Response Paper Guidelines for Gate of the Sun

Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is to encourage you understand the complexity of one of the more sensitive topics in the history of the modern Middle East through the monologue of Khalil with an unconscious patient, Yunes. Khoury’s novel reflects Khalil’s stream of consciousness. While it might be a difficult read, it is a very involving read. Elias Khoury’s style is not only more true to the way we would recount our recent past—non-linear, jumping from topic to topic—but also is reflective of the trauma that haunted the region: fluid, always changing.

Because of the complexity of the narrative, I would like you to summarize the plot as part of this assignment. To do that you will need to do some reading on the events mentioned in the novel. Please look up Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) from Gelvin, You will get a handout on Koenig Memorandum in attached to this handout. I am giving that to give some background information to the events that led to the purging of Palestinians from Galilee. For the 1948 events you might want to check Nafez Abdullah Nazzal’s article “The Zionist Occupation of Western Galilee, 1948” (Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. 3, No. 3. [1974], pp. 58-76). A recent article on the Sabra and Shatila Massacres is Leila Shahid’s “The Sabra and Shatila Massacres: Eye-Witness Reports” (Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. 32, No. 1 [2002], pp. 36-58). These issues are topics for heated discussions, there is a lot of information out on the web—a little amount of time spent in front of the computer can explain what I mean here. Should you decide to use anything other than these articles and handouts, I need you to consult me on the matter before you use the source. You need not summarize the results of this preliminary research; however, you should be able to integrate it in your analysis of the events and characters here. I also think that some historical knowledge of the events that happened would help you understand the plot better. You know from our discussions of documents and personal stories that historical information is essential in understanding the struggle of the individuals.

Please explain the nature of the monologue: who is talking, who is (might be) listening? What is Khalil talking about (the overall themes)? Why is he talking—what motivates him? Then focus on the struggles of the people of Galilee, how they lived their lives through the events mentioned in the novel—the articles listed above might come in handy in this section particularly. In doing this you might want to keep your attention on individuals—make a list of names so that you do not get lost in the way Khalil recalls these individuals. The struggles of Umm Hassan, Dunya, Catherine, Nahilah, Shams, Khalil, Yunes, Dr. Amjad, Jamal the Libyan and others inform us about the difficulties that these people we facing with. Choose three characters and explain to your readers their struggles by focusing on certain themes (see below for these themes). For example, in the case of Khalil, the hero of the novel, try to explain what sort of emotions he might be going through. Try to understand his struggle (with the ideals of a Palestinian revolutionary movement, with himself and the “heroes” around him, with women, with his mother and his father, with “homeland,”
with religion). All these struggles shed light on the desperate lives of these people confined to the refugee camps. I would recommend strongly to focus on three characters and use their struggles to compose your analysis.

**Themes:** Determine certain themes that will allow you analyze the experiences of these individuals. Themes such as home, heroism, suffering and its exploitation, gender roles and struggle, trauma and confrontation, sexuality, the role, idiom, or absence of religion, hiding etc. will help you to compare and relate the struggle of different characters for this assignment. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me if you have questions regarding these themes. Feel free to focus on a theme that is not listed here; if you are not sure about the theme that you want to focus on get in touch with me.

I would also like to be informed about your evaluation about the utility of this work: What do you think is the purpose of this book; what did this book leave you with—do you think it served its purpose?

You should write about the whole book in order to make these points. Your examples should come from different parts of the book.

You might find it useful to consult the book review that I am attaching to this handout please do not consult any other book review without discussing it with me. What I provided is more than enough.

**Some stylistic suggestions:**
1. Do not write in the passive voice.
2. Read your paper aloud—if it sounds awkward and confusing, then it probably is. Avoid long, run-on sentences.
3. Avoid beginning a sentence with a coordinating conjunction—and, but, for, or, nor, yet.
4. Avoid the word “very”—you could probably find a better word.
5. Do not use the word “this” without specifying this what.
6. Vary your vocabulary and syntax—do not use the same words and sentence constructions repeatedly.
7. Use your spellchecker, but remember that it will not catch all errors.
8. **Proofread your work carefully**—if you do not care enough to read your own work, then why should anyone else?
9. If you cite a quotation that is more than two or three lines, you should use block quotation format—single-spaced and indented left and right.
10. If you have any questions about formal writing, consult OWL website of Purdue University. It is a very useful site for writing formal papers.
11. Do not use contractions (e.g. can’t instead of cannot) and do not use the word “you,” unless you are quoting from the text.
Jeremy Harding goes to Beirut to meet the novelist Elias Khoury

Jeremy Harding

Shatila is a short car journey out of Beirut and a few minutes on foot down a street full of market stalls. You pass a refuse heap where goats browse and small children smash up polystyrene packaging, duck into any of the narrow alleys to your right and enter one of the oldest refugee camps in the world. It was established by the Red Cross in 1949 on behalf of Palestinians herded from their villages the previous year. About 700,000 people were evicted in 1948 and of these perhaps 100,000, many of them peasants and smallholders from the hinterland of Haifa, fetched up in Lebanon.

Like the other camps for Palestinians, most of them administered by UNRWA, Shatila rapidly became a breezeblock and cement affair. The busy thoroughfare with the refuse tip was once part of the camp, and it also included a patch of ground, now walled and tended, where the dead of Shatila and neighbouring Sabra, massacred in 1982, are buried. The extent of Shatila was hugely reduced when the Palestinian camps in Lebanon came under siege. Less well known than the Israeli-sponsored massacres, the ‘war of the camps’, which lasted from 1985 to 1987, pitted the Shia militia Amal against the Palestinians in a long campaign masterminded by Damascus, and intended to curtail Arafat’s lingering influence in Lebanon. So much of Shatila was destroyed by Amal that it now gives the impression of recoiling from the burial ground. After one edge of the camp had been blasted away, Amal fighters moved in and created a hill of garbage and excrement on the graves of 1982. A cemetery inside the camp contains the bodies of those who died between 1985 and 1987.

As for the living, there are now about 16,000, only half of them Palestinians. The rest are mostly destitute Lebanese and Syrians. Many people have turned the fronts of their cramped houses into little shops, from which they hope to scrape a few dollars on modest mark-ups. During the Israeli assault this summer, Shatila received about eighty of the thousands of families who fled towards the capital, while the burial ground of 1982 now plays host to the victims of the recent war, with a large hoarding mourning civilians who died in Israeli air-raids at Qana and on the road out of Marwahin.

Shatila is the setting for Elias Khoury’s novel Gate of the Sun.[*] In a single room in a clinic known as ‘the Galilee Hospital’, Khaleel Ayyoub, a Palestinian paramedic, sits with an inert patient, also a Palestinian, who is failing to recover from a cerebral embolism. The failure unfolds over seven months, during which Khaleel ministers to the patient, Yunis, once a legendary fighter for the Palestinian cause, with drips, catheters, swabs and bedsore remedies. Khaleel has been advised by Umm Hassan, an elderly...
Palestinian midwife who grasps a death as she would the legs of a breech-birth baby, that he should talk
to his unconscious patient even if it seems pointless. Khaleel obliges and in the course of the one-way
conversation – which rapidly becomes an interior dialogue and then a set of interlocking stories told by a
multitude of characters – we are given an account of the lives of the Palestinian villagers who moved
north from Galilee in 1948 in their tens of thousands to preside over later generations in exile, their
stories in turn bringing us to the 1990s, about the time we’re to imagine Khaleel seated at the bedside of
Yunis in the remains of Shatila.

Even though Palestine has been his main preoccupation as a journalist and political activist, *Gate of the
Sun* is the first of Khoury’s 11 novels to tackle the subject head on. None of his earlier fiction, of which
four books (all short) are translated into English, signals a magnum opus up ahead. Yet in retrospect,
they seem to have had a vested interest in *Gate of the Sun*, preparing for a grand synthesis of Khoury’s
habits and techniques: the narrative that begins at the end of a story and arcs back to the beginning, the
darting perspectives that coalesce at crucial moments into a recognisable view of the world, and the
intellectual restlessness that keeps reader, writer and characters on their toes.

Khoury is a Lebanese citizen. He was born in 1948, the year of the Palestinian catastrophe. He grew up
in the predominantly Christian east of Beirut, in the prosperous hilltop neighbourhood of Ashrafieh, also
known as Little Mountain – *Little Mountain* is the title of his second novel, published in 1977, and his
first book to be translated into English, in 1989. His grandfather mended shoes; his father became a
middle manager at Mobil in Beirut. He attended a Protestant school, and after graduating in history and
sociology in Beirut, enrolled in the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. It was 1971, but he had missed
nothing by arriving in Paris late in the day. In Lebanon, unlike France, the rhetoric and imagery of the
radical 1960s were visible alongside the very conditions to which they referred. Beirut was a place of
enormous wealth. A banking boom driven by region-al oil revenues was rapidly evolving into a top of the
range property and building bonanza, while the ‘belt of misery’ looping through the city filled with rural
poor. Lebanon was also attracting large numbers of dissident exiles from other parts of the Middle East,
including Cairo. Above all, it contained many thousands of stateless Palestinians, whose predicament
was at once a powerful symbol and a pressing material fact.

When we met in Beirut last month, Khoury remembered without a trace of Parisian enthusiasm having
come under fire from police in 1966, during a protest against the death of a Palestinian in Lebanese
custody. He also recalled that three years later 40 protesters were shot dead in Beirut as they
demonstrated in support of the Palestinians. In his spare time, Khoury was teaching literacy in the ‘belt’
and spending time as a volunteer worker in Palestinian camps. He might have joined the Lebanese
Communist Party when it was still underground. Instead, like hundreds of intellectuals in the Middle
East, stunned by the Six Day War, he enlisted in Fatah. By the time he got to Paris, he had savoured the
kind of defeat that few French activists of his age could have conceived, having watched his PLO
comrades being driven out of Jordan after the events of Black September, to regroup for the most part in
Lebanon.

At the Sorbonne Khoury wrote his dissertation on the Lebanese civil strife of 1840-60, a period of
Druze/Maronite rivalry inflamed by Ottoman rule. It struck him how little had been published by
Lebanese about the conflicts they’d experienced. Lebanon, he said much later, was ‘an oral society’ which
had failed to commit its history to paper. *Little Mountain*, set during the mid-1970s in the thick of civil
war, was his signal that the time had come to keep a written record.

Khoury returned to Beirut in 1973 and worked at the Palestine Research Centre in the west of the city, in due course becoming managing editor of the monthly journal *Shuun Filastiniya* – ‘Palestine Affairs’ – published under the auspices of the PLO and edited by Mahmud Darwish. He was a Fatah hack, bright and diligent, whose independent views didn’t ring too many alarm bells.

Once the civil war in Lebanon was under way, Khoury entrenched himself in West Beirut as an active member of the left-wing PLO/Lebanese National Movement coalition, which was pitted against an assortment of Maronite Christian militias, which came to be known as the Lebanese Forces. The war quickly became characterised by its complex of shifting alliances, sealed and sundered by massacres. A predatory Syria hovered over proceedings, descending wherever it saw an occasion to consolidate its interests. This meant waging a war within a war against the left, or Joint Forces, as the LNM/Palestinian alliance was known in the early days. Beirut was now divided by a front. On either side people started queuing for standardised identity. The east was Christian: right-wing tending to European-style fascism. The west was Muslim: left-wing tending to robbery with violence. Israel, when it got involved, stood four square behind European-style fascism. Syria dabbled cleverly and horribly in both.

What Khoury did during the war and how this informed *Little Mountain* is not clear. He would already have attended the short military course for all Fatah members, although promising material, unlike staff members of monthly journals, went on to a more rigorous training in arms. Then again, the chaotic nature of the war and the pressure of the cause, as understood by the Palestinians and the LNM, meant that people were called on to do any number of things. Khoury insists he was never a fighter in the strict sense. (His toughest test came in the mid-1980s, during the war of the camps. Here again, it wasn’t a case of bearing arms: the point was to cross and recross dangerous territory, at considerable risk, delivering vital supplies to besieged friends and comrades.)

*Little Mountain* was written much earlier, in the first phase of the war. But the war had become complicated and murderous early on: one of the reasons Khoury’s narrators think of it as an inexorable force, more like a god or an airborne toxin than a clash of adversaries. More interesting than what Khoury was or wasn’t doing at the time is that the book pays tattered homage, despite its pessimism, to the political spirit of the Joint Forces in the first years of the fighting: not the doctrinaire spirit preferred by brigade commissars but a vivid tiers-mondisme whose points of reference are the Ho Chi Minh trail and the Moneda Palace. And Palestine of course: ‘We’ll drape him in the Palestinian flag,’ someone says over the body of a dead comrade. ‘Palestine isn’t a country to have a flag,’ someone else replies. ‘Palestine is a condition.’

*Little Mountain* is told from three perspectives: that of a Joint Forces fighter in Beirut, a distressed civil servant (the classic bourgeois at whom other writers of Khoury’s generation would simply have sneered) and an indeterminate figure, part fighter, part intellectual, who argues the truths and untruths of the war with an exiled friend in Paris. Actions, events and places in *Little Mountain* are available only on each of the character’s terms. These are clouded by the fog of war from which a luminous scene will now and then emerge, only to disappear in another patch of poor visibility – a wash of memories, digressions and analogies, spreading across one or another narrative consciousness. Lurching from street battles to confrontations in the high passes of Sanneen (a dead fighter slumped over a blood-drenched donkey), to
a dazzling seaside where a man and woman mime the business of love, *Little Mountain* has the hand-held, impulsive style, and the jarring montages, of the great Godard. (*Pierrot le fou* comes to mind.) But this is not at all what Khoury or his reviewers in the Arab world thought. For most admirers, the scuffed surfaces and – as Edward Said wrote later – the ‘formlessness’ of the novel were authentic reflections of the civil war. And so this landmark on the road of ‘post-Mahfouzian’ fiction, welcome in literary circles where Mahfouz’s stature seemed vaguely unsettling, was after all a sort of naturalism.

Khoury was not yet 30. The acclaim was tremendous. Yet to read the later novels translated into English is to wonder how far the war really determined the manner of *Little Mountain*. There is a family resemblance in all of them, in terms of technique and tone, and in any case the sudden change of perspective, taking the reader from a landscape to an interior, from recollection to a vivid present, had already found a master in Ghassan Kanafani, whose beautiful novella *Men in the Sun* made a great impression on younger Arab writers. (Khoury, who was 17 when he read it for the first time, refers often in his own novels to Kanafani’s fiction. They met once or twice before Kanafani died in a car-bomb explosion in 1972.)

*The Journey of Little Gandhi*, published in 1989 and translated into English in 1994, is a bleakly comic novel set in a later phase of the civil war. The narrator is trying to ascertain the story of an ageing prostitute called Alice, while Alice’s story is really about a shoeshine worker in Beirut called Little Gandhi, whom the narrator also knew. Little Gandhi was killed when the Israelis entered the city in 1982. The novel follows the life of this downtrodden, ingenious man, who fed his family with scraps from the American University canteen intended for an academic’s dog. As the different narratives engage, the novel recovers a younger, livelier Alice from the impoverished knowingness into which she’s sunk.

Flurries of digression, deceptive footholds and dizzying mise en abyme effects put the reader in a state of high alert and then light-headedness. Typical is the story of a shipwrecked Italian nun who walked across the sea to reach safety in Beirut: the narrator elicits the legend from Alice, who heard it from her lover, who used to tell it to tourists as though he had seen it himself, though in fact he had read about it in a book he inherited from his father. As so often, *The Arabian Nights* supplies the model here: ‘I heard, O happy King, that the tailor told the king of China that the barber told the guests that he said to the caliph . . . ’ Only morning never quite overtakes Elias Khoury as it does Shahrazad and no lapse into silence seems possible. Whatever the meaning or non-meaning of stories, however brazen or obscure their purpose, they must go on being told.

In the late 1970s Arafat’s eagle eye fell on an article by an Iraqi contributor in *Shuun Filastiniya*. Khoury no longer remembers, or cares to remember, what it was that caused such a row. Still managing editor, he was lucky that an understanding was reached after the initial threat of a spell in PLO custody. (A passage in *Gate of the Sun* describes the brutality of Palestinian prison conditions.) By the early 1980s he had moved to the left-wing daily *as-Safir* and was now prolific, both as an essayist and a writer of fiction, with four published novels and two books of criticism – a work rate marginally impaired by the fall of Beirut and the massacres in Sabra and Shatila. Haunting desolation and anger were the proper reactions – they are still echoing in Shatila – but telling stories or thinking aloud about the work of others may have helped to keep them at bay: in 1984 a book of short fiction and another volume of criticism appeared. Khoury meanwhile was also overseeing a world literature series in Arabic. Writers in translation included Soyinka, Achebe, Mishima, Breyten Breytenbach and Carlos Fuentes. The less
obvious choices were Ken Kesey and Julio Cortázar. In some of Khoury’s own novels there is a faint echo of Cortázar’s melancholic playfulness – the two men were friends in Paris – but Khoury’s wit is more vivacious.

In person, Khoury has the curiosity of a child, an asset in a journalist. He is a lively conversationalist who speaks his mind without imagining an auditorium filled to capacity. He is erudite: Christian tradition in the Middle East is more than a passing interest. To his students at NYU, where he spends the spring semester, no doubt he feels like a natural teacher. He is always amusing. On one occasion at a restaurant in London, when the puddings were served, an Israeli friend expressed a keen interest in Khoury’s dessert. ‘It’s a sorbet,’ Khoury told him. ‘I’d like to let you try it, but I’m worried you’d occupy it.’ The humour of Khoury’s books has some of his off-the-cuff charm but it rarely extends to the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians.

Khoury’s involvement with Fatah tailed off a while ago and he now lives the life of an internationally famous novelist rather than a militant, but he is exasperated by Israeli policies and unusually guarded about the Israelis – ‘our cousins’, as he tends to call them. At the same time, his novels refuse to fasten down positions – self and other, Arab and Jew, victim and transgressor – or assign virtues and vices according to which side a character is on. If enmity were that straightforward then nothing would need to be asked about it.

Khoury has always asked questions about stories. In Kingdom of Strangers, a hundred-page novella translated in 1996, the inquiry extends to the writing itself. ‘What am I writing? I don’t know. I feel the words coming loose, falling apart.’ This disconcerted voice can be heard throughout the book. The main story, which begins in the 1950s, is about the family of a Lebanese businessman who falls in love with an Azerbaijani girl he has bought for five gold pounds to give to his wife as a live-in maid. ‘White Widad’ – ‘white’ because of her unblemished skin and, later, her long white hair – recalls nothing of her former home and is silent for much of the time, though given to fits of weeping. This is the case even after her master has divorced his wife and married her. (Man evolved from dogs not apes, the spurned wife says, and ‘Khawaja Muhammad Iskander is the missing link.’)

At the heart of this comedy is the problem of what can and cannot be known, a problem embodied by Widad, around whom similar puzzles, contained in other unfinished stories, proliferate. Beirut – or the war – makes coherence impossible. ‘We find stories tossed in the streets of our memory and the alleys of our imagination,’ the narrator says. ‘How can we bring them together to impose order on a land in which all order has been smashed to pieces?’

Themes and characters tested briefly in Kingdom of Strangers will reappear in Gate of the Sun, but the first is not a laboratory for the second so much as a sorting house where some of Khoury’s habits are thrown out, others reassessed. The fidgety questions of the earlier books are more narrowly focused. What is heroism? What is a country? Why is it that to lose something is to have it for ever? Several minor petitioners – half-thoughts, diversions and incomplete memories – that have jostled their way into the novels until now, on the grounds that it would have been bad faith to exclude them, will see their suits denied. Finally the habit of veering abruptly away from Palestine and the Palestinians, after a lapidary remark or a vivid story from a refugee camp, has to change. Gate of the Sun is the colossal result of these decisions.
As Khaleel Ayyoub, the forty-something Palestinian paramedic in Shatila, addresses the invalid Yunis, day after day, week after week, the story of the older man’s life begins to take shape. He was a primitive Palestinian nationalist in the late 1930s, and then a resistance fighter with a British service rifle, eventually driven up into Lebanon in 1948. Unlike others, Yunis kept going back across the Lebanon/Israel border. His secret was a cave ‘suspended above the village of Deir El Asad’ where he hid for long periods while carrying out missions against the new settler state. A stronger incentive, it emerges, was his wife, Naheeleh, who never left Palestine. For thirty years – until the Israelis occupied a strip of southern Lebanon in 1978, which put an end to his trips – he and Naheeleh could be reunited in the cave every time he crossed the border. They called the cave Bab El Shams, or Gate of the Sun, and so, as Khaleel says often, the legend of Yunis is really just a love story.

Khaleel, inquisitor and narrator, was still an infant when his family fled Palestine. His father was killed in 1959 by Lebanese security and his mother has disappeared in Jordan. When Yunis ran across this young boy in the camps, the two developed a father-and-son-like bond. Khaleel went on to join the fedayeen and train as a medic in China, where an old injury disqualified him for the military course he’d been sent to attend. Now he is ‘only half a doctor’, not fully trained, who only ever feels half a person, being a Palestinian. The motif of things not quite fitting the description, in a world of misnomers created by displacement and, increasingly, by ruin, is very well handled. Khaleel to Yunis: ‘We say Beirut but we aren’t really in Beirut, we’re in a semblance of Beirut . . . we say we’re in the Shatila camp but after the war of the camps . . . it’s no longer a camp, it’s just a semblance of a camp.’

In the telling of Yunis’s story, we learn more about Khaleel. It soon transpires that tending Yunis is only partly a question of dedication. Khaleel has had an affair with a Palestinian woman, since murdered by the clansmen of her other, steady lover, and thinks he will be next on their list. His round-the-clock attendance at Yunis’s bedside allows him to keep his head down.

Naheeleh is accessed gradually, as Khaleel – who has never met her – goes slowly over everything Yunis has told him. We follow her beyond 1948, living with Yunis’s parents, a blind Sufi sheikh and his wife, who keeps a picture of the Holy Mother in a drawer. Naheeleh and Yunis’s first son is hit by a lump of rock while playing near the perimeter of an Israeli settlement. She is the wife of a wanted insurgent and the military governor refuses her a pass to the hospital. The child dies but there will be others – and a constant round of assignations in the cave with Yunis, a wolf-like intruder in his former territory who walks for days, holes up in the fields and abandoned villages, living on bitter olives. Occasionally there are shake-downs and interrogations about his whereabouts, which Naheeleh takes more or less in her stride (abuse in PLO jails and torture in Israeli detention centres are inevitably part of the novel).

Towards the end of her life, we encounter Naheeleh in despair about the meaning of her cross-border marriage with a largely absentee husband, a glamorous member of the fedayeen who failed to liberate their people. The truth, it seems to her, is that Yunis loved her without ever inquiring into who she was or what it meant to be in her position. She is venerated but unknown, like all idealised objects, including homelands. In the last of their encounters, she asks Yunis for $3000 so that one of their sons can open a garage in Haifa. Though he’s risen through the ranks of Fatah, Yunis hasn’t that kind of money.

As her death approaches, Naheeleh instructs her children to close up the cave: ‘we mustn’t let the Israelis get in ever; it’s the only bit of Palestinian territory that’s been liberated.’ She calls it ‘your father’s village’.
And so, in the preamble to its extinction, the Gate of the Sun becomes a larger thing. After it’s sealed with stones one of Yunis’s sons, whom he’s only ever glimpsed, phones him in Lebanon to let him know that they’ve ‘closed the country’.

With its emblematic family firmly established – Khaleel being a kind of child to Yunis and Naheeleh – the novel ranges broadly across two periods. The first begins with the expulsions of 1948, the second with life in the aftermath, up through the massacres in Sabra and Shatila and the war of the camps to Yunis’s death. Sometimes a story from one period migrates to the other, but it’s in the earlier part of the book that we find most of the 1948 material, drawn from carefully solicited interviews Khoury obtained with older refugees. (‘I’m writing a story, not a history,’ he told the refugees who agreed to talk to him. No tape recorder, no notebooks.)

A notable exception is a set piece encounter in Israel, in which the midwife Umm Hassan goes back to look at her house in El Kweikat years after the cleansing of Galilee, and is asked inside by Ella Dweik, the new Israeli owner, a woman raised in Lebanon who speaks good Arabic. The Israeli brings coffee to the table and before Umm Hassan can explain herself, announces: ‘It’s your house isn’t it?’ Umm Hassan says: ‘How did you know?’ Her host-become-guest replies: ‘I’ve been waiting for you for a long time. Welcome.’ Umm Hassan takes a sip of coffee and bursts into tears. There follows a courteous exchange, akin to a dance, around Umm Hassan’s earthenware water jug, set where it was when she’d fled the house. The Israeli offers it to the Palestinian who declines politely and offers it to the Israeli, who accepts – and now both women are laughing. In the end Umm Hassan takes the jug and leaves it with relatives in a nearby village before travelling back to the camps in Lebanon. Ella is miserable in Galilee and longs to return to Beirut. Umm Hassan longs to leave Beirut and return to her forbidden paradise.

How villages like El Kweikat were lost is told in the voices of the residents or their descendants, recycled through Khaleel’s telling to Yunis. Four or five key villages are singled out for close description as they fall. In all these episodes, verbatim accounting – as it seems to be – has to sit with the requirements of the novel, as defined by the main protagonists. Dazzling and terrible incidents are related, but Khoury is also fascinated by the wild allegations that went the rounds. He interpolates a rumour that the Jews have crucified a village fighter on an oak tree in Yunis’s village, Ein El Zeitoun, and shot his father, the blind sheikh. Yunis creeps back into the village to ascertain the facts. There is no sign of a body by the tree. Meanwhile the sheikh is safe in another village drinking coffee and lamenting the horrors of the First World War. The truth, however, is not reassuring. The old man who surrendered Ein El Zeitoun was slapped in the face and shot through the head in two fluent, consecutive gestures. (‘None of us moved. Even his wife remained kneeling.’) Forty young men were led out of the village and killed. All the while, the supine nature of the so-called Rescue Army – Arab volunteers from neighbouring states – adds to the general humiliation, as they sit in hillside bivouacs cooking chickens requisitioned from the villagers whose misfortunes they are now at leisure to observe on a full stomach. To each village its particular woes, all told in effortless, looping narratives that start at the end and go back to the beginning – the trademark of Khoury’s marvellous vernacular.

Much too about the condition of surviving villagers, whether they were on the run for months before leaving or remained in the new state. As Naheeleh recalls, years later, trying to confront Yunis with his warrior’s indifference to the life she was left to lead in the remains of Palestine: ‘We stole from our land and lived like thieves’ – or as Umm Hassan put it, ‘there was nothing we could do but rob our own
Khaleel remembers something Yunis once said about 1948: ‘The villages fell and we ran from one to another as though we were on the sea jumping from one boat to another, the boats sinking and us with them.’ And later: ‘Those who occupied Palestine made us discover the country as we were losing it.’ A point reiterated by Khaleel much further on: ‘the disaster had manufactured a single people.’ It is a general rule, rather than a parti pris, that this is the way most forms of national consciousness developed under settler colonialism, from Indochina to southern Africa.

Until now, Khaleel’s stories have served an obvious purpose; like Shahrazad he talks and tells, day after day, to defer the threat of death. And of course Khaleel’s stories keep the memory of the catastrophe and the cause of the Palestinians alive a little longer. The second part of the novel will come close to an admission that a certain kind of Palestine is dead – and that it died in Shatila.

The recurring device, in this half of the novel, is that of the long encounter between two characters, as in Ella Dweik’s meeting with Umm Hassan. Three of these encounters stand out. One is the demystifying confrontation in the cave, or Bab El Shams, between husband and wife, brought on by the request for $3000. Naheeleh, too long cast as a Marian essence of Galilee, inveighs against the life Yunis left her to lead, and proves that she can’t be landscaped as a mother-of-the-nation – nurturer and lover of the Christ-figure Yunis tried to be. (Not only is Yunis – Jonah – still Yunis; he has never escaped the belly of the whale, whether it’s the problem of Palestine or his own motionless body, lying in the Galilee Hospital.) When the idealisation of Naheeleh becomes impossible, Palestine ceases to be a dream. This is a radical moment in the book and coincides roughly with Khaleel’s discovery that his own mother is alive, miserably remarried, working as a nurse in the Occupied Territories. He is unable to get in touch with her, but the information confirms our sense that the entanglements of the real are displacing the mythical Palestine.

Khaleel’s encounters are no less sobering. In the first he is cajoled from Yunis’s bedside to show a group of French actors round the camp. They have come to Lebanon to research a stage interpretation of ‘Four Hours in Shatila’, Genet’s commemorative text about the massacre. By acting as a reluctant tour-guide, he establishes a relationship with Catherine, the only woman in the group, and relives his own memories of the mass graves in Shatila, where he was obliged to check that no one was still alive. These difficult passages are carefully negotiated with the reader to minimise the horror and maximise the meaning. One of Khoury’s significant devices is Dunya, a mutilated girl retrieved from the quicklime pits who survives to serve the Palestinian cause, in Lebanon and elsewhere, as a ‘fund-raising tool’, hobbling forward in meetings and TV shows to speak in uninflected tones about how she sustained her injuries. Khaleel rails against the victim culture in which the Palestinians have had to acquiesce and thinks of Dunya as a ‘story telling its own story’, dragging Palestine into deeper humiliation with every telling. Catherine, meanwhile, pulls out of the Genet production, overwhelmed by her visit to Shatila, unable to square it with her loyalty to the older story of the European death camps.

Khaleel’s other extended meeting is with Georges, a Lebanese journalist writing a book about Sabra and Shatila. Georges gets drunk and tells Khaleel what he’s heard about the killers hoovering up cocaine before the massacres. Atrocity stories are recycled and Khaleel’s darkness deepens. ‘The issue isn’t what happened,’ he reflects afterwards, ‘but how we report and remember it.’ Perhaps – but terrible things did
happen. And from the fall of Tel al-Zaater in 1976 – ‘the tomb of Palestine’, as one of Khoury’s characters calls it – through Sabra and Shatila and the war of the camps, the cumulative defeats and killings have dealt a devastating series of blows to the hopes of the Palestinians in Lebanon. *Gate of the Sun* contains no hymns to steadfastness. Yet the book leaves us with the overpowering sense that to tell a story in its awfulness and complexity – a story very largely of defeat – is to live to fight another day.

The Palestinians should have grasped more thoroughly what happened to European Jewry, Khaleel intones over the body of Yunis: not to exonerate Israel from its crimes in Palestine, but to understand how quickly they, the Palestinians, were sliding into narrative entrapment. Israelis, Khaleel says, are ‘prisoners of one story’ and it has made prisoners of the Palestinians as well: they too have begun to tell a single, fatal story and must look to themselves and the world for other stories or they are finished. The narrative of the victim must end; it is a disgusting, opportunistic fable that feeds on everyone who feels a need to tell it, whether from overwhelming strength or profound disadvantage. For a moment, Khaleel thinks of the trains that rattled through Syria and Lebanon depositing Palestinians round the suburbs of the cities, where they would settle in camps for half a century – and counting. The echo of other trains in other places is not a call to rehearse futile arguments about who suffered more – that would be succumbing to the single story again. It is simply an acknowledgment, across the battle lines, that the enemy, too, has a history: ‘The whistle rings in my ears. I see the people being led towards the final train. I see the trains, and I shudder.’

Khoury’s worry was that his Palestinian friends might jib at the book. His sins of frankness were redeemed, in their reading, by his insider’s sense of loss and illusion: the intelligent gaze that enables recovery. ‘Recovery’ is not the same as ‘coming to terms with’. Khoury means the Palestinians to have Palestine back in some shape or form acceptable to both parties: this is his passion. What’s ‘acceptable’ changes as the balance of power shifts, and it seems, as we travel together in southern Lebanon, to have undergone a momentary shift in favour of Israel’s enemies.

Recent history has taught Khoury and the Palestinians that their enemy’s enemy is not always their friend, but almost all Palestinians and millions of Lebanese, including Christians, were impressed by Hizbullah’s showing during this summer’s invasion. Advertising space along the highways into Beirut is filled by Hizbullah’s proclamations of ‘divine victory’. In the south the agitprop is coarser: a life-size sculpture of Nasrallah on an old Israeli tank, main streets lined with photographs of Hizbullah martyrs and, posted near the border, an unflattering cartoon of Conoleezza Rice by local schoolchildren. Elsewhere Hizbullah appeals for ‘Coexistence between Muslims and Christians’: it was not simply intimidation that led the Christian villages in the south to welcome Shia refugees last summer.

