

Man, State,
and Society
in the Contemporary
Middle East

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AL-ARD GROUP

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[It is almost impossible to find a published monograph on one or another of Israel's political parties. The one we have selected deals with a rather atypical political group—al-Ard (“The Earth”). It is a small and politically alert group. Composed wholly of Israeli Arabs, it illustrates the political relation of the Arab minority in Israel to the state's majority and to the Arab masses in the Middle East.]

To anyone interested in politics, the crystallization and fortunes of al-Ard is one of the most fascinating chapters in the development of the Arab minority in Israel. The foundation of this small all-Arab political group was the culmination of efforts to establish a non-Communist political organization which would represent extreme nationalist trends among the Arabs in Israel. A few such attempts proved abortive in the early years of the state . . . The first such effort of real significance was

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the Popular Front. The founders of this front learned their lesson from the fate of previous experiments, which failed because of lack of popular support. In order to remedy this situation, a meeting was held by a number of MAQI¹ leaders and other Arab personalities. Among the latter were the lawyer, E. N. Kusa; the chairman of the Kafr Yasif local council, Yani Yani; the Mayor of Shafa 'Amr, Jabbur Jabbur, and others. They all agreed there was a need to establish some sort of comprehensive organization, in which different opinions prevalent among Israeli Arabs could coexist. The opportunity arose in 1958, when an Arab First of May demonstration clashed with police forces in Nazareth. With the participation of Kusa, Yani, and Jabbur, an Arab Public Committee for Protection of the Imprisoned and Exiled (namely, those jailed during the demonstration) was formed. On July 6, 1958, this committee initiated the establishment of the Arab Front, later called the Popular Front.² It was founded in MAQI's club in Nazareth,³ and indeed the Communists soon became the guiding spirit of the front. Even the declared aims of the front were identical with the nationalist theses of MAQI, though omitting the socio-economic demands of the Communists. The *modus operandi* of the front, also, resembled MAQI's: festive gatherings to celebrate international events, memorial meetings, distribution of manifestoes, publication of pamphlets (with such themes as "the front's road," "the front's unity" or "the front's banner").

The Popular Front, incidentally, proved one of MAQI's rare successes in attempting to identify with the Arabs in Israel. Between July, 1958, and February, 1959, branches of the front were established in various towns and villages, chronologically as follows: Kafr Yasif, Taiyyba, Wadi Nisnas, Ramle, Lydda, Bi'na, and others. Dedicated efforts were made to lend the front a character of mass support. Thus, large quantities of manifestoes were distributed, huge advertisements appeared, mass rallies were convened, and many Arab personalities were appealed to and invited to join. This activity was clearly aimed at making the Popular Front (as MAQI's organ put it) "The basis for uniting the ranks of the Arab people in Israel."⁴ Actually, success was rather limited in this direction, as soon became apparent, both because of competition with other parties and groups and because many suspected that the Popular Front was a front organization for MAQI. Indeed, the honeymoon between the Communist and nationalist components of the Popular Front continued for not more than a year. Even this was achieved solely through a tacit agreement to avoid decisions concerning attitudes to foreign policy; and, on the contrary, to stress those internal problems on which agreement existed. Working together proved relatively easy during this brief period, due also to the apparent identity of interests between 'Abd al-Nasir and the Soviet Union. However, when 'Abd al-Nasir attacked Syrian Communists "for endangering Arab unity" in a speech at Port Said at the end of 1958 and another early in 1959, the repercussions could be felt in the Popular Front as well. Furthermore, the 1959 conflict between 'Abd al-Nasir (the nationalist tendency) and Iraq's 'Abd al-Karim Qasim (whom

Moscow tended to support in this conflict) left the Popular Front badly shaken.

