

SURVEY OF ARAB AFFAIRS

A periodic supplement to Jerusalem Letter/Viewpoints

SAA:1 25 Av 5745 / 12 August 1985

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EMERGING ARAB METROPOLIS IN JERUSALEM

While the growth of the Jewish population of Jerusalem from 190,000 in 1965 to over 300,000 in 1983 has been noted widely, few realize that parallel and even greater growth has occurred changing the city's Arab population. Indeed, the post-1967 expansion of the city has had a symbiotic effect on the Arab sector. According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, the population of Arab Jerusalem has increased by 70 percent, from just over 70,000 to 120,000, since unification in 1967, compared to a growth of only 23 percent for Judea and Samaria during this period. Most of this growth is taking place in the northern reaches of the city along the road leading to Ramallah, a metropolitan satellite and the most dynamic

city in Judea and Samaria. Many of the new Jerusalemites are Israeli Arabs from the Galilee.

A recent investigative article in East Jerusalem's *Al-Awdah* magazine sheds light on one slight but interesting factor behind the Arab Jerusalem population growth--the immigration of educated Israeli professional Arabs to Arab Jerusalem. "Walk the streets of Beit Hanina (a wealthy neighborhood just north of Ramat Eshkol)," *Al Awadah* notes, "and you will inevitably bump into an Arab from the Galilee. Turn to a lawyer in Salah A-Din (the main street of Arab Jerusalem) and he might well be a Galilee Arab." These young Arabs, many of whom studied at Hebrew University, are attracted to the only

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real Arab urban environment in Israel.

Arab urban life, it is worth recalling, was dealt a deathly blow in 1948 when Arab Palestinians fled Jaffa and Haifa in droves and when Jerusalem was partitioned during the War of Independence. The largest Arab town in Israel is Nazareth with a population of 40,000. In the largest mixed towns, Haifa and Tel Aviv-Jaffa, the Arab population does not exceed the twenty thousand mark. In light of that situation, the lure of Arab Jerusalem to the Arab intelligentsia becomes clear. In Jerusalem, Israeli Arabs can enjoy the benefits of metropolitan life in an Arab environment without leaving Israel.

They become one of over one hundred and twenty thousand Arab Jerusalemites with over one hundred thousand more just outside city limits in the towns of Ramallah and Al-Bireh in the north and Bethlehem, Beit Sahour and Beit Jallah in the south. Fluent in Arabic and Hebrew, they can as easily attend a play at the Jerusalem Theater in Hebrew as they can an event at Bir-Zeit University.

Al Awadah notes that it is too early to say whether this phenomenon of Arab migration to Jerusalem will continue. However it did point out that this is one more proof of the blurring of the green line.

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THE GROWING RIFT BETWEEN LEFT AND RIGHT IN THE WEST BANK

When Ghassan Harb, a young economist and a veteran communist from Bir-Zeit University passed away, *Al-Fajr*, the right wing PLO daily published in East Jerusalem, pointed out in its eulogy that everyone was at the funeral, even members of the PLO-Fatah affiliated youth movement. At the traditional commemoration ceremony a month after the death, Sheik Saad A-Din Al-Ilmi, the head of the Jordanian-controlled Supreme Muslim Council sat side by side with veteran Communists from both sides of the green line paying their respects to a life-long comrade. This too was noted by the local press.

This emphasis by the press is in no way accidental. Demonstrations of unity are much needed as growing disunity between Left and Right in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip threatens the key institutional building process there and weakens the common front against Islamic fundamentalist and Jordanian attacks on PLO preeminence in the territories.

The local Palestinians are becoming afflicted with the same disease of disunity that characterizes the PLO abroad. Most of the problem is ideological -- the same questions of with whom the Palestinian movement should ally and with what its goals should be preoccupy those "inside" (the territories) as those "outside" (abroad). However, one issue is more acute locally: the disbursement of the Joint Committee Fund. The Left, always fiercely opposed

to Arafat's assent to joint PLO-Jordanian control of the Fund, now claims that their organizations "inside" are being boycotted by the Fund with the money flowing instead to the creation of rival and breakaway organizations. They claim the Fund is destroying the revolution.

