

Israel's Arabs - a Bridge or a Bridgehead

By PINCHAS E. LAPIDE

(Special to the Courier from Jerusalem)

One out of every ten Israelis is an Arab or a Druze.

There are some 30,000 Druzes, a sect of stately turbaned farmers, which split from Islam a thousand years ago and claims descent from Moses' father-in-law. There are some sixty-thousand Christian Arabs and over 200,000 Arabs of the Moslem faith.

To describe Israel's Arab community of a quarter of a million souls, two diametrically opposed concepts are often used: A bridge, and a bridgehead. It all depends on who is making the comparison.

Linked to the neighboring Arab peoples by close family ties, as well as strong religious and cultural bonds, they have been subjected by the Arab states to incessant anti-Israel propaganda, with open threats to all who swerve from their devotion to the cause of serving as a bridgehead for future Arab revanchism.

Upon attaining statehood, Israel was well aware of the fact that she would ultimately be judged by the manner in which she treated a minority — now that history's classic minority had become the majority in its own national home.

"Also thou shalt not oppress

a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the Land of Egypt." Translated into modern parlance, what this Biblical injunction meant to Israelis was: Having been robbed, tortured and killed by the ruling nations of this world for centuries, you ought to know best how not to treat minorities.

The precept became a key clause in Israel's Declaration of Independence, then an official policy, which was soon translated into facts of economics, social and cultural advance.

When Israel attained independence in 1948 only three Arab localities enjoyed local self-rule; today the number of Arab local councils and municipalities has risen to 41. In 1948 there were only five tractors in Arab use; today there are 45 times as many. Under British Mandatory rule Jewish and Arab wages were 5:1—now there is equal pay for equal work. In 1948 there were only six primary schools and one secondary school for Arab pupils; by 1966 there were 138 kindergartens, 152 primary, ten secondary schools and over 200 Arabs attended the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

As a result of comprehensive health services, the Arab rate of mortality dropped from 20 per thousand to 5.65 in 1965—whilst the rate of natural increase grew from 41.16 to 48.2,

one of the highest in the world. Similarly, the infant mortality rate fell from 67.88 per 1000 in 1951 to 40.02 per 1000 in 1965. Malaria, an age-old scourge, has disappeared, and tuberculosis is being progressively stamped out.

The very composition of the Knesset, Israel's legislature, proves that Israel takes democracy seriously; twice of its members, including two Deputy Speakers are women; two of the twelve political parties represented are purely Arab, and the Law forbids sessions to be held on Friday, Saturday and Sunday—the rest days of Islam, Judaism and Christianity—all three represented in the House.

Only once did the Knesset arouse the ire of Moslem extremists. Outlawing polygamy, the latter claimed, was open defiance of the Koran, which permits each Moslem up to four wives.

Not so, said Israeli scholars in a weighty defense brief, which was accepted by the Supreme Court in Jerusalem. Islam permits the taking of several wives, but does not oblige a Moslem to marry more than one.

Above all, the right to differ is exercised with vigor, both in Hebrew and Arabic—the two official languages of the country. Last but not least, more Arab newspapers, periodicals and books per capita are published in Israel than in any of

the thirteen independent Arab states.

To sum up, Israeli Arabs are healthier, earn higher wages and get a better education than most of their co-religionists throughout the Middle East—but does that make them better Israelis?

There are two tentative answers to this key question.

In Israel's first parliamentary elections in 1949 only 79.3 per cent of the Arab electorate cast their votes. In 1951 it was 85.5 per cent, in 1955 it rose to 91.2 per cent and by 1965 reached 92.1 per cent—somewhat higher than the Jewish rate. Since the number of Arab votes cast would have entitled them to at least 13 seats in the House—whilst only six Arabs got in—the ineluctable conclusion is that a goodly number of Arabs must have voted for Jewish parties.

However, the acid test came in 1956. Throughout the days and nights of the Sinai Campaign Radio Cairo never ceased beseeching Israel's Arabs to burn, blow up, shoot and kill, wherever they could. Homicidal appeals to Arab patriotism were coupled with stirring recitals from the Koran and—from the Christian communities—from the New Testament. Excerpts from the gospel of St. John "Ye (Jews) are of your father

the devil" were followed by "easy lessons in sabotage" such as: Take a spoonful of sugar or a handful of lumps; approach the petrol tank of any army truck, open the cap when nobody is looking and pour the sugar quickly in. If anyone should catch you, just say your aunt next door asked you for some sugar for her tea.

