

The Arabs in Israel

Sabri Jiryis

Foreword by Noam Chomsky

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The author is an Israeli Arab scholar and lawyer who lived in Haifa for many years under Israeli rule. After more than a year of detention and house arrest, he reached Beirut, where he now resides. Basing himself on extensive study of Hebrew and Arabic documents and detailed examination of official records and of the Israeli press during the past quarter century, Jiryis for the first time presents here an authoritative picture of the curtailment of Arab rights.

Monthly Review Press

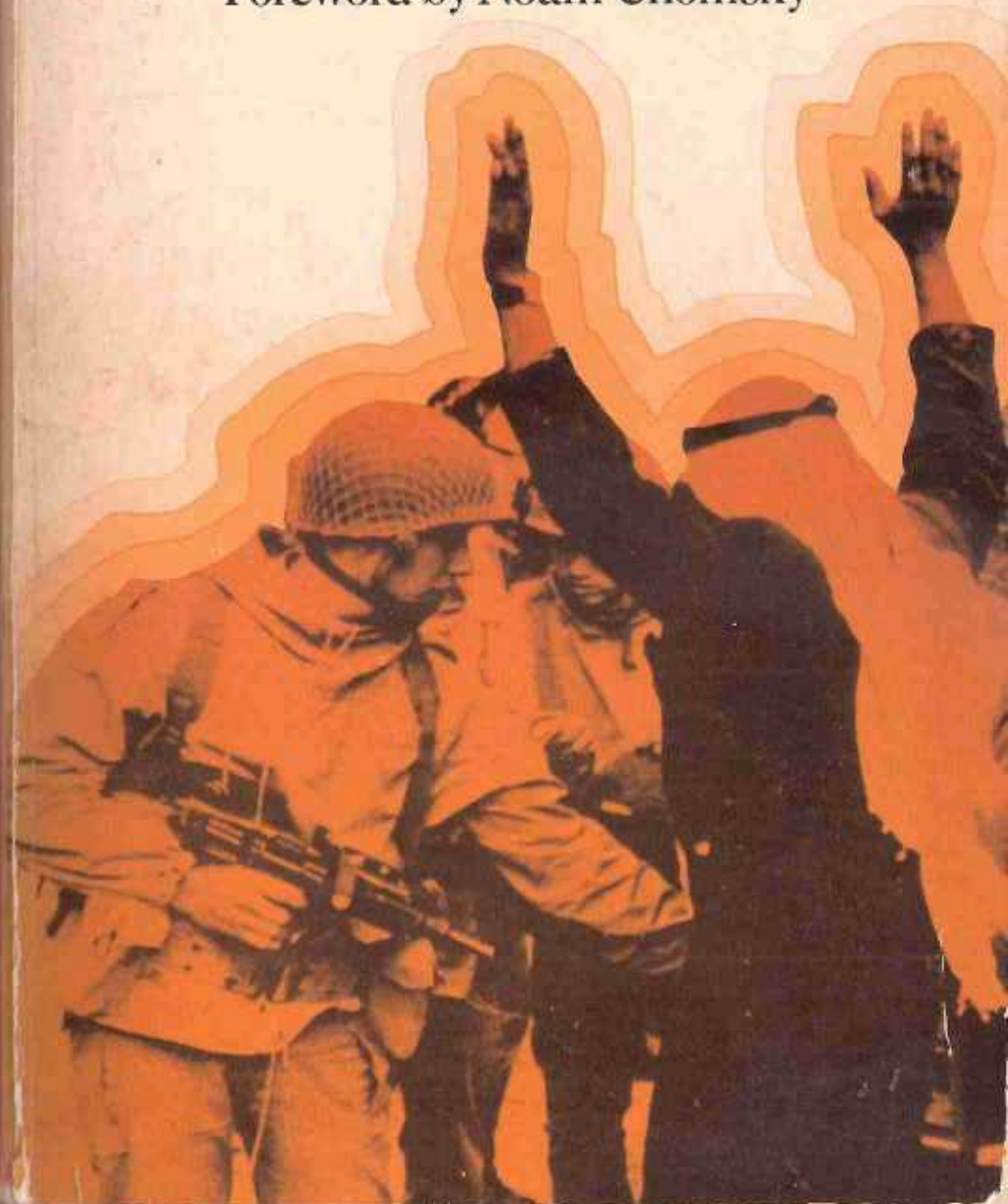
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\$5.95/£3.50 PB-406  MODERN READER

