

Palestinians rebuild war-shattered village

By WILLIAM DRUMMOND
[c] 1974, The Los Angeles Times

Wadi Fuqin, occupied Jordan — "My village had had a hard time," said Sudhieh Mustafa, 65, stooping over a basket of freshly plucked radishes and bell peppers.

She and about 600 other inhabitants of Wadi Fuqin have lived in a cross fire in the Middle East conflict since 1948.

Their village, about eight miles west of Bethlehem, was situated in Jordan almost exactly astride the Israel-Jordan border that existed from 1948 to 1967 when the six-day war ended Arab control on the west bank of the Jordan River.

Because they are no longer on the firing line, Sidhieh and the other Palestinian Arabs who live in Wadi Fuqin have been able to leave the grim surroundings of a refugee camp and return to their land.

According to sources who have worked closely with these refugees through the years, Wadi Fuqin is the first Palestinian community where refugees have been returned to their original land holdings.

An estimated 1.5 million Palestinian Arabs, displaced by the creation of the Jewish State of Israel in 1948, have not been so lucky.

A Palestinian identity, however, has remained, and appears on the verge of gaining recognized status at the United Nations.

Yasser Arafat, head of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), has promised to create a "democratic secular state" in Palestine, implying that an Arab majority would rule and the Jews would revert to minority status, an arrangement that the Israelis say they would never accept.

Even the Wadi Fuqin people say that the 200 acres they farm now is only half what they had before 1948.

Since the Israeli Military Governor gave them permission to return two years ago, about half the villagers have so far come back. The remainder are still in camps, saving their money and hoping to get enough to rebuild some day.

"When one has a chance to return to his land," said Sudhieh, "he is happy."

This year we have a lot of water and water is life."

Pausing in her labors, the stocky Arab woman squinted in the midday sunlight and recounted what it was like living astride the troubled Israeli-Jordanian border.

With a sweep of her arm, she pointed at a rocky hillside. "These houses were all destroyed," she said, "We could not live here. When we tried to return, they shot at us."

The Israelis claimed that Wadi Fuqin was a base for terrorists and saboteurs and tried to clear it of its Arab population.

In 1956, the Israelis crossed the border into Jordan and blew up all the houses in the village.

"Even though the Israelis shot at us and blew up our houses, we returned and plowed our land. At night they would chase us out. We would sleep behind the mountain and come back in the morning. One night I stepped on a rock in the darkness and twisted my ankle," said Sudhieh.

Later they moved to the refugee camp in Bethlehem and walked back to the land in the daytime to farm it.

Religious issue clouds real N. Ireland crisis

By GARRET FITZGERALD
Special to the Los Angeles Times

[Garret Fitzgerald, Foreign Minister of Ireland was a journalist in Dublin before entering Government. He is the author of a book on the Northern Ireland problem.]

The bloody and protracted conflict in Northern Ireland must often appear meaningless and inexplicable to outsiders. Its cause is frequently put down either to impersonal social and economic forces over which nobody has control, or to some particular defect or perversity in the Irish character.

opinion

In fact, it is a product of history — of a history involving an incomplete conquest and settlement of much of Northeastern Ireland three centuries and more ago.

Because this settlement occurred after the Reformation — unlike many earlier invasions — conquered and conquerors, being of differing religious persuasions, did not generally intermingle and intermarry. Unlike the Vikings, the Normans and the Pre-Reformation English settlers, all of whom were absorbed into the Native Irish community, the 17th Century colonists retained their separate identity, while living for centuries cheek-by-jowl with those whom (Continued on Page 13)

Moslems in all countries celebrate fast of Ramadan

By JIM HOAGLAND
[c] 1974, The Washington Post-Outlook

"Allah desireth for you ease. He desireth not hardship for you."
— The Koran

CAIRO — The death of each day in this month is the sweetest moment of the year for the Arab world's 100 million Moslems. As the light vanishes, the dusk thickening until a white thread cannot be distinguished from a black one, Arab cities relax and begin an ascent from the self-imposed denials of the day to the pleasures of the night.

This is Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, when a half-billion Moslems throughout the world are required every day to observe day-long fasts and are permitted night-long festivities.

The Manichean division of day and night during Ramadan continues to exercise great control over Arab Moslems after 1,300 years of practice. Arab leaders and thinkers who see the tradition as being increasingly in conflict with their efforts to modernize social and economic structures are making little headway in altering the practice of Ramadan.

