



Part I of IV

Photo by UPI

“Jerusalem, Palestine; Acre, Palestine”

By T.D. Allman
Pacific News Service

A decade after recent history's most stunning military victory brought the Holy Land under single rule and gave Israel secure borders, Israel still has not achieved its war aims nor won peace.

Just when the Arab countries seem willing to recognize Israel, its main enemy is no longer a surrounding array of hostile Arab states but a nation of 3.5 million Palestinians created by the very decisiveness of Israeli conquests.

Before the 1967 Six Day War, the Palestinians were already one of the refugee peoples of history—hundreds of thousands having been driven from their home in 1948. But at least some of their homeland then remained intact, and at least some of their people had a stronger interest in holding on to what they had kept than in sabotaging what they had lost.

Today almost all Palestinians, wherever they are, share a sense of dispossession. Israel's victories, so far as the Palestinians are concerned, have fed the flames of nationhood they were supposed to have extinguished.

►A common identity.

The Israeli military occupation has broken down divisions that formerly separated the Palestinians of the refugee camps from the Palestinians in Israel. It has helped to create a new sense of common identity between those remaining within the borders of the former British mandate of Palestine and those who found themselves in exile.

Israel today would like to negotiate only with the Arab states, as though the Palestinians did not exist. Yet it was the defeat of the Arab states in 1967 and 1973 that created the political vacuum on both sides of the cease-fire lines that the Palestinians' political arm, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), has filled.

Israel would like to hand back its captive populations in the West Bank to the rule of Jordan's King Hussein. Yet it was Hussein's inability to defend them in the 1967 war that gave birth to their determination that he should never rule them again.

Israel would like to treat the problem as an Arab/Israeli one, as though Palestinian nationalism were of no importance

at all. Yet it was precisely the Six Day War that more than anything else discredited the Nasserite vision of Arab unity among the Arabs themselves and made the Palestinians see themselves as a people caught between both sides.

While the Arab states and Israel share a perplexity over the Palestinians, the Palestinians go through metamorphoses of their own and a world that has ignored their problem for 30 years hardly knows what they have become.

►Highest literacy rate in Arab world.

The Palestinians today have the highest literacy rate in the Mideast—except for the Israelis—according to data assembled by UNESCO, the Red Cross, the UN World Relief Agency and other international bodies. They also have the highest proportion of children in school, the highest proportion of university students and the greatest ratio of skilled laborers to total work force of any Arabic-speaking people.

Like the Israelis, the Palestinians have become a nation of apartment dwellers; together they are the two more urbanized peoples of the Mideast. Next to the Jews, the Palestinians are also the most socially mobile, the most geographically dispersed and the least traditional people involved in the entire Arab/Israeli conflict.

Despite being divided for 30 years by the lines of military confrontation, the Palestinians have become an increasingly homogenous nation.

Even the stereotype of the Palestinians as a people of refugee camps is no longer valid. Of the more than two million Palestinians living outside Israeli-controlled territory, only 448,278—about a fifth—actually inhabit refugee camps. And the vast majority of those are women, children, many of whom are refugees not from 1948 but from the 1967 Six Day War.

Thus the real problem for the Palestinians is that in spite of the declining role of the camps, in spite of their rising incomes—which now often exceed the peoples among whom they have settled—they

remain a people who the more they wander the more they dream of returning home; the more cosmopolitan they become the more they want some small corner of the earth to call their own.

►A nation of itinerant schoolteachers.

This former population of sedentary peasants has become a nation of itinerant schoolteachers; this supposed cabal of saboteurs now is the principal source of skilled labor and trained management for the non-communist world's most important oil reserves.

Nearly a quarter-million Palestinians work in Kuwait; the oil would stop flowing to the factories of Japan and West Germany without them. The Palestinians are also the single most numerous group of technicians and teachers in Saudi Arabia, the small Gulf states and Libya.

The result is that, deprived of their own land, the Palestinians have become an increasingly powerful force in other lands. Denied nationhood, they play a greater international role than many fully sovereign countries.

Today Palestinians comprise two-thirds of the population of Jordan, half the populations of Israeli-controlled lands, a third of the population of Kuwait and about 12 percent of the population of Lebanon.