‘As a fighting force they’re low-key,’ Khoury says. ‘The day after the ceasefire, I was down here and I came across big funerals, but no guns, no shooting in the air.’ Khoury, who remembers the ostentation of the civil war militias, argues that this has nothing to do with Hizbullah concealing its heftier materiel – neither Unifil nor Israel will get at that for the time being. Instead this is symptomatic of a different approach to a conflict in which it’s rash to strut around after your latest victory. Hizbullah rank and file are inconspicuous as they go about their lives as smallholders, planters, mechanics and shopkeepers who also engage in this other activity called resistance.

We moved east along the Israeli border through the devastated villages in what was once Israel’s
occupied zone, run by its proxy the South Lebanon Army, under which the Shia suffered terribly. We drove past little storefronts (‘Salon Élégance’), pits of rubble next to sagging balconies and collapsed apartments hanging sheer, like enormous blinds, from twisted reinforcing rods. Parts of Bint Jbeil, where the IDF were ambushed in July, are now like worked-out quarries. The whole area is littered with unexploded cluster-bomb components. In several villages, men with shovels and diggers were clearing debris. Wherever we went Khoury provided a rough inventory of damage, a figure for the dead and a population estimate, with a breakdown by confession. Occasionally he supplied a bit of history. In Houla he told the driver that the Israelis had crossed the border and raidied here in October 1948, killing about 80 civilians, after the Arab volunteer army had pulled out.

We broke our journey in Khiam, at the old South Lebanon Army detention centre above the town. After the collapse of the Israeli occupation in 2000, the Lebanese turned it into a torture museum. Last summer, Hizbullah units operated from the exhibition site, sheltering in underground cells where their imprisoned colleagues had been buried alive for years. The torture museum has been pulverised by Israeli ordnance. It is now the relic of a relic. A visitor-friendly information panel showing a hand-operated generator, wires and electrodes, stands its ground over piles of smashed concrete that would have been a torture chamber. The panel takes you straight back to colonial Algeria; add the rubble frame and it puts you in mind of an installation in a Dutch art gallery. Khoury, it turned out, was thinking of an old acquaintance, Souha Bechara. In 1988 she nearly managed to assassinate Israel’s governor-in-effect for southern Lebanon, the SLA general Antoine Lahad, and spent ten years in Khiam. ‘I believe she’s in Switzerland now,’ Khoury said as we walked back to the car.

And Lahad?

‘The last thing I heard, he was running a Lebanese restaurant in Tel Aviv.’

The following day, in his office at the centrist daily an-Nahar, Khoury said how much he regretted that the resistance in the south hadn’t been led by a secular movement and felt the Syrians had much to answer for by wearing down the Lebanese left. Khoury isn’t anti-Hizbullah but he is a secular democrat, like so many Lebanese, surrounded by obstacles to secular democracy: invasion, occupation, ‘faith’ politics, the gun and the complicated attitude of Damascus, which tends too often to regard Lebanon as a long stretch of Syrian seafront.

Khoury was lured to an-Nahar in the early 1990s, to devise the weekly cultural supplement al-Mulhaq, now one of the most respected newspaper sections in the Arab world. The supplement is a campaigning institution. It has run features on Aids in Lebanon, demanded public information on the thousands of people who disappeared during the civil war, published a long piece of reportage (by Khoury) on Lebanon’s mental hospitals and fought hard to preserve an old neighbourhood, across from the paper’s offices, which was threatened – and eventually destroyed – by Rafik Hariri’s ambitious urban renewal programme. ‘It’s a cultural paper,’ Khoury says, ‘in the sense that I understand culture.’

But the success of al-Mulhaq points up the failure of a bigger project which Khoury hoped the paper would foreshadow. The growth of a social democratic consensus has not taken place in Lebanon. In 2004 Khoury was involved in the launch of the Democratic Left Movement, largely the non-Stalinist remains of the Communist Party, the student groups it had expelled in the 1990s and a growing number of loosely
affiliated intellectuals, but it is already stalled in disagreements and distractions, among them whether Hizbullah should earn its critical support or merely its criticism. Though the DLM and its sympathisers played an active role in the anti-Syrian uprising last year, a single seat in parliament and an ascendant Islamic resistance in the south are all the movement has to show for opposing many of Hariri’s policies, on the one hand, and campaigning against Syrian hegemony on the other.

Memorials to death by violence surround Khoury. Hariri’s shrine is a short walk from the main entrance of the an-Nahar offices, up through Martyrs’ Square, where a statue commemorates the Syrian and Lebanese anti-Ottoman radicals betrayed by the French and hanged by Jemal Pasha in 1916. On the front of the an-Nahar building itself is a banner-size portrait of Gebran Tueni, editor and grandson of the founder, who was killed by a car-bomb last December. Earlier in the year, after the huge ‘independence’ demonstrations aimed at Damascus, the same thing had happened to Samir Kassir, a colleague and great friend of Khoury’s. Kassir, part Palestinian, part Syrian, wholly Lebanese, was a founding member of the DLM. Like Tueni, though well to his left, Kassir was a vociferous critic of Syria. Khoury remembers trying to get through the police cordon around Kassir’s car in Ashrafiyyeh: he could see the slumped head and shoulders and thought his friend was still alive. ‘But the bomb had been placed directly under the driver’s seat,’ Khoury said, ‘and the head and shoulders were all that was left.’ Kassir’s glass-partitioned office, separated by a few yards of open plan from Khoury’s, is more or less as it was on 2 June 2005. ‘We just closed it and left it,’ he explained. ‘So Samir is still with us.’ On Kassir’s desk a few old copies of Le Monde are turning yellow. A mousepad gathers dust.

‘You will describe me as a political person,’ Khoury told me. ‘You’ll make too much of that. I am a journalist, sure, and I write what I think. I’m interested in the Democratic Left Movement because it’s a duty for people like me to try to make this place into a secular democratic culture. It is irresponsible not to do this. Especially now. But the truth is I’m a writer. This is really what I do and I’m too old to stop doing it.’ Khoury is not yet sixty, I remember, as he picks up his packet of Marlboro and puts it down again without removing a cigarette.

I’ve heard Khoury say twice what he thinks impels his own fiction and the writing he admires. The first time was in conversation: he argued briefly that good literature is always a tribute to human fragility and therefore to death; and it tends to imitate what it acknowledges. ‘Writing is itself weakness and death,’ he said. A day or so later, speaking at the American University in Beirut, he said he felt that the point of being a writer was ‘to defend life’. These are not as different as they seem; all the same, you could mount a spirited case that they didn’t add up. That is a good reason to take him at his word: he is, before everything else, a writer of stories. He loves them because there’s no end to them. And because their meanings, very much like the reasons he thinks they’re worth telling, get richer and more contradictory as he gets older.

Footnotes

* Translated by Humphrey Davies (Vintage, 501 pp., £7.99, October, 0 09 946159 5).
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What State for the Palestinians?  
HUSSEIN J. AGHA

Fate of the Arabs in Israel  
TAWFIQ ZAYYAD

From Peasantry to Proletariat  
ELIA T. ZUREIK

Geographic Elements in the Arab-Israeli Conflict  
FAWZI ASADI

Special Document

The Koenig Report
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Dear Subscriber:

We would like to take this opportunity to apologize to you with deep regret for the delay in publication of the four issues of Volume V of the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, and to reassure you as to their eventual appearance. Unfortunately, the almost complete paralysis of everyday life in Beirut since September 1975 has made a normal schedule of printing and mailing impossible to follow. We are happy to announce the creation of a new I.P.S. office in Washington, D.C., which will be able to temporarily take care of many of the matters related to the *Journal* formerly handled from Beirut, and to which any inquiries related to the Institute's other publications may be addressed.

The four issues of the *Journal* for the year 1975/1976 have been combined into two double volumes, which are being produced at different presses in Beirut. The Autumn/Winter issue had been almost entirely completed by the beginning of the spring, but awaits an improvement in the situation so that it can be removed from the printing press and distributed. The Spring/Summer issue was in progress when the disruption of the electricity supply to Beirut halted work on it. It requires the resumption of electricity to be finally printed and distributed.

Owing to the above reasons, and as a temporary measure, the Autumn 1976 issue has been printed in the United States and distributed by our Washington office.

In view of the fact that we have not been able to appear on our scheduled dates, our subscribers for the year 1975/1976 will automatically have their subscriptions renewed for an extra year free of charge, in addition to receiving their 1975/1976 copies when the situation permits.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to our readers for their patience, and for the loyalty that has enabled the *Journal* to expand circulation so appreciably since it began publication five years ago.

The Editor

P.O. Box 19449
Washington, D.C. 20036
THE FATE OF THE ARABS IN ISRAEL

TAWFIQ ZAYYAD

The results of the last municipal elections in Nazareth, December 9, 1975, and the general strike on Land Day, March 30, 1976, are two of the most important events in the history of the Arabs in Israel. These two events ushered in a higher stage of awareness, unity and struggle within the Arab masses who today comprise half a million people or 15 percent of Israel's total population.

These two events echoed across the world; they were reported on radio, television and on the front pages of world newspapers, arousing interest and concern for the fate of the Arabs in Israel who had remained in their homeland under the most adverse conditions of national oppression and racial discrimination.

It became obvious that the Arab population in Israel have an important and natural role which can no longer be neglected, in the struggle for a just peace in the Middle East, and in the struggle of the Palestinian Arab people to restore their national rights. The most important of these are the right to self-determination, the right to a sovereign state, and the right to return to the homeland of their fathers and forefathers from which they were evicted by a criminal blow of the sword in 1948.

These two events, the Nazareth elections and the general strike, created a considerable stir in Israel. Through them the rotten foundation upon which rulers of Israel have built their relationship with the Arab population—a relationship based upon privation, humiliation, coercion and national oppression—has been exposed.

As a result of the qualitative development in the role of the Arab masses in Israel, many people rightly came to the conclusion that a radical change in

*Tawfiq Zayyad is the mayor of Nazareth and a well-known Arab poet; this was an address delivered at the Ninth Annual Conference of the Association of Arab-American University Graduates, held in New York, October 1-3, 1976.
the official policy was inevitable in order to realize national equality for the Arab minority, especially because this national minority is part of the majority in the region, while the majority in Israel is a national minority in the region. It became evident that the democratic and rational Jewish forces were right when they claimed that the Arab masses in Israel could play an influential and important role in the process of solving the Arab-Israeli conflict; they can form a bridge for a just peace which would be based upon respecting the rights of the peoples and the sovereignty of the states in our area.

It is a known secret that the rulers of Israel wanted Israel to be “clean” from Arabs. The Arabs in Israel opposed these acts in a heroic and costly struggle. They won their first battle. They have succeeded in remaining in their homeland.

As the plan of expelling this remnant of our people failed, the authorities began a procedure of separating it from the main body of the Palestinian Arab people. The authorities tried to loosen the ties of national identity among the Palestinian Arabs in Israel. Israel wanted to use the Palestinian Arabs against the mother people and its national rights, like using a branch to cut the mother tree.

To support their policies the Israeli authorities fabricated absurd “theories.” Some Israelis declared, for instance, that the Druzes are not Arabs but are the thirteenth tribe that wandered in the desert after the exodus from Egypt. Others claimed that the Arabs in Israel are not a part of the Palestinian Arab people but instead comprise a different nationality, namely, the Israeli Arab nationality. It is obvious that this is a demogogical attempt to confuse affiliation of citizenship—which is an affiliation to the state of Israel—with national affiliation, since the Arabs in Israel are an integral part of the Palestinian Arab people.

Moreover, the authorities have always based their approach to the Arab population on the notion that they do not constitute a national minority or a single people, but a conglomeration of communities and religious minorities. In official statistics and announcements, no mention is usually made of “Arabs,” but of “Jews and non-Jews” or “Jews and minorities,” purposely ignoring that “non-Jews” and “minorities” are members of one and the same people and nationality. Even the local and Knesset election lists, which various official bodies and committees impose, are formed in accordance with this community-religious structure.

Prime Minister Rabin declared in an announcement made on April 13, 1976, shortly after the events of Land Day, that the Arabs in Israel lack
national characteristics of their own, that they only have religious and cultural features. The aim of considering the Arabs in Israel as a conglomerate of communities and religious minorities is to deny them any national right. If they are acknowledged as a people they would become entitled to a return of their national rights, contrary to the intention of Mr. Rabin and the makers of the official racist policy based on the Zionist theory that wants Israel to be a pure Zionist state, i.e., purely Jewish.

However, the unified heroic struggle that the Arab masses have been waging could bring such plans to failure.

A. ZIONIST SCHEME FOR EXPROPRIATING ARAB-OWNED LANDS

The battle for the land was, and still is, the basic struggle of the Arabs in Israel for national equality and for coherent development over their lands and in their homeland. Expropriation of Arab-owned lands is the basic strategy of Zionism, which in turn is the ideology applied by the Israeli rulers.

The Arabs did not lose lands accidentally. Their lands were taken from them by the power of special laws, by physical violence and by the use of the armoured cars and tanks of the Israeli police and army.

The number of Arab villages in the area on which Israel was established was 585. Since the establishment of the state, this number has gone down to 107 villages. The population of the remainder of these villages (numbering 478) were kicked out by force or ran away in fear. These 478 villages were bulldozed and obliterated. In addition, the authorities confiscated the millions of dunums belonging to the inhabitants of these villages.

The tens of thousands of uprooted villagers found shelter in nearby Arab villages and towns. The authorities forbade them from going back to the sites of their former villages. They were now regarded as “absentees” after the government had taken over their lands. The number of these “refugees at home” today exceeds 100,000 persons, and they form a separate issue by themselves. These same people refuse to give up their right to return to their villages and to their previous lands, in some cases not more than a few kilometers away from their present residence. Their struggle to return is on-going and is headed by the inhabitants of Iqrit and Kfar Bir’im whose struggle is well known in Israel and abroad.

After the establishment of the state and precisely on December 12, 1948, the Israeli rulers imposed military rule on the Arab villages and towns. On March 20, 1950, this military rule was converted into an established set of laws. These laws were based on the 1945 Emergency Regulations set up by the
British Mandate in order to quell the anti-imperialist struggle. According to these regulations, the military ruler has the right to take any measure against whomever he wants without taking him to court. These measures range from house arrest, banishment, administrative arrest to forbidding the movement of the person outside his zone.

According to these regulations, every Arab was forbidden to leave his residence or to go to his original village or even to his place of work without a military permit. The regulation of permits went on for 18 years. In 1966 it was abolished. But by abolishing the regulation of permits, military rule did not end. It remains in force until this very day. Hundreds of political activists who oppose government policies and who have been black-listed need permits to move from one place to another.

This military rule has two basic goals: first, to control the movement of every Arab, to terrorize him politically and economically, to kill the will to resist, to prevent the formation of political parties and to prevent free literary activities. The second goal of the military rule is to deprive the Arabs of their lands, and to forbid them from reaching their lands by declaring them “closed zones.” In this way, the takeover of Arab-owned land was accomplished. Right after the establishment of the state of Israel, the Israeli authorities took over an area of more than 3,250,000 dunums.

The monster of land robbery was not satisfied with all this. The Israeli rulers began planning the takeover of Arab owned lands belonging to those Arabs who did not depart from their villages or their towns. The authorities passed tens of new laws which gave legal bases for these plans.

Since the establishment of the state of Israel, land confiscation was and is still going on. This is the major strategy which is being directed against the Arabs in Israel. The outcome has been the confiscation of about 1,750,000 dunums. In addition, the government announced its intention to confiscate 1,500,000 dunums from the lands belonging to the Arabs in the Negev. If we add to this the land already confiscated immediately after the establishment of the state of Israel (3,250,000) we will arrive at the figure of 6,500,000 dunums. These statistics are official statistics which are, of course, somewhat “diluted.” In any case, this final figure equals one-third of the area of the state of Israel’s pre-1967 borders.

In the aftermath of the Land Day demonstrations the government did not find anything more with which to reassure Arabs than the promise that in the coming ten years there will be no confiscations. This means that a campaign of confiscations is already planned for the 1980’s.
B. THE CATASTROPHIC RESULTS OF LAND ALIENATION OF ARAB AGRICULTURE

It is natural that this confiscation policy had catastrophic ramifications: the average area belonging to Arab villages in 1948 was 16,500 dunums; in 1974, this area was down to 5,000 dunums—i.e., the average area per head in the Arab village went down from 16 dunums in 1948 to less than one dunum in 1974.

Examples of this: Nazareth was deprived of most of its land, while its population tripled (from 15,000 to 45,000). Um al-Fahim, the largest Arab village, used to own 140,000 dunums in 1948 while its population was only 4,000; today this same village owns 12,000 dunums while its population has increased to 17,000 (i.e., 128,000 dunums have been confiscated). Another Arab village, Taybih, lost 23,000 dunums, Tyrah also lost 23,000—and so on with the other Arab villages.

This policy destroyed the agricultural economy of the Arab village. The average area of arable land in the Arab village was, in 1948, an area of 9,136 dunums; in 1974, this area was down to 2,000 dunums. Since the population of the average Arab village increased by a rate of three-to-four times, we can imagine the sharp decrease in the rate of dunums owned per capita.

On September 7, 1976, the “Koenig memorandum” was published in Israel.* This is a racist document presented by its author as a work program for the Israeli authorities concerning the Arab population. Listed below are a number of the major ideas from this document:

1. It describes the Arab mentality as oriental, Levantine, superficial and backward.
2. It would forbid any aspect of lenience in the treatment of Arabs in Israel, tightening the use of strong control against them by the police, the army and the prisons.
3. It would impose a dishonest leadership on Arabs by a national Arab party administered secretly by the Israeli intelligence agencies and the tools of the authority.
4. It would establish a special intelligence system, to spy on the leaders of the Communist Party and other leaders to destroy their reputation and credibility.
5. It would impose severe measures against student leaders, and close the door to the universities in the face of Arab students, putting obstacles in the

*Printed as Special Document in this issue — Ed.
way of their general education, meanwhile facilitating the emigration of Arab youth from the country and forbidding their return.

6. It would make the Arabs busy 24 hours a day struggling to earn their livelihood, so that they would hardly have the time to think about their situation, or their national or educational goals.

7. It would advocate imposing stiff taxes and fines on the Arab population that would deprive them of financial freedom and rob them of the economic energy to raise their standard of living or to improve their social conditions.

8. It would cancel social security benefits for Arab families, limiting these benefits to Jews.

9. It would confiscate more Arab lands to establish new Jewish settlements on them.

10. It would seek to offset the population increase among Arabs and strive to decrease their number by various means.

Here we must mention that Koenig, the author of this memorandum, has been for 13 years the governor of the Northern District where 250,000 Arabs reside (more than 50 percent of the Arabs in Israel). This memorandum is a clear model of the policy which has been practiced against the Arabs, and it closely reflects the official policy of the government.

The prime minister has refused to condemn this memorandum on the basis that "he did not read it." The government also refused to condemn the document. We cannot but consider the reaction of the government and its prime minister as more ominous than the memorandum itself.

C. Plans for the Judaization of the Galilee

Last year the Knesset approved the racist program for the Judaization of the Galilee. The government issued orders for new confiscations which led to the general strike on Land Day, March 30, 1976. This program dates back to the 1950's when Ben Gurion, Israel's first premier, toured the Galilee and declared in racist anger, "Whoever tours the Galilee gets the feeling that it is not part of Israel." For the majority of the inhabitants are Arabs.

The plan of Judaization of the Galilee has two major aims:

1. To deprive the Arabs of the remainder of their land by means of confiscations.

2. To change the demographic composition of the Galilee, now inhabited by an Arab majority, into a Jewish majority.

The Arabs in Israel reject these Judaization plans which will deprive them
of the remainder of their land and create the objective conditions for their mass evictions. Undoubtedly there are many factors, some of which are objective, which make such plans hard to carry out successfully. But the major factor will continue to be the unity and struggle of the Arab masses who cling to their land and are ready to die defending it. This stand has received the backing of the democratic Jewish forces in Israel and the backing of world public opinion.

D. THE RETARDATION OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARAB CITIES AND VILLAGES

In order to mislead Israeli and world public opinion, the Israeli authorities have declared that the aims of land confiscation are the development and industrialization of the Arab villages. Here, things also take inverted names. The Israeli government has always followed the opposite course and imposed on Arab towns and villages a policy that has prevented development and cultivated systematic retardation.

Let us examine the bitter facts: Vast territories which have been expropriated and which were cultivated until the time of their confiscation, are still without cultivation because of lack of "Jewish" manpower. It is deemed preferable to have them uncultivated than to return them to their Arab owners. In all the Arab towns and villages there is absolutely no industry. Nazareth with a population of 45,000 and the largest all-Arab city in Israel, has not a single factory. The factories which existed in Nazareth during the British Mandate were liquidated during the early years of the state of Israel. In the all-Jewish city of Upper Nazareth which has a population of 16,000, there are tens of factories, some of which are regarded as the largest in their field of production, such as textiles, food industry, and car assembly plants. Land was confiscated from Arab Nazareth to construct a Jewish city so that Arab Nazareth would be converted, with the passage of time, into a neglected quarter of the Jewish city.

The picture in the Arab villages is even worse. About 60,000 Arab workers, from a total of 80,000, travel each morning from their towns and villages to work in Jewish cities and settlements, returning home in the evening. These workers regard their towns and villages as nothing but places of residence. Their only prosperous "industry" is the creation and supply of manpower.

The situation of public services in Arab towns and villages is a tragic one: there is not one Arab village that has a sewage system, except for Nazareth which has a partial one. Not one Arab village has a network of paved roads and streets. In the best of situations, the Arab village will be connected by a
single road with the main street or highway. The majority of Arab villages lack electricity, telephone communications, health centers, etc. The area which Arab villages can use for construction is limited to a fraction of its land. The aim behind this is to cause territorial suffocation by preventing all development and expansion.

In all the Arab villages and towns, there is not one single public library. There are no suitable football fields, or youth centers, or theatres, or cultural centers which go along with modern development. Every existing cultural or sports activity in the Arab areas takes place in spite of the programmed efforts at strangulation.

Tens of Arab villages have no local councils at all. In some villages there are government appointed councils instead of elected councils. The existing local councils suffer from lack of government financial assistance. Such assistance can be described only as token assistance with no real weight. The central goal of this “Chinese shoes” policy is to impose retardation on Arab villages and towns, freezing their development, embittering and impoverishing their life, to weaken any influence they might have on the political or economic life of Israel. This makes it easier to control the villages and to encourage their inhabitants to look for another homeland.

E. THE FAILURE OF THE POLICY OF CULTURAL JUDAIZATION

Along with the policy of Judaizing the land, the authorities have pursued a policy of cultural and intellectual Judaization aimed at creating an Arab generation lacking all national consciousness.

Immediately after the establishment of the state, the Ministry of Education revamped the educational programs in all the schools. It cancelled everything that would encourage the younger generation to love its homeland, stimulate national self-esteem or respect for moral values. For example, a song which had been taught in our schools from generation to generation was dropped out presumably because it speaks of love of country:

    Peace unto you, O my fatherland,
    How good it is to live and sing upon your soil.

The Arab student in Israel studies the Old Testament and Jewish history more than Arab history, which he is permitted to study only selectively and superficially. For instance, the Arab student knows about Salah ed-Din al-Ayyoubi (Saladin) only when he studies Maimonides who was Salah ed-Din’s physician.

The Israeli Ministry of Education has put plans into operation which aim
not to educate the Arabs but to miseducate them. This policy was defined by one of the previous advisors on Arab affairs for the prime minister as follows: 

“Our policy towards the Arabs is to keep them illiterate by preventing the Arab students from reaching the universities. If they were educated it would be difficult to rule them. We should make them wood-cutters and water-carriers.”

Although the Arabs in Israel constitute 15 percent of the total population, the percentage of Arab students studying on all levels is as follows (these figures are for the 1974–1975 academic year):

- In elementary schools, 20 percent, due to the higher birth rate among Arabs.
- In secondary schools, 7.7 percent.
- In sub-university institutions, 2 percent.
- At university level, 1.7 percent to 1.8 percent.

According to Israel statistics for the year 1969, for every 100 Jewish students in schools, 9.6 students were at the university level, while the percentage for the Arabs was 0.9 per 100 students. For the Arab countries, taken together, the ratio is three times as high as that of the Arab students in Israel.

Training in some scientific fields is totally closed to Arab students. The schools of medicine rarely accept Arabs for enrollment. Only the humanities and the social sciences are open to the Arab students. Generally speaking, the acceptance of Arab students at Israeli universities is tied to political considerations and is done on a selective basis. Neither the university administrations nor the Ministry of Education recognize the organizations of Arab students.

The share of Arab university students on government financial assistance is almost nil. In 1974, government financial assistance for all university students was 20 million Israeli pounds. The share of Arab students from this amount was 65,000 Israeli pounds, or 0.33 percent. The number of university students with all this assistance was 114,000 of which only 260 were Arab students (0.2 percent of the total). Another form of this discriminatory policy may be seen at the Arabic-language faculties, where Arab students study their mother tongue through lectures in the Hebrew language.

Arab students also suffer from the severe lack of school buildings and facilities. According to a report which was published by a ministerial committee (Garaysy's Committee), the Arab sector was in need of an additional 3,000 school rooms. This number today exceeds 6,000. Many youngsters begin their first day of school under the open sky because of the severe shortage of adequate educational facilities.
Moreover, the vast majority of schools in the Arab sector are more like stables than schools, more suitable for animals than for human beings. The majority of these so-called schools consist of rented rooms scattered all over the village or town. Some of these schools are without any basic amenities, including toilet facilities. There is also a great need for more secondary and vocational schools. The schools which do exist lack suitable furniture, equipment, libraries, laboratories and other facilities enjoyed by the Jewish schools. Physical education in most Arab schools is virtually nonexistent.

Only a small percentage of Arab university and high school graduates are able to find work. Most graduates soon discover that they have no alternative but to learn a new vocation and seek work wherever they can find it.

But the outcome of this educational policy has been the opposite of what its architects had aimed at. The younger generation of Arabs, born in Israel, is more nationally conscious and more politically militant than the older one. This younger generation is the cornerstone of the Arab struggle in Israel for civil and national rights.

F. CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

The Arabs in Israel have achieved much in their struggle against Israel's policy of oppression and discrimination. They have waged numerous brave but costly struggles since the establishment of the state and up to the present day. They have partly succeeded in undermining Israel's policy to Judaize the land; they have prevented the beast of land-plunder from implementing its plans. In their struggle they have become one of the active forces of freedom and democracy in the world.

The general strike on Land Day was a turning point in the struggle, marking a qualitative change in it. The strike caused an earthquake that shook the state from end to end, and overturned its policies and expectations. The sanguinary assault by the repressive forces, intended "to teach the Arabs a lesson," caused a reaction far greater in its effect than the strike itself. This was demonstrated at the funerals of the martyrs who fell in the strike, which were attended by tens of thousands of people.

Although the Arabs in Israel still live under conditions of national oppression affecting all spheres of life, they are no longer the scared and scattered society of 1948. In spite of expulsion, confinement and all forms of repression, the Arabs in Israel have survived and prospered. They have increased in number from 150,000 in 1948 to half a million people today. In 1990 they will become a million, i.e. 22 percent of the total population of the state.
The Arab masses have proven capable of producing progressive intellectuals and experienced political leaders, of consolidating their national identity, and of gradually absorbing revolutionary experiences taking place in other parts of the world. This process began after the 1967 aggression when the interaction between the struggle of the Arabs in Israel and that of the people of the occupied territories developed and grew in strength.

As a result of the systematic and planned expropriation of Arab land, the social structure of the Arabs in Israel changed markedly. The majority of the younger generation became workers, but the number of intellectuals also increased. In the new social class structure, the workers and intellectuals play a decisive role. Greater numbers of the petty bourgeoisie and the middle class, whether urban or rural, have changed their position and taken part in the general struggle. The Arab villages have gradually grown into small towns that feel the desire to modernize.

As a consequence of this dynamic development, political awareness has increased and the drive for unity has become greater. The Arab masses have started to solidify their ranks. The success of the democratic front in Nazareth was a clear expression of this unity and its importance. It created very positive influences in every town and village and at the national level. Democratic and progressive fronts started to emerge in Arab villages. This success brought new hope for the Arab masses and increased their self-confidence. The accomplishments of the new municipality of Nazareth were great, in spite of the fierce political war waged against it, and the financial restrictions to which it was subjected. This gave stark evidence of the potential energy which the Arab masses have, when they are well organized and united.

It must be mentioned that this unity has been built around the Israeli Communist Party, the political leader of the Arabs in Israel since the establishment of the state. This fact is mainly due to two things: to the party's general program which calls for the establishment of a just peace in the area based on the recognition of the national rights of all sides and states; and to its heroic struggle throughout this period, which has resulted in hundreds of comrades being persecuted, jailed and banished.

The Arab masses in Israel have always revealed great political maturity, and have rejected irresponsible infantile revolutionary extremism. They have been fully aware of the authorities' intrigues and conspiracies, the last of which was the attempt by official circles to stir religious strife by exploiting the Lebanese crisis. But all those attempts were nipped in the bud.

The Arabs in Israel are fully aware that the policy of the government
against them is only an integral part of the government's adventuristic, chauvinistic and expansionist policy based on the illusion that it can solve all its problems by the point of the sword. The Arabs in Israel have an important role to play in the struggle for achieving a democratic and just solution of the national problem of the Palestinian Arab people—its right to self determination and to a sovereign national state, and the right of the refugees to return—and for establishing a just and permanent peace between Israel and the Arab world.

A just and democratic solution will create a convenient atmosphere for continuing the democratic struggle and for defeating the policy of racial discrimination and implementing full national equality. This means that land expropriation has to be stopped, and confiscated Arab land must be given back to its legal owners. In addition, the right of the Arabs to exist and to develop on their land and in their homeland must be recognized. The Arabs must have the right of due respect to their culture and national dignity, the right of full representation in the various official and public institutions, and the right of participation in remolding the general policy of the state and the future relations with the Jewish people, which they want to be based on mutual understanding, cooperation and respect. It is encouraging to remember that the democratic and rational Jewish forces that support this just struggle are increasing daily.
ARAB DOCUMENTS ON PALESTINE
AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

[This section is a selection of important documents on Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict issued individually or bilaterally by Arab leaders, governments and political organizations.]


2. Message from President Franjieh of Lebanon to Secretary General of the Arab League Mahmoud Riad rejecting the League’s recent resolutions, Kfour, June 10, 1976.

3. Statement by Lebanese Prime Minister Rashid Karami asking Syria to withdraw its forces from Lebanon, Beirut, June 19, 1976.


5. Press conference statements by Fateh leader Abu Ayyad (Salah Khalaf) reviewing the situation in Lebanon, Beirut, July 3, 1976.

6. Press conference statements by moderate Maronite leader Raymond Eddé criticizing the PLO administration of the western sector in Lebanon, Beirut, July 9, 1976.


10. Inaugural speech by President Assad of Syria on the Lebanese situation made to the Local Councils, Damascus, July 20, 1976.

11. Speech by President Anwar Sadat of Egypt made on the occasion of the twenty-fourth anniversary of the July 25 revolution, Cairo, July 22, 1976.


15. Agreement signed by Syrian Foreign Minister Abdul Halim Khaddam and PLO Political Department Chairman Farouq Qaddoumi on the fundamental points for ending the fighting in Lebanon, Damascus, July 29, 1976.

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE ARAB LEAGUE
SENDING AN ARAB PEACE FORCE INTO LEBAON
TO REPLACE SYRIAN TROOPS. CAIRO. JUNE 9-10, 1976.1

The Council of the League. . .

1. Thanks the Secretary General of the League for having convened the extraordinary meeting.

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1 Published in Le Monde, Paris, June 10, 1976 — Ed.
2. Asks all parties to ceasefire immediately and asks for the stabilization of the ceasefire.

3. Decides to place symbolic Arab security forces under the supervision of the Secretariat of the League, in order to preserve security and stability in Lebanon. These forces will replace the Syrian forces. Their mission is subject to the demands of the President-elect before taking effect.

4. Decides upon the immediate sending of a committee, representing the Council of the League. The committee is to be comprised of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, the Secretary General of the League, and the chiefs of the delegations of Libya and Algeria. This committee must collaborate with all parties in Lebanon to observe the situation and assure the security and the stability in this country.

5. Invites all the parties in Lebanon to a national reconciliation under the aegis of the President-elect, in order to safeguard the unity of the Lebanese people and its territorial integrity.