Tunisia's Habib Bourguiba, who has prodded his countrymen into a wide range of other reforms, got nowhere when he pleaded with them to "give priority to the economic struggle" by getting a full night's sleep, showing up at work on time and working a full day during Ramadan.

Forbidden to smoke, eat, drink water or any other liquid or even to inhale perfume (nothing may enter the body during the day-long fast), Moslem office workers, traffic cops and others tend to become less attentive to their jobs and more irritable as the day wears on. In countries where Ramadan is strictly observed, getting business done after noon or one p.m. turns from an ordeal in normal times to a virtual impossibility in Ramadan.

The same scene is played out across the Arab World as sundown approaches. Here in the usually crowded, clamorous streets around the Husayn Mosque, men ask passersby with watches for the time every five minutes or less.

The din of the nearby bazaar begins to fade as darkness descends across the brown brick minarets of Cairo and the madcap Cairene traffic dwindles to a few solitary cars. As a single cannon shot booms out, an eerie silence engulfs the Arab World's busiest street corners.

The cannon shot is the traditional signal for the beginning of Iftar, the festive breaking of the fast with a sumptuous, carefully planned meal at home. Only the bazaar's shopkeepers, who constitute one of Ramadan's strongest constituencies, continue to work, grabbing bites of homomes and shishkebab behind the counter.

Shopping for presents for the family is as important at Ramadan in the Moslem world as it is at Christmas in the West. Merchants hold back scarce goods until Ramadan and then jack up prices during this holiday season.

One study done in Algeria shows the minimum expenditure for food and special goods during Ramadan for a family there is \$150, an enormous sum for a developing country. Despite the day-long fast, consumption actually rises in many Arab countries during Ramadan.

Egypt experienced the economic pressures Ramadan creates in a dramatic form this year. The first days of Ramadan coincided with the opening of school, when parents have to buy new clothing and school supplies. Workers in the industrial suburb of Helwan and elsewhere, squeezed by these competing demands and inflation, staged demonstrations until the government agreed to advances on wages.

After dinner, Arab Moslems stroll the brightly lit streets, which are strung with garlands of light bulbs painted red, yellow and blue, and sample the season's special sweets. In Damascus, Killaj (a cake stuffed with cream) and apricots flattened out in sheets (called "moon of religion") are special favorites. In the gaily decorated streets of Tunis, large donuts dipped in hot honey satiate the sweet tooth.

Visiting friends, attending special music halls and fairs set up in the bazaars, and taking brief

naps fill in the hours until a pre-dawn breakfast sets the stage for another nerve-wracking day.

Ramadan is taking on some modern touches. More people learn the hour of sunset from transistor radios now than from the cannon shot, and the religious men who would walk through neighborhoods awakening each family by name for the pre-dawn meal are being displaced by alarm clocks.

But the critics of Ramadan, who range from Arab political scientists to Western bankers operating here, strongly maintain that Ramadan has not kept pace with the change of this region from an agricultural society, whose life was determined by the sun, to one that has developed aspirations to become one of the world's economic superpowers.

The Arab mainstream seems to dispute that there is any loss of productivity, however, and says that Ramadan's spiritual values outweigh all other considerations. The fast "is meant to bring back to man his forgotten humanity," says

