

A Human Rights Odyssey: In Search of Academic Freedom

By Michael C. Griffin

Before I boarded the plane in Chicago on November 7, some seasoned travelers advised me that I could expect problems getting my literature past Israeli customs at the Tel Aviv airport. I thought those advisers a bit "paranoid" at the time. Their paranoia unexpectedly turned out to be prophetic!

I was headed for the International Teachers' Conference to Combat Racism, Anti-Semitism and Violations of Human Rights in Tel Aviv, during November 9-14. The literature I was taking was neither seditious nor salacious nor confiscatable on other grounds. It consisted of: the latest United States National Council of Churches' Policy Statement on the Middle East (see *Link*, November-December 1980); the Israel pages of the State Department's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1979*; the Palestine Human Rights Campaign's appeal to the Israeli government (later backed by the United States and the rest of the United Nations Security Council) to allow Mayors Milhem and Qawasmeh to return to their Halhoul and Hebron homes; and some memoranda from local academic and religious bodies detailing matters they wanted me to check into at the conference.

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(From left to right) Shalom Levin of Israel seated on the conference dais with Willard McGuire of the N.E.A., President Navon of Israel and Guy Georges of France.

True, all of these papers touched on human rights situations in Israel and the Israeli-occupied territories, but in broadly regional or inclusively rights-oriented contexts. I had thought that some conference discussion group might consider the materials appropriate as springboards for analysis. Hence, I had xeroxed enough copies to pass around. Why should I feel apprehensive?

My advisers had argued, however, that Israel's triple-digit inflation, her number-one status worldwide for

per capita military expenditures, plus a precarious international balance of payments, made her economic survival dependent upon an uninterrupted infusion of billions of dollars in American aid. Because United States legislation requires our government to withhold or reduce aid to countries with patterns of persistent violations of human rights, the Israeli establishment is understandably touchy when Americans focus on its human rights practices.

About This Issue

Since 1972 Michael Griffin has brought high school students from Wisconsin to visit various United Nations missions in New York, especially those of the United States, Britain, Russia, Israel, Iran, the Arab states and P.L.O. Observer's office. According to a book he co-authored in 1977, the program gives young citizens contrasting perceptions on such Mideast-related issues as human rights, the role of diplomacy and education in peacemaking.

When the Israel Teachers' Union announced that it was organizing a November 1980, "International Teachers' Conference To Combat Racism, Anti-Semitism and Violations of Human Rights" in Tel Aviv, Griffin's colleagues at Parker High School in Janesville, Wisconsin, logically encouraged him to attend. Backing for the conference by Dutch, French and German educators, plus the \$50,000 support of the United States National Education Association, seemed to heighten its significance.

Yet, when Griffin applied to A.M.E.U. for a travel grant, we hesitated. A tourist office was managing the travel arrangements. Its literature promoted El Al airline, but failed to suggest any tie-in with a human rights organization in Israel or elsewhere. Such commercialism seemed to preclude an impartial, humanitarian undertaking.

Two considerations, however, led us to approve the grant. First of all,

Braulio Alonso, N.E.A. Director of International Relations, assured us that the conference was a worthy investment.

Secondly, we had planned to devote an early 1981 issue of *The Link* to the history, goals, programs and problems of West Bank universities. We asked Griffin to visit the universities after the conference to obtain interviews and photographs for that issue.



Griffin with young Palestinians

Griffin's vivid, perceptive report to his fellow teachers impressed us. At the same time, ominous reports were being received of growing tensions on the West Bank. The military government had ordered a shutdown of the universities. Could Griffin, an eye-witness to

events leading up to the closings, re-study his notes, cassette recordings and hundreds of photographs? Could he translate his recent experience in order to give *Link* readers an understanding of what was happening? He could and we are pleased to present his first-person account.

Following the Tel Aviv conference, N.E.A.'s Braulio Alonso revealed that he had gone personally to the Israeli embassy to protest, in the name of the N.E.A. and American teachers, Military Order No. 854, because a free university cannot be under control. The text of his protest appears on page 7. Also on pages 12 and 13 is the statement of a delegation of eight United States academics who visited the Israeli-occupied West Bank from November 23-30, 1980.

The author supplied many of the photographs that appear in this issue.

Two book review selections begin on page 13: *Journey to Jerusalem* by Grace Halsell, reviewed by Rabbi Elmer Berger, and *Israel's Sacred Terrorism* by Livia Rokach, reviewed by Samir A. Rabbo.

Our June/July issue will report on a special survey conducted for *The Link* on Palestinian Americans: who they are and what they think about the Middle East situation.

John F. Mahoney,
Executive Director

"Even so, if you'd only take one of each document, the customs officers would probably let them pass," the advisers continued. "It's the quantity of each that will make them suspect your motives and perhaps delay clearance."

Actually, I didn't have to explain or defend my papers at Tel Aviv customs, because none of my luggage was awaiting me when I cleared passport control at the airport. The bag with my clothing reached the Dan Hotel two

days later. The case with my literature, however, is still listed as "lost."

This happens from time to time in all airports, I realize. Still, my advisers find it difficult to dismiss it simply as chance!

Apart from two worrisome days without fresh clothes, there was no harm done. Insurance has covered the loss and I soon discovered that my papers would not have fit into any of the conference discussion groups!

Dissident Israeli Teachers Dispersed

The Tel Aviv Museum, a super-modern architectural masterpiece, contains an enormous display hall that branches outward and upward into numerous interest areas, covering a wide range of Israeli history. A huge, beautiful lecture hall, furnished with the latest electronic equipment, housed our conference's

first general session.

The promotional literature for the conference hailed the declared purpose of our gathering as enabling all "teachers' organizations to defend more effectively the rights of all peoples and promote the fraternity of man." But, on the way in, a disconcerting event raised serious questions about the real objectives underlying the conference.

As I neared the museum's imposing main entrance, I was approached by a middle-aged man and woman handing out mimeographed booklets entitled: *Statement of the Progressive Bloc in the Federation of Teachers in Israel to the International Conference of Educators*. After undergoing an elaborate search by three Israeli soldiers at the museum door, I entered and began to read the document, which challenged our conference to deal with "offenses committed by the government of Israel against the human rights inside the occupied Arab territories." Never having heard of this Israeli teachers' group, I went back to talk with the two out front. They began to explain their concerns about specific denials of academic freedom to Arabs in Israel.

As we talked, the three Israeli soldiers confronted them and, in Hebrew, ordered them off the premises. After a brief verbal exchange, one of the soldiers began to push them physically with one hand while pointing to the street, some 50 meters away, with the other. As this "escorting" took place, I asked for extra copies of their statement. They passed them to me between the prodding arms of one of the soldiers. The soldier in charge momentarily detained me from re-entering the museum until he read my conference tag: "Michael Griffin/U.S.A." He muttered something to a second soldier in Hebrew which included the letters, "U.S.A.," then allowed me to re-enter.

While awaiting the conference's opening session, I read more of the eight-page mimeographed handout. In it I noted that:

1. Many United Nations resolutions have condemned Israeli human rights violations.
2. Arab political prisoners in Nafha Prison are subjected to racially selective, inhumane and humiliating treatment.
3. Violence is directed against Arab students and classrooms by Israeli authorities.
4. Independent Israeli researchers have disclosed the degree to which anti-

Arabism is promoted among Israeli Jewish students.

5. The actual physical conditions existing in Arab schools, compared with those in Jewish schools, stifle Arab education.

6. The teachers' conference should not only condemn Israeli policies which deny basic human rights, but "demand Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in June 1967 and recognition of the just national rights of the Palestinian Arab people to establish their state alongside the state of Israel...."

If such pleading for the concrete application of human rights was being kept—with military assistance—out of our conference, one could not help wondering, even that early, whether we were the targets of a rather elaborate bit of con artistry. An incident in the first discussion group heightened my apprehensions.

