took the grain harvest for their troops; and the impact of the "secret treaties" on the future of the area. The centerpiece in this act of European treachery was the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916, which contradicted

¹Don Peretz, *The Middle East Today*, New York, 1963, p. 104.

French President Giscard d'Estaing with King Hussein of Jordan last March



British promises of independence given to Arab leaders in exchange for Arab assistance to make France supreme in post-war Syria and Lebanon, and England in Iraq and Palestine. Even more significantly for the Arab World, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917, that gave in-principle support to Zionist ambitions to create a "national home" for the Jews in Palestine—despite the fact that Palestine was more than 90 percent Christian and Moslem Arab at the time.

Although free of Ottoman bondage for the first time in 400 years, the Arabs at the end of World War I bitterly found themselves once again in colonial bondage, this time with the added threat of a foreign settler movement into Palestine.

"The war fought to save democracy" proved for the Arabs to be a war fought to preserve colonial rule. The British made largely cosmetic changes

in their relationship to Egypt, the French kept their grip on the North African colonies of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, and Italy hung onto Libya. Only the heartland of the Arabian Peninsula was free of European rule, and there the House of Saud was in the process of building the kingdom that it still rules.

The period between world wars saw growing manifestations of Arab nationalism and resistance to colonial domination. World War II unravelled the skein of European colonial domination in the Arab World, with Palestine a major exception to the rule. Hatred of the British fostered pro-Axis activities among Arab nationalists in Iraq and Palestine, on the general theory that the opponent of the principal colonial enemy could be a friend. The French split between the Vichy and the Free French permitted Arab nationalists to appeal to the British for help in expelling French rule in Syria and Lebanon. Elsewhere the expulsion

of the European overlords took longer, with Algeria not gaining its freedom until after a bloody and exhausting war that ended in 1962.

Colonialism brought denial of rights to people under its sway. It also brought the destruction of local cultures, as in Libya and Algeria, and the calculated blockage of industrial development, as in the development of Egypt as a "cotton farm" for the benefit of the English mills of Lancashire.

At the same time, the colonial experience brought about a governing system in Iraq, including a civil service, creation of the oil industry, and establishment of a system of finances. Under the Italians, Libya began to export food for the first time since the Roman Empire, and Egyptian cultural life benefitted from encounter with the French. In the final analysis, however, the Arab World has been consistent on one major point: the ultimate expulsion of foreign imperialism from Arab soil.

The Interim Period Brings Wars and Continued Tension

The 1950's witnessed awkward, often contradictory decolonization in the Middle East, as Western Europe and the United States faced assertive, mainly independent Arab states no longer so vulnerable to "suggestion" and in a position to seek Soviet assistance as a counterpoise to the West. France, England and the United States signed the Tripartite Declaration in 1950, committing them to action in the event of boundary violations of any state in the Middle East. Intended mainly to reassure Israel, it proved necessary instead for the Arabs' security—and was massively violated by France and England in the 1956 Suez war.

Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser came to power during the 1952 Egyptian revolution which threw out the corrupt Farouk monarchy. For the next two

decades Colonel Nasser epitomized Arab nationalism and non-alignment in the Third World. Egypt commanded Western attention in 1955 when Nasser made a deal to obtain Soviet-bloc arms from Czechoslovakia after being rebuffed by the United States. In reaction, Secretary of State Dulles cancelled American financing of the High Dam at Aswan, subsequently made possible by Soviet financing and credit.

In 1954 Algerian rebels started down the long path toward independence from France, and in the same period France worked out secret agreements to provide Israel with military and nuclear assistance.

Early in 1956 Jordan expelled Glubb Pasha, legendary British commander of the Arab Legion whose troops kept the West Bank and Jerusalem under Arab control in the 1948

Palestine war. In July Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, setting in motion British-French-Israeli plans to attack Egypt and overthrow Nasser and to keep control of the canal in Western hands. British anger at Nasser's action was compounded by Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden's lack of balance due to grave illness; France also sought vengeance because of Egyptian backing for the Algerian revolution. The three-way attack on Egypt in October 1956 proved a major political mistake, generating American and Soviet pressure that forced Britain and France to retreat in humiliation, although it took until early 1957 before Israeli troops left the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip. Nasser became an international hero overnight, and Egyptian propaganda portrayed the victory as a political as well as military one which

had humiliated three major adversaries.

1958 was a year of major political upheaval in the Arab World. In July, the British-backed Iraqi Hashemite regime fell during a bloody coup that significantly reduced Britain's power base in the Arab World. The same summer saw a landing by American troops in Lebanon and by British troops in Jordan as gestures to keep unrest from spreading.

One characteristic of the 1950's was the opening up of Arab contacts with the Soviet Union, largely in reaction to European and American heavyhandedness and support for Israel at the expense of the Palestinians and the Arab World as a whole. Egypt, Syria and Iraq all developed ties with the Soviet Union in this period.

The 1960's, a less turbulent period, permitted consolidation of the changes brought by revolution in the preceding decade. In the early 1960's Kuwait achieved its independence, and Algeria won its freedom after appalling suffer-

ing. Britain announced its intention to remove all troops from "east of Suez" in order to bring commitments in line with capabilities, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (P.L.O.) was born in a well-publicized Jerusalem meeting in 1964.

The spring of 1967 saw heightening of tensions in the Middle East that led to the June war. Nasser responded to what he regarded as Israeli provocations with a military buildup in the Sinai Peninsula, expelling the United Nations contingent at Sharm El-Sheikh and blockading the Straits of Tiran, Israel's sea gateway to its port at Eilat. Israel launched the war, destroying Egypt's air force on the ground and quickly occupying all of Sinai, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), and the Golan Heights.

France took a strong stand against the Israeli attack, condemning the Israelis and embargoing arms shipments to combatant states. Since that

time France has been consistently critical of Israeli occupation policy and has become vocal in support of Palestinian rights. Meanwhile, Lord Caradon, Britain's United Nations Representative, guided what became Resolution 242 to a successful conclusion in the Security Council in the fall of 1967.

The 1970's unfolded to rising tension between Palestinian commandos and the government in Jordan. The P.L.O. had been building strength, and collapse of the Arab armies in 1967 lent strength to the Palestinian argument that only its own "armed struggle" could liberate Palestine. Stiff resistance to an Israeli attack on commando bases in the East Bank town of Karameh provided the material for legend, and the Palestinian challenge to King Hussein increased. In September ("Black September" to Palestinians) he struck back driving Palestinian armed elements out of Jordan. Most regrouped in Lebanon.

European-Arab Partnership Emerges In the Wake of October War

The October 1973 Arab-Israeli war changed the course of European-Arab relations. In military terms it was strictly limited, since Egyptian troops moved only a short distance into their own occupied Sinai Peninsula before the Israeli counterattack that put Israeli troops on the west side of the canal and saw Egypt's Third Army surrounded in the desert. The massive American military resupply of Israel, begun on October 15, triggered the second shock of the month—the retaliatory Arab oil embargo. Members of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (O.A.P.E.C.) started with a 5 percent cut in exports to the United States and other "pro-Israel" states, including the Netherlands. From that point various exporting

states raised the ante to a total embargo against the United States and an overall sharp reduction in Arab oil exports.

While the cumulative shortfall of about 20 percent of imports was deeply felt in the United States, Europe was more gravely affected because countries of the European Economic Community (E.E.C.) were then importing more than 70 percent of their oil from the Arab World. By the end of the year the situation was settling back to normal, but the shock had occurred, and Europe had gotten the message. The October war and the embargo were the catalysts, that brought the E.E.C. (also called "The Nine") frontally into the complex issues of oil and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

As Dr. Alan Taylor, a leading American observer of European-Arab relations, has noted, it took disappearance of the "last vestiges" of colonialism in the Middle East and North Africa to open the door to closer relations between the Arab World and Western Europe. The principal institutional product of these closer relations is the Euro-Arab Dialogue (E.A.D.), born of a political crisis in late 1973 and intended to focus on economic and trade matters, but in recent years given over more and more to discussion of political issues as well.

