Memorandum on Israeli Arabs

by

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New York

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

1957

MEMORANDUM FOR THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
WITH REFERENCE TO ISRAELI ARABS

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NOT FOR PUBLICATION

On my visit to Israel in June of this year with the delegation of the American Jewish Committee, I visited six Arab towns and villages, met with Arabs in Haifa and Acre, with Arab students of the Hebrew University, and had long discussions with Shmul Devon, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Arab and Other Minorities and with David Zekaria, who handles Arab affairs in the Ministry of Agriculture. I also talked with William Channel, who heads the Quaker Mission to Israel, and with Judge Olshan of the High Court.

In the course of these conversations I met with more than thirty individual Arabs, including mayors, mukhtars, Arab civil servants, university students, professional men, refugees, a nurse, a politician, a teacher, farmers and keeper of a coffee house. I have been in their city homes, in their village offices, in schools, in the homes of those who have lived continuously in their villages as well as in the homes of refugees in temporary housing. In previous years I have seen the Bedouins in the south and have been a guest in the homes of Arabs in several villages. I have seen the Arab farms as far back as 1927 and several times since 1950; met with middle-class Arabs and beggars in 1927 when I was also in that part of Palestine which is now Jordan and when I spent several days in each of the four Arab nations now surrounding Israel.

In 1927 the fellahin of Palestine appeared better off economically than those in the surrounding area. I cannot compare the condition today of the Israeli Arab farmer to that of the fellah

in the nieghboring nations; but certainly his condition has improved since the days of 1950, when the Arabs in Israel were a frightened minority, largely involved in barbed wire and suppressed by the grim and touchy chauvinism of their Jewish conquerors. The improvement over the last few years in clothing and shoes worn by the Arabs is noticeable. There are some few private cars owned by them, an increasing number of trucks and a quite substantial number of radios. Both the Arab and Jewish population have come far economically, socially and emotionally in Israel in the intervening seven years. This continuing change has been to me one of the most exciting and hopeful features of Israel on each of my visits there.

Those Jews who fought the war of independence in 1948 - with their hard corps of sabras and underground fighters - were emotionally and intellectually prepared to accept the new state and responsibilities in it. Those who came afterwards, mostly refugees, came, as Ben Gurion told us, "not only from distant countries but from distant ages." Nevertheless, they came with expectation of freedom in answer to a felt need to throw in their lot with the new Jewish state, their state, in which they had a share because of the fact that they were Jews and which they believed was established on land which belonged to them for two thousand years, whoever might have been the intervening usurpers.

The Arabs of Palestine, on the other hand, had no expectation of a Jewish state. Their need was the reverse of the Jews. They wanted an Arab Palestine with a Jewish minority. What happened,

consequently, was in direct contradiction to their felt need. The victory of the Jews over the armies of six Arab nations was in addition a humiliation. At first they felt, as in fact they were treated, to be virtual prisoners of the new state. Now they feel themselves in large measure to be aliens in a land they and their ancestors or many of them had inhabited for thousands of years. Their feeling was expressed to me by an Arab lawyer whom I met one evening and who said: "We are second class citizens. We feel we are not wanted here."

I shall later discuss the nature and basis of this Arab belief that they are second class citizens. But it should be emphasized that any concept of second class citizenship is counter to the intentions of men like Ben Gurion, Ben Zvi and former Prime Minister Sharett. It is a condition which officials whom I talked with, such as Shmul Devon and David Zekaria, are dedicated to eliminate. These and many other Jews want the Arab citizens of Israel to be the equals of the Jewish citizens for a mixture of economic, security and ethical reasons. The Arabs produce about a quarter of Israel's agricultural products. They are less likely to become security problems if they are satisfied and feel themselves to be full participants in the nation. The Bible has enjoined the good treatment of the stranger within the gates because we Jews were strangers in the land of Egypt. This latter reason for granting equal rights to the Arabs in Israel is particularly strong among older Zionists, such as Ben Gurion with his mystical chauvinism which is rooted in the Prophets of ancient Israel.