West Bank Voice Silenced

Anne Scott, a United Nations Association International Service volunteer at Birzeit University Research Center, wanted to read to conference participants a joint communication from Bethlehem (Catholic), Birzeit (originally Protestant, now non-sectarian) and Al-Najah (Moslem) universities on the West Bank. It dealt with Israeli military denial of academic freedom and the more general violations of human rights in these West Bank educational institutions. She had received a "visitor's permit" to participate in the discussion group on Tuesday, November 11. This was necessary because conference name tags had to be displayed at the door in order to enter any of the plenary or discussion sessions.

During the social period between the first morning's two sessions, I met Anne Scott in the lounge. She explained the nature of her paper and her mission and asked me to point out Willard McGuire, President of the United States National Education Association (N.E.A.). I introduced them. She then asked his permission to read the message at the impending session. Declaring that he wasn't in charge, McGuire said he'd look into the matter and get right back to her. Time passed and Scott waited. With the approach of the 11:00 a.m. reconvening time, McGuire went toward the rostrum where, in response to my inquiry, he said, "I'm too busy. I really can't say."

The session opened and James Farmer addressed us.¹ Questions raised and statements made by other participants soon revealed that prior permission to speak from the floor was not, in any case, required. Following the general pattern, Scott got the chairperson's nod and took her turn at the aisle microphone.

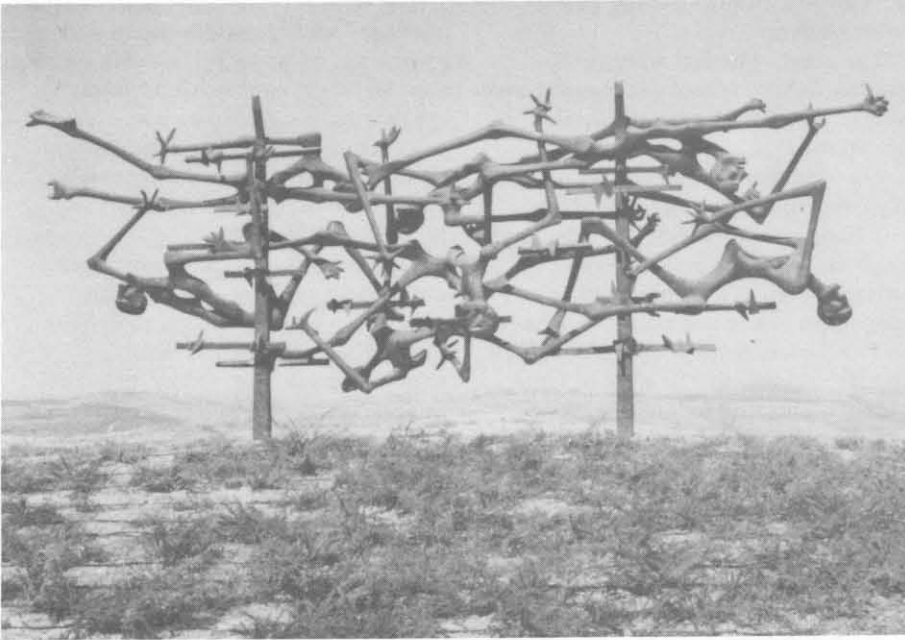
I have referred back to my photographs and tape recording of the incident to reassure myself that what followed actually occurred as I remembered it. Convention delegates listened attentively enough to the opening sentences delivered in her disarming English accent. Then she reached the section of the statement outlining the effects of Military Order No. 854 which since July 8 has put all West Bank higher education under total Army control. The audience noise level rose suddenly and numerous listeners actually began to attempt to shout her down. The chairperson, Germany's Erich Frister, clearly bewildered by the audience's behavior, did not yield to the pressure to stop her. Scott continued, but never reached, the statement's cordial invitation to visit the three universities.

The hubbub grew louder as more listeners heckled. Shalom Levin, President of the Israel Teachers' Union, seated on the platform near Frister,



James Farmer took up human rights violations against American blacks in the 1960's.

then took matters into his own hands. As Frister was verbally attempting to restore order, Levin grabbed the microphone from in front of him. "She's a Communist!" he shouted. "Get her out!" As he did so, a stocky young New York delegate (who had been acting as a roving photographer) moved



Outside Yad Vashem Museum, branches of sculptured metal thorn trees, full blown with emaciated corpses, symbolize the horrors of the Nazi extermination camps.

into the aisle and put his hand over Scott's microphone. As laughter broke out in the audience, a smile of accomplishment crossed his face. He bowed cordially to their appreciation. Scott sat down, only to be mobbed and verbally assaulted by angry hecklers at the conclusion of the session.²

A few days later, when Birzeit University closed under military order, the November 19 *Washington Post* carried a front-page headline, "Israeli Troops Wound Nine in Protests on West Bank." The accompanying news story reported that "Captain Ishai Cohen, spokesman of the military government, said Ramallah, Birzeit and El-Bireh would remain closed to reporters indefinitely."³ Were conference members getting a foretaste of the Israeli establishment's determination to keep the public in the dark on its infringements upon academic freedom?

"Anti-Semitism" Defined

It soon became clear that for the promoters of the conference the term, "anti-Semitism," was a label to be slapped on the slightest expression of doubt about human rights in the very land in which the conference was taking place.

On November 11 and 12 I raised specific questions and cited certain documents pertaining to the violation of Palestinian rights. I was awakened on the following nights with furious poundings on my hotel door, only to

find no one there. Five anonymous phone calls to my room denounced me as a "Nazi" and "anti-Semite." (The callers hung up without giving me a chance to reply.) The few Israeli delegates who were willing to talk to me on the subject did acknowledge some concern for the Palestinian Arabs. However, they tended to follow the dominant emphasis of 80 percent of the conference's meeting time—with the same strange drift of logic, they cited the Holocaust, modern history's most tragic violation of human rights, to justify the more recent restrictions on Arab rights in Israel and the occupied territories. Such reasoning was sounded in other settings as well.

Politicizing the Holocaust

Our conference, promoted and managed from the offices of Kenes Tours (P.O. Box 16721, Tel Aviv), operated under license from the Ministry of Tourism and in close harmony with the Ministry of Information. The tour took us on November 13 to Jerusalem to visit Yad Vashem, the museum memorializing with movingly grim realism the millions of Jewish victims of Nazism.

Neither the museum nor our conference dealt with another part of the story. According to Jewish historian Max Dimont, seven million Christians had suffered and perished under the same circumstances. But, even without this amplification, the museum draws tears to your eyes and makes you want

to join the shout of "never again!"

One would expect that a conference like ours would stress the universal application of those human rights essential to forestalling the slightest trend anywhere toward denials of freedom. Except for a few sentences by a Japanese speaker who included them in a long list of others, the subject of the Palestinians was officially ignored.

Some Israeli delegates who were willing to discuss it privately with me reasoned thus: Arabs may, indeed, have been displaced or subjugated to make room in Palestine for Jewish Holocaust survivors and their kin. If so, were they, as non-Jews, simply paying part of the due corporate price to make amends for the ravages of anti-Semitism elsewhere?⁴ And anyway, so our guide at Yad Vashem had warned us, the Palestinian Arabs—at least the shopkeepers among them—were cheats, thieves and worse. "Avoid them at all cost." Such inhuman beings, one gathered, were beyond the reach of human rights.

Worldwide Racism and Rights Violations

Meanwhile, the conference continued to recount violations of human rights almost everywhere except under Israeli administration. Eloquent speeches were fraught with pleas to "this gathering of academic excellence" to join the vanguard against racism and anti-Semitism.