The importance to both regions of a dialogue on issues of mutual concern is evident when one considers that the Arab League states are now the most important trading partners of

the European Community. In 1976, 40 percent of Arab League exports went to E.E.C. countries, compared with 16 percent to Japan and 9 percent to the United States. In the same period 13 percent of E.E.C. exports went to Arab League countries, more than to Japan and the United States combined. E.E.C. exports to the Arab League increased by almost 400 percent between 1970 and 1976, while League exports to the E.E.C. rose by 250 percent in the same period. Hydrocarbons dominated League exports—more than 90 percent in 1975. Three-quarters of all Arab exports to the E.E.C. in 1976 came from six states—Saudi Arabia, Libya, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Algeria. Because of the disproportionate role played by hydrocarbons in E.E.C.-Arab trade, the balance of trade has been weighted heavily in favor of the Arab countries, despite the fact that 11 of 19 League members had a negative balance of trade with the E.E.C. on a bilateral basis in 1976.

The first E.E.C. political response to the war and embargo was an E.E.C. Foreign Ministers' statement in Brussels on November 6, 1973, that identified the four bases on which Middle East peace must be established: the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force; ending of Israel's 1967 occupation of Arab lands; security for all states in the region; and inclusion of the "legitimate rights of the Palestinians" in the final Middle East peace. The final paragraph of the statement pointedly noted "the ties of all kinds which have long linked (E.E.C. members) to the littoral states of the south and east of the Mediterranean" and recalled the commitment of the October 1972 E.E.C. Paris Summit Meeting to negotiate agreements with those countries "in the framework of a global and balanced approach."

The Arab Summit Conference in Algeria in late November 1973 said in its communique: "Europe is linked with the Arab countries through the Mediterranean, by the affinities of civilization and by vital interests which can only develop within trusting and mutually beneficial cooperation." Representatives of four League states later appeared uninvited at the mid-December Copenhagen meeting of E.E.C. Heads of Government and communicated Arab desire for long-term cooperation with Europe, particularly in economic, technical and

cultural areas.

A final communique from Copenhagen confirmed E.E.C. intentions "to preserve their historical links with the countries of the Middle East and to cooperate over the establishment of peace, stability and progress in the region." The statement assured Europe's role "in the search for and in the guaranteeing of a settlement" and urged implementation of Resolution 242 "in all its parts taking into account also the legitimate rights of the Palestinians."

In March 1974, The Nine proposed a meeting between the E.E.C. President and Arab League representatives to set up the machinery of a formal dialogue, starting with working groups and culminating in a conference of Foreign Ministers. A "General Committee" would be set up to direct the work of the E.A.D. and to clarify the political framework.

Major institutional, political and perceptual problems, however, stood in the way of a mutually satisfactory conclusion. The E.E.C., sophisticated in dealing with trade and financial matters, was at the time relatively unsophisticated in handling political

Despite changes over time, the E.E.C. nations can be categorized roughly as follows on dialogue with the Arabs: France, Italy, Belgium and Ireland favor a politically supportive role; the United Kingdom, West Germany and Luxembourg take a centrist position; and the Netherlands and Denmark are relatively pro-Israel and therefore less enthusiastic about closer ties to the Arabs.

A consistent irony in E.E.C. attitudes toward the E.A.D. has been efforts to keep politics out of a relationship born of politics. While the E.E.C. acknowledged the role of the eastern and southern Mediterranean states in its own political security at the 1975 Helsinki Conference, it still insisted on keeping the Arab-Israeli conflict at arm's length in the E.A.D. Europe's principal objectives in the E.A.D. were to maintain a steady flow of Arab oil at stable prices while maintaining access to Arab markets. Other issues were accepted only insofar as necessary to obtain principal objectives.

Problems on the Arab side were of similar magnitude. The Arab League, founded in 1945, is a looser structure



During a three-week tour of the Middle East in 1979, Queen Elizabeth of England talked with Sheik Isa Bin Sulman Al-Khalifa, the Emir of Bahrain.

issues, particularly ones as sensitive and complex as the Arab-Israel problem. The E.E.C. decision-making process was cumbersome: two separate directorates (one for economic matters and one for political matters) became involved in the E.A.D., and many levels of staff representatives had to clear political decisions both within the E.E.C. and in the home ministries.

than the E.E.C., functioning reasonably well in non-controversial areas but unable to coalesce its widely differing constituency on difficult ones. League members include monarchies and radical socialist regimes, the super-rich and the desperately poor.

Arab goals in the E.A.D. were also different from those of the E.E.C. The Arabs had technical and political ob-

jectives. At the technical level the Arabs wanted E.E.C. assistance for industrialization, technology transfer, protection of petrodollar investments in Europe against inflation, and protection for Arab workers in Europe. The Arabs saw the E.A.D. as an important

forum for the argument that "prior consultations" were mandatory among the industrialized nations on important topics. Largely unspoken in these arguments was American awareness that Western Europe did not have strong domestic Jewish pressure groups

that could subsume P.L.O. participation within the League delegation.

The two delegations of experts met in Cairo from June 10-14, 1975. (Relations were not helped by E.E.C. approval of a preferential trade agreement with Israel a month earlier.) Working committees arose in seven key areas: agriculture and rural development; industrialization; basic infrastructure; financial cooperation; trade; scientific and technological cooperation; and cultural, social, and labor questions. The joint memorandum issued at the conclusion of the meeting said: "The Euro-Arab Dialogue is the product of a joint political will that emerged at the highest level with a view to establishing a special relationship between the two sides." Meetings of the working committees followed in Rome in July and in Abu Dhabi in November of 1975. Both were productive, and the Abu Dhabi session spelled out joint projects in basic infrastructure, industry and agriculture.

At the close of the first year of E.A.D. program work, the major topics and the differences between the two sides addressing them had emerged. Dr. Taylor has identified these as follows:

1. Industrialization

The Arabs assigned it a high priority because of the need to develop indigenous capabilities and in order to maintain national income once the oil ran out. The Europeans, on the other hand, saw a potential threat in Arab industrialization because 80 percent of E.E.C. exports to the Arab World were industrial products. Expansion of Arab refinery capacity would also be at the expense of under-utilized European refinery capacity.

2. Technology Transfer

The Arabs wanted control over their own technology center, with European assistance in establishing it. The Europeans wanted to maintain limits on Arab technological development in order to maintain Europe's relative margin.

3. Trade

The Arabs wanted region-to-region agreements while the Europeans continued to push for E.E.C. agreements with Arab countries individually, on the grounds that the E.E.C. should not provide trade benefits to the oil producers, who had such a large trade advantage over their European customers. The Arabs opposed these arrangements



During a state visit to Germany last June, King Khalid of Saudi Arabia conferred with heads of government and agreed to intensify economic cooperation.

forum in which to help achieve their political goals of forcing Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, obtaining recognition of the P.L.O. and achieving Palestinian self-determination. The major Arab arguments for linking technical and political matters within the E.A.D. are that they are intertwined and that it is unrealistic for Europe to think that it can develop a strong, functioning relationship with the Arab World if it appears to ignore or downplay issues of overriding importance to the Arabs.

