

PALESTINE JEWS MINIMIZE ARABS

**Sure of Superiority, Settlers
Feel They Can Win Natives
by Reason or Force**

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JERUSALEM, March 19—Palestine's Zionists are generally confident that relations with their Arab neighbors can be satisfactorily adjusted once the country's political status has been settled.

If not confident, they rarely allow themselves to be troubled by the problem, being usually preoccupied with issues that they consider more urgent. That attitude, which has been manifested in numerous conversations that I have had in the past three weeks with everyday citizens of all degrees, has developed in spite of the fact that the presence of the Arab majority is fundamentally the largest obstacle to the achievement of Zionism's national aims.

It is an attitude shared by almost everyone, no matter which of the many proposed political solutions he may advocate. A non-party professional man of Rehovoth summarized it when he said: "Give us time, give us peace and give us a policy."

Surprised at Mention

Talking to Jews in ordinary walks of life—not Zionist leaders—one gets the definite impression that relations with the Arabs are not among their major concerns. Some were even surprised that in the present circumstances the subject should be discussed.

Their unconcern seems to be the product of several factors. First of all, they feel, although not boastfully, that as a people they are superior to the Arabs in skill and education. "Look at an Arab village and a Jewish settlement side by side," one of them remarked recently. "There is a difference of 200 or 300 years."

Another man stated the difference more bluntly when he described the Western Jew as bearing the same relation to the Oriental Arab as the white man to the native in a colonial system. Some of the chauvinistic youth carry this feeling of superiority so far as to despise the Arab as an inferior.

Whatever the degree of their superiority complex, however, the Jews are certainly confident of their ability to bring the Arabs to terms—by persuasion if possible, by might if necessary. The program of the largest terrorist group, the Irgun Zvai Leumi, is to evacuate the British forces from Palestine and declare a Zionist state west of the Jordan, and "we will take care of the Arabs."

Some of this display of confidence may be whistling in the dark. In any case the usual emphasis is not on might but on persuasion. There appears to be a sincere belief among Zionists that their settlement in Palestine has conferred large and tangible benefits on the indigenous population. Everyone can cite an example from his own experience.

"I would be deceiving you if I told you that we consciously think about improving the condition of the Arabs all the time," one man told me. "Naturally we devote our first and best efforts to our own people coming from Europe. We help the Arabs incidentally—largely by example. As a result of our example they are freeing themselves from feudalism."

Sure Arabs Are Grateful

The Zionists are convinced that the Arabs are grateful for the improvements introduced by Jews and would so express themselves if not incited by the politicians to make a show of hostility.

Wherever ordinary Arabs are left to their own inclinations, Zionists frequently tell you, they show themselves friendly. They make a ceremony of welcoming new Jewish settlements, often bringing coffee and food on the first day. They sit side by side with Jews in public

markets, work in Jewish enterprises, buy from Jewish stores in spite of the Arabs' anti-Zionist boycott, and deal with Jewish banks. Their inherent willingness to get along with Jews is the primary article of the Zionists' faith.

Nevertheless, Arab-Jewish relations are admitted by Zionists to be almost entirely commercial. The relationship is usually one of buyer and seller, employer and employee. The cultural gulf, Zionists say, is such that social relationships are virtually impossible. Simple country Arabs sometimes invite their Jewish neighbors to their traditional festivities but the invitations are admittedly seldom returned.

Look for Common Interests

"Wherever there are common interests relations are good," one Zionist observed. A young skilled workman who had joined his Arab colleagues in a recent strike against the Iraq Petroleum Company in Haifa explained his cooperation by saying: "We have common interests."

There is a belief that areas of common interest would be enlarged if the political irritant could be removed from Arab-Jewish relations.

A leader of the diamond industry in Tel Aviv contended that substantially enlarging the Jewish community in Palestine was the only way of coming to a settlement with the Arabs. His theory was that the Arabs would either ignore or try to crush a numerically inferior community and that immigration was the only means of bettering the Zionists' bargaining position.

Neither he nor virtually any other Zionist with whom I talked would consider being subject to the Arab majority in Palestine. They wish to feel secure in their culture, religion and economy and to be free to develop a Zionist national home in their own way without restrictions.

Some Jews in Palestine have already attained that feeling of freedom from the restrictive presence of Arabs. In Nevah Ilan the Arab problem did not seem to exist for the young, husky French settlers, mostly veterans of the resistance. Nevah Ilan, established four

months ago, is almost literally up in the clouds, and the Arabs are far below. Eager, enthusiastic and optimistic, the settlers are absorbed in the task of restoring life to a barren but beautiful hill. Almost their only contact with their neighbors has been one visit by an Arab, who showed great interest in their plans and methods.

Tel Aviv Self-Contained

The all-Jewish metropolis of Tel Aviv is self-contained and separated from the rest of the country. The average resident has no daily contact with the majority element of the country—a fact that is probably true of most Jews in Palestine.

Tel Aviv residents do not worry about the Arab problem, a young journalist there said. They do not consider it insurmountable.

"Perhaps we do not have enough contact with the Arabs," a business man mused somewhat self-reproachingly.