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HALF A LOAF

By DAVID HIRST

BEIRUT.

The Palestinian resistance movement is bracing itself for a new trial of strength. The danger, this time, is not another collision with Israeli or Arab armies; it is an inner struggle to resist the temptation which both friend and foe may put before it in a bid to divert it from its hard and chosen path of "revolution till victory." For the resistance, Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba, with his pioneering call for direct negotiations between Arabs and Israelis, is doing no more than point the way.

The bait is some form of Palestinian statehood. Basically, the objective of those who offer it is to persuade the Palestinian resistance to forego their maximum aim of a democratic, de-Zionized state for Arab and Jew in all of Palestine, to get them to accept instead a truncated Palestine, a half-Palestine, coexisting with Israel, which the world might be ready to offer them within the framework of a general peace settlement.

It is by no means the first time that the idea of a "Palestine state" has come up; it tends to surface every time Middle East peace initiatives take a serious turn. For whatever the failings of the guerrillas, at least they have achieved one thing: they have created a worldwide awareness that there is such a thing as Palestinian nationalism which any would-be peacemakers must try, perhaps with a Palestinian state, to appease.

For the guerrillas, such a state would necessarily be an Israeli puppet and they have always rejected the idea out of hand. It is obvious, however, that the weaker the resistance becomes and more utopian the aim of total liberation looks, the more difficult it is for Yasser Arafat and his men to prevent the Palestinians from settling for something less. To many of them half a loaf, half of Palestine, would seem to be better than none at all.

It is therefore with growing concern that the resistance leadership watches the signs of a concerted new drive to "dispose" some such solution on them. It is not so much Bourguiba's initiative which worries them; he has done this before and Tunisian carries little weight in Arab affairs. It is rather the indications that this time he is only a front-runner, that while announcing support for his own, he is also doing a favor to Egypt's President Sadat.

In 1966 when, with real, if somewhat valiant courage, he first proposed that the Arabs should recognize Israel, and seek to restore their lost rights by negotiation rather than by eventual, and probably losing, war, he was burned in effigy round the Arab World and President Gamal Abdul Nasser, who had just received him as an honored guest, broke off diplomatic relations. This time there has not been a murmur of protest from Egypt. The fact is that Egypt and Tunisia have been in close touch for several months. It can be no accident that as Bourguiba was calling for a return to the United Nations 1947 plan for the partition of Palestine, Egyptian Foreign Minister Mohamed Hassan Zayyat was saying much the same thing, though much more cautiously, at the United Nations and elsewhere.

It -- he said in effect -- Israel had the right to exist within "secure and recognized frontiers" then so did the Palestinian "nation" -- and the only frontiers which the world can be said to have "recognized" are those which, under the 1947 Partition Plan, would have separated the proposed Arab from the proposed Jewish state in Palestine.

Insofar as there is any legitimacy for Israel's right to a part of Palestine, and the confinement of the Palestinians to another part of it, this is it. The Egyptian proposal had been preceded by discreet efforts to bring to the fore a Palestinian leadership which could accept it. For any talk of a Palestinian state naturally raises the question: who, as the most authentic representative of the Palestinian people, should head it?

The West Bank notables, the only potential leaders who remain, so to speak, in situ? King Hussein, who in the event of a restoration of the West Bank, would seek to bring it back, with some degree of Palestinian autonomy, under his own control? Or the Palestinian resistance leaders who, though their armed struggle appears to have failed, claim to be the real emanation of the Palestinian will?

It is, of course, the guerrillas on whom Sadat has been pinning his hopes. He has precious little influence over Hussein and the West Bank notables. Ideally Arafat himself should champion his grand design.

The chances are that Arafat will resist the new temptation. Indeed publicly, the Palestine Liberation Organization has already recently rejected it; nothing less than total liberation will do. There are widespread suspicions that, privately, Arafat is more accommodating, but even if the suspicions are well-founded -- and there is not much evidence to suggest it -- it is clear that any public acquiescence would bring him into immediate trouble from his own rank and file.

One faith leader, Khalid Hassan, charged with serving Egypt's purposes, has for the first time come under fierce attack from guerrilla publications. Perhaps the most influential, because outspoken, is "Al In'am", mouthpiece of one of the smallest groups, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command.

Hassan is Faeh's dominant rightwing leader who, enjoying the confidence of Saudi Arabia's King Faisal, now very close to Sadat, is the natural candidate for the promotion of Egypt's plans. Unfortunately for Sadat -- and in spite of his personal interventions with Arafat -- Hassan has been losing, rather than gaining, ground in the movement.