It appears that nationalist Arabs in the Popular Front, admirers of 'Abd al-Nasir, refused to follow MAQI's line, particularly as Communism did not necessarily appeal to them, anyway. It is also possible that they were not overly anxious to cooperate with MAQI's leadership, which was after all Jewish-Arab. These differences of opinion could not be left unresolved if the front were to run with a mutually accepted platform in the parliamentary elections scheduled for the end of 1959.⁵ The Israeli authorities, for their part, took steps to discourage the political activity of the front, which they regarded as potentially subversive. The military administration refused to grant some front activists travel permits, which resulted in their being unable to attend meetings or lectures far from their regular residence; a few were even detained for investigation. When the Popular Front requested legal registration as an Ottoman association, the Haifa district commissioner refused, replying that Ottoman law prohibited the establishment of associations which aimed at influencing the political activity of the various communities.⁶

The restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities appear to have been a less decisive factor in the disintegration of the Popular Front than the rift between the two components. The front broke up into its nationalist and Communist elements. The former seceded, forming an independent political group to become the nucleus of al-Ard. The rift was first revealed by Emil Habibi, a MAQI leader, in his column in *al-Ittihad* (July 10, 1959), when he wrote, "A small number of friends, cooperating with us in the Popular Front, secretly attack us; such a situation cannot continue." Several days later the division within the front was public knowledge and became final when the seceding group officially asked the Israeli authorities for a permit to publish a journal of its own. The leaders of the new group were intellectuals; some of them had literary interests; others had studied law. Outstanding was Mansur Qardosh, a Greek Orthodox who had been an active member of the front and now openly declared that the rift in it was a direct result of the political conflict between 'Abd al-Nasir and Qasim.⁷

While some of the early history of this group—which was soon known as al-Ard—is still obscure, much is known thanks to the Israeli press and to a book in Hebrew written by one of its young but prominent members, Sabri Jiryis.⁸ From the very beginning, the new group had to contend with three opponents, each stronger than itself:

1. The Israeli Government and its various departments. The new group was founded on the premise of nonrecognition of the authority of the State of Israel, at least not within its 1948 frontiers. It openly clamored for changes in the political map of the Middle East.

2. The traditional structure of the Arab population, from which a number of the group's founders originated. These thought (and rightly so) that the traditional structure was supporting the regime politically; they

therefore set about purposefully to widen the rifts in this structure, in order to speed up its breakdown.

3. MAQI, within whose sponsored Popular Front the group originated. Compared with al-Ard, MAQI was older and larger, more experienced, and better known. However, both organizations appealed for the backing of the same elements within the Arab population in Israel. This soon set MAQI up in arms against al-Ard. In order to reveal its true nature, al-Ard stressed its all-Arab character, thus possibly implying a slur on MAQI, whose membership had a Jewish majority. Again, when the new group called for the boycott of the parliamentary elections of 1959, this was justly interpreted as calling on the Arabs not to vote for MAQI either.

For its extremist propoganda, al-Ard needed a newspaper or periodical in which to compete with other political views. Its first overt political act was therefore to ask for a permit to publish a journal.⁹ When this was delayed, the group started publication without a permit, beginning in October 1959. Its weekly thus appeared for thirteen weeks. Unconfirmed reports estimated circulation at about 2,000 copies.¹⁰ The magazine tried to create for the group an image of the sole and real defender of the Arab minority in Israel and its interests; to praise pan-Arabism and its main exponent, 'Abd al-Nasir, while defaming his opponents, including Israeli leaders. The weekly attacked the State of Israel and even covertly threatened its Jewish inhabitants, writing, for instance, "Live and let your fellow-men live, so that you may live with them!" It appeared each time under a different name, but its last name was al-Ard (The Earth); hence the group's appellation,¹¹ which caught popular fancy. Every issue, besides having a different title, also had a different responsible editor.¹² The group thus tried to circumvent the law, which imposes the requirement of a permit to publish more than one issue of the same newspaper or periodical. When the editors became careless and repeated themselves, they were hauled into court and fined (March 1960).¹³ The weekly ceased publication. One member of al-Ard commented on this, in a conversation which was printed later, saying: "Are the Jews interested in learning the real views of the Arabs about their life in this country, or do they want the Arabs to play the game of a fool's Paradise?"¹⁴ Here was a clear exposition of the image the group had of its own role: the members regard themselves as representatives of the Arabs in Israel and express their views. This approach was consistently followed by the contributors to and editors of the group's weekly in 1959-60. Among the latter, the moving spirit was Habib Qahwaji, previously a member of the Popular Front's executive committee.

The name of al-Ard stuck to the group, which adopted it willingly, wishing to demonstrate their close connection with the earth of Israel and their wish to protect it from expropriation by the government.

