

## Prisoners Of Israel

**By Edward Dillon**

During my tour of Lebanon, the West Bank and Israel, I kept thinking of the Humpty-Dumpty syndrome.

I refer to the conversation in which that Lewis Carroll character turns to Alice and says: "That's glory for you!"

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To which she replies: "What do you mean by glory?"

"Why I mean a nice knock-down argument."

"But glory doesn't mean nice knock-down argument."

"It does when I use it. When I use a word I make it mean whatever I want it to mean."

"But can you make a word mean whatever you want it to mean? That's the question."

"No, the question is: Who's boss? That's all."

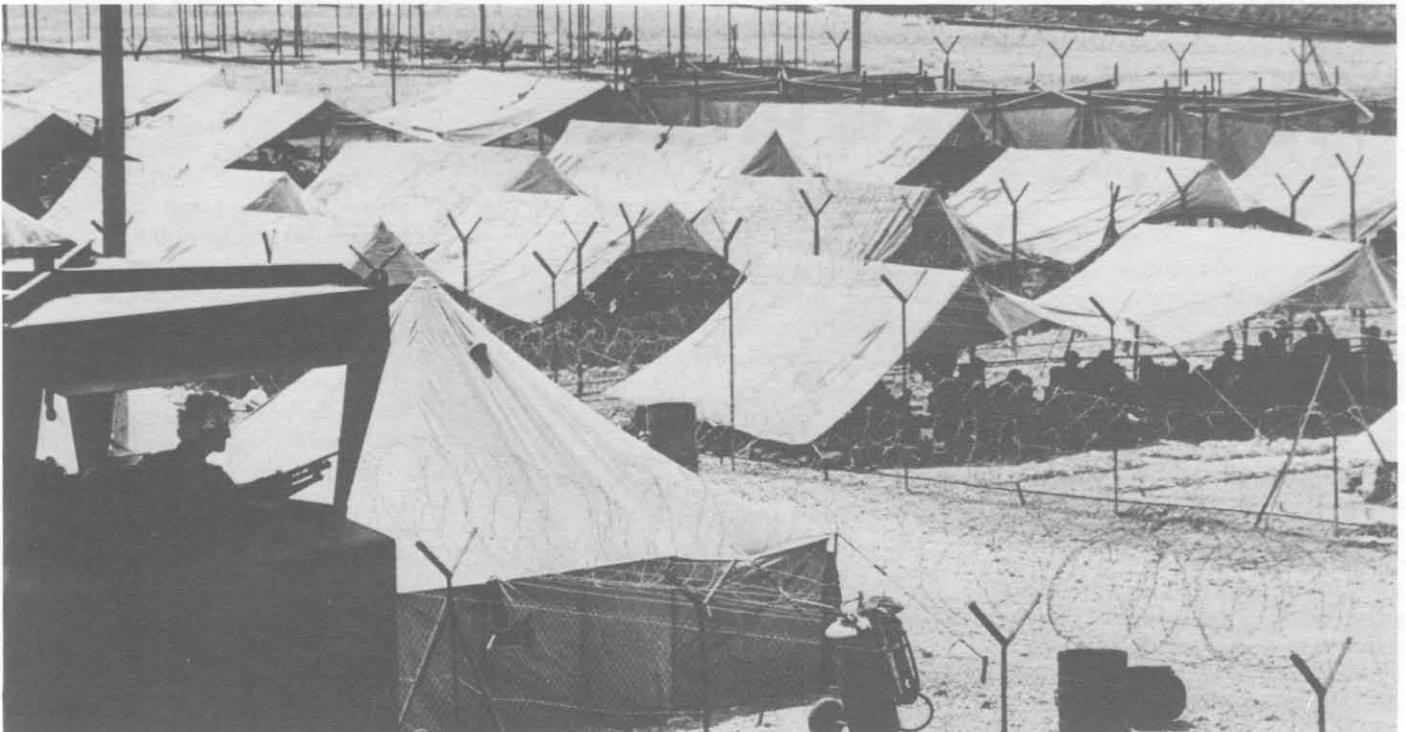
The Israeli invasion of Lebanon, entailing as it did the devastation of cities, the utter destruction of refugee settlements, the killing of as many as

40,000 innocent civilians,<sup>1</sup> and the rendering homeless of at least 300,000 persons, is called "Operation Peace in Galilee." Occupied territories are called "administered territories" or "Greater Israel."

Only in the case of the degradation of imprisonment has there been some difficulty coming up with the necessary vocabulary. "Concentration camp," the term first coined by the British during the Boer War in South Africa, had taken on unacceptable historical associations, so, in the summer of 1982, the Israelis simply called their barbed-wire compound near Ansar, south Lebanon, "the camp of the brought-ins (*muva'im*)."

Israeli guard in watchtower scans Ansar prisoner camp near Nabatiyeh, Lebanon, in July 1982.

Wide World Photos



# About This Issue

We wish to thank those individuals and groups, both in America and the Middle East, who provided Father Dillon with the background information and personal contacts which facilitated his research for this issue.

In particular, we thank the members of ACCOUNT for the documentation they made available. This is a New York-based organization which monitors the names of prisoners and the missing in Lebanon. Readers who seek information about particular prisoners or who have information from independent sources can write to: ACCOUNT, P.O. Box 1358, Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025.

The plight of prisoners inside Israeli prisons has gone largely unreported in the United States media. It deserves far wider coverage, for it is a story which tells more about the prison-keepers than the prisoners.

At the time Father Dillon was in the Middle East, former President Carter was touring the West Bank. Like Father Dillon, he, too, spoke out against the settlements. The former President's position on the illegality of

the settlements is clearly set forth in his recent memoirs, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President*, which is reviewed by Landrum Bolling on page 14. This, along with other significant books on the Middle East, are offered at substantially reduced prices on pages 15 and 16.

Our October-November issue of *The Link* will examine the historical, biblical and political ties between radical elements within Israel and certain fundamentalist Christian groups in America.

John F. Mahoney,  
*Executive Director*

In Israeli-run prisons, whether in Israel, in the Occupied Territories, or (since 1982) in south Lebanon, the hated ones are mostly persons who call themselves Palestinians while those who guard them call them Arabs. The despised ones are mostly Sephardi Jews, Arabic-speaking Jews from countries of Arabic language and culture. These are the ones who live close to the prisoners, are involved in the torture sessions, and are the ones who will be killed along with the prisoners if the military is called in to restore order in the event of riots. More about this later.

The Israeli prison system, though it has an established pattern and procedure, is not a static thing. It is constantly expanding, as if by improvisation, as the assault on Palestinian identity escalates.

Seldom is the Israeli prison system mentioned in the American press. It has not, however, completely escaped monitoring from without. Alfred Lilienthal gives a fair summary of the results of international concern on this issue.<sup>2</sup>

The biggest splash was probably made by the special in-depth investigation conducted by *The London Sunday Times* "Insight" team, Paul Eddy and Peter Gilman.<sup>3</sup> This investigation established the officially condoned widespread and systematic use of torture, including sexual sadism used by repressive regimes based on racial fears and hatred (South Africa, Nazi Germany). The purpose of the torture was threefold: to extract information; to extract confessions as the basis for convictions for crimes against the security of Israel; to degrade and intimidate the population.

The "Insight" team was able to name six prisons where torture routinely takes place: the prisons of the four main occupied towns: Nablus, Ramallah, and Hebron on the West Bank; and Gaza in the south; at the detention center in Jerusalem known as the Russian compound; and at a special military intelligence center whose whereabouts are uncertain, but which is perhaps somewhere inside the vast military supply base at Sarafand near Lod Airport.

Comprehensive reports on the full-scale violations of human rights have appeared in this country. Special mention should go to the *Christian Science Monitor*<sup>4</sup> and to the National Lawyers Guild<sup>5</sup> whose ten-member delegation of American lawyers re-

# The Anatomy of Prisons

There may be something especially revealing about prisons.

Nothing, for example, reveals the murderous heart of the Nazi regime as does the system of concentration camps with their grisly meaning. More recently nothing offsets Soviet political propaganda so effectively as recent accounts of the notorious Russian prison system.

So it may yet prove to be the case with Israel. Its expanding system of prisons and its treatment of prisoners may eventually provide the world with the key to understanding the peculiar ethos of its colonialism.

Listening to American correctional

personnel discuss the purpose of prisons, whether they should punish or correct, I have heard them refer to the neat schema attributed to Shaw:

Whom we love, we cherish and protect.

Whom we hate, we kill or imprison.

Whom we merely despise, we hire to guard the ones we hate.

Just by walking into a prison yard or cellblock you can see who it is a society hates and who it despises. It's harder to know who it loves, but if you can easily walk in and out without much hassle, chances are you belong to the cherished group.

leased a report on August 1, 1977, detailing the results of a three-week investigation.