The Communists and the Marxist terrorist organizations, who always knew how to organize better than those on the right, are now at a serious financial disadvantage. An example of this is the status of the local labor unions. In the mid-1970s, they were leftist strongholds. That certainly does not mean that most of the union members were Marxists; the overwhelming majority of the workers are apolitical, anxious for the unions to provide health care schemes and recreational facilities, and do not maintain a strong disposition towards political action. The unions, though, were controlled by Communists and PLO Marxists who were able to recruit the more politically conscious members into underground activity associated with the National Front. Moreover, the umbrella organization, the Federation of Labor Organization Unions located in Nablus, had always been headed by Communists. The Communists possessed one important resource - the ability to decide who was to receive a university scholarship to Eastern Bloc countries - a carrot of no small value in an education-hungry society.

Today the National Front, having been dismantled by Israeli security forces, no longer

exists. A rival right-wing, Fatah-dominated federation as large, if not larger than the Communist-controlled federation, has come into being; money pours into right-wing labor unions, and scholarships to Bucharest and Moscow are not as attractive as they once were due to the establishment of local institutions of higher learning in the territories and the close proximity of two prestigious Jordanian universities.

In journalism, leftists are also in a pinch. In 1979, local journalists formed the first Palestinian journalists union, Rabitat'1 Suhufiyin, and proudly watched it grow from a membership of ten to a membership of over eighty Palestinian journalists, all of whom were in some way connected with the rapidly expanding East Jerusalem press. Just when the organization was to move to its new offices, Jack Hazmu, the editor and publisher of *Al-Bayadir Assiyasi*, took his first steps to create a rival organization to compete with the leftist-controlled Rabita. He timed his organizational debut with the publication of the results of the election that had just recently taken place in the Journalists Union - an act of synchronization that has become commonplace in the territories for the good excuse it offers. The secessionists argue that the elections were invalid or the results falsified; the original organization pleads innocence; neither budges, and then the announcement comes - a new organization is born in

the Palestinian movement.

The Rabita is controlled by leftists. Its president, Akram Haniya, managing editor of *A-Sha'ab* is well known for his allegiance to Hawatmeh's Democratic Front, other members of the board work for *Al-Mithaq*, *Al-'Ahd*, and *Al-Katib*—the leftist bloc in the Arab Palestinian press. On the other hand, Jack Hazmu's *Al-Bayadir* is the most right-wing publication in the territories. It is a zealous advocate of Jordanian-PLO-Egyptian cooperation and a staunch supporter of the quick convocation of the seventeenth Palestinian National Assembly, with or without the leftist organizations. In other words, it is a publication ready for the formal split in the PLO.

The Leftists do possess moral sanction. No one would disagree that many of these new organizations set up are paper unions created only to be eligible for Joint Fund monies, while the active, real organizations are being boycotted. For example, even *Al-Bayadir Assiyasi*, the popular magazine representing the PLO mainstream viewpoint, in a write up about the problem of garage owners and workers in East Jerusalem had to admit that the Mechanics Union, supported by the Fund and belonging to the right wing counter-federation, is run, controlled, and milked by garage owners, and not the workers. Both workers and garage owners interviewed admitted this themselves.

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IS ARAFAT LOSING OUT IN THE TERRITORIES?

When Yasser Arafat was forced to withdraw from Tripoli under the combined attack of Fatah dissidents, Lebanese leftists, and Syrian artillery in December, 1983, he consoled himself that he was still the most popular leader in the Palestinian movement, especially in the territories. In recent months, as the bonds between the Palestinian leader, King Hussein, and President Mubarak of Egypt have deepened, support for Arafat in the territories appears to be dwindling. This became especially noticeable after he signed the Jordanian-PLO accord in mid-February of this year.

For good reason. Yasser Arafat and his closest supporters in the Judea, Samaria, and Gaza are finding it increasingly difficult to explain Arafat's warming to the Jordanians at a time when the Jordanians are continuously undermining PLO institutions in the territories. How can it be, critics in the Fatah fold ask, that one's friend behaves as

one's enemy?