In June, 1960, seven active members of al-Ard established a company under the name of al-Ard Company Ltd., which they tried to have le-

gally registered. The registrar of companies refused to do this, "due to considerations of security and the public good."¹⁵ Mansur Qardosh then appealed against this decision to the High Court of Justice in Jerusalem, asking for an order *nisi* against the registrar of companies. The Supreme Court, sitting as High Court of Justice, considered the attitude and reasoning of the registrar of companies. He claimed that, according to Article 14 of the Companies' Law, the Minister of Justice had absolute discretion to grant permits to companies; and that he had transferred part of his authority to the registrar of companies. This argument notwithstanding, the High Court decided that the appeal of al-Ard was a case justifying its intervention as it doubted good faith in this use of the discretionary authority. After due consideration, the court upheld the request of al-Ard, made the order *nisi* absolute, and ordered the registrar of companies to accede to al-Ard's request.¹⁶ The registrar of companies, through the government's Attorney General, asked for a second hearing. This was granted, early in 1962, before a panel of five (instead of three) Supreme Court justices, who however concurred in the previous decision and again made the *nisi* order absolute.¹⁷ Thus al-Ard Company Ltd. was registered as a company, the avowed aims of which were: "to concern itself with all types of printing, publication, translation, press, import of books, and all kinds of printed matter." In this manner al-Ard developed from a mere group of people with political initiative into a political body, officially registered as a limited company; this transformation had been achieved by cleverly exploiting the due process of law in the State of Israel. Undoubtedly the Supreme Court decision encouraged al-Ard to continue its political activity.

The predominance of the political element was evident throughout its activities. It also determined its tactics. All the activities of al-Ard may be understood in the light of its aim to become a full-fledged political party. After registration, it first increased its capital from I£500 to I£20,000, by offering shares for sale among the Arab population in Israel.¹⁸ Secondly, it asked for a permit to publish a newspaper of its own; when this was refused by the District Commissioner in Haifa, it again appealed to the High Court of Justice. However, this time it failed, as the court ruled that the matter was beyond its jurisdiction; it considered the decision to be well within the authority granted to the District Commissioner by the British emergency regulations.¹⁹ The frustration of its attempts to spread its message within Israel did not prevent al-Ard from carrying on international activity. In September, 1961, it cabled the Secretary-General of the United Nations regarding some Arab youngsters who had tried to cross from Israel into the Gaza Strip. Later, in July, 1964, it sent a memorandum, written in English, to U Thant, the foreign embassies in Israel, and the editors of several important newspapers abroad. The memorandum enumerated in detail all al-Ard's claims, with emphasis on the military administration, expropriation of land, and the condition of Arab culture in Israel.²⁰

Two weeks later, al-Ard wrote to the District Commissioner in Haifa

and informed him of the establishment of an al-Ard movement, as an Ottoman association, according to a law dating from the year 1909; they also appended the articles of association. The District Commissioner replied that he could not officially confirm their association, which was illegal because of its intention to harm the State of Israel. The leaders of al-Ard then appealed yet again to the High Court of Justice for an opinion on the legality of the existence of the movement. Their main argument was that the District Commissioner had no competence whatsoever to determine whether an association was legal or not and that, in any case, there was nothing in the aims of al-Ard which could be construed as an intention to harm the State of Israel.²¹

However, it is clear that al-Ard, apart from its legal struggle (to which we shall return), considered its activity among Israeli Arabs as the main task. True, members of al-Ard worked for their cause among the Jewish population, too—but mainly as individuals, not as a group: they participated in debates, gave interviews to Jewish newspapers, or wrote letters to editors. Among the Arabs, al-Ard acted as a group, though not continuously, nonetheless systematically and energetically. It tried to enlist the support of Arab students; and was not unwilling to cooperate with MAQI, at the beginning of 1961, against what it considered as the government's intention to expropriate Arab land. However, al-Ard's main efforts were devoted to disseminating propaganda among the Arabs in Israel and collecting funds from them. For instance, in August, 1964, it organized a meeting in Jaffa, attended by about a hundred persons, which sent a cable to Archbishop Makarios, President of Cyprus, expressing support for him in his struggle against the Turks. In October of the same year, it distributed locally the Arabic translation of the memorandum it had sent to the U.N. and others in July. Al-Ard paid special attention to enlisting the support of Arab youth, trying to infiltrate into the cultural and sports clubs of the Arab population.