There are many other Jews, however, who give mere lip service to Arab equality and who in fact do not want Arabs and consciously, or more frequently unconsciously, let them know this. Curiously enough, it is not Begin and his Herut Party - who perpetrated such horrible crimes against the Arabs at the time of the Mandate - who now are anti-Arab, but rather many middle class Jews and Jewish laborers and agriculturalists, who can now as conquerors project upon the Arab the attitudes which they experienced in other lands from the majority people there.

Before discussing the specific features and causes of the second class citizenship of Arabs, I want to come back to their feeling that they are not wanted, because this is clearly connected with their status as citizens. This feeling lends color to every act of discrimination, whether practiced by individuals, the state or the Histadruth. For example, one old Arab sheikh whom I had met on a previous trip to Israel told me again that he used to be able to talk to important Jews. Now, however, he said they were too busy or told him that they did not have under their control those things which he asked for his village. The lower officials to whom he was referred, he said, "Do not treat us with kindness." This he repeated several times. The fact that the petty bureaucracy also treats the Jews frequently without kindness is no answer to him. To the Arab this lack of "kindness" is accepted as another bit of evidence that he is not wanted and that he is a second class citizen.

There is, however, another side to the matter. In all fairness it should be recognized that in general the Arabs are not

certain that they want Israel to exist, or to be citizens of Israel. They may profess their loyalty, as many have to me on various occasions, but even mukhtars, professional men, university students and land owners gave the sense that they were making the best of a situation which, to greater or lesser degree, they resented. And one Jewish official said 80% of the Arabs of Israel wished Nasser success in the Sinai campaign although 95% of them would not even have lifted a finger to blow up a bridge. It should be remembered that in some places, such as the Triangle, Arab villages are in almost physical (and probably actually in physical) contact with their neighbors and families in Jordan. They listen to broadcasts from Cairo. Above all, they feel themselves a part of a great Arab people, the majority of whom live across the recently established borders. As another Jewish official pointed out, it is too soon for the Arabs to forget their old homes. "We Jews remembered ours for two thousand years. Why should they forget theirs in nine?"

The result is an ambivalence with respect to Israel. This makes it extremely difficult for them to feel wanted, even if they were wanted. Moreover, many of them are not yet convinced that Israel is here to stay. I was told of the story of an Arab civil servant of Israel who had accepted the offer of the Israeli government to exchange his house in Haifa for an apartment. The apartment, incidentally, is a beautiful one, large and airy, with a glorious view of Haifa Bay. His Arab friends who had been requested to accept similar exchanges asked: "What will you do when the Arab who owns that house returns and claims it again?"

He replied that he did not believe that the Arabs would come back but if they did he had a receipt from the government to show the land he had given up in exchange and he hoped that in that event he would get it back.

This feeling that the Arabs may return and conquer Israel puts many Arabs in the position of "damned if you do, damned if you don't." They do not want to accept Israeli offers, they live in bad quarters, they do not have money with which to operate and live on which they might receive for their old properties. If they accept the government offers then they always fear that when the Arabs return they will be punished just as if they were Jews. Since the Sinai campaign there is evidence that they are less sure of the return of the Arabs to Israel and as time goes on undoubtedly this feeling of expectation of the return of the Arabs will grow dimmer.

But the psychological dilemma, the frustration of an Arab minority living in a Jewish, Zionist State which is an island in a region of an Arab majority will not be easily dispelled. It is a problem that needs much more ventilation and perhaps the new magazine, New Outlook, published under joint Arab-Jewish auspices will help in this.

Several specific grievances are given by the Arabs as the cause of their discontent. These grievances, sometimes justifiable, are also symptoms of discontent.

In the villages and towns the people complained vigorously about the land seizures. Not only has land of absentee Arabs been

taken over but land of other Arabs has been confiscated, and farmers have been limited in many cases to thirty dunams of land irrespective of how much they may have had previously. If the people were refugees who returned - and this means not merely the twenty to thirty thousand Arabs who left the country and then returned as infiltrators or under the plan to reunite families but also Arabs who, for one reason or another, fled their villages but did not leave the country - their lands have been seized and put under the control of the Custodian of Absentee Property. Most of this land has been reassigned to old Kibbutzim and to recent Jewish immigrants. The reassignment of land is a cause of dissatisfaction, even when it is offered other Arabs. On the whole there is unwillingness on the part of one Arab to accept land which had previously been farmed by another, even though today the former owner of the land may be living in a refugee camp in Jordan or the Gaza Strip.

