

JERUSALEM DIARY
OF SISTER MARIE-TERESE OF THE COMPANION OF JESUS
[And Other Articles]

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[AL - FAT'H (The Palestine National Liberation Movement)]
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Jerusalem Diary

Of Sister Marie-Terese of the Companions of Jesus

(Extracts)

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

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June 8

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

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

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

When Father Paul returned he carried three dying children on a stretcher. He had found the Muslim quarter where he lived bombed by Israeli planes. The man he had accompanied found his wife and five children crushed, mutilated by a bomb. I took the handle of the stretcher to help them to the hospital...

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

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

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

Father Paul organized more teams of men to find the wounded. In the streets filled with the sound of

mortars and broken windows, the Arabs had hastily torn up and thrown out photographs of their relatives in military uniform. How they must have been afraid!

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

I continued down the street and found Father Paul near a wagon with three wheels. Over it was a plank covered with a blanket. We raised the blanket it was a young woman, dead, and completely white. We brought the wagon back to the hospital. How heavy it was! Once arrived, we removed the plank to bring it to the entrance. I turned back to the wagon which I had thought empty and uttered such a cry that Father Paul and the Israeli soldiers came running five small children, one of them a two-week-old baby, lay there dead, as white as porcelain statues. It was horrible. One by one I brought them out, placing them on the plank with their mother. These we left in the ruins while we took care of the wounded children who were still alive. The father, arrested by the Israelis, had not been able to bring his family any farther. Father Paul gently picked up a tiny red baby shoe and tucked it in his pocket.

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June 9

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

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

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

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

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

"Ah! But you look so weary!"

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

We wanted to go to Bethlehem... so we went down to the street to find a car which would take us there... The odor of death was everywhere. A car driven by the son of a very well-known Israeli stopped and he offered to drive us. I noticed that this stolen car was a Jordanian ambulance, the one which we needed to carry the wounded and dead. We stopped in front of a store which was being looted. Israeli girls were leaving with arms full of packages of detergents and all sorts of things... On the road we passed a dead woman in a ditch.

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

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

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

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June 12, 13 and 14

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

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

Jordanian soldiers, dead in the fields, had not yet been buried; the stench was foul. There was curfew everywhere the Jordanians could not circulate or work. We could not help but note that if the first wave of Israelis... avoided unnecessary restriction, the second was formed of thieves, pillagers and sometimes murderers, and the third was even more disturbing, for it seemed to concentrate on.

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

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

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

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

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June 15

We left for Jenin, bringing the woman with us, but in the hospitals of Jenin there were no more antibiotics or anti-gangrene medications, and the International Red Cross had not yet received authorization to work in this zone occupied by the Israeli army. When we arrived back in Jerusalem, we found that the abbey had an extra window. The bombardment had made a hole in the wall of the kitchen. Father Paul, who was extremely exhausted, had become quite ill.

During this time **we observed the expulsion of hundreds of families from Jerusalem.** Father Paul, still very sick, helped us from his bed to make the report of what we saw and verified for ourselves.

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

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June 23, 24 and 25

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

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July 1

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

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

We arrived by way of the forbidden road: the first houses to be destroyed were there. Some people had returned; then it was true! They came back to the ruins... The children slept under demolished roofs. There was no water or very little. Some 7,000 people of the 16500 of Qalkilya had come back... But to what did they return! **It was inhuman.**

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

"During the fighting, **five percent of the villagers were buried alive,** and half the people fled to the hills when the Jordanian army left. The Israelis expelled the second half of the population, but not immediately. First they forbade the people to leave their houses for three days. Wednesday, at 4:00

p.m an officer came to say: "Leave the village because Iraqi planes are going to bomb it." Then they took them by bus to Azzun, about 25 miles away." The mayor was the last to leave.

