Jews in Arab Countries

Aftermath of Six-day War

PARADOXICALLY, the very magnitude of the Israeli victory in the June war was to help keep in power the regimes of the Arab states so soundly trounced by Israel.* Even before the war was over, the Syrian regime hastily pulled back from the front its best tank divisions as protection against a possible internal take-over by its opponents. The government also ordered the execution, on June 26, of Majors Salim Hatum and Badr Dum'a, who had fled the country after involvement in the September 1966 plot to overthrow the government, but returned under the cover of the June conflict.

Egyptian President Abdel Gamal Nasser dramatically announced his resignation on June 9, and just as dramatically returned to office a day later, after popular demonstrations in his favor erupted throughout the country. Marshal Abd al Hakim Amir, who was relieved of his post as commander-in-chief of Egypt's armed forces after the June debacle, was arrested on August 25 on charges of conspiracy, together with some 50 other army officers and former Minister of War Shams al-din Badran. On September 14 Amir committed suicide; some sources believed he was forced to do so.

King Hussein of Jordan, whose country had suffered the greatest losses, maintained his throne by a hasty cabinet reorganization, on June 15 that eliminated the anti-Nasser elements; by purging more than 60 army officers in September, and by permitting Arab groups to use Jordan as their base for raids on Israeli-occupied territory and Israel itself.

Once post-war upheaval had been avoided, the defeated Arab governments and their severely traumatized peoples rallied more vigorously and bitterly than ever round the standard of anti-Israel feeling, in accordance with which the fall of any of the Mid-East regimes would have meant a new victory for Israel, this time on the diplomatic front.

This also was the reason why even the more conservative, monarchical governments—which Nasser had sought to undermine in the past—agreed, at the August Khartoum summit conference of Arab states, to give financial support to the bankrupt Egyptian government. Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Kuwait agreed to give to Nasser 95 million pounds sterling annually and to Jordan 40 million, as their contribution to the war effort. Another, unofficial agreement made at Khartoum between Nasser and King Feisal of Saudi Arabia, called for the withdrawal of Egyptian troops from the Yemen war.

Though united in anti-Israel sentiment, there were considerable differences

* The exception was Iraq, where a year later, on July 17, 1968, a right-wing military junta ousted President Abdel Rahman Arif. It was reported that a revolutionary command council, headed by General Ahmen Hassan al-Bakr, a former premier and member of the right-wing Ba'ath Socialist party (AJYB, 1966 [Vol. 67], p. 420), assumed control of Iraq.

of opinion among the Arab leaders on how to try to recoup war-time losses, differences hotly debated at meetings of the Arab foreign ministers at Kuwait in June and at Khartoum in August, and, of course, at the Khartoum summit conference. Iraq, Algeria, and particularly Syria took the most intransigent and extremist line. Egypt and Jordan, very conscious indeed of their near-disastrous positions, were seeking to temporize, while the oil-rich states, such as Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Kuwait, were anxious to find some *modus vivendi* that would allow them to resume oil shipments as before. Egyptian leaders were especially incensed at the Syrian attitude, since there was more than a little feeling that it was Syrian extremism in the months before the June war, which had brought about a conflict for which Egypt really was not ready. Moreover, once combat started, Syria had limited itself to defensive fighting instead of truly seeking to come to Jordan's and Egypt's aid. The Khartoum conference closed with the moderates in control, a situation raising premature hope that some kind of peace with Israel was possible.

There was no doubt that the Soviet Union influenced the outcome at Khartoum. June and July saw a series of visits to Moscow by the heads of the Iraqi, Algerian, and Syrian states and the trip of USSR chief Nikolai Podgorny to Cairo, Damascus, and Baghdad. On August 3 the Soviet party organ *Pravda*, stated that Arab super-patriots, with hysterical appeals calling for the elimination of Israel, were hurting their own cause. Wholehearted Russian support of the Arab cause in the United Nations and, even more significantly, the vast Soviet arms shipments and economic aid of all kinds to Cairo, bringing Egypt's forces close to pre-war level, permitted Nasser to take a progressively harder stance, as 1967 drew to a close. This, in turn, was an obstacle to often rumored Jordan-Israel peace negotiations (p. 147).