The land policy of Israel vis-a-vis the Arab violates his system of social belief on three scores. In the first place, his individualism is opposed to the socialist principle of ownership restricted to a limited amount of land. This is the land policy to which the government coalition is dedicated. Secondly, the position of the large landowner as head of a large family group and as a village leader is threatened by this breakdown of the quasi-feudal economy under which the Arab villager was still living during the Mandate in Palestine and from which he is not yet psychologically free. In other words, the government's land policy is a threat to Arab social organization. It is producing a social

revolution through liquidation of the quasi-feudal relationships among Arabs. This results in stress which will not be relieved by assertions that the new system is socially "good" and the old "bad." Finally, the Arab is emotionally attached to the specific plot of ground which he and his fathers before him had farmed. An Arab business man, explaining this attitude, said that it is hard to understand an Arab's attachment to his land and his dislike of accepting a substitute. "It is as though you had a son and someone took him away and said 'we'll give you another boy to love.'" Americans, who throughout their history have moved from farm to farm, and urban people generally, will find it difficult to appreciate this strong sentiment, but it is by no means unique in more primitive agricultural societies.

The Arab's grievance against the Israeli land policy, then, is compounded of the threats which he feels to his economic and social order, a belief that he is not receiving just compensation, and a sense of violation of a deep emotional attachment for <u>his own</u> strip of land - not any land - from which he has had a sense of security and assurance of status. Even assuming that the price offered for his land be just - and this seems to be doubtful - he is not prepared for the social and economic revolution in which he has been placed by no act or will or need of his own.

Two objections have been made to the prices offered by the government for confiscated land. I was told of several instances where the offer was of a sum only three times the annual yield of a farm. This would certainly appear to be inadequate compensation. True, most Arabs have delayed acceptance of the offered compensation;

but among other things they believe the price to be unjust. To this the Israeli officials reply that although under law no compensation need be given in the case of Arabs who deserted their land during the fighting, the government is willing to pay them as well as other Arabs whose land has been confiscated and it believes the prices offered to be fair. The officials add that if the Arabs contest this they have a right to go to court. But how many Arabs can afford litigation? It is also relevant to point out that out of 5500 applications for the return of land or compensation, as of June 1000 had not been processed. This lends weight to the further objection that compensation is based on the value of the Israeli pound at the time of independence instead of on the present inflated value.

Like the Arab's grievance concerning farm land is that with respect to houses. He might have possessed a five room house or a one room house but he is offered in return a one room house. Apart from the monetary value is the problem of housing a large family in one room. I saw several such houses in which families of eight persons were living, sleeping and cooking in one room.

Equally obnoxious to the Arabs as the government's policy on land and houses is the system of military permits. For the years immediately following the war of independence no Arab might move about the country without a permit from the military governor of the district. Since then the restrictions have been greatly liberalized. Now they are limited to "border regions," which in a country with so high a ratio of borders to area as Israel means a large proportion of Arab villages and about 80% of the country's

Arab population. As an Arab in Acre said to me: "I can travel freely now to Haifa or even Elath but I cannot visit my mother ten miles away without a permit." Permits may be granted by a mukhtar or village mayor for emergency purposes, as for example going to a hospital, or by the military governor for a single trip, or in the case of people who work as laborers, say in Acre or Haifa, for six months or a year. This presents inconveniences, sometimes trips of considerable distances by bus or frequently on foot or donkey. It involves the long wait incidental to all attendance on bureaucracies. But above all, it is a humiliation and one of the principal sources of the Arabs' feeling that they are not first-class citizens, and indeed in this respect they are not.