In a late-June edition "Al In'am" came close to making an attack on the guerrilla leadership as a whole; it argues that it is the leadership's ceaseless vacillations, and its naive desire to please the Arab regimes, that encourages Egypt to embark on such "counter-revolutionary" schemes.

Weak though they are, and troubled with the faint-hearted in their own ranks, the guerrillas can no doubt count on their two enemies to come to the rescue. Hussein has sent an emissary to Cairo, no doubt to tell Sadat the Tunisian-Egyptian plan would, by separating the West Bank from Jordan, deprive him of half his kingdom. Israel, in no mood to withdraw its 1967 frontiers, is hardly going to withdraw to the more exigent ones of the 1947 Partition Plan. -- The Guardian.

Jordan: Rifai's Realpolitik

BY JOHN DONAR

AMMAN
The new Jordanian government, formed by King Hussein's chief political adviser, promises to be one of the strongest civilian governments in the country's history. The government was announced on the 50th anniversary of Jordan's establishment as a state and the prime minister, Zaid al Rifai, is from a family long associated with politics in Jordan.

His father, the late Samir al Rifai, and uncle Abdel Monem al Rifai, were both prime ministers who have carved their names in Jordanian history. His wife is the daughter of a former Prime Minister, Bahjat Talbouni.

Rifai is 37 and his appointment marks a new era in Jordan. His cabinet is the youngest on record. The youngest member is 29 and the oldest 61 and the majority of Ministers are under 45.

Rifai is determined, like many first-time premiers in Jordan, to make a clean sweep. Replying to King Hussein's letter of appointment Rifai said: "We will develop Jordan's resources, plan projects and spread construction."

"We will organize the government institutions to render the utmost benefit. Such organization will be based on competence, justice and integrity. We will firmly oppose all hindrances such as bribery, favoritism, corruption, exploitation and carelessness in performing duty."

Perhaps alone of the figures prominent in recent Jordanian political history Rifai has the peculiar qualities necessary to carry out this task. An intimate of King Hussein, with whom his friendship dates from elementary school in Amman, a groomed political scientist and diplomat and a quiet-spoken confident leader of men, Rifai will find few who dare put obstacles in his path of reform.

Rifai is a man of great personal courage and is not afraid of taking unpopular decisions. At the time of the Palestinian commandos' greatest power in Jordan he opposed them. The situation in June 1970 was so near anarchy that King Hussein was forced to sack Rifai from his job in the Royal Court at the commandos' behest. A few months later when the civil war ended Rifai became ambassador in London.

His brushes with commandos were not over, however. Rifai narrowly escaped death when Arab terrorists machine-gunned his car in London in December 1971. Black September, the extremist Palestinian group, claimed responsibility for the attack from which Rifai escaped with a minor wound.

Rifai returned to Amman where he became King Hussein's chief political adviser. He was well qualified for the job. His studies at America's Harvard University gave him a B.A. in Political Science (1958) and an M.A. in International Relations (1959). He immediately joined Jordan's mission at United Nations where he served until 1964.

Since then his job has been closely associated with the Royal Court and more often than not he has been directly responsible to King Hussein.

Earlier this year Rifai told me Jordan had two types of prime minister: those who consulted King Hussein on every decision, major and minor, and those who went to the King only for broad policy directives.

If Rifai's predecessor, Ahmed al Lawzi, who resigned on grounds of ill health was of the first type, with a government characterized by indecision and colorless administration, then Rifai, by his own definition will be of the second type.

Rifai's cabinet is composed largely of young

technocrats. The newly created Ministry for Affairs for the Occupied Territories, for example, is headed by 29-year-old Taher al Masri. The selection of Masri is typical of Rifai's realpolitik. The minister is a businessman and industrialist. Masri is very much in touch with the situation in the occupied territories having business and family interests there.

Rifai is very much a political realist. He has little time for the polemics of more traditional Arab politicians and he is considered by some to be the most important Arab prime minister today. His appointment, as well as giving new status to the position of prime minister in Jordan, relieves King Hussein of the tedium of daily rule.

The reaction in Jordan to Mr. Rifai's appointment has been one of overwhelming relief. "At last we have someone at the top who can take a decision," commented one Jordanian businessman. - Financial Times Service.

Mr. Brown's Panacea

AMMAN.
The first step toward a solution of the Middle East crisis is to get a desire on the part of the two sides to engage in free negotiations, the United States ambassador to Jordan, Lewis Brown, said in an interview published here on July 3.

"It is not important that the negotiations should be direct or indirect, or that they should be in one room," the weekly newspaper "Al Litwa" quoted Brown as saying.