French President de Gaulle's hardening position on Israel greatly enhanced France's moral prestige in the Arab states (p. 445). France gained no material advantage from its pro-Arab position. The one notable exception was Iraq, which agreed to let French oil companies drill in part of that country; but here too, France was kept out of the oil-rich Rumalia fields and sulphur fields. On a five-day visit to Paris in mid-December, President Yussef Zuayen caused a diplomatic incident when he attacked Israel in a ceremony at Paris' Hôtel de Ville.

Arab differences, that had been patched up at the Khartoum conference, emerged once again after the adoption of the November 22 UN resolution on the Arab-Israel war (p. 181). Attempts to call a new summit meeting encountered such strong opposition, that, at year's end, it was doubtful that it would be held at all. Yet, despite all difficulties that came in the wake of the June war, the various states had maintained internal order.

JEWISH COMMUNITIES

Even before the six-day war, the Jews still living in the Arab countries were subject to severe discrimination. The war brought in its wake a new round of persecution and suffering for Jews in these lands and severely wracked once-great communities with histories going back to ancient, indeed Biblical times. Jewish life in Aden and Libya came to an end; the disappearance of the Jewish community in Egypt has almost become inevitable; the Jewish community in Lebanon is melting away, and the same probably would occur both in Iraq and Syria but for their ban on Jewish emigration.

Comparison of Jewish populations in the Middle East before the founding of Israel and just before the June conflict shows how Jewish communities in the area already had shriveled under the impact of two decades of Arab-Israeli tension; of Arab nationalism intent upon driving out all colonial and foreign influence (with local Jews being seen as such a foreign influence); of pan-Arab consciousness that continued to grow among Moslems, including non-Arabs, despite all the endemic, perpetual rivalries among the Arab states.

Jewish Population	*Pre-1948*	*May 1967*
Iraq	120,000	2,500
Egypt	80,000	2,500
Lebanon	6,000	6,000
Syria	30,000	4,000
Yemen	70,000	0
Aden	9,000	138
Libya	35,000	4,000

The impact of the war was also felt sharply by Jewish communities in the North African countries of Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria (p. 523). A clear distinction, though, must be made between what happened to Jews in these lands and in Near and Middle Eastern countries. In both Morocco and Tunisia the governments tried to protect the Jewish communities from popular feeling and from anti-Jewish sentiment stirred up or utilized by certain political groups. In the Middle Eastern countries, on the other hand, it was the governments themselves that were primarily responsible for the sufferings of the Jews. The situation was similar in Algeria, which had formally declared war on Israel and strongly opposed any political settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict.

Egypt

The Jewish community in Egypt numbered about 2,500 in May 1967, with some 1,400 Jews living in Cairo, 900 in Alexandria, and about 200 (mostly Karaites) in other towns. As the crisis built up in the month of May,

the Egyptian authorities made a new register of the Jewish population. Within two or three days after war broke out on June 5, the police rounded up the great majority of Jewish males, in their businesses and homes. Some were taken to local police stations in their pajamas. Treatment in the various Cairo and Alexandria police stations varied. It was good in some; in others Jews were beaten and maltreated. In one commissariat Jewish prisoners were held for two days without receiving even water. Grand Rabbi Hayyim Douek of Cairo was put under house arrest; Rabbi Jacques Nefussi of Alexandria was taken to prison.

Within a week Jews of foreign nationality—about 75 or so—were handcuffed, taken from these jails, packed into army trucks and driven to Alexandria where they were put on ships together with non-Jewish Westerners and foreigners who were leaving Egypt, or were being expelled. The families of expellees who did not have their passports with them at the time of arrest knew what was happening because policemen were sent to their homes to fetch these documents. But most wives and children were left behind without word, and later made their way out of Egypt.