They are a key ingredient of not only the Arab/Israeli conflict, but the confrontation between the industrialized and Third Worlds and the relationship of the superpowers. And whatever happens in the near future, this is quite unlikely to change.

Even if they get their mini-state, the Palestinians are likely to remain a nation whose population and influence continues to lie largely outside its borders.

“Faced with expulsion and exile,” observed Prof. Nabeel Shaath of the American University of Beirut, the Palestinians turned to “education as a means to national self-preservation.” Encountering the Arabs' own hostility to the strangers in their midst, the Palestinians “had to

study hard to enhance his personal competitive power and to overcome the disadvantage emanating from his “refugee status” as well.”

►A world force.

If both the social origins and human consequences of the Palestinians' dispossession resemble those that nurtured Zionism, so—though neither side admits it—the political results have also run increasingly parallel.

Just as the Zionist movement derived its initial strength not from the Oriental Jews living under Moslem rule but from Jews living in Europe, so the ferment that produced the PLO began not inside Israel or the camps but among a Palestinian elite scattered across the world. Yasser Arafat started not as a scarred revolutionary but as an engineer in Kuwait.

The consequences have also been similar.

Like the International Zionist Organization before it, the PLO today is an umbrella movement sheltering radicals and reactionaries, terrorists and the victims of terrorism—not by what they have in common—but in what they lack.

Some time ago in Amman, a wealthy Palestinian lawyer showed a visitor around his lavish house. “This is not my home,” he said. “My sons ask me when we will go home and I remind them of the parable of Moses. If it does not come in my lifetime, it will come in theirs.”

Under their graduation photographs in Arab school yearbooks, Palestinian students do not say where they live. Instead they list as forwarding addresses cities they have never seen: “Jerusalem, Palestine; Acre, Palestine; Jaffa, Palestine.”

As their historical quarrel grows deeper, the paradox grows of one people reenacting the fate of the other.

Haunted by the concentration camps of Europe, the Jews have become the masters of Gaza, Smaria and Judea.

Resisting the Judaization of their land, the Palestinians have become the new people of the Diaspora.

T.D. Allman, a member of St. Antony's College in Oxford, England, recently completed a research fellowship at the Council on Foreign Relations. He has written on the Middle East and Indochina since the early 1970s for such publications as *The New York Times*, *Manchester Guardian* and *Le Monde diplomatique*.

FRANCE

Left and right vie for French votes

By Bernard H. Moss

Paris. The French municipal elections of March 13 and 20 will test the progress of the united left on the way to legislative victory in 1978. They will also test the degree of popular resistance to the austerity plan that Giscard d'Estaing and his new Prime Minister Raymond Barre imposed last September. For the right, they will measure the popularity of its two main components, Gaullists and Giscardians, who are running rival mayoral candidates in the much overblown "battle for Paris." Early polls indicate that the left will be strengthened by the test.

French municipal elections have always had national political importance, in spite of the actual power of French local officials. The system of centralized administration severely circumscribes the powers of local mayors and town councils. Reflecting these limitations, French mayors usually hold a plurality of local offices, including that of national deputy.

The actual accomplishments of municipal socialists are rather minor. Communist and Socialist mayors use their offices for the benefit of public housing, recreational and cultural facilities and social services, but they dispose of meager tax revenues. Perhaps the greatest service they perform is to offer their solidarity to local struggles. The sight of Communist mayors wrapped in their tricolor sashes joining striking workers and demonstrations is a commonplace.

But this year more than ever the elections have national significance because of the bi-polarization of municipal politics between a united left and the right. For the first time Communists and Socialists are running joint lists of candidates on the first of two rounds. By altering the electoral system and barring consolidated lists on the second round of the election, the government had hoped to divide the partners. They responded with an agreement to negotiate joint lists, based on past electoral returns, in all large cities.

► Battle of Paris splits right

The decision to form joint lists was difficult for the Socialists, who in many cases had been governing in alliance with centrists and whose popularity in the polls far exceeds that of the Communists. But the desire for unity was so strong among party members that the leadership agreed on joint lists for many smaller cities as well.

