

The Israel Al Fatah is Fighting

Nick Medvecky

JERUSALEM—The greatest thing that strikes you when you leave the Arab countries and enter Israel are the differences in the culture and the level of material wealth.

A Westerner feels completely at home in Israel. Miniskirted girls, wide avenues, traffic signs and lights, supermarkets and the complete freedom of the English language allow one to freely mix and mingle here. The abundance of discotheques, theatres, transportation facilities and lush parks provide good and easy-to-get recreation.

But always in the back of one's mind remains the thoughts of war on all borders. The fear clearly expressed when, while sitting in a sidewalk cafe, a truck suddenly backfires. Everyone jumps and then sighs with relief when it is discovered that it's not a bomb.

Every day the newspapers carry the names and photos bordered in black of those who died the night before at the hands of the Arab resistance forces.

Since the Six-Day War of June, 1967, Israel's worries have gone from bad to worse. They had established new borders, what were then thought of as easier to defend. They had captured and occupied Gaza and all of the Sinai Peninsula to the Suez Canal, Jerusalem and all of the West Bank to the Jordan River, and the Golan Heights stretching into southern Syria. The mountains bordering their northern frontier with Lebanon completed a chain that was much easier to defend, from a military viewpoint.

The major chink in this line of reasoning was the growth of Al Fatah, the Palestinian guerrilla organization. With the Israelis defeating the Arab armies of Syria, Jordan and Egypt, great social forces were no longer held in check. Before, any attempt by anyone to establish an independent Palestinian force was quickly met with severe repression and imprisonment.

Arab leaders had proclaimed to the world that THEY would find a solution to the Palestinian's suffering. They had established dummy organizations that followed their orders and called for "Jihad" (Holy War) on Israel.

All this played right into the hands of those Israelis who sought national unity behind the concept of an exclusive Jewish State. They got it. Almost unanimously Israelis believe that a Jewish State is synonymous with survival.

Al Fatah's leaders saw the reactionary role of the Arab governments and rejected the racist concept behind the call for Jihad. During the lull directly after the Six-Day War they recruited over 3,000 Fedayin (commandos) and gathered tens of thousands of small arms and munitions off of the nearly deserted battlefields.

In the past two years they have successfully fought, not only against the Israelis, but the Arab regimes as well and established a powerful and independent Palestinian entity.

During my tour of Syria and Jordan I can testify that they operate as a "State within a State," completely free of control from those two regimes. They are quickly moving to that position within Egypt and Lebanon as well.

As one travels throughout the Arab world, the direct proof of Al Fatah's power is easily testified to; Fedayin working in fields with the Arab farmers, revolutionary posters and flags of Al Fatah decorating nearly every public and private structure, doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers freely donating their services to the people through the Al Fatah institutions; hospitals, medical clinics, and schools. All this and more—something's got to give somewhere.

If it is true that if you teach a child to hate he will manifest that in his adulthood, then it is reasonable to assume that if you teach a child to love he will have a tendency to manifest that.

Al Fatah's classes not only teach the reactionary history of the Arab leaders, but instruct the people, specifically the children, that the only solution lies in brotherhood with the Jewish masses, lies in fighting for "a- democratic Palestinian State where Jews, Christians and Moslems can live in peace and justice equally." Maybe they're too late.

Wherever I traveled throughout Israel; Jerusalem, Nablus, Rammallah, Bethlehem, Keryat Shmona, Haifa, Tel Aviv, Hebron, or wherever, Israelis see one essential problem, one main cause to their troubles, the Arabs.

In the main they don't see nor do they differentiate between the Arab leaders and the Arab peoples, between the revolutionary groupings and the reactionary regimes. Often I hear, "All of the Arabs are united in one goal: to throw us into the sea."

If I attempted to explain the differences between the Arabs they reject the concept out of hand and simply state, "You were fooled, they lied to you." If I press on and explain what I saw, what exists in fact, many say; "You saw what they wanted you to see." I found it difficult to win any arguments against that line of reasoning.