In September 1977, the Swiss League for Human Rights echoed the findings of previous groups,<sup>6</sup> such as Amnesty International (March 1972) and the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights (February 1973). The list of violations has become a familiar litany: deportations, arbitrary expropriation and demolition of property, flagrant inequalities between Arabs and Jews in every aspect of life, arbitrary arrests, prolonged detention, common and systematic practice of torture.

A document of fundamental importance is a summary of three United States State Department cables filed by the American Consulate General in Jerusalem in 1978 and 1979. These cables cite evidence that Israeli torture of Palestinian political prisoners is a systematic practice. The evidence was culled from forty-seven interviews with visa applicants conducted by United States consular officer, Alexandra Johnson. Her summary with commentary appeared in the April 1979 edition of the *Palestine Human Rights Bulletin*.<sup>7</sup> Her State Department reports were the basis of an article in the *Christian Science Monitor* that same month.<sup>8</sup>

And, finally, in 1983, the West Bank organization, Law in the Service of Man,\* an affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva, published a collection of signed affidavits documenting the continuing systematic violation of human rights in the West Bank.<sup>9</sup>

Such violations are periodically acknowledged by Israelis themselves. An Israeli private, Arthur Kutcher, recently told David Shipler of *The New York Times* that violence against Palestinians is endemic in the West Bank. Kutcher, a native of Sioux City, Iowa, said he found soldiers from the margins of Israeli society who were "working out their fantasies of violence on the native inhabitants of the West Bank."<sup>10</sup>

Grace Halsell, writing of the systematic and widespread use of torture in her book *Journey to Jerusalem*,<sup>11</sup> "met one Israeli official, who, after insisting that his name not be used, answered bluntly the question that came to my mind and perhaps is in the minds of those who read about these things for

\*Readers wishing further information about Law in the Service of Man's activities should write: P.O. Box 1413, Ramallah, via Israel.

the first time: Why does Israel do it?

"Let me remind you," said the official, "that Israel is a Jewish state, determined to remain so. Yet we rule 1.7 million Arabs, and for more than a decade 1.2 million of these have been under military occupation. Under our military rules, we can arrest and hold prisoners without permitting them to see a lawyer. Nor are we required to hold any court proceedings. Under these conditions, in which we report only to ourselves, are you surprised to hear that there is torture? How else do you suppose we keep more than a million people subdued, if not by torture?"<sup>12</sup>

With the invasion of Lebanon, the number of Arabs Israel had to subdue quickly presented a challenge for which, it turned out, it had been well prepared. Between June and September 1982, the count of prisoners held by the Israelis may have doubled or even tripled, with as many as 15,000 taken into custody in the wake of the devastation of south Lebanon and Beirut.

The new wave of prisoners had a more international flavor. Hundreds were from Asian, African and European countries. Thousands were Lebanese. But, of course, most were Palestinians.

Included in the number were the entire male staff members of the various Palestine Red Crescent hospitals and clinics. Included also are hundreds of staff members of the United Nations

Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) or of religious health, education or welfare institutions such as those run by the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). Anyone identified as working for any institution nurturing Palestinian identity seems to have been vulnerable to arrest and imprisonment.

One rapidly expanding prison in south Lebanon got quite a play in the world press. Inside Israel, opposition to the Zionist aggression intensified, with writers referring to the new prison at Ansar as a concentration camp, and the epithet "judeo-nazi" entered the political dialogue.<sup>13</sup>

In reference to the prison in south Lebanon, the Israeli writer, Uri Avneri, had this to say:

Any regime that locks up its rivals, both the internal and the external rivals, in prison camps, like animals in cages, tries to give those camps a new name, which will sound as innocent as possible. Therefore, the El Ansar camp is not called "concentration camp." It is called "camp of those brought in" (*muva'im*).<sup>14</sup>

An Israeli soldier on guard duty at the Ansar camp reflected on this odd use of the phrase "the brought-in" in place of "prisoners" or "prisoners of war":

It always begins with the language. When the language can't cover all the evil acts, then it is the time to be careful.<sup>15</sup>

## A Personal Quest

It was in the light of these developments — the rapidly expanding prison population in the wake of the devastation of Lebanon — that I undertook my journey to Lebanon, Jordan and the Occupied Territories.

I went at the request of Americans for Middle East Understanding to find out what I could about the prisoners and their families.

I went as a prison counsellor who, for the past fifteen years, has spent a lot of time dealing with the problems of prisoners and their families, mostly in or near Philadelphia.

I went, also, as a Catholic priest and biblical scholar, known to my students and my friends as someone with a special interest in the Jewish roots of Christianity and in the long and tragic oppression which the Christian peoples have inflicted upon the Jewish people.

I arrived in Beirut on February 25 and departed from the same city for New York on March 16, 1983.

What I learned regarding the prisoners and their families, first in south Lebanon, then in the West Bank, follows.



# Imprisonment in Lebanon

In Lebanon two main waves of mass imprisonments evolved with the Israeli invasion: the first in the south in the wake of the massive bombardments of Tyre and Sidon with their adjacent refugee camps; the second in Beirut and its environs, in the wake of the American-negotiated withdrawal of Palestinian fighters from the area.

By the time I arrived in the Sidon area to view the wreckage of the Ain el Hilweh camp, I was already familiar with the testimony given by a Canadian doctor, Christopher Giannou, to a committee of the United States Congress.<sup>16</sup> Dr. Giannou was a survivor of both the blitz and the mass imprisonment.

Referring to the "blind, savage, indiscriminate destruction of refugee camps by simultaneous shelling and carpet bombing from aircraft, gunboats, tanks and artillery" he had noted that "Nature itself seemed to have been injured."<sup>17</sup>

My own observation was that nature seemed much more resilient than the people. I arrived amid the ruins of the vast camp in early March, on the first real spring-like day of the new season. The lemon trees were loaded with fruit, and the almond trees were in full blossom along the fringes of the camp, while the people were living in makeshift houses fashioned from the debris of their former homes. The United Nations clinic was operating out of what looked to be the cellar of a once imposing building. The clinic attempted to treat three hundred patients a day.

The population of the camp still consisted of the old and the young, with very few men between the ages of sixteen and sixty. The Israeli mop-up had been thorough. When the bombing and shelling had stopped, the entire male population of the Sidon area had been herded onto the beach and sorted out for arrest and imprisonment.

Those arrested included all reasonably healthy Palestinian males between the ages of fourteen and sixty, as well as all males working for any Palestinian institution such as the Palestine Red Crescent Society. These men were

singled out by hooded men sitting in parked jeeps with Israeli soldiers sitting beside them. "In this way," according to Dr. Giannou, "there were four to five thousand men arrested including myself, two Norwegian colleagues and the entire male medical staff of the PRCS in Sidon..."<sup>18</sup>

Dr. Giannou had personally seen the bodies of four hundred persons killed in the bombing, mostly inside or within the immediate environs of the two hospitals he helped evacuate. These cadavers included the "calcinated, carbonized bodies of the victims of phosphorous bombs, frozen in their position at the time of death."<sup>19</sup>



Truck convoy of prisoners being taken under Israeli guard to prison camps in Israel, following Israeli Army invasion of southern Lebanon in June 1982.

He had described the scene in the refugee camp as one of apocalypse now:

All that remained were large blackened craters filled with rubble and debris, broken concrete slabs and twisted iron bars, and corpses.<sup>20</sup>

And yet it was the experience of being paraded past the hooded col-

laborators of which he said:

This was the most terrifying experience of all. The war was something you could cope with. But when you stand in front of someone who is hidden behind a mask, you cannot defend yourself. You cannot face your accuser ... or even try to explain. You don't know what you are accused of and are completely at the mercy of some blind denunciation.<sup>21</sup>

Nothing which began so evil could end well. The subsequent humiliation, torture and interrogation of these prisoners, during which many were tortured to death, was fairly extensively reported in the world press. In the absence of any adequate international official response to the atrocities, the McBride Commission, made up of distinguished academicians and humanitarians worldwide, was formed to investigate, document and publish the extent of Israeli involvement in war crimes and crimes against humanity.<sup>22</sup>

It's important to remember that

the hundreds, the number of homeless in the thousands. There was usually a Nazi-like 100-to-1 ratio between the number of those killed by the Israelis and the number of those whose deaths were being avenged.

But this 1982 invasion, the most extensive, prolonged and terrible of all, and one of the most efficiently brutal military operations in history, occurred after Yasser Arafat had demonstrated his ability to hold all his disparate allies to the ceasefire against Israeli settlements. There had been no Palestinian raids or shelling for a year, even in the face of continued Israeli provocation. In the months preceding the June invasion, Israel shelled and bombed Palestinian settlements in Lebanon, again and again, in the hope that at least a splinter group of the P.L.O. would retaliate. The invasion was to be carried out, come hell or high water, and could not be delayed. Every month that Arafat succeeded in prolonging the ceasefire served to enhance the prestige of the Palestinian cause in the world's eyes. There was danger that even the American people might see who the principal terrorists were in the Middle East.<sup>24</sup>

The racist character of the assault against the Palestinians is also betrayed in the Israeli treatment of the prisoners. They were held, hands bound, in the stifling heat, without food or water, and subjected to savage beatings.

