

Reviews

IS JERUSALEM BURNING?

by Paul Jacobs

The Fall of Jerusalem, by Abdullah Schleifer, Monthly Review Press, \$7.50 (cloth) and \$3.45 (paper).

The history of Jerusalem is a continuous chronicle of bloodshed, for no other city in the world has been fought over so bitterly by Jews, Christians and Moslems.

"The fall of Jerusalem took three days; the siege had been under way since 1917," writes Abdullah Schleifer in *The Fall of Jerusalem*, in this valuable but bound-to-be-considered "controversial" book.

Schleifer, born into a middle-class Jewish family in a Long Island suburb, was a New Left activist who converted in 1964 to Islam, changing his name from Marc to Abdullah. Now a devout Moslem, he has spent the years since then living and working within the Arab world, in East Jerusalem, Cairo, Amman and Beirut. Schleifer's book reflects his background, combining a Marxist approach with an Islamic cultural and religious view.

The book deals with a number of inextricably intertwined themes, each of them equally controversial, each of them equally laden with emotional distress. Almost half of the amply foot-noted volume describes and analyzes the history and ultimate success of Zionism in achieving state power.

But Schleifer's historical analysis differs not only from the theses advanced by Zionist scholars, but also from those promulgated by traditional Arab historians: the principal focus of his attention is the emergence of the Palestinian Arabs and their relationships to the colonial powers, the Arab states, the Zionist forces and, finally, to Israel. The Palestinians have been victims, maintains Schleifer, either because of their own errors or because,

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until after the 1967 war, their real interests had been obscured by the rise of Pan-Arab nationalism.

Schleifer is sharply critical of Pan-Arabism's "limited moral perspective," its "narrow emotion, so easily spilling over into cruel and self-aggrandizing ambition," which made the Palestinian cause sound "more like a tasteless vendetta or personal grudge (or even a property squabble over some obscure orange groves) than a liberation struggle." But Schleifer is equally critical of those Palestinians who, today, present themselves "without any apparent program or alternative beyond 'revenge' (a neotribal Arab affectation as repugnant to the classic Islamic sensibility of the region as to Western humanism)." He insists that "The beginning of any genuine national revival rests upon the ability of men to honor relatively objective criteria, whether it involves immediate political profit or not. The inability of the Arabs to comprehend this concept has been one of the great self-defeating psychological facts of Middle Eastern life and has been mercilessly exploited by Israel."

The constant ability of the Zionist movement to utilize, for its own purposes, all kinds of political developments, especially active anti-Semitism, is a basic theme in *The Fall of Jerusalem*, beginning with the Balfour Declaration in 1917, and ending with the easy Israeli military victory over the Arab forces in 1967.

That victory took place because the Arab military organization was incredibly disorganized and totally unprepared for battle, except in its anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic rhetoric. In recent months, a sharp debate has developed within Israel as a result of statements by a number of Israeli generals who insist that, since 1948, Israel has not faced the threat of annihilation by any single Arab state or combination of states. And if Schleifer's detailed on-the-scene description of the battle for East Jerusalem is correct, the Israeli generals are accurate in their assessment.

The intellectual strength of Schleifer's book rests on the cogent analysis he makes of the political

weaknesses of the Arab forces and the long range capabilities of the Israelis. In his conclusion, he points out that even—and perhaps especially—the regionalism advocated by the Israelis means the ultimate domination by Israel over much of the Arab world. And he is realistic in his pessimistic appraisal of the proposal, advanced by some Palestinian Arabs, for the creation of a "democratic Palestinian society open to all the Jews of Israel prepared to live with the Palestinian Muslims and Christians in a non-sectarian, nonracialist state that is in turn an integral part of the Arab nation."

If it is true, as Schleifer argues, that the struggle for Jerusalem is a "microcosm" of the entire Middle East conflict, then the future does not hold in it such a state: all of Jerusalem is now an Israeli Jewish city and it will remain so throughout the foreseeable future, especially if Palestinian Arab groups continue on their present course of self-destructive actions, substituting politics of the instant deed for the development of an integrated ideology and the tedious development of a constituency. The value of Schleifer's book is that it makes clear how and why both these realities came to be. ■

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Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem



PHOTO COURTESY PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION

THE ALMANAC

by Derek Shearer

The women's movement may well have generated more organizations and more activities than any other social phenomenon of recent years. Unfortunately, I cannot in this short space put together a comprehensive listing of materials useful to people interested in women's liberation. At best, I can only mention good general sources which will lead to many other publications and organizations.

The Spokeswoman—an independent national monthly **newsletter of feminist news**—provides a wealth of information on the women's movement. It is nonsectarian and each issue is filled with news on women's organizations, conferences, job openings, political action, new books, articles, films, and so on. It is probably the best newsletter of its kind in the country today. Subscriptions cost \$7 per year for individuals; \$12 a year for institutions. (Write: The Spokeswoman, 5465 S. Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60615, Tel. (312) 363-2580).