One additional obstacle to development of a dialogue between the Arabs and Western Europe continues to be the negative attitude of the United States, initiated principally by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Mr. Kissinger and his successors have waged unrelenting war against Euro-Arab ties on any number of grounds, one being American "price of place" in diplomatic strategy and another the fear that European intervention would upset American plans. Mr. Kissinger repeatedly told the Europeans that if they insisted on the E.A.D., it must involve neither oil nor politics. He was successful in obtaining British support

like the United States and that the region's dependency on imported Arab oil and Arab markets meant it was more likely than the United States to develop a balanced Middle East policy in the absence of outside pressure.

The first ministerial-level meeting of the E.A.D. took place in Paris on July 31, 1974, with the E.E.C. represented by the French Foreign Minister and the President of the E.E.C. (Italian), and the Arab League represented by the League's President (Kuwaiti) and the Secretary-General of the League. Agreement was reached on setting up the General Committee of the E.A.D. and a number of working committees.

Politics emerged early in the game. In the fall the League informed the E.E.C. that it would insist on an observer seat for the P.L.O. in all deliberations. An E.A.D. planning meeting scheduled for late November 1974 was not held due to this obstacle, and numerous proposals were floated for avoiding it. The "Dublin Formula" of February 1975 temporarily resolved the issue, calling for two homogeneous E.A.D. delegations, one European and one Arab,

because they worked against exports such as textiles from Arab manufacturing countries.

4. Financial Cooperation

Both sides were interested in petrodollar investments in Europe, although the Arabs wanted guarantees against inflation, while the Europeans insisted on mutual protection and cross-investment plans.

5. Labor Relations

The 800,000 Arab workers in Europe play a vital role in European productive capacity, often performing tasks that Europeans are no longer willing to do themselves. The Arabs, particularly the Algerians, sought employment security and welfare benefits for their migrants, but the E.E.C. maintained that many of these matters were outside the Community's jurisdiction since control of production in much of Europe is in private hands whereas in the Arab World it is mostly governmental.

The next major step in the E.A.D. was the first General Committee meeting in Luxembourg in May 1976. Although conducted at the ambassadorial level, a step up from the "experts" at previous meetings, it remained significantly below the ministerial level sought by the Arabs. The Arab delegation called on the Europeans to advance their political position on the Palestine question, but the European spokesman responded that such matters were beyond E.A.D. authority. The senior P.L.O. representative pointed out that the European political role in the Middle East was still miniscule in comparison with its economic power in the region. Compromises were made, and the Arabs qualified their position in exchange for European acceptance of two days of political discussion. The final communique noted that European security was "linked" to security in the Mediterranean area, including the Arab World, and reaffirmed the importance of recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.

An E.E.C. publication, issued after the meeting, assessed the E.A.D. as a permanent reality adding a global dimension to E.E.C. relations with the Arab World. The report placed the E.A.D. in the context of already existing trade agreements, such as the Lome Convention (February 1975) which included the North African Arab states in an E.E.C.-Africa preferential



Vienna, 1979: P.L.O. leader Yassir Arafat met with Dr. Bruno Kreisky, Austrian Chancellor, and with Willy Brandt, former West German Chancellor.

trade agreement, plus the Maghreb and Mashreq agreements signed a few months before the Luxembourg meeting between the E.E.C. and Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia on the one hand and with Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria on the other.

At the United Nations in September 1976, the Dutch representative (whose country then presided over the E.E.C.) placed before the General Assembly the E.E.C. position on Palestine—that there could be a solution to the Middle East conflict only "if the legitimate right of the Palestine people to give effective expression to its national identity is translated into fact." Inclusion of an implied territorial basis for Palestinian rights was important, particularly in light of the fact that a Dutch representative, not one of the more pro-Arab nations, made it on behalf of the E.E.C.

The second session of the E.A.D. General Committee convened in Tunis on February 12, 1977. Both the United States and Israel were anxious about the growing political role of Europe in the E.A.D., and the State Department pressured the E.E.C. Foreign Ministers not to issue a call for a Geneva-type conference because it might harm peace prospects. Jimmy Carter had just been inaugurated President, and the United States

did not want Europe taking independent initiatives while the new Administration was trying to sort out its priorities.

Nonetheless, the E.E.C. representative's opening statement at the Tunis meeting confirmed that the E.E.C. had "defined more closely" the November 1973 E.E.C. position and that the legitimate rights of the Palestinians "could involve a territorial basis in the framework of a negotiated settlement." The statement contained references to Israel's security and its occupation policies; identified a number of development projects as priorities; and listed activities in other sectors. The communique also cited the "joint political will" envisaged by the E.A.D.'s organizers three years before, although it only took note of an Arab proposal to establish a committee for political consultation and promised consideration "with due attention."

Middle East developments in 1977 had an important impact on Euro-Arab relations. President Carter came out in favor of a Palestinian "homeland" in February. Israeli elections in June brought longtime opposition leader and former terrorist Menachem Begin to power as head of the Likud Coalition on a platform that affirmed Israel's right to settle in and assert sovereignty over the occupied ter-

ritories. Through the summer the Carter Administration made an effort to engage the P.L.O. in peace negotiations, asking that it accept Resolution 242 in principle and add such qualifications as it felt necessary. After some confusion, the P.L.O. rejected this offer as inadequate.

The E.E.C. Heads of Government met in London on June 29 and pointedly urged all parties to refrain from "statements or policies" that could block peace efforts and indicated Middle East peace would be possible "only if the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to give effective expression to its national identity is translated into fact, which would take into account the need for a homeland." This represented progress, from the Arab perspective, although Europe had yet to recognize the P.L.O., endorse a Palestinian state, or suspend economic agreements with Israel—as the Arabs had requested repeatedly.

The climate appeared favorable for the third meeting of the E.A.D. General Committee in Brussels in late October. Areas of cooperation in intervening months on economic issues included: financing the E.A.D.; adopting a joint position on agriculture and infrastructure (particularly transport) development; establishment of a center for technology transfer; and other programs. Trade cooperation still presented problems because of differing E.E.C. and Arab views.

A week after the Brussels meeting, the Middle East political map drastically changed when Egyptian President Anwar Sadat made his dramatic trip to Jerusalem, shattering Arab unity and creating unanticipated obstacles for the E.A.D. Nevertheless, a P.L.O. recommendation to the Arab League counselled that Arab disputes should not be permitted to affect "institutions of unified Arab actions" such as the E.A.D. The Carter Administration was slow to respond to Sadat's trip but eventually committed itself publicly to the initiative. The E.E.C., more reticent in its reaction, noted in a November 22 Foreign Ministers' statement that the June 29 Heads of Government statement contained the basic ingredients for a lasting Middle East peace. The November statement called for resumption of a Geneva Conference in the near future. At this point European and American diplomacy in the Middle East began to diverge, although the differences were not highlighted until after the

Camp David Accords.

Much of 1978 passed with disappointing efforts to convert Sadat's stunning Jerusalem trip the previous fall into a diplomatic strategy for Middle East peace. With almost no advance warning, President Carter invited Sadat and Begin to Camp David for a three-way summit late in August. The results of that meeting, the Camp David Accords, set the format of Middle East diplomacy from that time until this writing. There were two separate documents, one spelling out bilateral relations between Egypt and Israel and the other defining a "general framework" for resolution of the West Bank/Gaza Strip Palestinian problem.

European reaction to Camp David was publicly supportive and privately skeptical of the framework's ability to resolve the Palestinian issue. The E.E.C. Foreign Ministers' statement of September 19, 1978, although congratulatory of President Carter's achievement, reminded readers that Middle East peace would require a comprehensive settlement along the lines of the June 29, 1977 Heads of Government statement (including a Palestinian "homeland"). A September E.E.C. statement at the United Nations indicated European annoyance at the solo American initiative and emphasized the necessary involvement of "all parties" in the peace process.

