

رسالة خليفة
Promises of the Storm



B. Lynne Barbee

رسالة خليفة
Marcel Khalifé

One of Lebanon's foremost composers sings songs of Palestine

Lebanon and Palestine

The Common Bonds of Culture

From Tripoli to Kuwait, Hebron to Beirut, Arab people have strong links of common language, history and culture. Today these bonds are clearly illustrated when one of Lebanon's foremost composers brings the poetry of two outstanding Palestinian poets to the level of song. This artistic accomplishment represents a reality that Israeli tanks have not been able to crush. Not only are Lebanese and Palestinians neighboring peoples; Arab people as a whole remain bound together through a common history and common adversities.

The artistry of Marcel Khalifé and the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish and Izzidine Al Munassrah, combined in this record, embody the cultural ferment of the Arab world today. These artists explore their peoples' roots and traditions while critically examining and confronting the immensity of the struggles before them. In this, they are part of a revolutionary culture emerging from the lives of the Arab people, whether the dispossessed of Palestine or the trampled of Lebanon. Palestinian poets have begun to have a deep impact on other Arab poets. Mahmoud Darwish's poems, such as "My Mother," sung by Khalifé on this recording, have become part of the daily language of thousands. The songs of Marcel Khalifé are sung by school children, fishermen, students, taxi-drivers, by people throughout the Arab world. Tens of thousands danced and sang with

Marcel at the Carthage Festival in Tunis, inspired by the themes and moved by the music.

As the peoples' struggle has grown, the cultural movement has blossomed. This cultural ferment, a part of the political development of the Palestinian struggle, reaches a broad and expanding audience throughout the Arab world, stirred by new voices which reflect the currents of its own hopes.

Marcel Khalifé

Born in 1951 in Amsheet, a town north of Beirut in the Mount Lebanon region, Marcel Khalifé wrote his first song, "Palestine," when he was fifteen. He graduated from the National Conservatory of Music in Beirut at the age of 20, and became professor of the *oud* (similar to the lute) and music theory at the Conservatory.

The civil war in Lebanon, which began in 1975, affected Khalifé and his music profoundly. He voiced his protests by setting Arabic poetry, particularly Palestinian poetry, to music. Today he still chooses to sing the poems of the uprooted Palestinian people because he understands that the crisis goes beyond the borders of Lebanon; that the suffering of the Palestinians is a blow to human dignity and an attack on the identity of all peoples.

In 1972 Khalifé helped form a musical ensemble, known as Marcel Khalifé and Al-Mayadeen, which has played a significant role in developing the Lebanese people's song movement. Khalifé explains that "Al-Mayadeen (the plural of 'maydan') has a double meaning: maydan can mean 'battlefield' and it can mean the central square in a village, where the people hold their celebrations and weddings, and where they sing and dance on such occasions." The double meaning of Al-Mayadeen suffuses Khalifé's artistic approach, which combines musical tradition growing out of the daily concerns of the common people with the legacy of Arab culture.

Deeply influenced by traditional Arabic music, particularly Arabic-Andalusian traditions, Khalifé has modernized and expanded the use of the *oud*, a cornerstone in Arabic music. Yet Khalifé approaches Arab tradition with a critical and innovative ear. He criticizes the pervasive sentimental Arab love songs as “furthering the listener’s tragic state. . . . If one is to love, there are other things which he must be able to do first. He must have food to eat, he must drink, he must be able to go out

at night, he should have a safe place he can call home. If we can sing songs on such subjects, then we can love also, and sing songs about love. In such a way, the love element in our songs becomes positive.”

When Khalifé creates a musical setting for a poem, he is sensitive to the meaning of the text, to its mood, its sentiment. His music embodies the words, interprets them and brings them to life, much as Arab troubadours of old enhanced and enlivened their legends.

Traveling throughout Lebanon—to small villages and the neighborhoods of Beirut—Marcel Khalifé and Al-Mayadeen have become immensely popular, singing in both classical Arabic and the colloquial dialect. Classical Arabic is the language of literature, while the spoken language varies widely. Most poems and songs have used the literary language. By singing in colloquial Arabic—and by selecting songs speaking to each particular audience—Khalifé’s music embodies the dignity of the common people.

While often subtle and understated, Khalifé is unabashedly political. “In such troubled waters as today’s Lebanon, it is impossible for the artist to write a musical composition or poetic song bearing no relation whatever to events occurring around him. Every individual practices, even if unwittingly, his political role in society—everyone from a taxi driver to the President of the Republic. However, some people hold the false belief that the artist is beyond politics. . . . In my opinion, even the song that purportedly has no position on anything in particular becomes a political song, because whether it



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Khalifé and the Al-Mayadeen Ensemble perform at a demonstration in front of the U.S. Capitol on May 1st 1982, weeks before the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

likes it or not, it is found in a position which may serve the status quo, or it is found to be used politically by those who have more political orientations and ambitions than those who produced the songs."

Despite Khalifé's political stand with the Lebanese progressive forces and the Palestinians, his songs are heard in the streets of East as well as West Beirut, although, as Khalifé describes it, sometimes listeners "block out their words" but still inadvertently "bob their heads to the music." Yet, it cannot be said that Khalifé and Al-Mayadeen find it easy to practice their artistry in today's Lebanon. "We never pretended that our conditions would be easy. When we started becoming active, we were aware of the conditions surrounding us, and that dangerous conflicts were taking place. Our participation in these times in the field of art has been a natural participation. We have seen that our role is to enter the battle, we can't avoid it—we are citizens like everybody else. We even derive our dynamism from this very fact."

Mahmoud Darwish

Politically and culturally, the poems of Mahmoud Darwish lend themselves well to Khalifé's *oud*. Darwish, sharing the same cultural bonds, also shares a critical and innovative approach to his verse. Combining themes of struggle and resistance with passion and bittersweet nostalgia, Mahmoud Darwish's poetry has considerable influence on contemporary Arab poetry.