The National Women's Political Caucus, which recently had its first convention in Houston, also publishes a regular **newsletter**. Subscriptions to the newsletter and at-large membership in NWPC cost \$15 a year. (Write: National Women's Political Caucus, 1302 18th St., N.W., Room 703, Washington, D.C. 20036). Those interested in a more active role in NWPC should seek out the state and local chapters of the organization.

A third newsletter, the **Women's Studies Newsletter**, is put out four times a year by the Feminist Press, Box 334, Old Westbury, New York 11568. Subscriptions are \$5 for individuals; \$10 for institutions. The **Feminist Press** also publishes **books and pamphlets**, including a series of nonsexist children's books. Be sure to ask for their complete literature list.

Likewise, **KNOW, Inc.** (P.O. Box

News of political work, including publications, films, slide shows, etc., should be addressed to Derek Shearer, RAMPARTS magazine, 2054 University Ave., Berkeley, California 94704.

86031, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 15221) publishes a fine selection of feminist books and pamphlets. Recently, the *Washington Post* commented favorably on their new book, **I'm Running Away From Home, But I'm Not Allowed To Cross The Street**. (about a woman trying to liberate herself). Request a free copy of their list of publications.

In addition, one particularly intriguing **pamphlet** has come to my attention, entitled **Witches, Midwives and Nurses—A History of Women Healers**. Copies cost \$1 each for 10 or less; 60 cents each for orders of 10 or more. (Write: Glass Mountain Press, P.O. Box 238, Oyster Bay, N.Y. 11771).

There are also several women's movement bibliographies available. The **Women's History Library** publishes **directories of films, courses, research projects**, and the like. They also maintain a microfilm library of various women's publications. For their publications list and for information about microfilms send \$1 to 2325 Oak St., Berkeley, Ca. 94708. (N.B. They desperately need volunteers and members.)

The Feminist Studies Program at the **Cambridge-Goddard Graduate School for Social Change** (5 Upland Rd., Cambridge, Mass. 02140) has published two excellent bibliographies, **Women and Psychology** (copies 40 cents each) and **Women and Literature** (75 cents each). Cambridge-Goddard offers an accredited **M.A. degree in feminist studies** and in such fields as political economy and Third World studies. If you're interested in the program, write for their course catalog and application blanks. (Applications for the fall program should be submitted before July 1.)

Last year, a bibliography of **films** on and about women was prepared by Janice Mendenhall for a "Federal Women's Day" program. Since then, it has been updated. Write for "**Films on the Women's Movement**" to Ms. Mendenhall at General Services Administration, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, D.C. 20405.

As for feminist magazines and newspapers, the range is truly impressive, and I can only mention a few examples here.

Women—A Journal of Liberation is a

highly respected women's movement publication. It appears quarterly, and subscriptions cost \$4 a year to individuals; \$5 in Canada; and \$6 for institutions. In the past it has published excellent special issues on women's culture, women and politics, and women and work. (Write: 3028 Greenmount Ave., Baltimore, Md. 21218)

The oldest, most respected feminist literary magazine is **Aphra**, which was reviewed by Elizabeth Fishel in last month's RAMPARTS. Subscriptions cost \$4.50 a year (Write: Box 273, Village Station, New York, N.Y. 10014).

Of more specialized interest is the **Women's Rights Law Reporter**. Individuals can subscribe for six issues at \$15; libraries must pay the higher rate of \$28. (Write: Women's Rights Law Reporter, 180 University Ave., Newark, N.J. 07102).

Two women's newspapers are worthy of special mention here: **Majority Report** (\$3 a year, 89-91, 171st St., Jamaica, New York 11432) and **Off Our Backs** (\$5 a year, Room 1013, 1346 Connecticut Ave., Washington, D.C. 20036). Both are well written and have a long and respectable track record.

Ain't I A Woman (\$5 a year, P.O. Box 1169, Iowa City, Iowa 52240) is a feminist newspaper put out by a collective of seven gay women. **The Ladder** (\$7.50 a year, P.O. Box 5025, Washington Station, Reno, Nevada 89503) is a bi-monthly magazine published by and for lesbians. Both enjoy the high regard of women active in the movement.

A new newspaper called **Women & Art** covers organizing, conferences, exhibits and other matters of interest to women with an artistic bent. Subscriptions cost \$2. (Write: Women & Art, 89 East Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10022).

Finally, **Motive**, a very fine church magazine, published a **special issue** in 1972 on **Lesbianism and Feminism**. Editorial responsibility for the issue was assumed by the **Furies**, a collective of 12 lesbians in Washington, D.C. Unfortunately, **Motive** has since folded, but copies of the **Lesbian Feminist Issue** are still available at \$1 for individual copies, 75 cents each in bulk orders of 25 or more. (Write: Motive Magazine, G.P.O. Box 1677, New York, N.Y. 10003). ■