6. Affirms the Arab pledge to consolidate the Palestinian revolution and to protect it against all dangers.

7. Considers itself in permanent assembly in order to follow the developments of the situation.

**Message from President Franjieh of Lebanon to Secretary General of the Arab League, Mahmoud Riad Rejcting the League's Recent Resolutions, Beirut, June 10, 1976.¹**

Since April 1975, a succession of murderous and bloody events have afflicted Lebanon, causing the collapse of the country and a world-wide uproar of indignation. Since that time, several years ago, when the first symptoms of these events began to appear, Lebanon repeatedly brought the problem to the attention, among others, of the Arab League. But the League as well as the individual Arab states remained unconcerned. The Arab League saw fit to take action only when the Syrian mediation, after several unsuccessful attempts at a peaceful solution, took the form of an armed intervention. The Arab League initiative, however, was not in response to the persistent demands of the Lebanese, but rather in response to the demands of others. It was as if the League was responsive to the voice of those others, even when they were the aggressors, rather than to the voice of justice; it was as if the League had been created to serve some of its members and not others.

Lebanon had on every occasion been in favour of a League meeting, hoping to obtain from it the benefits which it had assumed would automatically accrue to it as a member of the League. But it is contrary to the League's Charter and to the very reasons which had prompted the creation of the League for an Arab League meeting to take place to discuss a Lebanese matter tantamount to the very destiny of this country— and to attempt to make decisions binding on Lebanon without inviting Lebanon to attend or be represented at the meeting by a responsible person. The Lebanese Council of Ministers, which had the sole authority in those matters, had not charged anyone with representing Lebanon.

I have seen fit in a previous letter dated June 9 to caution you and the member states against violating the Charter and breaching the will, spirit, and principles which had been at the basis of its adoption. I reiterated Lebanon's determination not to abide by any resolution taken in its absence, drawing attention to Article VII of the Charter which affirms that a resolution must be accepted by the country concerned before it becomes binding on that country.

In view of all that, Lebanon declares:

First: The resolutions taken yesterday and today by the Arab League dated June 9 and 10, 1976, are null and void and unbinding and shall remain unenforced.

Second: Lebanon refuses in respect to any matter, and particularly in respect to matters pertaining to its destiny, to submit to the will of any but its own children. Consequently, Lebanon will not submit to a decision taken in its absence, particularly since it considers it an arbitrary verdict rather than a decision.

Third: Lebanon will not consent to any Arab country supervising its peace and

¹ Published in al-Safir, Beirut, June 11, 1976 — Ed.
integrity if such a country is party to the war raging on its territories and contributes men and arms to the fighters, and especially if such a country contributes a division to the Palestine Liberation Army.

Fourth: Lebanon censures the attitude of discrimination which the Arab League has taken in that it rejects one demand for intervention but accepts another, depending on the identity of the initiator of the demand rather than on the validity of the justification.

Fifth: Lebanon will resist with all its means and resources any Arab force which enters its territories against its will and without its prior consent, drawing attention to the numerous serious consequences which will result on the international level from this intervention.

Sixth: Should Lebanon feel apprehensive about being foresaken by its brothers, then any messenger of justice in the world would be as a brother and a neighbour to it. Lebanon is determined without any hesitation not to allow its rights to be compromised and its existence to come to an end.

Please accept my best regards.

Out of concern for the unity of ranks between the Syrian brothers on one side and the Palestinian resistance and the national forces on the other, and in an effort to face the dangers which threaten our country, we request Syria to initiate the withdrawal of its forces in order to prevent the renewal of the clashes, widely condemned by Arab public opinion. We urge the Secretary General of the Arab League, Mr. Mahmoud Riad, to speed up the implementation of the Arab League resolutions of June 9 and 10, related to this issue, because delaying and diffusing those resolutions instead of enforcing them would create doubts about their seriousness and usefulness.

Moreover we draw the attention of all, warning them of the manoeuverings of the Kfour Front especially that which led to the appointment of President Camille Chamoun as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. We announce our rejection of this action and any other action which might result in any foreign intervention by any side, hoping that our Lebanese brothers would understand the dangers of the situation, and would adopt the national stance which preserves the unity of Lebanon and her safety.

4

PRESS STATEMENT BY LEBANESE PHALANGIST LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL ON THE ROLE OF THE ARAB PEACE FORCE. BEIRUT, JUNE 22, 1976.3
[EXcerpts]

Syria’s position could be explained as reflecting a thorough understanding of the Lebanese problem. One must overlook what is being said and rumoured about Syrian aspirations in Lebanon and about alleged conspiracies to which the Syrian regime may or may not be a party. They accuse Hafez Assad of helping the Christians in Lebanon and taking sides with them in the fighting. In my opinion, the accusers are either ignorant of the facts or they entertain ulterior motives. As I understand things, what Hafez Assad did was to attempt to treat the Christian fear of Arabism. Although Christians do not object to, and are not hesitant towards Arabism it still raises among them a feeling of caution rather than of confidence. Assad tried to reassure the Christians that they were not aliens in this part of the world; he did this at a time when all the other Arab countries, influenced by confessional considerations, had foresaken them and supported without hesitation or reservation the second party which consists mainly of Palestinians and Moslems.

I remember a sentence that appeared in the “Defenders of the Cedars” memor-

1 Published in al-Safir, Beirut, June 20, 1976 — Ed.
2 The Kfour Front is a grouping of rightist Maronite forces, namely those of Camille Chamoun, Suleiman Franjieh, Pierre Gemayel and Sharbel Qassis — Ed.
3 Published in al-Nahar, Beirut, June 23, 1976 — Ed.
andum in which they threatened to seek aid from Israel. I wonder here how extreme the disillusionment with Arabs and Arabism has become to drive some of us in that direction. Is that not because for the past fourteen months the Arab countries were either indifferent observers of the Lebanese massacres or else one-sidedly involved? Moreover, none of the Arab countries and none of the Arab leaders have tried to ask the Christians what is the cause of their attitude toward Palestinians. Worse than that, all Arab aid was reaching the second party as if the Christians were not children of this country or this region. Hafez Assad declared that the Lebanese Christians are brothers and if any misunderstanding between them and the Palestinians and Moslems occurred, that does not mean that they alone are wrong and the others right; he said that it is not permissible that the other Arab countries should foresake the Christians as if they were foreigners.

Here, Hafez Assad's stance reminds me of Riad Solh's, both having had a deep understanding of the Lebanese problem. The question is, Arabism is either a mere religious tie meaningful only to Moslems, or it is a humanitarian tie meaningful to both parties without distinction. It is on this basis that we welcomed the Syrians and accepted their intervention after we had always refused it in the past. We have realized the extent of President Assad's appreciation of the Lebanese question: He gives me the impression of wanting to say to the Lebanese Christians: It is enough that Damascus, the heart of Arabism, is being a peace conciliator between you and the Moslems to reassure you that Arabism is a call for love and peace.

It is therefore very important for us that the Arab peace force abides by this line and moves within the framework of the basis and essence of the Syrian initiative. For when the Arabs cooperate with the Palestinians who illegitimately occupy half the country and fight unjustifiably on the mountain tops, who interfere in everything without a legitimate right, when the Arabs side with them and ignore, as they have until recently done, the situation of the Christians, they present Israel with an additional argument and give cause to the partitioning of Lebanon. The Arabs should either act as intermediaries of good and peace among the Lebanese or they should let Syria complete its mission. On this sole basis do we accept the Arab peace force. At any rate, we observe closely and we shall adopt, vis-à-vis any alterations and any devious utilization of the Arab and even the Syrian mediation, the stance which is dictated by the interests of the country.

5

PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENTS BY FATEH LEADER ABU AYYAD (SALAH KHALAF) REVIEWING THE SITUATION IN LEBANON. BEIRUT, JULY 5, 1976. 1 [EXCERPTS]

One must of course draw a link between the Syrian forces stopping at Saida and what has been happening for the past 13 days in Tal al-Zaatar. It is not at all a coincidence that this camp of Tal al-Zaatar, in which live some 14,000 Palestinian men, women, children and men of religion, as well as 17,000 Lebanese, has been under siege since April 13 [1975] in an isolationist area. Every now and then, supplies were permitted to pass. But since March 11 [1976] to be exact, it has not received either medicine or supplies. As a result of the Syrian invasion water and electricity have been cut off. The wounded have no medication and the people have neither water or food. It is no accident that this camp with its Lebanese inhabitants was attacked the day the Syrian military began to withdraw. There was a Syrian plan... to strike at this camp in order to achieve several objectives:

First, they know that we will never acquiesce in the fall of Tal al-Zaatar and, therefore, fighting would break out all over if the isolationists overrun the camp. Hence they would be making it appear to the Arab countries as if the Palestine revolution and the Lebanese national movement were responsible for wrecking the Arab initiative and the work of the Arab peace-keeping forces. . . .

Second, it would then appear as if the Syrian advance, if it continued, would have ended the fighting. Thus the Syrians would appear ready to play the role of the Arab

1 Published in Wafa, Beirut, July 4, 1976 — Ed.
forces whose mission had been wrecked by the resistance and the Lebanese national movement.

Third, this is an important point which we shall discuss in detail at the end of the press conference, namely, what the Syrians want by being in the Beq'a and in other areas under their control.

I would like to mention certain simple points and events which prove collusion between the Syrians and the isolationists as regards the attack on Tal al-Zaatar.

First, they know that the presence of troops in Saida and Sofar would immobilize at least eight or nine of our battalions, and these battalions would thus be unavailable for the fight against the isolationists. It is no accident that today they have delayed their withdrawal. . . . Every day they delay their withdrawal so that we will not be able to withdraw any of our troops for the battle of Tal al-Zaatar.

Second, four or five days ago, a delegation from the Kfour Front was visiting Damascus. They sent us an offer from Damascus at a meeting which included the Syrian Deputy Prime Minister, Muhammad Haydar and [Libyan Prime Minister] Abdul Salam Jalloud and two of our brothers in the central command of Fatah [Abu Mazin and Abu Mahir]. The offer given by President Assad to Muhammad Haydar by telephone included the following:

1. A guarantee by Syria that Tal al-Zaatar would not fall.
2. A ceasefire throughout Lebanon.
3. A Lebanese-Lebanese political dialogue.

If we as a resistance accepted the offer, we were to declare our adherence to the Cairo Agreement and its annexes and call upon the Lebanese to undertake a dialogue. . . . We know that this offer was a ploy and not genuine and yet we accepted it. . . . The answer was that the Kfour delegation was not empowered to act and would have to return to Kfour to discuss the offer. This is proof of the extent of collusion between the Kfour Front and Damascus.

Dr. Hassan Sabri al-Kholi arrived five days ago, the same day that the Kfour delegation was in Damascus. Naturally I asked him if he knew anything about the matter. He said no and expressed surprise at the isolationist offer, which came via Damascus. Nevertheless, he went the next day to Kfour and after a seven-hour discussion he called us on the phone and asked me for a ceasefire, just a few hours before the fall of Jisr al-Basha camp. . . . I said: we agree. I made one condition which is recorded in the minutes of Dr. Kholi. I told him there was a siege and many troops were massing before the camp. I do not want to review what they, as their wont, did in the camp. Although I do not have any sectarian feelings, and do not wish to use sectarian language, I should mention that the inhabitants of the camp are Christian Maronites. Those who claim that they carry the cross and defend it have done to this Christian camp more than they did to Maslakh and Karantina. . . . Hassan Sabri al-Kholi went again to Kfour and asked us to exercise self-control. We said we would maintain a state of self-defence, especially in this heroic and besieged camp. Once again Kholi returned from Kfour bringing with him seven points relating to the ceasefire, the opening of the port and the airport and other points of procedure, to all of which we agreed.

But throughout the period that Kholi was meeting with the Kfour Front, troops kept massing in a big way. This attracted our attention to the extent that we ran a few trial skirmishes. We were astonished by the results, for we know precisely the strength of isolationist forces. Where did they get all this 'force'? Let us mention at this point two incidents which are no longer secret. The first concerns the arrival of four ships carrying large numbers of people to the port of Jounieh before the battle of Tal al-Zaatar. I do not know precisely what their nationality is. . . . I would not exclude at all the possibility that they could be Israelis complete with their arms.

The second incident: a reliable source from their side informed us that a Syrian battalion, serial number 234, together with about 30 tanks, was giving support to the isolationists in the positions from which they had been driven out. Two members of this battalion escaped to our lines and were prepared to hold a press conference to tell all they knew about this battalion, which is
present in the isolationist areas. But we refused because of considerations relating to the security of their families and other reasons which I cannot mention now.

Kholi returned . . . When we gave him an account of the siege and the massing of troops at Tal al-Zaatar, he was surprised and said, "On the contrary, Chamoun left the place of meeting in order to prevent the massing of troops around Tal al-Zaatar and to withdraw them." I believe Kholi sent a message to Mahmoud Riad and another to the Syrians by way of Riad to say that 'the solution is in your hands and you can, if you want, stop the isolationist attack.'

The third point has to do with the Arab initiative of Mahmoud Riad and the Arab League delegation which met the leaders of the resistance and the national movement.

Riad, in the name of the Arab League, contacted the Kfour Front individually and requested each one of them to send observers to Tal al-Zaatar far from the Arab peacekeeping force so that the ceasefire would be a real one. The answer from all of them and from Franjieh was to refer the matter to Gemayel, who said that this could not be discussed on the phone. He told Riad: "If you can come here tomorrow at 12:00 or 1:00 we can agree, especially since the statement made by your crowd [he meant the Palestinians and the national movement] concerning the ceasefire was not clear and expressed no commitment to the Cairo Agreement. We cannot do anything, and we refuse to allow the Arab forces to go to Tal al-Zaatar." After a lengthy discussion, I might as well reveal that Riad and his delegation returned at once to Damascus without meeting any other Lebanese leader, because he realized that the key to the problem was in Damascus and not in the Kfour Front. . . .

Once again I ask: What do the Syrians want from the occupation of Tal al-Zaatar by the isolationists? There is one thing I would like to affirm and to declare to the entire Arab nation and to world public opinion: . . . if the camp is overrun the very word ceasefire will be struck out of our dictionary and that of the national movement.

This region will become a new Vietnam. Everything that is now being said about a political dialogue and other dialogues will be struck out from the dictionary of the national movement. We shall call things by their proper names. I do not think that the Arab peace force and the Arab states collectively are unable to stop the isolationists from overrunning Tal al-Zaatar. . . . I cannot but believe that there is a major plot of which the Syrian regime is the spearhead. But to be fair, there is also an Arab collusion, an Arab silence.

President Sarkis confessed to me that tanks and arms had arrived for Chamoun forty days ago from Israel and he officially took possession of them. I apologize to President Sarkis but I find myself forced to mention the incident.

When Amin Gemayel made his famous statement in which he supported the Palestinian revolution and most of the programme of the national movement, Jean 'Ubayd told me that Gemayel had said: We have received an Israeli offer but we have so far refused. This was forty days ago. We in the Phalangist Party turned the offer down but Chamoun accepted the Israeli offer and he is now using it in his fighting. . . .

At a meeting with Jalloud attended by Bashir Gemayel and Sheikh Alexander Gemayel at which I was present, I shook hands with Bashir and said, you are a fighter and you have a cause. He confessed that he had not received any arms from the Israelis but that Chamoun had done so. Naturally I applauded his decision because he had not accepted any arms from the Israelis.

The second story I want to cite as proof of the isolationists receiving arms and perhaps fighters from Israel is the secret trip of Sharbel Qassis. Here we must put in brackets that Qassis had lived in occupied Palestine for some time. Ten days ago or more he travelled to Israel and Comrade Majid [Abu Sharar] here has a document proving that he made the trip. I do not know what he did there but it is certain that he accepted an offer of arms. I do not know whether he also accepted an offer of men, but I am sure that

1 Jean 'Ubayd is a notable from Zgharta who has maintained close ties with the left, right and Syria, and has generally played a role of intermediary — Ed.
an offer of arms was concluded between Qassis and the Israelis in the occupied land.

What do the Syrians want with their occupation of Lebanon? Let us state in all frankness that they want to join the whole of the Beq'a to Syria, to give the South to Israel and to create a small Christian canton in what is called the region of the Kfour Front. This is the American plan which has been condoned by some Arab regimes and which the Syrian regime is now attempting to spearhead and implement.

Thus our battle from now on will not be with the Kfour Front alone but with the Syrian regime. This regime, led by President Hafez al-Assad, bears a great responsibility if the isolationists and their allies overrun Tal al-Zaatar.

The situation is going from bad to worse. The Palestinian resistance wanted to take care of everything and became incapable of controlling even the basic problems. Let's start with security. Thefts are widespread in all quarters and are carried out by armed men who may or may not belong to this organization or that. The Palestinian Revolution, if it is really a revolution, has to declare that every person who steals and is caught red-handed will be executed within 24 hours at the scene of his offense, and that every person who drives a car he does not own will be executed summarily. The Revolution does not have to enforce the law itself but has to take such necessary restraining measures to keep order.

In this respect, I would like to draw the attention of those responsible in Fateh to the fact that the Moslems are more discontented than the Christians. In order for things to quiet down it is necessary to execute a few persons who are carrying out these disorders.

Concerning flour, telephone service and fuel supply, Fateh should leave these problems to the Lebanese administration, such as the Ministry of the Economy, and when necessary help in securing foodstuffs, fuel and flour. If these measures are not taken, emigration of Moslems will increase even more than emigration of Christians.

I am sorry that I have to discuss these mundane matters and take up the matter again after I had already discussed it in closed meetings with certain officials. The Lebanese who could not tolerate the misbehaviour of Sa'iqa will not tolerate the misbehaviour taking place now. There will come a day when the Lebanese who refuse the Syrian occupation will refuse any other occupation including the one they agreed to against my advice.

We, the undersigned, have agreed to form the "National Unity Front" which places at the top of its list of urgent concerns, during these times, the following basic objectives:

1. Intercepting all efforts to partition Lebanon into two or more divisions, or to relinquish any part of its land, while maintaining Lebanon as an independent, free, democratic and Arab republic.

2. Working to secure the withdrawal of the Syrian army from all Lebanese land and demanding the enforcement of the Arab League resolutions.

1 Published in al-Nahar, Beirut, July 10, 1976 — Ed.

2 The National Unity Front is a non-sectarian grouping of Lebanese politicians created principally by moderate Maronite leader Raymond Edde and traditional Muslim politicians including Saeb Salam, Rashid Solh and Rashid Karami. Its main aim is to prevent the partition of Lebanon, secure the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon, and bring about an end to the conflict through dialogue — Ed.
3. Reiterating the necessity that the Palestine resistance with all its troops should abide by the obligation of carrying out the agreements made with the Lebanese state, and all the addenda to those arguments, out of due respect for Lebanese sovereignty.

Memorandum Issued by the Islamic Grouping of Lebanon, Beirut. July 12, 1976. [Excerpts]

Unanimous agreement was reached on the following:

1. Those attending this meeting declare their adherence to the unity of Lebanon, land and people, maintaining it as an independent, free, Arab homeland.

2. The Palestinian presence on the Lebanese land is a forced presence of brothers who were expelled from their homes. The national duty as well as human obligation necessitates the commitment to aid them in the struggle to free their land and to attain their full rights.

If this presence has created misunderstandings which were regulated through agreements within the limits of Lebanese sovereignty. The vicious attack carried out by a group of Lebanese against the Palestinians and against the rest of the Lebanese cannot be justified by the breaches of these agreements or by the mistakes of this quarter or that. Sound treatment is only through dialogue and understanding.

3. A number of the causes of the Lebanese crisis... do not affect Lebanon only, but affect all regions of the Arab nation. Because of this, Arab interest necessitates the quick enforcement of the Arab League resolutions of June 9 and 10, 1976, which specify a ceasefire, the formation of an Arab peace force, and the withdrawal of the Syrian army.

4. The worsening of events following the circumstances which had compelled a two-thirds majority of Parliament to agree on demanding the resignation of the President of the Republic... calls on us today more than ever to demand the enforcement of this popular and parliamentary desire.

Joint Communique Issued by the Governments of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Sudan, Jiddah. July 17-19, 1976. [Excerpts]

His Majesty the King and the two Presidents [Sadat and Numairi] agreed that the national responsibility of all parties as well as the security of the two brotherly peoples, the Lebanese and the Palestinians, require that an immediate end be put to all acts of hostility and violence, without any delay, as well as to all provocative acts and transgressions which threaten the lives of the innocent and destroy their livelihood.

The leaders deplored the continuation of the fighting at a time when the Arab nation had looked forward to the ending of the bloody tragedy in Lebanon and the creation of the right atmosphere for a roundtable conference of national reconciliation.

The leaders called upon all the parties to cease from any acts or measures which openly or implicitly conflict with the resolutions of the Council of the Arab League, impede their implementation or prevent the Arab peacekeeping force from carrying out its mission effectively and decisively in order to permit pacification and reconciliation to play their constructive roles.

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1 The Islamic grouping includes the most prominent traditional leaders of the Lebanese Muslim community, notably former Prime Ministers Saeb Salam and Rashid Karami — Ed.
2 Published in al-Nahar, Beirut, July 20, 1976 — Ed.
Brothers,

When the events in Lebanon began several months ago, we had our own interpretation of these events, an interpretation that was shared by many Arab forces which claim to be nationalist and progressive. Indeed, our interpretation was shared by many parties in Lebanon who call themselves nationalist as well as by groups of the Palestinian resistance. We argued that the events of Lebanon were the result of an imperialist plan which seeks, first, to cover up for the Sinai Agreement, second, to drag in the resistance, smash it, liquidate the camps, and embarrass Syria, and, third, to partition Lebanon. This is what we say and what they used to say. In my estimation, if we ask them today, they might still repeat the same words. Here someone may ask: Why should Syria be embarrassed and what has Syria to do with events taking place in Lebanon? I would like you, fellow citizens, to pay special attention to this question because there are people who are posing this question abroad whose aim is really to infiltrate our ranks at home. They ask, what have we to do with the events of Lebanon and what ties Syria to the Lebanese events?

First: The plot, among its other aims, seeks to strike at a cause which is the cause of every Syrian citizen in this country.

Second: Throughout history, Syria and Lebanon have been one country, one nation. This in turn created genuine common interests and a real and common security. Today we see before us the results of this common history and geography: before the recent events some half million Syrians worked in Lebanon in various fields: merchants, doctors, scholars and so forth. They have returned to Syria because of the events. In Syria there are now at least one-half million Lebanese refugees, one-half million of our people who have returned from Lebanon, and about 150,000 Palestinians who were previously residing in Lebanon. As a result of these events, about one million people have entered Syria.

Naturally, brothers, no one can possibly think that I am saying all this, or that any Syrian citizen can say this because we are fed up with all those brothers who have come to Syria. ... I said what I had to say only in order to point to a problem created by the events in Lebanon, to indicate the size of that problem and to cite a living problem by way of answering those who ask from beyond our borders, why Syria?

As we know, the partition of Lebanon is a historic objective of international Zionism. ... This partition is not desired by Israel because of Lebanon's military importance. Lebanon, whether united or divided, does not at present constitute a burden to Israel and is not expected to become a military burden within the foreseeable future as far as Israel is concerned. ... Israel seeks the partition of Lebanon for a political and ideological reason. It is superfluous to mention that Israel wants to create small sectarian states in this part of the world so that it can become the strongest of them all. ... Israel wants the partition of Lebanon in order to discredit the motto of a secular democratic state.

This has been our interpretation of the events in Lebanon, an interpretation we shared with others. We said that this plot can only achieve its objectives by fighting. Therefore, to foil the plot, we must stop the fighting. ... We began to work to that end. We exerted a political as well as a military effort. ... At one point, the balance of power was unequal and the fighting could not stop. Because of this, we were obliged to furnish arms and ammunition. We gave arms to those who are now attacking us and

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1 Published in al-Nahar, Beirut, July 21, 1976 — Ed.
denying our sacrifices and efforts. . . . Our political decision. . . to work for an end to the fighting, had Arab as well as international dimensions. We tried as far as possible to narrow the problem down in Lebanon because we believed, and they believed, that the widening of the problem in the Arab and international fields served the interests of the plot and not vice versa. . . .

In spite of our political efforts and our military efforts where we supplied large quantities of arms and ammunition of various kinds, . . . the day came when the front held by the parties and the Palestinian resistance in Lebanon collapsed and they could no longer stand on their own. They then sent us. . . messages for help urging us to expend further efforts, in addition to the efforts we had already made.

One day in the middle of January, as I recall, the Foreign Minister contacted me and said that he had been contacted by phone by the [Lebanese] Muslim summit meeting in Aramoun. . . . they requested the Foreign Minister to ask me to contact President Suleiman Franjieh and ask him to stop the fighting because the situation was very bad. I told the Foreign Minister that I would not do so and that they must hold out.

Less than fifteen minutes later, the Foreign Minister called again to say that they had contacted him once again to say that they were in very bad shape, that certain quarters had fallen, that the Phalangists were sweeping everything in their path. Again I told him, I will not call and that they must hold out. In saying this, brothers, I was not just being hesitant or unwilling to make any effort for we knew perfectly well that the resistance and nationalist parties had more arms and ammunition than the entire Lebanese army, not just the Phalangists and [National] Liberals. . . . Of course, the Lebanese army was not a party to the conflict at all.

After a while, the Minister called me a third time and said that the situation was very bad and that they urgently requested me to contact President Suleiman Franjieh. In point of fact, news arrived of the fall of Maslakh, Karantina and other places. They said then that if we did not quickly make contact, the Phalangists would surround the western area and that the road was open before them. . . .

At that point, I found I had to make that contact. I called President Suleiman Franjieh and told him, among other things, that a serious massacre was taking place which would have repercussions everywhere, and urged him to act quickly to stop it and avoid its dangers. . . .

President Suleiman Franjieh and I had a telephone discussion and we ended by agreeing on a ceasefire to come into effect at a certain hour that night. . . . Afterwards, there were further reports of escalation in the fighting and of the situation worsening.

Here in Damascus, we held a meeting with some of our comrades in the leadership and deliberated about what we could do to save the situation. We had undertaken political efforts. We had given arms. We had given ammunition. All this was there in plenty and yet could not save the situation. Therefore we found we had no alternative but to intervene directly. Naturally we debated the problem. . . from all angles. We discussed the dangers of intervention and the possibilities of war with Israel. We had two choices then: either not to intervene and thus the resistance would have collapsed in Lebanon in view of the military situation and of the appeals for help, or we would intervene to save the resistance and expose ourselves to the risk of war.

We debated the possibility of war. . . But the plot in Lebanon had certain objectives and if Israel were to attack us and a war broke out, the war would have achieved the opposite of what the plot aimed at. Nevertheless, war was a possibility and no war was also a possibility. . . . We decided to intervene under the guise of the Palestine Liberation Army. The Palestine Liberation Army began to enter Lebanon. No one knows this at all. Those who now speak in the name of Palestine are living in self-delusion and disowning all the efforts we made on their behalf—those people did not know about the decision to bring the Palestine Liberation Army and knew about it only when it was inside Lebanon. We did not consult them or the nationalist parties. Naturally, none of them was prepared to discuss with us any measure we took. The important thing was that they wanted us to do something to save them.

After the Aramoun contacts, in fact the same day, the leaders of the nationalist
parties came to Syria. They spent a long time in the Foreign Ministry and stayed till late at night... discussing the problem and seeking solutions and an honourable end to their predicament while we were moving the army into Lebanon to defend them and the Palestinian resistance.

The following morning, I received them in my house and Kamal Junblatt was with them. Junblatt had been in Aramoun when they were calling the Foreign Minister by phone. Later he came to Syria and the following morning I received him together with those other party leaders.

During our conversation, President Suleiman Franjieh called me... He was, and I say this openly, an honourable man in his dealings with us and stuck to his word. He said that Syrian troops were entering Lebanon. I reminded him of our conversation the day before and told him that the situation was critical. I said, “I hope that the Arabs will understand our position. We have a fixed policy with regard to the Palestinians. There is a red line as far as they are concerned and we do not allow anyone to cross it”...

In any event, we ended the telephone conversation by agreeing to form a commission to proceed to Lebanon and work for a cease-fire. This was done. You remember the Syrian delegation that went to Lebanon, the discussion it held, the many meetings. The important thing is that soon thereafter a cease-fire went into effect. As is well known, we quickly began to create the right atmosphere and a constructive spirit which would help everyone to work faithfully and in cooperation.

The ceasefire began. We said we should consolidate the ceasefire. Let us see what the resistance wants. We got the resistance leaders to come to the Foreign Ministry in Damascus. They were led by Yasser Arafat and the other leaders were also present. We said, “Write down what you want in Lebanon.” They wrote this down themselves and we took it to the Lebanese authorities and debated the problem. The Lebanese authorities agreed to everything they had written without deleting a single letter. The agreement is here before me and I might as well read the text to you:

“Lebanese-Palestinian relations,” these are the very words of the Palestinian leaders.

“1. The Palestine Liberation Organization is the only representative of the Palestinian people in Lebanon. No other representative can be recognized.” This was meant to bolster the status of the Palestine Liberation Organization so that no one could defy it and the state would not recognize anything except the Palestine Liberation Organization.

“2. The Palestine Liberation Organization is responsible for Palestinian affairs inside the camps.

“3. The Palestine Liberation Organization has the right to take any measures inside the camps to safeguard itself against any external attack.

“4. The Palestine Liberation Organization has the right to exercise all the rights given to it in accordance with the Cairo Agreement and its appendices.

“5. The Palestinian presence in Lebanon should not be opposed or harmed.

“6. The security of the Palestinian resistance or its presence in Lebanon should not be opposed or harmed”.

What else does the resistance want? What else does the Palestine Liberation Organization want? This is the part of the text which relates to Lebanese-Palestinian relations. Is all this necessary for the Palestine Liberation Organization to undertake its work against Israel? I say no. Nevertheless, the authorities in Lebanon agreed to everything I have just read. But as we hear on the radio, they now want to deceive Arab public opinion, and perhaps also the world, into thinking that they are defending the Palestinian resistance,... The truth of the matter is that there are forces inside Lebanon and on the international scene which seek to enslave the Palestinian resistance into carrying out their tactical and strategic aims. The Palestinian resistance is now fighting for the objectives of others and against the best interests and aims of the Palestinian people.

Following this agreement, we said there were national problems remaining. Out of a spirit of brotherhood and because we knew of many failures which needed to be made good at this stage by the Lebanese authorities, because of all this we said we must exert
a brotherly effort so as to achieve something of value. . . . We agreed upon certain measures which were termed national acts of reform. . . . These were written down on paper and this was later on called "the Constitutional Document." This document contained at least 95 percent of what the nationalist parties had proposed. I will add that we in Syria proposed certain things which had not been put forth by the parties, e.g., the specific reference to the Arab character of Lebanon which had not been proposed before by the parties. The authorities agreed. Hence, agreement was reached to organize Lebanese-Palestinian relations and the Constitutional Document which embodied national reforms was also accepted.

There are in Lebanon thousands of people, resident there for many years, who do not have Lebanese nationality. Most Arab leaders know the Lebanese situation and many have mediated, struggled and laboured to solve this problem, to no avail. This problem was finally solved as cited in the Constitutional Document, and it was agreed to grant Lebanese nationality to everyone.

The problem of the sectarian nature of public office was one from which all Lebanese citizens suffered. The only gainers were a certain class of leaders. It was now agreed to do away with the sectarian nature of office. Later on I gathered that this measure had rekindled the war because the cancellation of the sectarian nature of public office had cancelled the privileges of some people despite the fact that they themselves were calling for the cancellation. . . .

The document specified equality of all, the formation of a constitutional court, economic and social reforms, the Arab character of Lebanon and the granting of nationality, mentioned earlier, as well as the repeal of sectarianism. Many things were specified: in fact the totality of the question proposed, as I indicated before.

The ceasefire came into effect in a real manner. The days passed. So far, as I remember, fifty days had passed when suddenly a military coup d'état took place on March 11. I do not want to talk about the men who carried it out. They may be good people; I do not know any of them. Their aim may have been solely the good of Lebanon. But if this was what they wanted, they missed their objective. This coup, one can state unhesitantly without debating it further, did not strengthen the ceasefire or the document embodying national reforms, nor did it serve the interests of the Palestinian resistance by continuing the ceasefire and freeing the resistance to turn its attention to the Israeli enemy. The coup was apparently a challenge not posed before, namely the resignation of the President of the Republic, especially since his term of office was to have ended five months later.