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On October 29, 1956, on the eve of the British, French, and Israeli attack on Egypt, Israeli forces perpetrated a massacre in the Arab village of Kfar Kassim, near Petah Tikvah in the Triangle, killing forty-nine Arabs. The cause of this slaughter was the breaking of a curfew by the victims, who were unaware that it had been imposed on their own and neighboring villages. The massacre was carried out by the Frontier Guard, which had been formed in the early 1950s to protect Israel's borders. A description of the events at Kfar Kassim follows, as recorded by the Israeli military court:

On the eve of the Sinai War . . . a battalion attached to the Central Area Command was ordered to prepare itself to defend a section of the Israeli-Jordanian frontier. [With this end in view] . . . a unit of the Frontier Guard was attached to the said battalion and the commander of this Frontier Guard unit, Major Shmuel Melinki, was placed under the orders of the battalion commander, Brigadier Yshishkar Shadmi. In the morning of 29 October 1956, the Commander of the Central Area, Major General Zvi Tsur informed Brigadier Shadmi and the other battalion commanders, of the policy it had been decided to adopt toward the Arab population.

The area commander went on to emphasize to the battalion commanders that the safeguarding of the operation in the south [the Suez campaign] required that the area coterminous with Jordan be kept absolutely quiet.

. . . Brigadier Shadmi requested that he be empowered to impose a night curfew in the villages of the minorities in the area under his command in order to: a) facilitate the movements of his forces, and b) prevent the population being exposed to injury by the reserve troops. These arguments convinced the area commander, who empowered Brigadier Shadmi to impose a curfew. . . .

On the same day Brigadier Shadmi summoned Major Melinki to his headquarters, informed him of the duties of the unit under his command, and gave him instructions about the execution of these duties. One of the duties of this Frontier Guard unit was to impose the curfew . . . in the villages of Kfar Kassim, Kfar Barra, Jaljulya, Tira, Tayba, Qalansuwa, Bir al Sikka, and Ibtin during the night. The two commanders agreed that the curfew should be enforced between 5 P.M. and 6 A.M.

The battalion commander [Shadmi] also told the unit commander [Melinki] that the curfew must be extremely strict and that strong measures must be taken to enforce it. It would not be enough to arrest those who broke it—they must be shot. In explanation he said, "A dead man [or according to other evidence "a few dead men"] is better than the complications of detention."

When Melinki asked what was to happen to a man returning from his work outside the village, without knowing about the curfew, who might well meet the Frontier Guard units at the entrance to the village, Shadmi replied: "I don't want any sentimentality" and "That's just too bad for him."

Shadmi gave his orders to Melinki verbally, while they were alone, and Melinki wrote the following words in his diary during the interview: "Curfew imposed from evening till morning (1700-0600). Strict policy."⁶

Similarly, the order drafted by Melinki and handed to the reserve forces attached to his group, shortly before the curfew was imposed, contained the following words under the heading "Method": "No inhabitant shall be allowed to leave his home during the curfew. Anyone leaving his home shall be shot; there shall be no arrests."⁷

Armed with these instructions, Major Melinki returned to his headquarters, where with the help of his officers, he prepared a series of orders for his forces. During this meeting,

he informed the assembled officers that the war had begun, that their units were now under the command of the Israeli Defense Army, and that their task was to impose the curfew in the minority villages from 1700 to 0600, after informing the mukhtars to this effect at 16.30. With regard to the observation of the curfew, Melinki emphasised that it was forbidden to harm inhabitants who stayed in their homes, but that anyone found outside his home [or, according to other witnesses, anyone leaving his home, or anyone breaking the curfew] should be shot dead. He added that there were to be no arrests, and that if a number of people were killed in the night [according to other witnesses: it was desirable that a number of people be killed as] this would facilitate the imposition of the curfew during succeeding nights.

... While he was outlining this series of orders, Major Melinki allowed the officers to ask him questions. Lieutenant Frankenthal asked him, "What do we do with the dead?" [or, according to other witnesses "with the wounded?"]. Melinki replied, "Take no notice of them" [or, according to other evidence, "There will not be any wounded."]. Arie Menches, a section leader, then asked, "What about women and children?" to which Melinki replied, "No sentimentality" [according to another witness, "They are to be treated like anyone else; the curfew covers them too."]. Menches then asked a second question: "What about people returning from their work?" Here Alexandroni tried to intervene but Melinki silenced him and answered: "They are to be treated like anyone else" [according to another witness, he added, "It will be just too bad for them, as the commander said."].⁸