Leon Poliakov, Paris's award-winning author on myths of the Aryan race, obliterated the arguments for the superiority of any race. Dr. Albert H. Van Den Heuvel of the Netherlands angrily chastised South African apartheid to the satisfaction of all. American civil rights activist James Farmer described the burning of the "Freedom Rider" buses in the American South of the 1960's. Other orators filled the sessions at the Dan Hotel with the plight of the American Indian and other victims of rights deprivation. German author, Dr. Susanne Miller, blasted anti-Zionism as a "Communist" term used as "a camouflage for anti-Semitism."

The great variety of this coverage made the conference's silence on the problems at its own doorstep all the more disappointing. Among the barrage of nine major presentations and countless introductions by the conference organizers, the word "Palestinians" was

never once mentioned. Even speakers representing U.N.E.S.C.O. and Amnesty International avoided public mention of their organizations' findings and publications concerning the plethora of human rights denials in Israel and the territories under occupation. Had the conference organizers advised them to do so?

Attempts to bring the Palestinian lot to the floor, however, were soundly crushed. The overriding impression was that no Palestinian issue existed, or if it did exist, it did not merit the consideration of so select an academic gathering.

At one point I offered the suggestion that, if this conference was indeed to deal fully with anti-Semitism, as its title indicated, it must take into account the mistreatment of Arabs. In a bon voyage memorandum, my Janesville colleagues had, among other things, called my

attention to the *Jewish Encyclopedia's* definition of "Semites" as a "group of kindred nations speaking kindred languages, originating from the Arabian Peninsula.... They include the Arabs, Hebrews, Phoenicians, Arameans, Babylonians and Assyrians." If this be the case, I dared suggest, could Israeli policies leading to ill-treatment of Palestinians (who, as Arabs, are also Semites) properly bear the "anti-Semitic" label? My inquiry was openly greeted with silencing derision.⁵

A Cruel International Joke?

Had the National Education Association expected such thought control when it provided \$50,000 for the "International Teachers' Conference to Combat Racism, Anti-Semitism and Violations

of Human Rights"? In its official description of the conference, the program stated, "Israel, which serves as a shelter for persecuted Jews, witnesses to the havoc and suffering wreaked by racism and discrimination, is, therefore, a meaningful choice of venue for our conference." Those Palestinians I talked to later, however, saw the selection of Israel for the site of this meeting as a cruel international joke played on them. To West Bank educators (none of whom, so far as I could find, had been invited to attend) the conference resolutions were mere rhetoric.

In terms of its promise and potential the conference had been a disappointment, yet it served as proper orientation for appreciating the plight of the universities I had promised A.M.E.U. I would visit.

Academic Freedom on the West Bank

The International Commission of Jurists has stated: "Implicit in the right to academic freedom is an atmosphere in which the attitude of government towards academic institutions, teachers, students and research activity is favorable if not benevolent. Unfortunately, however, no such atmosphere exists in the West Bank" (*The West Bank and the Rule of Law*, 1980, page 89).

Israeli delegates to the Tel Aviv conference explained the absence of academic freedom within West Bank academic institutions because they are "hotbeds of radicalism" and "schools of terrorism" which don't deserve freedom.⁶

Arabs, of course, insist that such "explanations," along with appeals to "biblical promises" and "security needs," are simply part of the Zionist public-relations program to justify ousting or repressing Palestinians and appropriating their buildings and lands. If (so their interpretation of Israeli policy goes) Palestinians are allowed higher education, they will promote cultural solidarity, political awareness and sophisticated counteraction which could foil Israeli plans. Better turn the universities into training centers for

laborers to work cheap for the Israelis—or close them altogether.

Birzeit Campus Closed

Contrasting views are held with such vigor by the contending parties that I looked forward to seeing for myself

what was going on and why. The treatment accorded Anne Scott in Tel Aviv made me want to start with her university—Birzeit.

Unfortunately, the November 14 ending of our human rights conference coincided with a week-long shutdown of that institution by order of General Benyamin Ben Eliezer.⁷ Hence I

Basketball game played against backdrop of library and classroom building on old campus, a direct contrast to new facilities going up last spring



couldn't see it in operation. I did, however, call on one expatriate professor in his off-campus home and later interviewed Acting President Gabi Baramki, whose doctoral degree in chemistry is from McGill [in Canada]. I fully anticipated a leisurely, relaxing interview over the light refreshments he served, but no sooner had the coffee been poured and the Arabic bread broken than a loud knock on the door shattered the calm atmosphere. A dark, middle-aged Arab, wearing a brown business suit and the traditional black-and-white checked Palestinian head-dress, entered the living room. He, too, was an employee of Birzeit — a handyman.

A furiously paced Arabic dialogue

filled the next few minutes. The topic of conversation was the Arab gentleman's son. Five months before, the young man had been detained without charge for 18 days in a local Israeli compound. Then he was suddenly set free without explanation. Now, just a few hours earlier, he had again been arrested, but this time informed that his trial would be in three days. Once again, no charges were filed.

My host, pacing the Oriental carpet which graced his living room, at one point slammed the back of his hand against a convenient chair. Then he suggested calling Felicia Langer, the renowned Jewish Israeli attorney whose defense of Palestinians (including, at

that time, the mayors seeking freedom to return to their homes) had earned her much publicity, respect — and denunciation — in many corners of the world. Hastily he provided his distressed Arab friend with directions for meeting her.

No sooner had the door closed than a phone call brought graver news: A mass roundup of Birzeit student leaders was apparently taking place. The student government president had been arrested within the last 20 minutes. "Can you believe this?" he appealed to me. "This is Palestine Week. It's a cultural happening: art displays, music, crafts. This is their reward for demonstrating pride in their heritage. It's a tragedy — a tragedy!"⁸

Birzeit: The Search for National Identity

By Milton Viorst

Birzeit's responsibility goes beyond scholarship, according to Acting President Gabi Baramki, to whom I spoke before the incidents of November. "We are trying to act in some fashion as the Hebrew University did in the early part of the century," he said, referring to the Jewish institution that now has three campuses, stately buildings, and a reputation for excellence. Baramki's office, by contrast, is bare, framed by plywood partitions, and located in an ancient mansion that houses most of Birzeit's activities. "The Hebrew University set out deliberately to give a national identity to the Jews. The Israelis are now worried that we're doing the same for the Palestinians. I wish we could be as successful...."

After the victory of Menachem Begin's Likud Party in 1977, Jewish settlers began pouring into the West Bank, determined to affirm a principle of Israeli sovereignty. Just up the road from Birzeit, radical Gush Emunim members founded a settlement named Neve Tsuf ("Oasis of Nectar"), and their comings and goings through the university town served as a constant provocation. The students, like the population generally on the West Bank, felt increasingly besieged, and in the ensuing clashes the Israeli army naturally sided with the settlers. Relationships between the soldiers and the students, never friendly, grew acrimonious....

Last summer, when the Israeli military government withdrew the autonomy of Birzeit and that of the other four Palestinian colleges, all were placed under direct military control....

Birzeit's board of trustees, supported by student, staff and faculty councils, protested the military domination. They said that the military government's new code "goes against the legitimate status of the university which it has acquired through its associations with international leagues of universities throughout the world." Baramki publicly condemned the measure as "the most serious action by Israeli authorities against academic freedom" since the beginning of the occupation in 1967....

Baramki argued that Birzeit's students, being normal young people, cannot be sealed off from the political agenda that affects their lives. "We don't encourage politics," Baramki said. "Since the military government makes it illegal, we don't allow any open politicking on the campus. But, like other universities, we value our freedom and think that students should be free to choose their own direction. The Israelis don't like it, but the student interest in politics is only natural...."

Yet Baramki, while disclaiming responsibility for student politicking, emphasized Birzeit's own political duties. Every university is political, he said, in the sense that it must shape the next generation of leaders for the

society to which it belongs. For Birzeit, the responsibility is particularly heavy because events have not permitted local leadership to develop normally. Equally important, the society does not have a clear vision of what it wants to be....