This literary influence is inseparable from the hard reality of Palestinian experience. "The tragedy of this people in particular comes from the fact that they have not yet received recognition of the torment in which they live," Darwish explained in a recent interview. "It is not easy for a six-year-old child to learn words such as "tent," "Red Cross," "UNRWA" and "the return." In 1948 I came across these words as if I were colliding with a boulder. These words began to pave my road as a poet." This road extends into the hearts of a broad Arab audience.

Darwish was born in the village of Al Bardah in northern Palestine in 1942. When he was six Israel was established as a state and his village was destroyed. His family sought refuge in Lebanon, but later returned home to Palestine by secretly crossing the border.

"My childhood is not only my own personal childhood, but a collective childhood," he explains. "Regarding Palestine, it is my childhood, it is the paradise which can be created and it is not a paradise lost. When I talk about it I talk a lot because I want to put my hand on my origins. In this sense, Palestine is not a memory but an existence, it is not a past but a future. Palestine is not a mythological Andalus [Spain]—a place lost forever—but a regainable Andalus."

Mahmoud Darwish worked for *Al Ittihad*, the newspaper of the Israeli Communist Party, where his early poems were published. He soon became a leading figure among a generation of Palestinian poets who were "refugees in their own country." After the June 1967

war, interest in the work of these Palestinian poets living in Israel grew throughout the Arab world. Darwish is among the most renowned.

In 1971, he left Israel for Egypt where he wrote for *Al Mossawir* magazine and *Al Abram* newspaper. He then moved to Lebanon where he became editor of *Palestine Affairs* and, between 1976 and 1979, director of the Palestine Research Center. Since 1981, he has published *Al Karmal*, a quarterly literary magazine which, since the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, must be produced outside Beirut.

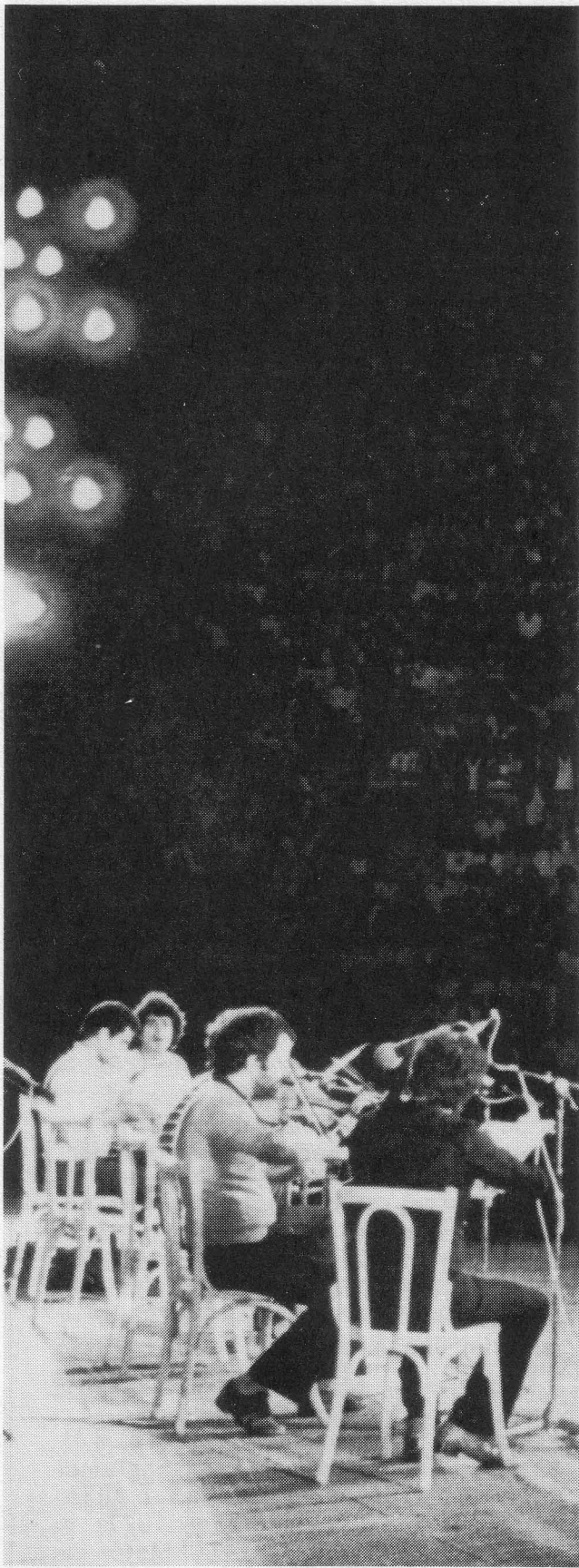
Darwish has published several volumes of his poetry: "Awraq Al Zaytun" (Olive Leaves) in 1964; "Asheq Min Falestine" (A Lover From Palestine) in 1966, "Asher Al Lay" (The Fond of the Night) in 1967, "Al Assafir Tamut Fil Jalil" (Birds Die in Galilee), "Habibati Tanhadu Min Mawmiha" (My Loved One Rises From Her Sleep) in 1970, "Ohibbuki Aw La Ohibbuki" (Do I or Don't I Love You) in 1972, "Mohwalat Raqm Sabaa" (The Seventh Attempt) in 1974, "Telqa Suratuha" (That Was Her Image) and "Intihar Asheq" (The Suicide of a Lover) in 1975 and "Aarass" (Festivities) in 1978. He also published the book "Yawmyat Al Huzn Al A'di" (The Diary of Ordinary Sadness), which depicts his experience in Israel. He read his long epic poem on the 1982 siege of Beirut before the meeting of the Palestine National Council in Algiers. That same year he won the Lenin Prize for literature, attesting to his growing international acclaim.