From the point of view of the Jews, this system appears at the present time to be essential to security. The four nations bordering the country claim still to be at war. There are frequent forays and shootings across three of the borders. The Fedayeen raids were destructive. Many Israelis lost their lives. The loyalty of Israeli Arabs is, as we have seen, no sure thing. Military governors have considerable powers over Arab population which they could but do not exercise and the permit system, it is claimed, is the one important security control which they use. To grant complete freedom of movement would be a calculated risk which the government does not calculate it can take. There is a tendency even now, however, to ease permit restrictions, as was done last month in the region of Nazareth.

Objectionable as all such provisions must be to free men, it

is difficult in all fairness to condemn the government for those requirements which still remain. But just because the government believes that it cannot take the risk of the complete mobility of the Arabs of Israel in the present state of their ambivalence, it must search other approaches and make increased efforts in other ways to win Arab loyalty and convince them that their fate lies for the better with their fellow citizens.

Several times Arabs protested that they were overassessed for purposes of taxation; but Jews also complained of this. Probably because of lack of books and records the fair assessment of Arabs is all the more difficult.

There were complaints about discrimination in civil service appointments. It is probable that because of educational deficiencies Arabs are less likely than Jews to qualify for civil service positions. It takes a generation or two to create an adequate supply of people educationally prepared to assume such duties, except jobs requiring manual labor. We have found this to be the case with succeeding waves of newcomers in the United States - and among Negroes and Puerto Ricans who have migrated to our northern cities.

In one place I was told that the military permit system was used to bring pressure for votes for Mapai because most Arab villages are controlled by government appointed, that is Mapai appointed, mukhtars, or by the heads of three or four leading families who fear that if they do not deliver the vote they will either not be reappointed mukhtars or will be refused travel permits. Political machines being what they so frequently are,

this is possible. On the other hand, it should be recognized that Mapam is also strong among the Arabs, as is the Communist Party - the only party in which Arabs can attain full membership - and which has won elections in at least one village, Kfar Yassif.

Perhaps the most justified criticism and the most serious for the welfare of Jews and Arabs alike involves discrimination by Histadruth, the great labor organization of Israel. This is an anamalous organization having much the same relationship to the Mapai Party of Ben Gurion as the British trade unions do to the British Labor Party. Many of the government leaders are or were members of Histadruth. Thirty years ago President Ben Zvi and Prime Minister Ben Gurion were already the top men in the organization. In addition, Histadruth operates the most important health services in Israel, with clinics and hospitals in all parts of the country, and it also owns industrial enterprises and in this capacity employs some of the labor it represents as a labor organization.

Most Arab workers are not registered with Histadruth. Unless they have served in the army they are not admitted to full membership, which means that Arabs except Druze are relegated to an Arab section. If they are registered in Histadruth Trade Unions they become entitled to all the health benefits to which full-fledged members are eligible. They are permitted to work on union jobs, except that in most of the Jewish farm colonies they are not employed. But they can neither vote nor hold office in the organization. Therefore most Arabs do not join and thereby submit to this form of discrimination. Many of them get "black market" jobs

at lower wages than the Jews receive. The Arabs claims, therefore, that Jews get a better break on jobs.

The official explanation of the attitude of Histadruth is that it is essentially a Zionist organization. Indeed, in the days of the Mandate Histadruth prevented Jewish owners of orange groves, for example, from employing any but Jewish labor in order to strengthen the economy of the growing Jewish community and prevent the employment of Arab workers at non-union wages. At the end of the Mandate, Histadruth helped finance the underground. Therefore, it is said, the leaders think that it would be hypocrisy to require Arabs to be Zionists.

So much for the past; but one is tempted to inquire whether Histadruth has not today an important function to help the Arabs become good Israelis. What better way could there be for people who are mostly laborers and farmers to become involved in Israel and its welfare than in concert with other Israeli laborers and farmers? Histadruth is in a position to do more for the healthy political life of the country by becoming less political and more labor-oriented.

"The meat is for the Jews, the bones for the Arabs," an official in a village said to me in commenting on the competitive positions of the new Jewish farm colonies and the Arab farmers. Arabs still have a virtual monopoly of olive and tobacco growing but the new immigrants settled in their new colonies on old Arab land are taking from the Arab farmers their virtual monopoly of all truck farming, and the Arabs cannot compete with the Jews in raising crops that require machinery for their economical production.