Negotiations were long and hard, and not everywhere successful. The Socialists wanted to use as a reference the opinion polls, which show them with 30 percent of the vote to the Communists' 22 percent. They proposed to head the lists even in Communist sectors. The Communists, who insist that the alliance must benefit both parties, stuck doggedly to the terms of the original accord. In several major cities, including Marseilles, where Socialist anti-Communism dies hard, the Socialists refused joint lists, but promised reciprocal support on the second round. With joint lists negotiated in over 200 of 221 large cities, the Communists stand to triple their municipal representation.

Contrary to the impression conveyed by the official media and right-wing press, the left faces a single enemy. Almost everywhere outside of Paris, the right is united. Giscard d'Estaing has incorporated all factions of the right and the center into his governing majority; in the face of a united left he has no more political reserves. The only way he can avoid condemnation for the failures of his regime is to present the electorate with a seeming diversity of conservative faces—what he calls "organized pluralism."

In the "battle for Paris," however, the competition between Jacques Chirac, head of the Gaullists, and Michel d'Ornano, the Giscardian, because of its vehemence, risks compromising the chances of the majority in the arch-bourgeois cap-

This week's municipal elections will test the left's strength and measure the degree of popular resistance to Giscard d'Estaing's austerity plan.

ital. The mutual recriminations being exchanged by the parties of the majority, a sign of their confusion and disarray before the advance of the left, may cause voter defections. Independent candidates running on an ecology platform are also expected to get as high as 10 percent of the vote.

► Grave economic illness.

The great hope of French capitalism now rests on the hefty shoulders of Raymond Barre, chosen last fall to impose austerity on the nation. The French economy has never really recovered from the quadrupling of oil prices in 1974 and the world recession of 1975. The crisis exposed the weaknesses of entire sectors of French industry—printing, textiles, machine tools, etc.—which are presently being restructured to suit the imperatives of international competition—in other words, the multinationals. The result has been the liquidation of large productive sectors, factory closings, massive lay-offs, a worsening trade deficit—the French must import what they no longer produce—and persistent inflation.

Barre, a solid liberal economist who has served many conservative administrations, presented himself as a non-partisan technician who would save France from a grave illness. The stern and unyielding doctor prescribed the standard medicine. His austerity plan combines price controls with higher taxes on wage earners and consumers and a wage freeze.

To the protests of trade unions, which demanded the respect of wage agreements, he turned a deaf ear. His paternalistic and authoritarian manner in the traditional French father image seemed—if certain polls are to be believed—to please the public. Through a judicious timing of a decrease in the value-added tax and juggling of statistics, he could announce before the elections a great victory in the fight against inflation—a .3 percent rise in January, a figure contested by the left and most experts.

From the beginning the Communists set out to defeat the Barre Plan. Politically, its success would interrupt the momentum of the left. Economically, its success would mean greater unemployment, reduced purchasing power and a demobilization of the working class. Millions of workers joined the October 7 strike called by the left trade unions to protest the Barre Plan, followed in January by public employee strikes. In the face of government and employer intransigence, however, strike action has been localized in the industrial sector as workers await a left victory at the polls before they renew their action.

► Communists going all-out.

Outside of the trade unions, which seem to have reached an impasse, the Communists have accelerated their own independent mass action. Having effectively isolated the extreme left, Maoists and Trotskyists, they are no longer afraid of radical mass struggles. Communist cells frequently led occupations of factories threatened with lay-offs and closures and have encouraged spreading resistance to tax collectors and foreclosures. In February, the party conducted a national campaign among the population, collecting the personal testimonies of those in distress, to expose the extent of poverty in the land. It is going all-out—to the point of circulating sign-up sheets in factories—to gain raw recruits, which are running ahead of last years' 100,000.