In the minutes of the meeting, which were taken down and signed by Melinki a short time after he signed the orders, the following appears: "As from today, at 1700 hours, curfew shall be imposed in the minority villages until 0600 hours, and all who disobey this order will be shot dead."⁹

After this psychological preparation, and the instructions given to the policemen-soldiers to "shoot to kill all who broke the curfew," the unit went out to the village of Kfar

Kassim to start its work. There Lieutenant Gabriel Dahan divided his unit into sections of three or four men each (including their leader) armed with submachine guns, rifles, and automatic rifles, and posted each section in a place overlooking one of the quarters of the village, at the entrance to the village, and at its end. He made the leaders of each section responsible for the enforcement of the curfew and authorized them to shoot according to his previous instructions, which he repeated.

On the same day at 16.30 hours, a Frontier Guard sergeant informed the mukhtar of the village that a curfew was to be imposed from 5 P.M. to 6 A.M. the following morning and warned him that it would be strictly enforced and would involve danger of death, telling him to inform the village. The mukhtar, Wadi Ahmad Sarsur, informed the sergeant that "there were four hundred villagers who worked outside the village, some of them in the neighborhood or in nearby places, while the remainder were in more distant places, like Petah Tikvah, Lydda, Jaffa and elsewhere, so that he could not inform them all of the curfew in time. After an argument the sergeant promised the mukhtar that he would let all men returning from work pass on his own responsibility and that of the government. The mukhtar, assisted by his relations, announced the imposition of the curfew in the center and to the north and the south of the village, saying that everyone inside the village must enter his home before 5 P.M."¹⁰

In other words, the curfew, of which the mukhtar was informed at 4:30 P.M., came into force half an hour later when dozens of the villagers were in different places of work, so that they could not possibly know of the curfew. And a bitter fate awaited them when they returned to the village. In the first hour of the curfew, between 5 and 6 P.M., the men of the Israeli Frontier Guard killed forty-seven Arab citizens in Kfar Kassim. The killing was carried out in cold blood and for no reason. Of the forty-seven, forty-three were killed at the western entrance to the village, one in the center, and three to the north; several other villagers were wounded.¹¹

The forty-three killed at the western entrance included

seven boys and girls and nine women of all ages—one sixty-six years old. Most of them were inhabitants of Kfar Kassim, returning from their work outside the village, nearly all by the main road, a few on foot, the majority on bicycles or in mule carts or lorries. In most cases the villagers were met by sections of the Frontier Guard who ordered the passengers to get down from their transport. When it was clear that they were residents of Kfar Kassim returning from their work, the order to fire was given, and shots were immediately fired at short range from automatic weapons and rifles, "and of every group of returning workers, some were killed and others wounded; very few succeeded in escaping unhurt. The proportion of those killed increased, until, of the last group, which consisted of fourteen women, a boy and four men, all were killed except one girl, who was seriously wounded."

The killing might have gone on like this but Dahan who had personally taken part in the killing and who had seen what was going on as he went round the village in his jeep, informed the command several times over the radio of the number killed. Opinions differ as to the figure he gave in his reports, but all agree that in his first report he said "one less" [one killed], and in the next two reports "fifteen less" and "many less; it is difficult to count them." The last two reports, which followed each other in quick succession, were . . . passed on to Melinki who was at Jal-julya. When he was informed that there were "fifteen less" in Kfar Kassim, Melinki gave orders, which he was unable to transmit to Dahan before the report of "many less" arrived, for the firing to stop and for more moderate procedures to be adopted in the whole area. . . . This order finally ended the bloodshed at Kfar Kassim.¹²

This is an outline of the principal events in Kfar Kassim, but the details are no less important as reported in the files of the Israeli military court:

The first to be shot at the western entrance to the village were four quarrymen returning on bicycles from the places where they worked near Petah Tikva and Ras al Ayin. A short time after the curfew began these four workmen came round the bend in the

road pushing their bicycles. When they had gone some ten to fifteen meters . . . they were shot from behind at close range or from the left. Two of the four were killed outright. The third was wounded in the thigh and the forearm, while the fourth, Abdullah Samir Badir, escaped by throwing himself to the ground. The bicycle of the wounded man fell on him and covered his body, and he managed to lie motionless throughout the bloody incidents that took place around him. Eventually he crawled into an olive grove and lay under an olive tree until morning. Abdullah was shot at again when he rolled from the road to the sidewalk, whereupon he sighed and pretended to be dead. After the two subsequent massacres, which took place beside him, he hid himself among a flock of sheep, whose shepherd had been killed, and escaped into the village with the flock.