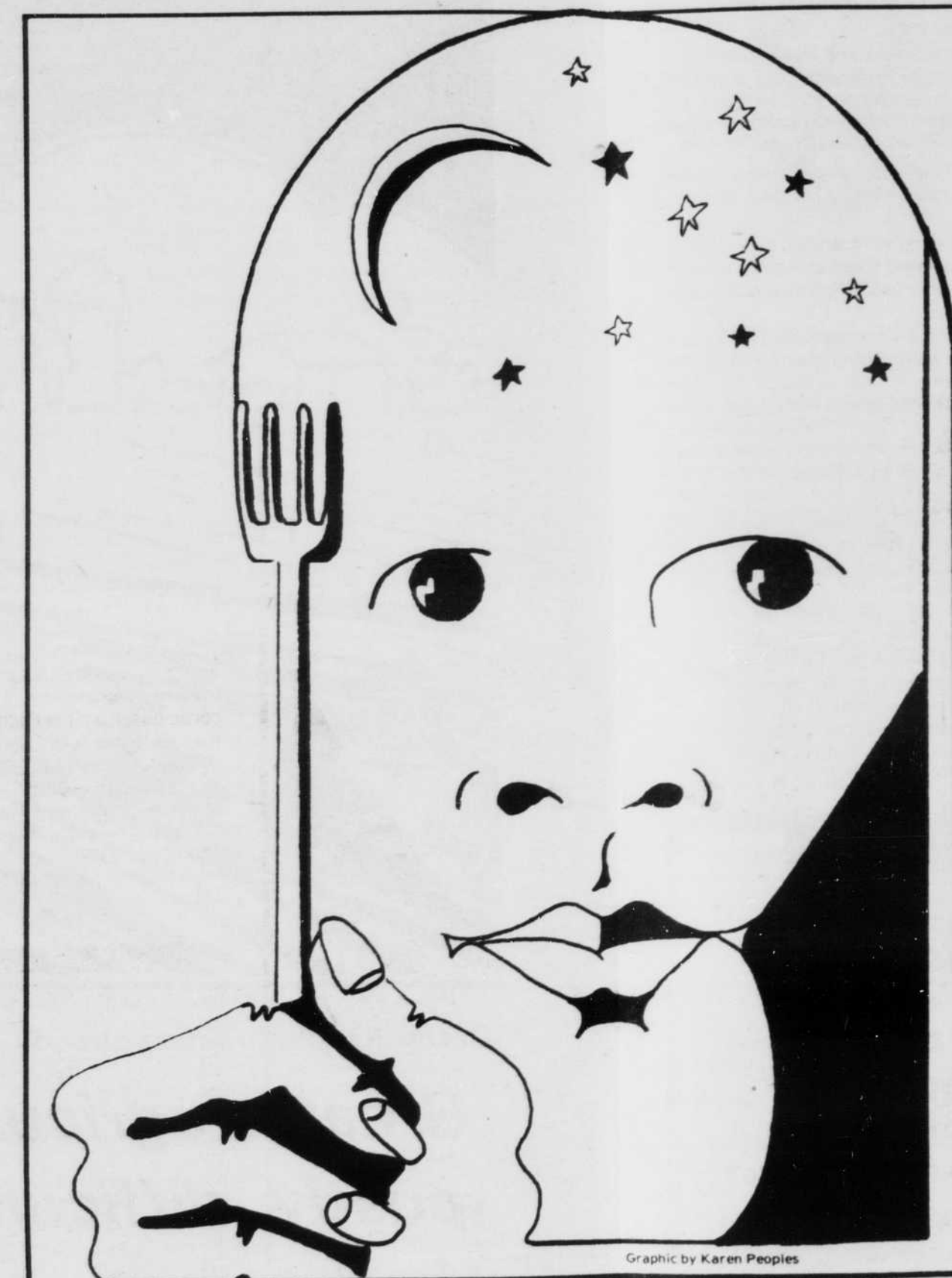
made martyrdom and self-reliance chief characteristics of that religion. Smith and others assert that the differing traits remain, even as the relative situations change.

In somewhat of a contrast to Christianity today, observance of Ramadan varies from country to country and even from year to year for the same individuals more than it does across age lines.

Here in Egypt, the existence of a 10 to 14 per cent Christian minority in a population of 36 million makes for a relaxed public mood. Many restaurants stay open for lunch. The sight of a man sipping a beer in a cafe causes no surprise and secretaries can have a glass of tea at their desks.

Cynics say Egyptian Christians have the best of both worlds. They do not fast but take advantage of the shortened workdays and four-day holiday that follows Ramadan on Oct. 17.

In Tripoli, the capital of neighboring and more puritanical Libya, a foreigner runs the risk of an angry or envious slap by smoking in the street



Mohammed Ali El Zeibi, a Lebanese Professor of Philosophy.

Observing Ramadan from the age of 14 is one of the five essential rites for a Moslem. The others are giving alms, making a pilgrimage to Mecca, saying prayers daily and making the profession of faith in Mohammed as the Prophet of God.

Ramadan — the month of heat — was for Mohammed the period of meditation in the Saudi Arabian desert. It was during this month that the prophet first saw the Angel Gabriel, who awoke him with the command, "Read!" and received the message of god in the form of the Koran.

The body is considered a holy vessel not to be penetrated by a foreign substance during the day. All food, liquids and sexual intercourse are ruled out as long as there is light. The ill are excused from the fast, as are travelers and, as the Israelis discovered last October, soldiers engaged in war.

The easy dualism of sacrifice and indulgence that Ramadan epitomizes is an integral part of Islam, some historians believe. Wilfred Cantwell Smith notes that Islam was founded in the success of sweeping conquests and conversions that spread the faith from Cordoba to the Punjab.