Yasser Arafat came to see me three or four days later and asked me to try to convince the President to resign. I must confess I was astonished by this request and told him then: "I will not make any effort at all to do so and I believe that the organizers of the coup have nothing to do with the interests of Lebanon. The resignation or otherwise of the President is not a basic problem as far as the Lebanese masses are concerned." Arafat went away without obtaining any promise from me to do anything. The following morning, we met and felt that it was our duty not to despair as long as the problem concerned a people who are brothers to us. . . . We decided to contact all parties to the dispute. Syrian delegations went to Lebanon and Lebanese delegations came here and the question was discussed from all angles. . . .

As a result, and in the light of safeguarding legitimacy, to which all adhered. . . . we reached agreement on the following:

1. Amending one article of the constitution to permit the election of a new president before the six month period preceding the end of the term of office of the previous president.

2. The election of a new president.

3. Moving on to the resignation of the current president.

Having reached this accord, the fighting broke out again violently. . . . As the fighting went on, they kept saying that the President of the Republic must resign.

During this period, Arafat asked us to receive Kamal Junblatt. We told Arafat,
“Why should we receive Kamal Junblatt when he insisted on prolonging the fighting, while we in Syria and you also feel that the fighting itself was paving the way for the plot and its objectives? He said, “No, these are just statements made for local consumption in typical Lebanese fashion. Pay no attention to them. Everything is proceeding well.” We received Kamal Junblatt and I had a lengthy meeting with him... We reviewed the events of Lebanon from the beginning... and I said to him, “We agree with your analysis of the Lebanese events and we have all laboured to stop the fighting. We have helped you politically and militarily.... Despite this, you were unable to endure and so we entered Lebanon and risked a military confrontation with Israel. We gave the resistance all the guarantees it had asked for.... We discussed the national reforms and agreed to the Constitutional Document, which embodied 90 to 95 percent of what you had proposed. Then the coup took place and raised the question of the resignation of the President although this had not been a problem before and we had not been in its favour. You supported the aims of the coup, namely the resignation of the President. We made our contacts and did our best to arrive at an accord on this point. When we got the accord, you yourselves began the fighting again.... So far we are satisfied with what we have done.... Now, after what has happened, we would like to know what you really want....

The Constitutional Document was discussed and I believe there were no basic objections.... Junblatt said, “We have formed a committee to study the document and they found it obscure.” I said to him these were broad lines of policy for future action and each article needs certain decisions and regulations and laws. It is there that the meaning is clarified and you can do what you like. But we cannot do this here and there is no need at present for further details and specifications.

He spoke about secularization.... He wants a secular state in Lebanon.... I said... The Phalangists too are enthusiastic about secularization. When the Phalangist Party leaders visited us, headed by Sheikh Pierre Gemayel, I personally asked him about this and he said, “I will not accept any alternative to secularism; I insist upon a secular state in Lebanon.” I posed this question to the Mufti and to Sayyid Musa al-Sadr and to some premiers and speakers of the chamber, who refused secularism because it touched the essence of the Muslim religion.... It is the Muslims in Lebanon who refuse secularism and not vice versa, because the question concerns the substance of Islam.... He said, “Pay no attention to them, they represent nothing”.... I said, “The question is not one of representation but is one that touches the Islamic religion and as such it must not be underestimated”....

He said, “Let us really teach them a lesson. A decisive military solution is inevitable. They have ruled us for 140 years. We want to be rid of them.” At this point I realized that all the masks had fallen away.... Therefore, the real problem was not what we used to say nor what was being said to us. It was not a problem of right and left, progressive and reactionary, Muslim and Christian. The problem was one of a vendetta and revenge.... which went back 140 years in time....

Brothers, Kamal Junblatt left the meeting and I had the impression that he insisted on prolonging the fighting. I said to him, “Do not rely on our support. We cannot go along with you down a road which you and we both agree is the road laid down by the plot.”

The following day, or rather the same day, I called Yasser Arafat. I received him the following day with some comrades and spoke to them at length repeating a lot of what I had said to Kamal Junblatt. I repeated to them what I have just mentioned, and discussed with them the risks of a decisive military solution to the conflict, which he had called for.

Here, brothers, I would like to say something about a military settlement to the conflict.... A decisive military solution between two parties within a single homeland is impossible. Such a solution of an issue means the total eradication of the issue itself. It means a radical solution to the problem. In this sense and when applied to a country like Lebanon, this solution is impossible. The solution is not only a matter of force but demands other factors which are at present non-existent in Lebanon.
But if what is meant by a decisive military solution is the creation of a state of coercion on the Lebanese scene, this, if it comes about, would have truly dangerous consequences. If we postulate a plot on the one hand, a decisive military solution, if it can be achieved, would accomplish the aims of the plot on the other. In this sense, a solution of this kind would create a new problem in Lebanon and in the region. A problem will arise, and we do not know now what name to give it. . . . But we can certainly affirm without hesitation that in case of a decisive military victory, a very dangerous problem will be created which would occupy our attention, the attention of the region and of the world. . . . It will be a problem of a defeated people with whom the world will sympathize since the world always sympathizes with the vanquished. This would be the first consequence of a decisive military outcome of the kind they want to accomplish. The second consequence would be that the world would try to find a solution to this problem. As you see, the world does its best to find solutions to problems, especially major problems, problems of nations, problems of vanquished people. . . . The problem that will arise will be solved by the world. And what sort of solution will that be?

We can all imagine that this solution can be nothing but the partition of Lebanon. . . . A partition of violence and coercion. This partition will in turn create additional and grave dangers which would differ from those that might arise if partition is done without violence.

A state will come into being for the vanquished, a state filled with bitterness that is handed down from one generation to the next as a result of the coercion they had undergone. They will forswear all Arab values and all Islamic values since Islam is the religion of the majority in the Arab homeland. . . . As a result of this series of coercions this state will be even more dangerous and more hostile than Israel.

Thirdly, a decisive military solution in this fashion will, as you can all imagine, open the door wide to foreign, and especially Israeli intervention. We can all imagine the extent of the disaster that might ensue if Israel were to intervene and save some Arabs from other fellow Arabs.

Fourthly, such a decisive military solution would entail many negative consequences for the Palestinian cause, whether inside the Palestinian ranks or on the level of world public opinion and the support it has given to Palestine and to the Arab struggle. . . .

In the middle of April we held a meeting with resistance leaders which lasted the whole night, as I recall. The following morning we made public the points we had agreed upon. This was the communiqué issued on April 16, 1976. . . . We reviewed the situation in the region as a whole and in Lebanon in particular. We analyzed and assessed the various aspects of the Lebanese crisis and the dangers of its continuation and we reached an agreement of views on all matters. . . . The two sides affirmed their concern for the people of Lebanon and for its security, stability and territorial integrity. They called upon the brotherly people of Lebanon to work to stop the fighting and the bloodshed. The two sides agreed also upon the following:

1. We agreed therefore to take effective measures against any side that would resume military operations. Of course, the same people who agreed with us were the ones who resumed military operations.

2. To reconstitute the Higher Syrian-Palestinian-Lebanese Military Committee to effectuate a ceasefire and to supervise it until a new president is elected who would determine what security measures were needed, in accordance with his constitutional authority.

3. To resist partition in all its forms and any measure or act that would harm the unity of Lebanon of its territory and people.

4. To reject American plans and solutions in Lebanon.

5. To adhere to the continuation of the Syrian initiative.

6. To reject internationalization of the conflict and the entry of any international troops into Lebanon.

7. To reject Arabization of the crisis in Lebanon.

This accord did not see the light of day and was not put into effect. What happened was that on June 6, after this accord, Fateh, as well as other Palestinian groups and some
parties which call themselves nationalist parties in Lebanon, carried out a deliberate and complete attack against the offices of the Union of the Forces of the Working People, the Sa'iqa offices, the offices of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist party, the positions and offices of the Palestine Liberation Army and other offices of certain parties in the National Front, and without any warning . . . . We moved some of our troops in order to restore matters to normal, then stopped these troops before they reached Beirut as a result of the urging of our Algerian and Libyan brothers.

The resistance leaders who had carried out this operation screamed out loud and went berserk when they knew we were advancing on Beirut. They called the Libyan premier and the Algerian minister and asked us to stop our troops from advancing and matters would return to what they were before . . . . We welcomed the idea. They informed us the same night that they had released those whom they had captured, vacated the offices occupied and would release Kamal Shatila, Secretary-General of the Union of the Forces of the Working People, so that he would appear on television to deny the statement they had issued in his name. The problem, they said, was a passing one. We were pleased. We had no intention of reaching Beirut, and we wanted to solve the problem . . . without being forced to enter Beirut.

But what happened, unfortunately, was the opposite as it became apparent that their words were not sincere. They occupied the offices, arresting some and killing others belonging to the groups already mentioned and also attacked Syrian troops that had previously gone in to help them . . . . In spite of this, we maintained our troops in their positions and ordered our troops to defend themselves only, restricting self-defence to its narrowest limits. Our troops were infantry, having no guns or tanks or other support formations which are generally supplied in armies. We did not give them any support and although the Syrian air force was flying over Beirut, we did not allow the air force to fire a single round either in Beirut or anywhere else in Lebanon.

And here we all remember how they spoke about aerial bombardment. Up to that moment, the Syrian air force had not bombed any place in Lebanon or any target . . . . In addition, we could have given support to our troops from other positions we held but we did not do so . . . .

At certain moments it looked as if they gave a different interpretation to our actions and did not understand our position in reality. In my view, and as it sometimes appears, they still have not understood our actions. The harm they did to Syria and to Syrian troops was not done by anyone else. Injury was done not just to the troops who were in Beirut Airport. In the Palestinian camps in Lebanon there were troops whom we had sent three years ago to defend the camps in Beirut, the South and Tripoli. These troops who had lived in the camps for three years were now treated most deplorably . . . . Fighting raged in Beirut among the various factions while these troops kept their eyes only on the Israeli air force in case it attacked the camps. Some were arrested, others were killed and even in Tal al-Zaatar which they now talk about, there are a number of Syrian soldiers who are under arrest, unless they have already been killed . . . .

Who is it now who stands in Lebanon and says no to Syria? It is a truly amazing thing. Spokesmen for Palestine stand up and tell us: Do not enter Lebanon. They forget, or they pretend to forget, or they want us and the world to forget, that Lebanon is not Palestine and that Beirut is the capital of Lebanon and not of Palestine. Who is it that complains when we enter Lebanon? It is not the Lebanese President or Foreign Minister or Prime Minister or Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies. It is the Foreign Minister of the PLO, or the head of the Political Department of the PLO, or the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, or some other Palestinian spokesman . . . . By what moral logic, what nationalist logic, by what legal logic do these people stand up and say to us: leave Lebanon; Withdraw from Lebanon; You have no business in Lebanon. How can a Palestinian stand up in Lebanon and tell a Syrian not to enter Lebanon? . . . .

I am not at this moment prepared to review the sacrifices that this country has undertaken for the cause of Palestine but let us remind ourselves of some things done in
the past few years by Syria. . . for the sake of the groups in the resistance. How much have we sacrificed in these last years! Fifty percent of Syrian airforce planes shot down before 1973 in engagements with the enemy were shot down while defending Palestinian positions. In one day in the Arqub region we lost 13 planes while defending the resistance. We lost some of our best pilots, among whom was the martyred hero, Fayiz Mansour. In one day, to mention only a few instances, 500 Syrian troops were martyred in an engagement with the enemy because the enemy had struck a commando base somewhere in Syria. . . . Our relations with fellow Arabs were constantly deteriorating because of our policy towards the resistance. . . . Who indeed has sacrificed as much as Syria for the sake of the resistance? Which Arab country engaged in paramilitary operations against another Arab country except Syria?

We all remember our operations against our brothers in Jordan, who are the nearest of Arab brethren to us. We all know now the extent of cooperation between us and Jordan, the extent of mutual confidence and what we aspire to achieve in unison. And yet, we fought fierce engagements against our brotherly neighbours in 1970 and 1971. . . . In 1969 we adopted a policy in Lebanon which saved the resistance. Again in 1975 we were the only ones who had a policy which saved the resistance. In 1976 we entered Lebanon for the sake of the resistance and we saved it. . . . Why did we not also negotiate after the Sinai Agreement and recover part of the Golan? Why did we oppose the step-by-step diplomacy? Had we based our policy on Syria's narrow regional interests we would have negotiated, recovered part of the land and followed the step-by-step diplomacy. But for the sake of Palestine and in order not to isolate those who claim to symbolize the Palestinian cause, and in order not to abort the cause of Palestine, we refused to negotiate, despite the fact that these negotiations would have restored to us part of our occupied territories. The conditions would have been acceptable, if only we had gone down that road.

Even more than this, when we refused to negotiate, we were offered a withdrawal without negotiations. Israel was to have withdrawn from a small part of the Golan, which was in fact small, without negotiations. When I told the person who proposed it that we refuse, he said "You are not required to say either that you refuse or you do not refuse." I said, "No, we do not accept this." And why? Because we imagined that such a withdrawal, even without negotiations, would constitute a step and a justification to repeat the process all over again and thus we would reach the very dangers we were determined to put an end to. . . . These offers, brothers, are known to the Palestinian leaders. They know what was offered to us and the line we took regarding them. And yet, this is their policy. Our policy, however, does not change. It is based on unchanging principles for the sake of a just cause which we consider to be our own cause. Our policy will remain as it was and will never change.

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Speech by President Anwar Sadat of Egypt
Made on the Occasion of the Twenty-Fourth Anniversary of the July 23 Revolution.
Cairo, July 22, 1976.1 [Excerpts]

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The crisis in Lebanon was a result of foreign plans and foreign interventions which renounce the aspirations of the nation and deny its freedom, liberty and progress. Ever since the beginning of the crisis, Egypt has been proclaiming: Hands off Lebanon and let its people determine their future and correct their course of development. . . . The Egyptian position was based on the following principles: First, all foreign powers must keep their hands off Lebanon. Second, a collective Arab initiative, free from all polarization or individual Arab interests must be made. . . . Third, this Arab initiative must begin by securing a ceasefire. Fifth, the Arab solution must aim to safeguard the unity of Lebanon, its

1 Published in al-Nahar, Beirut, July 23, 1976 — Ed.
sovereignty, its territorial integrity and its Arab character. Sixth, the role of the Palestinian resistance must be safeguarded and it must not be harmed.

The conspirators have gone far in their folly. They have rejected what they termed Arabization and resisted any idea or suggestion which could lead to collective Arab action. ... As a result, the situation there has deteriorated. Today we are witnessing a situation where the Palestinian resistance together with the nationalist forces are being attacked. We here should ask: In whose interests are the resistance and the nationalist forces being attacked and towards whom are Syrian rockets and shells being directed? ... 

Egypt cannot condone any injury being done to the resistance of the Lebanese nationalist forces. ... and is working with all its might to stop the painful bloodshed in Lebanon. Nor can Egypt condone an invasion of Lebanon, whether the invaders are Syrian or not. She regards what has happened to be a result of conspiratorial miscalculation which has resulted in the escalation of the fighting, despite what we heard only recently in the way of pretexts and boastings. To emphasize our stand, we believe that the Syrian forces must withdraw now that they have failed to realize their mission, and must be replaced by the Arab Peace Force organized by the Arab League to consolidate the ceasefire. A ceasefire is, in the first place, a political decision. Only then can a political dialogue begin in a new and appropriate atmosphere. ... The Arab solution has been and remains the only way to solve the crisis. Calling for internationalization, on the other hand, is not a nationalist stand and lacks responsibility; the purpose behind it is to pave the way for suspicious interventions which can bring back foreign tutelage. We are as opposed to all this as we are to foreign intervention and invasion and whatever threatens the sovereignty of Lebanon and its territorial integrity, as well as the attempts at partition and terrorist schemes. I say this while warning against any harm that may be done to the Palestinian resistance and its nationalist and patriotic role.

Some have raised the banner of constitutional legitimacy in Lebanon as if there is any legitimacy left in Lebanon. Lebanon burns down while its president, Franjieh, talks about legitimacy. Lebanon is vanishing while some of its rotten leaders raise side issues. Legitimacy is not a mere word to be used in bragging; rather, it stands for responsibility, dignity and leadership. Unfortunately these are all qualities which are at present lacking in Lebanon. "Legitimacy" has run amuck in such a way that dignity has changed its meaning and lost all its constituent elements.

We are faced with a problem that has three branches: The first is the Syrian-Palestinian clash which must be dealt with at once in order to save both the resistance and Syria. The second is the problem of Palestinian-Lebanese relations which are governed by the Cairo Agreement and its appendices. This must be affirmed. The third is the Lebanese problem itself, for which the Lebanese leaders must bear the responsibility. We stand behind them and bless any measure they adopt to establish unity and peace in Lebanon.

The resolution of the Arab League regarding Lebanon must be implemented. The Arab force must be permitted to operate and to replace the Syrian troops which public opinion in the entire Arab world is asking Syria to withdraw. Egypt is prepared to supply the Arab force with arms and the necessary equipment to enable them to operate and to defend themselves against any act of folly committed against them so that they can advance towards sensitive areas, stand between the fighting lines and help to stop Arab bloodshed.

1 Published in al-Nahar, Beirut, July 25, 1976; for text of President Assad's speech see document 10 in this section — Ed.
Liberation Organization. especially during the regime which was called “corrective.”

[ Gives the following examples: ]

First: Militarily preventing sixteen Palestinian commando regiments from entering Jordan during Black September to help their brothers who were being hounded and were dying by the score, after being encircled and subjected to barbaric shelling in the Jewish hills and other parts of northeast Jordan.

Second: Controlling the Palestinians in their camps, closely surveilling them, applying various pressures and forcing them, one way or another, to join the Sa’īqa Organization which is controlled by the Syrian intelligence.

Third: Banning commando activities in all its forms across the Syrian-Israeli borders, even though the activities were aimed at hitting the Jewish settlements being established in the Golan with the intention of permanent takeover.

Fourth: The formation of a Palestinian organization in form or appearance subject to the Syrian intelligence and its directives, with no justification for its formation other than wanting to divide the Palestinian line and fragment its regiments; the effort to influence the resolutions of the Liberation Organization to the advantage of Syrian policies; the spread of the contradictions existing among the ten [Arab] countries directly involved in the Palestinian question] into the Palestinian commando hemisphere: dealing a blow to the resistance’s unity and limiting the revolution’s and the Palestinian people’s independence in making decisions which guarantee its absolute national right to self-determination and return to the land without entering into Arab compromises, bargainings and disagreements.

We still remember who arrested Abu Ammar and other leaders of the resistance at the beginning of the emergence of the Palestine revolution.

We declare with all pride, that we, as a leading regiment in the Lebanese national movement, did not receive anything from the Syrians, either in the way of money or arms. On the contrary, the Syrian intelligence used to—whether Hafez Assad knew it or not—ration the passage of arms to us and shackle our movements. These arms were bought with the people’s money or our money. This was the case with a great number of regiments in the national movement in Beirut and other Lebanese regions.

After careful meditations and calculations, I can say that this action of alternately tightening control on, and releasing our arms and ammunitions is intended to establish a continuous balance between the nationalist and the isolationist forces so that the civil war is prolonged and so that there is no winner or loser. In turn, it will enable the Syrian regime to play with the strings of internal Lebanese politics... Syrian policy benefits from the prolongation of the military activities because the Syrian side can thus act as a mediator at every stage. This is how we explain today the reasons behind the Syrian mediation for ceasefire which has always aimed at separating the warring factions and returning each of them to the starting lines: this was especially true in the case of the advanced resistance and national movement regiments.

In spite of our observations and reservations, we did not reject the Syrian mediation when it was still political in nature, in spite of the suspicious indications of its unjustifiable interference in the internal affairs of Lebanon, such as forming and imposing cabinets on Lebanese politics. This was the case when the Syrian-Karami ingenuity inspired the giving of the ministries of the interior, electricity and water power and ports to Mr. Camille Chamoun. That ministry was a source of dire misfortune for the Lebanese because it enabled [Chamoun]... to place the weight of the internal security forces, including the tanks and army commandos which Rashid Karami had lent to the internal security—to place the weight of the state on the side of the isolationists and to actively support them.

I remember when there was a relatively long ceasefire just before the formation of the present Karami-Chamoun cabinet, the ambassadors of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait had reached an agreement on a ceasefire in a conclusive and serious manner and on Rashid Karami forming a new cabinet... But this agreement irritated
the Syrian Ba'ath. So, on that blighted night when the shelling reached one of its peaks, the ceasefire was rescinded by the Sa'iqa. Zuhair Muhsin disappeared and we looked for him in vain. The head of the Liberation Organization asked us to locate him in order to prevent him from continuing the crime of restarting the fire. We tried in vain to find him through the help of our comrades in the party; we were informed that he had been much angered when the ceasefire and the formation of the cabinet materialized, or almost did, at the hands of the ambassadors of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait instead of the Syrians. Of course, the situation exploded, and people were dragged again into the fighting. Our relationship then with Suleiman Franjieh had not yet been severed. We called the Director General of the Palace and asked him to call Khaddam from Damascus to avert the explosion. So Khaddam was called and came to put the finishing touches to what the ambassadors had completed and replaced them in what they had started and succeeded in doing through their own mediation.

This selfishness which accompanied the behaviour of the Ba'ath Party and the Syrian authorities was translated by the Syrian regime into a virtual monopoly of the mediation and intervention in Lebanon and a prevention of Arabization, so that the Syrian regime alone has a hand in all that happens in Lebanon. This was an introduction to the execution of the major conspiracy in which we had the honour, along with a group of genuine nationalists including the Christian leader Raymond Eddé, to expose and reject the tool and the means of its implementation. This is the reason for the Syrian regime's dismay with the dean of the National Bloc, Mr. Raymond Eddé.

Q. It is noticeable that concentrated political activity is taking place within the context of the Syrian initiative, and that the League is responsible for this activity, notwithstanding that this contradicts the League's resolution providing for Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon. Shouldn't this be explained as a contradiction between the two initiatives, the Arab and the Syrian?

A. In fact, any initiative which works towards peace in Lebanon does not disagree with the Arab League initiative nor does it contradict it.

Q. Sheikh Pierre Gemayel has for two days been emphasizing the necessity of cooperation with the Arab League in order to bring the Lebanese question to the United Nations, while it is known that the Phalangists coordinate with Syria. How do you explain this emphasis?

A. In my opinion, Sheikh Pierre Gamayel wants only the ending of fighting in Lebanon, and the solving of the Lebanese crisis as soon as possible. It is beyond doubt that these aims could be furthered by backing the Arab League initiative and working by all means for its success. In this respect, I feel that Sheikh Pierre Gamayel is cooperating.

Q. Was the failure to insist on Syria's withdrawal in response to the League's resolutions caused by contacts aiming at considering the Syrian forces in Lebanon as part of the Arab peace force?

A. The question, in this form, implies a meaning that does not correspond to reality. The Arab peace force is defined by a decision taken by the Arab League Council; the contingents working under its command function with the approval of the League Council and the legal authorities in Lebanon. It is currently formed of four nationalities: Saudi, Syrian, Libyan, and Sudanese. These contingents, upon orders of their respective commands, function collectively in this form to carry out the duties assigned to them. They are at present all positioned in the Beirut area. As for the presence of other Syrian forces on Lebanese territories, this issue is not connected with the Arab peace force. It is rather a political

1 Published by al-Nahar, Beirut, July 28, 1976 — Ed.
issue that is subject to political considerations and is connected with the bilateral Lebanese-Syrian relations.

Q. When you say that the presence of Syrian forces is not connected with the Arab peace force and is subject to political considerations, do you not imply a conflict with the Arab League resolutions?

A. This issue as well as all topics relating to the Lebanese crisis were discussed during the recent meetings of the League Council, and most of the deliberations were published at the time.

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JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ Issued by the PLO and Syria on the Situation in Lebanon. Damascus, July 29, 1976.1

Proceeding from national responsibility, in appreciation of the importance of maintaining the solidarity of the forces which confront the enemy, and in affirmation of the special historical ties between Syria and the Palestine Liberation Organization, a series of meetings took place in Damascus between July 22 and 29, 1976, attended on the Syrian side by Mr. Abdul Halim Khaddam, Deputy Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs, General Najim Jamil, member of the National Command and Deputy Defence Minister and commander of the air force, Mr. Jamil Shayya, member of the National Command, Dr. Yusif Shaqra, Assistant to the Foreign Minister, and Mr. Bashir Qutb, Director of the Department of Arab Affairs at the foreign ministry; and on the Palestinian side by Mr. Farouq Qaddoumi, Chairman of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Mr. Yasser Abd Rabbo, Chairman of the Department of Information and member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Mr. Abdul Muhsin Abu Mayzar, Chairman of the Department of National Affairs and official spokesman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Mr. Talal Naji, Chairman of the Department of Culture and member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, member of the Central Committee of Fateh, Mr. Mohammad Ghuneim, member of the Central Committee of Fateh, Mr. Salih Ri'fat, member of the Politburo of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and Mr. Fadel Shruru, member of the Politburo of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.

In the course of these meetings, a review was made of the Arab situation and the developments which have occurred since the imperialist-Zionist onslaught reached its peak in the Sinai Agreement, one of whose most serious repercussions has been the fragmentation of the Arab scene as well as the sad events in Lebanon.2 The situation in the Lebanese arena was similarly reviewed and analyzed. There was a concurrence of views regarding the dangers implicit in the continuation of this situation not only to the unity of Lebanon but also to the Palestinian cause and the Arab nation as a whole.

Consequently, there was unanimous agreement on the necessity of working to preserve the unity of Lebanon's territory and people, the respect of its sovereignty, and the prevention of interference in its internal affairs.

There was also complete agreement on the resistance's right to carry out its struggle from all Arab arenas including the Lebanese, on condition that relations between the Palestinian side and the Lebanese side would be regulated in accordance with the Cairo Agreement and its appendices as well as on the basis of the [Constitutional] Document announced on February 14, 1976.

The two sides reiterated the need to exert all efforts to restore confidence among all sides in Lebanon and to encourage dialogue among them for the purpose of preserving the national unity of the brotherly country.

Moreover, the Syrian side affirmed the continuation of their unflinching support for the Palestine Liberation Organization as the

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1 Published in al-Nahar, Beirut, July 30, 1976 — Ed.
2 The Palestinian side later denied having approved this phrase in the joint communiqué — Ed.
representative of the Palestinian people in their struggle for liberation and against the Israeli enemy; Syria has been and shall remain a base for the efforts of the Palestinian people in their national struggle against Zionist existence.

The Palestinian side, on the other hand, applauded the stand adopted by Syria, respecting the struggle of the Palestinian Arab people and the Palestinian cause as a whole, and the support of Syria for the Palestinian resistance in their struggle against the Zionist enemy.

The two sides also reiterated the need to consolidate Arab solidarity in accordance with the Rabat resolutions in such a manner as to employ that solidarity in the cause of liberation and in confronting all the imperialist and Zionist conspiracies to which the Arab nation is subjected.

The two sides agreed to meet continuously for the purpose of strengthening their joint struggle for liberation against the Zionist enemy; they also agreed on the fundamental points which they envision as necessary to end the fighting in Lebanon, as well as the immediate and necessary steps to be taken for the quick implementation thereof.

1. All parties concerned are to announce their acceptance of a complete ceasefire on all Lebanese territories effective from the time to be specified by the committee mentioned in Article 2 of this agreement.

2. Pending the assumption by the President-elect of his constitutional functions, a Higher Lebanese-Syrian-Palestinian committee shall immediately be formed under the chairmanship of the Arab League envoy to undertake the supervision of the ceasefire, the enforcing of security and the establishment of a timetable for the phased withdrawal of all show of arms within a period of ten days, employing for that purpose the Arab peace force units currently available and any other suitable and appropriate forces.

3. Concerning the Lebanese situation: Proceeding from concern for the unity of Lebanon, its land and people, and its independence and integrity, and out of a conviction of the necessity of realizing governmental reforms to assure a genuine and effective participation of all elements in the government, the Syrian and Palestinian sides encourage all sides to conduct a national dialogue under the chairmanship of President Elias Sarkis on the basis of the Document of February 14, 1976 and on the basis of any additional Lebanese issues agreed upon by those quarters. Moreover, the Syrian and Palestinian sides encourage all Lebanese sides to work for the formation of a national union cabinet to work for the restoration and unification of governmental institutions and the implementation of accepted reforms.

4. Lebanese-Palestinian relations: Proceeding from the stipulation that it is Lebanon’s right that the Palestinian side should not interfere in internal Lebanese affairs, as well as the resistance’s right to carry out its struggle from the Lebanese arena in accordance with the agreements contracted between the resistance and the Lebanese authorities, agreement has been reached on the organization of those relations in conformity with the attached Syrian working paper which was approved by all parties and announced on February 14, 1976, and also in accordance with the Cairo Agreement and its appendices. A Lebanese-Palestinian committee will be formed to establish a timetable for the implementation of those principles including the Cairo Agreement and its appendices.

Published in al-Nahar, Beirut, July 30, 1976 — Ed.
THE KOENIG REPORT

[Editors Note: This memorandum, proposing changes in Israeli policy toward the Arabs in Israel, was written by Israel Koenig, the Northern District (Galilee) Commissioner of the Ministry of the Interior, and reportedly submitted to Prime Minister Rabin as a secret document. Its subsequent publication in Al Hamishmar, September 7, 1976, brought the document wide, critical attention. In the words of Al Hamishmar, the Koenig report “includes dangerous evaluations and statements. Were they accepted as an authorized position, they would cause a conflict between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority.” Below, the Journal reprints the report, translated from the original Hebrew.]

TOP SECRET: MEMORANDUM-PROPOSAL — HANDLING THE ARABS OF ISRAEL

PROPOSAL NO. 1

GENERAL:

1. Until a very short while ago it was accepted by those dealing with this part of Israel's population that it had fully come to terms with the establishment of the State of Israel and that most of this [Arab] population had a high degree of identification with the state and had been drawn into its various frameworks. This, at least, was expressed by those who handle them, and by those close to the social centers of Arab residents and citizens of the state.

2. Recently, certain phenomena have occurred which have challenged these assumptions and which have seriously questioned the loyalty of a large part of them to the state and to its very existence.

Even though doubts about the ideas and ways of dealing with the Israeli Arabs have been expressed over the years for reasons that will be mentioned below, these were opposed to the accepted conception of the Arabists and rejected outright. It appears to us that it can no longer be disputed that there is room to discuss these “preconceptions” which have, until recently, served as guiding principles.

3. With the establishment of the state, the remnants of the Arab population in the country were left without a leadership. A minority was created which had to adapt itself to the reality of a Jewish state waging a war against its neighboring countries and proving its strength against them.

The military government, under whose aegis this population was placed, established the rule of “notables” and thus entered into the framework of Arab society which was built on family clans. The abolition of the military government caused the undermining of the authority of the “notables” and those whom they represented. The undermining of the individual's dependence on the establishment—the military government—enabled the younger generation to feel the power that had come into its hands in a democratic society, and this also because of the passage of Arab society from an agricultural society to an industrial one with all the social implications of this.

Moreover, the “revolt” of the younger generation frequently forced the older generation to join the camp of the rebels and exposed the state as a target for their struggle, since the tools to insure their dependence on Jewish society had not been

prepared. Moreover, we encouraged the letting off of steam by attempts to bring the rebels to our side by various "means."

In the fifties, the Arab society was dependent from an economic point of view on the Jewish economy which had, in the course of time, been opened to the Arabs as a result of Jewish manual laborers having left it. This situation has created an affluent economic stratum, on which to a large extent, the economy of the country and its well-being are dependent.

4. With the abolition of the military government the country put the affairs of the Arab population into the hands of those who spoke Arabic and who pulled out the violent elements and made them leaders while founding their status on their ability to obtain benefits for themselves and their families. This they did while ignoring the social problems in the Arab sector on the one hand, and lacking a long-term plan for the creation of an identity of a loyal Arab citizen on the other.

Those dealing with the Arab sector at all levels, political, military, police and civilian—their test was to familiarize themselves with the Arab mentality. Their thinking and practical ability was not always greater than that of the people with whom they were dealing, and dealing with their interests instead of maintaining their independent thinking and analytical abilities is a phenomenon that causes concern on the one hand, as opposed to the attempt to deal with this from the point of view of objective thought that insures the long-term Jewish national interests on the other hand.

5. In the northern district are concentrated most Israeli Arabs, whose sincerity and involvement among the Jewish population manifestly and prominently put into focus the problems that have already been created and the expectations in the near and distant future. One of the most worrying phenomena is the loss of patience of the average Jew toward the Arab citizen, and in certain cases a hostility can be felt, and any provocation might cause an uncontrollable explosion on both sides whose results might have negative consequences in Israel and especially abroad.

(See the decision of the student organization in Haifa not to perform guard duty because of the possibility given to Arab students to pay a guard fee.)