A short time after the above incident, a two-wheeled cart drawn by a mule arrived at the bend. Sitting in it were Ismail Mahmud Badir . . . and his little daughter, aged eight, who were coming back from Petah Tikva in the cart, with three people, one of whom came from Kfar Barra, walking beside or behind the cart, carrying vegetables. One of these was a boy of fourteen, Muhammad Abdul Rahim Issa. At this moment Dahan arrived at the bend in the jeep with the mobile squad . . . on a tour of inspection. Dahan ordered his men to get out of the jeep. . . . He then told Ismail to get out of the cart and stand in a row with the other two men [who had been walking beside the cart] at the side of the road. Dahan then ordered the boy Muhammad to get into the cart, and sent him off to the village with the weeping girl. Dahan ordered the three men to be shot, shooting them with the Auzi he was carrying. The three men fell under the rain of bullets and the firing continued after they had fallen. Two of them . . . were killed, while Ismail was seriously wounded, with several bullets in his hips and thigh—he survived only because the Frontier Guards believed him dead.

A short time after this killing a shepherd and his twelve-year-old son came back from the pasture with their flock. They approached the bend . . . the shepherd throwing stones at sheep that had strayed to turn them back onto the road. Two or three soldiers, standing by the bend, opened fire at close range on the shepherd and his son and killed them. . . .¹³

A man in a lorry was killed, then a four-wheeled cart carrying two men arrived at the bend. Near the bend, a soldier stopped the

cart, ordered the two men to get down and to stand beside it in the road. . . . Immediately after the arrival of this cart, several groups of workers started arriving, riding bicycles with lighted lamps. The soldier ordered them all to lay their bicycles beside the cart and stand in a row with the two men. . . . There were thirteen men in this row, and when one of them . . . tried to stand at the end of the row, the soldier shouted at him: "Dog, stand in the middle of the row." He thereupon moved to the middle.

When no more bicycle lamps were visible on the horizon, the same soldier asked the men standing in the row where they came from. They all answered that they were from Kfar Kassim, whereupon the soldier took a step backwards and shouted to the soldiers lying opposite the row: "Mow them down." All the men in the row fell under the hail of bullets that followed, except for [one] who escaped by jumping over the wall. The soldiers continued firing at any of the fallen men who showed any signs of life. When it was clear that they were all dead, or almost so, the soldiers cleared the road of the bodies, piling them on the side of the road. Of these thirteen men, six were killed, while four were seriously injured. . . .¹⁴

A short time after the killing of the cyclists, a lorry with its lights on approached the bend. Ten to fifteen meters before the bend it was stopped by a soldier, who ordered the driver and passengers [eighteen persons] to get out and stand in a single group to the left of the road, in front of the vehicle. The soldier then asked them where they came from, and when they said they were from Kfar Kassim, he ordered two of his men, who were lying beside the road between this group of workers and the bend, to open fire. They killed ten of the nineteen. . . .

[A survivor] Raja [Hamdan Daud] said in his evidence that at five o'clock, his little son Riyadh came with the boy Jamal and told him that there was a curfew in the village and that his mother had said that he must hurry home. . . . Nineteen people got into the lorry including the driver . . . and set out for the village. The people in this lorry, unlike most of the other people returning to the village, knew of the curfew, but they did not see that this prevented them from returning to the village. On the contrary . . . they tried to get back to their homes as soon as possible because of the curfew. Indeed, it was Raja who persuaded the driver, who had no license to carry passengers, to take them because he thought that it would be safer to go by lorry

rather than on foot during the curfew. After the lorry had been stopped, and Raja and his companions had got out, his little son shouted: "Father, take me down." This was why Raja went back and took his son down from the back of the lorry, and rejoined the group on the road.

Raja held out his identity card to the soldier and was about to ask him why they had been detained. But at that moment the soldier gave the order to fire, and a hail of bullets mowed down the workmen. When Raja jumped over the wall, the Bren gun was fired at the wall, and this is perhaps how some of the workmen escaped. But Raja's son, Riyadh, aged eight, and his friend Jamal, aged eleven, were among those killed.¹⁵

Two more men in a lorry were killed, and then a third lorry arrived, carrying four men and fourteen women, aged twelve to sixty-six years, on their way to Kfar Kassim. The lorry went on past the bend without stopping, whereupon a soldier who was still at the site of the previous incident ran behind it shouting "Stop!" The lorry had already passed the bend and was making for the school road; the soldier crossed the space between the two roads and again shouted "Stop! Stop!" At the same time he called to two or three other soldiers who were standing in the space between the two roads to follow him, which they did.