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

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

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

We awake the next day thoroughly determined to get to Latrun. The sun was shining, and the Israeli flag flew over the Wailing Wall. **The space once occupied by the 400 expelled families had been razed to make room for the crowds of Jewish schoolchildren and others who came to contemplate the Wall. They knelt in front of the stones. But because I had watched children dying under the bombs, no stone in Jerusalem held any value for me any longer; only the immense suffering of the children of this earth, whether they be Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist or communist, black or white, yellow or brown.**

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

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

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

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

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

We arrived at the monastery of Latrun. Israeli soldiers were guarding the entrance. They looked at us suspiciously. Then, since we had passed the other barriers they let us through. The monks seemed like prisoners, 50 closely were they guarded. The Father welcomed us warmly, surprised at this unhoped-for visit. He told us:

"On the evening of the fifth, the Jordanian soldiers began to leave, advising the people to go, some of them left, some took refuge in the monastery, and the rest stayed in their homes. Since the sixth... Israeli soldiers took them away in tractors... they said they would be taken to Jordan. After that, the tractors stayed at the monastery. The Israelis said they were for the kibbutz. On the night of the 26th or 27th, eight bulldozers razed Amuas, two destroyed Yula and two Beit Nuba"

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July 4

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

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

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

In the afternoon, we left for Jericho and the Allenby Bridge. It is there the refugees must cross. They must walk on a broken bridge carrying with only a rope: stretched from side to side to help them. Israeli soldiers' sittings in easy chairs have been watching them pass like this for weeks. If they had wanted to move their tanks over the river during the war, the bridge would have been repaired in a matter of hours! **Why should they humiliate these people so? Below, on the bridge, expressions**

of hate; above the bridge, looks of disdain. But it is the terrified expressions on the faces of the children before the demolished bridge which wound the most.

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

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

The Red Crescent, It was a Jordanian ambulance transporting the wounded. **Napalm killed them all.**

When we arrived in Israeli Jerusalem, we went to see the International Red Cross representatives.

From them we learned that the Red Cross did not have permission to go anywhere and that no representative could move without an Israeli officer by his side. Moreover, the messages they tried to transmit between divided families had to go the censor's office where they were unduly delayed. They had not received permission to go to Qalkilya or Latrun.

And when they tried to reach the Allenby Bridge, they receive permission for a few hours only. They were, therefore, concentrating their efforts on exchange of prisoners.

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July3

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

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

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

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THE FATE OF THE REFUGEES

By. Ian Gilmour, M.P., & Dennis Waiters, M. P.

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

* * *

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

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

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

We saw children being medically treated in tents in which the temperature was 120° F, with totally inadequate facilities. So far, there has been no epidemic worse than measles and rampant gastroenteritis. But unless the camps are soon emptied and the refugees allowed returning to their previous homes, nobody can foresee what outbreaks may occur. One camp we visited contained 12,000 inhabitants; with even 5,000 it would have been over-crowded.

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

The Israel argument again is that the refugees left of their own accord. And certainly many of those who were in the refugee camps at, for example, Jericho, left because of sheer panic caused by the war. Equally certainly the Israelis have not used the terrorist methods that were used in 1948 by the Irgun, whose leader, Mr. Menachim Beigin, is now a member of the Israeli Cabinet. This time, though

rifle butts do seem to have been used in some cases (we saw their imprint on some of the refugees), psychological methods have in general been employed.

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

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

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

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

Many, of course, have left not because of physical but because of financial pressure Deprived of their homes, sometimes with their possession looted, with the banks closed, and with contributions from Kuwait refugees were compelled to opt for the meager rations and other parts of the Arab world cut off, some of the refugees were compelled to opt for the meager rations of the refugees camps as preferable to total destitution at home.

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

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

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

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

The contrast between the indulgence granted to Israel trippers and the attitude of the guards to the Arabs was shocking. Tourists can go to the Israel end of the bridge and photograph the departing refugees. **Arabs who have been separated from their families are not allowed to go to the same spot to see if their children are alive.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Why then is Israel behaving in this way? The thinning out of the Arab population on the west bank serves Israel's objectives; Mr. Ben-Gurion has in the past made little attempt to conceal Israel's

Territorial ambitions; nor in an extraordinary speech in Paris on July 18, did Mr. Walter Eytan, the present Israel Ambassador and a former Director General of the Israel Foreign Office. Mr. Eytan, a charming and highly civilized man, told his audience that save perhaps for Sinai, **Israel had not taken anything that belonged to anybody else.**

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

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

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

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WEST BANK STORY

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"And the King of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them: My father, shall I smite them? Shall smite them? And he answered, thou shalt not smite them: wouldst thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and thy bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them, away... And the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel". (KINGS: 11. 6. "21-23").