The government has done more to enable Jewish immigrants to get farm equipment than it has for the Arabs. Nor have producer cooperatives been established among the Arabs. It is probable that the Arab is not so prepared as the Jew to work with his fellows in a cooperative. Nevertheless, this is a way in which Arab economy could be helped through instruction in self-help by means of cooperatives.

It is not my intention to suggest that the government is purposely discriminating against Arab farmers. To help them become more efficient would mean inducing them to change old habits of thought and technical practices, and the government I suspect, with limited resources and large immigrations of untrained Jewish workers, has concentrated on establishing the latter and postponed a solution of the problems of Arab agriculture.

The fact that the Prime Minister has a Special Adviser on Arab Matters and that the Ministry of Agriculture has centered the problems of Arab agriculture under one man (and both men appear informed and sympathetic) demonstrates that these problems are not now being ignored. Furthermore, although irrigation of Arab lands (not including land assigned to the Bedouins in the Negev) has increased about tenfold, this increase has not proceeded so rapidly as irrigation of Jewish lands. The increase in irrigated fields is important to the whole land problem because, as the mayor of one Arab village said to me, thirty dunams of irrigated land can make as good or a better living for a farmer than a hundred dunams of unirrigated land. In other words, irrigation may well soften the blow of reduced farm size and tend to make the smaller holding

more acceptable. As so large a part of Israeli agriculture is still in the hands of Arabs, this will increase the agricultural product of Israel.

Water presents another problem in many villages. When the old rain water cisterns become exhausted, villagers have to go to wells which may be outside the village proper. Refugees in such villages sometimes are required to pay the village for the five gallon tin of water which a family may use in a day.

Only two or three Arab villages now have electricity. The expense is more than most of them can meet. They are involved in such problems as the construction and maintenance of schools and roads and provision for water. These are more immediate problems to them than electricity, for which they have not felt a great need. Its introduction, however, would be an important equalizing factor which would, it seems to me, come home to the Arabs once they had it. This, too, might be a field in which government help would prove fruitful psychologically as well as economically.

In spite of the lack of Arabic-speaking doctors there are a considerable number of clinics in villages and among the Bedouins and there is improvement in the health of the Arabs. Through inoculations tuberculosis is being reduced but malnutrition and the ailments that derive from it are prevalent. People appear pleased to go to the clinics, dressed often in their best apparel. The nurse occupies a special position among Arab women, as witness the luncheon we had in Tamra, where our host, the mukhtar, in good Arabic style did not sit down to eat until his guests were finished but the nurse was permitted to sit at the table with us

and the men of the family - although I noted she was always served the last.

A considerable proportion of the village and town Arabs are laborers, mostly in the construction industry. As much as forty percent of the income of many of these communities comes from day labor. Many of those in the Galilee work in the Haifa Bay area and only return home weekends. At one time the mayor of Haifa protested that Arab workers were holding jobs in his city while there were Jewish unemployed there. He wanted this stopped. The government, however, refused to give preference to unemployed Jews and continued to permit Arabs to hold jobs in Haifa.

Arabs know more about the Jews than the Jews ordinarily do about the Arabs. The curriculum in the schools provides for Arab children to study about Jews. Hebrew is their second language. For most Jewish children Arabic is at best a third language and the curriculum does not make it necessary to study so much about Arabs as Arabs must learn about Jews. Thus there is built into education a system by which the Jews can fortify themselves against effective communication with the minority. Again, this is not a situation which the authorities have intentionally brought about and it could and should be corrected in the best interests of a united nation.

This brings us to an important barrier to Jewish-Arab unity within Israel. It is the almost complete absence of social intercourse between the two parts of the population. They associate to some extent in old cities like Acre and Haifa, where there has long been a tradition of Jews and Arabs living as neighbors. This

is not so of Jaffa, for example, where the populations are newer. And there is practically no relationship among the people of neighboring Arab and Jewish farm settlements. All about the country one sees bus and truck loads of children and workers spending a day or two sightseeing, acquainting themselves with their country. But they do not visit Arab villages, nor do Arabs go on such jaunts. There are doubtless a number of reasons for this, some good practical reasons. But I report this situation as a fact which is one of the stones in the barrier.