The lorry stopped in the road that passes near the school, whereupon the first soldier ordered the driver and the passengers to get out. The driver hooked the steps on to the back of the lorry, and said to the women: "Get out, sisters, and have your identity cards ready." The women had already seen the dead bodies of people from their village as the lorry turned the bend, and started imploring the soldier in command to let them stay in the bus. But he took no notice of the identity cards or of the women's entreaties, and insisted on their getting out. As soon as the fourteen women and four men had got down from the lorry he ordered the other soldiers, who had by then joined him, to fire. They obeyed and continued firing until seventeen of the total of eighteen persons were killed. The sole survivor was a girl of fourteen, Hannah Suleiman Amer, who was seriously wounded in the head and leg and appeared to be dead. . . .

Two of the girls who were killed were twelve years old, and two others fourteen.¹⁶

The government took great pains to remove all traces of

the crime in Kfar Kassim and to hide the truth from the Jewish population, despite the fact that certain circles spread news of the massacre throughout the Arab sectors, apparently to "encourage" the Arabs to leave. A three-member committee headed by Benjamin Zohar, a district court judge in Haifa, was appointed to investigate the incident. The two other members, in whom the authorities had great confidence, were Abba Hoshi, mayor of Haifa and head of the Arab department in the ruling Mapai party, and Aharon Hotar Yshay, who had once been a lawyer for the Haganah. When the committee had concluded its investigation, some ten days after the massacre, Prime Minister Ben-Gurion issued a brief press release in which he referred to the fact that some people in the Triangle had been "injured" by the Frontier Guards and stated the government's determination to bring the matter before the courts and to pay compensation.

This did not stop rumors about the extent of the crime from spreading. Tawfiq Tubi made his way to Kfar Kassim as soon as news of the crime reached him in order to see for himself what had happened. On his return he gave his information to Uri Avneri, the editor of the periodical *Haolam Hazei*, which devoted a special issue to it. The story was taken up by the press, there was a great uproar, and a wide range of Jewish groups expressed concern. The poet Nathan Alterman, a close friend of Ben-Gurion's, was moved to publish a poem censuring the deed and calling for a trial of all those responsible, with detailed disclosures of what had taken place.¹⁷ A special session of the Knesset was held, lasting twelve minutes, during which Ben-Gurion spoke of the "shocking incident in the villages of the Triangle," and cited his appointment of the fact-finding committee as soon as he had heard of the event—three days after it occurred. He added that the government had paid compensation ranging between one thousand and £5000 to the families of the dead, but clearly that "no sum of money could compensate for the loss of human life."¹⁸ At the end of the session, all members present stood in mourning for the dead.

Following the recommendations of the committee, eleven

officers and soldiers of the Frontier Guard were brought to trial for "carrying out illegal orders."

The trial was lengthy; judgment was finally given on 16 October 1958, two years after the incident.

The court found Major Melinki and Lieutenant Dahan guilty of killing forty-three citizens and sentenced the former to seventeen years imprisonment and the latter to fifteen years. The third accused, Sergeant Shalom Ofer, who perpetrated most of these terrible killings, was found guilty, with Dahan, of killing forty-one citizens, and was sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment. The accused Private Makhoul Hreish and Private Eliahu Abraham were found guilty of killing twenty-two citizens, while Corporal Gabriel Olial, Private Albert Fahimi, and Private Edmond Nahmani were found guilty of killing seventeen citizens. All these five were sentenced to eight years imprisonment and deprived of their ranks. The remaining three accused, including two young Druze volunteers, were acquitted.

These light sentences (premeditated murder incurs a sentence of life imprisonment or twenty years) astounded many Jews as well as Arabs and gave rise to deep fears that similar incidents might occur in the future. On the other hand, there were many in Israel who thought that the trial of the killers, and even their arrest, seemed a grave injustice. They argued that these men were performing their duty and were therefore in no way responsible for their deeds. An extensive campaign for the release of the killers was launched as soon as it was known that they would be brought to trial. This was intensified after the sentencing. The Israeli press was clearly involved in this campaign.