Among Dr. Giannou's colleagues from the PRCS, it was the Semitic ones, the Islamic ones, and the darker-skinned ones who were most severely beaten.

Dr. Giannou observed: "The two Norwegians and I were not beaten. I, myself, was struck but once. It was obvious that orders had been given that we were not to be molested. The darker-skinned Arabs, Africans and Asians (Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Indians) present were those who were beaten the most severely."<sup>25</sup>

Not so lucky were Dr. Nabil, a Palestinian doctor from the West Bank, who had been educated in Barcelona, and who was beaten and then dragged around the schoolyard by a rope placed around his neck; Dr. Mohammad Ibrahim, an Iraqi surgeon, who was beaten viciously by several guards and left to lie in the sun with his face buried in the sand; Dr. Ahmed Soubra, a Lebanese; and Drs. Seiffedin, Mohammad Iman and Shafiq El-Islam, all Bangladeshi nationals.<sup>26</sup>

Dr. Giannou witnessed four prisoners who were beaten to death. He was called upon by an Israeli soldier to examine two of the cadavers. His Norwegian colleague, Dr. Berge, examined another two cadavers and saw another five or six piled into an ambulance.<sup>27</sup>

Dr. Giannou saw Israeli officers, including Colonel Arnon Amozar, the military governor for Sidon, witnessing these beatings and doing nothing about it.

He also saw several of the Israeli guards attempt to stop the beatings, and several arguments break out among the guards between those doing the beatings and those attempting to stop them.<sup>28</sup>

## The Families of Prisoners

While working among prisoners in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a few years ago, I was asked once to relay a message. It was from a black prisoner who was and is a friend of mine, and the message began like this: "From Ted, in the maximum security of Graterford Prison, to my brothers in the minimum security of the ghetto..."

I had occasion to reflect on these words during my tour of the refugee camps in south Lebanon. The worst fear of the prisoners at Ansar, I would guess, would be fear for the safety of their families in the minimum security of the camps.

When I visited Sidon, I met the Red Cross staff member who, with a team of thirty, tracks down families to give them messages from their loved ones in Ansar, the one Israeli prison in south Lebanon that the Red Cross has regular access to.

Red Cross teams transmit thirty thousand messages back and forth each month. To protect their staff from burn-out, the Red Cross has divided the task of transmitting messages between two teams. One team is lodged in Tyre. Its members visit the prisoners every day. They receive the (heavily censored) messages from the prisoners, and then give these messages to a second team lodged in Sidon. The Sidon team attempts to track down the families, give them the messages, and receive return-messages for the prisoners. These are then given to the Tyre team which relays them to the prisoners.

The thinking is: for one person to perform the whole circuit of message bearing would involve an emotional strain too difficult to bear.

One Palestinian told me the messages, so heavily censored, amount to: "I am fine, thinking of you" and the answer: "We are fine, thinking of you."

But don't knock it, he added. It makes all the difference between life and death to us.

## Ibrahim El Haj

I spoke with a 37-year-old Palestinian man who said his name was Ibrahim El Haj. He is a staff nurse at the clinic run by the Middle East Council of Churches in Ain el Hilweh camp. Although he lost his home and all his possessions during the bombardments, he is happy, because he did not lose his wife and five children, and he has good health.

He was arrested three times by the Israelis during the invasion, and each time released. His older brother, too, was released after twenty-four hours. But his younger brother, two cousins and a nephew were still in Ansar camp as I spoke to him (after nine months). His 52-year-old brother-in-law was released after four months because of ill health.

He was especially concerned about his cousin, Ibrahim Mahmoud El Haj, who had been working for ten years in Abu Dhabi, in the United Arab Emirates. He had been visiting his relatives in Lebanon for only fifteen days, when he was arrested. He had a Lebanese visa and a return airplane ticket. His family has appealed to the Israeli military governor in Sidon, who has been sympathetic, but he is still in Ansar after nine months.

## Sharif Hassan Abu Salah

I spoke with Sharif Hassan Abu Salah, 25, who for ten years has walked on crutches. He suffers from paralysis in one foot, deafness in one ear. His father and mother are from Nazareth, but fled Palestine in 1948 with one son who died before Sharif was born. Of his eight brothers and sisters born in Lebanon at Ain el Hilweh, one a sister, died during the Israeli invasion. She had been suffering from cardiac disease, and was unable to obtain medication or get treatment in a hospital because of the devastation caused by the blitz. The father, 61, and the mother, 52, survived. Their house was completely destroyed.

An older brother left two years ago to find work in Kuwait. Another brother, Abad El Rahman, has been at Ansar for nine months.

Sharif is the oldest now, and despite the crutches, he is the leader in the work of rebuilding amid the ruins of the camp. He hopes to be a doctor someday.

His uncle died when the Lebanese Government Hospital he had sought refuge in was bombed. That uncle's son, Khalid Fawzi Abu Salah, has been in Ansar nine months. He was a car mechanic at Sidon Square, the only support for a family of twelve.

## An Unnamed Witness

When I was about to leave the United States for Lebanon, a priest who is very knowledgeable about Middle Eastern affairs told me: Think of it as Norway under Nazi occupation. His remark in context referred to the danger of quoting people who have to live there or in the occupied West Bank. The meaning was: Don't make their lives any more difficult than they already are.

Many people in Lebanon, Jordan and the West Bank gave me similar advice. In fact I can hardly remember a single non-Palestinian in the three areas willing to be quoted or even mentioned by name. Often Europeans and Americans did not want their nationality, organizational affiliation or religious order mentioned. The reason was usually that they wanted to stay and remain useful.

The Palestinians were the exception. They seemed bold in every respect, including their willingness to be identified as thoroughly as possible.

The exception was the one man I met in Ain el Hilweh who had been released from Ansar prison after four months there. He didn't want me to use his name or say anything that could identify him. He was reluctant to even talk about Ansar, other than to admit that it was very bad, and to say it was not quite so bad now. He expressed fear of being arrested again. He also feared being pressured into collaborating with the Israelis. He was willing to forget Palestine and go to any country that would take him.

But he asked me to mention a man still in Ansar: Abed Mohammad Marshoud. For twenty-two years this man worked for the Batta Company in Sidon. His son was released recently from Ansar so he could work at half salary in his father's place, and the father would not lose his job. There are five boys and two girls in the family.

## Other Witnesses

A young Palestinian was pointed out to me as a collaborator. He came over to check me out, and to read a leaflet that had been given to me. The leaflet was a homemade journal of events that had taken place locally in the past week: arrests, acts of terrorism against Palestinians, threats made to families to leave their homes or farms in the environs and resettle amid the ruins of Ain el Hilweh.

He read it silently and gave it back.

A doctor and two nurses, all Europeans, came over to say how sad they were at first to see young men collaborate to stay alive and out of prison. Now they accept the fact that survival must come first.

Later, when I was in Amman, Jordan, I had occasion to engage in conversation two taxi drivers who were refugees from the West Bank. One had been imprisoned for three and a half years after the 1967 war, the other for one and a half years after the 1973 war. When they were released they were not allowed to keep a job because of their prison record. So they eventually crossed the Jordan to Amman.

They had a hard time getting clearance to go back to the West Bank to visit their families. Finally, one made it back. He was told by the Israelis they could make it easy for him to visit often if he would act as their agent and supply information. He could not bring himself to do it, even though it means seldom seeing his family.

He said he could not blame those who did collaborate. He has a friend who agreed to do it. A good man, he called him, who just wants to stay in touch with his family.

The last voice I record from south Lebanon will be that of a nurse with whom I had a quiet conversation. She was European and had worked among the poor, including Lebanon for quite a few years.

I asked her about the resilience of the Palestinians. She said they had been amazingly resilient in the past, but no one should presume they can keep bouncing back forever.

In fact she was noticing an epidemic of depression in the camp. And she sensed a lack of any concrete vision of hope.

This last blow had been devastating. The Palestinians were virtually abandoned by the Arab world. The United States seemed to set no limits to what

Israel can do with American weapons in achieving its goals through military might. Now such massive homelessness on the heels of massive casualties, with their enemies pressuring them to leave Lebanon, with their best men in prison, may be the crushing blow.

## Reflections of An Israeli Soldier

The Israeli journalist, Amnon Dankner, smuggled into his column of the November 5, 1982, issue of *Ha'aretz* the most compelling testimony I have found concerning the fate of the prisoners in south Lebanon.<sup>29</sup> Dankner mentions a nameless soldier who, while on guard duty at Ansar, notes the "deep depression" that overcame the whole military unit within forty-eight hours of beginning duty. The soldier speaks many times of the terrible stench which comes from the seven thousand sweaty bodies and their secretions. He speaks of the armed vehicles that drive all the time among the enclosures of the "brought-in," painting the tents and the figures around the tents in bright colors.