Rapprochement with Jordan was never one of Arafat's easy tasks. Historically sentiments of Palestinian activists have always run deep against King Hussein and his family. In 1951, his grandfather and predecessor, King Abdullah, was assassinated on the Temple Mount by a Palestinian officer who felt that the King had betrayed the Arab Palestinian cause in 1948. Many on the West Bank remember the harsh punitive measures the Hashemite regime took against political radicals, mostly Palestinians, in the late fifties. Local families still mourn the thousands in the PLO who died in the civil war on the East Bank less than fifteen years ago. Those actions, though, could at least be justified on the grounds that they were undertaken in self-defence.

Today, that is no longer the case. Jordanian activities aimed at undermining the PLO in the territories now come at a time when Arafat's faction

has made considerable effort to close the gap between the goals of his organization and those of the Jordanians. To add insult to injury, the Jordanian moves are often timed to coincide with concessions from the Palestinian side.

The convening of the Jordanian Parliament in February of last year, after a ten year hiatus, with representatives from both sides of the Jordan River, was the best known of these moves. By reactivating the thirty members of Parliament from the six districts that compose the West Bank, Jordan signalled its readiness to bypass the Rabat Conference decision that conferred on the PLO the sole right to represent all the Palestinians, including those in the territories. That decision was taken only six weeks after Arafat risked a split in the PLO and the displeasure of the Soviets, who play an important role in preserving PLO unity, to meet with President Mubarak.

Two months later, when Yasser Arafat met King Hussein for the first time since their unsuccessful talks of May, 1983, the Jordanians made sure that Arafat was confronted by a delegation of thirty-nine pro-Jordanian notables from the West Bank all urging him to make concessions to Jordan. Meanwhile, the pro-Jordanian East Jerusalem daily *Al-Quds*, published remonstrances of support for the reactivation of the Parliament from most of the one-hundred village councils across the West Bank. The PLO struggled with Jordanian orchestrated pressure.

The Arafat-Hussein rapprochement has done nothing to reduce Jordanian attacks on PLO institutions in the territories. Quite to the contrary, they have intensified ever since the Palestinian leader decided to cast his lot with the Jordanians. Jordanian control of the Joint Jordanian-PLO Committee today is common knowledge. At first most of the Committee's funds were used to undermine leftist PLO organizations opposed to Arafat and to assist institutions affiliated with the PLO mainstream. More recently, most of that money has been diverted to pro-Jordanian municipalities and labor unions increasingly dominated by pro-Jordanians.

This is evident in the recent decision to deny support to the Nablus Electric Authority, the second largest in Judea and Samaria, and to terminate the salaries paid to its one hundred or so workers in order to punish former Nablus mayor Bassam

Al-Shaq'a for his opposition to the convocation of the 17th Palestinian National Assembly in Amman and to the Jordanian-PLO rapprochement. That step was followed by the Joint Committee's recent announcement of substantial cutbacks in its financial support for unemployed physicians, many of whom serve in village clinics in the countryside, on the grounds that these activities are organized by communists (as they indeed are). Stipends were reduced from \$280 to \$200, and the number of recipients from 200 to 120. These actions are hardly acceptable to the politicized segments of the Palestinian Arab population who believe that institution-building efforts must continue despite ideological differences within the PLO.

Nor are recent Jordanian changes in the educational system condoned. The Jordanians, after three years of relentless effort, have succeeded in breaking the boycott of the junior college comprehensive examination, organized by the local student factions in the PLO. They have also moved subtly against the local Palestinian universities, the centers of nationalist activity in the territories, and the only educational system the Jordanians do not control. The six universities suffer from a small potential student population. Average enrollment is less than two-thousand. The potential intake is less than half of that in Israel with the same number of universities. By establishing more stringent requirements for taking the Jordanian matriculations (the *tawjih*), the Jordanians ensure that the student intake will be still smaller in the future, thus reducing the prospects of future growth of these institutions.

Thus, when the Arafat-King Hussein five point agreement was finally leaked to a Kuwaiti newspaper, it was received coolly by local Palestinian Arabs, so coolly in fact, that it might have split even local Arafat supporters. As *Al-Mithaq*, the viciously anti-Arafat, East Jerusalem daily pointed out, the customary congratulatory announcements by the local Fatah controlled youth, student, and labor movements were markedly absent in the local Palestinian Arab press. Few Palestinians can blame them for their reservations. Yasser Arafat, the co-author of the recent agreement, last year lost his power base in Lebanon; today, he risks losing his credibility, and ultimately the support of his people in the territories.