With two or three exceptions, the press has been party to a conspiracy of silence, throwing a veil over the incident. It wrote of condemned men instead of killers; instead of a killing or a crime in Kfar Kassim it wrote of a "misfortune" and a "mistake" and a "regrettable incident." When it mentioned the victims of the calamity, it was difficult to tell whom it meant, the dead or the killers. When the sentences were handed down, a cowardly campaign against the judge was begun. . . .¹⁹

What was remarkable about the official Israeli attitude was that various authorities made efforts to lighten the killers' sentences. An appeal was brought before the Supreme Military Court, which rendered a judgment that the sentences were harsh and should be reduced. Thus Melinki's sentence was reduced to fourteen years, Dahan's to ten years, and Ofer's to nine years. The chief of staff then proposed to reduce Melinki's sentence to ten years, Dahan and Ofer's to eight years, and the rest of the killers' to four years each. The president of the state followed suit; he granted a "partial pardon" to Melinki and Dahan and reduced their sentences to five years each.²⁰ Finally it was the turn of the "Committee for the Release of Prisoners," which ordered the remission of a third of the prison sentences of all those convicted. Thus, the last man was released at the beginning of 1960—about three and a half years after the massacre. They reportedly did not spend the time in prison but were held in a sanatorium in Jerusalem.

Moreover, in September 1960 the municipality of Ramle engaged Gabriel Dahan, convicted of killing forty-three Arabs in one hour, as officer for Arab affairs. Melinki, ten years after the event, felt no embarrassment about boasting of his services to Israel in the field of security, both before and after the massacre.²¹

But the Kfar Kassim affair would not go away. Particular concern was aroused by the part played by Brigadier Yshishkar Shadmi, the man under whose command Melinki's unit had operated. Shadmi was not originally brought to trial and the part he played became known only after the military court had rendered its judgment. During the trial, public indignation was aroused by certain comments Brigadier Shadmi had made during his briefing concerning the imposition of the curfew, particularly his replies to the officer who asked what was to happen to people returning from work: "I don't want any sentimentality" and "Allah have mercy on them." In its judgment, the military court (presided over by Dr. Benjamin Halevy, president of the district court in Jerusalem, who was on loan to the army for the trial) stated indispu-

tably that Shadmi was responsible to a greater degree than any of the others.²² This put the Israeli authorities in an embarrassing situation. They were forced to bring Shadmi to trial, with the knowledge that in self-defense he would reveal the instructions he must have received from his immediate superiors, including Major General Zvi Tsur, commander of the Central Area, and Moshe Dayan, army chief of staff. The military court found the following in assessing Shadmi's role in the massacre of Kfar Kassim:

The defendant Melinki, when he gave his orders to his unit, was not acting on his own initiative or according to his own judgment. He was obeying orders. It was not he who initiated the imposition of the curfew—either as a curfew or as regards the manner of its enforcement. He only passed on the order he had received from his responsible commander, Brigadier Shadmi. . . . There can be no doubt that the order given by Melinki was only one link in a chain of firm orders given in detail by the brigade commander. The orders given by Melinki were the direct result of the placing of a Frontier Guard unit under the orders of the brigade of the Israel Defense Army commanded by Brigadier Shadmi and of the assignment to that unit of a task in accordance with the wishes of the brigade commander and with the direct order he gave in connection with the curfew and the way in which it was to be carried out.

Shadmi not only entrusted Melinki with the "task"; he also informed him of the "method" by which the curfew was to be enforced. The method . . . was defined, as stipulated by the brigade commander, as one of "stringent severity" and "decisive policy," the enforcement of the curfew by firing rather than by arrests. We are satisfied that the "method" prepared by Melinki before the bloody incidents at Kfar Kassim, as a summary of the orders of the brigade commander and for the purpose of including it in the orders to be given to the units ("No villager shall leave his home during the hours of curfew"; "Anyone leaving his home will be killed"; "There will be no arrests") was a true reflection of the order given by the brigade commander. There was no misunderstanding by Melinki as to how the curfew was to be enforced, as decided by the brigade commander, and the harsh distinction made in the order given by the unit commander, Melinki, between villagers in their homes, who were to come to

no harm, and persons out of doors, to whom the principle of shooting was to be applicable in its full severity, derived from the order given by the brigade commander, Shadmi. The unit commander's statement that, "It would be better that several people should be killed" was derived directly from the statement of the brigade commander to the effect that "It is better to get rid of some in this way" (his words being accompanied by a gesture with his hand as described by Melinki) "than to have the complications of arrests." . . . Our conclusion is that the method of enforcing the curfew, as decided by Melinki in his orders (before the questions and answers), corresponded in all important aspects with the methods of enforcing the curfew stipulated in the order given by the brigade commander. It was Brigadier Shadmi who initiated and ordered, in a manner that could not be disobeyed, the enforcement of the illegal instructions; it was he who ordered the shooting of citizens as a way of enforcing the curfew, and Melinki, in submitting to the orders of his commander, was only transmitting these instructions to his subordinates."²³