Arab response to Camp David was swift and harsh. The Baghdad Conference, held in November and attended by Saudi Arabia and other conservative Arab states, demonstrated the breadth of opposition to the substance and presentation of Camp David. Efforts were set in motion to expel Egypt from the Arab League.

The European and the Arab communities seriously doubted that the fourth meeting of the E.A.D. General Committee would proceed on schedule in Damascus in December 1978. The meeting was held, and the Arab side maintained a united front, with no reference to the rupture with Sadat. Agreement reached on defining and funding several feasibility studies included: an institute for technology transfer; an Arab polytechnic institute; cooperation in technical training; desalination; and agriculture and port development. There was also progress in defining migrant workers' rights and on a formula for multilateral investment promotion and protection.

European response at Damascus on political questions disappointed the

Arabs. The Arab League, in the process of fracturing and expelling Egypt and concerned about American-Israeli intentions about Palestine, tried to encourage potential supporters like the E.E.C. to reflect their economic ties with the Arab World in political terms. The Arab side took hope that France, patently pro-Arab and about to become President of the E.E.C., would advance E.E.C. policy on recognition of the P.L.O. and creation of a Palestinian state.

The French did take over the Presidency of the E.E.C. for the first half of 1979 and wanted to schedule a meeting of the E.A.D. General Committee at the ministerial level—a goal of the Arabs. Inter-Arab political problems, increased by signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty on March 26, brought the E.A.D. to an effective halt, however, and the second Baghdad Conference, held in late March, overwhelmingly rejected Egyptian actions. The Arab League expelled Egypt and officially transferred to Tunis, a move that created major problems. Based in Cairo since its origin in 1945, the League had a predominantly Egyptian staff, and most of its financial assets were under physical control of the Egyptian government. The fledgling Tunis-based Arab League and the Egyptian "rump" each insisted that the E.E.C. recognize it as legitimate. The E.E.C. took the position that it would not exclude Egypt and would keep it fully informed of E.A.D. progress, even if Egypt were not present.

In May 1979, the Tunis headquarters informed the E.E.C. that it would be forced to suspend the E.A.D. until it could reorganize. Apparently, Tunis raised the problem of irretrievable E.A.D. records in Cairo and asked the E.E.C. in Brussels to send duplicate copies.

European response to the Tunis League became more sympathetic when Chedli Klibi, a Tunisian known and respected by many Europeans, was appointed Secretary-General of the League. Klibi's conciliatory introductory speech brought hope to the E.E.C., which had no intention of getting caught between Egypt and the rest of the Arab World, particularly all the Arab oil-producing states lined up politically against the Egyptian position.

The first quarter of 1979 witnessed growing pressure on and within Europe to develop a Middle East diplomatic posture independent of the United

States that would protect European interests in the Arab World. The E.E.C. statement on the Egyptian-Israeli treaty was cool and did not urge the other Arab governments to endorse it. The French government was actively opposed to American urging that the E.E.C. be a channel for rewarding

Egypt and Israel financially for the treaty.

Installation of a Conservative government in England in May appeared likely to increase the E.E.C. tempo of Middle East activity because the Tories were traditionally less pro-Israel than Labor and because of the Tories' desire

to forge strong links with the Continent. Also, Britain had a special responsibility for the breakup of Palestine, a factor likely to increase its activism, although British political leaders were considered by other E.E.C. members to be susceptible to American pressure.

Arabs Keep Palestinian Question In Forefront of Dialogue

The P.L.O., both in its actual and symbolic roles, proved to be a key factor in the E.A.D. from the outset. The Arab League usually designated the senior P.L.O. representative at E.A.D. talks to draft communiques and to present arguments, thus confronting the Europeans with the P.L.O. at every turn. The E.A.D. was considered important by the P.L.O. in the context of its 1974 decision to emphasize political over violent means of progress. Active in Europe in the late 1970's, the P.L.O. opened information offices in most of the E.E.C. capitals (except the Netherlands).

The high point of P.L.O. international prestige and visibility was Chairman Arafat's meeting in Vienna in August 1979 with Austrian Premier Bruno Kreisky, attended by former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt. The meeting caused an international uproar because it was the first time that a European head of government had officially received the Chairman of the P.L.O. The meeting also fueled P.L.O. hopes for further breakthroughs in its diplomatic offensive in Western Europe.

A broad initiative evolved in 1979 to obtain a United Nations Security Council Resolution based on Resolution 242 but with supplementary language affirming Palestinian national rights. This omission in 242 was a sticking point for the Palestinians in accepting it as the basis for negotiations. Lord Caradon, principal author of 242, and Lord Carrington, the current Foreign Secretary of England,

strongly supported a supplemented resolution. In the summer of 1979 Arab diplomats at the United Nations made a major effort to draft language that would perform this function, while incorporating previous American language to avoid an American veto. West Germany had first invoked the concept of self-determination for the Palestinians in 1974 at the United Nations and had cited it on successive occasions since that time. The Belgians had included the phrase in a joint communique issued at the end of a visit to Iraq by the Belgian Foreign Minister earlier in 1979.

The P.L.O. participated in the drafting process at the United Nations, and it was while serving as Chairman of the Security Council that United States Ambassador Andrew Young lost his job after a secret meeting with the P.L.O. representative to the United Nations. After the Young debacle, the resolution effort came to a halt, and subsequent European interest in reviving it met with a cool reception by the Americans.

That fall, Ireland's Foreign Minister, as representative of the E.E.C. Presidency, told the United Nations General Assembly "the representatives" of the Palestinians must play "their full part in the negotiation of a comprehensive settlement." He included the P.L.O. by name among "those involved" in the process.

The London-based *Middle East International* described 1979 "as the year in which the E.E.C. countries would decisively move away from support of

Israel and toward the Arab cause." The publication predicted that formal recognition of the P.L.O. by The Nine was unlikely before "some new, more comprehensive acceptance of Israel by the P.L.O.," plus P.L.O. specification of its proposed relationship to Jordan. It noted that heightened anxiety over oil supplies (in the wake of the Iranian revolution) had led to the E.E.C. decision to renew contact with the Arab League in Tunis.

In the early part of 1980 pressure was still building in Europe to take decisive action in Middle East diplomacy. News accounts reported a French-British agreement on a supplemented United Nations resolution coupled with a call for an international peace conference based on the new resolution (resembling the abortive United Nations attempt the previous summer). The Irish then took the lead in a communique, issued in February at the completion of a visit to Bahrain by the Irish President and Foreign Minister, that called for establishment of "an independent state" in Palestine for the Palestinians within a negotiated framework. The statement endorsed "a full role" of the P.L.O., although it stopped short of recognizing the P.L.O.

Exploratory talks about reinstatement of the E.A.D. had been taking place. In Rimini, Italy, in October 1979, the Arab delegation had informed the Europeans that "no effective dialogue" would be possible unless the E.E.C. recognized the P.L.O. Another round of talks, held in Rome in March 1980, brought forth Arab charges that the

E.A.D. was "a hoax" and that Europe was "playing with words." The Arabs declared their unwillingness to distinguish any longer between political and technical discussions. The P.L.O. representative heading the Arab delegation insisted that the next Dialogue meeting be held at the long-delayed ministerial level.

The month of March produced President Giscard d'Estaing's highly-publicized trip to Kuwait and other Gulf countries and Jordan in March. The first trip by a French President to the region, it gained dramatic impact in the form of a French-Kuwaiti communique which supported Palestinian self-determination. French motivation for the gesture included establishment of a "French alternative" in the Gulf to the traditional British and American dominance, defined politically and in terms of exports—particularly weapons. One French evaluation was that France could play a natural European leadership role in the Middle East because West Germany was too inhibited by its past, and England, under the sway of the Americans, also had tentative status in the E.E.C.