All other Jews taken into custody were sent to Abou-Zaabal prison, about an hour's ride from Cairo on the Port Said road. The Jews from Alexandria, sent to Abou-Zaabal by truck, were almost lynched by an Egyptian mob which gathered in response to an announcement by the Egyptian Ministry of Information that the first Jewish prisoners had been captured, leading the public to believe that they were Israelis. They only were saved by the quick thinking of some of the army officers accompanying the convoy. On arrival in Abou-Zaabal prison, all Jews were forced to kneel and put their elbows on the floor. Prison officers and trustees then jumped up and down on their backs, kicked them, and beat them with canes and leather straps.

This treatment on arrival was but a foretaste of what was to come in later weeks. Altogether some 350 Jewish prisoners were housed in five cells of the Abou-Zaabal House of Correction. In each of these completely bare cells, originally meant for 20-25 prisoners, were 70 Jews who had to sleep on the floor in alternate rows with legs overlapping in order to fit into the available space. For the first five weeks prisoners were kept locked in their cells; finally they were permitted to take a half-hour daily walk in the prison courtyard. They received only two aluminum dishes and had to eat with their fingers or otherwise gulp down their food. Many of the prisoners were quite old, several over 70; many others were in poor health when summarily arrested, among them a partially paralyzed lad, one just out of the hospital, and one taken from an asylum.

In the first month the prisoners were frequently beaten, or required to stand in two rows and strike each other, or forced to shout in chorus slogans such as "Up with Nasser, down with Israel" over and over again. On numerous occasions individual prisoners were given 20 to 30 lashes with palm fronds, often slightly wet so that they drew blood, for some alleged misdeed.

One man was caned so severely on the soles of his feet that he could not stand for weeks. Two others are known to have been thrown into solitary and especially harshly beaten. One young man was saved from being strangled by a prison officer when other officers intervened. There were at least two instances where jailers sought to force prisoners to commit unnatural acts upon each other.

No family member, legal representative, or representative of a foreign government or international organization was permitted to visit Jewish prisoners at Abou-Zaabal. The International Red Cross repeatedly requested permission to visit the prison, and on several occasions was even promised the opportunity to do so, but in fact never got in. For well over a month the prisoners had absolutely no news of what was going on outside. Then they were asked to fill out forms requesting relatives to send them packages containing underwear, towel and soap, but nothing else. They were also permitted to send out and receive messages through the Red Cross, and to receive some money for the prison canteen. From mid-August onward their treatment generally improved somewhat.

Following intervention by numerous government and international agencies, the Egyptian authorities began to release individual prisoners for whom special appeal had been made—about 15 by the end of August. Almost all of these were then summarily expelled from Egypt. Rabbi Nefussi, who was among the very few released, was permitted to stay in Egypt for some months, before his expulsion in December.

In mid-September authorities initiated a process whereby a number of prisoners gradually were transferred from Abou-Zaabal prison, where they were under the jurisdiction of the ministry of the interior, to the Les Barrages jail. Here they were dealt with by the Egyptian Passport Service which released and expelled them.

On October 15, in an interview with New York *Times* reporter Jay Walz, Grand Rabbi Douek denied through a government official—who was chosen by the Egyptian Information Department to serve as his interpreter—any persecution of Egyptian Jews resulting from the conflict, but admitted that "about 400" Jews had been jailed. "We are Egyptians the same as anyone else," the rabbi was reported as saying. He also mentioned that President Nasser sent greetings to the Jewish community on Rosh Ha-shanah, and emphasized that Egypt permitted full religious freedom.

At about this time (October 10) the Egyptian government denounced "the public appeal by the rabbis of Israel pretending that thousands of Jewish youth are imprisoned or persecuted in Egypt, Iraq and Syria." This appeal, made the day before, was called by the Egyptian Ministry of National Orientation "an attempt to turn public opinion attention away from the atrocities and massacres being perpetrated in the occupied territories."