If one recalls that practically every Arab home in Israel has a transistor radio, and that most of Israel's Arabs lived within walking distance of a hostile Arab border, it is almost incredible to record that not a single incident of sabotage took place in Israel during the Sinai Campaign.

"If only one class of high school students had followed Nasser's advice," a battalion commander told me in 1957, "they could have inflicted a good deal of harm to our effort." No wonder, for most of Israel's armed forces, during that swift week, were "abroad."

In other words, when the chips were down eleven years ago, and Israel's Arabs had to take sides, all of them chose—loyalty by inaction.

The picture greatly improved in 1967.

As soon as trouble was in the air after the middle of May, not only veteran Druze soldiers of the war in '48 returned to their units, but many hundreds of others joined a mass demonstration in front of the Ministry of Defence, demanding to be mobilized at once in many cases, fathers and sons served in the same companies, some

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of which now stand guard in the Old City of Jerusalem and other towns on the Western Bank. No Jewish leader's appeal was as eloquent and emphatic as the call to arms which Jaber Ma'ad, the Druze Member of Knesset, issued over Kol Israel.

The Circassians similarly fought, and distinguished themselves, in the Druze units of the Israeli Army.

"We needed courage . . . to call upon you to manifest your loyalty to the State of Israel . . . without being inveigled by mendacious propaganda or destructive tendencies," says a four-page pamphlet issued by Archbishop George Hakim to his 21,000 Greek Catholic Arabs.

The loyalty the church leader asked for, came forth in several hundreds of applications for military service, numerous advance payments of income tax, considerable purchases of Government bonds and close to a hundred offers of cars, tractors and trucks for military transportation service.

Among the other Christian communities, the Maronites excelled.

"We, our sons and all our property are now at your orders, for any use you may see fit," says a typical letter written by a villager of Jish in Upper Galilee. And Monsignor Jacob Rabad, of the Maronite Church in Jaffa, wrote to Prime Minister Levi Eshkol: "On 25 May the Maronite community of Israel proclaimed its loyalty and

full solidarity with the State of Israel, as well as its readiness to do everything in order to fulfill this sacred duty."

However, what really surprised Israeli authorities, was the Moslem response. Though none of the 300,400 volunteers for army service were accepted (there was hardly time to teach recruits how to handle a rifle, quite apart from political considerations) many groups of villagers helped out with the harvest in neighboring kibbutzim, replacing farmers who had been called up. Financial contributions sent to the President of Israel, the Ministry of Defence, and even addressed to Moshe Dayan, ranged from a fellah's IL150—"It is all I have saved", to IL1500—

Several mayors of Arab towns wrote affirmations of loyalty, in Hebrew, sometimes with copies to their Jewish neighbors and to the Ministry of Police. Any one of these hundreds of letters of allegiance to the cause of Israel could have gotten their authors hanged—had Nasser accomplished his design.

"Even amidst the violent attacks launched against us for months past, we call upon the sons of the Arab people dwelling in Israel to keep the peace and to play their part in building the state on the basis of full and equal citizenship," Israel proclaimed in its Declaration of Independence on 14 May 1948.

It seems that Israel's Arabs have not only heeded the call, but some of them may soon help to build bridges between their Jewish fellow citizens and their kin across the borders.



Ten Basilian priests celebrated their Silver Jubilee with a Mass of Thanksgiving at St. John Fisher Wednesday, August 8. Bishop Kearney homily for the occasion. The class of '42 four priests associated with the Rochester diocese.

The Popes Did More than Anybody Else for the Jews, Says Author

"The one thing we've learned from this war is that we've got only one friend—and that's God—and He expects us to take care of ourselves."

That was the clear conviction voiced by our cab driver guide as we returned to Jerusalem from a morning trip to Bethlehem.

He made his comment after we had stopped to watch Israeli troops prod inch by inch for mines in the former no-man's land between Israel and Jordan.