The British pronounced themselves "mystified" by the French initiative, theorizing that France was "grand-standing." In fact Giscard d'Estaing had spoken with Helmut Schmidt and leaders in Italy, Belgium, Ireland and the Netherlands—but not Britain—before the trip.

The E.E.C. countries, including the Netherlands, lined up quickly behind the French initiative. The P.L.O.'s Yassir Arafat called the statement "courageous" and "an important initiative." An American source reported "no fundamental disagreement" with an E.E.C. diplomatic initiative but said that the timing was a "disservice" to Camp David. Austria's Premier Kreisky accorded the P.L.O. diplomatic recognition, the first European nation to do so.

European determination to take steps independent of the United States was strengthened by three considerations, the first being the "disavowal" by President Carter of the American Security Council vote March 1 condemning Israeli settlements policy, following outcry in Israel and among American Jews. Vacillation within the Administration appalled the Europeans.

The second consideration was the upcoming May 26 Accords deadline for completion of a Palestinian "Self-Governing Authority" in the West

Bank. Since no responsible Palestinians had shown willingness to associate themselves with the autonomy negotiations, the Europeans knew that the American plan was in deep trouble and that without a "safety net" the participants might be badly hurt when they fell.

The third consideration was the scheduled fall election in the United States, with the traditional ritual of the candidates outbidding one another for support from American Jews. The campaign meant effective paralysis of American Middle East diplomacy if any pressure on Israel was required.

European activism expressed itself at a late April meeting of the Council of Europe, which unanimously passed a resolution calling for "completion" or replacement of Resolution 242. It also stated that mutual non-recognition by Israelis and Palestinians was "an obstacle to peace." While the Council of Europe also contained non-E.E.C. members, E.E.C. activities often surfaced later in the European Parliament (limited to E.E.C. representatives).

The evident European determination to distance itself from the Camp David formula, and American election paralysis, generated a warning from Secretary of State Muskie at a N.A.T.O. meeting in Brussels in mid-May. Indicating that the United States would not welcome an E.E.C. Middle East initiative, Mr. Muskie told the Europeans, "I can't conceive of any other process (than Camp David) that could get us closer to the central issues." Efforts to reassure the American representative were to no avail. At a meeting in Naples following the Muskie session, however, the E.E.C. Foreign Ministers generally agreed that the Camp David process was "fatally flawed" on the Palestinian question. The Ministers drafted the statement that would eventually be presented to the E.E.C. Heads of Government in Venice early in June.

President Carter then made American opposition to an E.E.C. initiative more explicit when he told a nationwide television audience June 1: "We are asking the European allies not to get involved in the negotiations for the time being." Carter threatened an American veto of any effort at the United Nations seen to "undermine" the Camp David process.

Secretary Muskie appeared to temper American opposition to European Middle East diplomacy in a June 9 National Press Club speech, perhaps in

anticipation of the E.E.C. Heads of Government meeting in Vienna. Muskie referred to Resolution 242 and Camp David as "essential building blocks" that the United States considered unalterable. He said, however, "We do not object to new initiatives that would further the Camp David process."

There was extensive international press attention to the E.E.C. Venice meeting. The *New York Times* gave it faint praise, indicating its "Third Force" concept (i.e., between the super-powers) had been made academic by the "more stark" issues of the Soviet presence in Afghanistan and its implicit threat to stability in the Gulf.

European commentators found it ironic that the United States, attenuated by its own election rituals, was lecturing Europe about statesmanship. A general European assessment was that whereas tradition and Henry Kissinger's force of personality had kept Europe "in line" in the early 1970's, too much had happened for Europe to defer as before. A widely held view in Europe was that President Carter was incapable of providing consistent or coherent leadership to which Europe could respond.

The Venice meeting produced a significant document dealing with the Middle East situation. The final communique set out "the two principles universally accepted by the international community: the right to existence and to security of all the states in the region, including Israel, and justice for all the peoples, which implies the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people." The statement affirmed the Palestinian right to self-determination and for the P.L.O. to be "associated" with peace negotiations. It also directed The Nine "to make the necessary contacts with all the parties concerned," from which point to "determine the form" the European initiative would take.

A separate communique dealt with the E.A.D., stating that "The Nine affirmed the importance they attach to the Euro-Arab Dialogue in all fields and the need to develop its political dimension." It also called for an E.A.D. meeting at the political (i.e., ministerial) level.

Each of the two Venice communiqués contained language intended to alter Europe's working relationship with the Arab-Israeli conflict. The main Venice declaration failed to accomplish two major demands of the Arabs, however: a call for a Palestinian state

and recognition of the P.L.O. One European commentator pointed out that the declaration went about as far as possible within the limitations imposed by realities of the Atlantic Alliance. The French President provided the European view on the Alliance in a toast to the West German Chancellor in July when he said, "(N.A.T.O.) is necessary for our security and, by the balance it insures, it guarantees peace. Our membership in this alliance in no way prohibits the emergence, or rather the re-emergence, of a European presence, acting in its own way and for its own ends, in the great debate which is stirring the world."

Middle Eastern reactions to the Venice Declaration varied widely. Prime Minister Begin of Israel said flatly, "These proposals...could threaten the existence of Israel and... the future of our people." Much of the same Knesset speech was devoted to a denunciation of the European nations for their treatment of Jews in World War II, pointedly thanking the Americans for their intention of blocking the European initiative.

The Arabs supported the progress represented by the Declaration, but they were unhappy that it did not go further. The P.L.O. focused Arab response by its view that concrete measures had to be adopted by the E.E.C. to end the Israeli occupation and that economic sanctions were both possible and required by the E.E.C. against Israel. The P.L.O., while disappointed, counselled continuing to work within the E.A.D.

One concrete step after Venice was the dispatch of Gaston Thorn, Foreign Minister of Luxembourg (then President of the E.E.C.), to the Middle East on a fact-finding mission. He visited a number of Arab countries and Israel, although he was prevented by the Israeli government from visiting the occupied territories or speaking with West Bank/Gaza Strip leaders. Mr. Thorn presented his findings to the E.E.C. Foreign Ministers' meeting in Brussels in mid-September.

The landslide victory of Republican candidate Ronald Reagan in the American Presidential race significantly altered European assumptions about American Middle East diplomacy. Reagan is relatively unknown to the Europeans, who have not hidden their disdain for his Hollywood background. Many Europeans, tired of Carter's vacillation, welcome Reagan's conservatism and anti-Soviet posture,

although detente-minded Europeans wonder if President Reagan might provoke a war with the Soviet Union that would be fought, at least in part, in Europe.

It seemed likely that Reagan's Middle East policy would "tilt" toward Israel, because Israel is viewed by many conservatives as relatively stable politically, pro-West and militarily efficient. Reagan, reportedly unenthusiastic about the Camp David process, prefers to bring Jordan's King Hussein back into the peace process.

Europeans generally welcomed the announcement of the appointment of General Alexander Haig, formerly N.A.T.O. Supreme Commander in Brussels, to the position of Secretary of State. In an interview in a French magazine, General Haig indicated that there were "just and reasonable" elements in the P.L.O. The Europeans were also encouraged by a post-election shift to Republican control in the United States Senate and by statements in Moscow by Senator Charles Percy, incoming Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, supporting creation of a Palestinian state, albeit in linkage with Jordan.