On December 23 all Jewish prisoners, except those in Les Barrages were transferred to Tourah prison. On that day, according to estimates by Jewish

organizations, such as the United HIAS and the European Office of the American Jewish Committee, 223 remained in jail, five of them in the hospital of Tourah prison near Hellwan, and three still in Les Barrages. One hundred four imprisoned Jews had been expelled from Egypt; another 20 or so of those released were permitted to remain in Egypt. All released Jews were carefully warned that failure to remain silent about their treatment in prison could have serious consequences for their relatives or others still in Egypt. One released prisoner, Berto Farhi, gave a full, harrowing account of prison conditions in an eight-page feature article in the French weekly *L'Express,* December 25, 1967.

On December 22 Egyptian Minister of the Interior Chaaraoui Gomaa asserted, in an interview in the Cairo daily *Al Ahram,* that Egyptian President Nasser had given "clear and precise instructions" for the liquidation of internment camps in Egypt. He also claimed that 257 Egyptian Jews had been arrested at the outbreak of the war and declared that "Twenty-three among them already have been released and we are studying the cases of the others with a view to liberating them, now that the circumstances that might necessitate their internment have lost their acuity." These figures were substantially lower than the ones released by the Jewish organizations.

The situation of the prisoners was discussed with the Egyptian authorities by Nils-Goran Gussing, sent by UN Secretary General Thant to the Middle East as his special representative. He reported to the United Nations that the UAR "expressed the firm opinion that the Security Council resolution [on the question of the treatment of minorities in Middle Eastern countries after the war] did not apply to the Jewish minority in the UAR, declared that Jews of foreign nationality were the responsibility of their respective ambassadors, that stateless Jews came under the mandate of the United Nations' Commission for Refugees, with its office in Cairo, and that Jews of Egyptian nationality were solely the responsibility of the UAR." Yet the High Commissioner's office actually was unable to intervene even in behalf of stateless Jews in Egypt. The Egyptian authorities later charged that Gussing had not properly presented their views with regard to stateless Jews.

Accounts by Jews coming from Egypt seemed to indicate that the Egyptian government wanted all Jews to leave eventually except for a few Jews who had converted to the Moslem religion but also had been arrested and Jewish women married to Moslem men. The imprisoned Jews were told that release was possible (though not necessarily assured) only if they agreed to expulsion.

Jews leaving Egypt were permitted to take with them nothing but five Egyptian pounds and a few personal effects. Currency transfers were impossible. Their passports were stamped with a red Arabic letter indicating they were Jews, to enable customs and police officials to pay special attention to them. The only thing the expellees could do was to sell their properties at auction, at ridiculously low prices, and deposit the proceeds in Egyptian bank

accounts. These accounts were in fact blocked for Jews in Egypt, though no law or administrative decree to this effect was passed. There were also several cases of sequestration of Jewish businesses, whose owners and families could draw up to a maximum of 50 Egyptian pounds per month, depending on the size of the family.

Egyptian Jews lived in fear of popular as well as government reaction to the June war, but, except for few minor incidents in the first weeks, they were not molested by their Arab neighbors. The Jewish community organizations in Cairo and Alexandria were permitted to function. This was fortunate because, with so many of the breadwinners in prison, a number of families needed welfare assistance after the first few months. However, assistance was limited since only a limited amount could be withdrawn from community funds each month.

One serious problem facing the Alexandria community was the maintenance of its home for the aged which cared for some 70 persons, who were 60 years of age or older. Forty-five of these were old and disabled; the others were kept in the home so that they could receive the necessary welfare assistance. Another 70 aged persons were in a home at Heliopolis, outside Cairo; a handful were in Egyptian institutions. In view of what appeared to be the certain disappearance of the official communities, the fate of these persons was a source of great concern.

A problem of another sort was the fate of Jewish incunabula, ancient Torah scrolls, and other Jewish treasures owned by the communities, which were being kept by the Egyptian authorities. Before hostilities began, Jewish community leaders negotiated with the authorities for return of about 40 Torah scrolls that had gotten into the hands of the Egyptian customs authorities, but the conflict put an end to these discussions.