The United States was prepared to undertake the role of mediator between the two sides or would welcome U.N. peace envoy Dr. Gunnar Jarring or any other party, he said.

Some procedure for reaching a solution to the crisis had become imminent, Brown said. He contended that the United States had been doing a lot to bring peace to the Middle East. Brown said he could not read the Israelis' thoughts but judging by statements by Israeli leaders they wanted peace.

He denied Arab charges that American support was responsible for Israel's survival and confrontation of the Arabs.

Israel could survive because it had a flourishing economy, he said.

Apart from the United States, there were other sources of aid to Israel, including German assistance, Brown added.

The ambassador denied that he had heard of any new American initiative to resolve the Middle East crisis but added that the U.S. had a firm desire to see peace in the area.

He would seek to re-establish peace if a new Arab-Israeli armed clash took place and would resort to all peaceful means, such as the United Nations Security Council.

Brown also denied suggestions that President Nixon and Soviet Communist Party leader Leonid Brezhnev had agreed at their last meeting to divide the world between the two superpowers.

"Talk of dividing the world into spheres of influence is a lie and a big myth," he said.

"There are people in every part of the world who are masters of their own destiny and future," he added.

The ambassador said there was some exaggeration in talk of the energy crisis in the United States.

He added that the United States did not have any new plans regarding the sources of energy in the Gulf. It was interested in ensuring the continued flow of oil from all over the world.

Brown affirmed that the United States would continue to give aid to Jordan. - Reuters.

Israeli Coolness to Dr. Waldheim

BY ERIC SILVER

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM.

United Nations Secretary General Dr. Kurt Waldheim is proposing to visit the Middle East within the next six weeks. A date is still being discussed but he will probably come to Israel before the Security Council resumes its special debate on the Middle East situation.

It is understood here that Dr. Waldheim will not be bringing any specific plan for peace in the region. On his own initiative the secretary general will visit Israel and its Arab neighbors to explore rather than to decree what can be done.

His welcome here will be cool but not hostile. Israel is sceptical about the effectiveness of any U.N. contribution. On the published evidence, officials believe that their doubts are shared by U.S. President Nixon and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev. The communique issued at the end of their Moscow summit last year referred to Security Council Resolution 242 and hoped that the parties would cooperate with Dr. Waldheim's roving representative, Gunnar Jarring. This time there was no mention of a U.N. role.

In general, Israel is satisfied with the outcome of the Washington summit. The Big Two agreed to differ, but acknowledged that the Middle East conflict could not be solved by them alone. Israel finds confirmation of its own insistence that the parties must get together and negotiate. The

superpowers can help to create the right atmosphere but they cannot dictate terms.

As the Israelis see it President Sadat of Egypt has been confronted again with his old dilemma. No one else will pull the rabbit from the hat. He has three choices: to make war, which he knows might be disastrous; to live with the status quo, which he says is unthinkable; or to find a way, however tortuous, to the negotiating table.

Israel is sticking to its steady contention that negotiation is the only answer. It is ready to sit down at any time, provided no one demands that it throw away its tricks before the first bids have been entered.

Officials here believe that international opinion is moving their way. They note that even U.N. delegates who criticize Israel in the Security Council echo the theme of negotiation between Jews and Arabs.

Within the region, however, they sense immediate ground for optimism. Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba's peace campaign is no longer taken here with the same sliver of seriousness it enjoyed a week ago. Although the official line is still that Jerusalem is open to approaches, the Tunisian leader's requirement that Israel return to the borders ordained by the U.N. Partition Resolution of 1947 ruled him out of court. President Bourguiba must have known that no Israeli government would contemplate such a condition. -- The Guardian.

Press Comment on Arab Affairs

The semi-official Jordanian newspaper "Al Rai" said on July 4 that Israel should be called on to answer specific questions committing it to a declared and clear-cut attitude toward the Middle East crisis.

Commenting on the recent three-day visit to Israel by Lord Balfour, British minister of state for foreign affairs, the paper said Israel should stop referring to pretexts such as direct negotiations and secure boundaries.

Any genuine attempt to reach the truth and ward off the danger of war in the area should go beyond traditional diplomacy and should consist of frank and unequivocal dialogue, it added.

The Cairo newspaper "Al Ahran" said on July 4 it was inconceivable that the question of European security could be separated from the Middle East issue.

"The complexity of the Middle East crisis is no justification for dropping the issue altogether," it said. On the contrary, the complexity should be an incentive to include the crisis in the debates on European security.