There was evidence in Europe at the end of 1980 of determination to push on with the much-discussed if largely theoretical European initiative on the Middle East. The E.E.C. Heads of Government, meeting in Luxembourg in early December, spelled out the key subjects central to Middle East peace: Palestinian self-determination, Israeli security, Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, and Jerusalem. Reportedly, the working papers on each topic identified the obstacles as well as a range of alternatives for consideration. The general assumption in Europe was that while The Netherlands (serving as President of the E.E.C. in the first half of 1981) would launch talks with Israel, the Arab states and the P.L.O., it would not be until Britain's Presidency of the E.E.C. in the second half of 1981 that substantial progress could be made. It was in this context that the British Foreign Minister reportedly stated that the incoming Reagan Administration should have the opportunity to settle in before the E.E.C. took major steps concerning the Middle East. The French reaction to the statement was negative, reflecting French impatience with the slow pace of E.E.C. Middle East activity and suspicion that

Britain was unduly influenced by American thinking.

While the Arabs are unhappy that the Europeans remain limited to verbal progress on the Middle East, Europe does benefit by comparison with the United States in Arab eyes; America's share of Arab markets is declining rapidly, and Western Europe is one of the major beneficiaries, along with Korean and Japanese firms.

Western Europe has committed itself to a balanced policy in the Middle East shared with practically all the community of nations except Israel and the United States. As Israeli occupation policies become ever more oppressive, it will be increasingly difficult for American officials to credibly insist that current American policy and leadership provide the best hope for Middle East peace. If the European message is heard loudly and clearly in the United States, the American people might take the initiative in demanding a change in American Middle East policy.

Notes on Principal Sources

Professor Don Peretz's *The Middle East Today*, New York, 1963, and Desmond Stewart's *The Arab World*, New York, 1964, were helpful in preparing the historical section of this article.

Major sources for the contemporary section were articles on the Euro-Arab Dialogue by Professor Alan Taylor, *Middle East Journal*, Autumn, 1978; and Ahmed Sidki Dajani, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Spring, 1980; plus reporting in recent issues of *Monday Morning* magazine, Beirut, in English. Other useful sources of information included the following:

1. *Middle East International*, London, biweekly political newsletter.
2. *Strategy Week*, Washington, D.C., weekly magazine addressing defense and security topics but valuable for political context.
3. *JTA Daily Bulletin*, New York, daily bulletin addressing topics of concern to Jews. Worldwide correspondents.
4. E.E.C. publications, Brussels, including an overview entitled, "The European Community and the Arab World," E.E.C., 1978.
5. European Economic Community embassies in Washington, D.C.

The author wishes to thank Dr. Michael Dunn and Dr. Alan Taylor for reading and critiquing the manuscript.

Book Views

Dispossessed: The Ordeal of the Palestinians 1917-1980

By David Gilmour
Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1980,
242 pp., 12.50 pounds.

By Ghada Karmi

There was a time when it was difficult to find a book on the Palestine problem which was not written by a Zionist. That situation has changed and we now have a considerable number of books to choose from. Thus, it is something of a pity that David Gilmour's well-written book *Dispossessed* did not appear a few years ago, when it would have had an even greater impact. It is nonetheless a welcome and highly recommended addition to the existing library of books on Palestine.

The book deals with the period from 1917 up to the present day. It relates the story from the Palestinian perspective throughout, and in doing so takes a position of undisguised sympathy with the Palestinians. This is heartening for the pro-Palestinian reader, but may alienate the very people who would benefit most from reading it, namely the Zionist sympathizers reared on an unadulterated diet of Zionist mythology. It would be a pity if this were to happen, for the book, while sympathetic to the Palestinians, is no senseless propaganda tract. It is well-researched and well-documented and does not hesitate to expose the weaknesses of the Arab position where relevant. For example, the account of the mandate years in Palestine, when the Palestinians should have used all their skill to counter the dangers of Zionism, makes clear that they were on the contrary disunited and torn apart by internecine fighting. This important period of Palestinian history is still sadly under-researched or obscured by apologist inaccuracies—as if to admit that the Palestinians themselves were sometimes guilty of disunity or treachery could in some way detract from the justice of their cause. Likewise, the war of 1948, which was fought half-heartedly and ineptly by the Arab states against the newly-established Israel, is described critically and leaves one in no doubt as to the responsibility of the Arabs for that defeat.

The first section of the book, which deals with mandate Palestine and the early aftermath of 1948, is by far the best. It is written with accuracy and authority and manages to give a picture of the Palestinians whose authenticity could only have come from a rare sensitivity and insight on the part of the author. The quotations from Zionist sources which he includes in this section are more repugnant and damning than any that I have seen before. It is difficult to imagine how anyone could retain any sympathy for the Zionist case after reading them.

The remainder of the book is taken up with a number of important topics: the status of the Palestinians in exile, the position of the Arabs in Israel and the occupied territories, the Palestinian resistance movement and its relations with other movements and the Arab world, and the situation in Lebanon. In tackling the latter issues, the author displays an understandable desire to find neat explanations and solutions for the problems, and the book suffers from some over-simplifications as a result. For example, the ideologies and complex inter-relationships of the groups that go to make up the P.L.O. are rather simplistically analyzed and Fatah's wide political spectrum and its pragmatic philosophy, well exemplified by Yasser Arafat, should perhaps have been discussed in more detail.

The final chapter of the book is concerned with Palestine and the international community. In fact, it devotes much space to relations with the Soviet Union and the Third World and too little to relations with the West. There is no doubt that the Palestine case has been most suppressed and distorted in the countries of the West and particularly in Britain, that very Britain which was not only responsible for letting the Zionists into Palestine in the first place, but which really knew the facts of the whole ghastly story, possessed all the documents, and should therefore have been the last to pretend ignorance of the Palestine case or to give any credence to the Zionists. An explanation of how this extraordinary and immoral *volte-face* came about would be of immense value and interest.

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The Crossing of the Suez

By Lt. General Saad El Shazly
American Mideast Research,
San Francisco, 1980, 333 pp., \$14.00

By Henry G. Fischer

It is only natural to feel some anticipatory misgivings about a book that tells what might have been, if the writer's views had only been heeded rather than ignored. Such misgivings are totally unjustified in the present case. General Shazly describes the genesis, progress and outcome of a highly complex military operation for which he had the ultimate responsibility and authority; when the success of that operation had been realized, brilliantly demonstrating his ability as commander-in-chief, the authority for its continuation was removed from him, and he was left with the responsibility of repairing, against hopeless odds, the foolhardy decisions of the politicians. The basic situation is a familiar one in bureaucratic societies: the withholding of a proportionate measure of authority from those given a certain responsibility—and, even worse, the arbitrary withdrawal of that authority when their judgment is most critically needed.

In time of war, however, this bureaucratic situation can, and did, have extraordinary consequences. And if the disaster was extraordinary, the initial success was no less so. Anyone who is familiar with the dismal decay of facilities in Cairo will be amazed that the Egyptians could bring off so elaborate and intricate a system of maneuvers.

The complexity of the Suez crossing is the most fascinating part of General Shazly's story, and he launches into it at once, so that one has a clear picture of all its aspects when, in the later chapters, the chronological sequence of events is followed, step by step, from the author's diary and other personal papers. The style is brisk and matter-of-fact, very much in the tradition of the British officers from whom Shazly undoubtedly received his training; he was 32 in 1952, the year of the revolution. Like so many Egyptians, Shazly is also blessed with a sense of humor, as in his account of sleepless musings during the eve of the crossing, when he debates whether he should

have arranged to have a film crew record the coming events. And he can be extremely trenchant, as when he describes his government's "regime of autocratic privilege, which it upheld by lying to its citizens and then spying on them to see if they believed the lies." Above all, one is impressed with Shazly's realism and practicality. His book rings true, and the truth is, that

The President had thrown away the greatest army Egypt had ever assembled. He had thrown away the biggest airlift the Soviet Union had ever mounted. He had thrown away the greatest collaborative effort the Arabs had achieved in a generation. So many lies have been told about each of these aspects of the war that...it is right that I set the record straight.