One effect of the June crisis was to bring about what in effect was a merging of the Sephardi Jewish community with the much smaller Ashkenazi and Karaite groups, the latter having always kept pretty much to itself. This was inevitable because the problems of Karaite prisoners were handled together with those of all others by Jewish leaders who were not imprisoned. Among expellees who had been held in Abou-Zaabal prison were Adolph Deutsch, president of the Cairo Ashkenazi community, and Grysca Koslovski, the president of the Alexandria Ashkenazi community. It was estimated in December 1967 that some 1,000 to 1,200 Jews, prisoners included, were still in Egypt.

Libya

The 4,000 Jews in Libya suffered more in death and destruction as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict than any other Jewish community in the Middle East. By end of 1967 all but 220 Jews had fled the country, and these were expected to leave shortly. Thus, mob hatred, arson, and murder put an end to one of the oldest Jewish communities. Before World War II, the com-

munity numbered some 40,000. However, only about 6,000 were left after pogroms in 1945, that resulted in the death of some 130 Jews, and in 1948, shortly after Israel became an independent state.

Another 2,000 left the country in the 1950s and early 1960s when the government adopted a series of anti-Jewish measures. Among these were the special registration of the Jewish population at the request of the Arab Boycott Office; stripping the Jewish Community Council of its autonomy and of all but strictly religious functions, and placing it under the control of a Moslem commissioner; barring the operations of all Jewish welfare organizations such as the Joint Distribution Committee and OSE (which had maintained offices in Libya in the first years after Libya became independent in 1952), and the Alliance Israélite Universelle school; decrees virtually forbidding Jews to complete property transactions. The government also adopted administrative measures making it impossible for Libyan Jews to get passports or documents attesting to their Libyan citizenship. They could acquire, though with considerable difficulty, *laissez-passers* enabling them to travel abroad on business. But they had to leave behind family members or substantial cash deposits as guarantee for their return. They were also forbidden to emigrate. All Libyan Jews lived in the city of Tripoli, except for some 200 in Benghazi.

During May and the beginning of June extremist Libyan newspapers such as *Ar Raid, At Taliya* and, to a lesser extent, government publications were filled with both anti-Israel and antisemitic articles. There was also wide distribution of pamphlets of this ilk from Cairo and Damascus, including *The Jews in the Koran* containing several passages from *Mein Kampf.* On June 2 Moslem priests in the mosques called for a Jihad, a holy war against the Jews. Their harangues stressing incidents between Mohammed and the Jews were broadcast over the Libyan radio. The week June 5-12 had already been designated a propaganda "Week for Palestine" with demonstrations.

When, at ten o'clock on the morning of June 5 the news came that hostilities had begun, the planned controlled demonstrations exploded into fanatic attacks on and destruction of all things foreign, especially against the Jews: of Jewish shops on Tripoli's main streets and in the *hara* (ghetto) where the poorer Jews lived. The mob murdered at least ten Jews; Jewish leaders who later reached Italy reported that the Libyan government would never admit to more than two, a butcher pulled out of his shop hacked to death with his knives, and a woman assistant at the home for the aged. Virtually every Jewish shop was burned to the ground, not so much for pillage as out of sheer hatred. Because of the hour at which disorder began, children were in school, family heads in offices and shops. Forced to hide in the nearest available homes that offered refuge, many were cut off for weeks from their families. Jews did not dare to go out. They barricaded themselves in their homes where they received phone calls threatening them with death. The authorities advised them to stay indoors since they could not assure adequate

police protection. Even getting food became a serious problem: several Arabs and Italians who tried to buy bread for their Jewish friends were threatened. Among the buildings destroyed by the mob were the Bet El Synagogue and the Dar Serussi Talmud Torah in the *hara*.