...We are far from them, guarding them from a distance, no contact. We only know if something happens, if they break the fences, if they go wild, we are supposed to open fire, from the watchtowers, from the military vehicles.

When he is taken off the watchtowers and sent to guard the roadblocks on the road to Nabatiyeh, he is pleased at first to get out of the camp, "to get away from the disturbing, stinking mass of the 'brought-ins,' not to hear the constant screaming of the interrogated."

The soldier describes the appearance of the military police in words that seem to validate the dictum of Shaw: whom we merely despise, we hire to guard the ones we hate.

...And then a military police officer appeared, one of those who are not like us, who sit around the camp, who are all the time inside the camp, afraid because they know that if anything serious shall happen we shall be forced to fire and they shall be hurt then.

And when the military police officer opened fire, the nameless soldier "standing outside the fences, watched how the bullets cut into the flesh of those who were hit..."

The soldier becomes another victim



of the war machine; he and his fellow soldiers

...move like shadows with their sad expressions. They don't feel like joking, as is the custom in any regular reserve service. Not this time. As if they are surrounded by some sadness coming out of the earth: the prisoner and his guard.

## An American Response

It bears repeating that the fate of the prisoners is intertwined with the fate of their families: the tens of thousands left destitute, who have lost their means of support and are defenseless in openly hostile surroundings.

Philip C. Habib, Special Emissary of the President of the United States, was aware of these inter-related concerns. In two separate letters, dated August 18 and 19, 1982, and addressed to Shafiq al-Wazzan, Prime Minister of Lebanon (but intended for the eyes of the P.L.O. leadership), he committed the United States Government to the protection of the civilian populations left defenseless after an envisioned P.L.O. military withdrawal from Lebanon; as well as to the well-being of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners.<sup>30</sup>

The letter concerning prisoners was dated August 18 and mailed from the United States Embassy in Beirut. It consists of two paragraphs:

In connection with our recent conversations, I wish to assure you that the United States Government has held, and will continue to hold a strong interest and concern for the fate of and treatment of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners being held by Israeli forces in connection with their operations in Lebanon, and for full respect for all applicable international obligations.

The United States Government will continue to discuss with the Government of Israel the conditions under which such persons are detained, reflecting the view of the United States Government that they should be accorded the most reasonable, humane and orderly treatment possible under the circumstances. They should be dealt with in a manner consistent with international obligations and should be treated in a way which respects humanitarian considerations.

The letter dated August 19 refers to

the safety of the people left behind after the withdrawal of their protectors from Lebanon. It includes the following:

...On the basis of these assurances [made by the Government of Israel to the United States Government], the United States Government is confident that the Government of Israel will not interfere with the implementation of this plan for the departure from Beirut, Lebanon, in a manner which will: (A) assure the safety of such departing personnel; (B) assure the safety of other persons in the area; and (C) further the restoration of the sovereignty and authority of the Government of Lebanon over the Beirut area.

I would like also to assure you that the United States Government fully recognizes the importance of these assurances from the Government of Israel and that my Government will do its utmost to ensure that these assurances are scrupulously observed.

## Voices from Beirut

These assurances of Philip Habib were clearly and forcefully expressed. As far as assurances go, however, these must rank with those of Chamberlain on his return from Munich, as regards effectiveness.

The world has not yet been able to forget what happened next. On August 21 the P.L.O. began their evacuation of Beirut. On September 15, despite assurances to the contrary, Israeli forces occupied West Beirut. On September 16 through 18 the massacres occurred at Sabra and Shatila.

So much for the safety of the civilians left defenseless.

What is not so well known is that during those same few days after the Israeli occupation of Beirut, two new categories of prisoners materialized: those taken by the regular Lebanese Army (under the new government of Amin Gemayel); and those taken by the Phalangists (also called the Lebanese Forces). The latter were at that time operating at will in East Beirut, and are even now able to terrorize Palestinian settlements in Israeli-occupied south Lebanon.

## Sinane Barrage

When I was in Beirut, I was able to meet personally with Mr. Sinane Barrage, a Lebanese lawyer and a

member of the executive committee of the Lebanese National Movement. He is vice president of the Lebanese Association of Democratic Jurists; and vice president of the Committee for Safeguarding Civil Liberties and the Rights of Detained, Kidnapped or Missing Persons.

He told me his version of the story of the thousands who were taken prisoner in the days following the Israeli take-over of Beirut.

On September 14, President-elect Bashir Gemayel was assassinated. On September 15, Israeli forces occupied West Beirut.

In response, all the shops closed. People had to go to Phalange-controlled East Beirut for food and drink.

During the next three days, two hundred persons, all Lebanese males and all Sunni Muslims, went to one such section, Achrafieh, and were never seen again. They were last seen near a butcher shop called Calcas. They were the first two hundred taken by the Phalangists.

Between the 16th and the 18th of September, while the massacre at Sabra and Shatila was occurring, the same persons who perpetrated the murders, also kidnapped about five hundred Lebanese and Palestinian Muslims, who have been missing ever since.

Beginning on September 19, in a region called Khaldeh, an Israeli-controlled area near the airport, which serves as an entranceway to Beirut from the south or from the mountains, five hundred Lebanese Muslims, both Shiite and Sunni, were kidnapped by the Phalangists with the help of Israelis who blocked the normal route and forced the travelers to take a detour through Phalange-controlled Hadeth.

Such kidnappings have continued ever since, one or two at a time, at Phalange-controlled (Kataeb) checkpoints along the routes that lead to Beirut from the north or the south or from the Bekaa (the east).

On February 27, the day before our interview, Mr. Barrage's brother had seen just such an arrest of two men at Checkpoint Barbara, around thirty-five kilometers north of Beirut on the road leading to Tripoli.

Typically, he said, after three days their photos would appear in the newspaper with a caption that said these men left home and hadn't been seen since.

Where are they being held? At various Phalangist headquarters, such as: Karantin in East Beirut; Saifi in down-



Palestinian suspects, bound and blindfolded, are lined up in the outskirts of Beirut, in June 1982, before boarding a bus headed for a detention center in the south.

town Beirut; or Achrafieh. Others may be in mountain prisons in the north.

At the same time that the Phalangists were taking these twelve hundred prisoners, the Lebanese Army was taking seventeen hundred prisoners of its own, of whom one third are Palestinian and two thirds are Lebanese. These prisoners are being warehoused at the army barracks at Badaro in East Beirut; and at the Ministry of Defense at Yarzeh, near the presidential palace at Baabda.

Mr. Barrage assured me that the very day of our interview (February 28) he had been given a list of thirty-six Palestinians who had been living in Lebanon since 1948, whose papers were in perfect order, and who have now been detained by the regular Lebanese Army for three months.

What will happen to these prisoners? What is their status? To what kind of treatment are they subjected? No one knows, since no one has access to them; not the Red Cross, not anyone. The Lebanese Government treats it as an internal matter and divulges no information.

As for the prisoners of the Phalange: when Mr. Barrage asked Pierre Gemayel, head of the Phalange Party and father of the president, about the fate of these prisoners, he was told, in a face-to-face encounter, that there

are only eleven prisoners.

Whether there are eleven prisoners or twelve hundred, their detention without charges or trial is illegal under Lebanese law. A recent law, decree no. 10, states that anyone detained by the army must go to court within five days. According to Mr. Barrage, not one prisoner has yet had such a hearing.

As regards those detained by Israel, Mr. Barrage's committee maintains there are 10,000 in Lebanon and between 2,000 and 3,000 in Israel, of whom one third are Lebanese.

Counting those held by the Israelis, the Phalangists, and the regular Lebanese Army, the committee puts the total number of prisoners at 17,000.

The committee has asked the Lebanese Government to put the fate of the prisoners before the negotiators (Israel, Lebanon, the United States); and to insist that it (the Lebanese Government) be informed by the Israelis of the fate of at least the Lebanese persons detained by Israel.

## A Witness from Europe

The Lebanese Army's house-to-house search for Palestinians and other undesired foreigners in the environs of Beirut began in mid-September after the Israeli occupation, and lasted for several weeks. Richard Ben Cramer wrote a gripping on-the-spot report

from Beirut which appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.<sup>31</sup>

One evening in Beirut, I met one such undesired foreigner. He was the European-born director of a human services group (I can't be more specific than this) whose institutions were demolished during the Israeli blitz. By chance he was not at Sabra and Shatila during the days of the massacre, but he was told by a survivor friend who was there that they were asking for him by name.

He maintains a low profile while trying to put together the pieces of his former commitments, and to help his former associates find jobs or relocate.

As I sat in a quiet corner of a Beirut hotel dining room talking with him, I was not sure what, if anything, of his story I can tell without placing him in further jeopardy. I know he is determined to stay and fight it out.