"The Israelis say that everyone in Birzeit is a radical and therefore dangerous," Baramki said to me. "If you mean by a radical a person who feels a strong identity with his own people, then the university, the students, all the Arabs on the West Bank are radicals. But if you're talking about radicals as extremists, as irreconcilables, as uncompromisers, then they are a small minority. I think their numbers may be growing, however, as the occupation drags on and becomes more difficult every day...."

Last year, shortly after the military government closed Birzeit, some 60 Israeli intellectuals, many of them professors at the Hebrew University, published a petition demanding that Israel "ensure that the Palestinian Arabs receive the same rights as we demand for ourselves, including the right to a higher education."

*Reprinted from Science,
December 5, 1980*

I was able to interview Dr. Baramki on the afternoon of the same day, Saturday, November 15, at his Birzeit residence.⁹ In charge since the Israelis exiled Purdue-educated President Hanna Nasir in 1974, he was extremely open and candid about the present conditions and academic future of Birzeit University. Neither of us, of course, could have foretold that three days later a bullet wound from an Israeli soldier's rifle would put his 14-year-old daughter, Haniya, in Ramallah Hospital. Nor could we have predicted that he himself would soon be in jail.¹⁰ Both incidents added serious overtones to my recollections as I went over the notes from my interview with him and the copy he gave me of his university's official response to the close-down order.

February 2, 1981

To His Excellency Ambassador
Ephraim Evron:*

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

I am taking this opportunity to remind you of the conversation with the three members of your staff in November 1980, in which I protested in the name of the National Education Association of the United States (N.E.A.) and its 1.8 million members:

- a. The Military Order 854 which placed a university under military control. No university can function effectively while under military control. The order should be rescinded or at least ameliorated to the point of allowing a great deal of autonomy to the university.
- b. The harassment of Mr. Gabi Baramki, the Acting President of Birzeit University. These actions can only create greater distress and are beneath the dignity of a great nation.

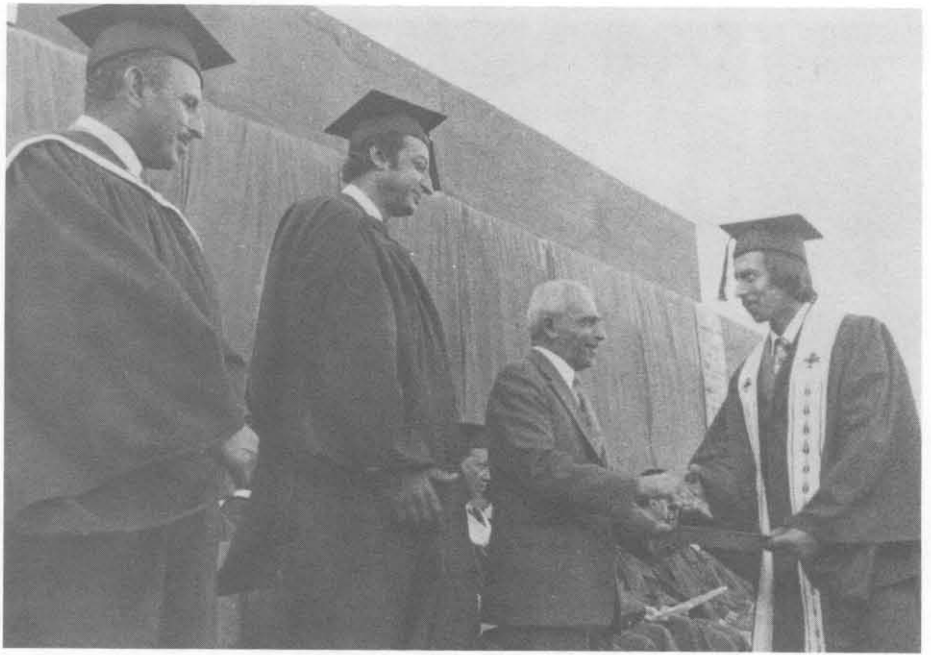
The N.E.A. expects that steps have been taken to correct these situations.

Sincerely,
Braulio Alonso, Director
International Relations

*Israeli Ambassador to the United States

Bethlehem Campus Closed

Since Bethlehem University, which operates under Vatican auspices, was still open on November 18, I went there



Dr. Gabi Baramki offering congratulations during graduation exercises

to get some flavor of how Palestine Week was being observed on a Palestinian campus still allowed to function. There I listened to the music and observed the festivities and rich displays of art and handicrafts.

A Bedouin tent graced the university mall. Three Palestinian students, dressed in the authentic garb of those proud desert dwellers, played on what appeared to be ancient musical instruments. Two other students busily demonstrated the use of an olive press. The last of the tent's inhabitants was skillfully putting the final touches on a beautiful tapestry.

In the administration building I met President Joseph Loewenstein, (Brother Joe), who beamed with pride as he directed me into a large room filled with paintings, sculpture, music, handicraft displays and student exhibits. I was impressed by the quality of the student work in all fields. The atmosphere was vibrant with a living culture, a culture which the western world, swamped by "refugee" and "terrorist" stereotyping of Palestinians, has too long overlooked. There were no students on soap boxes inciting the crowd to revolt. There were no "terrorists" riddling the displays with bullets and bombs—only earnest students affirming their pride in a way of life they don't want to see vanish.

"We won't have the problems here with the military government that caused Birzeit to be closed," predicted Brother Joe. "We've conformed to the wishes of the authorities so that Palestine Week can go on. Their

halting of this event would only serve to damage further the self-concept and cultural identity of our students. To forestall that, we've kept the military government informed in advance of everything going on here, as they demanded.

"At Birzeit, you see, the students have more of a say in university policy. They refused to account to the authorities for the scheduling of displays and events. We certainly agree with their principles, but don't believe that confrontation and the consequent ruining of this important week serves any purpose."

Within hours, the military government would fabricate a reason for halting this celebration of Palestine Week and closing the Bethlehem campus. The confrontation would come, and, if Brother Joe was correct, the self-concept and cultural identity of his students would be dealt another blow.

Women's Training Center Shut Down

To further understand West Bank education, I arranged to spend most of Monday, November 17, with Samiha Khalil at The Society of Ina'sh el-Usra, a women's and girls' vocational training center in El-Bireh, near Ramallah. Israeli soldiers, however, abruptly terminated the potentially rewarding visit.

Mrs. Khalil, the society's president, was placed under "house arrest" by



Festive music in Bedouin tent just before Bethlehem University was shut down

the Israeli military government in July 1980. The charges against her were never stipulated, yet this amazing woman has functioned under "town arrest," which restricts her movements to her home, the society and close environs.

Within the center I observed a wide range of skill-development classes and areas which would indeed be the envy of any American school. The classes catered to female students from preschool to beyond the age of 20. During an hour-long tour of her center, Mrs. Khalil proudly described how an education here would improve the lives of the students. The ancient skills of hand sewing and tapestry weaving were being taught to numerous teenage girls. Their handcrafted items would later be sold in surrounding areas. The aroma of success filled the cooking center as we passed through to a large class in "secretarial science." Electric typewriters tapped out the tune of future employment for the diligent pupils. The teachers and students in the simulated beauty salon beamed from under curlers and hair dryers as I snapped their pictures.

Mrs. Khalil paused in the busy dress-making center to describe how the three ornate, student-made wedding gowns on display were rented out to brides unable to afford such an expensive purchase. After seeing these and numerous other training areas, I viewed the school's Palestinian Culture Museum, complete with ancient agricultural tools and glass-enclosed mannequins wearing authentic historic dresses from northern, central and southern Palestine.