The Libyan authorities reacted fairly rapidly to protect the Jews in Benghazi. These were rounded up almost immediately after word of Israel-Arab fighting came and put into protective custody in army barracks outside the city. Action in Tripoli came too late to save Jewish lives and shops, although, on June 6, Jews of the *hara* and from certain outlying parts of the city were taken to an army barracks at nearby Gurgi. In the weeks following these were joined by others from the city. It is believed that two Jewish families, who were known to have set out for Gurgi but disappeared without a trace, were taken instead to the desert by Libyans pretending to help them, and killed for their valuables.

The situation of the Libyan Jews somewhat improved in mid-June after community leaders sent a series of appeals to Mufti Sheikh Abdurrachman el Galhud; to the Moslem commissioner of the Jewish community, Haj Mohammed el Koni, and to Prime Minister Hussain Maziq, who took office a week after the riots. Among other things, the Libyan government completely altered its pre-war policies with regard to emigration. An estimated 300 managed to flee in the confused, hectic, immediate post-war days. It is known that, on June 20, the Libyan emigration office began working day and night without interruption to meet requests for travel documents from the Jews still in the country. Mass departure by plane of Jews from the Gurgi camp and Tripoli began on June 28. Libyan authorities also permitted a representative of the International Red Cross to visit the camp, which Jews could leave at will. Conditions at Gurgi were reasonably adequate, refugees reported. The camp was closed down on 24-hours notice at the beginning of December, when only some 100 Jews were left.

Jews leaving Libya in the first four months were allowed to take with them only 20 Libyan pounds each (under $60), and some personal luggage, leaving behind all valuables, homes, businesses and real estate. Later, when almost all the Jews were gone, the amount was raised to 300 Libyan pounds, and a handful actually went back to Libya to try and salvage something by taking out these additional funds.

The fate of Jewish community properties, of the accounts left in Libyan banks, of the assets of an institution known as CABI olim to which many Jews who had left Libya years before had entrusted their funds was not as yet determined. But there was no real hope that anything could be done in these matters in the foreseeable future.

Iraq

Only some 2,500 Jews remained in Iraq at the end of December. Discrimination against Iraqi Jewry began long before the June Israeli-Arab war. On

the eve of Israel's birth its Jewish community numbered approximately 120,000, constituting the largest non-Moslem community in the country, and one-fourth the population of Baghdad, the capital.

With the creation of Israel, all Jews were classed as enemy aliens. There were severe repression of Jewish activities and sequestration of Jewish properties and businesses; and emigration was forbidden. When, in March 1950, the Iraqi government opened the gates and announced that it would permit emigration for one year, almost all Jews fled the country, leaving behind about 6,000. Additional anti-Jewish discriminatory legislation was adopted in the years that followed. Premier Abdul Karim Kassim, who headed the Iraqi government from 1960 to 1963, had some of these laws rescinded as discriminatory; they were later reinstituted. Jews continued to make their way out of Iraq as best they could. As of May 1967, the still remaining 2,500 Jews already were restricted in their rights of citizenship, travel, and control of property.

Protests to the Iraq government by the International League for the Rights of Man went unanswered; and protests to the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations were unavailing despite the fact that rules and regulations adopted by Iraq were in marked contrast to the antidiscriminatory provisions of its own constitution.

The war was to bring a new outbreak of persecution. It has become known that Minister of Interior Rajab 'Abd al-Majid had prepared a plan for the collective arrest of the Jews, who were to be interned as potentially dangerous to the country's security. Intervention by President 'Abd al-Raham Arif, it was believed, prevented the execution of the plan. However, a house-to-house search of all Jewish homes was undertaken and a register compiled of all occupants. Mid-June some 70 Jews were arrested, among them 50 prominent members of the Jewish community and 20 others whose occupations had brought them into some kind of relationship with American, British, or West German business concerns in Iraq. The official reason for detention was "to appease public opinion"; other explanations alleged illegal financial or political activities. Actually, no formal charges were filed against those detained, and they were never brought to trial. Nor was any contact with them allowed, not even by Moslem lawyers retained by their families. While, so far as could be determined, treatment of prisoners was generally decent, some were believed to have been beaten or maltreated.