This is a very clear indictment of Shadmi, and when it was published it aroused various demands that he be brought to trial. Opposing the trial was a group led by officials of Shadmi's own party, Achdut Haavoda, who warned of the consequences of such action. A week after the court decision, an article appeared in the party's daily newspaper signed by a "Hebrew prisoner," the nom de plume of Knesset member Moshe Carmel, one of Achdut Haavoda's leaders and then minister of transportation.

It is essential that we should ask whether the ultimate responsibility was Shadmi's and his alone. A brigadier commanding a brigade in the Israel Defense Army who is charged with the task of supervising an area of operations does not act in accordance with his own personal opinions; he is restricted to a framework of plans, orders, and instructions drawn up somewhere and imposed on him by the authority of a higher command. And inasmuch as the court has disclosed the facts to the people at large, the people have the right to know, and insist on knowing, what orders and instructions were given to Brigadier Shadmi by those responsible for him, in accordance with which orders he acted, and then gave

his own more detailed orders in the light of conditions as he saw them and in the field in which he had experience, and also from whom he received his orders.

If it is indeed found that the orders given by Brigadier Shadmi, whether oral or written, were a cause of the tragedy that took place, the following question must be asked: Were these orders *incompatible or compatible* [italics in the original] with the orders he received? It is on this basis that the problem must be considered.²⁴

The warning behind these words is clear. If Shadmi were brought to trial it would lead to the exposure of the role of his superiors, who no doubt briefed him and gave him the instructions which led to the massacre. But the authorities soon found a way out. Shadmi was hurried into court, but there was a change in the formation of the court. Justice Halevy had stepped down. The second court tried Shadmi rapidly, found him guilty of a "technical error," and sentenced him to a reprimand and a fine of one Israeli piaster. (Since then "Shadmi's piaster" has become proverbial among the Arabs in Israel.) And so the curtain was lowered on the massacre at Kfar Kassim.

Every year the families of Kfar Kassim, and with them many of the Arabs in Israel, try to hold memorial ceremonies for the dead in the village cemetery. The authorities have, on occasion, declared the village a closed area on the anniversary of the massacre, preventing anyone outside the village from entering on that day.²⁵

The massacre at Kfar Kassim is not the only occasion on which Israeli forces killed, or caused the death of, Arabs living inside Israel, but it is a powerful illustration of the strong-arm policy the Israeli government pursued. Acts of aggression, terrorism, and murder by the Israeli "security forces" have been frequent since the establishment of the state. The aim at Kfar Kassim was the same as that at Deir Yasin, to induce the Arabs remaining in Israel to emigrate to the neighboring Arab countries. This time, however, the Israeli authorities were not so successful.

Naturally, not all the incidents of this nature have been

recorded, but the available evidence is enough to give an accurate picture. At the end of July 1948, after conducting a search in the village of Elot near Nazareth, the Israeli army arrested forty-six young men and took them away. On August 3 several of these men were found dead in the hills near the village. On the same day fourteen of those arrested were killed in an olive grove, in full view of the villagers.²⁶ On October 30, 1948, four Arabs were killed in the village of Jish after an army search. In November 1951 Meir Vilner complained in the Knesset of the harsh treatment the Arabs were suffering in the Triangle, citing information that at least five persons had been killed in the area just a short time before.²⁷ Toward the end of January 1952, one of the Arabs held at the Acre police station was found to have "died in his sleep."²⁸ Three days later, "while being interrogated," an Arab "jumped" to his death from a second-floor window of the Haifa police headquarters.²⁹ In June 1952 two Arabs from the village of Ara were killed when the army opened fire on a group of villagers who were trying to meet relatives at the border, which is near the village.³⁰ In the middle of September 1961 five young Arabs were killed by the Frontier Guard on the southern border of Israel while attempting to flee to the Gaza strip.³¹ This incident led to unprecedented angry demonstrations by the Arabs in Nazareth, Shafa Amr, Haifa, Acre, and many of the Arab villages, and a display of the corpses of the dead in effigy.³² The Frontier Guard had become "expert" at killing Palestinian refugees who were moved to cross into Israel. After the 1967 War it was used to keep order in the occupied territories. It is second only to Unit 101 and the paratroopers of the Israeli army in crimes committed against Arabs. During the Kfar Kassim trial, which was public, a clear picture emerged of the criminal way in which the Guard treats the Arabs.