The wreckage of an Israeli jet was scattered across a hill—and we chanced to find on the roadside a U. S. Army first aid kit, apparently left there after it was used by a wounded Jordanian soldier.

The Israelis are puzzled, if not bitter, about both United States and Vatican attitudes.

U. S. funds and military equipment poured into the Arab nations but Israel was left to purchase its arsenal wherever it could find a willing and high-priced weapons salesman—France for jet fighter planes and Czechoslovakia for ammunition.

The Vatican has never granted Israel official recognition although Rome's envoys are stationed in most of the Arab capitals.

Both U. S. and Vatican demands that Jerusalem be "internationalized" following Israeli take-over of the historic "Old City" section have only further irritated the victorious Israelis—who point out that both the U. S. and the Vatican were quite reticent in such demands during the 19 years the Old City was under Jordanian control and Jews were denied access to their "shrine" of the walling wall, only remaining remnant of the ancient Jewish Temple.

One lone voice, however, that speaks up favorably at least for the Vatican is Pinchas Lapide, an Israeli diplomat-journalist who is now a member of the Prime Minister's staff in Jerusalem.

We met him quite by chance when we went to the government press office for accreditation as newsmen for our six-day stay in Israel.

He apparently was surprised to see a Roman collar in the press office—there aren't many Roman collars in Israel anyway—and he introduced himself.

He recently authored the book "Three Popes and the Jews"—a well documented denial of Ralph Hochuth's play "The Deputy" which accused Pope Pius XII of keeping silence when he should have spoken out to save Jewish lives during the Hitler era.

Lapide's book details the pontificates of Pope Pius XI, Pope Pius XII and Pope John XXIII in their relationships with Jews and Jewish organizations.

He bluntly rejects Hochuth's



Pinchas Lapide, center, Israeli diplomat-journalist, and Courier editor Father Henry Atwell talk with an Arab from Bethany, village near Jerusalem, on first day former Jordanian Arabs were free to come into Jerusalem in late June. Lapide is author of recently published book "Three Popes and the Jews."

charges of a do-nothing Pius XII. On the contrary, he asserts that "the Catholic Church, under the pontificate of Pius XII was instrumental in saving at least 700,000, but probably as many as 860,000, Jews from certain death at Nazi hands."

"These figures," he concludes, "small as they are in comparison with our six million martyrs whose fate is beyond consolation, exceed by far those saved by a 1 other churches, religious institutions and rescue organizations combined."

If anyone is to be blamed for negligence, Lapide says, it's not the Popes because "they stand in startling contrast to the unpardonable foot-dragging and hypocritical lip-service of those outside Hitler's reach, who certainly had far greater means to rescue Jews whilst there was still time—the International Red Cross specifically and the Western democracies in general."

Both the United States and Great Britain are singled out

for their persistent passing of the plight of Jews as Hitler stepped up his "final solution" of the Jewish question—a solution which took the lives of six million out of eight million European Jews.

Lapide's point about the neg-

lect by the Red Cross and the western democracies, he told us, is not meant to minimize their later and present accomplishments but to point out that the popes, Pius XII in particular ought not to be "blamed" for doing more for the Jews

than any other person or agency or government.

"I think we owe it to the memory of these great men to set the record straight," he told us.

He has particular personal af-

fection for Pope John whom he met several times—including visits with him when he was the Cardinal of Venice prior to his election to the papacy.

On one occasion there, Pope John advised Lapide, at that time still single, "Build yourself

The Sin of Living as 'We' and 'They' People

By GARY MacEOIN

The plane was making its landing approach, wheels down, flaps extended. "There is no danger," I was being told. "But curfew has already started, so you won't be able to drive through the city. Fortunately there is a by-passing super-highway. Suspicious cars are searched for arms at entrances and exits. You can ride safely to your destination six miles to the north."

I was not in Vietnam or the Sinai Desert. I was approaching Newark Airport where I had parked my car a week earlier. My destination was my home in one of Newark's many satellite towns.

The war had come to us, and just about every solid citizen in the community and the state was possessed by equal parts of disbelief and indignation. It had come to Harlem, to Watts, to Chicago, to a dozen other places. But how could they do such a thing to us? I do not believe there will be any mass violence in Newark this summer. Mayor Hugh Addonizio had assured us two months ago. If you can't trust the mayor, who can you trust?