Some of these activities were cited in the case before the Supreme Court sitting as High Court of Justice, in November, 1964, to consider the request of al-Ard to be registered as an association according to the Ottoman law. After profound consideration, the court rejected the request.²² The main points of its reasoning were: in spite of the obvious desirability of granting a permit to every association—including those which intend to change the *status quo*—a permit should not be granted to an association that does not recognize the state within which it operates, and which opposes the free regime in it. In this connection the court remarked that the term "Israel" was not even mentioned in the articles of association of al-Ard. It also referred to Article 3, where al-Ard stated that it desired to solve the Palestinian problem by considering the country as an indivisible unit, according to the wishes of the Arab people—which the court understood to mean as totally disregarding the wishes of the Jewish people. Thus, in refusing to grant al-Ard's request, the court also held that its very establishment was inappropriate within Israeli democracy. These conclusions of the Supreme Court are especially

significant in view of its strictness in upholding the freedom of association in Israel. Its reasoning and decision obviously indicated its opinion that al-Ard endangered Israel democracy.²³

Three days after the ruling, three of al-Ard's leading members were arrested: Mansur Qardosh and Habib Qahwaji, as well as Sabri Jiryis, a graduate of the Faculty of Law at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. According to the press, they were arrested as a result of the capture of infiltrators from across the border, with orders to contact the leaders of al-Ard, who had been seized in Israel. At the end of November, 1964, an order signed by the Israeli Minister of Defense was published in *Reshumot* (official gazette of the government); in it, according to the authority granted to him by the emergency regulations of 1945, he banned al-Ard stating: "The group of people known as al-Ard group, or al-Ard movement, its name whatever it is from time to time, as well as the group of people organized in al-Ard Company . . . are an illegal association."²⁴ With the publication of this order, the legal existence of al-Ard, as well as its activity as a group, came to an end. Its last stand together was before the district court in Haifa, where Sabri Jiryis and the lawyers of the other members unsuccessfully opposed the Attorney General's application to wind up the assets of al-Ard Company. The district court concurred that it was an illegal association and ordered that it be wound up.

The escalation of al-Ard's political activity between January, 1962, and November, 1964, carried extremism to a point at which, according to official circles, some contact was established with Israel's enemies across the borders; this led directly to the banning of the group's activity and the winding up of its assets. Special interest attaches to the fact that MAQI was the sole organized political body to criticize the ban on al-Ard. This party declared that, although it did not subscribe to al-Ard's views, it regarded with anxiety the ban on political activities of any group. Both *al-Ittihad* and *al-Jadid* vigorously demanded the cancellation of the order banning al-Ard and the release of those group leaders who had been held for questioning.²⁵

The last act in the political activity of al-Ard was unfolded before the 1965 parliamentary elections, when some leading members presented a slate of candidates for the Knesset. This was a retreat from the group's earlier attitude, according to which any kind of participation in elections was tantamount to granting recognition to the State of Israel. Now the candidates wanted to be elected to the Knesset and thus obtain parliamentary immunity for their political activity, in addition to the prestige attached to the status of an M.K. However, the Central Elections Commission refused to register their slate, called the Arab Socialist List (September, 1965), arguing that this was an illegal association, denying the very existence of the State of Israel.²⁶ The representatives of the Arab Socialist List appealed to the Supreme Court, which upheld the decision of the Central Elections Commission. A majority of the justices agreed with the reasoning offered by the Attorney General that al-Ard, which had initiated the presentation of the Arab Socialist List for parliamentary

elections, was a group liable to sabotage the state by attempting to exploit any loophole in the law for the realization of its political aims.²⁷ The justices agreed with the findings of the chairman of the Central Elections Commission that the list denied the existence of the state and wanted to cause its destruction. Mr. Agranat, president of the court, added that he did not deny the right of any of the candidates on the list to be elected individually, or as candidates on other slates. However, he pointed out, the present system of election was by slates, that is, by groups each having a common political objective; hence a list defined by the chairman of the Central Elections Commission as subversive *a priori* loses its right to share in the process of crystallizing the wishes of the people and therefore cannot participate in the elections. The president of the court also added that he was aware of democratic principles and the accepted processes for a change of regime, but he quoted in this context a ruling by Mr. Justice Witkon,²⁸ that no free regime would grant assistance and recognition to a movement undermining its own existence.²⁹