Izzidine Al Munassrah

"Izzidine Al Munassrah's poetry has the taste of Hebron's grapes and the acidity of green Galilee thyme," explains *Al Ittihad*. Like Marcel Khalifé and Mahmoud Darwish, Izzidine Al Munassrah draws upon the bonds of Arab culture to evoke a new stance in the face of today's struggles.

Born in Hebron in the occupied West Bank, he lived in Egypt and Jordan before moving to Beirut, Lebanon, where he was an editor of *Falasteen Al Thawra*, the PLO newspaper, and from 1981 editing secretary of *Palestine Affairs*.

Al Munassrah's poetry delves into the depths of ancient Palestinian identity, drawing upon the era of the Canaanite (the people of Palestine before the Biblical invasion of the Hebrews) for his imagery. "I started understanding Canaanism from my readings of Palestinian history and the Canaanite-Palestinian ruins," he explains. "I live in a poetic state and am not a chauvinist political fanatic. I believe in the progression of history and this is a Marxist issue, which means that the human being is not born suddenly with a perfect character but passes through stages of development. The Palestinians are not without original roots but they are connected with a deep-rooted civilization that still exists. We are still speaking some Canaanite words. The names of our Palestinian villages are Canaanite. Why should we



Courtesy of Marcel Khalifé

Khalifé and the Al-Mayadeen Ensemble at Carthage Festival in Tunisia, 1980.

abandon the relationship with the Canaanite heritage?"

As *Al Ittihad* explains, "Canaan is a revolutionary, Canaan is an Arab, Canaan is proud as a firm mountain . . . and says: Oh, Izzidine, this is your home." Jaffra—the legendary woman of Al Munassrah's poem which Marcel Khalifé has set to song—embodies such imagery: "that beautiful one is a sister, lover, wife and homeland."

Published collections of his poetry include "Ya Inab Al Khalil" (The Grapes of Hebron) in 1968, "Al Khurug Min Al Bahr Al Mayyet" (The Exit from the Dead Sea) in 1970, "Jaffra" and Lam Yafhamani Ahad Ghayraz-Zaytoon" (I Can Only Be Understood by Olive Trees) in 1976, and "Qamr Jarash Kana Hazinan" (The Moon of Jarash Was Sad) in 1979.

These three artists together represent the strength of a people—Lebanese and Palestinian—who have resolved to control their own destinies. This powerful, passionate and moving goal produces a rich culture.

Americans have had little contact, knowledge, or appreciation of this culture. The "imperial West" has fostered a stubborn cultural chauvinism toward the civilizations of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The culture and peoples of the Middle East—of Islam in particular—have been victimized by the West from the Judeo-Christian mythology of the Crusades to "recapture the Holy Lands from the heathens" up to current Israeli propaganda efforts attempting to justify their aggression. Of course, the sting of the West's cultural chauvinism lies in the fact that for centuries it has been backed up by armies and cemented by economic and political domination of the Middle East by Europe and the U.S.

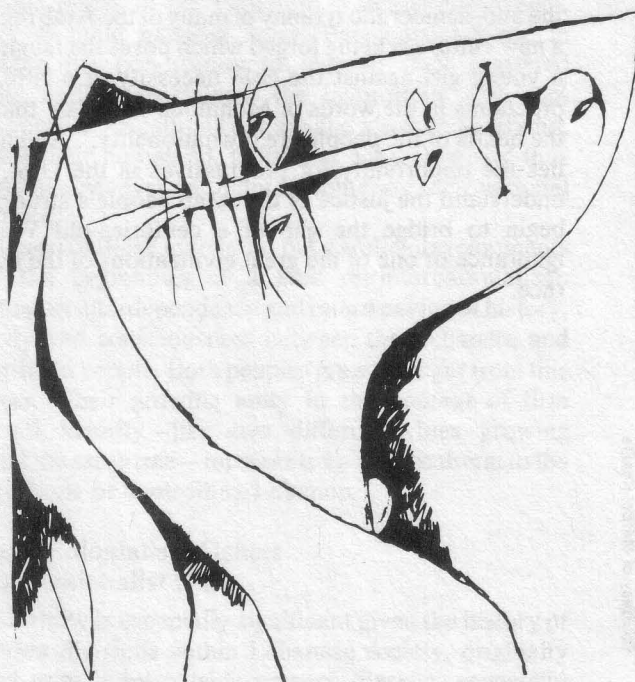
However, as Arab people resist the crushing weight of U.S. domination, the constant aggression of Israel, and the anti-democratic tyranny of many of the Arab regimes, a new culture is being forged which poses the laughter of a young girl against the cold necessity of a rifle, that proclaims in the words of Mahmoud Darwish, that "all the hearts of the people are my nationality." And herein lies the opportunity for progressives in the U.S., who understand the justice of the Arab people's struggle, to begin to bridge the gap of a centuries-old Western ignorance of one of the great civilizations of the human race.

Marcel Khalifé International Music Credits

Since 1976 Marcel Khalifé and Al-Mayadeen Ensemble appeared in numerous musical events, including:

- The Musical Consortium "Sama'i Bayati" (Tunis, 1974) • Humanité Festival (Paris, 1976/1979) • The Song Festival (Berlin 1976/1978) • Al-Wihdda Festival (Beirut, 1977/1978/1979) • The Song Festival (Havana, 1978) • The First of May Festival (Democratic Yemen, 1979) • The Festival in Solidarity with the Lebanese People (Paris, 1980) • The Carthage Festival (Tunisia, 1980) • The Youth Festival (Democratic Yemen, 1981) • The Song Festival (Sofia, 1981) • The National Convention of the Association of Arab-American University Graduates (Houston, 1981) • Central and South America 1983.