Back in her office, decorated with paintings, petit point, pottery, sculpture and other artwork reflecting the Palestinian heritage and culture, Mrs. Khalil described the society's "sponsorship scheme." "Ever since the 1967 War," she said "the number of Palestinian children suffering gravely from the effects of war and occupation has increased. Some children were left fatherless while others were deprived of parental care and financial support due to the long prison terms imposed on their fathers."

The society, unable to cope with this problem alone, rallied support from friends in many places. As a result, the sponsorship scheme developed. Sponsors give from \$300 per year for preschoolers staying at home with their mothers to \$1500 for university students, ages 19 through 22. Each sponsor receives a picture of the assisted individual along with a complete biography and periodic update reports; and, of course, letters from those able to write. "Sixty young folks have already been sponsored, but there are still hundreds on our waiting list," Mrs. Khalil stated.¹¹

As she was explaining the sponsorship costs to me, soldiers rolled into the neighborhood. They were there to close the school because a child had thrown a stone at a troop truck.

Mrs. Khalil hastily summoned two staff members. Together they speedily resolved the question of whether to send the young ones home in taxis or to let them walk. Taxis were called, because they deemed it unsafe for the youngsters to be on the street.

While the visibly worried staff loaded the children into the taxis, Mr. Khalil sat reassuringly in a chair next to his wife's desk. "Keep calm," this Palestinian gentleman advised as I nervously peered out of the window at the children. "Most of us are accustomed to this. It's the teachers who have children walking home from other areas who are the most distressed."





(Above) Samiha Khalil, President of Ina'sh el-Usra Training School, which offers diverse educational opportunities, from needlework to a kindergarten program (below, opposite page). The library (at left) despite confiscation of many volumes, contains extensive resource materials. (Above and below right) An English class shortly before Israeli soldiers arrived to close down the school.



But why the “town arrest” of Samiha Khalil? Why harass a woman who has encouraged others to develop a sense of cultural pride and the skills necessary to rise above repression and humiliation? Part of the answer appeared in the Hebrew daily, *Al-Hamishmar*, on June 2, 1980: A general Israeli crackdown on Palestinian women’s organizations had included the West Bank Family Association of which Mrs. Khalil is president.¹²

Mrs. Khalil continues to overcome obstacle after obstacle in the struggle to provide a better existence for young

women and girls in the El-Bireh center. That struggle goes virtually unnoticed by people informed only by the western media’s emphasis on Palestinian “terrorism,” but it is not unnoticed by the Israeli military authorities.

Outlook of Our State Department

The *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1980*, put out by the United States Department of State,

devotes only one diluted paragraph to the question of restrictions on educational rights in the Occupied Territories: “The military government (or U.N.R.W.A. for the refugees) meets the basic educational needs of students in the Occupied Territories.” The statement does note, however, that the military governor imposed Order No. 854, which empowered him “to dismiss university students, bar professors and revoke university charters,” and that Palestinians saw the move “as an attempt to exert greater political control over the West Bank universities.”

Americans who were able to observe the plight of West Bank and Gaza institutions in 1980 are surprised that the State Department, which purportedly knows better, should have implied to Congress that "the basic educational needs of students in the Occupied Territories" are being met by, or with cooperation from, the Israeli military government. I wonder how the National Education Association will respond to the suggestion that it set aside an equal \$50,000 for investigating the realities the Tel Aviv conference seemed to cover up.

The State Department's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1980* can be secured from any congressman or senator.

Other Violations

Although my central concern was for free speech and academic freedom, I couldn't help observing many of the other kinds of violations that are perpetrated daily. Unlike most travelers, I remained unhampered by govern-

ment-licensed guides telling me what to see and how to interpret it.

My Israeli fellow-delegates in Tel Aviv had assured me that Palestinian refugee camps did not exist in Israeli-controlled areas. Yet I didn't have to go far from beaten paths to visit three of these "non-existent" subsistence centers of harried, uprooted men, women and children. What bothered me even more than their oppressive physical circumstances was their inability to exercise that most basic right—the freedom to go home. This was especially frustrating to those whose homes were nearest.

Then there are property rights. With an elderly Bethlehem Arab, the dark, leathery furrows of his cheeks wet with tears, I watched helplessly as Israeli bulldozers leveled the ancestral olive trees on his farmlands, recently confiscated for Israeli settlements.

In occupied East Jerusalem I visited the mammoth, nearly completed administrative building ordered, against international law, by Prime Minister Begin for his offices. Next to it I saw the private Palestinian home that was slated for demolition until, so the lady of the house told me, the news media threw a

spotlight on the owners' refusal to move. The perplexing chain-link fence that goes up to and over her house marks the line to which the Begin government claims ownership-by-confiscation.

At Shiloh I talked with a widowed mother of nine who had received an official letter telling her that her land would be seized "for security purposes." Bulldozers had sliced two rooms from her home and leveled her orchard to make way for the Russian immigrant settlement just the other side of a new chain-link fence. "Sometimes at night stones are thrown at what's left of my house," she said. "My washing has been pulled off the clothesline and rubbed in the dirt." I could see why her new neighbors across the fence started conversing nervously as I pulled out my camera.

I also saw precious Palestinian water rights rendered meaningless by diversionary wells, pipelines and powerful pumps. Arab crops withering near the green fields, sprinkled lawns and swimming pools of the new Israeli settlements nearby told the story graphically.

Grounds for Hope?

There's much more to tell but this is not the place to tell it. Nor, regrettably, is there room here to go into the historical, cultural and religious grounds for hopes for possibly restoring Arab-Jewish good relations. Professor S.D. Goitein, who has taught at both the Hebrew University and the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study, has detailed these in his book *Jews and Arabs: Their Contacts Through the Ages* (Schocken, 3rd edition paperback, 1974). Harvey Cox, in his important January 1981, *Atlantic Monthly* article on "Understanding Islam," gives a helpful summary of some of Goitein's research.

I want to close on this positive note: I met many Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs who are struggling to build an honorable basis for lasting peace. Let the people I met in the editorial offices of the Jewish monthly *New Outlook* in Tel Aviv and the Palestinian weekly *Al-Fajr* in East Jerusalem symbolize the peacemaking efforts. Both staffs keep in close touch and hope to co-sponsor some peace symposiums. These people exemplify uncounted others in varied walks of life who, with encouragement from the rest of us, will create an atmosphere in which fair play, human rights and peace can prosper.

Many Palestinian students have grown up in refugee camps such as this one. (U.N.R.W.A.)



NOTES

1. At the conference, James Farmer, the civil rights activist, described American violations of black human rights in the 1960's. Though comparing his eye patch to former Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan's, he did not comment on Dayan's remark on Israel TV that America's military quality is low because the ranks are filled "mostly by blacks who have low intelligence and low education." America should take steps "to ensure that fresh blood and better brains go to their forces," Dayan advised.

2. Scott, in a letter written later, says: "Immediately before James Farmer's speech at the conference, Mike Griffin introduced me to Willard McGuire. I asked him if he had received and read the West Bank universities' statement. He replied in the affirmative. I enquired if it would be brought up in the general sessions; he said no, but it could be discussed in the smaller group meetings. I then asked if I would be permitted to participate in one such group. He was unsure, but promised to find out and let me know.... The entire conversation took place in Mike's presence. (I did not talk with Mr. McGuire again.)"

"I believe I was justified in raising the question of academic freedom in the West Bank, given the subject of the conference and background of those attending...."

"After Farmer had finished speaking, like others in the audience, I raised my hand indicating that I wished to speak. Following two other persons, I was invited by the chairman to the microphone. Once the contents of the paper I was reading became clear, the president of the Israeli Teachers' Union started shouting, 'Communist,' and gesticulating, and a photographer (who appeared to be the official conference photographer, but I'm not sure) seized the microphone from me. This was returned minutes later, but the sound had been cut off. In the confusion, I believed that I had been officially ordered to sit down. This was not in fact the case; the chairman, speaking in German, which I do not understand, did not ask me to leave the floor; neither did he ask for quiet so that I might be allowed to finish. I left the microphone having read one third of the statement. I was not approached officially after that time."