This catalyst containing powerful emotional residues among the Jewish population upsets the demographic balance in these areas, and this can be felt by and is a source of fear to each individual.

In the framework of this memorandum we will point to certain critical issues establishing the background, and, in conclusion, recommendations to solve the problems.

The problems to be discussed are:

a) The demographic problem and the manifestations of Arab nationalism.

b) The Arab leadership and its implications.

c) Economy and employment.

d) Education.

e) Implementing the law.

A. THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROBLEM AND THE MANIFESTATIONS OF ARAB NATIONALISM

1. The natural increase of the Arab population in Israel is 5.9 percent annually against a natural increase of 1.5 percent annually among the Jewish population.

This problem is particularly acute in the northern district where there is a large Arab population. In mid-1975 the Arab population of the northern district was 250,000 while the Jewish population was 289,000. A regional examination shows that in western Galilee the Arab population constitutes 67 percent of the total; in the western Galilee the Arab population constitutes 67 percent of the total; in the region of Yizre'el the Arab population constitutes 48 percent of the total population. In 1974 only 759 Jews were added to the population of the northern district while the Arab population increased by 9,035.

According to this rate of increase, by 1978 Arabs will constitute over 51 percent of the total population of that district.

The nationalists feel—as I do in regard to the Arab population—that the Arabs' increase in the Galilee will endanger our control of that area and will create possibilities for military forces from the north to infiltrate into that area in proportion to the acceleration of the nationalistic process among Israeli Arabs and their willingness to help.

2. The Israeli Arab population has received a nationalistic momentum since the six-day war. The policy of free contact with the West Bank and the open bridges has renewed the contact between the Arabs of Judaea and Samaria and the Palestinians.
east of the Jordan River, and this has created the basis for a show of determination and slogans for a nationalist struggle in Israel. This process, which was inevitable, gained momentum after the Yom Kippur war and was further strengthened after the international political events which were manifested in the recognition of the PLO as the standard bearer of the struggle in regard to the Palestinian problem.

Recently there has been mention of the UN resolution about Israel's borders in 1947 according to which significant parts of this piece of land are not to be included in the State of Israel.

The Israeli Arab is no longer passive and has gone over to nationalistic manifestations — only verbal at this stage — which have seen light in a number of events, the most striking of which were:

a) Events during the prime minister's visit to Nazareth a year ago.

b) The shouting of slogans of solidarity with the PLO during student demonstrations and on other occasions.

c) The position of Arab students in the universities on the issue of guard duty.

d) The nationalist manifestations in the voting in the Nazareth municipal elections on December 9, 1975.

e) The devious and unexpected callup of the inhabitants of Nazareth to help the municipality pay off pressing debts, which at that stage eased RAKAH's burden on running the town.

f) A protest rally in Sakhin on February 14, 1975 in which the head of Ramra's local council announced that Israel should fear the Israeli Arabs more than it does the Arabs beyond its borders.

g) Decisions made at a convention in Nazareth on Saturday, March 6, 1976:

1) Declaration of a day's strike by the whole Arab population in Israel called "the Day of the Land strike."

2) A call to the Arab population not to cling to passive protests alone but to "protest by way of struggle until the bitter end. . . ."

3) A hunger strike in front of the UN buildings, following the example of the protest on behalf of Russian Zionists.

4) "The government is residing in a glass house and we will be the first to hurl a stone and smash it."

5) A statement by local council head Mīlīya (Mas'ad Kasim), who is considered a "positive" man, and who is a former MK from a list linked to the Alignment: "... What moral right has the government to carry out expropriations in this region which, according to the 1947 UN resolution concerning the partition of Eretz Yisra'el is not included in Eretz Yisra'el?"

This is a relatively new phenomenon and reflects the wish of a clear majority of these people to demonstrate against the establishment and the Israeli authorities even within the confines of a "pocket" — a very serious development in view of their past behavior.

The era of international victories by the Palestinians and the achievements of the nationalists in Israel point to a process of open confrontation with the Arab problem in Israel, a process which will grow as long as RAKAH carries the resistance to the establishment exclusively. (It must be remembered that "Israel" is not RAKAH's major concern and this is not accidental.)

3. Forecast

a) The increase of the Arab population (from 150,000 in 1948 to over 430,000 in 1975) gives the Arab nationalists a feeling of power and a hope that time is working for them. This is especially true in an area like northern Israel where the physical Arab presence in contiguous areas represents a checking obstacle.

b) The usurping by RAKAH of "quasi-governmental" institutions, such as the local councils, creates a legitimate basis for a political nationalistic activity, both overt and clandestine, adopting methods that were in use by the Jewish community in the "prestate era," as well as worldwide communist methods. Actually, at this time there already exists a number of local councils completely controlled by RAKAH, and in our view, due to premeditated decisions. They are at this time not yet being exploited for the above-mentioned aims, but this is only due to a lack of sufficient executive cadres and the lack of necessary organizational facilities. In fact, the number of students in Eastern Europe from northern

1 An acronym for Reshimā Kommunistīt Hadasha (New Communist Left) — Ed.
villages aided by RAKAH stipends is gradually increasing in our view, for the purpose of creating such cadres.

c) There is ground for serious apprehensions that within the next decade an Arab political and demographic takeover of the Acre and Nazareth areas will occur.

d) It must be taken into account that at one of the stages of the hostile political activities a demand of some kind will be raised to hold a referendum in northern Israel where the Arab population is in the majority.

This activity will be guided from outside, but its perpetrators are likely to be nationalistic leftists from among the local populace.

e) At some point a planned provocation by RAKAH and/or by nationalists is possible in order to induce an outbreak of disturbances by uncontrolled Jewish elements—a situation likely to have the issue of Israeli Arabs raised at international forums, and concurrently, to maneuver the moderate Israeli Arab elements into a situation which forces them to identify themselves with extreme steps within Israel and outside it.

f) There are indications of an organized activity in the purchase of real estate by Arabs in the north. This activity is prominent in Upper Nazareth and in Acre, and is also causing concern in the Yisra'el Valley.

4. Suggestions

a) Expand and deepen Jewish settlement in areas where the contiguity of the Arab population is prominent, and where they number considerably more than the Jewish population; examine the possibility of diluting existing Arab population concentrations.

Special attention must be paid to border areas in the country's northwest and to the Nazareth region. The approach and exigency of performance have to deviate from the routine that has been adopted so far. Concurrently, the state law has to be enforced so as to limit “breaking of new ground” by Arab settlements in various areas of the country.

b) At the same time, a strong and solid Jewish leadership should be fostered in Upper Nazareth and in Acre capable of facing the expected crucial developments.

c) Introduce a policy of reward and punishment (within the framework of the law) for leaders and settlements that express hostility in any way toward the state and Zionism.

d) To deny RAKAH its “priority” in carrying out a national struggle and representing Israeli Arabs and to provide a valve for communities still sitting on the “fence,” a sister Labor Party should be established in which the stress will be on ideas of equality, humanism and language, social struggle and on raising the banner of peace in the region. The establishment has to prepare itself to maintain covert presence and control in that party.

e) Invest every possible effort in bringing all Zionist parties toward a national consensus regarding the issue of Israel's Arabs in order to disentangle them from their internal political squabbles.

B. THE ARAB LEADERSHIP AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

1. The Jewish democratic and open society, which swallowed the Arab population remaining in the country after the establishment of the state, failed to absorb it as far as its way of thinking, its manners and its vulnerability are concerned. The Jews appointed to take care of this population, and whose aim had been to make them loyal to the Jewish society in its state, failed to do so. On the contrary, there are clear indications that everything was done to maintain that population's singularity and isolation on the one hand, and to receive selective attention and preferred favoritism on the other hand.

At the same time, however, time and again they made proclamations about equality, integration and so forth... though the actions were contradictory. This policy did not take into consideration the superficial and Levantinistic Arab character whose imagination tends to exceed rationality.

The extreme and keen manifestation of this double standard and contradictory policy of the “enthronement” of public representatives and leaders. Up to this very day there is not a single elected major Arab public figure above the local level.

The Arab society in Israel is in the throes of the transition from an agricultural and institutionalized society of long standing into an industrial society, a transition involving the breakup of family, religious and social frameworks, to which the dimension of national strife has been added.
This strife is serious and confronts every individual with decisions that are often crucial. The transitory society is in these stages in need of leaders who can provide personal examples and who are capable of giving appropriate answers to sincere nationalists, leading them toward a reasonable personal and public solution.

However, as has been mentioned in the preamble, this had not been the test for receiving the title of "leader." The bully, the bigmouth and not always the honest, have become the representatives and standard-bearers of Israeli Arabs.

2. The second generation which has grown up in Israeli society and which is trying to adapt, and not just superficially, to Israeli customs, has not been able to produce the proper leaders. Signs of this could be seen 10 years ago. Those responsible for these issues had to create leaders who were acceptable to this generation and, at the same time, loyal to the state. In our opinion, both if this omission was a result of no other choice or if it was premeditated, the results of it might be disastrous. One of the main catalysts of today's decline is the disgust with this leadership (see the Nazareth municipal elections).

3. Forecast:
   a) The struggle between those who hold the various positions and the rebellious generation will get worse with the former falling back on the governmental, Histadrut and party establishment.
   b) The result will be that the struggle for control will become a struggle against the establishment and the state with the majority consistently going over to the side of the rebels.
   c) The elements hostile to the country will take full advantage of this social crisis. They will adopt this as their struggle and the echoes will be taken advantage of in various forums in this country and abroad as a social and national struggle.
   d) We believe that if the decline continues at the present rate, RAKAH might win 10 seats in the coming Knesset elections.

4. Suggestions:
   a) We would act courageously and replace all the people who deal with the Arab sector on behalf of government institutions, the police and the parties, including policymakers.
   b) We should disassociate ourselves from the present Arab "leadership" which does not represent the Arab population and stress the establishment's nonsolidarity with them.
   c) Those who will be given the job of performing this mission should start immediately to create new figures of high intellectual standard, figures who are equitable and charismatic. They should be helped to establish an Arab party as mentioned above.
   d) Special team should be appointed to examine the personal habits of RAKAH leaders and other negative people and this information should be made available to the electorate.
   e) Steps should be taken against all negative personalities at all levels and in all institutions.

C. Economy and Employment

1. The development and economic improvement of the country's population over the years of its existence did not reach the Arab population. Moreover, this lack of improvement is strongly felt among this population because it was the poor who remained within the borders after the fighting of 1948-1949.

This great gap between supply and demand for labor in all spheres of the market and especially in building, mechanics and general manual labor, and the dependence on this labor that has been created in many spheres of the economy have given a feeling of power to Israeli Arabs which has been taken advantage of by interested hostile elements.

2. The manual aid that is customary among members of a family and the lack of awareness about creative investment on a large scale have left very large sums of cash in the hands of the Arab population. This capital is hidden from the various tax authorities. It should be stressed that while the Arab population in Israel constitutes 14 percent of the total, and there is no "uprooting" of labor as a result of 3 years of army service among that population, it pays only 1.5 percent of the taxes. In this way its economic future is decisively insured. Also, the age composition (half of the population is young and working) is of great significance:
it means a high income for all families. To this should be added state grants (national insurance to families with more than two children, which is 95 percent of the Arab families in Israel).

3. A significant issue in the northern district, because of the large concentration of Arabs there, is that projects which are being established with huge investments with the aim of increasing the Jewish population are employing Arab workers on a scale of 25 to 50 percent.

This social and economic security that relieves the individual and the family of economic worries and day-to-day pressures, grants them, consciously and subconsciously, leisure for "social-nationalist" thought which is taken advantage of by hostile elements for various forms of incitement, a sense of power and the possibility of public protest.

4. Forecast:
   
a) The concentration of mainly black capital in undesirable hands, estimated to be several hundred of millions of pounds, in addition to the economic damage that might be caused by this, could serve as a basis for donations which, in the future, might be put at the disposal of hostile elements (the collection of payments by the Nazareth municipality has already been mentioned).

b) The increase of Arab workers in factories might accelerate the friction between Jews and Arabs and develop into uncontrolled incidents. Moreover, there is a possibility of RAKAH taking over the worker committees.

c) By having significant control over various spheres of the economy there is the possibility of striking or of noncooperation and thus causing serious damage to the economy and to the state, and especially political damage by emphasizing their strength as factor in the country's economy.

d) Increasing difficulties in absorbing Jewish workers, especially in the north where we have a special interest in increasing the Jewish population.

5. Suggestions:
   
a) Appropriate arrangements have to be made with the management of a concern bearing the "approved investment" label in crucial areas (as noted above). The number of Arab employees should not exceed 20 percent.

b) The tax authorities must adopt immediate steps to intensify tax collection, performing it with firmness and without deviations.

c) Reach a settlement with central marketing factors of various consumer goods that would neutralize and encumber Arab agents, particularly in the northern areas, in order to avoid dependence of the Jewish population on those agents, especially in times of emergency.

d) The government must find a way to neutralize the payment of "big family" grants to the Arab population, either by linking them to the economic situation or by taking this responsibility from the national insurance system and transferring it to the Jewish Agency or to the Zionist organization, so that the grant is paid to Jews only.

e) Endeavor to have central institutions pay more attention in giving preferential treatment to Jewish groups or individuals rather than to Arabs.

D. EDUCATION

1. The most important and crucial change in the conceptual and behavioral structure of the Arab population is a result of the broadened and expanding educational system available to that population.

The improved economic situation and the social security of the individual and of the family have encouraged a large number of pupils to attend high school and institutions of higher learning. This process aided in the introduction of graded tuition fees—66 percent in high schools. Financial aid and the policy of scholarships to university students established the fact that a populace with education, and be it ever so superficial and provincial, provides the "jet sets" for every nationalistic movement, particularly in the given circumstances of the Israeli Arabs, and this is indeed the situation, namely, the incidents at the universities. People in charge of that sector should have foreseen such contingencies, and it is imperative that from now on the coordination of the various frameworks as well as the activities adopted toward the population of all kinds of graduates be meticulously planned.

2. The establishment of preferential criteria (low grades) for the acceptance of
Arab pupils into various colleges and into the department to which they used to be directed (humanities, political and social sciences), as well as the absence of care and the inability to provide full employment to graduates, created a large population of frustrated “intelligentsia” forced by a profound mental need to seek relief. Expressions of this are directed against the Israeli establishment of the state.

The scope of the problem is particularly serious when we take into consideration that the number of graduates is more than 5,700 and that today about 2,500 students are in high schools.

3. Forecast:
   a) Because of the objective difficulty of recognizing the professional inferiority, the feeling of frustration will increase gradually, and the total number will become bigger at an ever-increasing rate.
   b) By virtue of its Levantine character and due to social dynamics, this society will move from introversion to external manifestations and a possible move into organized violence is not to be ruled out. The first blossoms already exist.
   c) The raising of the banner of the social and nationalistic struggle and overt identification with the PLO and even more extremist organizations.
   d) Reasonable prospects for the success of a number of leaders by virtue of their being sons of the local progressive society out of which they grew. No doubt some of them will be endowed with leadership qualities.
   e) One shouldn't ignore the difficulties that will be caused to the government when handling them in crucial times, because of their personal standards.

4. Suggestions:
   a) The reception criteria for Arab university students should be the same as for Jewish students and this must also apply to the granting of scholarships. A meticulous implementation of these rules will produce a natural selection and will considerably reduce the number of Arab students. Accordingly, the number of low standard graduates will also decrease, a fact that will facilitate their absorption in work after their studies. [sentence as published]
   b) Encourage the channeling of students into technical professions, to physical and natural sciences. These studies leave less time for dabbling in nationalism and the dropout rate is higher.
   c) Make trips abroad for studies easier, while making the return and employment more difficult—this policy is apt to encourage their emigration.
   d) Adopt tough measures at all levels against various agitators among college and university students.
   e) Prepare absorption possibilities in advance for the better part of the graduates, according to their qualifications. This policy can be implemented thanks to the time available (a number of years) in which the authorities may plan their steps.

E. Law Enforcement

1. Implementation of the law and its enforcement by the authorities expresses the public interest of society in preference to individual interest. In the subject in question, the diligent maintenance of internal security with everything that this implies is of paramount importance to the nation and to Jews at large.

Law enforcement in a country with a developing society like that of Israel is a problem to be solved with flexibility, care and much wisdom. At the same time, however, the administrative and executive authority in the Arab sector must be aware of the existence of the law and its enforcement, so as to avoid erosion.

We have already mentioned some ways in which this population was treated and the double standards that were characteristic in those procedures. There exists an awareness among the Arab population, based on facts, that the law in this state can be circumvented by good connections with the proper people. In addition to the general public damage these procedures are causing, Israeli Arabs see in this the first signs of weakness in the administration which, following further pressures, will make possible additional concessions (examples for this abound).

2. It is difficult to get a reasonable explanation for the low percentage of taxes collected from the Arab population, in comparison to what is collected from the Jewish population. Nonenforcement of the law is likely to cause grievous harm to the internal security in extensive areas in the north and center of the country.
One has to remember and to learn from the experience of other states with national minority populations that exaggerated and uncontrolled liberalism does not achieve the intended end, but rather the opposite. And this rule applies particularly to the specific Arab minority in Israel (as has been elaborated upon above).

3. Forecast:
   a) In a law-abiding society overt disobedience of law generates a dynamics of its transgressions, a situation later necessitating many efforts to remedy it.
   b) The possibility must be considered that in the future many Jews may support, for various reasons and motives, a population violating the law, and denounce the administration as “suppressor” if it attempts to enforce the law.
   c) One cannot ignore the percent of the Arab population—14 percent—in which the violation of the law may assume a “revolutionary” quality.
   d) Hostile elements inside the country and abroad are apt to exploit the implementation of laws, whose enforcement the authorities avoided for a long time, claiming they represent national suppression, and so forth.

4. Suggestions:
   a) Make clear to everyone dealing with the Arab sector that violation of the law must not be ignored, and that its literal implementation should be carried out firmly.
   b) Adopt legal steps against civil servants and institutions not fulfilling their duty in the enforcement of what the law prescribes.
   c) Introduce law suits and put into effect a number of court sentences, particularly in the sphere of income tax and illegal building, which will deter the population from any thought about an escape from the hands of the law.
   d) Increase the presence of various police and security forces in the Arab streets to deter extremist circles and those who are “sitting on the fence” and are likely to be drawn into uprisings and demonstrations.

[Signed: March 1, 1976]
effective. Pledges by the administration that every strikebreaker would be protected lacked credibility and the population did not take them seriously.

2. Despite the fact that the strike and all the preparations and events that accompanied it were planned and executed by RAKAH, the party decided not to be very conspicuous in this matter in order to assume, in practice, the leadership of all the nationalities and to be the vanguard of all Arab nationalist activity among Israel’s Arabs in the future.

It is necessary to pay attention to this process and to study its motives and components:

a) The PLO movement, that is the national liberation movement for the Palestinian Arabs, does not call for achieving social aims. With the exception of a small and secondary section—George Habash’s group—there is not a single group that seriously deals with such matters or propagates them.

b) Sending people who do not belong to any party into an open and violent confrontation with the security forces, causing maximum casualties among the people in an attempt to create feelings of hatred and vengeance among them and tension on the part of the government toward the hostile population.

c) A classic move that is usually the vogue with the liberation movements in Asia and Africa is the linking of the national and the social struggles in a way that helps to mobilize the masses for the sake of the struggle and to obtain sympathetic world public opinion. It is clear that some countries and powers that have a certain orientation find themselves involved, if only for propaganda purposes, in every struggle that is carried out under these slogans.

In view of what has been said before, it is necessary to treat very seriously the aforementioned moves and the phenomena that are liable to stem from the creation of such an identification in world opinion and among the Arab population. Moreover, it is my belief that RAKAH has used these moves mainly under the guise of nationalism.

3. There have been a number of impressive achievements for Arab nationalism led by RAKAH as the result of the strike day [Day of the Land], both the disturbances that took place prior to the strike day and those that took place on the day of the strike:

a) For the first time since the establishment of the State of Israel, a situation has been created where the Arab population has identified itself openly and cognizantly— contrary to the government’s request—with an Arab extremist-nationalist demand and have displayed a psychological readiness for actions to achieve it. Moreover, most parts of the Arab population justified and still justify those who rioted and attacked the defense forces, and they talk openly about their identification with them.

b) A large number of local authorities and their leaders were used as the means and tools to develop and lead the struggle. Those local council heads who, as a result of pressures, did not join the extremists in the last phase did not declare their objection to the strike, but requested its postponement in order to use it as a threat to apply pressure against the government in a bid to make it surrender to their demands.

c) The nationalists and RAKAH succeeded in agitating and embroiling the masses in a violent struggle with the defense forces—a confrontation that has left its deep and serious marks for a long time to come.

The fact that despite the sentiments that gripped the masses the organizers succeeded in extricating their men from the violent struggle and insuring their physical safety, and saved them from being arrested after the riots, proves the precision of the planning of the operations.

d) The open and violent acts with all the sorry results that they brought upon the population have infused them with pride and straightened their backs. They are proud of their courage to confront the official forces of the state. It should not be forgotten that such a feeling in a population like that of the Israeli Arabs, and in the atmosphere in which they live, holds many possibilities for professional agitators whose aim would be to restore “the straight back of the humiliated Arab,” to the Israeli Arabs.

e) The political power of Arab nationalism that is used by RAKAH for its own future political struggle becomes evident.

f) The strike and the violent actions that accompanied it pushed aside that part of the official Arab establishment (the elected) and the heads of the local councils who did
not participate in the strike or had proposed postponing it to a marginal position. The strike took place contrary to the Shefar'am meeting. In this way, the active part of the Arab population, especially the young, were left for RAKAH and its nationalist agitators.

It is perhaps worth asking here whether it was politically wise, in the long run, to apply pressure on the heads of the local councils in the Shefar'am meeting for them to act as they did. The subject should be discussed and suitable conclusions should be reached. The absolute unity of the Arab population that was attained on the "Day of the Land" and the deep rift created between the Arab and Jewish sectors was a historic achievement for the organizers. This rift had and will have in the future grave expressions in the Arab and Jewish populations alike. Needless to say, it will be well exploited by a hostile factor.

g) A significant impression was felt in plants and services as a result of the strike by proving the dependence of the smooth operation of the economy on Arab hands. Parallel to that, dependency of the Jewish-run economy on them has been proven to the Arab population. Even this is exploited and will be in the future, for the sake of feeding the "Arab back-straightening" which the Arabs of Israel must exploit.

4. Forecast:

a) The conditions created on "Day of the Land" and afterwards provide RAKAH and the nationalists with many opportunities to incite disturbances in the country and to create communal tension and anxiety. It appears that we may witness here a recurrence of the same tactics and slogans used to inflame the masses and turn them loose on the streets whenever the leading elements decided to do so.

b) The campaign of intimidation will be intensified to the point of threatening Arabs who cooperate with the government or committing violence against them in order to quell any resistance and silence moderate voices.

c) Following the repercussions in the Arab streets in the wake of the recent clashes, the masses will be called into the streets for a specific purpose: to clash with the security forces and to increase as much as possible the number of Arab citizens injured so as to arouse ambitions of revenge within the Arab population against the security forces and to create reaction in the world about the tension in Israel and the suppressing of the Arab population by the Israeli occupying power.

d) Such clashes would increase the Israeli Arabs' identification with the injured and the means would be created to penetrate into those circles which are still hesitant about joining the struggle. Such action would, generally speaking, cause the atmosphere to become more extreme and to deteriorate further. The theory adopted by those circles is that the present situation is bad for the Israeli Arabs and that only in a situation of general disruption in the state would they have an opportunity for change; in the long run—perhaps in the foreseeable future—this would cause Israel to disintegrate from within and would bring about the Palestinization of the state.

e) It is quite probable that the PLO or some of its components would analyze [as published—possibly lead] these extreme acts, although the operations in the field would be carried out by RAKAH while its functionaries remain behind the scenes but pull the strings. Most of the burden of absorbing such activity will be placed on the Arab nationalists from the population in Israel, and mainly from among the intelligentsia who yearn for action in order to prove their "Arabness" and their willingness to struggle against Israeli rule.

f) The rift that the recent events have created between the Jewish and Arab populations would be completely exploited and all efforts would be made to widen and deepen it. It must be taken into consideration that in order to achieve that end, provocations of all kinds would be carried out, including strikes, demonstrations, violent actions and even acts of sabotage (in cooperation with Arab terrorists). I think that in the next large-scale clashes there will be greater use of firearms in order to create critical visual effects of this rift.

g) There is also a probability that a nationalist organization oriented toward the West would be created in order to attract sympathy to their struggle from states and circles abroad which are anti-leftist.

h) The penetration and takeovers of local councils will increase in order to ex-
exploit them for propaganda, cover, financing and to create an impression of broad representation. This measure proved very effective on “Day of the Land” in carrying out those aims.

5. In view of the speedy deterioration and the forecast which I have outlined in my previous memorandum and in the present one, I would like to suggest:
   a) To immediately create a brain trust which would submit three plans of action to the decision-making elements:
      1) For the short run.
      2) For the medium run.
      3) For the long run.

   b) An interministerial coordinating committee should be set up immediately at the ministry director level, headed by a minister who would be appointed for that purpose by the cabinet and assisted by the prime minister’s Arab affairs adviser.

   c) In view of the fact that the Interior Ministry is the official practical and central link with the official and elected institutions of the Arab population, it is hereby suggested that the coordinating committee of ministry directors should be headed by the director general of the Interior Ministry.

   [Written after March 30, 1976]
The Sabra and Shatila massacres, whose twentieth anniversary occurs in September 2002, marked the culmination of Israel's second invasion of Lebanon, launched on 6 June 1982. Named Operation Peace in Galilee with the stated intention of remaining within twenty-five miles of the Israeli border, the invasion soon expanded in scope. By 13 June, Israeli forces led by Defense Minister Ariel Sharon had pushed all the way to Baabda, seat of the Lebanese presidency, completely encircling West Beirut, where the PLO was headquartered, and trapping thousands of PLO fighters inside the city. The declared goal of the operation also expanded, from protecting the Israeli citizens of northern Galilee into what Sharon called "ridding the world of the center of international terrorism." More specifically, this meant elimination of PLO headquarters and infrastructure in West Beirut.

The siege of West Beirut continued for seventy days. Though the PLO, as the principal military force fighting the Israeli onslaught, had put up far stiffer resistance than had been expected (the Israelis lost 368 men during the incursion\(^2\)), losses on the Arab side were staggering. During the first three months of the invasion, 17,825 were killed throughout the areas occupied,\(^3\) while in West Beirut alone, 2,461 persons were killed in the systematic air strikes and intensive artillery and naval gunfire directed at the capital.\(^4\) As of midsummer, the PLO became engaged in negotiations led by U.S. envoy Philip Habib to bring about an end to the siege, which hinged on its own withdrawal.

One of the primary sticking points in the negotiations was the PLO's fear for the fate of the thousands of Palestinian civilians who would remain be-

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**Leila Shahid**, Palestinian ambassador to France since 1993, was living in Beirut at the time of the massacres. The six interviews published here, conducted in the immediate wake of the events, were published by our sister quarterly, *Revue d'études Palestiniennes*, vol. 6 (Winter 1983), and have never been published in English. They are part of a larger study conducted by the author. **Linda Butler** is associate editor of *JPS*.  

2. The Chronology of *JPS* 46, no. 2 (Winter 1983), p. 116, quotes the IDF figures from 6 June to 10 October as 368 killed and 2,383 wounded in Lebanon.  
Agreement was finally reached in mid-August, involving the evacuation of more than 11,000 Palestinian fighters and PLO officials and the dismantlement of PLO offices and infrastructure, to be supervised by a multinational force that would leave within thirty days of its arrival. The agreement also involved written guarantees for the security of Palestinians in the camps personally signed by Habib as representing the United States. The evacuation was carried out from 21 August to 1 September 1982. By 10 September, the U.S., French, and Italian troops that had overseen the operation had left the country.

Aside from ending the PLO presence in Beirut, Israel's invasion had a second goal: the installation of a Lebanese government friendly to Israel and willing to sign a peace treaty with it. Soon after the Lebanese civil war broke out in March 1975, Israel began cultivating several of the Maronite militias fighting the PLO, particularly the Phalangists under the leadership of Bashir Gemayel. Ever since 1976, these forces had been trained, armed, supplied, and (as of 1982) even uniformed by Israel, its cadres and top lieutenants almost all having received training and instruction in Israel itself. In addition, Israel had largely created a Lebanese border militia, grandiosely titled the Army of Free Lebanon, under the command of renegade Lebanese army major Saad Haddad and stationed in the southern zone that Israeli forces had been forced to evacuate after its first invasion in 1978. Haddad, however, could not serve Israel's larger purpose, having no constituency of his own and being seen, even in most Maronite circles, as a mere Israeli puppet. Gemayel, on the other hand, a charismatic though ruthless leader who had not hesitated to carry out massacres against Maronite rivals (including the son of former president Suleiman Frangieh and his family, along with thirty-two followers, in 1977), was wildly popular among large segments of the Maronite population and enjoyed near godlike status among his men.

On 23 August, as the PLO evacuation was in progress, Bashir Gemayel was elected president of Lebanon, with the Muslim deputies boycotting the vote. Tensions between Gemayel and the Israelis grew following the election as he began to resist pressures to conclude a formal treaty quickly. Still, he represented Israel's best hope for achieving its objectives in Lebanon.

Then, at 4:30 P.M. on Tuesday, 14 September, a week before Gemayel was to assume office, he was killed in a massive explosion at the Phalange party headquarters in East Beirut. Though the perpetrator (who turned out to be a Syrian agent) was found only later, and though the PLO had by this time totally evacuated the city, Sharon did not hesitate to blame the Palestinians. In a declaration that same evening reported by Associated Press, he stated that Gemayel's killing "symbolizes the terrorist murderousness threatening all people of peace from the hands of PLO terrorist organizations and their supporters." According to Washington Post correspondent Jonathan Randal, Gemayel's men, whose hatred for the Palestinians was notorious, were "only too willing to listen to the Israelis' insistent argument that the Palestinians in the camps had killed Bashir and should pay."

5. For the text of the agreement, see JPS 44/45, nos. 4-1 (Summer/Fall 1982), Doc. E4.
The stage was thus set for the massacre. Within hours of the announcement of Gemayel's death, Sharon and Prime Minister Menachem Begin, informing only Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir and without consulting the Israeli cabinet, decided to enter West Beirut despite explicit commitments to the United States not to do so. That same night, preparations began for an operation that according to Israeli journalist Amnon Kapeliouk had been meticulously planned long in advance. Israel Defense Forces (IDF) chief of staff General Rafael Eitan arrived in Beirut that evening. Several hours later, at 3:00 A.M. on Wednesday, 15 September, Eitan, Major General Amir Drori, head of Israel's northern command, and other Israeli officers met with Phalangist military leaders, including Fadi Frem, the militia's new commander in chief, and Elie Hobeika, chief of intelligence. It was at this meeting, according to Sharon's testimony to the Knesset on 22 September 1982, that the Phalangist entry into the camps was discussed. Sharon's instructions regarding entry into West Beirut, recorded by his personal aide on 15 September and presented as testimony to the Kahan Commission of Inquiry Israel set up after the massacre, emphasized that "Only one element, and that is the IDF, shall command the forces in the area. For the operation in the camps, the Phalangists should be sent in." Chief of Staff Eitan in his briefing to the Israeli cabinet on the evening of 16 September—when the massacre was just getting underway—explained that while the IDF would not enter the camps, the Phalangists would be sent in "with their own methods." Explaining the advantage of leaving the task to the Phalangists, he noted that "we could give them orders whereas it was impossible to give orders to the Lebanese Army."

Israel's invasion of West Beirut began at dawn Wednesday morning, scarcely twelve hours after Gemayel's assassination, with Phantom jets overflying the city at low altitude. Israeli tanks and troops advanced in a six-pronged thrust, with Israeli gunboats taking up position to shell the city. With the PLO gone, resistance from the Lebanese National Movement (the coalition of Islamic and leftist forces) was sporadic and light, and with the mines having been cleared a few weeks earlier by French international forces, Israel lost only seven men during its entire stay in West Beirut.

Sharon arrived at 9:00 A.M. to oversee operations. By noon, while the IDF push into West Beirut continued, the IDF had completely surrounded the camps, setting up checkpoints and roadblocks that controlled all entrances and exits. It also occupied a number of multistoried buildings on the perimeter as observation posts and established its forward command post in a seven-story building at the Kuwait embassy traffic circle, which, according to Time magazine, enjoyed "an unobstructed and panoramic view" of the Shatila camp.