"For its complexity does not mean that the crisis is not liable to explode," it said.

"Al Akhtar" said that for many reasons the crisis was bound to cast its shadow on the conference, whether it was put on the agenda or not.

The geographical position of the area, its oil resources and the fact that the crisis was of an explosive nature were among these reasons.

The Tunisian press on July 4 expressed its deep regret that the Mediterranean Arab countries were not represented at the European security talks.

The daily paper of the Destourian Socialist Party, "L'Action", said the absence of Arab countries severely limited the field of vision which could be brought to bear on the problems of security and cooperation.

The government organ, "La Presse", said "if they do not consult us in times of war, at least they should consult us in times of peace."

The London "Times" said in an editorial on July 4 that Egypt was not in a hurry to throw itself into total union with Libya.

This was likely to be the gist of the message given to Libyan leader Muammar Kaddafi at a cabinet meeting in Cairo which he was due to attend on July 4.

While Egypt would be glad enough to get a larger share of Libyan oil revenues, most Egyptians did not wish to be associated with "Col. Kaddafi's notably intransigent foreign policy since this would limit their freedom of diplomatic maneuver and might also earn them another military thrashing by Israel," the paper said.

The editorial concluded: "Col. Kaddafi must be well aware of all these facts. It will be for him and his colleagues on the Libyan Revolution Command Council to decide their response."

"Either they accept a face-saving compromise by which the merger is postponed or given a largely formal interpretation, or they go home in a huff denouncing the perfidy of the Egyptian leaders, cutting off their subsidies and calling on the Egyptian masses to rise and overthrow them."

"The latter course seems unfortunately much more in character. It is certainly what President Sadat fears, and he is already seeking to defend himself by drawing closer to Saudi Arabia. It is probably also what Israel hopes for, since it would open a new and serious breach in the front of her enemies. Both these considerations should give the Libyans cause for second thoughts."



'...If Tomorrow, God Willing, We Have a Cabinet...'

Review of the Lebanese Press

Failure of attempts to complete the formation of the new government made the main headlines in Wednesday's Lebanese press.

The news in the headlines:

"Al Hayat": "Liberals and Phalangists escalate objections to giving Interior to Takkiedin, Chamoun, No, No, No. Decrees were not issued and crisis became more complicated."

"Al Amal": "Government's fate to be determined today. Large-scale manhunt in Iraq. Tehran Hussein behind attempt."

"Al Anwar": "Soh: Obstacle emerges again. Junblatt agreed, and Chamoun and Gemayel refused."

"Al Jarida": "Cabinet has not been formed."

"Al Moharrer": "Palace distributes roles."

"An Nubar": "Night government ends by day."

"Ash Shaab": "Terms and negotiations remained, and government was absent."

"Al Hayat" asked whether Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) leader Kamal Junblatt was hoping to change the country's system of government so that he would overcome obstacles in the way of his political aspirations.

"Does the leader of Mukhtara hope that the crowds on whose behalf he speaks, not to say the Muslims whom he claims to represent, will increase so that he would become the first leader of the whole of Lebanon?" the paper asked. "Or does Kamal Junblatt represent only himself, his caprice, and philosophy in a way that suits every time and place?"

"Al Jarida" said it would be catastrophic for Lebanon if each minister was to represent his own group only.

The paper was commenting on Junblatt's insistence on being assigned the Interior portfolio.

"A minister should be at the service of the whole of Lebanon," it said. "Before the decree appointing a minister is issued, he should take an oath that he would not commit himself to any political, parliamentary or sectarian group and

that he would be at the service of all Lebanon without discrimination."

"Al Moharrer" said it had become evident that the Interior portfolio was not the real cause of the present crisis.

"It must be admitted that the veto still stands," the paper said. "It is not directed against a specific person but against an entire political trend."

The paper said the opposition by former President Camille Chamoun's National Liberal Party and Pierre Gemayel's Phalangists was meant only to complicate the issue.

Bahji Takkiedin, a member of Junblatt's group but not of his party, was not a party member or a leftist, the paper added.

It asked why Takkiedin should be opposed as Interior minister while a Phalangist should be named as defense minister.

"Such an attitude is aimed at monopolizing power and imposing a specific policy on the country without taking into consideration the trends of all Lebanese," it said.

"An Nubar" said it appeared that the Lebanese were in need of Arab mediation to resolve the present crisis.

"The process of forming a government and the negative reaction it has triggered has proved that achieving agreement among the Lebanese was even more difficult than achieving it between the Lebanese and Palestinians," the paper added.

"Al Anwar" suggested that Premier-designate Takkiedin should give up his efforts to form a new government.