Islam is built on communal experience and reward, while the persecution of early Christianity

during Ramadan. "It is an insult to me as a person and to my religion," an elevator operator in a Tripoli hotel expalined politely during Ramadan last year when he asked a visitor to extinguish a cigarette.

Despite the population's refusal to follow Bourguiba's lead, it is not uncommon in Tunis to see Moslems smoking or eating during the day. Bourguiba, who failed to convince his people that the "battle against underdevelopment is a new form of the sacred war" that justified dispensing with the traditional observance of Ramadan, still complains privately about the hypocrisy of students and others.

In a few countries, some Moslems fast one year and skip the next. A secretary at Cairo's *Al Ahran* newspaper was stunned to walk into an editor's office in midmorning on the first day of Ramadan and find her boss munching on a sandwich. "Shamel!" she said. "Have a cheese sandwich," he replied. "You can make up for it next year."

But for those who observe, Ramadan appears to fashion a strong communal bond as entire cities and villages fast together. While economic and social disparities frequently thwart Islam's aim of equality and brotherhood for all men, Ramadan serves as a strong reminder of the aim.

U.S. media's glorification of Ford unwarranted

By DAVID SHAW
[c] 1974, The Los Angeles Times

In the immediate aftermath of former President Richard Nixon's resignation, much of the American press — blinded largely by its hostility toward Nixon — did a generally inadequate and sometimes irresponsible job of covering the Ford Administration.

An analysis of leading newspapers, news magazines and wire services — along with several White House press briefings and almost three dozen interviews — makes clear a number of significant deficiencies in press coverage and attitudes during the first 50 days of Ford's presidency. The most important of those include:

— In the month between Ford's accession and his pardon of Nixon, the press was too gentle and uncritical in its treatment of the new President, frequently inverting to him many virtues that, in the words of Peter Lisagore, White House correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News*, "he didn't possess, we knew he didn't possess and he didn't even claim to possess."

— Press reaction to the pardon of Nixon was, in most cases, harsh, subjective and speculative, at times giving the impression that the act was, above all, a personal affront to (and a betrayal of) the press itself.

— Given the critical nature of other domestic and foreign problems, the press has often been too preoccupied with Nixon's mental and emotional health and, to a lesser extent, his status as a former president. In some aspects of that preoccupation, the press ran the risk of allowing itself to be used by Nixon friends and relatives determined to create considerable sympathy for the former President, seemingly to help condition public opinion to accept the pardon from Ford.

— The widespread use of stories from unnamed sources — a practice long accepted in Washington (and, of necessity, intensified during the Watergate period) — has, on occasion, resulted in the publication of highly speculative stories of dubious origin and credibility.

Although those deficiencies can be documented, that documentation should not be construed as an accusation that the press did nothing right in its early Ford-Nixon coverage.

In the last week or 10 days, in fact, coverage has improved immeasurably, and even before that, there were some instances of sound newspaper coverage.

The *New York Times*, for example, published a story Aug. 19 on President Ford's friendship with "several of Washington's most powerful lobbyists."

The *Washington Post*, on five consecutive days in late Sept., published an analysis of voter attitudes, including reaction to the pardon, all across America.

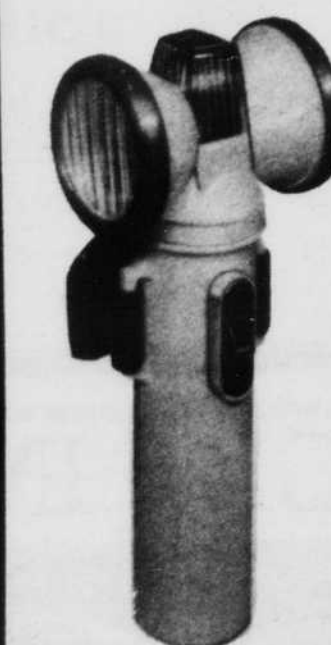
Time, in its Sept. 23 issue, published an insightful and well balanced essay on Ford's pardon decision seen in terms of "the theology of forgiveness."

And most leading news organs decided to ignore the most lurid and unsubstantiated rumors about Nixon's emotional condition (that he had tried to commit suicide; that secret service men had pulled him, unconscious, from the Pacific) and about the pardon (that Mrs. Nixon and their daughter Julie Eisenhower had flown to Washington to personally persuade Ford to accept).

But good journalism was the exception, not the rule, during the first 50 days of the Ford Administration.

President Ford's month-long honeymoon with the press was not unprecedented, of course. It is customary for an incoming President to enjoy a brief period of bliss with the press, Congress and the public alike.

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