10. Ibid., 97.
11. Ibid.
camp 200 meters away. Fire by IDF snipers and sporadic tank shelling from higher ground around the camp began that afternoon. Most of the camp residents, mainly old people, women, and children, locked themselves into their houses and waited. That day, a succession of official Israeli statements (and a cabinet statement of 16 September) repeated that the army had been obliged to intervene in West Beirut "in order to forestall the danger of violence, bloodshed, and chaos."

Even before Gemayel's assassination, Sharon had laid the groundwork for a possible intervention in the camps on 10 September, when he had suddenly announced, without providing any evidence, that "2,000 armed terrorists" had remained in the camps. (Indeed, no evidence was ever provided, and Chief of Staff Eitan had told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on 14 September that "only a few terrorists . . . remain in Beirut." The fact that no weaponry was ever produced after the massacre, the relatively small numbers of Maronite militiamen sent into the camps, and the minimal casualties on the part of the Maronite forces bear out the speciousness of the claim. Even after the massacres, on 24 September, when the absence of any armed presence had become manifest, Sharon said in a television interview that the IDF had had to enter Beirut "because the terrorists had left behind thousands of men" and "very large quantities of arms." Now that West Beirut was in Israeli hands, the "nests of terrorists" could be dealt with in "comb operations."

By 11:30 A.M. on Thursday, 16 September, Israel was able to announce that the "IDF is in control of all key points in Beirut. Refugee camps harboring terrorist concentrations remain encircled and closed." Meanwhile, throughout the day, meetings were held between Phalangist commanders, including Frem and Hobeika, and top Israeli military leaders, including Chief of Staff Eitan, Major General Drori, head of military intelligence General Yehoshua Saguy, a high-ranking representative of Mossad, the head of Shin Bet, and the commander of Israeli forces in Beirut, Brigadier General Amos Yaron. During the meetings, General Yaron coordinated details of the Phalangist entry with the help of aerial photos of the camp and instructed the Phalangists as to the location of the "terrorist nests"; there was also a warning "not to harm civilians."

An hour later, 1,500 Christian militiamen, who had been assembled at the staging area of the Israeli-occupied Beirut International Airport, began moving toward the camps in convoys of IDF-supplied jeeps, following large arrows painted by the Israelis the day before on the sides of buildings to mark the best route to the Shatila camp. Most of the forces who participated in the operation were Phalangist, though there was also an undetermined number of militiamen from Saad Haddad's Free Lebanon forces. The actual operation was

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15. Ibid.
led by Hobeika, well known to the Israelis since 1976, when he had gratuitously killed a number of unarmed Lebanese and Palestinian civilians while assisting an operation of Haddad, and who, like many other Phalange militiamen, had been trained in Israel.

The first unit of 150 militiamen (according to the Kahan Report, "the members of this unit were considered specially trained in discovering terrorists who tried to hide among the civilian population") entered the camp at sunset on Thursday, 16 September, armed with knives and hatchets in addition to firearms. The killing began almost immediately, with groups of militiamen entering homes and slitting throats, axing, shooting, and raping, often taking groups outside and lining them up for execution. There was virtually no resistance, only a very few camp residents having managed to keep a personal weapon for self-protection: throughout the forty hours of killing, there was only a handful of Phalangist casualties. As of nightfall, both Thursday and Friday, Israel began firing illuminating flares over the camps long into the night; according to a Dutch nurse, the camp was as bright as "a sports stadium lit up for a football game."  

By 8:00 P.M. Thursday, less than three hours after the entry into the camp, a Phalangist liaison officer reported to the Israeli officers at the forward command post, including General Yaron, that 300 persons, including civilians, had been killed so far. At 8:40 P.M. a briefing was held chaired by Yaron. According to the taped transcript of the briefing included in the Kahan Report, the IDF divisional intelligence officer stated that the Phalangists within the camp "are pondering what to do with the population they are finding inside. On the one hand, it seems, there are no terrorists there. . . . On the other hand, they have amassed women, children, and apparently also old people, with whom they don't exactly know what to do." When he began to cite a conversation with a Phalangist making clear the fate of these people, he was cut off by General Yaron. At any event, at 11:00 P.M. a report was sent to IDF headquarters in East Beirut that information received from the Phalangist commander in the Shatila camp indicated that "thus far we liquidated 300 civilians and terrorists." The report was sent to headquarters in Tel Aviv and, according to Jerusalem Post military correspondent Hirsh Goodman, was seen by more than twenty senior officers. Reinforcements were sent into the camp the following morning.

By Friday morning, 17 September, horrific rumors of massacres had begun to filter out via refugees, several thousand of whom had managed to escape to the Gaza and Akka hospitals during the night, as well as via medical personnel and film crews in the vicinity of the camps; with the camp tightly sealed by IDF troops, the rumors could not be verified. Groups of refugees attempting to flee were turned back by IDF soldiers, under orders to block the exits, but a number of IDF soldiers, dismayed by what they had been told or seen (soldiers at an armored unit 100 meters from the camp themselves witnessed batches of

civilians being executed), reported to their superiors. (Throughout the maracases, Christian militiamen, who made no secret of their activities, regularly came to the Israeli posts around the camps for food and water and for additional ammunition; IDF soldiers questioned later also noted the absence of the "sounds of combat.")

At about 11:30 A.M. on Friday, Yaron, on orders from Drori who had arrived at the forward command post, apparently ordered the Phalangist commanders to advance no further, and Chief of Staff Eitan, back in Tel Aviv and informed that the Phalangists had perhaps "gone too far," returned to Beirut, arriving at 3:30 P.M. At 4:00 P.M, Drori, Eitan, Yaron, and a Mossad representative met with Phalangist commanders at the Phalangist headquarters in East Beirut. According to the minutes of the Mossad representative quoted in the Kahan Report, the chief of staff "expressed his positive impression received from the statement by the Phalangist forces and their behavior in the field" and decided that they could continue their "mopping up" action until 5:00 A.M. the following day, "at which time they must stop their action due to American pressure." The Phalangist request for another bulldozer to "demolish illegal structures" was granted.22 Though it was agreed that no reinforcements would be sent into the camp, in fact fresh fighters were permitted to pass through the Israeli lines.

Meanwhile, despite Yaron's apparent order from the morning, the pace of the killing had hardly slowed. As executions, killings, and point-blank shootings continued, bulldozers were at work digging mass graves inside the camps—one of the largest being in full view of the IDF forward command—and, as witnessed by a Norwegian envoy, loading scoops of bodies onto trucks just outside the camp to be hauled away.23 A pattern had moreover emerged of executing groups and then bulldozing houses to bury the bodies under the rubble. At the same time, truckloads of Palestinian men, women, and children were seen leaving the camp—a Danish TV crew on Friday filmed groups being herded into trucks near Shatila.24 The bulldozing and dynamiting of houses (the "illegal structures" referred to by the Phalange to the Israelis), often with the inhabitants inside, accelerated.

The militiamen did not leave the camps at dawn the next day, Saturday, as had been agreed at the IDF-Phalange meeting the previous afternoon. Instead, the killings resumed at dawn after a brief respite after midnight. At 6 A.M., loudspeakers called upon surviving camp residents to come out and surrender. The hundreds of people—some reported more than a thousand—who emerged were marched at gunpoint toward a camp exit, with some being taken out of line and executed while others were loaded onto trucks parked in front of the abandoned Kuwaiti embassy and taken away, never to be seen again. Around 7:00 A.M., militiamen had gone to the Gaza hospital north of Sabra, killing the Arab personnel on the spot and removing the foreign staff, eventually taking them to another part of the city.25 (A similar, though far

24. Ibid.
more lethal, operation had been carried out the day before at Akka hospital. At 8:00 A.M., the remaining men were herded to the southern entrance, where some, fingered by an informer, were taken away, the others being marched to the Sports City stadium, where interrogations had been taking place. At 10:00 A.M., the militiamen left the camp. The IDF decided not to enter as not to be implicated, but throughout the day interrogations continued at Sports City conducted by Israelis and their Maronite allies. The Lebanese army took control of the camps on Sunday, 19 September.

Meanwhile, foreign journalists and diplomats began entering the camps as of 9:00 A.M. Saturday to find hundreds of bodies, many mutilated, scattered around the camp as well as hastily dug shallow graves and sandpiles, often with body parts protruding. A little past noon, the first news of the massacre was broadcast to the world.

Israel initially denied involvement in or knowledge of the "alleged massacre." Later, Israeli spokesmen stated that "fierce fighting" between the Phalange and the "terrorists" had resulted in casualties on both sides and that the IDF had had to intervene to prevent a much larger tragedy. There were even Israeli claims of exchanges of fire between the IDF and the Phalangist "extremists" while the IDF attempted to stop the violence. The chief of staff attempted to claim that the killing had not begun until Friday evening, while military spokesmen asserted that the "assailants" had entered "a gap in a part of the camp under the control of the Lebanese Army" (despite the earlier statements that the area was entirely under IDF control). Prime Minister Begin, for his part, insisted not to have known anything about the massacre until 5:00 P.M. on Saturday, seven hours after it ended, and continued to maintain Israeli innocence. It was at a cabinet meeting on 19 September that he delivered his famous line that "Goyim kill other goyim and then accuse the Jews," and the cabinet issued a statement calling charges of IDF complicity in the massacre "blood libel."

Nonetheless, Israeli efforts to place the entire blame on the Phalangists and to deny any responsibility—despite the fact that they had manifestly provided logistical, operational support as well as food, water, ammunition, and supplies throughout the operation—failed. A unanimous Security Council resolution condemned the "criminal" massacre on 19 September. Even U.S. President Ronald Reagan, who unlike Jimmy Carter during the 1978 invasion had steadfastly refrained from ordering Israel to withdraw in June and had not even protested Israel's entry into West Beirut in violation of its commitments, now proclaimed his "outrage and revulsion" and blamed the killings on the IDF, demanding its immediate withdrawal from West Beirut. (Israel began pulling out on 20 September.) Within Israel itself, demonstrations grew in size and intensity, with demands for the ouster of Sharon and Begin, culminating in a massive demonstration of some 400,000 people on 25 September in Tel Aviv, the largest in Israeli history.

27. Kapeliouk, Sabra and Shatila, p. 68.
28. JPS 46, Chronology, p. 102.
29. Ibid.
With such pressures, the Israeli government on 28 September appointed a three-member commission of inquiry under Yitzhak Kahan, president of the High Court. Its findings were issued on 7 February 1983. Israel was justly praised for establishing the commission, unprecedented in the Middle East, which painstakingly reconstructed events and attempted to ascertain how much the IDF leadership knew or should have known. As a result of the inquiry, Sharon lost his position as defense minister, though he remained in the government as minister without portfolio. Others implicated were also demoted, though all very quickly regained positions of importance.

Nonetheless, many found the commission’s findings flawed. One egregious error was the assumption that movements in the camp “were not visible from the roof of the forward command post or from the observation sites on other roofs,” a statement vigorously contradicted by the many journalists and diplomats who climbed to the top of the IDF-occupied buildings, where the high-power telescopes equipped with night vision hardly seemed necessary and where the goings on in large parts of the camp could be observed with the naked eye. Amnon Kapeliouk quotes an Israeli officer as saying that watching from the roofs of one of the buildings occupied by the Israelis was like watching “from the front row of a theater.” It was also noted that the commission at no point criticized the invasion itself or called into question the IDF’s claims of the presence of “terrorists” in the camps. Finally, the commission found that Israel bore only “indirect” or “moral” responsibility, whereas its own carefully amassed evidence points to far more. In general, the report treats the massacre as an isolated incident rather than as an integral part of the invasion.

In this regard, it is interesting to quote from the independent International Commission of Inquiry that focused on the invasion (and the massacres) from the perspective of international law. In its 280-page report published in early 1983, it noted that the

[Sabra and Shatila] massacres were low-technology sequels to earlier high-technology saturation bombardment by Israel from land, sea and air of every major Palestinian camp situated anywhere near the combat zone throughout southern Lebanon. The underlying Israeli objective seems clearly directed at making the Palestinian camps uninhabitable in a physical sense as well as terrorizing the inhabitants and thereby breaking the will of the Palestinian national movement, not only in the war zone of Lebanon, but possibly even more centrally, in the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

Kapeliouk makes a similar point when describing Israel’s provision of bulldozers to the Phalangists during the massacres. In a passage that seems eerily current in this summer of 2002, he writes,

31. Kapeliouk, Sabra and Shatila, p. 31.
Since the beginning of the war in June 1982, the Israelis have repeatedly used bulldozers to destroy homes and force the residents to flee. The refugee camps of south Lebanon were bombarded and then destroyed with explosives and bulldozers. In Israel, this operation was known as "the destruction of the terrorist infrastructure." The objective was to prevent the Palestinians from forming a national community in Lebanon. Therefore, it was necessary to destroy not only homes, but also Palestinian institutions such as schools, hospitals, and social service centers. In addition, the Israelis sought to deprive the Palestinian population of all males by arresting thousands of men and forcing thousands more to flee.33

In terms of casualties, no census of the dead has ever been attempted. In the days following the massacre, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other relief agencies collected the bodies and disinterred the shallow graves, giving survivors the chance to identify relatives. But efforts to establish lists of the dead soon fell victim to the priority of "national reconciliation." Bashir Gemayel's brother Amin was elected president of the republic on 21 September (with the Muslim deputies this time participating in the vote), and the Phalange role was soon downplayed or even ignored, exclusive blame being placed on Saad Haddad's men and Israel. After going through the motions in October of appointing a commission of inquiry, whose findings were never released, the subject of the massacre was virtually dropped. Any effort to collect names became virtually taboo, to the point that the ICRC has never published the names it did collect, and those conducting field work on the subject had to do so with extreme discretion. Such was the climate that even death certificates became almost impossible to obtain.34

Nonetheless, there were a number of estimates in the days following the massacre. According to official Lebanese sources published in mid-October 1982, 762 bodies had been recovered in Sabra and Shatila: 212 unidentified bodies reburied in mass graves, 302 bodies identified and cremated by local rescue teams, and 248 identified and buried by the ICRC. In addition, according to the same sources, about 1,200 bodies were claimed and buried by their families. This figure of almost 2,000 does not include those buried in mass graves that were never opened, the bodies remaining under the rubble of more than 200 destroyed homes (above and beyond the some 170 bodies dug out of rubble in the first few days, after which the search was abandoned), and the "missing"—those trucked away during the massacre who never returned. Based on all these categories, Kapeliouk gives a rough estimate of 3,000 to 3,500 dead.35 Bayan al-Hout, who conducted a field study of the massacre from 1982 to 1984, has identified and documented with certainty the names, with sources, of 1,390 victims: 906 known dead and 484 "missing." Her total estimate, however, is also around 3,500, based on information con-

33. Kapeliouk, Sabra and Shatila, pp. 45–46.
34. Email correspondence with Bayan al-Hout, Beirut, 28 August 2002.
cerning mass graves never opened, estimates of dead bulldozed under the rubble (including various neighborhood shelters known to have been bulldozed), and estimated numbers of bodies removed from the area. It should be noted that in addition to Palestinians and Lebanese, there were also workers from Egypt, Syria, and Pakistan among the missing. Certainly, precise figures will never be known. When asked how many Palestinians had been killed during the massacre, a Phalangist militiaman who took part in it replied, “You’ll find out if they ever build a subway in Beirut.”

**The Testimonies**

**Sobhia F.**

The F. family had lived in the Tal al-Za‘atar camp until it was destroyed in 1976, at which time the father and one of the sons were killed. Afterward, the wife, Sobhia, and other children came to Shatila. The oldest daughter, Wasfia, has three children. The other three daughters are Khadija, twenty-two years old, Sawsan, twelve years old, and Zeinab, eleven years old. The only surviving son, Adel, is seven years old. Sobhia’s mother-in-law, Umm Salim, was present throughout the interview. Three generations of women bear witness.

*Shahid: Tell me what happened.*

*Sobhia: Thursday night, we were sitting at home when the sky over the camp was lit by flares. A man came in and said the Phalangists are massacring people. We didn’t believe him and went to bed. The next day, someone else came and said the same thing, that there was a massacre going on. My brother-in-law, Sobhi, who lives next door, got dressed and ran out to see what was going on. He saw dozens of bodies in the nearby alleys, along with some wounded. He was going to take them to the Akka hospital, which isn’t far. On his way to get his car, he saw for the first time armed men near the Kuwaiti embassy. He ran back and shouted to us, “Quick, get up! You can’t stay here, you have to leave!” Just then we heard loudspeakers calling on people to gather at Sports City. They said, “Go there and you will be safe.” We were hardly out of the house when three armed men stopped us and asked if we were Palestinian. We said we were Lebanese, and they said they wouldn’t touch Lebanese. Then one of them, who was leaning against a wall in khaki trousers, came up and asked to see the identity papers of one of our men, who replied, “By the life of Shaykh Bashir, I am Palestinian.” The other said, “So you are all Palestinians, then. Follow me.” They grouped all the men together—that is, my sons Khaled and Amr, my brother-in-law Sobhi, and our neighbors Abu Farid and Abu Shihab. They ordered us to start walking. We were five families from this neighborhood, Horch Tabet, across from the Akka hospital. So we walked, the men on one side, the women and children on the other. They had made a path through the camp by opening big breaches in the walls, and so we passed from house to house. We walked like that for some time.

Suddenly, they told the men to stop and ordered us to go on. We started to scream and weep. They said, “If you go on screaming we’ll kill you too.” We had hardly gone a few meters farther when we heard shots, and we understood that we were lost. So

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37. Randal, *Going All the Way*, p. 16.
we screamed even louder. One of them said, “So what do you think? That it’s chaos here? We are not killing people. We are questioning them first and then we’ll judge.” We begged them, “For the love of God, for the love of the Prophet Muhammad, don’t kill them.” And they said, “You killed Shaykh Bashir!” We swore that we didn’t have anything to do with the assassination. We even said “May God kill the one who killed him. We are peaceful, we don’t have any weapons, we gave ourselves up without resisting. Why are you doing this?” One of them said, “There is no God, there is no Muhammad. We are God and Muhammad. Get on, now, you whores,” and he insulted us.

We had to go on until we came to a house where there was a big pit. There we saw a tank with Israelis. They were inside the camp, across from the Kuwaiti embassy. They said, “Take them to Sports City.” But I had time to see, and everyone with me also saw, a deep pit full of corpses. They were killing people and throwing the bodies into the pit. This pit is near the Kuwaiti embassy, along the road. Before they let us leave, they lined us up, and one of the armed men said to another, with a wink, “Choose one. Which one deserves to have her throat slit?” The other replied, “No, we don’t want to kill them now.” Then they made us walk to Sports City. There, three armed men in a jeep told us to turn around and go back. We said we were getting contradictory orders. We had to go back and forth twice between the Kuwaiti embassy and Sports City. At one point, a mine or a cluster bomb exploded on our path. Some people were wounded and fell, and the men shot at us. Everyone was running in all directions. We ran toward the Arab University. We flagged down a car on the road. There were foreign journalists, but one of them spoke Arabic. They photographed us and asked us what was happening. We told them there had been a massacre but they didn’t want to believe us. We told them that we were the first survivors to get out of the camp. This was Friday morning.

Shahid: You said your sons were killed. How do you know?

Sobhia: My cousin went to look for my boys and their uncle the next day. He was relieved when he didn’t find their bodies. But when he heard whistling, he was frightened and ran. Later, I described to him the exact spot where they had separated us. He went the next day, Sunday, and found all their bodies. It was a little farther from the spot where we had been forced to go on, near a pink house. They were all lined up, all six, against the wall. Six men . . . and they had shot them. My son Amr, they shot him in the face and struck him with an axe. His uncle Sobhi met the same fate. My other son Khaled was leaning against the wall, his arms open, as if he had tried to resist. Their cousin did not even recognize them, they were so disfigured. He identified them by their clothing. Khaled was nineteen years old. Amr was fifteen. They were both welders. My brother-in-law Sobhi was forty-three. He was a mason and had six girls and three boys. The oldest was seventeen.

Shahid: How old was your oldest son when he was killed in Tal al-Za’atar?

Sobhia: He was sixteen at the time. He would be twenty-two today. After Tal al-Za’atar, we lived in Damour for a time, then we came here, to Shatila. We’ve been here for four years now.

[Adel, her seven-year-old son who was present during the interview, refused to answer when questioned. He remained glued to his mother, without speaking. He was with the family the day the militiamen came for them. There was also Sobhia’s
mother-in-law, the children's grandmother, who was seventy years old. I turned to her.

Shahid: When did you come to Shatila?

Umm Salim: In 1948, we came from Jaffa. There were mulberry trees here. We moved in with one of my cousins. Then the director of the camp refused to give us authorization to remain in Shatila. Someone said to my husband, "Don't stay here, they are building a new camp in Tal al-Za'atar." He took us there. What can I tell you? There was nothing but brambles and serpents in Tal al-Za'atar. I wept when I saw the place. I said to my poor husband, "You made me leave my house to bring me here, with snakes!" In Shatila at least there had been tents. In Tal al-Za'atar there was nothing. The director of the camp was named Abu Yussef. We moved there with our children: Salim, Sobhia's husband, who was killed there; my son Sobhi, who was killed here; my son Arafeh; my son Abed; and my son Awad, the youngest, who was three months old at the time. I also had a daughter, Malabee, who is married and lives somewhere else. So I had five boys and a girl when we got to Tal al-Za'atar. Then UNRWA built houses. What can I say? Houses that were more like stables than houses. But since we had no choice, we had to live there. It was a furnace in summer and flooded in winter. We moved in. They gave us one room at first. There were eight of us. We spent three years like that, eight in one room. Then they began to enlarge the houses, and they gave us two rooms. My husband built a little wall around and we lived there for twenty-five years, up until the massacre of 1976. I married my children in these two rooms. Salim, Arafeh, and Sobhi. Then they moved with their families. My sons made good choices—I get on well with their wives. My husband died a natural death. He had a coffeehouse for truckers at Mkalles, near the camp. After his death, the coffeehouse closed.

Shahid: What did he do in Palestine before 1948?

Umm Salim: He was a fisherman. We lived in Jaffa, in the Ajarni quarter in the Old City. He had a boat, and in fact it was in that boat that we fled Jaffa during the war. They were shelling the quarter from the village of al-Bireh. We were afraid and we left Jaffa just before the Zionists entered.

Shahid: When the Israelis invaded Beirut, were you afraid?

Sobhia: The day Bashir Gemayel was killed, we had the feeling something terrible was going to happen. We went to Hamra to spend the night with relatives. My sons were still alive then, they were with us. The next morning the Israeli army entered the city. They were looking for fighters but didn't say anything about civilians. So we thought that we could go home. We returned to Shatila Thursday, and Friday the armed men came to get us, at 6:00 in the morning.

Khalil Ahmad

Khalil Ahmad is Lebanese. The day of the massacre, he spent the night at his mother's, who lives in Sabra. He was taken, like most of the men, to Sports City and freed later. The stadiums at Sports City were used as interrogation and detention areas.

Shahid: Where were you when armed elements invaded the camp?
Ahmad: I was at my mother's, in Sabra, across from the Gaza hospital. My own house is near the martyrs cemetery, at Ghobeyreh. When the shelling became more violent I sent my wife and father-in-law to a safer neighborhood. I came to my mother's and would return now and then to see if my house was hit or not. A few days earlier, the Lebanese army had established a post near the house. I took the initiative to go there with some neighbors to ask protection. They said they had already received orders to withdraw, and in fact the next day they were gone. That was Wednesday. On Thursday, the sixteenth, I spent the night at my mother's. Frightful rumors were spreading that people were being massacred in the camp. But we didn't believe them. The neighborhood was full of people who came with the same information.

Shahid: Who were these people?

Ahmad: Palestinians from Shatila. They were fleeing their neighborhood. We took in as many as we could, in the basement of the building. Most of them left at dawn. Women, children—all civilians. That night, we saw hundreds of flares over the camp. We went to bed anyway, not really knowing what was going on. Saturday morning, around 6:30, my nephew came in. “Uncle! The Israelis are here, they are outside!” I got dressed quickly to go talk to them, to explain that everyone here was a civilian, that there were no weapons. I wanted to speak politely, calmly, thinking that after all it was a regular army so they wouldn't harm civilians. At the entrance of the building, one of the soldiers yelled, “Out! Everyone move out! Get out of the building!” I said to the neighbors, “Come on, come on! It's the Israelis. They won't do anything to us.” But when we got close, we saw on their uniforms the Lebanese cedar and the marking “Lebanese Forces” in Arabic. There was no more discussion. They told us to move toward the square. Thinking they meant Sabra square, we stayed where we were. But they shouted, “Not here! The other square, farther down!” They were very crude, violent. They insulted us as they made us go forward. When we protested that we were Lebanese, they replied, “What are you doing among the Palestinians?” We explained that we lived in the neighborhood, that these were our homes. They said, “It's your fault, you just had to drive the Palestinians out.” We replied, “Why would we drive them out? They live here. And where should we drive them?”

They had gathered us on the square, with hundreds of others, before ordering us to set off again. There were old people, women, children. Some of the old people couldn't walk, so they had to be carried. Those who didn't walk quickly enough were struck with rifle butts. Palestinian women were trying to pass their babies to Lebanese, but the soldiers noticed and grabbed the babies. In crossing the camp we saw corpses all over, dead bodies everywhere. Only then did we understand that the rumors of the day before had been true. We saw the bodies with our own eyes, bodies of old men, especially, men over fifty. We also saw bulldozers at work: there were human limbs hanging down, caught on the teeth of the bulldozers, legs, entrails. The bulldozers were clearing away piles of bodies. We kept on walking to the exit of the camp.

There, the soldiers ordered, “Women on one side, men on the other!” Then we began to shout, “What do you want of us? We are Lebanese! What are you going to do with us?” They replied with insults and curse words, “Get moving, you sons of whores! You've done enough against us!” I said, “But we are Lebanese!” They replied, “Then how come you're living among them? So you've become Lebanese now, you sons of whores?” And they made us line up and march toward the Kuwaiti embassy. Along the way they would grab people out of the line and throw them on the ground,
forcing them to lie face down in the sands, hands behind the head. Then a big guy would come and jump on the back of the person, who shrieked with pain. Then they’d start in with another.

Shahid: Was anyone telling them whom to take out of the line?

Ahmad: No, not at all. They took them at random. A young man I knew had the misfortune to say that he knew of no fighters among us. They set upon him all the harder. “So, sons of whores. You don’t know anyone now?” The poor guy had a gold chain and a key chain, which they ripped off him. The old man just in front of me was moving slowly, with difficulty. One of the soldiers punched me, saying, “Move!” I didn’t react. I didn’t even look at him, for fear that he would throw me on the ground and stomp on me like the others. I saw them do that to about forty. All along the road there were soldiers of the Lebanese Forces in jeeps. They swore at us and yelled at us as if we were a herd of sheep or cattle. We were scared to death, afraid they were going to shoot us at the slightest protest. So no one opened his mouth. When we arrived at the Kuwaiti embassy, they turned us over to the Israelis.

Shahid: Had the Israelis seen what was going on?

Ahmad: Of course. The Israeli army occupied the Kuwaiti embassy, which overlooked the whole camp and from where you can see perfectly well the entrance and particularly the road they had us take. At the Kuwaiti embassy the Israelis took charge of us. They made us keep in a line. We asked where they were taking us, and they said, “You’ll see.” They insulted us too. On the road to Sports City, a bomb or mine exploded. A dozen of us fell. Three didn’t get up, the others were wounded. The Lebanese soldiers shouted at us to lie down on our stomachs. The wounded who were bleeding were running in all directions. The soldiers were firing and they kept on running. We were lying face down. Then they told us to get up and keep going. We said, “But there are mines, we don’t want to set off the mines.” And the soldiers yelled, “So, you knew there were mines here!” “No, we didn’t know, but we just saw one explode.” The Israeli soldiers who were nearby wanted to help the wounded. The soldiers of the Lebanese Forces tried to stop them, but all the same they did take the most seriously wounded, the dying. The others had to continue on with us.

Shahid: How many were you?

Ahmad: About 2,000 at the beginning. But by the time we got to the stadium we were only about 1,300. The others were either killed or taken away, who knows where, in trucks. And then there are those who were blown up by the mine. When we got near the Riding Club, before Sports City, some of the men tried to make a run for it toward the sand dunes, but the Israelis called out over their loudspeakers, “Don’t flee! Saad Haddad’s men will catch you and kill you. Stay here, and we’ll stamp your papers!” We were thirsty, hungry, we had been on our feet for hours. They promised that we could eat and drink once we got to Sports City, and they said it was better to stay with them or they could not be responsible for our lives. We finally agreed to follow them. Inside the stadium, they brought us water in a tanker. The Israeli soldiers were examining the results of their shelling, admiring their handiwork. Then they gave us sugared bread, but there wasn’t enough—one loaf for about twenty people. Then they asked older men to bring the young people who remained in the camp. About a hundred were brought. They came with the hope that once their cards were stamped they wouldn’t be arrested again. Then the Israelis began to take the men, one by one,
for interrogation. The officer who interrogated me was bearded with glasses. He asked me my name, nationality, and profession. He was Israeli but spoke Arabic with a Palestinian accent. Since I was Lebanese, he went easy on me. The Palestinians were questioned much more closely, and if they were young and strong they were taken away, who knows where. Then the Israelis brought someone who pointed out certain men as having been in contact with the fedayeen or who had carried arms. The guys who were fingered—about twenty-five or thirty—were taken away and no one knows what happened to them.

Toward 2:30 in the afternoon, the Israelis said they were going to let us go and that they were pardoning us even if we were “terrorists.” And they let us go, but they didn’t stamp our papers like they said. Outside, I found my wife, who was waiting for me and crying. We were able to get to the house through Fakhani, without passing in front of the Kuwaiti embassy.

Shahid: And the others?

Ahmad: It depends. My neighbor, the grocer, who was let go the same time I was, told me that he had been thrown to the ground and beaten, he and his son. They had wanted to take him away in a truck; they were filling up two trucks, but there wasn’t enough room for everyone. The ones they couldn’t squeeze in they told to go with the others to Sports City. Another told me that they had taken him into one of the rooms under the bleachers of the stadium and beaten him with a riding crop.

Shahid: And your wife?

Ahmad: She came looking for us at Sports City along with about sixty other women. They had waited for a long time at the entrance. Soldiers wouldn’t let them into the stadium. They were crying because they didn’t know whether we were dead or alive. At one point, an Israeli officer came by in a jeep and told them, “Whoever among you can bring about the surrender of a fighter in your neighborhood, we’ll free their husband.” Naturally, everyone said there were no more fighters. Then the officer told them to wait.

Umm Ahmad Farhat

Umm Ahmad Farhat is the mother of ten children. Four of them, aged one, two, six, and thirteen, were killed, as well as her husband. Her oldest daughter, eighteen years old, is paralyzed for life. She herself got two bullets in her back but was up the day after the massacre. She makes a great effort to speak and cannot keep back her tears.

Umm Ahmad: We were sleeping in the room—my husband, eight of my children, and myself. There was also our neighbor who had come to sleep at our house because of the shelling the night before. Around 5:00 in the morning, armed men came to the house and ordered us out. We went out in our nightclothes, each carrying the nearest child. I have young children, one and two years. Once we were outside, they asked my husband his nationality. He said he was a 1948 Palestinian* and that he was a

* The “1948 Palestinians” were refugees who came to Lebanon in the wake of the 1948 war. Under the agreements signed with Philip Habib, they had the right to remain in Lebanon.
telephone repairman. He also said he was crippled in one arm. The guy raised his machine gun to strike him and insult him, calling him a “terrorist.” Then he ordered us to face the wall without looking right or left. Then they fired several rounds at us. I was carrying my son two years old. I heard him cry, “Yaba!” [father] just before his skull exploded. I got two bullets in the back of my shoulder. The traces of his brain are still on the wall—and of his little sister too, who was on the shoulder of her big sister and who also got a bullet in the head.

Shahid: How old were the children?

Umm Ahmad: Layla was the youngest. She was a year old. Then Sami, two years old. Then Farid, who was six, and Bassem, thirteen. My husband also was killed. He was forty-seven. The others were wounded, like me. I lost consciousness. When I came to, the armed men were gone. My wound was bleeding a lot. My oldest daughter was seriously wounded and couldn’t walk. The other, Salwa, was wounded in the shoulder but she could walk. Everyone else was dead. So Salwa and I got up and managed with great difficulty to walk to the hospital. On the way, the Good Lord willed that we meet a young girl who helped us get to the hospital, taking us by little alleys to avoid armed men.