As already stated, the activity of al-Ard as an entity actually ended with the order of the Minister of Defense outlawing it and the district court winding up its assets. Any attempt of the group to act as a body would undoubtedly have incurred legal proceedings. As a result, only part of the group's leaders entered their names as candidates on the Arab Socialist List for the sixth Knesset in 1965. Since their slate was not approved, the former al-Ard members continued their political activity as individuals. For instance, Sabri Jiryis participated in debates and made speeches; he also published a book on *The Arabs in Israel* (1966), the first of its kind in Hebrew written by an Israeli Arab. The book was translated into Arabic by the Jordanian bureau of the League of Arab States and issued in a mimeographed form. Other members of the group tried to exploit for political purposes the Arab sports clubs in the Little Triangle and other institutions which had occasionally served previously for Arab nationalist propaganda.³⁰ Thus Salih Baransi, from Taiyyba, attempted to establish a sports and cultural club there and to register it as an association, according to Ottoman law. Although Baransi prudently refrained from including his name among those sponsoring the registration of the Taiyyba sports club as an association, the Israeli authorities maintained that he was behind the move; and also that all the seven members proposed for the management of the projected association were known as supporters of al-Ard (they had all signed their names as supporting the Arab Socialist List of candidates for the Knesset in 1965). Nonetheless, in the request for registration of the club as an association, its aims were described as cultural and educational (May 15, 1966). Since the District Commissioner delayed his reply, the lawyer who had submitted the club's request advised opening the club *de facto*. The military administration reacted with characteristic vigor. The club managers, together with Salih Baransi, were confined to their homes, and the activities of the club practically ceased—presumably acting on the assumption that the club could be used as a center for incitement.³¹ In this manner, the Israeli authori-

ties continue to control any sign of renewed political association inspired by al-Ard members or supporters. Several of these Arabs were detained for a few days when war broke out in the Middle East, in June, 1967. Later, in December 1967, three were charged with organizing a terrorist cell connected with al-Fath; at the end of January, 1968, a court found them guilty and imposed stiff prison sentences on them.

It is not difficult to define and analyze the aims of al-Ard. Its name indicates its preoccupation, and in an interview with the Tel Aviv weekly *Etgar*,³² Mansur Qardosh maintained that the group's main struggle was against the expropriation of Arab land. However, even Qardosh could not mention more than one instance in which the group had worked in this direction. In fact, it would be more correct to describe the group's aims as extremely nationalistic ones. They are revealed in its early publications, its articles of association, memoranda, and the speeches of its leaders at various political gatherings. The third article of its articles of association is particularly revealing and important for appraisal of its aims. This is the very article criticized by the Supreme Court, and on account of which it rejected the group's application to register as an association in accordance with Ottoman law. Because of its relevance, it merits translation in full:

Article 3. The Association will act to achieve the following aims or a part thereof:

1. Raising the educational, scientific, health, economic, and political level of its members.
2. Bringing complete equality and social justice among all strata of the people in Israel.
3. Finding a just solution for the Palestinian problem, through its consideration as an indivisible unit—in accordance with the wish of the Palestinian Arab people; a solution which meets its interests and desires, restores to it its political existence, ensures its full legal rights, and regards it as the first possessor of the right to decide its own fate by itself, within the framework of the supreme wishes of the Arab nation.
4. Supporting the movement of liberation, unity, and socialism in the Arab world, in all lawful ways, while considering this movement as the deciding power in the Arab world—a factor which should make Israel regard it in a positive manner.
5. Acting to make peace prevail in the world in general, and in the Middle East in particular.
6. Supporting all movements of progress everywhere in the world, opposing imperialism, and assisting all peoples desirous of freeing themselves from it.