From the very beginning, when he assumed command of the Egyptian armed forces on May 16, 1971, Shazly realized that his air force was ten years behind Israel's in technical quality, to say nothing of Israel's numerical superiority. He therefore judged that, even if he exploited to the very maximum the air defense that the Russians had provided during the previous year, it would at most be possible to cross the Suez Canal and take up positions about six to eight miles farther eastward. Such an action could not be expected to lead to the immediate recovery of the Sinai Peninsula, but it would force the Israelis to fight under much less favorable conditions and subject them to the intolerable strains of prolonged warfare. This remained Shazly's position from the first to last, despite constant pressure from Sadat to pursue a more ambitious and less realistic objective. When on October 11th the Egyptians should, in Shazly's view, have been entrenching themselves after their first week of successful combat, Sadat insisted on an advance toward the key Sinai passes 30 to 40 miles east of the Canal, an advance that was doomed to failure because the Egyptian armor was outnumbered and lacked protection from aerial attack. After the advance had failed, and the Israelis had made their counter-offensive at the very point that Shazly had predicted, he was repeatedly prevented from withdrawing men and equipment from the East Bank in order to meet this assault. He was not even permitted to withdraw units from the Third Army, at the southern end of the Canal and beyond immediate pressure; and so, instead of providing support, this segment of the Egyptian forces ultimately became en-

trapped and turned into a mass of starving hostages, whose suffering was then exploited by the enemy to exact a long series of humiliating demands. When the Israelis were finally compelled to make a limited withdrawal, they plundered and devastated everything they left behind them, just as they had done in 1957, to the point that Shazly wondered whether this highly organized and systematic destruction was meant to terrify: "Or did they, in some perverse way, like living in a climate of hatred?"

Considering the intolerable degree of frustration that Shazly endured, the spirit of his book is surprisingly positive. He finds much to praise in the valor and capability of his men and fellow officers; in the resourcefulness of the engineers who came up with practical solutions to the many problems of breaching the Bar-Lev Line (such as the scouring of passages through an immense sand barrier by hosing it with water); in the enormous amount of help supplied by the U.S.S.R. (somewhat eroded by the ineptness of the Russians in personal relations); and in additional help from the eight Arab countries that sent reinforcements. In many cases this help from the other Arabs was the direct result of Shazly's persuasion. It is obvious that they recognized his loyalty, and gave him their own.

It is also clear, from the excerpts taken from Shazly's personal diary, that he likewise enjoyed the respect of President Sadat. The problem was not, apparently, the result of any personal animosity, but rather Sadat's unwillingness to delegate authority, and his continual use of that most negative of all administrative procedures—divide and rule. Nor is this an isolated case. One thinks, for example, of the limitations Sadat imposed on the authority of his very gifted minister of finance and planning, Abd El Moneim El Kaissouny, who successfully disentangled the complex problem of Egypt's foreign debts, but was not allowed to deal with the even more critical problems of his country's internal economy.

Although Shazly occasionally wonders whether some unacknowledged policy lay behind Sadat's arbitrary decisions, he wisely refrains from pursuing this line of speculation, and he confines himself to the events in which he was directly involved. It does not, in fact, seem possible, in explaining the disastrous military reverses that Egypt suffered in the wake of the successful

assault of 1973, to ascribe them to anything but blunders compounded by obstinacy. That is how Shazly characterizes them, and his indictment is inescapably convincing.

The editing is, on the whole, very good, and the book is equipped not only with an index but a series of maps and diagrams that graphically illustrate various plans and details of the offensive and counter-offensive. It may be useful to point out, however, that the designation "Bren," which occurs on several maps, is not to be found in the index, since it refers to General Bren Adan. More importantly, a troublesome contradiction between pages 95 and 99 is evidently to be resolved by revising the last lines of page 99 to read as follows:

Was I chosen for my support of the Union of Arab Republics? If that were so, surely the other members of the Armed Forces Supreme Council would have been dismissed, or at least transferred, to less sensitive posts.

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In Quest of Justice and Peace in the Middle East:

The Palestinian Conflict in Biblical Perspective

By Hagop A. Chakmakjian, Th.D. Vantage Press, Inc., New York. 1976 and 1980, 157 pp., \$8.95, hardcover.

By Lucetta Mowry

Hagop Chakmakjian's book on the current Middle Eastern situation in the Palestinian area originated in a series of weekly discussions sponsored by the Presbyterian churches of Fresno in 1974. The author's intention is to provide a "primer" for those concerned about, but ignorant of, the facts regarding the Palestinian issue and to set the record straight about claims, supported by scriptural quotations, for Israeli right to the land of Palestine. His further aim is to suggest a possible basis for reconciliation between the Jews of Israel and the Moslems of the Middle East.

The author's review of historical events that led to the partition of Palestine and his careful analysis of the current situation are the best and most detailed sections of his book. Although

sympathetic to the Jews who have endured centuries of persecution, he finds the situation created by the Zionists' establishment of the state of Israel an intolerable one for Palestinian Arabs—some of whom, deprived of land, possessions and rights, became refugees in Arab countries unable to absorb them into their economic structures; others of whom have tried to remain in Palestine in spite of Israeli terrorism, repression and harassment.

The author points out that in its at-

tempt to bring peace to the Middle East the United Nations has been severely hampered and made ineffective by pressures from the Soviet Union and the United States. Both superpowers guided by their national interests have blocked United Nations resolutions: the United States by its massive support of Israel and the Soviet Union by its attempts to curry the favor of the Arabs. Thus the current situation in the

(Continued on page 16)

Books To Order

New Selections

Hagop Chakmakjian, *In Quest of Justice and Peace in the Middle East: The Palestinian Conflict in Biblical Perspective*, Vantage Press. 157 pp. \$8.95. Written for those concerned about, but unfamiliar with, facts regarding the Palestinian issue, and in particular, the scriptural claims for the Zionist right to the land of Palestine. Our price, \$6.50. See review, page 14.

Saad El Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, American Mideast Research. 333 pp. \$14.00. Egypt's former military commander-in-chief tells how the Egyptian army executed its brilliant 1973 crossing of the Suez and how Egypt's political leaders turned that success into disaster. Our price, \$10.95. See review, page 13.

David Gilmour, *Dispossessed: The Ordeal of the Palestinians 1917-1980*, Sidgwick and Jackson. 242 pp. 12.50 pounds (U.S. \$29.00). Well-documented history of Palestinians, based in part on revealing quotations from Zionist sources. Author examines the status of Palestinians in exile, the complex inter-relationships of the P.L.O., and the Palestinians vis-a-vis the international community, particularly with the Soviet Union and the Third World. Our price, \$13.95. See review, page 13.

Uri Avnery, *Israel Without Zionists: A Plea for Peace in the Middle East*, Macmillan Publishing. 278 pp. \$1.95 (paperback). A remarkable description of Israeli politics, as presented by a member of Israel's Knesset and the sole representative of a party that believes in the transformation of the Jewish state into a pluralistic and secular one that is able to achieve reconciliation with the Arabs. Our price, \$1.70.

Dewey Beegle, *Prophecy and Prediction*, Pryor Pettengill. 274 pp., \$5.95 (paperback). Refutes the biblical claim of Zionists to the Promised Land by discussing what the Bible teaches about prophecy, especially concern-

ing the predictions of events which already have occurred and those which are to come. Our price, \$5.25.