Often I ran against the statement, "The Palestinians are Arabs, aren't they? Well then, the Arabs should take care of them."

This was no isolated statement and neither were any of the other ones. The Israelis, almost unanimously, view the Arab peoples in a monolithic and generalized manner. "Good" Arabs are those who have taken Israeli citizenship, "bad" ones are virtually all of the others.

European and American influence on the country is tremendous. The farms, factories, agricultural communes (Kibbutzim), transportation, communication, attitudes, etc., are all dominated to one degree or another by Western science, technology and ideology.

As I traveled across the country I saw tens of thousands of housing units going up. Much of this activity centered in the occupied areas.

While in the Arab countries I was filled with stories of how the Israelis "Israelize" an area they conquer.

After conquering a territory they, through one means or another, get rid of the Arab inhabitants and develop the area by occupying it with settlers; Israeli citizens or recent Jewish immigrants. This is accomplished by building free or cheap housing units, public buildings and services, and through the use of Kibbutzim.

Forthwith, the area is now Israelized, now an accomplished fact and the Israelis are now willing to "negotiate from the fact." The Israelis assured me that this was only lying propaganda, "Something you'd expect from the Arabs."

Much of this activity centered in occupied Jerusalem.

They say that Jerusalem doesn't count, that it has been "annexed." Aside from the fact that the annexing of conquered territories is contrary to international "law", none of this housing was being built for the Arabs. The Israelis assured me that the Arabs are getting adequate housing. I never saw any of it.

The Israelis I spoke to also assured me that no Arabs were being forced from their homes. I registered a bit of surprise at this statement as I had just come over from the Arab side of the border and had visited a number of refugee encampments that were reputed to hold in excess of 1,600,000 persons, approximately 130,000 of these from the West Bank alone (during the Six-Day War).

The Israelis claim that they settle, almost exclusively, only unoccupied areas; swampy areas, etc. One Israeli benevolently looked upon this process as land development, or "urban renewal".

Another Israeli, Moshe Dayan, the Defense Minister, in a speech to the students of Haifa on March 19, 1969 (a copy of this speech was made available to me by the Israeli Jewish Agency), stated:

"...we must establish Jewish, Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, not only in the Golan, and not with the intention of later abandoning them. Not just tent encampments which can be put up and taken down in a day. We should set up such settlements only in areas from which we are convinced that we shall not withdraw, in accordance with what we consider a suitable future map."

I must presume that aside from the good intentions of some Israelis there are those in the leadership who have and are carrying out other intentions. Jerusalem has been annexed, and all of the other occupied territories are being settled.

The Arabs I spoke to also feel that the Israeli leaders have no wish for social and political equality with their Arab neighbors. That they wish to set up an exclusive Jewish State and to establish a measure of control over the economic life of the Arabs.

Abba Eban, Israel's Foreign Minister, concurred with this view in part by stating in his latest book, *The Voice of Israel*, that he wishes Israel to be to the Arab world what the U.S. is to Latin America.

Moshe Dayan, in a June 8, 1969 issue of the *New York Times Magazine*, stated, "We are Europeans, foreigners, but we are ready to share our standard of living and to treat them as equals." And, "I am against the integration of a large number of Arabs. I think a solution should be found that would not leave too big an Arab minority within our frontiers."

In Israel the culture is different. In Israel the material wealth is at a high level. I can say these same things about America and Americans.

Is racism a product of the Israelis call for a Jewish State?

Golda Meir says: "We sing a lot, we play a lot, we create, we have the theatre, the concerts. Don't believe all our songs are battle songs. I feel sorry for the other side. There is no music there. No culture. No creation." She told this to a gathering of stars who were honoring her on her recent tour at the Beverly Hills Hilton Hotel.

She's Israel's Prime Minister.

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