Scott's account coincides with a tape which I made of the proceedings: A full-length speech by Farmer precedes a five-minute talk from the floor on apartheid. A second floor talk in a foreign language was not recorded. Next is Scott, who has no problem at first. As her subject becomes clear, however, background murmurings arise and, with Levin's, "She's a Communist," swells to an uproar. Above this the words of the German-speaking moderator are not all distinguishable but do give the impression of calling the audience rather than Scott to order. Briefly Scott's voice reasserts itself above the din which culminates in a burst of laughter.

3. Journalists who ignored or defied this ban on press freedom paid a heavy price. Under a four-column December 8 headline, "Israel Cracking

Down on Foreign Reporters Covering West Bank Clashes," the *New York Times* gave abundant illustrations: Soldiers tear-gassed a CBS camera crew and confiscated its video tape. "Criminal charges are being filed against Howard Arenstein of United Press International for his presence yesterday 'in a closed military zone'—the campus of Birzeit University—during a demonstration.... Mr. Arenstein, who was at Birzeit University during yesterday's demonstration, said a group of soldiers shoved him into a jeep when he refused to turn over an audiocassette containing interviews with Palestinian students. The troops took the cassette from his pocket, they said, and confiscated his notes. He was kept at a police station for several hours."

Other illustrations appeared in David Shipler's December 14 *New York Times* account of further troubles: "Stone-throwing protesters have been shot in the legs, tear-gassed, arrested and held without trial and without access to lawyers. Foreign journalists trying to report on the clashes have been arrested, charged with crimes, detained for hours, stripped of their notes and films and denounced by high-ranking army officers."

On November 16, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin had assured his interviewers on NBC's "Meet the Press" that Israel would not only help in "protecting the free world" but would do its best to "preserve the liberty of mankind." Was Begin excluding Palestinians and newsmen from his definition of "mankind"?

4. I must not leave the impression that these are the only Jewish, or even Israeli, views on the Holocaust. They range widely from Rabbi Meir Kahane's to freelance writer Carolyn Toll's.

The opening chapter of Kahane's *Never Again* deals with aspects of guilt thus: "The record is obscenely empty of any vigorous sacrifice on the part of those Jewish leaders who are supposed to lead us and those Jewish groups organized to defend us.... Suddenly the Jewish community of Eastern Europe faced extermination.... Two years before the war came to an end, Jewish organizations.... knew that a holocaust was raging... as American Jews celebrated their weddings.... reveled in their expensive Bar Mitzvahs.... spent a pleasant Sunday at home.... American Jewish leadership can never say: Our hands have not had a hand in the shedding of that blood.... Millions in Europe went to their gas chambers.... We knew of it and were worse than silent, for he who knows of horror and limits himself to respectable occasional efforts is worse than the one who knows and does nothing." (New York, Pyramid Books, 1972).

Toll shows concern for, among other things, the politicizing of the Holocaust. Her "American Jews and the Middle East Dilemma" (*The Progressive*, August 1979) opens with sad acceptance of the 1968 complaint of a Sol Yurick character: "I am tired of you Jews throwing that six million up at us and hiding behind them corpses to do whatever you want to...."

Other Jewish writers who give abundant, thoroughly documented, supplementary insights into the political ramifications and propagandist manipulations of the Holocaust are novelist Ben Hecht and Middle East specialist Alfred M. Lilienthal. Hecht's *Perfidy*

(New York, Messner, 1961) accuses top Zionists of rejecting opportunities to rescue Jews from Hitler when such would not serve the political program of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. Dr. Lilienthal devotes a full chapter in his encyclopedic *The Zionist Connection: What Price Peace?* (New York, Dodd, Mead, 1978) to "The Holocaust; Stoking the Fires." His pages 477-81 indicate N.E.A. complicity in resurrecting the Holocaust to advance the thesis: "You are either for the Jews and Israel or you are for Hitler."

5. Professor Tom Driver, in November 24 *Christianity and Crisis*, similarly applied the term, "anti-Semitism," to both anti-Jewish and anti-Arab prejudice. Most of his article, "Hating Jews for Jesus' Sake," relentlessly, scathingly denounced anti-Jewish prejudice in self-styled "Christian" circles. Toward the end, however, he included this statement: "The most blatant expressions of anti-Semitism I have ever heard were in Israel in 1965 from the lips of some Israelis talking about the Arabs. I heard from otherwise calm, humane and well-educated people that all Arabs are scum, vermin and dirty animals who ought to be exterminated. The only time I had heard such language before was in my Southland as I grew up, when it was the language of white people talking about 'niggers.'"

6. Cf. *Birzeit University in the Israeli Press*, Birzeit University, 1979.

7. As described in the *London Times* of November 22 by Professor Sir Robert Birley:

"Israel may be particularly averse to any organized manifestation of Palestinian culture at a time when it is pressing so hard to colonize the territory for its own people. But the closure must also be seen in the light of the latest Israeli measures to discipline all three Palestinian universities—Birzeit, Al-Najah and Bethlehem. We have recently learnt with concern that their status has been downgraded and their future put into jeopardy under a new order issued by the military government."

8. For several days students were taken, sometimes from their homes, to the Ramallah Military Headquarters, the Ramallah Police Station or the dreaded Muskobiyya Prison in Jerusalem. On November 24, by arithmetical coincidence, 24 students were detained, beaten and imprisoned. On November 25, Captain Baruch of Ramallah MHQ told Prof. Jawad Barghouti, an American citizen, that he could no longer teach at Birzeit, though he could stay in the West Bank as a tourist. No reason was given. Days later, pressed for an explanation, the military governorate said that "security considerations" stopped him from teaching but he could still wander about at large on his tourist visa!

9. Baramki's own home, which I later saw in Jerusalem, had been confiscated by the government to house immigrants from Russia.

10. The December 2 *New York Times* reported from Jerusalem:

"Arrested today... was Gabi Baramki, Acting President of Birzeit University, who was reported by a military spokesman to be under investigation for having knowledge of, and failing to block, students' plans for a 'Palestine Week' featuring speeches, songs and slogans in support of the P.L.O."

11. For more information about the Sponsorship Scheme, write Mrs. Khalil at P.O. Box 549, El-Bireh, West Bank, via Israel.

12. Under the headline, "Women's Organizations Forbidden to Engage in Politics," *Al-Hamishmar* said, in part: "The military government has forbidden all the women's organizations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to have anything to do with politics.

"The order was issued after a clash between Israeli soldiers and a group of (Palestinian) women holding a sit-in opposite the three houses sealed in Nablus last weekend.... The women will be forbidden, among other things, to hold assemblies, publish information or make public declarations.

"The order announcing the ban on all political activity has already been delivered to women's organizations all over the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"Among recipients was Samiha Khalil of El-Bireh, chairperson of the Family Association and the only woman member of the National Guidance Committee."

Notices

The new weekly, *Al-Fajr*, is the only English-language newspaper published in the Occupied Territories and, though heavily censored, provides information on many Arab-Israeli developments that are overlooked by Western news media. A \$40 one-year subscription may be ordered from: *Al-Fajr* Weekly Edition, P.O. Box 19315, Jerusalem.

□ A.M.E.U. has a limited number of Faith Hanna's recently published history of the American University of Beirut. For a copy of *An American Mission*, send \$4.95 to: A.M.E.U., 475 Riverside Drive, Room 771, New York, NY 10115.