One day several years ago I was chatting with some Jews in Jerusalem about the problem of improving the position of the Arabs in Israel. With American naivete I said that it seemed to me the first important break in the situation, which held Negroes down in America, came about when whites and blacks sat down together to work out common problems, including the problem of Negro rights and the better integration of Negroes into American life. Why, I asked, could not groups be set up in Israel in which Arabs and Jews would consider their common problems? To this one of the Israelis replied: "In America much of the improvement in the condition of Negroes is the result of the work of Jews, who have felt themselves to be a minority. Here we Jews are not a minority." This ironic fact should not be permitted to block efforts to have Jews and Arabs work together on common problems, not great political or economic problems but those which can be seen as more directly affecting their present lives.

Bringing about greater association, more face to face contacts among Jews and Arabs cannot of course be accomplished by artificial

arrangements which may cause embarrassment or appear to be mere hearty hypocrisy and in the end create greater estrangement. Busloads of children descending upon a village, mixed garden parties or state functions will not do the trick. Opportunities for functional cooperation, for joint planning and participative efforts would, however, be effective. Such opportunities are at hand but some person or group must be responsible for indicating them and stimulating their use.

We think of the Arab refugee problem as applying to the 900,000 or so Arabs in the States bordering Israel. There are, however, some 50,000 Arab refugees within Israel and no consideration of Israelis Arabs would be complete without mention of their situation. More than half are people who have infiltrated across the borders to return to their homes. Some 20,000 more are people who were displaced during the fighting in 1948 and who never left their country but who are not permitted to return to their villages, and whose lands have been seized by the Custodian of Absentee Property, some of which has been given over to settlements of new Jewish immigrants. These people are a built-in fifth column in their present condition; they are a drain rather than a help to the Israeli economy; their poverty and malnutrition is an ever present community health risk; and they are a lost opportunity for Israel to show the Arab world how refugees can be properly resettled and integrated.

To illustrate something of the situation of these internal refugees I shall discuss two villages.

The village of Damun in western Galilee, some 35 kilometers from Haifa, was evacuated during the fighting. The villagers with whom I spoke said they were told by the military to leave but whether by the Israeli or Arab armies I could never determine. Thirty percent of the population are now in Lebanon and would like to return if they could get their land again. (I was told of refugees from other villages who did not wish to return to Israel but preferred to live in Arab countries.) Of the other villagers of Damun 600 are now in Tamra, a village of about 4600, of whom some 1700 are refugees, 750 are in the village of Kabul with a total population of 1500 and about 250 other residents of Damun are distributed among other nearby villages.

The maximum offer of the government has been thirty dunams for a family, which might do, the mukhtar of Tamra said, if they were irrigated and not just dry hill land. Meanwhile many of the refugees are unemployed. Most work as laborers, some get money by selling their government ration cards. They live in the kind of shacks which have become all too familiar as refugee dwellings, of mud or of rags and old petrol cans. In one home I visited in Kabul a family of five lived in one room 10 X 10. They had no water and had to buy it from the village. Their old lands in Damun were a quarter of a mile away and one old fellow pointed to his farm and said: "There, I can see it, but I can't go back and farm." And the government still appears to hope that these villagers will not expect to return to their old lands and will accept the distribution of their land to new immigrants.

The story of the Maronite village of Bir'am close to the Lebanese border is also instructive. Though not typical, it does illuminate certain attitudes. During the war people were forced to leave their village, some going to Lebanon to join other Maronites, others remaining in Israel. They were asked by the government to go to nearby Gush Halav. They were told that this was for military reasons and would be for a short time. Later they were offered other lands which they refused to accept. They brought an action in court for the return of their lands and houses at Kfar Bir'am and obtained a judgment in their favor. The army did not obey the judgment and an order to show cause was issued by the High Court. No temporary stay had been asked or issued and without showing cause the army proceeded to blow up the entire village with the exception of the church. Certainly it is not for us to pass judgment on the security phase of the case. The Israeli court did just that, however. But the arbitrary action of the army and its conduct in placing itself above the law not only caused bitterness in circles beyond the Maronites but must also give pause to those who believe that democratic government requires that law be paramount to force.