Briefly, the essential aim of al-Ard is to struggle for Palestinian Arab nationalism, ignoring the will of the Jewish majority in Israel as well as the state's authorities. This echo of 'Abd al-Nasir's formulation of Arab nationalism³³ is reformulated with admirable frankness in various of its publications. In the group's first issue of its weekly, for instance, al-Ard

calls for the recognition of the Arab national movement as the decisive force in the Middle East. Perhaps this voice only a sense of national pride, serving as a psychological outlet for frustrated Arab youths, who have failed on the material level. However, its effect is to identify al-Ard fully with the Arab national movement outside Israel, on one hand; and, on the other, uncompromisingly to object to all the policies of the Israeli Government, and in particular to those concerning the Arab minority. Al-Ard's criticism of the Israeli Government is characterized by one-sidedness (stressing the negative side and completely ignoring all government assistance to the Arab minority), aggressiveness (often emotionally loaded), and sincerity (frank expression of admiration for 'Abd al-Nasir and incitement of the Israeli Arabs). Such an attitude may be considered as extreme for, in considering the solution of the area's problems, it wholly ignores the interests of the Jewish majority in the State of Israel and sees Palestine solely as a part of the united Arab nation.

Its uncompromising stand in all political matters was a potentially significant source of power for al-Ard; it ultimately induced the authorities to ban it and restrict the political activities of its erstwhile leaders. In order to appreciate more clearly the attitudes of this group, it is worth perusing excerpts from a characteristic talk by one of its noteworthy spokesmen, the ex-teacher Salih Baransi. He represented al-Ard in a symposium organized by the Tel Aviv English monthly *New Outlook*, early in 1963. The subject under discussion was "New Paths to peace between Israel and the Arabs." After attacking the Israeli Government and what he considered as its identification with Western imperialism, Salih Baransi scathingly described his conception of official Israeli policy towards the Arab population in Israel, saying:

Last but not least, there is the policy of the Israeli Government towards the Arabs in Israel. The humiliating military rule, sowing corruption and dissension between the Arabs, favouring the most reactionary elements, spying on everybody, maintaining economic and political pressure on those whose behavior the military governor does not like . . .³⁴ and, in short, administering, although unofficially, all Arab affairs: economic, political, labor, etc., in a military fashion.

The confiscation of land. . . . About 65 per cent³⁵ of the land of the Arabs in Israel has been confiscated in the name of the law. A new kind of refugee has thus been created . . . inside Israel.

The miserable level attained by education as a result of bad administration, the interference of security agents, military personnel and party members . . . who are really the real administrators from behind the scenes; the vague curriculum, the prohibition of Arab youth to organize itself, to publish a newspaper of its own; shutting the doors of governmental and public offices in the faces of the Arab intellectuals . . . all these came from the same source.

The Arabs began to see in them a sign proving the impossibility of two nations living in peace here. They were also taken to mean, or to show, the intention of the Israeli Government to get rid of the Arab community here and so to add a new large number of homeless distressed Arabs.³⁶

It is difficult to ascertain the exact numerical sphere of influence of al-Ard. When they left the Arab Popular Front, they were convinced of the difficulty of recruiting mass support in the way the Popular Front had tried and briefly succeeded in doing. They preferred to establish a small, but efficient, organization, to prepare the ground by written and oral propaganda. The founders distributed among themselves the 20 founders' shares of al-Ard Company Ltd., which together commanded 76 per cent of the votes; while they distributed in other quarters 400 ordinary shares, which together commanded 24 per cent of the votes only. The owners of the founders' shares actually became the group's secretaries of the nuclei in various regions. The list of the owners of the ordinary shares—roughly equivalent to the group's members and supporters—was kept by these secretaries and its secrecy jealously guarded (to prevent its falling into the hands of the Israeli police or security service).

As far as is ascertainable, al-Ard was a small elitist group, particularly concerned with recruiting Arab intellectuals. During most of its existence, the number of its members does not appear to have been much more than a score.³⁷ Even among these, there were few remarkable personalities. In spite of incomplete information, it is possible to describe briefly the main participants; the data refer to the time when the group broke up, in 1964.

1. Mansur Qardosh, 43 years old, a Greek Orthodox who owns a coffeehouse in Nazareth.³⁸ He does not speak Hebrew. He is the oldest member of the group and was apparently considered by most of the members as its leader and as the planner of the group's lines of action.³⁹

2. Habib Nawfal Qahwaji, 33 years old, a Maronite, born in the village Fassuta in Galilee. He was a teacher at the Greek Orthodox school in Haifa, then taught in an elementary school, from which he was dismissed. He has some literary talent and often wrote poetry.