Tape recordings of Marcel Khalifé and Al-Mayadeen Ensemble include: *Wu'ud Min Al-'Asifa (Promises from the Storm)* Poetry of Mahmoud Darwish (1976) • *Aghani Al-Matar (The Rain Songs-1977)* • *Min Ayna Adkhul Fil Watan (Entrance to the Homeland-1978)* • *A'ras (Weddings-1979)* • *'Ala-l-Ard 'Ala-l-'Hudud, (On the*



Frontier-1979 • *'Ala-l-Ard Ya Hakam (On the Bare Floor, Judges-1980)* • *Farah (Happiness-1981).*

In 1981, Marcel Khalifé also published *Al-Sama'* (Listening).

During the last decade Marcel Khalifé has composed music for dance and operettas performed by leading troupes in the Arab World. Such performances include:

- *'Aja'ib Al-Ghara'ib (The Miracles of Marvels)* The Karakalla Eastern Ballet Troupe-1974 • *Al-Khiyam Soud (The Tents are Black)* Karakalla-1978 • *Tar-awid Al-Sharira (The Taming of the Shrew)* Karakalla-1981 • *Maraq Al-Saif (Summer is Gone)* Jubail Festival of Tourism-1970.

Furthermore, Marcel Khalifé has composed music for films, including: *Kamal Jumblatt* (Documentary, 1976) • *Al-Shaheed (The Martyr)* by Maroon Baghdadi (1977) • *Kulluna Lil Watan (We Are All for the Homeland)* (Documentary, 1977) • *Hadithat Al-Nisf Mitr (The Half-Meter Incident)* by Samir Thikre (1981).

The Poems

PROMISES OF THE STORM

Side 1, Band 1: (5:46)

Music: Marcel Khalife

Poem: Mahmoud Darwish

This poem is a call to Palestinian rebellion. The poet refuses sadness and empty nostalgia for the past, rejecting the pervasive sentimental Arab love song—"the bleeding songs." "From the time the storm has raged in my country/It has promised me wine and rainbows." He seeks the joy of a future that will be won only by the storm of resistance, the promises of winning the battle.

وعود من العاصفة

ولیکن ...
لا بدّ لي أن أرفض الموت
وأن أحرق دمع الأغنيات الراحه
وأعري شجر الزيتون من كل الغصون الزائفه
فأذا كنت أغني للفرح
خلف أجفان العيون الخائفه
فلأن العاصفه
كنّست صوت العصافير البليده
والغصون المستعاره
عن جذوع الشجرات الواقفه.
ولیکن ...
لابدّ لي أن أتباهي، بك، يا جرح المدينه
أنت يا لوحة برق في ليالينا الحزينه
يعبس الشارع في وجهي
فتحميني من الظل ونظرات الضغينه
سأغني للفرح
خلف أجفان العيون الخائفه
منذ هبّت، في بلادي العاصفه
وعدتني بنبيد، وبأقواس قرح

Promises of the Storm

So be it

I can assure you that I will refuse death
And burn the tears of the bleeding songs
And strip the olive trees
Of all their counterfeit branches

If I have been serenading happiness
Somewhere beyond the eyelids of frightened
eyes

That is because the storm
Promised me wine and new toasts
And rainbows

Because the storm
Swept away the voices of idiotic, obedient birds
And swept away the counterfeit branches
From the trunks of standing trees