Robert B. Betts, *Christians in the Arab East*, rev. 1978, John Knox. 318 pp. \$12.00. A comprehensive study of the Arabic-speaking Christians and the role they have played in the Middle East from the time of the Islamic conquest up to present-day developments. Valuable demographic statistics and a comprehensive bibliography included. Our price, \$7.75.

John H. Davis, *The Evasive Peace*, revised 1976, Dillon/Liederbach Inc. 136 pp. \$5.95. Factual background to present Arab-Israeli dilemma, with a prescription for peace in Middle East. Our price, \$3.60.

Jonathan Dibleby, *The Palestinians*, Quartet Books. 256 pp. \$25.00. Explores the crisis of a people without a land, demonstrating that the "Palestinian problem" is not an abstract issue but an urgent human tragedy. Fully illustrated with moving, dramatic, often harrowing photographs by Donald McCullin. Our price, \$17.50.

Abdelwahab Elmessiri, *The Land of Promise*, North American. 255 pp., \$7.95 (paperback). A scholarly study of Zionist ideology and Israeli practices, showing Zionism as a political movement more Western than Jewish in nature; based mostly on Zionist and Israeli sources. Our price, \$5.20.

James Ennes, Jr., *Assault on the Liberty*, Random House. 301 pp. \$12.95. The author served as lieutenant among the officers of the U.S.S. Liberty on her fatal voyage. He was on watch at the bridge during the day of the Israeli attack. Our price, \$8.50.

A.C. Forrest, *The Unholy Land*, Devin-Adair Co. 178 pp. \$3.95 (paperback). The author's personal, informed and uncompromising stand against what he considers to be imbalanced and distorted news coverage of the human tragedy brought about by the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. Our price, \$3.60.

Stephen D. Isaacs, *Jews and American Politics*, Doubleday & Co. 302 pp. An investigation into the role Jews play in American politics. It explodes many myths on this subject and shows how Jews have recognized and exerted the power they have. Our price, \$3.85.

Sabri Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel*, Monthly Review Press. 314 pp. \$12.50. Expanded version of Jiryis' original authoritative account of the deprivation of Arabs living in Israel. Our price, \$7.85.

Alfred Lilienthal, *The Zionist Connection: What Price Peace?*, Dodd, Mead & Co. 800 pp. \$20.00. Covers the Arab-Israeli conflict from the time of Herzl to Camp David. It treats the subject from every angle. It is well-documented; the research involved is monumental. Contains much information of which Americans are mostly unaware. One authority has said that it should be read by every responsible citizen in the West. Our price, \$12.75.

William R. Polk, *The Elusive Peace: The Middle East in the Twentieth Century*, Croom Helm, 184 pp. \$15.95. Good introductory book on the history of the Middle East; corrects many of the prevailing Western myths. Our price, \$11.75.

Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine*, Times Books. 239 pp. \$12.50. Author argues that the reason the problem of Palestine remains intractable is because the question of Palestine has not yet begun to be understood. Our price, \$8.50.

Ephraim Sevela, *Farewell, Israel*, Gateway Editions. 295 pp. \$12.95. The author's disenchantment with Israel, which he had thought would be the fulfillment of his dreams, is emotionally expressed in his treatment of what he calls Israel's "racism" and the disintegration of the world's Jewish communities. Our price, \$8.10.

Raymonda H. Tawil, *My Home, My Prison*, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 265 pp. \$12.95. Autobiography of a Palestinian woman whose description of life under Israeli occupation mirrors the changing moods on the West Bank. Our price, \$8.50.

Evan M. Wilson, *Decision on Palestine*, Hoover Press, 244 pp. \$14.95. Well-documented analysis of the six years leading up to the creation of Israel. Based on author's personal experience and on information only recently made available by the United Nations and governments involved. Our price, \$10.00.

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Middle East appears to be insoluble.

Since the United States has publicly and officially backed Israel and the American public has been subjected for many years to news favoring Israel, the author wishes to correct certain misconceptions about the Palestinian problem. To apply the term "anti-Semitism" to Jews only is a misconception because the term includes most of the inhabitants of the Middle East from ancient times to the present. It is also a misconception that Arabs had done nothing to make Palestine productive before the Jews settled in Palestine during this century, and that Palestine was an empty quarter devoid of inhabitants. It is another misconception to believe that God's election of Israel through a series of covenants had given her absolute right to the land of Palestine, for two reasons: she selects only one of the seven covenants made by God with individuals or groups and ignores in that one, the covenant made with Abraham, the statement that "all nations shall be blessed in your seed"; and she ignores prophetic warnings that that covenant would no longer be operative if Israel refused to measure up to God's righteous demands.

As the author points out, the Arabs as well as the Israelis are at fault for the present Palestinian problem. They refuse to recognize Israel's need for statehood, have made land deals to their own advantage, have plotted to liquidate Israel, and refused to recognize that both Arabs in the 7th century and Jews in the ancient past and now in the 20th century have won the land by military force. To recognize this fact in both cases is not to condone the action but to suggest that other solutions for settlement are needed.

In answer to the question about what should be done, Hagop Chakmakjian suggests compromise, accommodation and reconciliation. The ideal resolution would be a secular state with equal rights for Arabs and Jews. Since the ideal is probably beyond realization, the next best plan is to establish two states in the portions of Palestine delineated by the Partition Resolution of 1948. The creation of a state for Palestinian Arabs is to be determined by Palestinian Arabs. This means that the Camp David agreement is not satisfactory because Palestinians were not participants and that Arafat and the P.L.O. should play a decisive role in all deliberations.

It is difficult to do full justice to all facets of the problem in so brief a

discussion of the Palestinian issue. The least-developed aspect of the issue concerns the biblical perspective. The author does well in pointing to prophetic criticism of Hebrew nationalism, but even on this point he fails to note that passages expressing universal hope still include a nationalistic view of Israel's election. For example, the author calls attention to Isaiah's hope that Israepe still include a nationalistic view of Israel's election. For example, the author calls attention to Isaiah's hope that Israel is "chosen" by God to be a "light to nations" (Isaiah 49:6), yet, later in the same chapter, is to receive servile gratitude from foreign kings and their queens who will be Israel's foster fathers and nursing mothers, and "with their faces to the ground they shall bow down to you and lick the dust of your feet." The biblical perspective on the situation is not sufficiently integrated into the discussion of the problem nor at times carefully and accurately examined.

From the political problem the author moves to the theological issue for the solution of the matter of changing attitudes of the Israelis, especially the Zionists, and the Arabs. According to the author, one can curb acts of violence and aggression by reminding Moslems and Jews as well as Christians that we all believe that God is one and that man is made in God's image. He believes that the mission of the Church, however, to bring their Middle Eastern neighbors to a better understanding of the fatherly nature of God's love, and to a recognition of the Church as an ideal model for world and human society. This reviewer feels most uneasy about this suggestion, for the Church, like Judaism and Islam, may have the potential for representing the Kingdom of God on earth, but unfortunately the value of the model has not been self-evident. Peacemakers are not to be limited to those within a single tradition, but must come from all three traditions in a united effort to create peace in the Middle East through justice and equality for the people of Middle Eastern nations.

Dr. Mowry is Coordinator of Chaplaincy Programs at Wellesley College and Professor Emeritus in the Department of Religion, specializing in New Testament studies.

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The Link aims at maintaining contacts among Americans who believe that friendship with the people of the Middle East is essential to world peace, who would contribute to this goal by spreading understanding of the history, values, religions, culture and economic conditions of the Middle East, and who would—in this context—press for greater fairness, consistency and integrity in United States policy toward that area.

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