At this time the government also took other restrictive measures: All Jewish homes were placed under surveillance, and telephones were disconnected. Jews were forbidden to sell personal property; their assets were frozen, except for a small living allowance. Licences to Jews were cancelled. All Iraqi companies received official letters ordering the dismissal of all Jewish employees. Jews were forbidden to travel from their area of residence; many were placed under house arrest. A government order, which later was rescinded, provided for the expulsion of all Jewish college students from

private colleges (they long had been refused admission to government universities). Borders were tightened as never before.

During the course of the June war Iraqi Chief Rabbi Sasson Khadouri, who was well over eighty, appeared on Baghdad television to reaffirm the loyalty of his community and to disassociate it from Israel and Zionism. He also announced a donation by Iraqi Jews to the Iraqi army. One can easily imagine the kind of pressures that led to this move. The Chief Rabbi's statement was rebroadcast many times. At the same time the Baghdad radio and television embarked on a continuing campaign of attacks against Jews, accusing them of being "fifth columnists" and warning Iraqis that contact with Jews would make them guilty by association. Wrote *Zut al Arab* of June 17: "The Jewish cancer in Iraq constitutes a serious danger for our struggle to exist and for the future of our country. If interest, circumstances, and the law require that we do not hurt them at the present time, it is at least incumbent upon us to place them under stringent surveillance and freeze their activity."

In mid-August, after about two months of detention, some 50 of the 70 Jews under arrest were released. The Iraqi authorities continued to hold the others "for investigation"; numerous appeals by the leaders of the Jewish community for their release were to no avail. Indeed, with the appointment in mid-September of Shamel el Samurai as minister of the interior, the Jews still under arrest were moved to the Central prison from a quondam B'hai temple in which they had been held. Rosh Ha-shanah day, October 5, the 50 Jews, who had been released in August, were thrown into jail, together with 30 other Jewish men, bringing the total to about 100. By this time, virtually all heads of families and men of working age were either in prison, under house arrest, or unemployed as a result of the various restrictions. Apparently as the result of an appeal by Rabbi Khadouri to Iraqi Prime Minister Taher Yahya, most of the prisoners were released. Concern for the 20 or 25 who continued to be held grew as ugly intimations that some kind of treason trial of Jews might be brewing began to appear in the Iraqi press.

While the Iraqi Jewish community formerly always had been able to care for its own and had some fairly wealthy members, a substantial number were now in need of relief. At the end of 1967 Iraqi Jews could neither emigrate (only one or two have managed to escape the country since June) nor receive help from the outside.

Syria

There are approximately 4,000 Jews in Syria, 2,500 living in the capital city of Damascus, 1,500 in Aleppo and 40 to 50 families in Kamishli, on the Turkish border. In the first post-war days the government threw troops around the Jewish quarters in the two major cities and imposed a tight curfew which permitted Jews to go out at certain hours for shopping. Paradoxically, the removal of these troops a few weeks later put Jews in greater

danger. The houses and apartments left behind, after the large-scale departure of Jews from Syria in the early 1950s, were taken over by Palestinian Arab refugees. These now outnumbered the Syrian Jews in the one-time Jewish quarter and were a continual threat to them. A number of incidents aroused fear of more serious trouble.

It was scarcely necessary for the Syrian government to take any special measures against Jews; those enforced for years before the Israeli-Arab conflict of June were draconic enough. These measures deprived Jews of the right to sell property and to move about beyond a mile-and-a-half radius from their place of residence without special permit. Jews also had to carry special identity cards. Soldiers and other civil servants were forbidden to trade in Jewish shops.

Emigration of Jews was forbidden; only two families were known to have permission to leave the country since June. The situation was particularly bad in Kamishli, in a military border zone, where Jews always had been under very strict control. Following an incident between Moslems and Jews on September 1, the entire community was put under 24-hour arrest. By the end of the year, the situation of the Jews in Kamishli seemed to have eased somewhat; but fundamentally it was most unfavorable, as it was in Aleppo and Damascus. Yet, the Alliance Israélite Universelle school in Damascus, with an enrollment of 300, was permitted to open as usual in September.