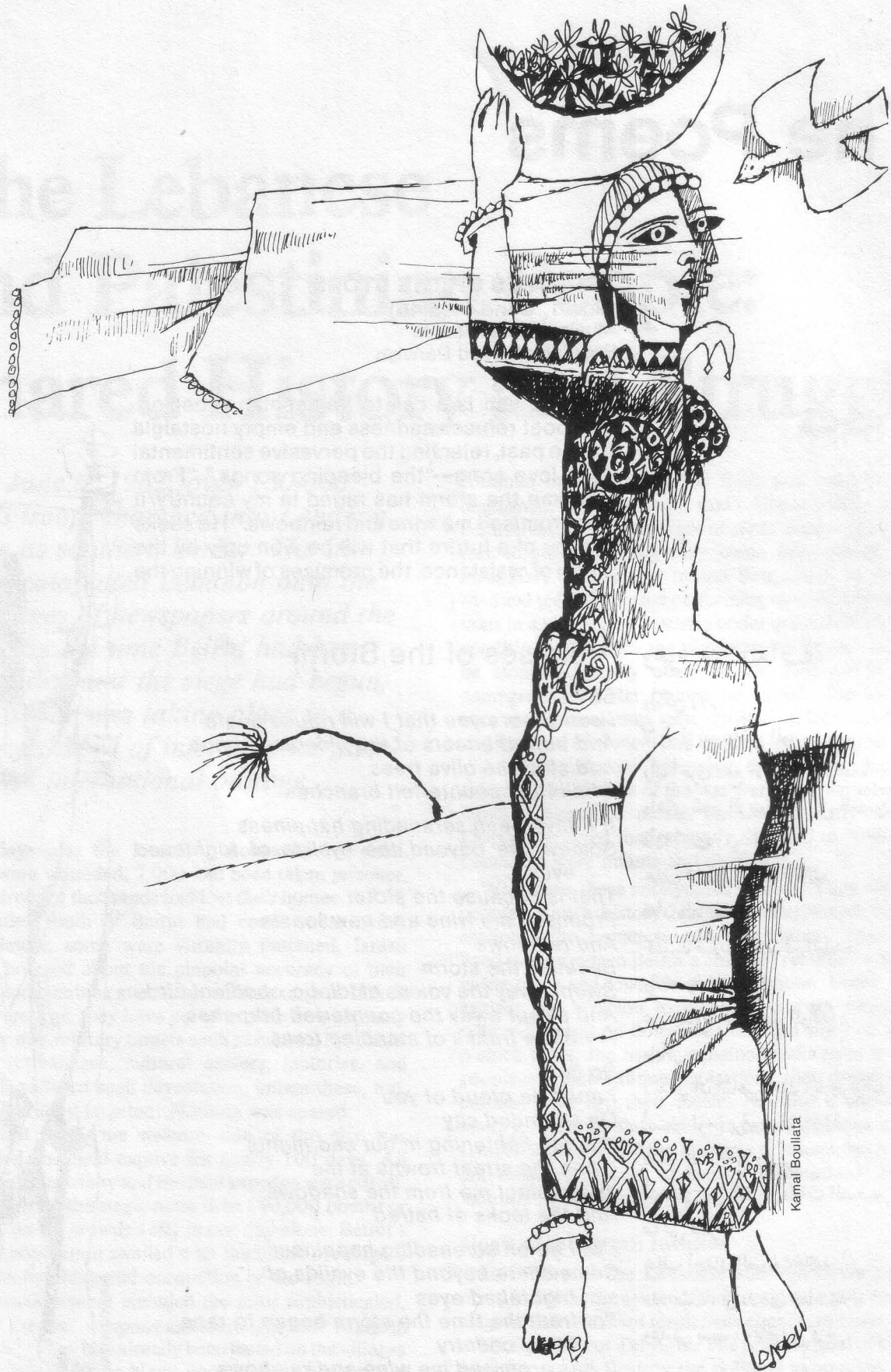
So be it

I must be proud of you
Oh wounded city
You are lightening in our sad nights
When the street frowns at me
You protect me from the shadows
And the looks of hatred

I will go on serenading happiness
Somewhere beyond the eyelids of
frightened eyes

For from the time the storm began to rage
in my country
It has promised me wine and rainbows





MY MOTHER

Side 1, Band 2: (9:14)

Music: Marcel Khalife

Poem: Mahmoud Darwish

In this poem the mother is the homeland, Palestine, for whom the poet is willing to accept all sacrifices. Expressing a violent yearning for the country of his childhood, the explosive hope of return, the poet desires to unite with his land

“as a veil to your eyelashes.” In words, rhythm, and sentiment, this poem is one of the most appreciated poems among Arab people, expressing the ineffable love for both the mothers of flesh and soil.

إلى أمي

أحن إلى خبز أمي
وقهوة أمي
ولمسة أمي ..
وتكبر في الطفولة
يوماً على صدر يوم
وأعشق عمري لأني
إذا متّ،
أخجل من دمع أمي!
خذني، إذا عدت يوماً
وشاحاً هذبك
وغطي عظامي بعشب
تعد من طهر كعبك
وشدي وثاقي ..
بخصلة شعر ..
بخيط بلّوح في ذيل ثوبك ..
عساني أصير إلهاً
إلهاً أصير ..
إذا ما لمست قرار قلبك!
ضعيني إذا ما رجعت
وقوداً بتنور نارك ..
وحبل غسيل على سطح دارك
لأني فقدت الوقوف
بدون صلاة نهارك
هرمتُ، فردي نجوم الطفولة
حتى أشارك
صغار العصافير

My Mother

I long for my mother's bread
My mother's coffee
Her touch
Childhood memories grow up in me
Day after day
I must be worth my life
At the hour of my death
Worth the tears of my mother
And if I come back one day
Take me as a veil to your eyelashes
Cover my bones with the grass
Blessed by your footsteps
Bind us together
With a lock of your hair
With a thread that trails from the
back of your dress
I might become immortal
Become a god
If I touch the depths of your heart
If I come back
Use me as wood to feed your fire
As the clothesline on the roof of your house
Without your blessing
I am too weak to stand
I am old
Give me back the star maps of childhood
So that I
Along with the swallows
Can chart the path
Back to your waiting nest

JAFFRA

Side 1, Band 3: (5:14)

Music: Marcel Khalife

Poem: Izzidine Al Munassrah

Jaffra, a young girl of Palestinian legend, has been a character in many poems and songs. In the legend she is a beautiful peasant kidnapped and confined by a feudal lord. Jaffra represents all profaned beauty and the country defended against all assaults; she represents all for which the Palestinian people are fighting—for hope,

victory of humanity over evil, and the transformation of Palestinian society as seen in the transformation of the Palestinian woman. The legendary Jaffra who languishes in the lord's castle has now become a fighter able to win her own freedom and that of her people.

جفرا Jaffra

للشعر المكتوب على أرصفة الشهادة

أغني

للأشجار العاشقة

أغني

للطلقة على صدر الفاشست، أغني للسيدة الحاملة الأسرار الثورية

للشجر المحروق الأخضر، في ذاكرتي

لرفاق لي في السجن أغني،

ولجفرا سأغني:

جفرا أمي

إن غابت أمي،

جفرا الوطن المسي

الزهرة،

والطلقة،

والعاصفة الحمراء

جفرا!

إن لم يعرف من لم يعرف

غابة زيتون ولفيف حمام

وقصائد للفقراء

جفرا!

من لم يعشق جفرا، فليدفن رأسه في الرمضاء

أرخت سهامي قلت يموت القاتل

من لم يدفن وجه الغول الأصفر تبلعه الصحراء

جفرا كانت في قصر الأقطاعي تنوح،

جفرا كانت في الجبهة تحمل طلقتها

وتبوح، بالسر المدفون على شاطئ عكا،

وتعني

وأنا لعيونك يا جفرا.. سأغني

To the poem written on the sidewalk
of martyrdom

I sing

To the trees in love

I sing

To the bullet in the chest of the fascist,

I sing

To the woman carrying the revolutionary secrets

To the burned, green trees in my memory

To my comrades in prison

I sing

To my comrades in the grave

I sing

And to Jaffra

I will sing:

Jaffra is my mother

When my mother is absent

Jaffra is the homeland captured

The flower

And the bullet

And the red storm

Jaffra!