□ Increased printing and postal rates are making it extremely difficult for A.M.E.U. to continue sending *The Link* free of charge to all its nearly 50,000 readers. A special form is provided on page 16 for those who can help us to continue this service by making a \$10 donation.

The Crisis of Palestinian Universities In the Occupied Territories

Following is the statement of a delegation of eight U.S. academics who visited the Israeli-occupied West Bank from November 23-30, 1980. The delegation, which was sponsored by the A.A.U.G., conducted wide-ranging interviews with university administration, faculty and students—including students wounded by Israeli Army gunfire—at Al-Najah University in Nablus, Birzeit University, Bethlehem University and the Arab College of Nursing in El Bireh. Their findings will be published as a report in mid-1981.*

Recent demonstrations on the West Bank were part of a general Palestinian resistance to military occupation, but also must be understood specifically in terms of the crippling restrictions placed on higher education by military authorities. Military Order No. 854, issued on July 6, 1980, in particular extends to institutions of higher learning a whole series of regulations which previously applied to elementary and secondary schools.

These include an extensive censorship of teaching materials (more than 1,100 books of various types are specifically forbidden for use in classrooms as well as possession by individuals), onerous restrictions on formal lectures and extracurricular programs and events. The recent student protests at Birzeit University, for instance, challenged a ban by the military government on the celebration of Palestine Week, a cultural event whose most provocative feature turned out to be the representation of the Palestinian flag in certain student paintings. Meanwhile, all lectures by visitors and outside speakers must be approved by the military government, with the text of the lecture submitted one month in advance. Compliance with these regulations does not, of course, ensure the approval of such events, which are frequently forbidden arbitrarily and without further explanation, on the summary grounds of Israeli "security."

Even more serious than such forms of harassment and provocation, even more damaging to the pursuit of education than the systematic military control and censorship of the curriculum, is a whole

range of restrictions on the freedom of individual students and faculty members, from random detention to the denial of work permits, the suspension or expulsion of students from school, restrictions on freedom of movement, and in some cases the outright expulsion of students or faculty. At Al-Najah University in Nablus, for instance, faculty work permits which were at best renewable annually have gradually been reduced to periods of six months and in some cases even to one month or two-week durations. It is obviously extremely difficult for such institutions to recruit faculty when the latter can never be sure that their work permits will not be revoked without explanation in the middle of the academic semester. Thus, at Birzeit University this week, Jawad Barghouti, professor of cultural studies, who left North Carolina State University at Raleigh to teach on the West Bank, found his work permit denied, effective immediately, after he had begun to teach.

The arbitrary denial of permits extends beyond the harassment of individuals, however, and is aimed specifically at preventing the organization and creation of a whole range of associations and groups. It can be used to delay or prohibit the institution of new programs: at Al-Najah the request for permission to open an agricultural school has been denied for several years without explanation (agriculture is of course a particularly sensitive field of study in the West Bank, where the Begin settlement policy is aimed at preempting or confiscating Palestinian farmland and water resources). Meanwhile, the very operation and continued existence of the West Bank institutions of higher learning must be reapproved annually by the military government.

The major targets of such refusal to license new organizations are however clearly student and professional associations (particularly insofar as these imply wider contact and communication between the various campuses) as well as labor unions. This is part of a systematic effort to hamper the development of Palestinian community organization, which has also included

the detention or expulsion of some of the mayors and the "town arrest" of major community leaders. The intensification of this repression can be dated from the announcement of the so-called "iron-fist" policy by the Begin Government in May 1980, subsequent to the signing of the Camp David Accords.

Palestinian universities also suffer from a tax status under which, unlike Israeli universities, laboratory equipment and teaching materials, even when these have been approved by the military authorities, and sometimes after delays as long as three years in delivery, are subject to onerous customs duties and taxes sometimes 100 percent of their value.

Paradoxically, these repressive measures, which crystallize in Order No. 854, have brought about the opposite of what they were intended to achieve: far from order and submission, they have resulted in a renewal of Palestinian national consciousness and resistance, as the recent mass

demonstrations show. These measures are of course an integral part of the more general repressive atmosphere of daily life under military occupation. Yet more specifically they destabilize higher education, which is one of the key resources of the Palestinian people. We ask that they be repealed immediately, and that academics from other countries and people of good will generally join us in denouncing these measures and in making them more widely known to world public opinion.

Robert Lange
Dept. of Physics
Brandeis University

Mary Gray
Dept. of Mathematics, Statistics
Computer Science
American University

Naseer Aruri
Dept. of Political Science
Southeastern Mass. University

Harold McDougall
School of Law
Rutgers University

Hayden White
Dept. of History Consciousness
University of California, Santa Cruz

Masao Miyoshi
Dept. of English
University of California, Berkeley

Fredric Jameson
Dept. of French
Yale University

John Quigley
College of Law
Ohio State University

**The A.A.U.G. circulated a petition among American college and university professors specifically to protest Military Order No. 854. The organization received 300 signatures by mid - February 1981.*

Book Views

Journey to Jerusalem: Christianity, Judaism, Islam

By Grace Halsell
Macmillan Publishing Co., 1981,
256 pp., \$10.95.

Elmer Berger

This is a different, perhaps unique, book about the Palestine problem. The majority of present publications about the Middle East consist either of: weighty tomes on geo-politics, oil-economics, or legalistic and/or theological polemics; or sentimentalized, romantic, self-serving biographies or memoirs of the principal combatants.

Although Halsell addresses all these "big-ticket" issues, her front-and-center concern lies with humans whose daily lives have been—and will be—affected by super-power politics, local powerplays and the lobbying in capitals distant from "Jerusalem."

The power-brokers involved are no strangers to Halsell, a distinguished journalist. Her questions directed to the less prominent interviewees are disarmingly sophisticated. The answers come back in the same style: fear, arrogance, vision, despair.

None of the settings for the interviews included crystal chandeliered halls of state structures or some historic conference table. Rather, they took in disparate locations—schools, synagogues, mosques, a convent, shops, "refugee" camps and Zionist "illegal settlements."

On the Israeli side, Halsell features two couples: Aviva and Reuven within Israel proper and Jewish settlers; and Linda and Bobby in the Arab-inhabited West Bank.

The first couple think, "The internationally recognized boundaries of Israel are fixed and they do not want to risk war to extend those boundaries." When her youngest son was born, Aviva "did not bother" to pray he might not "go

into uniform... There will always be wars," she despairs.

Aviv's despair is in direct contrast to the attitude of Bobby Brown. Formerly from the Bronx, NY, Brown now lives in a Gush Emunim settlement near Bethlehem in the West Bank. Brown tells Halsell:

I have not given up America, only added Israel. Gush Emunim is not a movement where you go into an office, sign up, get a membership card, and pay dues. Still it is a growing movement. We are dedicated to one goal: to drive the Arabs out and create a greater Israel... We do not see lines on a map. The border will be made after we settle the area... We want all the Arabs to leave, and if coming to settle here means we must be in a continual state of warfare with the Arabs, then so be it.

In New York, Halsell read her taped interviews to Dr. Aaron Cohen, a psychiatrist "who had made a study of

the Jewish settlers in the West Bank." The psychiatrist explains the settlers "are a cementing agent in Israeli politics and that is why they are tolerated." If these settlers "were really contrary to deep beliefs by the Israelis, they would be stopped... The situation of allowing them to take Arab land has a unifying factor or a unifying feature in the society."

The analysis is reminiscent of the recently published segments of the Sharett Diary which disclosed that the highest government levels considered Israeli provocation of "the Arabs" necessary to maintain Israeli morale.

Zionism was intended to inspire "Jewish unity" by accenting and revitalizing affirmative "Jewish" values. Ironically, Jews in the Zionist state commonly believe the society still needs the unrelieved pressure of the old Herzlian dialectic of real or fabricated non-stop, universal hostility to unify "Jews."