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

No one doubts now that Israel will take over almost all the territory which she took by force. The only serious question is whether or not she will seize the Suez Canal, and, 'in interests of all nations', open it as an 'international waterway'. But the problem for all true blooded Jews is: how to annex all that land without giving votes to the people who live on it.

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

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

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

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

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

"We told them to go to Beit-Sura. **They told us that they were driven out everywhere, forbidden to enter any village that they were wandering like this for four days, without food, without water, some dying on the road.** They asked to return to the village, and said we better kill them. Some had a goat, a lamb, a donkey or camel. A father ground wheat by hand to feed his four children. On the horizon we could see the next group arriving.

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

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

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

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

"Amos Kenan".

Haolam Hazeh and other Israeli newspapers have also been approached by several other reservist soldiers in the West Bank area, with exciting stories of their exploits. Once again, however, only a

selection has been published. One statement, from a young soldier in the 5th Reservist Division, was also taken down in the offices of Haolam Hazeah, whence it has reached us. Some of the statement was reprinted in a pamphlet called 'Fed Up' which was seized almost as soon as it appeared in Tel Aviv. The distributors are still awaiting trial for breach of security regulation. After an interview with Shalom Cohen, co-editor of Haolam Hazeah, the following statement was produced:

Tel Aviv, September 10th, 1967.

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

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

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

"There were some cases I'll never forget.

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

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

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

* * * * *

Military Occupations Are Apt to Be Nasty For the Occupied

by. David Holden

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

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

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

If anything, the gulf between Arab and Israeli seems deeper now than it was before. To most Israelis this is a matter for regret, for in the position of master they can afford some generous emotions. To many Arabs it is the last refuge of self-respect. Defeated, humbled, occupied, made to eat their stupid boasts and futile gestures, they are subdued but implacable. They have drawn into themselves, as the vanquished do, yet they look at the work with eyes that are undefeated. They can still feel pride, because they can still hate, and unhappily, the Israelis like most conquerors-give them plenty of reasons for doing so.

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

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

Since June, there have been 75 incidents of sabotage or shooting, chiefly in the occupied areas of Gaza and the West Bank, attributed to the guerrillas known as "Al Fat' h" who are believed to come from Syria. Twelve Israelis have been killed and 48 wounded, in addition to more than another 100

killed in sporadic border clashes and military engagements like the sinking of the Eilat. If Israel is to survive the Arab must be taught that such violence cannot pay. Reprisals are therefore swift and massive.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In Qalqilya, where 40 percent of the houses were destroyed after the war, some of the people have also returned to live under make-shift roofs in ruined homes. But last week, near the Damia Bridge over the Jordan, bulldozers were at work flattening some of the homes from which 20,000 to 30,000 people fled across the river in June. General Narkiss said he had taken this action because the empty houses harbored rats which threatened his men with epidemics and because they offered shelter to "AL Fat'h "infiltrators.

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

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

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

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

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

been refused permission, including all men of military age, all refugees from Jerusalem and Jericho, and nearly all refugees of the class of '48 who fled in June for a second time.

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

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

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

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

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

A carpeted space near the entrance was roped off for Muslims and labeled "Holy place". Elsewhere the carpets had been taken up and large signs in Hebrew directed the crowding visitors from one tomb to the next. Flash-bulbs were popping for family snap-shots, while devout Jews pressed their lips to the tombs there were no Muslims to be seen. They are admitted for prayers four times a day and all day on Fridays when Jews are excluded. A civilized compromise, perhaps, and not to be compared with

some of the desecrations of Jewish shrines on the Arab side in recent years. But not a solution calculated to win friends among the Arab population.

The list of Arab grievances could be extended almost indefinitely, for the Israeli supremacy, even when it is exercised with discretion as it often is, grates on every nerve and fiber of their being. Most of all, of course, there is the fate of old Jerusalem.

As it is already annexed to the State of Israel, and firmly declared to be non-negotiable, there seems to be no conceivable compromise that Arab and Jews will both accept with decent grace.

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

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

* * * * *

The End