3. Mahmud Suruji, 30 years old, a wholesale shopkeeper from Acre.

4. Sulayman 'Awda, a Nazareth merchant.

5. Salih Baransi, 36 years old, is the son of a farmer. He is a Muslim and was born in Taiyyba. Baransi was a teacher, but was dismissed at the end of 1961 and has apparently been unemployed for a number of years. He was considered an orator and the main spokesman of the group (see *New Outlook* symposium above).⁴⁰

6. Sabri Jiryis, 25 years old, a Greek Catholic from Fassuta, who graduated from an Israeli high school, and later from the Hebrew University's Faculty of Law, becoming a lawyer himself. He was active in representing the group, chiefly in its lengthy litigation.⁴¹

7. Elyas Mu'ammar, 32 years old, from Nazareth, a graduate of the Hebrew University's Faculty of Medicine.

8. Muhammad 'Abd al-Rahman 'Isa, a Muslim from the village of al-Makr, in western Galilee, also a university graduate.⁴²

Most of the group's members were young, in their 30's, with Mansur

Qardosh the eldest and Sabri Jiryis the youngest. They carried on their meetings and activities in the main centers of Arab population in Israel: the Little Triangle, Upper Galilee, and the Acre-Haifa area. They were all middle-class intellectuals, and the majority were teachers or members of other liberal professions.

The number of overt supporters reached more than a few hundred, to judge from the participation in the various public meetings organized by al-Ard. However, this figure may not be taken as the full extent of its support among the Arabs in Israel. It is necessary to take into account the increase of al-Ard Company's capital, first, from I£ 500 to I£ 20,000 and, later (March 1963) to I£ 100,000. This expansion, due to the shares sale which financed the activity of al-Ard is proof that the group enlisted considerable sympathy and support among the Arabs in Israel. One gathers that the population, especially the young people, were impressed. Al-Ard offered no crystallized political ideology, except for a few ideas inspired by 'Abd al-Nasir's version of nationalism and socialism combined. This represented the minimum program upon which the leaders of al-Ard could unanimously agree. However, the simplicity of the group's ideology, its familiarity (due to Cairo's previous broadcasts), and its sentimentalism appealed to a section of the Arabs in Israel. This standing was a significant achievement, in view of the group's size and political inexperience; true enough, the opponents of al-Ard unwittingly aided its renown.⁴³

There were periods of cooperation between al-Ard and MAQI, even after their separation and the breaking up of the Popular Front by al-Ard. The relationship between the two political groups tended to be one of love-hate, deriving, at least in part, from identity of aims regarding defense of the Arab minority in Israel. MAQI and al-Ard cooperated several times, for example in the protest meetings during 1961 against what they considered as the discrimination against Israeli Arabs. Mutual recriminations finally put an end to the quasi-harmonious relationship. The rifts became deeper, due to ideological differences: al-Ard as a nationalist movement could not but oppose the universal principles of Communism. However, of even more significance was the rivalry between the two for the support of the Arabs. The implications of the competition between al-Ard and MAQI were more far-reaching than those of its conflicts with other groups or parties. As may be recalled, in the very first issue of its weekly, al-Ard called on the Israeli Arabs to boycott the 1959 parliamentary elections. Had this call been successful, MAQI would have lost considerable electoral support. MAQI seemed to have feared the increase of al-Ard's influence on the Arabs; it therefore repeatedly called on it to reunite with MAQI. Upon the failure of these appeals, MAQI turned to attacking al-Ard, and the latter responded in kind. Nevertheless, MAQI resisted any governmental attempt to suppress al-Ard.⁴⁴ Its lone protest in this matter was perhaps prompted not only by principle but by possible apprehension of a similar fate some day.