With the deliberate cold-blooded killings at Kfar Kassim the policy of employing force against the Arabs had reached a peak, however. There were few incidents of this kind thereafter, the most notable being a demonstration at Shafa Amr in November 1959, during which the police opened fire

on workers who had gathered to demand transportation to Haifa and their places of work. One of the workers was killed and the demonstration forcibly dispersed.³²

With the decrease of incidents in which Arabs were killed, a new style of terrorism began. Bombs were suddenly discovered in public places in Arab cities and villages, reportedly placed by "persons unknown." The wave of bomb scares lasted from 1956 through 1958. In those two years bombs were found near schools in Tayba, Nazareth, the villages of Ein Mahil and Jish, Baqa al Gharbiya, Kfar Kassim, Ramle, and Tur'an, near a church at Shafa Amr, in a children's playground in Baqa al Gharbiya, and in the village of Sandaleh. A bomb exploded in August 1957 in Umm al Fahm, wounding four children, and in 1956 a bomb exploded in Sandaleh, causing the deaths of fourteen schoolchildren who had found it and were playing with it.³³

The position of the Israeli authorities toward the bombings is interesting, as are the explanations offered. Replying to questioning in the Knesset, Bikhur Shitrit, minister of police, said that "in every one of these incidents it was found that the explosives had been in place for a long time, in most cases since the days of the [1948] War. In some instances the material was the same as that used by the Arab armies [during their attack on Israel]."³⁴ Shitrit added that "in 1956 the police handled 648 incidents of this kind and in the first eleven months of 1957, 295 additional cases were recorded." But the minister failed to explain why the schoolchildren did not find these bombs until eight years after they had been planted and why more than nine hundred bombs had suddenly been found within this two-year period—and those only in areas inhabited by Arabs.

The Arabs in Israel also had to put up with problems stemming from the fact that for some reason the Israeli army favors certain populated Arab districts for its maneuvers. To the present day two large areas, one in central Galilee and the other in the Triangle, have been reserved for operations of this kind, in spite of the fact that these areas are very densely settled. Over the years there have been numerous protests

and requests to remove the maneuvers from the midst of the civilian population, but the authorities persist in carrying them out, even though they frequently result in casualties or damage to property. For example, two Suaed Bedouin boys in Galilee were killed and four wounded when the army was in their area at the end of July 1957. In February 1958 a schoolboy in the village of Sakhnin was killed by a stray bullet from nearby army maneuvers. In September 1958 another boy was killed in identical circumstances in the village of Deir Hanna. A number of maneuvers took place between November 1961 and July 1962 and between April 1963 and April 1964, near the villages of Umm al Fahm and Umm al Qutuf in the Triangle and near the Suaed Bedouins in Galilee, during which a number of people were wounded and Arab property damaged.³⁵ In late January 1970 two villagers from Sakhnin were wounded when they happened upon a mine left behind by the army.³⁶ In the middle of June 1971 a woman from the village of Mu'awiya was hit during army maneuvers nearby.³⁷

After repeated requests that their houses and places of work be protected from such hazards, the Arabs were promised that the army would transfer its operations to uninhabited parts of the Negev. The authorities eventually announced that such a transfer would be impossible, however, and that instead of limiting the areas used by the army, they actually intended to extend them.³⁸ During the months of May and June 1971, the minister of defense issued orders that an area near the village of Tayba, totaling some three thousand dunums, be reserved for maneuvers.³⁹

The final incident in the whole episode took place in August 1972 when the villagers of Barta'a "rebelled" and forcibly stopped some army tractors that were preparing ground near the village. A delegation from the village met with Moshe Dayan and asked that the maneuvers be held elsewhere. Their request was granted.

The incidents recorded above are in no way a complete list. Nor do they cover other forms of coercion, such as curfews imposed on whole villages for "breach of peace" and

the forcible dispersion of demonstrations, including the shooting of demonstrators. The causes of such demonstrations—demands for employment, complaints against forcible seizure of Arab property, complaints against long detention and harsh sentences disproportionate with the crimes—in themselves form a further list of grievances.

The violence that has been a feature of Israeli policy toward the Arabs has continued to the present day. Whatever the hidden motives for such a position, there is no doubt that the incidents described, in conjunction with the military government and security measures, helped to bring the Arabs in Israel under complete control of the government.