The institutions he worked for were known for their excellence and for their nurturing of Palestinian pride and identity. For this they were singled out by the Israelis for destruction. Nor do the Israelis allow them to rebuild and start again in any territory they control. It is doubtful their fate will be any better under the new Phalange-dominated Lebanese Government.

The Israelis are aggressively replacing such institutions with Christian fundamentalist institutions, which know little about Palestinian identity and care less.

## Sabri Jiryis

I met Dr. Sabri Jiryis in Beirut. I knew that his Palestine Research Center had been ransacked and looted by the Israelis after their take-over of the city in mid-September 1982. I knew that his wife was among those killed by the saboteur's bomb that destroyed the Center in February, just weeks before my arrival.

I was reluctant to intrude upon his grief, but he seemed genuinely cordial and willing to meet me when I phoned him.

"Where shall we meet?" I asked him.

"At our Center," he replied. "It's been bombed, of course, but we can meet there."

I stepped out of a cab into bright sunshine, and crossed the street to the charred skeleton of a building. A man appeared, smiling broadly, and led me down a street for a block or two, and we entered a small building and found the few bare rooms that serve as tem-



porary offices for the Center that refuses to die.

Dr. Jiryis had a serenity about him that seemed amazing to me in the circumstances. He is an accredited diplomat to the new Lebanese Government. As such he apparently has information that gives him hope regarding the prisoner situation and the safety of the civilian population.

He mentioned that Major Youssef Rajab, the Palestine Liberation Army's liaison officer with the Lebanese authorities, had been informed that three hundred detainees, both Lebanese and Palestinian, had been released the previous week. The source of this information was Major Attallah, the head of Lebanese military intelligence for the greater Beirut area. Major Attallah assured Major Rajab that this was part of a general policy to ease the problem of the regular army's detainees. Those who carried out the previous policy have been relieved of their posts and replaced.

Dr. Jiryis was also impressed by the way the Italian and French components of the multinational force were protecting Palestinian institutions (hospitals, workshops, etc.), with the Italians leading the way.

When asked about the safety of Palestinians in south Lebanon and the possibility of other massacres, he said simply that the Americans wouldn't let it happen.

## Present Conditions

It seems important to emphasize how little is known officially about the numbers and fate of the prisoners taken in Lebanon. In the case of those detained by the Lebanese Army or by the Phalange, nothing is known officially: how many there are, what conditions they must endure, where they are, what future lies in store for them.

The prisoners taken to Israel also survive in Limbo. No one has systematic access to them. Next to nothing is revealed by the Israeli Government.

It is only the one Israeli prison in south Lebanon (Ansar) that delegates from the Red Cross have regular access to. But these delegates reveal nothing about conditions to anyone except the host country: in this case, Lebanon, whose government divulges nothing of what it learns from the Red Cross.

The Red Cross, the P.L.O., and human rights committees like Mr. Barrage's are the ones that families of missing persons would turn to for help. And these three groups agree basically on numbers.<sup>32</sup> On the basis of their various statements, 15,000 is a reasonable number.

In January, there was a spate of articles in the European and American press, intimating that conditions at Ansar had improved. Much of the credit for improvements was given to Meyer Rosenfeld, the 55-year-old reserve Army colonel in charge of all Israeli military prison facilities. In October 1982, when he took over personally at Ansar, it was reported that:

## The Case of Walid Mahmoud Ardah

*Jenin, West Bank, May 25, 1983* Walid Mahmoud Ardah, the son of an Arrabe councilman, was arrested on May 17 on the charge that he incited local school-girls to hysteria in connection with the recent poisonings on the West Bank. On May 25, he was brought from Farah Prison to Jenin for a bail hearing. In an interview with Israeli lawyer Felicia Langer which lasted one and a half hours a verbatim statement was recorded. The Israeli judge, after seeing the prisoner's body, recommended an official investigation into the case. The following is Mr. Ardah's sworn testimony:

On May 22, I was in solitary confinement (in Farah Prison) part of the day, without sheets or mattresses. I was brought before certain parties who asked me to talk and to make a confession, but I refused to sign a statement before an investigator named Beton. I was then hit with a stick and told that I was responsible for a demonstration.

On May 24 I was taken to the interrogation center of Farah Prison before the investigator Beton and asked to write a confession. I refused and said I was innocent and had nothing to

confess. Beton then started beating me on the back and shoulders. Afterwards, he undressed me, removed his own shirt, and forced me to lie down on the floor. He brought in a bench and put my feet on it.

Beton began to beat me on the feet with a stick. When I tried to avoid the stick he beat me on the back. I started shouting because of the pain and Beton blindfolded me, and stuffed clothes in my mouth to avoid the shouting. Afterwards Beton brought in water and poured it on my head and legs saying: "This is not enough. This is not the end."

I tried to sit down and Beton kicked me in the chest. Immediately after this he brought in electric wires and put one on my ear and the other near my abdomen and connected them with electricity. Then I felt the electricity vibrate through my body.

Beton also threatened to send in a man who would try to have intercourse, a homosexual relationship, with me.

After this terrible ordeal I was completely exhausted and suffering in pain. Beton returned and released my hands

and said: "You son of a whore, you are not even saying thank you to someone taking off your manacles." After this he asked me once more to write a confession and gave me a cigarette, saying: "I have finished my duty and we can remain friends."

But I refused to confess and said I was innocent. The investigator returned me to solitary confinement where I was whipped and forced to lie on a bare floor without a mattress.

After a few minutes, Beton returned and said: "Who has beaten you?" He wanted an answer, but I said nothing. Then he warned me to be silent and not to reveal to anybody what happened or I will pay for it.

Sometime later, soldiers approached my cell, opened the door and asked how I was. I was afraid to answer because of the threat of Mr. Beton. In the evening, another Israeli soldier approached and asked what happened. He promised not to tell Beton what I would say. Then he asked what I will say if asked why I cannot walk properly.

I was told not to discuss what had happened and to tell everybody that I fell down and was injured.

*For further information on this case, contact: Palestine Human Rights Campaign, 20 E. Jackson No. 1111, Chicago, IL 60604 or Tel. (312) 987-1830.*

...he found the camp overcrowded, with a high level of tension between prisoners and guards and winter closing in. He ordered new winter tents, kerosene heaters and a new, more carefully prepared, second area for prisoners.

He also lifted all restrictions on Red Cross access to the camp and allowed prisoners who were members of the same family to be united in the same prison sections.<sup>33</sup>

The same article indicated that improvements have come through negotiations with a committee of prisoners consisting of a P.L.O. colonel, a P.L.O. major from a rival faction, a Palestinian doctor and a Lebanese lawyer.

Whatever the improvements were, they may have been short-lived or even have led to greater difficulties. There may be truth in the declaration of officers in charge of the guard at Ansar, as heard over Israeli radio (February 15):

...Most of the Palestinians detained here were not P.L.O. fighters, but persons suspected of collaborating with the Palestinian organizations. In Ansar we are transforming them into P.L.O. militants...<sup>34</sup>

On February 6, 1983, prisoners at Ansar, both Lebanese and Palestinian, started a hunger strike to protest conditions, especially the cold and the non-compliance with the Geneva Convention regarding prisoners.<sup>35</sup>

On February 9, Wafa Beirut announced that the Israelis responded with violence to the hunger strike.<sup>36</sup> Prisoners were beaten with guards' gunshafts. The inhabitants of nearby villages said they heard shots, saw ambulances and helicopters. Some villagers were especially nervous because of the recent discovery of fifteen corpses near Ansar.

On February 10, the Lebanese newspaper *El Nida* recounted the testimony of villagers who claimed that the Israelis, while they were evacuating the wounded, were also taking prisoners presumably to Israel.<sup>37</sup>

On February 23, *Liberation* reported that a continual series of shots was heard before noon near Ansar camp. The Israelis were reported to have multiplied patrols around the camp.<sup>38</sup>

In addition, a newsletter from Paris monitored the situation of prisoners and missing persons in Lebanon during the period from January 22 to February 24, 1983.<sup>39</sup> It gave the names and

known facts about persons arrested or declared missing during this period, or whose whereabouts had been discovered.

In January and February, according to the newsletter, the arrests made by the Lebanese Army had decreased in number. They were becoming more selective. For the general population extradition was an easier solution, after refusal to grant or renew identity cards and work permits.

The newsletter also reported that the (Lebanese) Committee for Prisoners' Families had compiled a list of more than two hundred names of women who had disappeared.

The testimony of numerous women released from prison confirmed the existence of Phalangist prisons. The special one for women is said to be in the Adonis Barracks near Jounieh.

The newsletter contained the names and personal data of nine women arrested in Lebanon and detained at Neve Tirza, the women's prison in Ramleh, West Bank. Six other women are mentioned by name as arrested by Israelis, place of detention unknown.