NOTES

1. MAQI stands for "Israel Communist Party."
2. *Qol ha'am*, July 7, 1958. Cf. Schiff in *ha-Ares*, Sept. 19, 1958.
3. The Nazareth branch of al-Ard was officially inaugurated on Aug. 3, 1958. (See *Qol ha'am*, Aug. 3, 1958.)
4. Editorial in *al-Ittihad*, Mar. 6, 1959.
5. *Ha-Ares*, Jan. 7 and Oct. 11, 1959.
6. Schwarz, *Arabs in Israel*, 58.
7. *Ha-Ares*, July 8, 1959.
8. *Ha'Aravim be-Yisra'el* (1966), esp. 117 ff. On the author cf. his interview with Mansour, *ha-Ares*, Dec. 12, 1965.
9. *Ha-Ares*, July 14, 1959. However, it seems that this group only applied for a permit officially in Aug. 1959.
10. Ed. Eytan, in *Yedi'ot Aharonot*, July 31, 1966.
11. According to Mansour, in *ha-Ares*, Sept. 9, 1964. In a conversation, Mansour told me that he had been mixed up in the publication of this weekly, but soon left the group when he became aware of its extremist nature.
12. *Ha-Ares*, Nov. 2, 1960.
13. *Ibid.* Jan. 31, 1960. According to *ibid.* Jan. 14, 1963, Salih Baransi was sentenced to a short term in jail.
14. *Ner*, Feb.-Apr. 1960, 16-17.
15. *Davar*, Jan. 15, 1961.
16. High Court of Justice, 241/60, *Qardosh v. the Registrar of Companies*.
17. *Ibid.*, 16/61, *the Registrar of Companies v. Qardosh*.
18. *Ha-Ares*, Mar. 21, 1963. At the time, U.S. \$1. was equivalent to 1£ 3.
19. High Court of Justice, 39/64, *al-Ard Co. Ltd. v. the Haifa District Commissioner*.
20. The memo aroused interest in the Arab press outside Israel, e.g. in Jordan: *al-Jihad*, July 16, 1964; *al-Manar*, July 17, 1964; *al-Difa'*, July 19, 1964. Acc. to the Jordanian daily *Filastin*, Dec. 31, 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization distributed copies of this memo.
21. *Davar*, Aug. 3, 1964.
22. High Court of Justice, 253/64, *Jiryis v. the Haifa District Commissioner*.
23. Detailed report also in *ha-Ares*, Nov. 12, 1964.
24. *Yalqut ha-pirsumim* (Israel's official record of orders, etc.), no. 1134, Nov. 23, 1964 & *Davar*, Nov. 27, 1964.
25. *Al-Jadid*, Nov. 1964; *al-Ittihad*, Nov. 27 & Dec. 1, 1964, and cf. *ibid.* June 4, 1965.
26. *Ha-Ares*, Sept. 30, 1965.
27. *Davar*, Oct. 10, 1965; *ha-Ares*, Oct. 13, 1965.
28. Given regarding al-Ard's application for registration as an association.
29. Elections appeal 1/65, *Y. Yardor v. the chairman of the Central Elections Commission*.
30. *Al-Ittihad*, Sept. 29, 1964.
31. *Ibid.* Sept. 23, 1966; Y. Avi'am in *Ma'ariv*, Sept. 25, 1966; M. Stein, in a letter to the editor, *ibid.* Oct. 18, 1966; Mirqin, in *ha-Ares*, Oct. 30, 1966; *ha'Olam ha-zeh*, March 22, 1967.
32. March 3, 1963. This is the organ of a small group, mostly Jews, named "The Semitic Action"; it advocates the complete integration of Jews and Arabs in the Middle East.
33. Even verbatim, in some instances.
34. This, and subsequent . . . —in the original.
35. An exaggeration.
36. *New Outlook*, Mar.-Apr. 1963, 66-67.
37. See *ha-Ares*, Aug. 20, 1964. According to *Qol ha'am*, July 28, 1964, al-Ard numbered some tens of members only.
38. About him and his family, see Alyagon in *Ma'ariv*, June 17, 1966.

39. Cf. his article "for a Palestinian Arab State," *New Outlook*, May 1966, 43-44.
40. See about him G. Sharoni, in *Ma'ariv*, Nov. 11, 1966.
41. In addition to his book, *Ha-'Aravim be-Yisra'el*, see his interview with Mansour in *ha-Ares*, Dec. 12, 1965.
42. About others, see *ibid.*, July 22, 1966, suppl., esp. p. 6.
43. Starting with the statement by the Prime Minister's adviser for Arab affairs, Divon, at a news conference, saying that he saw serious danger in this group's activities (early 1960) (cf. *Davar*, Feb. 1, 1960).
44. For example, *Qol ha'am*, July 28, 1964.