At the Gaza hospital they gave us first aid. Then there were rumors about the arrival of Saad Haddad’s men or Phalangists in the coffeehouse near the hospital. I then decided to leave the hospital at all costs—I remembered my niece in Sidon who had sought shelter in a hospital, and the Israelis destroyed it with everyone inside. So I fled with my daughter. I carried her on my back and was bleeding but determined not to stay there waiting for them. We found refuge in the entrance of a building. And while I was waiting for the bleeding to stop, a young man who knew my son recognized us and helped us.

Shahid: And the others?

Umm Ahmad: Suad, my oldest girl, who was seriously wounded, remained on the ground in front of the house until first aid workers arrived—Saturday morning—and took her away on a stretcher. She stayed the whole day of Friday and all night bleeding on the ground. No one could get to her to help her, because the massacre was still going on. She is still in the hospital. Most of the bullets hit her spinal column, and the doctors say she will remain paralyzed...\[her voice breaks and she starts crying\] Suad was very active, she did everything in the house. I don’t dare see her—I don’t dare look her in the face and lie to her.

Shahid: What about your other children [Umm Ahmad also had sons aged twenty, nineteen, twelve, and eight]. Where were they at the time of the massacre?

Umm Ahmad: The older boys were at the house Thursday afternoon, and they noticed from the terrace groups of armed men coming down the hill overlooking the camp. They came running to tell us the news. Their father told them to go stay with someone in town because the Israelis always think young men are fighters. As for us, we thought that being civilians, women and children, the Israelis wouldn’t attack us. The two little ones stayed with us, but they managed to hide in the toilets. When they came out, they found their father and brothers all dead. Then armed men grabbed them.

Shahid: [turning to the eight-year old] Where did they take you?
The boy: They took us to the Kuwaiti embassy, then to Sports City. There, they separated the Lebanese and the Palestinians. They took the young men and killed them. They killed Lebanese too. And they told us that if we opened our mouths they would kill us one by one.

Shahid: Who? Lebanese or Israelis?

The boy: Both. Afterward, they let us leave, and we went to our relatives, near the camp, where we found our mother.

Umm Ahmad: He still wakes up every night asking for his father.

Shahid: Did you hear anything the night before?

Umm Ahmad: Yes, we heard groans. The children were watching television at the neighbors. I told them to come home. There were many flares lighting the sky. We were afraid to go out and see what was happening. We were wrong to trust the Israeli army. They managed to hide the atrocities they committed in the camps in the south, in Rashidiyya, in ‘Ayn al-Hilwa and Burj al-Shamali. There, too, they massacred people. We didn’t know it yet. Since then, our relatives have come from there, and they told us. I have family in Burj al-Shamali. They buried people alive in their shelters; they also used gas. But all that they have managed to hide from world opinion.

Ibrahim Musa

Ibrahim Musa is thirty years old. He was living in Shatila with his young wife and three children. His family was all killed in the massacre. He himself was hit by a dozen bullets, including bullets in the waist, lung, leg, and thigh, and explosive bullets in the hand that exposed the bone. The interview took place in the hospital where he is being treated.

Shahid: What exactly do you remember?

Musa: I woke up Wednesday morning with the sound of airplanes ripping the sky [breaking the sound barrier]. I thought they were going to the Biqa’. I went to work, not far from the camp. There, we began to get news: “The Israelis are at the Cola roundabout.” “The Israelis have reached Arab University.” I immediately went home. I spent the entire day with my wife and children. That night, the Israelis surrounded and besieged the camp. Thursday morning, Israeli planes again flew low over the city, terrorizing the population. At 4:00 in the afternoon, the shelling began. I took my wife and children to the shelter a few meters from the house. You know, in Shatila the houses aren’t very sturdy, so I thought we would be safer in the shelter. Many families from the neighborhood had the same idea. We put the women and children below; the men and the old men remained above. There was a continuous coming and going in the shelter. People came in and, seeing how crowded it was, left for another shelter. There were almost a hundred people in this shelter that measured about 3 by 4 meters. Mostly women and children.

Around 5:00 in the afternoon, a mortar shell landed very near and our neighbor, who was pregnant, was hit. She was taken to the Gaza hospital. We then began to hear about the Israeli advance. We told ourselves that we would give ourselves up and that we would be civilian prisoners. There were rumors of a massacre in the camp, but we listened to the radio, and there was no mention of it. Toward 7:15 at night, we heard cries, but we stayed in the shelter. My children were sleeping.
Around 7:30 P.M., the owner of my house called the men and said to come out of the shelter. On the threshold, I saw a man in an Israeli uniform. Another asked me who I was. I said I was a plumber. He said, "I mean your nationality." I said, "Palestinian." So they told me to come out. I obeyed, and when I came out dozens of men old and young were lying face down in the street with their hands clasped behind their heads—about fifty of them. They ordered me to do likewise. I laid down, face to the ground.

Then I heard an argument between the armed men and the women, followed by shooting in the air and threats. Then I heard one of the men say, "Take the women to the Red Cross headquarters." I knew that there was no Red Cross in the camp, but I hoped all the same they would spare them. I wanted to believe they would spare them.

Once the women and the children were gone, they ordered us to stand up and emptied our pockets. They took my wallet and identity card and threw them on the ground. Then they lined us up face to the wall and began shooting. At this very moment, twenty-five meters away, some men from our camp, who were armed, burst out and there was a clash. Taking advantage of the panic, I looked around and saw that I was the last one in the row against the wall and the only one standing. The others were on the ground, either dead or wounded. I didn't know whether to flee or stay. I felt a sharp heat climbing my leg and arm. At that moment a grenade exploded, and I threw myself on the ground.

I thought I was going to die. I looked around, the armed men were gone, but there were lots of dead and wounded. I heard moans. A thirteen-year-old boy, his back against the wall, was bleeding from the chest. He was choking on the blood rising in his throat and coughing. My leg was pinning down one of the wounded, who was asking if they were gone. With great difficulty I moved my leg, and he extricated himself, leaving me there with the others. Another of the wounded, who knew me, called me by name and asked me to help him. I said I couldn't stand up. I asked him where he was wounded. "In the back," he said. I said, "Let's at least talk together and we'll see who dies first, you or me." We spoke a little. He tried to sit up and lean against the wall. He cried out in pain and vomited a lot of blood and his body went limp. I understood he was dead. I controlled myself so as not to cry out.

Night was beginning to fall, and I was surrounded by corpses. Near the wall where they shot us there was an open door. I dragged myself and crawled into the house. I found a mattress and laid down and covered myself. I was convinced that I was going to die, but I didn't want rats to devour my body. I recall a lot of flares but I couldn't see where they were coming from. I tried not to move very much so I wouldn't bleed more. I heard voices outside. They were saying that there were lots of dead, and then there was a woman's voice saying, "Let's get out of here before they kill us." I called for help, but nobody answered. I saw a pitcher in a corner and dragged myself to it and drank. It was practically suicidal, because people who are seriously wounded aren't supposed to drink, but I did it anyway. I lay there all night. I took off my shirt and made a tourniquet above my leg wound to stop the blood, and I soaked a cloth and put it on my forehead and lips.

At dawn, I was exhausted. I had lost a lot of blood. Suddenly, I heard steps nearby. I thought that the militiamen were finishing off the wounded. I was afraid they would torture me. I crawled to the darkest corner and covered myself with everything I could find. I heard a voice, "Let's go into this house to see if anyone's here—I see blood on the ground." I started trembling, convinced they were going to kill me. The
steps came nearer, and a hand raised the covers. I opened my eyes and saw a familiar face: an old man I knew by sight. I started breathing again and begged him to help me, telling him I couldn't move. He told me to wait for him because armed men were still in the vicinity. He came back a little later with three others. They asked me if there were others wounded. I said I didn't know. They put me in a blanket and carried me through the back alleys of the camp. There were snipers, and they were very careful. I was transported from hand to hand to the Gaza hospital. After they gave me first aid, they said they wanted to send me to a hospital in town just in case the armed men attacked the hospital.

Shahid: And your wife and children?

Musa: My mother came to see me in the hospital. I asked about them, telling her that the men had mentioned the Red Cross. She said there was no Red Cross in the camp, and she didn't know where they were. When my mother-in-law came, she said my wife and children were fine, that they were in the mountains resting. I didn't believe her and said that if they were alive they would have come to see me in the hospital, and that if her daughter didn't come within forty-eight hours I would know that she was lying. The following day I saw photographs in the newspaper of people looking through corpses,* and I saw my mother and mother-in-law among them. When my mother-in-law came again, I yelled at her that she had lied, that I had seen her photo in the paper. She burst into tears and admitted that there was no trace of my wife and children. My mother asked what they were wearing the day of the massacre. My wife was wearing jeans and my daughter a red dress. She told me that they had found the body of a woman difficult to identify because of the blows but whose clothes could

* Every day, the camp inhabitants were asked by the first aid workers to come identify bodies they had found.
be hers. They had found the bodies of a number of our neighbors who were with my wife and children, but not the bodies of mine. There are many bodies not yet found. They must be in mass graves not yet opened.

_Shahid:_ How old were your children?

_Musa:_ Ranna, the oldest, was five. Mustafa was four and little Marwan was ten months. My wife was twenty-three. The two older ones went to school, and I have their notebooks with me here. They were very studious, and I helped them with their homework at night. I teased Mustafa by saying that he couldn't read without the illustrations. So he redoubled his efforts to impress me. Marwan, the little one, was very tender; every day he awakened me by caressing my hair. I can't believe I won't see them again. I was happy with my wife.

_Shahid:_ What will you do now?

_Musa:_ I don't know. I have always lived in Shatila. I grew up here, I married here, and I lost everything here.

_Shahid:_ Had you remained in Shatila during the war?

_Musa:_ I had taken refuge elsewhere, but then I returned not too long ago, thinking that everything was getting back to normal. I didn't believe that the Israelis would enter West Beirut and that they would bring these men whose hearts are so full of hatred that they would massacre children. We did not imagine that the Israelis would enter the camp. There were guarantees by the Americans, Arabs, and Lebanese. We didn't think they would enter.

_Shahid:_ In your view, who carried out this massacre?

_Musa:_ All I know is that the Israeli army brought them in, that they had Lebanese accents, and that they were wearing military uniforms.

_Munir_

_Munir is thirteen years old. He is the only survivor of his family._

_Munir:_ Thursday afternoon there was a lot of shelling, so we went down to the shelter. I was with my family. There was also my maternal uncle and his ten children and our neighbor and his children. There were a lot of people, especially women and children. Then the armed men arrived and forced us to get out. They lined the men against the wall and shot them, and then they led us, the women and children, to Douachi.* There, there was a clash. One of the men went mad, crying out, "They killed my brother! My brother has been hit!" and he started firing at us. My mother and my sisters were hit. I was hit in the leg, and a bullet grazed my head but didn't injure me.

_Shahid:_ How many were in your family?

_Munir:_ There was my father, my mother, and my three sisters. The oldest of my sisters was six. There was also my uncle, his wife, and their ten children.

_Shahid:_ What happened to them?

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* A grocery store in Shatila, on the main street of the camp.
Munir: My father was shot against the wall. My mother was wounded near me and my sisters. Then the armed men said, "You injured people, get up, and we'll take you to the hospital." I whispered to my mother not to believe them, to stay down. But she saw the others get up, and she did too. They put them up against a wall and shot them.

Shahid: And your sisters?

Munir: One of them was wearing earrings. They said to her, "Are those gold or copper?" She said they were copper, so they got mad and said, "You daughter of a whore, that's copper, is it?" And they ordered her to close her eyes and ripped off the earrings and shot her on the spot. My cousins, they killed them too with the other children with us. I heard them say, "When they grow up, they'll become fighters—we have to kill them." And they killed them.

Shahid: And you?

Munir: I pretended to be dead. They all left, and finally I fell asleep. Then they came back. One of them had a flashlight. He saw that I was still breathing and shot at me again. He aimed at my head, but my hand was up against my cheek, and the bullet cut off my finger but didn't touch the head. All night I lay there in a pool of blood. The next morning, the armed men came back and one of them said, "Look at that one. He's still alive, he's trembling." So he fired. One bullet hit the ground, and the other hit me in the arm. I pretended to be dead. One of them wanted to fire on me a third time, but his friend said, "That's OK, he's dead." When they left, I managed to get to an empty house. I took off my clothes, which were soaked in blood, and put on others that I found there. Meanwhile, they were nearby stealing cars. I stayed in the house waiting for the pain to go down and the bleeding to stop. Suddenly they burst into the house where I was hiding. "You're still there? We're going to kill you." They took their guns, but then one said, "Are you Lebanese or Palestinian?" I said I was Lebanese. So he said to go sit in the room. As soon as they left, I fled by back alleys. I know all the back alleys, and I knew they led near the house of my uncle. There, I met a boy who knew me. He took me to the al-Sharq movie house, and from there a car took me to the Gaza hospital.

Shahid: What did you hear while you were hiding?

Munir: I heard people talking about the bad smell, how bad corpses smelled. And I heard the sound of tanks or bulldozers, I don't know which, near the Kuwaiti embassy.

[Munir is very weak; he had lost a lot of blood. His voice was hardly audible, and I decided not to tire him further.]

Umm Hussein

Umm Hussein, with a scrawny two-month-old baby in her arms, is staying with her children in a classroom of a high school in West Beirut. Hundreds of families of Shatila and Sabra are living in schools turned into emergency shelters. Umm Hussein lost her husband and two of her sons in the massacre. Her house had been bulldozed. She identified herself as a "1948 Palestinian" who had lived in Shatila for five years. Before, she had lived near Sports City.
Shahid: When did you leave Shatila?

Umm Hussein: Thursday, Israeli planes were flying over Beirut, making a terrible racket. They circled over the camp while their tanks began shelling us. Around 6:00 in the morning, the shelling intensified. We went into the shelter with our neighbors. Later, about thirty armed men came and started shooting. We ran to hide. Just as we closed the door, they burst in and said, "Why are you slamming the door in our faces? Where do you think you can hide?" Then they lined us up against the wall, separating the men from the women and children. They killed the men right in front of us. There was my husband, Hamid Mustafa, who was only forty-seven. My son Hussein was fifteen, and my son Hassan was fourteen. There was also the son and brother of our neighbor, and others too. In all, seven men they killed and piled one on top of the other in front of the house. They emptied their pockets, taking their watches and whatever they were carrying. Then they dug a pit and buried them.

Shahid: How did they dig the pit?

Umm Hussein: With bulldozers the Israelis gave them. The Israelis also lighted the camp all night for them with their flares and brought them food.

Shahid: And you, women and children, what did they do with you?

Umm Hussein: They took us to Sports City. They made us spend the night there, on the sand, with no covers. There were Phalangists and Israelis. They questioned us now and then. "What does your husband do? Where is your husband?" I told him that they had just killed my husband at our house along with others. "And your children?" I said my children also had been killed, that all that remained were my three daughters and the four little ones. "The youngest, here he is, he's two months old—do you want to kill him too?"

Shahid: You didn't have weapons in the camp?

Umm Hussein: The weapons were removed from the camp, and the fighters were evacuated. They left us disarmed and without defense. There were so-called guarantees that no one would attack us. Guarantees by the Americans, the Europeans, the Arabs. But they lied.

Shahid: Why didn't you leave when the Israeli army came in?

Umm Hussein: When Bashir Gemayel's death was announced, some people preferred to leave the camp. They were afraid that something would happen. But we had just moved back to the camp a week earlier. We had spent the three months of the Israeli siege in this same school where we are now. My baby was born here, in this classroom, where there is no water, no kitchen, no bathroom. We were so happy to return home, to Shatila, after the shelling stopped. We weren't prepared to start wandering again in the streets of Beirut looking for shelter. So we remained, thinking that since we were without weapons and since the fighters had all gone, the Israeli army would not harm us. We couldn't guess that they would make us pay for Bashir Gemayel's assassination. After all, it wasn't the Palestinians who killed him. It was between them. They fought among themselves, and they killed him. How are we responsible? We turned in our weapons; we trusted the Lebanese authorities. Abu Ammar [Yasir Arafat] had signed an agreement with the government that no one would touch the camps after the fighters left. We believed that. The result? They betrayed us.
They even killed women and children. I saw with my own eyes a baby of less than a year in his mother's arms. She was dead, and he was crying all the time. They fired at him, but he wasn't dead. One of the armed men got mad and yanked the child from his dead mother and said he would take it to the hospital. But farther on he strangled it and left it in the sand. I saw it on the ground when we passed. I also saw a woman whose hands were tied and who had perhaps been raped. Her clothing was torn, and she must have been dragged by the rope before being killed with an axe. It was a terrible sight.

Shahid: How did you get out, finally?

Umm Hussein: After a night in Sports City, they ordered us to walk along the road. They knew it was mined, and they wanted us to blow up the mines while walking. But we were extremely careful not to walk on any wires. Then they let us go. We first tried to hide in an apartment building in Fakhani, but the Lebanese inhabitants were afraid and begged us to go elsewhere. So we left, and on the road we flagged down a car that brought us to the public garden of Sanayeh, where the International Red Cross took us and brought us here, to this school, where we had taken refuge during the shelling of Beirut in July. And this is my life, from exodus to exodus. Except that now I am without my husband and my two sons.

I have eight children. What can I do with them? I don't have anyone to help me. My house has been razed. Where will I go? Is that what America wants? Is that what Israel wants? And the Arab countries agree? They took away our fighters, they killed our men. What more do they want of us?

Shahid: Your baby is very pale . . .

Umm Hussein: How could he not be? He was born here during the siege of Beirut and he hasn't had a normal life since. And with all these emotions, I don't have enough milk and don't have the means to take him to the doctor.

[In leaving, I wished health for her child, and she answered, "Why should he live? So they can kill him when he's twenty?"]
The Zionist occupation of most of Palestine during the first Arab-Israeli war and the dispersal of the majority of its Arab inhabitants from their lands have been a matter for considerable debate. The reasons behind the flight of so many Arabs from Palestine, the role of the Arab Liberation Army and the ability of the Arab villages to defend themselves are all subjects of controversy, but some light may be thrown on the events of 1948 by concentrating one's attention on a few specific cases of occupation. For the purposes of this article, I have chosen to describe the experiences of the inhabitants of six villages in Western Galilee: al-Sumeiriya, al-Bassa and al-Zib, which were occupied on May 14, 1948; al-Ghabisiya and Kabri, which were taken on May 21; and al-Birwa, which after having fallen to the Jews and being retaken, was finally occupied on June 24.

From these villages I have interviewed twenty families who are now living in Lebanon—in ‘Ain al-Hilweh, Bourj al-Barajneh and Shatila refugee camps. The large majority of the heads of these families were farmers, although they also included a former policeman, a carpenter and a construction worker. I tried to select those villagers who participated in the defence of their villages individually or through a locally trained "militia."

Arab response to the adoption of the UN Partition Plan for Palestine on November 29, 1947 was hostile. In Palestine itself, Haj Amin al-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem and head of the Arab Higher Committee, denounced the resolution, while in the wider Arab world, the prime ministers of the Arab

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1 The partition plan established an Arab majority in the proposed Jewish state as well as in the proposed Arab state, if the estimated 105,000 Bedouin resident in the proposed Jewish state are included. The proportion of Arabs to Jews in the Jewish state would then have been 509,780 Arabs (as against the lower totals usually given by counts which exclude the Bedouin) to 499,020 Jews, and in the Arab state, 749,010 Arabs to 9,520 Jews. For further information see the Institute for Palestine Studies’ *The Partition of Palestine: 29 November 1947* (Beirut: The Institute for Palestine Studies, 1967), Appendix II, p. 52.
League states (Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Transjordan and Yemen) met in Cairo on December 8, 1947, and issued a communiqué condemning the resolution:

... the heads and representatives of [the Arab] governments have decided that partition is void from its very beginning. They have also decided, in deference to the will of their people, to take such drastic measures as would, with the will of God, defeat the unjust partition plan and give support to the right of the Arabs.

According to Jon and David Kimche, the Haganah High Command had considered their strategy to meet such a threat as early as March 1945:

Ben Gurion, Galili, Yadin, and other Haganah strategists assumed that the main aim of the Arabs would be to isolate and, if possible, capture the Negev and Eastern Galilee, to penetrate the Sharon and Hefer valleys from Qalqilya in the direction of Natanya and Herzliya, to isolate the three large cities—Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa—and to interrupt the essential services throughout the country—water, electricity, and, particularly, petrol supplies.

Three years later, in March 1948, a new operational plan was devised, known as Plan Dalet. It called for the new KHISH brigades (Khayl Sadeh—the Jewish field army) and the Palmach forces, to... gain control of the area allotted to the Jewish state and defend its borders and those of the blocs of Jewish settlements and such Jewish population as were outside those borders, against a regular or pararegular enemy operating from bases outside or inside the area of the Jewish state.

Two prerequisites were essential for the implementation of the plan: full mobilization and an additional supply of arms. By the end of March 1948 the first consignments of Czech arms had been safely delivered, and six new...
KHISH brigades were almost ready for the offensive. Of the thirteen military operations undertaken by the Haganah within the framework of Plan Dalet, four operations — Yiftah, Matateh, Gideon and Ben Ami — were successfully carried out in the Galilee prior to the termination of the British Mandate and the establishment of the Jewish state on May 15, 1948.

Most of the people of Western Galilee were farmers who worked their own land. Economically, the villages of Western Galilee were largely self-sufficient, and although excess produce was sent to the cities of Acre and Haifa, few villagers had contacts with the outside world; travelling was rare and seldom done out of curiosity or for pleasure.

Like most Arabs in Palestine, the people of Western Galilee were not armed on the eve of the partition of Palestine, as a result of British preventive measures; the inadequacy of arms and ammunition was thus a major difficulty confronting them. As of May 15, 1948, the total rifle strength of Arab forces in Western Galilee was estimated at about 140 rifles with the rural forces, Kimche and Kimche, Both Sides of the Hill, pp. 92-94.

W. Khalidi catalogues the operations as follows beneath. Although Zionist historians dispute the contention that a number of these operations included provisions for the eviction of Arabs, the facts of the 1948 war, which resulted in the reluctant exile of the overwhelming majority of Palestinians from Jewish-occupied areas, indicate that expulsion or incitement to leave was part of the policy put into practice. Documentation from non-Arab sources of specific instances of expulsion in various parts of Palestine is included in Khalidi, op. cit.

Operations carried out within the framework of Plan Dalet were: 1. Operation Nachshon: April 1 — To carve out a corridor connecting Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and by so doing, to divide the main part of the Arab state into two (Defeated). 2. Operation Harel: April 15 — A continuation of Nachshon, but centred specifically on Arab villages near Latrun (Defeated). 3. Operation Misparayim: April 21 — To capture Haifa and rout its Arab population (Successful). 4. Operation Chametz: April 27 — To destroy the Arab villages around Jaffa and so cut Jaffa off from physical contact with the rest of Palestine, as a preliminary to its capture (Successful). 5. Operation Jevussi: April 27 — To isolate Jerusalem by destroying the ring of surrounding Arab villages and dominating the Ramallah-Jerusalem road to the north, the Jericho-Jerusalem road to the east, and the Bethlehem-Jerusalem road to the south. This operation would have caused the whole of Jerusalem to fall and would have made the Arab position west of the River Jordan altogether untenable (Defeated). 6. Operation Yiftach: April 28 — To purify Eastern Galilee of Arabs (Successful). 7. Operation Matateh: May 3 — To destroy Arab villages connecting Tiberias to Eastern Galilee (Successful). 8. Operation Maccabi: May 7 — To destroy the Arab villages near Latrun, and, by an outflanking movement, to penetrate into Ramallah district north of Jerusalem (Defeated). 9. Operation Gideon: May 11 — To occupy Beisan and drive out the semi-sedentary Bedouin communities in the neighbourhood (Successful). 10. Operation Barak: May 12 — To destroy the Arab villages in the neighbourhood of Bureir on the way to the Negev (Partially successful). 11. Operation Ben Ami: May 14 — To occupy Acre and purify Western Galilee of Arabs (Successful). 12. Operation Pitchfork: May 14 — To occupy the Arab residential quarters in the New City of Jerusalem (Successful). 13. Operation Schifon: May 14 — To occupy the Old City of Jerusalem (Defeated). Khalidi, From Haven to Conquest, Appendix VIII, pp. 856-57.
commanded by Abu Mahmoud Saffouri, and about 30 rifles in the city garrison of Acre.\footnote{Khalidi, From Haven to Conquest, pp. 859-60.} The Jewish strength consisted of the Carmeli Brigade, commanded by Moshe Carmel, which comprised 1,667 men as of April 1, 1948, and was intended to be 2,750 men by the beginning of May\footnote{Kimche and Kimche, Both Sides of the Hill, p. 158.} although this total was never reached.

The occupation of Haifa was completed on April 22, 1948.\footnote{See Major Roland D. Wilson, Cordon and Search: With the 6th Airborne Division in Palestine (Aldershot, England: Gale and Polden Limited, 1949), pp. 191-94. Also Walid Khalidi, Why Did the Palestinians Leave? (Cairo: The General Union of Palestine Students, 1965), pp. 21-56.} Jewish convoys going to the settlements north of it were safeguarded by the British who were stationed at Napoleon Hill, east of Acre, and at St. James police post to the north. The Haganah High Command feared that upon the evacuation of the British from their military bases, their settlements in the north along the coast would be besieged after the entry of Arab armies. The situation demanded immediate action and on the eve of May 14, operation Ben Ami was initiated.\footnote{The operation was carried out entirely in an area allotted to the Arab state under the partition plan. Ben Ami ("Son of My People") was named after the fallen commander of the Yechiam (Khirbat Jiddin) convoy who died in the Battle of Kabri on March 28, 1948. Lorch, Israel’s War of Independence, p. 113.} The objectives of the operation were: to reach the settlements of Nahariya and Yechiam (Khirbat Jiddin); to carry supplies and ammunition from the city of Haifa to the northernmost settlement of Hanita; to demolish the transportation routes leading into Western Galilee, thus preventing a Lebanese invasion from the north; and to evacuate the women and children from the settlements bordering Arab villages.\footnote{Ephraim Talmi, A Lexicon of the War of Independence (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Davar, 1970), p. 40.}

During the night of May 13, a supply convoy accompanied by Haganah forces left Haifa overland with the mission of occupying Napoleon Hill. Simultaneously, another unit carried in trucks set out from the settlement of Ein Ha-Mifraz, south of Acre, in the direction of the Nahariya intersection of the roads to Acre and Safed. It was to bypass Napoleon Hill (which by this time was supposed to be occupied by the Jewish forces) and the city of Acre, and would then proceed north towards the Arab village of al-Sumeiriya. A third seaborne force left the port of Haifa towards the settlements of Shavei Zion and Nahariya, north of Acre. This force was also to bypass Acre and capture the villages of al-Sumeiriya and al-Zib, securing the road for the forthcoming convoy travelling north. But when this unit reached al-Sumeiriya, its men were too seasick to fight and capture the village. Consequently, as the convoy from
Ein Ha-Mifraz approached the village, it was surprised to discover that the village was still in the hands of its Arab inhabitants.13

1. AL-SUMEIRIYA

Al-Sumeiriya was a village about an hour's walk (six kilometres) north of the city of Acre on the main road between Acre and the Lebanese border. At this time it had a population of about 760 Arabs and a total land area of 8,542 dunums — 7,935 dunums belonging to the Arab villagers and 607 dunums listed as "public property."14

The people of al-Sumeiriya heard on the radio of the village mukhtar, Mahmoud Amin, about the Jewish attack on the village of Deir Yassin.15 They were further terrified to hear of the fall of Tiberias, Haifa and Safed, but were somewhat heartened by the news of the Arab states' intervention in Palestine.

During the day of May 13, Yusuf Nafa'a, believed to be an officer in the Arab Liberation Army16 stationed at Acre, visited the village17 and assured the villagers of military aid in case of a Jewish attack. At dawn the next day, a Jewish force approached the village from the north-west. The few families remaining in the village began to flee to the neighbouring villages of 'Amqa, al-Ghabisiya and Kafr Yasif and to the town of Acre; only about thirty-five

13 Ibid., pp. 41-42. Also see Israel Army, Department of History of the General Headquarters, History of the War of Independence (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Marachat, 1970), pp. 140-42; and Lorch, Israel's War of Independence, pp. 113-14.

14 Population estimated as of December 31, 1944, and landownership as of April 1, 1945. Palestine Government, Village Statistics, 1945: A Classification of Land and Area Ownership in Palestine (ed. by Sami Hadawi) (reprinted in Beirut: Palestine Liberation Organization Research Centre, 1970), p. 41. "Public property... are all those lands which are subject to the control of the Government of Palestine by virtue of treaty, convention, agreement and succession, and all lands which are acquired for the public service or otherwise." For further information see ibid., pp. 29-33.


16 The ALA was an army of volunteers from the various Arab countries, formed by the Arab League on January 1, 1948 under the control of the Arab League Military Committee in Damascus. For further information on the ALA, see Hani al-Hindi, "The Arab Liberation Army, 1947-1949," Shu’un Filastiniya (Arabic), 23 (July 1973), pp. 27-58.

17 I was told that by that time many of the villagers had already moved their families out of the village. A few armed men remained in the village to protect it while others came in and out of the village. (Hussein Khalil 'Awad, interviewed at 'Ain al-Hilweh, Lebanon, February 28, 1973.)
armed men remained in the village to repel the Jewish attack. At sunrise, however, the villagers saw an armoured unit approaching from the south, along the road from Acre. Believing it to be the Arab force coming to their rescue (the men wore the red and white Arab headdress), Saleh Sa‘id Ka‘boush, positioned south of the village, began to fire into the air in welcome. But when he was fired upon and instantly killed, the villagers entrenched east of the village realized that the armoured unit was the enemy’s and began to withdraw. Ahmad Ibrahim Yusuf, a farmer and a member of the village militia, related what followed:

It was impossible to withstand the Jewish attack on two fronts. We were very few in number and very poorly armed. We attempted to repel the attack from the north-west, but we never expected this armoured unit to approach our village on the main road from Acre, since we assumed that Acre was still in Arab hands.... We retreated, leaving behind many killed and injured.18

The people of al-Sumeiriya had counted on the Arab Liberation Army to come to their rescue, and they were severely demoralized when it did not. Hussein Khalil ‘Awad took his family to Acre: “I thought they would be safe because the Arab Liberation Army was stationed there.” After the fall of the village, he went back to Acre and took his family to the neighbouring village of al-Ghabisiya. From that time, he lost confidence in the Arab regular forces and their ability to safeguard the city. He stayed in al-Ghabisiya until it too fell; then he fled again with his family to the village of ‘Amqa. He decided to return to al-Ghabisiya to bring out a few of his belongings which were left behind.

I had to return to the village.... I had kept the keys of my rented house with me when we fled. At the village, I met a few elderly people who told me that the Jews were not near the house.... I went to the house and was glad to fetch my belongings from there.19

He then took his family to the village of Abu Sinan, remaining there until it surrendered. With a few villagers he marched north-eastward, to the village of Tarshiha, where he stayed until it was captured. Now the whole of Galilee had fallen into Israeli hands. With his family he left for Lebanon, never to return to his village.

18 Among those killed during the fight were Saleh Sa‘id Yusuf, Ahmad Muhammad al-Haj, Muhammad ‘Ali Shana’a, Sa‘id Muhammad Khatib, Muhammad Lemuneh, Mahmoud Saleh ‘Awad, Saleh Sa‘id Ka‘boush, the wife of the former mukhtar, Hamadeh Abdul Fadi and the two children of Muhammad ‘Ali Felous. Those injured were Muhammad Abu-Fuad, Rajab al-Tariwi, Muhammad Khalil ‘Awad and Mustafa Ahmad Khatib. (Ahmad Ibrahim Yusuf, interviewed at ‘Ain al-Hilweh, Lebanon, February 28, 1973.)

Some villagers returned to al-Sumeiriya; Ahmad Ibrahim Yusuf was one of them. He recalled:

We returned to the village to get our dead. We were able to bring the body of Mahmoud Khalil ‘Awad because it was in the southernmost section of the village. The rest of the bodies had to remain in the centre of the village as we could not get them out.\(^{20}\)

Ibrahim Taher Sa’iyah returned to the village with Ahmad Saba, a farmer, three days after the village was captured.