World response to the plight of the prisoners was predictable, often eloquent, and feeble. Amnesty International issued a special memorandum for general distribution,<sup>40</sup> outlining the various violations of human rights

and humanitarian tradition. The McBride Commission and others gave detailed analysis of the various violations of the Geneva Conventions,<sup>41</sup> especially Convention III which deals with the treatment of prisoners of war, and Convention IV which deals with the treatment of civilian populations.

But, in the Zionist eyes of Menachem Begin, what Israelis do to Arabs in south Lebanon is nobody's business but their own. South Lebanon, like the Golan Heights, the West Bank, and much of Jordan, is all part of Greater Israel.<sup>42</sup> As a 21-year-old Israeli soldier stationed in Lebanon explained to a *New York Times* correspondent almost one year after the invasion. "There is no problem of morale here. Our soldiers are religious. They believe they are in Israel, not in Lebanon."<sup>43</sup>

The Book of Joshua spelled out the relevant boundaries three thousand years ago. That same book (see especially chapter 10), along with Deuteronomy, also describes the treatment to be accorded peoples who get in the way of Israel's destiny.

Thus, the most barbarous of biblical traditions, the devil's own parody of Judaism, becomes the guiding norm for one of the last, most brutal expressions of European colonialism.

## Israeli-Occupied West Bank

The fates conspired to keep me in Jordan six days longer than I had intended. Unprecedented snow and rainfall had brought floodwaters to the Jordan. The bridges were out of use indefinitely.

Besides meeting several hospitable Palestinian Christians in Amman, I made two valuable connections: a Palestinian priest named Raouf Najjar, originally from Nazareth, and whose name in Arabic means "compassionate carpenter"; and the staff of the Pontifical Mission for Palestine.

I was glad to get the full name of this Catholic organization. Its branch in Jerusalem is simply called the Pontifical Mission. Apparently even the

pope can't use the word "Palestine" in Palestine. Israeli courts have found the word offensive to Israeli ears.

As far as Father Najjar goes, he gave me the name and address of the most important contact I was to make in Jerusalem: a priest who has spent many years visiting political prisoners throughout the Occupied Territories, on behalf of the families of missing or arrested persons who come to him for help.

Within the space of a few days in 1967, in the wake of the Israeli occupation of what remained of Palestine, the city of Amman doubled in population. Once it learned the knack of doubling, one local humorist told me,

it's been doing it ever since. Now it is a city of a million, seventy percent Palestinian. The entire population of Jordan is over half Palestinian.

Before leaving Jordan, I was taken by a Palestinian Christian named Youssef (Joseph) to view the Promised Land from Mount Nebo, the place where Moses, according to legend, was able to see it but not enter. Youssef's family had fled their hometown of Bethlehem in 1948.

It was his brother, Viktor, who told me: "There is no hope for us until there is a revolution in your country."

After waiting six days for the bridge to open, I finally decided to try the alternate, and expensive way, to get from Amman to Jerusalem. I flew to Cyprus and then to Tel Aviv, and then shared a cab to Jerusalem.

This three-hundred-dollar detour served me well. I made a couple of friendships on the way: a Palestinian architect, who let me stay with him in his flat in Jerusalem; and an American archeologist, who teaches part time at Bir Zeit University.

In answer to my questions about life on the West Bank, they told me: "You have to see it to believe it."

They guided me through customs. My Palestinian friend was taken aside and detained for over half an hour. We two Americans breezed right through.

That night was the Islamic sabbath. As we entered Jerusalem, forty-one Jewish militants were attempting, by means of a secret underground tunnel, to gain access to the Al Aqsa Mosque, holiest shrine in the Islamic world next to Mecca and Medina, the holiest shrine in the Holy Land.

The heavily armed Jewish "settlers" were intending to establish a "symbolic settlement" on the site, according to Christopher Walker in *The* [London] *Times*, March 12. He added:

The extremists were foiled in their clandestine operation late on Thursday night after a tip-off to police by someone arrested earlier in the week after a wave of Jewish vigilante attacks on Arabs in the occupied West Bank.

According to Walker, some of those arrested were off-duty Israeli soldiers. A formidable arsenal of weapons was seized by the police, including Uzi sub-machine guns and Army issue pistols.

The move to settle Jews on the most sacred site captured in the 1967 war was described by Palestinian leaders as "the most inflammatory in recent

years." A senior Israeli official was quoted as saying that if it had succeeded it would have caused "an unprecedented deterioration of relations between Jews and Arabs."

The results were predictable. Once again in the words of Walker:

Helmeted riot police backed by soldiers armed with automatic rifles and undercover squads from Israel's General Security Service patrolled the narrow alleyways around the Muslim holy places,...

Later, a patrol of Israeli border policemen fired into the air to disperse a crowd of chanting Arab demonstrators who threw rocks at them in the Arab sector of Jerusalem. Three of the protesters were arrested after a chase through the area.

It was widely predicted to me that the Jewish militants would be held a week or more and given counseling to help them see the effects harmful to Israel that their actions may have caused. As for the Arab demonstrators, especially those throwing rocks, they will have begun their lives of "crimes against the security of Israel."

The evening after these events, while I was waiting for a ride in front of the Damascus Gate, some Arab youths came up to me and began a friendly conversation. They asked me if I noticed how "cool" it was, nodding in the direction of the Israeli soldiers sprawled on the steps leading to the famous gate. They asked me if I would tell the Americans how they are treated here in their city.

On the day after that, a friend and I had to make a detour around the area of the Damascus Gate. An arrest was in progress.

Later that night, I was speaking with an American soldier who was a member of the United Nations Special Observer force, supposedly keeping tabs on the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Jerusalem. When a priest friend of his joined our group, he said to him, "Did you hear, Father, the police killed an Arab kid today."

"But isn't that just Arab exaggeration?" the priest said. "We heard two were arrested and one was wounded in the ankle."

"No," the soldier replied. "I got it right from the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) Radio. They killed a fourteen-year-old kid. But what do they expect, if they're going to be throwing rocks? Those rocks can hurt."

Actually there is quite a list of things you can expect from throwing rocks: from arrest, interrogation, torture, and indefinite detention; to arrest of older members of your family, followed by the same treatment; to destruction of your home and confiscation of your property. All this and death, too, from throwing rocks, while the United Nations observes.

## Dissent within Israel

One night my Palestinian host invited me out to a Chinese restaurant with some young Israeli friends who were vigorous dissenters from mainstream Zionism. Two of them had just come back from a peace demonstration. They seemed a bit disappointed that they hadn't been arrested. They reminded me so much of American young people in the Sixties, for whom dissent was an experiment in freedom, not a matter of life and death.

On my way to pick up the young people, I knocked at the wrong door by mistake. An elderly man wearing a black yarmulka came to the door with a slight look of annoyance for being called from the sabbath meal. The young Israelis later told me he is a hero of the resistance, a famous scientist and humanist, who has urged young people not to cooperate with the military at all. The government doesn't touch him, because of his age and fame. So there is impressive freedom to dissent among Jews.

Three Israeli names come up again and again when there is talk of Israelis who fight for the human rights of Palestinians, especially political prisoners: Israel Shahak, Felicia Langer and Leah Tsemel. I was only able to meet with Leah Tsemel on my last evening in Jerusalem.

She has been defending prisoners for fourteen years of the occupation. When asked the number of persons arrested during that time, she thought that 200,000 was a safe estimate. Thirty percent never get beyond the stage of administrative detainee and never come to trial. Three thousand may be the number of those sentenced at the present time. The average length of time in prison for those eventually sentenced formally is eight to ten months.

She corroborated what I have already described elsewhere as regards lack of due process, use of torture, etc. Regarding the fact that the Ministry of Defense has still not come up with



an official status for the prisoners of Ansar, her opinion is: that Israel is afraid that recognizing the prisoners either as prisoners of war or as protected civilians would be the first step toward recognizing some "Palestinian entity."† And, to do that would be putting the lie to Theodore Herzl, one of the architects of Zionism, who described Palestine as "a land without a people, for a people without a land."

As I was leaving the Tsemel home, I turned to the young Palestinian couple who had accompanied me there and remarked how beautiful the house was, with its gracious simplicity, with garden terrace and grape arbor. The young woman responded laconically, "Of course. It's an Arab house."

Then they motioned to all the houses nearby. "These are all Arab houses. The Israelis don't build houses like this. That is the native style." Then they explained that the houses could have

†For a discussion of the legal status of the prisoners of Ansar, see article by Felicia Langer, "Ansar Camp," *Al-Fajr*, June 3, 1983, p. 16.

been expropriated from Arab families anytime since 1948.

## The Priest, Friend of Prisoners

On two different days I visited and had long conversations with a priest who told me his incredible story. I would love to mention his name, because it is a venerable one in Catholic circles. But he asked me to mention neither his name nor his country. "Just say 'a priest told you.'"