I had picked up the South Bend Tribune as I board the plane. In common with newspaper editors to come, it reported that mobile loudspeakers were instructing police and national guards: "You have weapons. Use them." (A few days later, when jittery cops were firing at each other, the wording was changed: "Make sure of your target before you press the trigger.")

My Catholic, Protestant and Jewish neighbors in our segregated suburb assured me loudly, when I got home, that

outside agitators were responsible. Still they advised me that there are criminal elements everywhere and approved of the police decision to close bars and liquor stores early. The wisdom of the advice became daily more obvious, as murder, arson and looting moved out from the hard core of underprivileged Newark to satellite towns which like ourselves had each its ghetto.

But Governor Hughes was still reassuring. A few "bad ones" were to blame for the Catholic archbishop in a slightly everything. It was an explanation repeated in different context. His laudable intention

was to discourage an intensification of the anti-Negro feeling of his church-goers. Words, however, make less impact than deeds.

I heard the words in our parish church during Sunday Mass. We have a substantial Negro minority in our parish, but segregation affects religion as well as housing. I did not see a single Negro in the congregation, as I do not see one on any average Sunday.

It was this fact, I suspect, which prevented the words of the preacher, as he read and commented the archbishop's

statement, from impinging on the consciences of the listeners. He was not talking about us. He was talking about them.

He made a valiant effort to draw a conventional moral conclusion from the violence, the hatred and the destruction down there in Newark. The housewife who switched price tags in the supermarket, he insisted, was as guilty of theft as the looters.

It was a pretty figure, but we all knew it was as formalized as a ballet and as removed from reality. Switching price tags or looting department stores is not the sin in which we are living. The sin in which we live in the sin of we and they, the sin of segregation in housing, in church membership, in opportunity.

Father John LaFarge told us that a long time back. His now-blind friend, George Hunton, recently repeated it in his autobiography (a book with which I had the privilege of helping him). "A deep disease, a great rotteness in the body politic of the United States and in the Catholic Church as institutionalized in America," was how George put it. "One American in ten . . . ground mercilessly as a human being . . . progressively denied the opportunity to share in the spiritual riches which Christ had entrusted to the Catholic Church to give abundantly to all."

Father John F. Cronin recently repeated the warning in "Sign magazine. To the question if we must have race riots he replied: "The answer lies in our response. It must be total. Anything less would be just. Nor would it be prudent. Our cities might burn." After Newark, who is next in line?

Pilgrims Drenched

Dublin — (RNS) — Torrential rains, which sent flash flood waters roaring through part of the steep path up Croagh Patrick, nearly stopped Ireland's National Pilgrimage on its Holy Mountain.

Tents and souvenir stalls which had been set up along the path were virtually washed away and food for the pilgrims was destroyed.

A majority of the 80,000 pilgrims (including many from the U. S.) continued to the top of the mountain, however, following in the footsteps of St. Patrick. The saint climbed to the top of the mountain in 441 A.D. for 40 days of fasting and prayer.

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Fourth in a Lay in M

The rise of Puerto Rican responsibility in recent months is a development in inner-Carmel parish, according to Father Gennaro Ventura.

An effective lay "generated mainly by have made a curia emerged in the Our parish, he pointed out.

(A cursillo is a program, part retreat, part inspiration, part catechesis. The word means "to be the first word" title of this spiritual "A Short Course in Faith.")

The "cursillistas" have made a cursillo several techniques to the Puerto Rican in Rochester.

Enter the Parish. One of the most successful in the Mount Carmel Father Ventura Saturday night "parish" word means part evolved locally, it is Mass at someone's home into a time of and socializing that very popular with Rican people.

Entire families parrandas, and a typical will attract 60 to "They sometimes fill and overflow to the their Ventura mention.

The parranda Mass only well attended, marked by rich pi Several Spanish-language highlight a low Mass usually accompanied two guitars and eye maracas.

Father Alvaro Francisco priest from South America assisting in the Puerto apostolate during his He's living at Mount rectory while finishing on his Ph.D. thesis.

He usually celebrates home Masses for the in the Mt. Carmel mentioning on the "parish" of the term, Father explained, "we're defining the meaning of the term

IN CLOSE his servers others in t "parranda"