Few people were in the village. Most of the village was destroyed. The Jews entrenched themselves in the south and east close to the Acre-Beirut Road.\(...) We went in and out of the village without being seen.\(^{21}\)

2. AL-ZIB

The village of al-Zib was about fourteen kilometres north of Acre. It had a population of 1,910 and a total land area of 12,607 dunums, with 12,438 dunums belonging to the Arabs and 169 dunums listed as “public property.”\(^{22}\)

The people of al-Zib were too close to Jewish settlements to avoid clashes. After the battle of the Yechiam convoy at Kabri,\(^ {23}\) the Jews of Nahariya took revenge by attacking an Arab truck loaded with grain on its way from the village of al-Zib to the city of Acre, killing the driver and four of the six passengers.\(^ {24}\) Henceforth, the villagers patrolled the road and tried to prevent the Jewish convoys from reaching the settlements of Ma’sub and Hanita. The villagers began to post guards around the village around the clock. But


\(^{21}\) I was told that among those who remained in the village were Zaynab al-Zayneh, her husband, and their three children. Her oldest son left the village with the rest of the villagers. The family is still separated. (Ibrahim Taher Sa’iyah, interviewed at ‘Ain al-Hilweh, Lebanon, March 1, 1973.)

\(^{22}\) Estimated as of December 31, 1944. See Village Statistics, 1945, p. 41.

\(^{23}\) On March 28, 1948, the Arab villagers of Western Galilee ambushed a Jewish convoy near Kabri on its way from Nahariya to Yechiam (Khirbat Jiddin). The villagers killed most of its members in a battle which lasted for over ten hours. This was one of the few important defeats the Jews suffered in Western Galilee. For further information on the Battle of the Convoy, see Lorch, Israel’s War of Independence, 1947-1949, pp. 68-70.

\(^{24}\) It was the custom of farmers to accompany the truck with their produce to its destination, riding on top of the sacks. Those killed in the attack were: Haj Mustafa al-Faqhir, Khalid al-Khatib, Yunis Khatab and Muhammad ‘Ali ‘Ataya. Injured were Fayez Omar Yusuf and Khalil Muhammad Khalil. Only one person, Muhammad Yamani, fled the scene without injury. (Muhammad As’ad Qiblawi, interviewed at ‘Ain al-Hilweh, March 1, 1973.)
they were unprepared to withstand a full-scale attack. The village strength was estimated at between seventy and seventy-five men, armed with some sixty rifles of different kinds, three or four Bren guns and one machine gun, with fifty to seventy rounds of ammunition for each man.

At dawn on May 14, a company of the Carmeli Brigade attacked al-Zib and immediately occupied the house of Muhammad 'Ali al-Sheikh Taha, in the southernmost section of the village. Soon after, a Jewish armoured unit approached the village from the south; the soldiers wore the red and white Arab headdress.

We knew that our Arab brothers would not let us down. But when the approaching soldiers began to shoot at us, we realized that they were Jews. They had fooled us with their headdresses. Our Arab brothers did not come to our rescue. Only thirty-five to forty men remained to defend the village. We could not withstand the Jewish attack. The armoured cars really terrified us. We began to retreat north, leaving behind our dead and injured.

A few villagers who were “too old and could not escape” remained in the village. Muhammad As'ad Qiblawi recounted:

I slipped into the village about a month after it had fallen into Jewish hands, to bring a few things from my home. I talked to the elderly people

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25 Many of the villagers had taken their families to Ras al-Naqura, just within the borders of Lebanon, soon after hearing of the massacre at Deir Yassin and Nasr al-Din (a small village near Tiberias which was attacked on April 10, 1948; the Zionists blew up all of the houses in the village, killing ten of the ninety inhabitants, trapped within doors). At the time of the Jewish attack, almost all of the villagers had left al-Zib, except for the armed men and a few elderly people. I was given the names of those who stayed on: Khalil Safrawi and his wife, 'Abdul Hafer Hassan, Umm Ahmad Mansour, Umm Kamleh Shaheneh and Shahena 'Abdul Razeq. (Ahmad Bakri al-Barjawi, interviewed at 'Ain al-Hilweh, Lebanon, March 2, 1973.)

26 Few of the armed men in the village had any systematic training. However, six of the villagers had served in the British Police Corps or the Transjordanian Frontier Force. Their names were given to me: Sami Yusuf, Ahmad Darwish, Suleiman 'Awad, Mustafa Bakr, Sa'd al-Din Nabulsi and Hussein al-Masri. Ibid., March 3, 1973.

27 These were supplied by one of the richer villagers, Abu Fayez 'Ataya.

28 The machine gun was owned by Fathallah al-Sheikh Taha. The villagers had to buy most of their own guns and ammunition. The cost of a rifle was between 100 to 120 Palestinian pounds ($400-$480), while a single bullet cost ten piasters ($0.40). Many of the villagers sold part of their livestock, land or their wives' jewellery to purchase a gun and some ammunition. (Muhammad 'Abed, interviewed at 'Ain al-Hilweh, Lebanon, March 1, 1973.)

29 Eyewitnesses (Muhammad As'ad Qiblawi, Ahmad Bakri al-Barjawi and Muhammad 'Abed) told me that Muhammad 'Ali al-Sheikh Taha was bayonet to death by the Jews and his wife fled through a window, breaking a leg in the process. ('Ain al-Hilweh, Lebanon, March 1 and 2, 1973.)

30 Muhammad As'ad Qiblawi, interviewed at 'Ain al-Hilweh, Lebanon, March 2, 1973.
who had remained; they were all placed in Abu Saleh’s house. They said that the Jewish soldiers had destroyed most of the al-Ramel area, south of the village, and the eastern section... and that a few of them were still in the village and were stationed at Sa’di’s house, on the Acre-Beirut road.31

My informants commented that a few people had recently (Autumn 1972) gone to Western Galilee via the West Bank to see their village and discovered that it had “disappeared.”32 The few who had stayed behind had been moved to the village of al-Mazra’a, just south of the Jewish town of Nahariya.

3. Al-Bassa

Al-Bassa was about eighteen kilometres north of Acre and quite close to al-Zib. Its population was estimated on December 31, 1944 at 2,950 Arabs33 and 150 Jews, residing at nearby Ma’sub, and it had a total land area of 29,535 dunums, with 25,258 dunums belonging to the Arabs, 4,178 to the Jews, and ninety-nine dunums listed as “public property.”34

The people of al-Bassa did not expect any trouble from their Jewish neighbours at Ma’sub and Hanita; the Jews had assured the mukhtars of the village that they wished them no harm. They were in the habit of visiting the village from time to time and must have known that its people harboured no ill will toward the Jews.

I was told that the villagers first heard of Jewish atrocities committed against Arab villages over the radio at Ahmad Hussein Maghribi’s coffee-house. They became all the more anxious when they learnt of the fall of Tiberias, Safed and Haifa. Hussein As‘ad Khalil reported that they did not trust the Jews because the latter “had a plan to convert Palestine into a Jewish state.... They wanted our land as well and did not want us there.”

When the Jews attacked al-Bassa, most of the villagers had been evacuated to Lebanon. Hussein As‘ad Khalil remembered: “I took my mother, wife and children to Lebanon when the Jews of Nahariya killed my father, who was a policeman with the British, on his way to Acre. I did not want any

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33 About two-thirds of the villagers were Christians and one-third Muslims. The Christians resided in the eastern section of the village and had two mukhtars, Wadi ‘Azzam and Jabbour al-Haroun. The Muslims lived in the western part of the village and had Khadr ‘Issa as their mukhtar.
harm done to the rest of my family. At the village remained about forty armed men and a few elderly people.\footnote{Only four of the armed men could use their weapons effectively. They were As'ad Ibrahim Musa, 'Ali Khalil 'Issa, Dawud Ghezzuh and Ismail Khalil Hamureh. The old people who remained were Haj 'Ali Khalil, Nuha Mukluh, Zuhra al-Baithi, 'Aysha al-Qaysiyah, Sa'ida Huwila, Wadi' 'Azzam and his brother, and Hussein As'ad Khalil's uncle and his wife, who, after living ten years at the village of al-Mazra'a, were permitted to join their family at 'Ain al-Hilweh camp in Lebanon. (Hussein As'ad Khalil, interviewed at 'Ain al-Hilweh, Lebanon, March 2, 1973.)}

At dawn on May 14, as the men were preparing to go off duty after being on guard all night, a Jewish infantry unit attacked from Jubel to the south-east, overlooking the village. At first the armed villagers were able to halt the attack, but only until an enemy armoured unit approached from the west. Believing that the coastal villages were still in Arab hands, an attack from this direction was totally unexpected. According to Abdullah Hussein Dukhi, who took part in the fighting:

> At first, we thought the armoured unit was Jordanian [the Arab Legion] because the men wore red and white headdresses. When they began shelling our positions, we knew they were not Arabs. ... We felt helpless and decided to retreat north, the only way open to us.\footnote{Abdullah Hussein Dukhi, interviewed at 'Ain al-Hilweh, March 1, 1973.}

As in most of the villages of Western Galilee, only a few people from al-Bassa were able to infiltrate back to their village to bring out their relatives and to retrieve some of their belongings. Mahmoud Hassan Dukhi returned two days after the village had fallen to fetch his mother, only to find her a burnt corpse at his home. Hussein As'ad Khalil, who also returned, reported:

> My uncle and his wife were not in the village. The village was empty. ... I saw the bodies of Abdullah Isma'il Muhammad, Ahmad Muhammad Khalil, and 'Ali Hussein 'Ali, who were killed by Jewish snipers as they tried to infiltrate into the village. ... The Jews were entrenched at Jubel, overlooking al-Bassa.\footnote{Hussein As'ad Khalil, interviewed at 'Ain al-Hilweh, March 1, 1973.}

Hussein As'ad Khalil's uncle and his uncle's wife, who stayed on after the fall of al-Bassa, described the Jewish occupation of the village:

> The day the village fell, Jewish soldiers ordered all those who remained in the village to gather in the church. They took a few young people — including Salim Darawes and his sister Ellen — outside the church and shot them dead. Soon after, they ordered us to bury them. During the following day, we were transferred to al-Mazra'a. ... There we met other elderly people gathered from the surrounding villages.\footnote{I was told that among those killed at this time were Qudes al-Bayk, Musa Salim Khalil, Yunis Hussein Yunis, As'ad Khalil 'Issa and Mikhail 'Audeh. (Hussein As'ad Khalil's uncle and his wife (I was asked not to reveal their names), interviewed at 'Ain al-Hilweh, Lebanon, March 4, 1973.)}
Three days after the capture of al-Bassa, the city of Acre surrendered to the Jews. In order for the Jews to forestall a possible attack from Lebanon by way of Ras al-Naqura, the rest of Western Galilee had to be occupied. On May 24, the Carmeli Brigade attacked and seized the frontier post of Ras al-Naqura; in the same operation the villages of Kabri and al-Ghabisiya were captured.

4. Kabri

The people of Kabri were disheartened when they heard that all the Arab villages along the coast, including the city of Acre, had fallen into Jewish hands. They were very poorly armed; there were between forty to fifty men sharing between them some forty to forty-five different kinds of rifles, with seventy to one hundred rounds of ammunition each, and a few hand-grenades.

The Jews had attacked Kabri earlier in the year (on February 1, 1948) when a small Jewish force attempted to blow up the house of Faris Sirhan, a village notable and a supporter of the Mufti of Jerusalem. In the following weeks the people of Kabri often blocked the main highway leading to Khirbat Jiddin and to the other settlements in the north.

On the morning of March 28, Ibrahim Ya’qoub saw a Jewish armoured car leaving Khirbat Jiddin to the main Nahariya-Safed road; the villagers had learned earlier that a convoy was on its way from Nahariya. They asked Officer ‘Alush, in charge of the Arab Liberation Army group stationed at Kabri, to have his thirty-five to forty men assist them in preventing the passage of the convoy through Kabri on its way to Khirbat Jiddin, but ‘Alush refused, claiming that he had no orders to attack.

Determined nonetheless to block the road, the villagers gathered together in the al-Rayas area, two kilometres south-west of Kabri, and, placing rocks in the road, one group positioned itself on both sides of the road, and another entrenched itself at the cemetery behind the stone tombs, overlooking the road.

At noon, the Jews brought a bulldozer to al-Rayas to clear the way. Soon after a convoy composed of three armoured cars, two trucks and a bus approached the village. The people of Kabri, now joined by villagers from the surrounding villages, opened fire but were unable to stop the convoy. An eyewitness, ‘Ali Qadureh, reported that at about this time a hand-grenade was thrown at the armoured car ahead, but it failed to explode. Then “a second hand-grenade was thrown, but it fell short...We did not hit any of the armoured cars. But suddenly as one of the armoured cars was turning around,

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39 For further information see Kimche and Kimche, Both Sides of the Hill, p. 129.
40 Village Statistics, 1945 combines the villages of Tarshiha and Kabri in its figures. Thus Tarshiha and Kabri had a total population of 5,360 Arabs, owning 37,308 dunums, with ninety dunums owned by Jews and 10,030 dunums listed as “public property.”
it turned over and caught fire, blocking the road and the Assal Water Canal, the water source of our village." The rest of the convoy stopped and could not turn back because the vehicles were too close to each other. As the villagers continued to shoot at the stalled cars, the Jewish soldiers began to jump out of their armoured cars and run toward the village orchards. The villagers began to run out of ammunition. They urged those back in the village to send their women to the Arab Liberation Army to shame them into joining the fight. By mid-afternoon, the Arab Liberation Army and villagers from around about joined the fighting. Jamil Ya'qoub, a local villager who took part in the fighting, reported:

We kept fighting until we killed almost all of them... Two injured Jewish soldiers, hiding in the fields, killed Ahmad Muhammad Hassan, the camel driver, as he was coming back to Kabri from the village of Kafri Yasif. . . . We destroyed all of their armoured cars and trucks except the bus. Officer Kallas, of the Arab Liberation Army, asked those in the bus to surrender, but they refused; they shot at him and he was wounded. We brought gasoline and set the bus on fire, with the soldiers in it... It was God's will that we should win that day.42

At nightfall, a British force, accompanied by an Arab policeman, approached the village and stopped at the roadblock. They demanded passage to al-Rayas, but were not permitted to pass. Soon after, they retreated a few kilometres and began to shell the area from al-Mazra'a. The next morning, the British soldiers came back and were handed the bodies of about seventy-four Jewish soldiers.43 My informants said that all the weapons captured on the battlefield were seized by the Arab Liberation Army.

A few days later, General Ismail Safwat, Commander-in-Chief of the Arab Liberation Army, visited the village and inspected the area. When he left, he took with him Mahmoud Dib (the mukhtar's son), 'Uthman Muhammad Kassem, and Ahmad Rashid to headquarters in Damascus; they returned a few days later with a gift to the village of eleven rifles and some ammunition.

The expected Jewish attack came on May 21, simultaneously from the south-west, the south-east and the north.44 There were about twenty or

43 Arab losses were two Arab Liberation Army soldiers and one villager killed and two injured. (‘Uthman al-Jesheh, interviewed at Bourj al-Barajneh, Lebanon, February 26, 1973.) The fate of the Jewish convoy is described by Lorch, op. cit., p. 70.
44 Women and children of Kabri had been evacuated to Tarshiha soon after the fall of Acre. Only a few old people remained, among them: Haja Umm Hussein, Umm Hassan Dabajeh, Abu Isma'il 'Arkeh, Umm Kazneh Dabour, Kassem al-Hashimeh and Fatimeh al-Kheshfeh. (Amina Muhammad Mousa, interviewed at Bourj al-Barajneh, Lebanon, February 23, 1973.)
twenty-five villagers entrenched east of the village. A member of this group, 'Uthman al-Jesheh, reported that when the Jews attacked,

... We could not confront [them]. They were too many and well-armed. After all, didn’t they occupy most of the villages along the coast, including the town of Acre? We decided to hide and not to fire. . ..We later retreated to Tarshiha.45

When the Jews entered the village, they captured a number of the old people who could not make their way to the orchards. Amina Muhammad Musa (Umm Sa'id Ra'di) was one of those who got out in time. Her story is worth relating in detail.

My husband and I left Kabri the day before it fell. We walked a few hours to the east on the main Kabri-Tarshiha road. As it got dark, my husband suggested that we spend the night in the village orchard and proceed after the morning prayer. He said that no harm would come to us if we spent the night there. At dawn, while my husband was preparing for his morning prayer, our friend Rajeh passed us and urged us to proceed, urging that we run. My husband made his prayers, then we started to walk towards Tarshiha. It was not too long before we were met by the Jews, who were coming from the north and south towards Kabri. They stopped and searched us. We had no weapons. They took my jewellery — gold earrings, a necklace, and four bracelets . . . and forty pounds we had with us. One of the Jews, who spoke broken Arabic, kept saying: “I will give this necklace to habibti (my girl friend).” I did not say a word to him because I knew they were our enemies and that they had no mercy on us. Another soldier said, as the shelling started, destroying almost everything: “Kwayis, kwayis Kabri.” [Expressing delight at the shelling of Kabri.] They took us and a few other villagers, Ibrahim Dabajeh, Hussein Hassan al-Khubeyziyeh, his wife and three children, and a man from the village of al-Nahr called Khalil al-Tamlawi, in an armoured car back to the village. There a Jewish officer interrogated us and, putting a gun to my husband’s neck, said: “You are from Kabri?” We told him that we were from the village of Sheikh Dawud. However, ‘Ali Abu ‘Aziz of the village of al-Ghabisiya, who was working for the Jews, said that we were lying and that we were from Kabri. The Jews took away my husband together with Ibrahim Dabajeh, Hussein Hassan al-Khubeyziyeh, Khalil al-Tamlawi, ‘Uthman Ibn As’ad Mahmoud and Rajeh. They left the rest of us — Umm Hassan Dabajeh, Abu Isma’il ‘Arkeh, Kassem Shahineh, Umm Khazneh Dabbour, Umm Hussein al-Khubeyziyeh and myself — to the main Kabri-Tarshiha road. The Jewish soldiers were dancing in the streets. . ..They came to us and asked us about our boys. . ..An officer came and asked me not to cry. He said he would bring my husband back, except that he had already been killed. . . He showed me a picture of Faris Sirhan and asked me if I knew him . . ..“Tell Faris,” he said, “we will occupy Palestine and will follow him to Lebanon.” We slept in the village orchards that night. The next morning, Umm Hussein and I went to the village. The chickens were in the streets, and Umm Hussein

suggested that I go and bring some water. I saw Umm Taha on my way at the village courtyard. She cried and said: "You had better go see your dead husband." I found him. He was shot in the back of the head. I pulled him to the shade and went to bring Umm Hussein to help me bury him. I did not know what to do. I could not dig a grave for him. We carried him on a piece of wood to the cemetery and buried him sideways in his mother's grave. . . . Until today I worry and pray that I buried him in the right way, in the proper position. 46 I stayed in Kabri six days without eating anything. I decided to leave and join my sister, who had fled earlier with her family to Syria. I asked Abu Isma'il 'Arkeh, an elderly man, to accompany me to Tarshiha, and he did. We left the others in the village. I do not know what happened to them. Abu Isma'il remained with his son in Tarshiha, and I proceeded to Syria. 47

5. AL-GHABISIYA

Al-Ghabisiya was a village about sixteen kilometres north-east of the city of Acre. Its population was estimated on December 31, 1944 at 1,240 Arabs; it had a total land area of 11,786 dunums, with 11,771 dunums belonging to the Arabs and fifteen dunums listed as "public property." 48

The people of al-Ghabisiya fought with the villagers of Kabri against the Jewish convoy to Khirbat Jiddin on March 28, 1948. They knew that the Jews would sooner or later attack their village. As elsewhere the villagers of al-Ghabisiya were not well-armed and sought the aid of the Arab regulars and other volunteers. Their strength was estimated at forty men sharing among them thirty rifles of different makes and one Bren gun, 49 and between forty and sixty rounds of ammunition each.

The Jews attacked al-Ghabisiya on May 21, the same day as they did Kabri. 50 They approached from the north and south-west, and immediately

46 Facing the city of Mecca.
48 Estimates include the population and land area of the neighbouring village of Sheikh Dawud. Village Statistics, 1945, p. 40.
49 I was told that the Bren gun and a rifle were salvaged during the fight in Kabri. A representative of the Arab Liberation Army came to the village and took the rifle from Ahmad Hijazi and the Bren gun from Dib Jesh'a. My informant said: "That was the only time the Arab Liberation Army came to our village." (Hussein Shehada, interviewed at Bourj al-Barajneh, Lebanon, February 26, 1973.)
50 Most of the villagers had taken their families to the neighbouring villages or to Lebanon soon after the city of Acre had fallen. A few remained in the village. Ahmad Dib Kassim was one of them: "I did not take my family out of the village until the last minute because I continued to believe that the Arab armies would enter Palestine, protect us, and recapture the occupied villages and towns." (Ahmad Dib Kassim, interviewed at Bourj al-Barajneh, Lebanon, February 25, 1973.)
captured ‘Uthman As'ad ‘Abdul ‘Al’s house, in the southernmost corner of
the village, and arrested the owner and his son.\textsuperscript{51} They shelled the village from
the house, killing and injuring many of the villagers as they were fleeing.\textsuperscript{52}
Hussein Shehada said: “We did not resist the Jewish soldiers; we were too
few and very poorly armed. We decided not to confront the Jews in order
to be able to retreat.”\textsuperscript{53}

Many of the villagers returned to the village a week after its occupation.
Hussein Shehada recalled: “I returned to bring a few blankets, some pillows
and food for my family. We left in such a hurry that I was unable to take
anything with me.”\textsuperscript{54} Most of the people of al-Ghabisiya remained in the
Galilee until it was completely captured on October 31, 1948. Then they moved
to Lebanon.

6. \textbf{AL-BIRWA\textsuperscript{55}}

Al-Birwa was a village on the Acre-Safed road, ten kilometres east of
Acre. It had a mixed population of Muslims and Christians numbering 1,460,
and a total land area of 13,542 dunums, of which 546 dunums were in Jewish
possession.\textsuperscript{56}

The people of al-Birwa had followed the news of the fighting in the Galilee
with mounting anxiety. They had heard of the fall of Haifa, Acre and the
villages along the coast. They were told by the people of Tamra that “the
Jews were mean and unkind to the old men, women and children... that
they had killed a woman and her children in the village.”\textsuperscript{57}

Soon after the fall of Acre, the villages north-west of al-Birwa — al-Makr,
Judeida, Julis, Kafr Yasif and Abu Sinan — surrendered. The villagers of
al-Birwa decided to contact the nearby villages — Sha‘b, Mi‘ar, Majd al-
Kurum, al-Bi‘na, Deir al-Asad, and Nahf — to organize a common defence
against the expected Jewish offensive which would have al-Birwa as its first
target. At this time the people of al-Birwa received a delegation composed
of Arab Druze, sent by the Jews from Druze villages that had decided to
surrender and to cooperate with the Jews. They were advised to do likewise.
The villagers were unable to agree because they were divided into followers

\textsuperscript{51} About twenty armed men had stationed themselves in the village to confront the
Jews. (Hussein Shehada, interviewed at Bourj al-Barajneh, Lebanon, February 23, 1973.)
\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Ibid.}, February 22, 1973.
\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Ibid.}, February 26, 1973.
\textsuperscript{55} A version of this section appeared in Arabic in \textit{Shu‘un Filastiniya}, 21 (May 1973),
pp. 104-107.
\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Village Statistics, 1945}, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{57} Mahmoud Sa’d, interviewed at Shatila, Lebanon, February 4, 1973.
of the Darwish-Sa'd and al-Kayyal families. Some favoured surrender, and
the others were for fighting.

Like other villages, al-Birwa was not prepared for a Jewish attack. It had
a strength of about forty men,\footnote{As in the other villages, only a few of the men were trained, having been members of the British Police Corps or the Transjordanian Frontier Force. Among these were: Salim Sa'd, Yusuf al-Kayyel, Muhammad Isma'il al-Sheikh Khalil, Mustafa Mahmoud Mi'ari, Najib Sa'd, Mahmoud Judeh, Hassan Muhammad Safya, Saleh Mi'ari, Salim As'ad Abdul-lah, Musa Hurani and Ahmad As'ad. ('Abed Hussein Bishr, interviewed at Shatila, Lebanon, January 31, 1973.)} armed with different makes of rifles, with
between thirty and forty rounds of ammunition each, and one machine gun.

The people of al-Birwa prepared for the attack by taking their old men,
women and children out of the village. Haj 'Ali Fayyad took his family as
early as May 23 to the village of al-Bi'na, about ten kilometres to the east.
'Abed Bishr sent one of his wives with six children to Beirut on May 24 and
sent his second wife and four children there a week later. Mahmoud Sa'd
sent his family to al-Bi'na on June 1, while Najib Sa'd sent his on June 6.
About forty-five elderly people, both Muslim and Christian, stayed on in the
village, hiding in the church with Father Gibran.

On the afternoon of June 10, three armoured cars approached al-Birwa
from the west. As they came closer, the villagers began shooting at them, and
forced the Jews to turn back. At about sunset, the Jews, now numbering over
one hundred men, returned. The villagers were able to engage the attacking
force only for a short time. "We ran out of ammunition and did not know
what to do. Our men began to retreat one by one to the east."\footnote{Many were killed; my informants are not sure how many. Among those known to have been killed are: 'Ali Hussein Judeh, 'Ali Muhammad Yunis, Ahmad Muhammad Nijim, Muhammad Taha Ihsan and Nimir Mustafa. Muhammad 'Ali Yusuf Hussein, Muhammad 'Ali Ihsan and 'Ali Ihsayat were injured. (Mahmoud Sa'd, interviewed at Shatila, Lebanon, February 3, 1973.)}

The Jews remained on the outskirts of the village all night. At dawn
on June 11 — just before the first United Nations truce was to come into

The villagers who fought left everything behind and retreated to join
their families. But they did not expect the Jews to stay in their village long.
As Haj 'Ali Fayyad recalled:

We left our homes open and our fields unharvested. We had a great hope
of returning with the help of our brothers, the Arab Liberation Army,
who were stationed at Tell al-Liyat, about six kilometres east of al-
Birwa.\textsuperscript{61}

The people of al-Birwa waited for about thirteen days. During this time
they depended upon the hospitality of the neighbouring villages. On the
morning of June 23, the villagers decided to recapture their village. It was
almost the end of the harvest time, and they wanted to harvest their fields
before the crop was ruined. The news of the plan spread throughout the sur-
rounding villages. My informants report that over two hundred men and
women assembled and made preparations to fight for their village and their
harvest. About ninety-six men were armed with different makes of rifles, and
they had about thirty to forty-five rounds of ammunition each. Officer Jassem,
an Iraqi of the Arab Liberation Army stationed at Tell al-Liyat, gave the vil-
lagers some ammunition, but told them he could not join them because he
had no orders.\textsuperscript{62} They then made their way through the Arab Liberation Army's
line, marching towards the village shouting "Allahu Akbar."\textsuperscript{63}

When the shooting started, many people from the surrounding villages
joined the attackers. 'Abed Hussein Bishr said: "This is a local tradition.
When you hear shooting, you join in."\textsuperscript{64}

The Jews were taken by surprise; many of them were in the fields. The
villagers attacked them from three directions: from Jebal al-Tawil, to the
north of the village, from Sha'b, to the south-east, and from Tell al-Liyat,
to the east. The Jews retreated to the village. The villagers pressed on their
attack, forcing the Jews back to Tell Kissan and to the area of Abu Leban,
about half a kilometre west of al-Birwa.\textsuperscript{65} In the village the Jews left behind
three positioned machine guns and seven mechanical harvesters at the fields
of Ahmad Isma'il Sa'd that had been used to harvest the villagers' wheat,
besides a few sacks of wheat gathered from the fields. In the house of Ahmad
Isma'il Sa'd and 'Abed Darwish (where the Jews had stayed), the villagers
found bags filled with their wives' dresses and their own clothes, twenty to
thirty fresh cups of tea, much tinned food, and a great quantity of sugar, tea
and coffee.

\textsuperscript{62} At this point about eleven Palestinians of the Arab Liberation Army from the village
of 'Aqraba deserted their unit and joined the villagers. ('Abed Hussein Bishr, interviewed
at Shatila, Lebanon, January 31, 1973.)
\textsuperscript{63} Mustafa al-Nimr, interviewed at Shatila, Lebanon, February 3, 1973.
\textsuperscript{64} I.e., "faz'a." For further information see Hisham B. Sharabi, Palestine and Israel: The
\textsuperscript{65} The villagers lost many killed, including women. Among them were: Jamileh Muham-
mad Khamziyeh, Muhammad Sa'id of Sakhnin, Faraj Isma'il Abdullah of Majd el Kurum,
Saleh Rabeh of Deir al-Asad, Radwan 'Audeh and Labibah Radwan. Saleh Duki, Ahmad
'Issa and Kasem Helu were injured. (Najib Sa'd, interviewed at Shatila, Lebanon, February 3,
1973.)
The people of al-Birwa were delighted to find some of their wheat already harvested and packed in sacks. They rushed to take as many sacks as possible to their homes. Najib Sa'd recalled:

The reason why we fought for our village was because we were hungry. It was harvest time. . . . Why should we leave our crops to the Jews? . . . We tried to take the mechanical harvesters into the village. However, the Jews, west of the village, began to shoot at us, forcing us to leave the machines where they were.66

The villagers remained in the village for two days. On June 23, soon after the retaking of the village, four United Nations representatives came to the village, carrying white flags. They spoke with Salim As'ad Abdullah, Musa Hurani and Ahmad As'ad, formerly policemen during the British mandate. The United Nations representatives asked to speak with the leader of the group who attacked.

We laughed. . . . We told them that we had no commander, that this was our village, and that we came back to harvest our fields and take the village back from the Jewish invaders. . . . They wanted to go through our village to speak to the Arab Liberation Army's commander at Tell al-Liyat, but we stopped them.67

On the afternoon of the following day, about one hundred Arab Liberation Army men entered the village of al-Birwa. As they were approaching the village, they shelled the Jewish positions west of the village.

We were so happy and proud to see our Arab brothers coming to help us. We knew that they would come to our aid and would not let us down. We were tired and nearly out of ammunition. . . . The Arab soldiers were led by Officer Jassem and a Lebanese officer known as Mahdi. . . . They were armed with modern weapons.68

Officer Mahdi complimented the people of al-Birwa on their courage and fighting spirit, but he suggested that they leave and join their families in the surrounding villages for a short rest. “We were certain that he was sincere and trusted the soldiers of the ALA to protect the village.” So for a second time the people of al-Birwa left their village. That evening, the villagers heard shooting in the village. Mahmoud Sa'd recalls:

We wanted to return to the village, but some of us were confident that our Arab brothers, who were well armed, would withstand a Jewish attack. But before long, we saw them retreating from the village. We could not believe our eyes. . . . They came to aid us and protect our village; instead, they handed over the village to the enemy.69

The people of al-Birwa remained in the surrounding villages. Najib Sa'd's family stayed on the outskirts of the village for almost a week before deciding to go north to Lebanon. His wife refused to go anywhere, hoping they would return to their home soon. Haj 'Ali Fayyad stayed on a month (at al-B'ina) after the village had been occupied the second time, before deciding to leave to Lebanon. Some villagers infiltrated into their village to "steal" some of their belongings from their own homes. Others were not so successful. Najib Sa'd remembered:

We took refuge in Lebanon and life was not what we expected it to be. Conditions were bad. We had nothing to live on. I became desperate, and one night, I decided to leave my family and go back to the village to bring some money I had buried outside my house before the Jews attacked. . . . But I never reached my village. I was caught by the Jews and put in jail. I did not stay long in jail. One day, the Jews filled a truck with prisoners, blindfolded us, and drove us to the borders of Gaza. . . . On our way, the Jews beat us and took our watches and rings. When we arrived at our destination, they assembled us, chose a man at random, and shot him in front of us. They ordered us to run as fast as possible to the other side of the border and not to look back. They were shooting in the air, and I ran as I had never run before. . . . I worked in Gaza for a short time, saved some money, and used it to travel back to Lebanon to join my family.70

In 1950, the Israelis, in accordance with Article 125 of the Defence Regulations of 1945, declared the village of al-Birwa a "closed" area for security reasons. In 1972 Haj 'Ali Fayyad went to visit al-Birwa and found that it had suffered the same fate as that of countless others in Palestine. "When I arrived there, there was no al-Birwa. The village was levelled and the few Arabs who remained behind had been transferred to other villages. The Jews had built a new village in place of ours."71

70 Najib Sa'd, interviewed at Shatila, Lebanon, February 1, 1973.
71 Al-Birwa is now inhabited by Yemeni Jews; see Sayegh, Buldaniyat Filastin al-Muhtaleh, p. 20.