He has lived in Jerusalem almost forty years. In his youth he was active in rescuing Jews from the Gestapo in his native country. He narrowly escaped capture three times. Two of his brothers were not so lucky. One was executed, the other imprisoned.

When he first came to Jerusalem, he was a friend of Ben-Gurion. He still has many close friends from the old days. But as Zionist pressure against Palestinians increased, he found himself becoming more aware of the

suffering of the "people of the land." Eventually, his time was taken up more and more with visiting political prisoners in Israel and the West Bank, and caring for their families.

As a new generation of Israelis came to power, his heroism against the Gestapo was less known. Occasionally an official would ask him: "What are you, a terrorist sympathizer? some kind of leftist priest?"

He would reply that he was doing what he has always done. He was trying to follow the teaching of St. Paul: Think of those in prison as though bound up with them.

When I was first trying to locate Father \_\_\_\_\_, I went to the Pontifical Mission to ask directions. As I was talking to Brother Lowenstein, an elderly man came in talking excitedly, and it turned out he was looking for the same priest. It seems a young man who was a student in Iraq had come home to spend a holiday with his family. The young man had been missing for five days, and the family

Israeli military policeman walks along the perimeter of Ansar camp housing Palestinian suspects in July 1982. Israel, on July 18, opened the camp to inspection by the International Committee of the Red Cross.



Wide World Photos

feared he had been arrested. They were hoping that Father \_\_\_\_\_ could find out where they had locked him up and get him out.

Students anywhere are a prime target for police arrest and interrogation. But especially students who study abroad. The Israelis fear their heightened political consciousness, and, even more, their heightened sense of Palestinian identity.

The priest's testimony corroborated the familiar litany of hardships that I had heard from so many others: the beatings, the torture, the hardship to families when their young men are taken away indefinitely, the difficulty getting a decent job afterwards.

He made the telling observation that the whole system of emergency measures by which Israel rules the Occupied Territories is modeled after the notorious special powers acts by which Britain so long ruled Ireland, and still rules Northern Ireland, and which are designed, among other things, to encourage mass emigration.

He estimated the number of new arrests to be five hundred a month, mostly Palestinians, and mostly Muslims.

When I think of a priest who spends his time ministering to Muslims, I think of the words of a Trappist monk who has lived in Palestine for quite a while: "The longer you stay here, and the more Christian you are, the more of an Arab you'll become."

## Voices from Bethlehem

My Palestinian host drove me in his little bubble of a Volkswagen to his office in Bethlehem. It was a bright sunny morning, March 11, the day after Jimmy Carter had made his historic, and somewhat tumultuous, visit, during which he had insisted on meeting privately with Bethlehem's Palestinian mayor (Mayor Freij), without any Israeli officials present.

After getting my bearings, I started up a gently sloping hill toward Bethlehem University, run by the Christian Brothers. I stopped first by mistake at a school for the deaf nearby. I arrived at the gate of Bethlehem University just in time to see the students turned away. The military governor had sent notice that the university was to be closed indefinitely because of the student demonstrations the day before during the Carter visit, during which stones were allegedly thrown.

A Palestinian brother was chatting

with the students, calming their fears and sending them home in a positive spirit. Then he motioned me inside the gate and began showing me the university.

The faculty, staff and student body had been tear-gassed the day before. An older Czech brother told me you have no idea how painful it is for older people to be trapped in a building that has been tear-gassed. He said he was just getting over it.

Then he added wryly that you could read on the canisters that rolled into the corridors just where in the United States they were made. And there was a warning written in very good English, too, to the effect that the canisters were not to be used in buildings or enclosed areas, but only in open spaces.

Before we were all made to leave, faculty, staff and maintenance personnel as well, one of the brothers brought me out to a terrace to get a good view of the environs of Bethlehem.

To one side was a building site. The foundation had been laid for a new building for the University. This was a sign of life and hope for the Palestinian people, who comprised the entire student body. I later learned that the local Arab authority can give the permission to build the foundation of a new building, and had done so in this case. But only the Israeli authorities can give permission to build on the foundation. They had been consistently denying the university this permission for the previous eighteen months.

Then the brother pointed in the distance to the kind of buildings the Israeli authorities do authorize with relish: the Jewish settlements.

The brother seemed to notice the look of astonishment on my face. Perhaps he was used to the reaction.

The word "settlement" is so misleading. It would seem to refer to something modest, provisional and low-key. But these concrete thickets stretch from horizon to horizon dominating the landscape. They are like mile-long strips of condominiums, posh blight, and eventually will reach from Nablus in the north to Hebron in the South.

As one billboard, beckoning yet more Israelis to settle on the West Bank, reads: You can now reach the settlements without having to pass through any Arab villages.

Cutting across the top of the hills like a vise, these settlements around Bethlehem stand hateful against the sky.

Nothing could better express contempt for the history of this precious Muslim town, so dear to Christians. What history they do express is the history of colonialism, which itself is in large part hateful illusion.

The words that come to mind are the words of the Irishman, Yeats:

And what rough beast, its hour come  
round at last,  
Slouches toward Bethlehem,  
to be born.<sup>44</sup>

In the last analysis, the prisoners of Israel must include the whole captive nation that attempts to survive in the shadow of these murderous "settlements." The brutal treatment of the "administrative detainees" is just a dramatic expression of the daily degradation experienced by all who live in the Occupied Territories (now including south Lebanon) and who must struggle to maintain their way of life and their identity.

It is long past time for the nations of the world, who treasure the rich diversity of the Holy Land and its history, to bring the beast to heel.

## NOTES

1. The best analysis that I have found of the human cost of the invasion is in Michael Jansen's, *The Battle of Beirut*, Zed Press, 1982, pp. 15-38.
2. In "The Cover Up: What Palestinians?" in *The Zionist Connection II* (1982), pp. 173-187.
3. June 19, 1977.
4. March 1, 1977.
5. See A. Lilienthal, op. cit., pp. 184-5.
6. Ibid., pp. 185-6.
7. Number 17.
8. April 4, 1979.
9. *In Their Own Words: Human Rights Violations in the West Bank: Affidavits Collected By Law in the Service of Man*, Commission of the Church on International Affairs, World Council of Churches, 1983.
10. David Shipler, *The New York Times*, May 31, 1983.
11. Macmillan, New York, pp. 179-191, esp. pp. 179-180.
12. Ibid.
13. See M. Jansen, op. cit., pp. 70, 126.
14. *Haolam Hazeq*, December 15, 1982; translated and included in the *Israel Shahak papers*, Collection No. 12: "The Israeli opposition to the invasion of Lebanon," item no. 1.
15. *Ha'aretz*, November 5, 1982, from Israel Shahak, op. cit., item no. 2.
16. See *American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) Background Paper no. 6: Conditions of Palestinian and Lebanese Prisoners Held by Israel*, pp. 1-8.
17. Ibid., p. 2.
18. Ibid., p. 5.
19. Ibid., p. 4.
20. Ibid., p. 2.
21. Ibid., pp. 5-6.
22. Formal name is: International Commission to Enquire into Reported Violations of International Law by Israel During its Invasion of the Lebanon.

23. For a thorough discussion of this, see A. Lilienthal, op. cit., "Terror: the Double Standard," pp. 357-399.  
 24. See M. Jansen, op. cit., "The Reason Why," pp. 119-130, esp. p. 127f.  
 25. See op. cit. in footnote 16 (p. 7)  
 26. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7, 10.  
 27. *Ibid.*, p. 7.  
 28. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.  
 29. See op. cit. in footnote 15.  
 30. Copies of these letters were provided to me by ACCOUNT for the Prisoners and Missing in Lebanon (New York). For detailed analysis of these letters, see Milton Viorst in *The Washington*

*Post*, December 19, 1982.  
 31. September 30, 1982.  
 32. See M. Viorst, op. cit. (footnote 30).  
 33. Edward Walsh, *The Washington Post*, January 22, 1983.  
 34. See English language Newsletter N.5 of the International Information Centre on Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners, deported and missing persons, p. 4.  
 35. *Ibid.*, p. 3.  
 36. *Ibid.*, p. 4.  
 37. *Ibid.*  
 38. *Ibid.*  
 39. *Ibid.*, p. 1ff.

40. "Amnesty International's Concerns in Southern Lebanon since Israeli Forces Entered the Country on June 6, 1982" (AI Index: MDE 15/12/82).  
 41. See especially Gay J. McDougall's paper presented in August 1982 to the Seventh United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (in Dakar, Senegal, August 9-13) "Palestinian Prisoners Captured in the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon: Are They Prisoners of War?"  
 42. See M. Jansen, op. cit., pp. 119ff.  
 43. *The New York Times*, May 27, 1983.  
 44. In poem entitled "The Second Coming."

## Book Views

### Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President

By Jimmy Carter

Bantam Books, New York, 1982, 622 pp., \$22.50.