He who does not know the grove of olive trees

The flight of pigeons

And the poems of the poor

Jaffra!

He who does not love Jaffra let him bury his
head in hot sand

I released my arrows, saying: "Let the killer die"

He who does not bury the pale face of

the monster

Let the desert swallow him

Jaffra wails in the castle of the feudal lord

Jaffra was carrying her gun at the battlefield

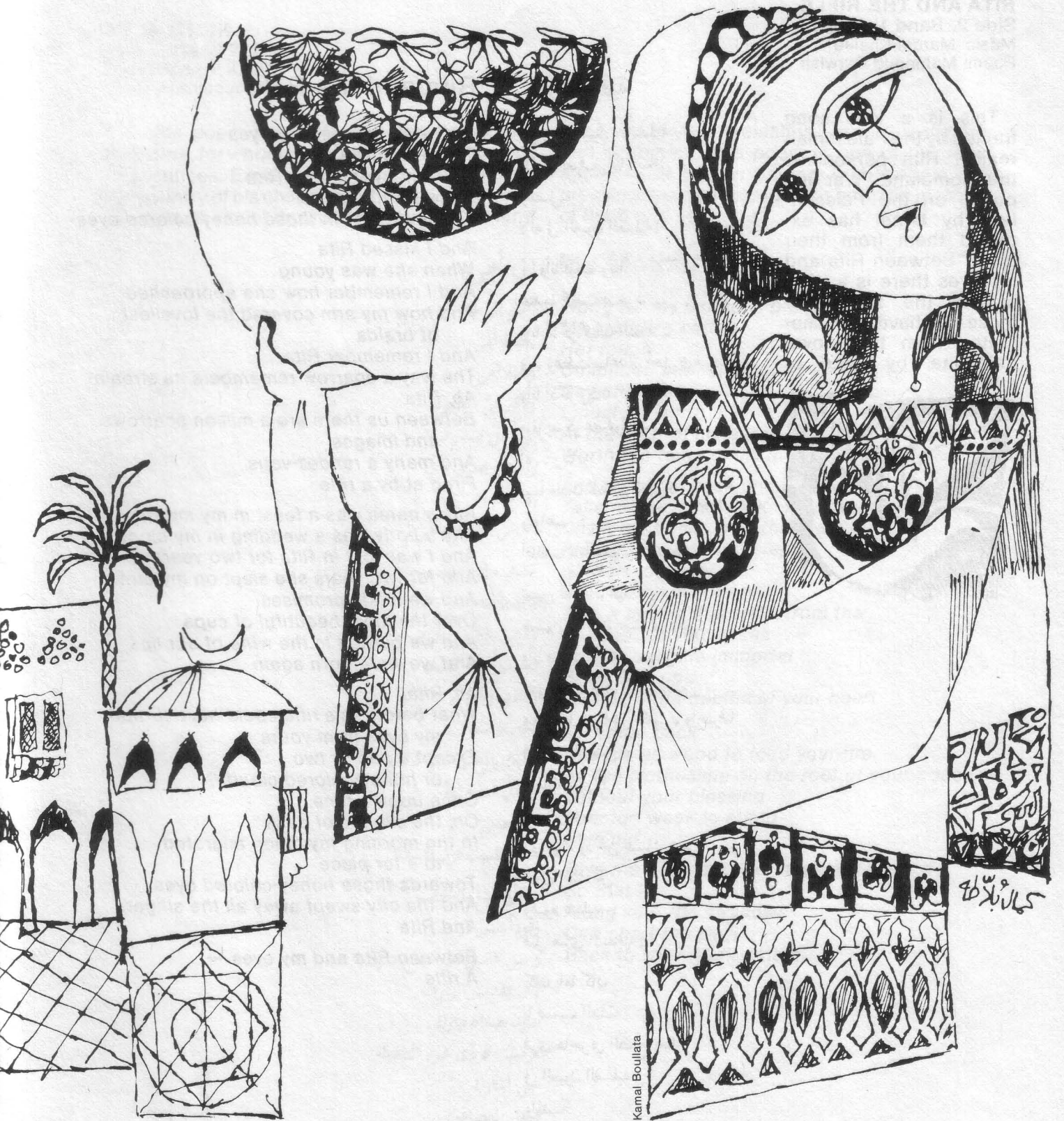
Telling the secret buried on the shore of Akka*

And singing

And I will sing to your eyes, Jaffra!

* Port city in Palestine





Kamal Boullata

RITA AND THE RIFLE

Side 2, Band 1: (9:58)

Music: Marcel Khalifé

Poem: Mahmoud Darwish

This is a love song framed by the Palestinian reality. Rita personifies the homeland. War imposed on the Palestinians by Israel has expelled them from their land. "Between Rita and my eyes there is a rifle" evokes the sorrow of those who have been separated from their love, Palestine, by force of arms.