In spite of the Arab criticism of the government and its policies, there are certain points on which they are in agreement with the Jews. Everyone spoke highly of the courts and their just and equal application of the laws. The Arabs had no complaint about religious freedom, w hether they were Muslim, Druze, Roman or Greek Catholic or Greek Orthodox. Each community had authority to deal with matters of marriage, divorce and ritual observance in

accordance with its doctrines, and its authority has been respected by the government.

Everyone spoke of the Hebrew University and the Technion as two of the few places in which Arab and Jew were treated alike. True, Arab students had certain disadvantages in these institutions but not due to discrimination on the part of the University of Technion. In their knowledge of the Hebrew language, the language of instruction, few Arabs are as competent as the Jews. For some time, too, they do not feel at home in the social life of the institutions, not because there is social discrimination but because the freedom there is foreign to their mores. The system of military permits, however, prevents Arabs from accompanying their Jewish fellow students on a number of field trips and requires their periodic return to their districts for a renewal. Arab liberal arts students after graduation have few opportunities for employment which will make use of their education except as teachers.

In one respect, however, the Arab young people are at a definite educational disadvantage, and that is in the proportion who receive preparation adequate for them to pass the University matriculation examinations. Even more than the Jewish schools, Arab schools lack trained teachers. This lack is especially felt in Hebrew language teachers. The elementary and secondary schools have inadequate textbooks. Much of the material has to be transcribed to a blackboard. I recall an amusing example of this in a village classroom in which the teacher was drawing on a blackboard, surrounded by Arabic characters, a crossword puzzle for us in

instruction in English. It is probably true, as one Arab suggested, that there is not a sufficient market to induce private publishers to prepare new and varied textbooks in Arabic. If this be so, the government ought to grant subventions for this purpose. This would appear to be a necessary step to improve Arab education and provide equal educational opportunities.

In all fairness, it should be stated that there has been a great improvement in Arab education in Israel and, with few exceptions as to this or that phase of education, there was general agreement that this is so. Among the boys, except among the Bedouins, there is almost 100% attendance in the elementary schools. The proportion among girls differs but in several villages I was told that at least 60% attended and more in others, which, considering the position of women in Arab culture, represents good progress. Even among the Bedouins in the Negev, who are in a transitional stage from their nomadic practices, school attendance is gradually climbing. A great difficulty there is to get city and village Arabs willing to live as teachers in the far more primitive Bedouin setting, because there are no trained teachers among the Bedouins.

At first glance on entering a classroom today it is difficult to tell whether the teachers and pupils are Arab or Jewish. These classrooms are far removed from the disorganized Arab schools manned by inferior teachers using memorization as one of the principal methods of instruction which I saw in Israel in 1950.

In regard to secondary education there is less equality between Jew and Arab. Some sections of the country have sufficient secondary schools for Arabs, others do not. As, following the

European tradition, secondary education is not free, even though the fees are not large Arabs have more difficulty in meeting them than Jews. Again in the interest of equality, the government could grant greater aid to the erection and operation of secondary schools and award more scholarships to Arab pupils.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The essential problem is to bring about a change in the attitude of the Arabs of Israel towards the state and their Jewish neighbors and at the same time of the Jews towards the Israeli Arabs. The Arab must be brought to feel that he is wanted in Israel, and this can only be done if the Jews feel that he is wanted there. Changes of this character are not brought about from the outside. Threats, restrictions and directives only harden positions. Rewards can make few permanent changes and of course their return diminishes.

There are certain substantial difficulties. We referred to one in connection with the relationship of military permits and national security. We referred to another lying in the Arab ambivalence towards the Arabs there. There is also the natural resistance to change, particularly to such vast changes in the social and economic order as the substitution of western practices and forms of organization for the century old Arab system. The Arabs have had little felt need for these changes. The new political situation has forced it upon them. The government has been wise to move slowly and not attempt to compel immediate adaptation to more of its western ways than it has. There are, however, means to

bring about change which can build up rather than destroy people, which can give them a sense of acceptance rather than rejection.