Halsell knows that most of the Zionist land-grabbing which sustains Arab hostility is made possible by American money, either public or private in origin. She is not reticent about reporting the fact in pertinent contexts.

Halsell's interviews with West Bank Arabs bristle with deep—and despairing—resentment of Israeli occupation. Their bitterness extends to the United States which continues generously to indulge the Israeli policy.

Sentimental and starry-eyed tourists rarely see the existing differences while they are tenderly shepherded by Israeli guides or supervised by their uninformed American or European tour-organizers. Arab taxis must be painted a different color from "Jewish" taxis. Arabs are employed in menial labor. According to Israeli information, Arabs are "better off economically" than they were under Jordanian sovereignty. But unskilled Arab labor is plentiful partly because Zionist policy has expropriated Arab lands and uprooted so many Arabs. They now earn a livelihood only by moving (or being shuttled) back and forth from their agricultural "homes" to urban centers where they fill menial jobs.

There are only three vocational technical and teacher-training schools in the West Bank. Although the Palestinians have attempted to build more, the Israelis have "blocked" all such initiatives. Israeli interference with and interruptions of even the meager facilities for secondary (or university) education have been rather widely publicized in connection with incidents

at Birzeit. The thinly disguised objective of all such Israeli policies is to discourage the young generation of Palestinians about their future. To the extent the strategy succeeds it will expedite "voluntary" expatriation from the coveted territories of "Judea and Samaria."

Sentimentalists who sympathize with Israel's claim that it needs the West Bank for "security," or theologians who endorse Begin's corruption of the "divine promise" as another basis for the Israeli claims, may be somewhat sobered by some economic facts conveyed to Halsell by Bassam Shaka, the Palestinian mayor of Nablus. Although Israel requires the West Bank to buy 90 percent of its imports from Israel, she takes only 2 percent of her imports from the West Bank and Gaza. Water is the primary reason why Israel wants the West Bank. They "take 80 percent of our West Bank water supply... They pump about 30 percent into Israel. Then they pump about 50 percent... desperately needed by our Palestinian farmers into their illegal Jewish settlements here on the West Bank."

There are many tragedies within the grand tragedy of Palestine. Only a foolhardy soul would dare to choose the greatest among them. But it is difficult to put aside Halsell's absorbing humanization of the problem of Palestine without—perhaps rather sardonically—observing that, in a sense, the tragedy of Zionism may head the list. The dreamers and idealists of the movement believed Zionism would "normalize 'the Jewish people'" and therefore the lives of individual Jews. But a theme running through Halsell's interrogations of Jews in Israel, and some in America, connotes fear, insecurity, even paranoia. The problem of Palestine qualifies as one of those grim episodes in history in which, "Never was so much good intended by so many people only to produce so much tragedy and suffering." The worldwide tensions radiating out from this cockpit of anger, frustration and periodic warfare make it a universal tragedy.

Halsell has the political sagacity and the literary reticence to conclude with a prayer rather than with the certitudes of some political formula for peace. "I always was aware of the stars over Jerusalem, Bethlehem, over the refugee camps, and over the Jewish settlements on the West Bank," she says. "Perhaps these same stars that inspired Moses and Christ and Muhammad in their desert

homes will inspire new leaders who will embrace one another with confidence, faith and trust, saying, 'We are truly one people.'"

A crusty, perhaps cynical observer and analyst of the old problem is inclined to add another "Perhaps!" and *Ensh'allah!* ("God willing!").

Rabbi Elmer Berger is President of American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism.

Israel's Sacred Terrorism

*By Livia Rokach
Association of Arab-American
University Graduates, Belmont,
Massachusetts, 1980, 68 pp., \$2.50.*

Samir A. Rabbo

This monograph is devoted to the examination of Moshe Sharett's diary. A fervent Zionist leader who was born in Harsson, Russia, in 1894, Sharett immigrated with his family to Palestine in 1906. Sharett, a founding member of Mapai (The Israeli Labor Party), became the chief editor of *Davar*, Mapai's official organ. In 1933, he held the post of Director of the Jewish Agency's Political Department. In 1948, he became Israel's first foreign minister, a position he continued to hold until 1954 when he became Israel's second prime minister.

This monograph is based wholly on the personal diary of Sharett during the period between October 1953 to November 1957. The eight-volume diary contains 2,400 pages of daily notes and personal memoirs in which he recorded current events. The diary is objectively written and can hardly be considered an attempt at distortion or self-glorification. In fact, Sharett's family was subject to immense pressure from the Israeli political establishment to refrain from publication of the diary or to, at least, submit it for censorship. Finally, Sharett was ousted from power in June 1956 and remained isolated until his death in 1965.

In general, the diary of Sharett lays undiscovered by the self-styled Middle Eastern experts of the West. Moreover, Rokach's monograph is the first attempt to analyze Sharett's work. Through her analytical technique, the author brilliantly refutes Israeli and Western myths on the nature of Israel and its practices vis-a-vis the Palestinians and Arabs in particular and the actors of world community in general.

This monograph offers an authorita-

(Continued on page 16)

Books To Order

New Selections

Grace Halsell, *Journey to Jerusalem*, Macmillan, 1981. 256 pp. \$10.95. A distinguished journalist visits the Holy Land and meets people as diverse as Mayor Bassam Shaka of Nablus and Bobby Brown of the Bronx, NY, now a Gush Emunim settler near Bethlehem. Our price, \$7.95. See review on page 13.

Livia Rokach, *Israel's Sacred Terrorism*, Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1980. 68 pp. \$2.50 (paperback). Examines the 1953-57 diary of Moshe Sharett, founding member of Israel's Labor Party, his country's first foreign minister and its second prime minister. Our price, \$1.95. See review on page 14.

The Arab Image in Western Mass Media, Outline Books, London, 1980. 280 pp. (paperback). Collection of papers delivered at the 1979 International Press Seminar in London. Contributors include Jack Shaheen, Edward Said, Mohammad Heikal, Claud Morris, Lord Caradon, Hisham Sharabi and Eric Roleau. Our price, \$3.50.

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

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, the fact regarding the Palestinian issue, and, in particular, the scriptural claims for the Zionist right to the land of Palestine. Our price, \$6.50.

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 Dimbleby, *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.

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.

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.

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.

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. Research involved is monumental. Contains much information of which most Americans are unaware. 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.

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.

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tive source of information based on the work of an insider and an active participant Zionist leader in the policy-making process within the Zionist establishment.

The crux of Sharett's work is his indication that Israel's political/military establishment never seriously believed in an Arab threat to the existence of Israel. Rather, they worked at pushing the Arab states into a pre-calculated military confrontation which the Israeli leaders were certain of winning, i.e. the June War of 1967.

The mere indication of such a policy objective, certainly would serve a severe blow to Israel's apologists in the West, particularly to those who advocate that Israel's security is prerequisite to the achievement of peace in the region. However, this monograph emphasizes that Israel is not interested in achieving peace. Rather, it is an expansionist state: the Zionist design is to create a Christian state in Lebanon by intervening in Lebanon's affairs under the pretext of protecting its Christians from their Moslem brothers. Recently, this

plan has been put in motion through aid to Major Haddad and an actual occupation of a strip of Lebanese land along the northern border. In doing so, Israel has forgotten that thousands and thousands of Christian Palestinians have been uprooted from their homeland by the very force that claims to be the protectorate of Christians in Lebanon (Israel).

I would agree with the author that Western journalists, scholars and analysts may find themselves embarrassed by the revealing outcome of such analysis. But I go further to say that they also share the guilt for propagating the evil of Zionism.

Due to the importance of understanding the nature and the realities of the factors involved in shaping Middle Eastern politics, I recommend this monograph to be used as a major source of information on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Samir Rabbo is editor of The Search, Journal for Arab and Islamic Studies.

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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