

Mid East Round-up

. . . a Palestinian Perspective

By Georgette Ioup

What effect has the recent war in the Middle East had on the Arab World? Recently we spoke with several Palestinians living in the U.S. to find out their response to this question. Although opinions differ, on several points there seemed to be general agreement. The most immediate outcome of the war is the change it has brought in the attitude of the Arab people. There is no doubt that this war has given the Arab people a new confidence in themselves and in their ability to stand up to Israel. One Palestinian, who recently returned from a visit with his family on the occupied West Bank, told us, "My aging parents have become encouraged and for the first time have hope of returning to their home inside of Israel."

However, the new feeling of self confidence has a negative side to it. The people have seen that their governments were able to deal effectively with Israel using conventional war fare. Hence the task of educating the people to the necessity of mass struggle may become even more difficult. The masses will place more faith in their governments to look out for them, and less in themselves. But in the past the governments have not been responsive to the needs of the people. They have been more concerned with strengthening their own positions internally and within the international power picture. They have all shown that they were more concerned with their own stability than with the welfare of their own people or with the plight of the Palestinians. At this particular moment governments like Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon would like nothing better than to crush the popular resistance movements, both of their own nationals and of the Palestinians, and are well aware that a sign of international strength on their part is necessary to turn support away from the resistance movements and to the individual governments.

There have been speculations from many quarters that one outcome of the war is the possibility of the establishment of a Palestinian state on the west bank of the Jordan river and the Gaza strip. Though this new state would include only about 12% of the original land taken from the Palestinians, a few of the resistance leaders have called for support of such a compromise, if it is offered. This position is taken most notably by Naif Hawatme, leader of the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. He argues that the state will be created with or without the support of the resistance movements, and if they do not take a

leadership role in its creation, it will be grabbed by King Hussein of Jordan who has shown himself in the past to be no friend of the Palestinians. Hawatme adds that an independent Palestinian state would give them a base to work from without pressure from hostile Arab governments.



The majority of the Palestinian resistance leaders, however, reject the idea of the proposed state. And in surveying the Palestinian students in the New York area, it seems as if they agree that the Palestinian "mini" state should not be supported. The reasons they give for this are numerous.

First, they note, the Palestinians have not been invited to participate in the Geneva conference although the recent Algerian summit meeting of Arab leaders voted that the Palestine Liberation Organization (a coalition of resist-

ance groups) was the sole representative of the Palestinian people, and the only voice that could speak on their behalf in whatever decisions are to be made. Their participation in the conference was vetoed by Israel, since any negotiations with the Palestinians would amount to recognition of a Palestinian people who have been forced from their land, a fact that Israel has tried to deny all along. Thus, at this point, it seems that any state that is created would be done over the heads of the Palestinians people and forced upon them.

Secondly, it is almost certain that the U.N. resolution 242, passed after the 1967 war, will be used as a basis for the settlement. This resolution is notorious for its vague language. It calls for fair treatment of the Palestinian refugees, but does not state who constitutes a refugee. Thus it could be interpreted to refer to the refugees of the '67 war, rather than the refugees who have been forced out since 1948; and this small portion of Palestinians may be the only ones entitled to live in the new Palestinian state.

But our Palestinian friends tell us that the main reason they oppose the creation of a Palestinian state at this time is that it would effectively stifle the efforts of the resistance movements to gain a permanent settlement whereby the state of Israel would become a democratic, secular state where people of all religions could live together with equal rights. After the creation of the "mini" state, the Palestinian people would be duped into passivity, thinking that they had gained back some of their land and that it would be futile to continue the struggle for the remaining part. Arming the masses inside the new state would be nearly impossible since any borders where arms entry could be made would be tightly controlled by neighboring Arab regimes, hostile to any further resistance effort.

Arab and world opinion would be against any continued resistance activity, since they would assume a just solution to the Palestinian problem had been made. Israeli liberals, who until this point, have agitated for fair treatment of the Palestinians, would abandon their efforts, thus weakening the opposition to a Jewish state which has always existed inside Israel. Considering all these reasons, it is better not to support a compromise imposed by the major powers, but to continue the struggle until a truly just solution is reached.



1973: BLACK AFRICA ENDS RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

NEW YORK, Jan.12 (TNS)—One of the most dramatic diplomatic trends of last year was the mass severing of relations between the black independent nations of Africa and Israel.

Before January, 1973 most of the sub-Saharan nations were little concerned with the Middle East, considering Israel to be "an Arab problem" or even being sympathetic to it.

Israel's aggressive foreign policy, its colonization of the occupied Arab lands, its close relations with South Africa, the growing unity between the Arab and independent black nations, and finally the Mid East war stripped away Israel's image as a "small struggling Third World country" and forced the African nations to come to terms with its reality.

As a result some 23 black African nations severed ties in the last year, joining five which previously cut diplomatic relations—leaving

Israel without a friend on the continent except the white settler nations of South Africa and Rhodesia, and the colonial regimes under Portugal.

African nations severing relations with Israel

Guinea	June 67	Tanzania	Oct 73
Uganda	March 72	Madagascar	Oct 73
Chad	Nov 72	Central African Rep.	Oct 73
Congo	Dec 72	Ethiopia	Oct 73
Niger	Dec 72	Nigeria	Oct 73
Mal	Jan 73	Zambia	Oct 73
Burundi	May 73	Gambia	Oct 73
Togo	Sept 73	Ghana	Oct 73
Zaire	Oct 73	Senegal	Oct 73
Dahomey	Oct 73	Gabon	Oct 73
Rwanda	Oct 73	Sierra Leone	Oct 73
Upper Volta	Oct 73	Liberia	Nov 73
Cameroon	Oct 73	Kenya	Nov 73
Eq. Guinea	Oct 73	Ivory Coast	Nov 73