ريتا والبندقية

بين ريتا وعيوني .. بندقية
والذي يعرف ريتا، ينحني
ويصلي
لأله في العيون العسلية!
.. وأنا قُبلت ريتا
عندما كانت صغيرة
وأنا أذكر كيف التصقت
بي، وغطت ساعدي أحلى ضفيره
وأنا أذكر ريتا
مثلاً يذكر عصفورٌ غديره
آه .. ريتا
بيننا مليون عصفور وصوره
ومواعيد كثيرة
أطلقت ناراً عليها .. بندقية
إسم ريتا كان عبداً في في
جسم ريتا كان عرساً في دمي
وأنا ضعت بريتا .. سنتين
وهي نامت فوق زندي سنتين
وتعاهدنا على أجمل كأس، واحترقنا
في نبيذ الشفتين
وولدنا مرتين!
آه .. ريتا
أي شيء ردّ عن عينيك عيني
سوى إغفاءتين
وغيوم عسليه
قبل هذي البندقية!
كان ياما كان
يا صمت العشيّه
قري هاجر في الصبح بعيداً
في العيون العسلية
والمدينة
كنست كل المغنين، وريتا
بين ريتا وعيوني .. بندقية

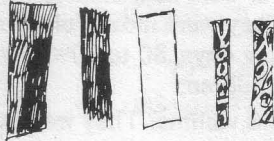
Rita and the Rifle

Between Rita and my eyes
There is a rifle
And whoever knows Rita
Kneels and prays
To the divinity in those honey-colored eyes
And I kissed Rita
When she was young
And I remember how she approached
And how my arm covered the loveliest
of braids
And I remember Rita
The way a sparrow remembers its stream
Ah, Rita
Between us there are a million sparrows
and images
And many a rendez-vous
Fired at by a rifle
Rita's name was a feast in my mouth
Rita's body was a wedding in my blood
And I was lost in Rita for two years
And for two years she slept on my arm
And we made promises
Over the most beautiful of cups
And we burned in the wine of our lips
And we were born again
Ah, Rita!
What before this rifle could have turned
my eyes from yours
Except a nap or two
or honey-colored clouds?
Once upon a time
Oh, the silence of dusk
In the morning my moon migrated
to a far place
Towards those honey-colored eyes
And the city swept away all the singers
And Rita
Between Rita and my eyes —
A rifle

PASSPORT

Side 2, Band 2: (9:18)
Music: Marcel Khalifé
Poem: Mahmoud Darwish

During the exodus of the Palestinians from Palestine in 1948, Mahmoud Darwish left as well, returning shortly after. When the state of Israel was declared, Mahmoud Darwish became a foreigner in his ancestral land. From that time Israeli authorities required all Palestinians to carry identity cards or passports. Asked to show his passport, the poet expresses his sadness, anger and irony. He hopes that the Arabs will not display their legendary patience once again, but that they will liberate their country instead. As to the passport, the poet does not need it anymore; "all the hearts of the people are my nationality."



جواز سفر

لم يعرفوني في الظلال التي
تمتص لوني في جواز السفر
وكان جرحي عندهم معرضاً
لسائح بعشق جمع الصور
لم يعرفوني، آه.. لا تركي
كفي بلا شمس،
لأن الشجر
يعرفني ..
تعرفني كل أغاني المطر..
لا تركيني ساحباً كالقمر! ..

كل العصافير التي لاحقت
كفي على باب المطار البعيد
كل الحقول قمح،
كل السجون ..
كل القبور البيض
كل الحدود ..
كما المناديل التي لَوَّحت
كل العيون
كانت معي، لكنهم
قد أسقطوها من جواز السفر!

عارٍ من الأسم، من الأنتاء؟
في تربة ربيتها باليدين؟
أيوب صاح اليوم ملء السماء:
لا تجعلوني عبدة مرتين!
يا سادتي! يا سادتي الأنبياء
لا تسألوا الأشجار عن إسمها
لا تسألوا الوديان عن أمها
من جبتي ينشق سيف الضياء
ومن يدي ينبع ماء النهر
كل قلوب الناس .. جنسيتي
فلتسقطوا عني جواز السفر!

Passport

They did not recognize me in the shadows
That suck away my color in this passport
And to them my wound was an exhibit
For a tourist
who loves to collect photographs
They did not recognize me
Ah... Don't leave
The palm of my hand without the sun
Because the trees recognize me
All the songs of the rain
Recognize me
Don't leave me pale like the moon!
All the birds that followed my palm
To the door of the distant airport
All the wheatfields
All the prisons
All the white tombstones
All the barbed boundaries
All the waving handkerchiefs
All the eyes
Were with me,
But they dropped them from my passport
Stripped of my name and identity?
On a soil I nourished with my own hands?
Today Job cried out
Filling the sky:
Don't make an example of me again!
Oh, gentlemen Prophets,
Don't ask the trees for their name
Don't ask the valleys who their mother is
From my forehead bursts
the sword of light
And from my hand springs
the water of the river
All the hearts of the people
are my nationality
So take away my passport!

The Lebanese and Palestinian People: Shared History and Struggle

On June 6, 1982, over 150,000 Israeli troops marched into Lebanon across its southern border. The invasion catapulted Lebanon onto the front pages of newspapers around the world. By the time Beirut had been surrounded and the siege had begun, Israel's war was taking place in a global fishbowl of international attention and international outrage.

Ten days into the invasion, thousands lay dead, 20,000 were wounded, 7,000 had been taken prisoner, and hundreds of thousands had lost their homes. All the major cities south of Beirut had come under heavy bombardment; some were virtually flattened. Israeli officials bragged about the pinpoint accuracy of their artillery and bombing attacks on military targets. If their claims were true, they have yet to explain how so many obviously non-military targets such as houses, hospitals, schools, orphanages, cultural centers, factories, and farmlands suffered such devastation, unless these, too, were deliberately targeted. Nothing was spared.

In Beirut itself, the western side of the city was surrounded and held captive for nearly 100 days. All water, food, electricity and medical supplies were cut off. At the height of the siege, more than 140,000 bombs or shells fell on the crowded city in one day alone. Beirut's panicked population swelled with the influx of refugees fleeing the bombing and occupation of the south.