The paper said the cabinet list with which Soth had come out on Tuesday night "indicated that the premier-designate did not take the trouble of analyzing the attitudes and decisions he takes -- if he himself is in fact making the decisions."

"Otherwise, how are we to explain all the contradictions and disregard of complicated terms and hidden intentions?" it asked.

"How are we to explain his insistence on forming a government of 'all Lebanon' when he cannot reconcile members of one bloc?"

"The country will not be ruined if he chooses right or left. Nor will be ruined if he chooses to quit."

"Perhaps this would be easier and better," the paper added.

Islamic Affairs

The Soviet Union's Two-Faced Policy

The London-based review "Impact", a fortnightly of "Moslem viewpoints on current affairs," published the article below in its June 22 - July 12 issue:

Following the launching of a book on "The Qur'an, its Doctrine and Philosophy" in Indonesian and Semalia, Moscow Radio has broadcast in Arabic an interview with Mufti Ziya al Din Babakhanov (Chairman and Spiritual Administrator of the Moslem Board of Central Asia and Kazakhstan) which has rejected Soviet responsibility for the authorship and publication of the book. The book, according to the "Jakarta Times" is in Arabic and entitled "Islam Aqadatuhu wa Ta'alimatuhu". It is published by the Soviet Novosti News Agency written by N.I. Mukhtidinov and was issued during the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed in 1973. It claims that the Qur'an is "a collection of lies -- written during the Middle Ages", that its verses possess "hypnotic power" and that according to the remark of Soviet academician Kravoski "it is only good for a song" and is not clear, its teachings are said to be "legalizing the despicable deed of intimidating the people."

These views in themselves are nothing new. What is interesting is Moscow radio's disclaimer and Mufti Babakhanov's replies. The interviewer remarked that "the booklet grossly distorts the real position of Moslems in the Soviet Union. Babakhanov in turn was "amazed" that there should be "these people who slander Almighty God and His words by uttering absurd and malicious and false statements against the Qur'an". Although only asked about the book of Mukhtidinov he also referred to a booklet allegedly published in English by Novosti and written by R. N. Nishanov, Soviet ambassador to Ceylon (Sri Lanka). This was entitled "The Soviet Union and Islam" and was published in 1971. Babakhanov said, "I know that the authors of these two books have used the name of comrades Nishanov and Mukhtidinov but they 'are not expert on the Qur'an nor have they fabricated or falsified the Holy Qur'an', neither were they experts in the two languages so they could not have been 'the real authors'."

One may go on to postulate then that maybe it was the CIA or a similar nefarious body which was responsible for any fabrication that might have occurred. Whatever it is Moscow must

presume that its Arabic listeners are so ignorant as to believe that the type of views expressed in the book is not indeed the type of views which the Soviet Union has held of Islam and the Moslems. Orientalists in the Soviet Union have always represented Islam as "a primitive and banalistic religion", "a chaotic mixture of Christian, Jewish and pagan doctrines", founded by "a member of the feudal trading classes of Mecca with the object of providing a religious pretext for the plundering expeditions organized by the Arab aristocracy" and as a "foreign religion imposed on the peoples of Central Asia and Transcaucasia by fire and sword."

The question is why, in spite of these Soviet positions, has Mufti Babakhanov said that "Moslems in the Soviet Union perform the rites of the Islamic religion in complete freedom" and that "the Soviet Union does not interfere in or apply pressure concerning teaching of the Islamic religion" indeed, according to Babakhanov, Islam is positively flourishing in the Soviet Union. To be sure, there are a great number of Moslems even in the Communist Party who "are still practising religious practices and customs." According to a party official this is "intolerable". There is also no doubt that pressures of various sorts are applied but by and large anti-religious comments are aired mainly for internal consumption. One must remember that Babakhanov's interview was broadcast in Arabic and meant for external listeners to show that a liberal attitude toward Islam is adopted in the Soviet Union. It is also true to say that since the end of the Second World War, the attitude of the Moslem religious authorities toward the Soviet States has been one of complete loyalty. It is not known what, if any, sort of pressures are put on Mufti Babakhanov to be the faithful mouthpiece and emissary of the Soviet Union that he has shown himself to be. Perhaps it is his way of ensuring that whatever exists of Islam in the Soviet Union is left intact. But the Soviet Union must surely realize that its two-faced policies on religious questions -- one for home and the other for foreign consumption -- are now seen as such and are therefore without much effective propagandist value. It is much better for them to recognize, rather than attempt to suppress, the positive mainsprings of Moslem life in Central Asia.