In September a delegation of the Bertrand Russell tribunal commission visited Syria and met with Jews in the presence of the authorities. "You can imagine that if a single Syrian Jew had dared to tell the truth it would have cost him his life," wrote one Syrian Jew in a letter that reached the West. It urgently appealed for intercession.

An anonymous letter published in the Paris *Le Monde* (December 27) describing the plight of the Syrian Jews brought a response in the same paper (January 3, 1968) in which the Syrian embassy in Paris—in sharp variance with reports reaching Jewish organizations—denounced the letter as a "pure fantasy." It denied that there had been manifestations against Jews in Kamishli or elsewhere in Syria or incidents between the Palestinian refugees and their Jewish neighbors, or that there had been curfew. It also asserted that Jews were not excluded from public life, as indicated by the employment of 40 Jewish teachers at the beginning of the 1967–68 school year. The letter further stated that an International Red Cross representative in Damascus had found, on the eve of the Arab-Israel war, that the Jews enjoyed full rights.

Lebanon

Lebanon, a country of many minorities, has protected their security, if not always all their rights. The Jews in Lebanon fared better than almost in any other Arab and Moslem countries. However, psychological and economic pressures—the latter brought on by the effects of the war on the economies of most Middle Eastern countries—and various resultant incidents

during the critical spring months convinced many to leave the country. The community shrank from 6,000 in June to roughly 3,000 at the end of 1967.

The vast majority were Lebanese nationals, or came from families who had come to Lebanon from Syria, Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries during recent decades. Some of the latter had identification papers stating that their nationality status was "To Be Determined," regardless of how long they may have lived in Lebanon.

Lebanese Jews who wished to emigrate were given *laissez-passers* in place of passports. These were granted freely in the first six weeks after the Israel-Arab conflict. Adverse comment on this policy in the Lebanese press stating that it might be helping Israel, and government concern that Jews might be leaving without paying their debts or taxes, brought a change. *Laissez-passers* could be gotten, but with much more difficulty, by application through the Jewish community, which had to guarantee that emigrants had taken care of all finanical obligations.

As the crisis leading to the Israel-Arab war deepened, anti-Jewish feeling and the number of incidents increased. Some Moslem merchants took advantage of the situation by refusing to pay their Jewish creditors; one Jew, Joseph Antebi, was shot to death when he tried to collect a loan. The Jewish community requested protection and, by coincidence, an army guard was placed around the Jewish quarter in the Abou Jamil section of Beirut on the morning of June 5. No limitations of any kind were imposed on Jews except for a ban on travel to Southern Lebanon bordering Israel.

Jewish communal institutions continued to function, including the Alliance Israélite Universelle schools, the Ozer Hatorah, and the Talmud Torah (AJYB, 1965 [Vol. 66], pp. 467–69). Jewish investments of community funds continued to provide income for the care of the needy, for a Jewish community hospital, and the maintenance of the three large synagogues in Beirut. Except for a handful in Tripoli and in Sidon all Jews lived in Beirut.

Aden

Before 1948 there were approximately 9,000 Jews in what used to be the Aden Protectorate, now the South Yemen Popular Republic. Though Aden was under British control until November 1967, the Jews began to leave the country long before. In October 1965 when serious anti-British riots broke out only 350 Jews were left in Aden, living in the Crater section. During the riots the Jewish Selim school was attacked and an attempt was made to set fire to the community synagogues. The school was closed, most of the Torah scrolls and community archives shipped out of the country. Jews continued to leave in small numbers until the community numbered 138 at the start of the Israel-Arab war.

The outbreak of hostilities, the imminent departure of Britain from Aden, and the continuous struggle among the various Arab nationalist groups for

power when Aden became independent made the situation of the Jews impossible. Rioting Arab mobs attacked the Jewish quarter on June 12, beating the elderly Mayer Shoa to death and looting Jewish shops. A special plane was chartered and all Jewish men, women and children still in Aden were flown to London.

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