Participation and sharing in planning and carrying out plans, jointly arrived at, to conclusion has been proven time and again to be the most effective means to accomplish such changes as we are considering.

1. Experiments should be made by the government - perhaps with assistance from the Agency, the Palestine Economic Corporation and Histadruth - to establish cooperatives for Jews and Arabs in such fields as irrigation, rural electrification, credit unions and agricultural production. Jews and Arabs should be involved in such activities together, to break down the social barriers that now exist and to give the Arabs a sense of their acceptance as equals. Arabs should be included in all planning groups.

2. Histadruth should be encouraged to help change its political emphasis to a labor union emphasis and take in Arabs as full-fledged members. Perhaps American labor organizations could be of help. If desired, technical assistance through the International Cooperation Administration might be provided.

3. There should be more encouragement of Jewish school children to study Arabic and the school curriculum should require more study of Arabic history, social practices and conditions.

4. Encampments of young Jews and Arabs and joint work camps should be arranged to provide more experience in living together. Of course it must be recognized that the Arab girls and Orthodox Jewish girls would not be permitted to participate in such activities. Again, Arabs should be included in all planning groups and Arab

university students should be solicited for staff membership.

5. Local problems should be solved jointly more than they are today in cities with mixed populations. In rural areas Arab and Jewish villages should be encouraged to consider jointly problems of importance to the localities.

6. Self-government should be pushed more rapidly in the villages and the mukhtar system abolished.

7. Related to the last point is the matter of Arab membership in political parties. Apparently only the Communists give full membership today. This not only gives an advantage to the Communist Party but it feeds the Arab's feeling of exclusion. The other parties would do well to seek members in the Arab villages and conduct local campaigns there. This is another means of integrating the population.

8. In place of the present "take it or leave it" offers to the Arabs for confiscated lands and houses, placing on them the burden of appealing to the courts, the government might consider establishing a claims commission or commissions on which Arabs would be represented, with possibly a judge as chairman, to travel about the country, hear claims in the towns and villages, and determine them. In this connection the value of the present inflated pounds should be taken into consideration. The additional cost would be well repaid to Israel if it helped settle the Arab land problem as I believe it would.

The government might also weigh the probable relationship of new irrigation projects to the satisfaction of the Arabs in any land settlement.

9. The government is well aware of the strong objection to the requirements for military permits for travel and will almost certainly liberalize them within the limits of security. Merely to remove restrictions would not remove Arab tensions and ambivalence. The execution of other parts of this program should reduce the Arab tension and in time make military restrictions less necessary.

10. For political, if for no other reasons, the situation of the Arab refugees within Israel should be promptly remedied. Concededly this will require considerable study, but the pilot project for resettlement proposed by the American Friends Service Committee appeals as a point of departure.

11. The plan projected by Mr. Zakaria, of the Ministry of Agriculture, to assist trained young Arab farmers to finance farm machinery and fertilizer purchases, to demonstrate their use to other villagers, sell fertilizer to and do custom work with their machines for other farmers and operate demonstration plots, appears to be a sound form of agricultural extension work. It is suggested that if the government has not already done so, it might bring over a few American County Agents to assist in this work, as India and Pakistan have done.

These suggestions are admittedly not easy to accomplish. Undoubtedly they will require modification. Others will come to mind. But the suggestions here made are based on the assumptions that the welfare of Israel requires changing the present ambivalence of both Jews and Arabs and that such changes can only be successfully accomplished by joint participation in the planning and the execution of the changes.

There is, however, one great advantage at this time - that is the leverage that exists in the prophetic tradition while the present generation is in places of power in Israel; but such forces have a tendency to lessen as the generation of the revolution is succeeded by another. The time to make use of prophetic morality to solve the Arab question is therefore now. It is not safe to assume that time will cure the malady. Time is just as likely to harden positions and will very probably lessen the moral drive.

September 18, 1957
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