The contrast between the activist Communists and the more electoralist Socialists is striking. Since 1974, the year of the presidential campaign, membership in the Socialist Party has leveled off at

about 155,000. The recruitment of 15,000 trade unionists from the left Christian CFDT (Democratic Federation of French Workers), contrary to expectations, has not altered the electoralist weight of the party. The entry of Michel Rocard, former leader of the ultra-left PSU (Unified Socialist Party) has on the contrary strengthened the hand of the technocratic politicians in the party. The slogan of "autogestion"—worker self-management—has always hidden certain technocratic elements in the PSU and CFDT that are more concerned about managerial reform than about capitalist expropriation.

In recent weeks, the Socialists have taken initiatives to reassure the middle class. In his recent visit to Washington Rocard apparently stressed the technical character of the nationalizations inscribed in the Common Program. Gaston Deferre, mayor of Marseilles, has written of a transition to socialism that will take 25 years. Francois Mitterand speaks of the number of nationalizations in the program as the grand maximum. At their recent colloquium on industrial policy, the Socialists emphasized the importance of gaining the confidence of non-monopoly capital, which will have to provide the bulk of new jobs under the new regime. Aside from some marginal experiments with workers' cooperatives, the Socialists have relegated "autogestion" to the distant future.

► Distrust of Socialists.

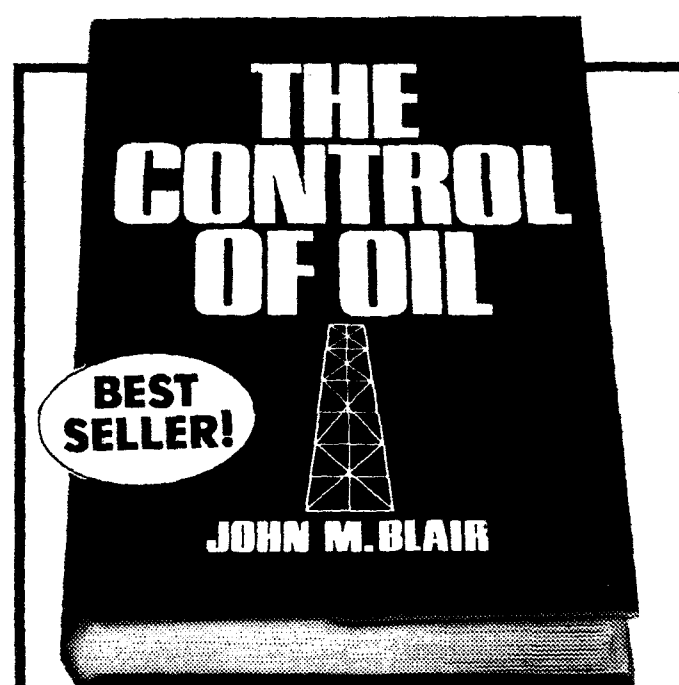
In the context of the conflictual alliance, which is the most interesting dimension of the French left, the Communists con-

tinue to treat their partners as reformists. The distrust of the Socialists among Communist militants, especially the old-timers, is fierce. The party leadership does nothing to improve the climate with its constant admonishment and criticism of Socialist leaders, particularly Rocard. The campaign of denigration of the Socialists, often compounded of distortions and half-truths, contains an element of party patriotism. The Communists are disturbed that their neophyte partners have reaped the electoral rewards of their mass struggles. More seriously, they fear that a hegemonic electoralist Socialist Party will seek an accommodation with capitalism in the manner of Portuguese Socialist Mario Soares.

Such a fear, however, is unreasonable. There is practically nobody left in the Socialist Party who is not a solid supporter of the Communist alliance and the Common Program; the cold warriors have either resigned or been expelled. And if the repeated declarations of fidelity and personal integrity of Socialist leaders were not enough, objective conditions presently exclude a reversal of alliances.

Considering the narrow margins of maneuver for French capitalism today, the right could never offer the minimum concessions that even the most reformist Socialists would demand. And those politicians who turncoated would face the united opposition of their party and all the major trade unions, which would render a reformist solution untenable. The Socialists may be accused of harboring politicians with reformist, technocratic or electoralist tendencies, but they cannot be suspected of class collaboration and betrayal.

Bernard Moss lives in Paris and is writing a book on the French left. He is author of *The Origins of the French Labor Movement*. He recently published a four-part series on the French left in *In These Times* (No. 10-13).



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