By Landrum R. Bolling

President Jimmy Carter rightly devotes a major portion of this book to the story of efforts to bring peace to the Middle East. However, history may ultimately judge his administration, his own prolonged negotiations with President Anwar Sadat and Prime Minister Menachem Begin — before, during and after Camp David — constitute one of the most dramatic and significant phases of this century's struggle over that turbulent region. His highly personal account of those negotiations not only describes convincingly what happened at Camp David but provides invaluable insights about why things have gone so badly since then.

Although his writing style is low-key, the candor and fullness of detail with which President Carter recounts his direct experiences, feelings and observations give revealing and even startling glimpses into Middle East diplomacy. One comes to understand why the processes of peacemaking there have been so complex and maddeningly laborious. Still, one is sobered and saddened by the documentation of the fear, the mistrust, the limited knowledge, the misinformation, the lack of courage, the narrow ambitions, the absence of vision (and even the bad faith) that have so long plagued every constructive peace initiative. That doesn't mean that things are hopeless. It does mean that we need to know what we are up against. It means that we must face those harshest of realities more honestly than generally

seems to be the case.

The key "harsh reality" that comes through loud and clear, despite all Mr. Carter's attempts to soften his reporting and to avoid unfriendly judgments, is that the Israeli Government, throughout Camp David and since, has been interested only in a separate peace with Egypt and has been determined to evade the central Palestinian issues. It also seems evident from our former President's testimony that Mr. Begin is a man of selective memory and a will so inflexible that it drove him to bull his way ahead despite logic, common sense and explicit promises to follow a different course.

The ink was hardly dry on the Camp David Accords, and Mr. Begin had not even left the United States, before he was publicly trying to undermine parts of the agreement he had just signed by attacking provisions he did not like and re-interpreting them to the American public and his own people.

According to Mr. Carter's memory, his notes, and the word of Cyrus Vance, the agreement on West Bank settlements was that "no new settlements would be established after the signing of this Framework for Peace, and that the issue of additional settlements would be resolved by the parties during the negotiations." Mr. Begin denied that he had made any such commitment and, as the whole world knows, went ahead building more and more settlements in the occupied Arab territories. Within less than two months, Mr. Carter noted that Begin's aims had become quite clear. On November 8, 1978, President Carter wrote in his diary:

It's obvious that the Israelis want a separate treaty with Egypt; they

want to keep the West Bank and Gaza permanently ... And they use the settlements and the East Jerusalem issue to prevent the involvement of the Jordanians and the Palestinians.

More than four years later, that is as crisply accurate a description of basic Israeli policy as anyone has stated. Unfortunately, throughout the remainder of the Carter administration and thus far through the Reagan years, the Jordanians and the Palestinians have continued to get the blame for "not coming to the conference table." Meanwhile, the Israelis continue to get away with the building of more and more settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, a war and occupation in Lebanon, and the daily harassment of more than a million Palestinian Arabs under Israeli military control.

It can be argued that the Palestinians and the Jordanians have been extremely short-sighted not to have come into the negotiations, not to have put the Israelis to the test, not to have demonstrated publicly a readiness to make peace which they have long professed to want. They have acted precisely the way the Israelis calculated they would act, the way the Israelis wanted them to act. All that is undoubtedly true. But the United States Government has never been willing or able to demand of the Israelis the fulfillment of promises that would create a climate in which negotiations about the West Bank and Gaza would be believable to the Jordanians and the Palestinians — or anyone else.

Only ex-presidents, apparently, can afford to speak the truth about the real issues and the real barriers to peace in the Middle East.

Landrum Bolling is Research Professor of Diplomacy, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, and principal author of the study, *Search for Peace in the Middle East*.



# Books To Order

## New Selections

□ Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President*, Bantam Books, New York, 1982, 622 pp., \$22.50. Drawing from the 5,000-page diary he kept as President, Carter evaluates his accomplishments and disappointments. A sizeable portion is devoted to Camp David with minute-by-minute accounts of the negotiations and private meetings with Middle Eastern officials. Our price, \$11.50. See review on page 14.

□ Cheryl Rubenberg, *The Palestine Liberation Organization: Its Institutional Infrastructure*, Institute of Arab Studies, Inc., Belmont, MA, 1983, 66 pp., \$3.50 (paperback). This monograph studies the civilian network of social institutions and services established and operated by the P.L.O. to provide health care, education, employment, vocational training and social services to the Palestinian people. Our price, \$3.25.

□ Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, *Palestinian Rights: Affirmation and Denial*, Medina Press, 225 pp., \$7.95. In this book of essays, seventeen distinguished international scholars examine, analyze and detail Palestinian national rights, including their right to national identity, sovereignty in Palestine, return, and representation. The international assessment and response to these rights and their violation by Israel are carefully probed and documented. Our price, \$3.95.

□ 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, \$4.50.

□ Lenni Brenner, *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators*, Croom Helm Ltd., London and Lawrence Hill and Co., Westport,

Conn., 1983, 277 pp., \$8.95 (paperback). Using a wide range of sources, predominantly Jewish, Brenner concludes that from the beginning the goal of Zionism was the occupation and control of Palestine, and not the rescue of millions of Jewish victims of Nazi, Fascist and other European tyrannies. Our price, \$7.95.

□ Kenneth Cragg, *The House of Islam*, Kickenson Publishing Co., Inc., 145 pp., \$8.95. Outlines basic elements of Islam; particularly geared to a Christian audience. Supportive yet not unafraid to face major questions between Christianity and Islam. Excellent group study guide with a section, "Questions For Further Study and Discussion." Our price, \$7.75.

□ Richard Curtiss, *A Changing Image: American Perceptions of the Arab-Israeli Dispute*, American Educational Trust, Washington, D.C., 1982, 216 pp., \$9.95. Traces the evolution of American public opinion on the Arab-Israeli conflict; concludes that it is becoming more balanced, and that this trend will continue. Our price, \$7.25.

□ Jonathan Dibleby, *The Palestinians*, Quartet Books, 1979, 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., \$13.95. 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, \$9.95.

□ David Gilmour, *Dispossessed: The Ordeal of the Palestinians 1917-1980*, Sidgwick and Jackson, 242 pp. 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, \$5.50.

□ Grace Halsell, *Journey to Jerusalem*, Macmillan, 1982, 256 pp., \$7.95. 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, \$2.95.

□ David Hirst, *The Gun and the Olive Branch*, Futura Publications Ltd., London, 1983 reprint, 367 pp. Aptly subtitled "The Roots of Violence in the Middle East." In tracing those roots, the author dispels a number of myths about Arabs and Zionists. Well researched and very readable. Our price, \$4.75.

□ 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 exercised the power they have. Our price, \$3.85.

□ Michael Jansen, *The Battle of Beirut*, Zed Press, London, 1982, \$8.50 (paperback). This book analyzes the war from its start in June 1982, to the massacre at Sabra and Shatila in September. It explodes the contention of a "limited operation" and "minimal civilian casualties," and exposes the longer term ambitions of Israel. U.S. policy is also examined, especially the degree of collusion between Alexander Haig and the Israeli leaders. Our price, \$5.95.

□ 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., \$9.95 (paperback). 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, \$8.25.

□ Ian Lustick, *Arabs in the Jewish State*, University of Texas Press, 1980, 400 pp., \$10.95. A systematic, scholarly analysis of the strikingly low level of Arab political activity in Israel. Author examines success with which Israeli authorities have coopted Arab elites, maintained the backwardness of the Arab economy, and promoted parochial rivalries within the Arab sector. Our price, \$8.50.

□ Basheer Nijim, ed., *American Church Politics and the Middle East*, Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Belmont, MA, 1982, 156 pp., \$6.95. Examines the biblical, theological and socio-religious factors in the formulation of U.S.-Middle East policy. Our price, \$5.25.

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Livia Rokach, *Israel's Sacred Terrorism*, Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1980, 68 pp., \$4.50 (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, \$3.50.

Jacobo Timerman, *The Longest War: Israel in Lebanon*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1982, 167 pp., \$11.95. Timerman foresees consequences that Israel will have to face in the years ahead: a rise in pacifism and anti-militarism among its people; an army and air force that will no longer unquestioningly follow their government's lead; the world's changing perception of Jews from victim to victimizer; inevitable changes in Israeli society and its relationship with overseas Jewish communities. Our price, \$9.50.

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 made available by the United Nations and governments involved. Our price, \$10.00.

Marion Woolfson, *Prophets In Babylon: Jews In The Arab World*, Faber & Faber. London, 1980, 292 pp., £14 (\$38.00). Traces the story of the Jews through Babylon, Yemen, Spain, the Maghreb, and in the Ottoman era, Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Palestine. Author points out that while the Jews were sometimes misused or persecuted, more often they enjoyed a privileged status, respected by Muslim and Christian alike as "people of the book." In the concluding chapters Woolfson traces the growth of Zionism and its sometimes subversive consequences on Jews both inside and outside Israel. Our price, \$17.50.

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