The Israeli arsenal included the most sophisticated, "state-of-the-art" weapons and were labelled "Made in the U.S.A." They had already been tested on the villages and rice fields of Viet Nam: phosphorous bombs that

continue burning inside the flesh and cannot be extinguished; vacuum bombs that collapse buildings upon themselves like houses made of cards; cluster bombs that tear through anything they come into contact with; incendiary bombs that turned Beirut into an inferno. Medical teams reported performing over 1,000 amputations in a single day—usually under makeshift operating conditions—because the phosphorous burns could not be stopped by any other means. Nor could tissue damaged by cluster bombs be saved. The limbs of vacuum-bomb victims were crushed under tons of brick and cement. No one—and nothing—was spared.

As day followed agonizing day during that long summer, the victims of the war were kept nameless and faceless in the U.S. media. They were mostly civilians. Doctors reported that on many days, 80 to 90% of the casualties were infants and children.

Who were these anonymous victims? They were two peoples whose history has been intertwined for generations—the Lebanese and Palestinians. Many had lived side by side in Beirut's crowded refugee camps and in the cities and towns in south Lebanon. Many fought against the invasion together. And even though the military assault on Beirut was the lead story on the six o'clock news, the media remained indifferent to these people—to their national aspirations, their dreams, their culture, their art, their music. Nor did it show their history, their battles, their years of fighting against Israel's attempts and the attempts of others, both inside and outside Lebanon, to destroy their national life and national identity.

Goals of the Israeli Invasion

In 1982 both the Lebanese and Palestinians recognized Beirut as the center of their national existence. The siege of Beirut did not result from chance, mistake, or the arbitrary whim of Tel Aviv. The primary goal of Israel's invasion was to destroy the political expression of the

national identity of the Palestinian people: the Palestine Liberation Organization, then based in Beirut. The razing and occupation of south Lebanon, and ultimately the destruction of West Beirut, demonstrated Israel's willingness to attack and destroy an entire city—one known for its rich cultural traditions and centers of art, music, history—in order to destroy the PLO.

Israel did not act alone in its decision to take Lebanon. Ten days before the invasion was launched, Israel's then Defense Minister Ariel Sharon conferred in Washington with then U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig. The conclusion of their meeting amounted to a green light from Washington for the Israelis' surge towards Beirut. Israeli and U.S. government leaders shared a vision of



Israeli tanks cross Lebanon's southern border.

Besides decimating the political center of Palestinian national life, Israel had other equally dishonorable and destructive goals. It was attempting to prevent Lebanon, Beirut in particular, from remaining the focal point of resistance to Israeli aggression in the region. To this end, Israel hoped to install a regime in Beirut completely sympathetic to the needs and demands of Tel Aviv. Such a pro-Israeli government would be counted on to oppose resistance movements in Lebanon, to oust the Syrians from Lebanon, and to check the ability of Damascus to provide assistance to Palestinian resistance.

Lebanon was, however, already a country sorely divided over a wide range of political and social issues. To install such a government would endanger the existence of the patriotic elements in Lebanese society that had fought for many years to prevent Israeli domination of their country and who supported the Palestinians' fight for an independent homeland. And this was precisely the other main goal of the Israeli invasion.

what the invasion could accomplish: a radical alteration of the balance of political forces throughout the Middle East, an expansion of the strategic alliances known as the "Camp David process." Specifically, the U.S. and Israel were committed to finding a second Arab country, after Egypt, which would officially agree to act as part of a U.S.-Israeli-Egyptian team. This team would pave the way for mutually beneficial military and political relationships between the Arab countries and Western powers. Such alliances, however, would be at the expense of popular national sentiments.

Although tactical considerations required that U.S. officials appear to distance themselves from the most destructive aspects of the Israeli invasion, the long-range goals of Washington and Tel Aviv converged in the decision to neutralize at any cost those forces in Lebanon opposed to the Camp David process. The cost to the Lebanese and Palestinian people was terrible.

The social and political frictions in Lebanon had already reached critical proportions several years prior

to the invasion. In large part this was the result of Israeli pressure to push large numbers of Palestinians into Lebanon. Lebanon was the latest—and for many, the last—refuge for the dispossessed Palestinians. And Lebanese society itself has been divided over whether to remain open and accessible to the Palestinians or to shut them out and abandon them as a number of the more conservative Arab countries have done.

The large Palestinian community in Lebanon came about in direct consequence to the founding of the state of Israel in 1948. Israel's founding was accompanied by dramatically effective expulsion campaigns so as to empty Palestine of its native inhabitants and allow for settlement by European Jews. Many of these European Jews were the victims of Nazi genocide who were refused refuge in post-war Europe and the U.S. Others were more ideologically committed to establishing a "Western" outpost in the otherwise Arab Middle East. Whatever their motives were, the result was the same: through military and economic coercion, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were expelled from the villages and farmlands they and their ancestors had owned for centuries. They were transformed overnight into stateless refugees. Many had no choice but to move into the squalid refugee camps which soon ringed the cities of Lebanon.

Since the early period of Palestinian resettlement in Lebanon in the late 1940s, the Lebanese and Palestinian communities have lived closely together in Lebanon. Their closeness continued right up through the influx of tens of thousands more refugees after the 1967 war and Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Each people developed and refined its national identity. The Lebanese, especially through the development of patriotic forces in the Lebanese National Movement, strove to build national unity. Palestinians found in Lebanon the opportunity to regroup their scattered people and to reestablish the institutions and consciousness of Palestinian culture and identity; to rebuild, outside their homeland, unity and coherence and thus defend against every attempt to obliterate their national existence.

Alongside these individual but parallel developments were the beginnings of a kind of internationalism, creating an interdependence and interweaving of history, identity and consciousness between the Lebanese and Palestinian people. Both peoples grew stronger from this process. Their growing unity in the context of firm national identity—like two different vines growing around the same tree—represented a serious threat to the Israeli hope of controlling Lebanon.

French Colonialism Ushers in Confessionalist State

This unity is especially significant given the history of sectarian divisions within Lebanese society, originally forced onto it by outside powers. France, especially

when Lebanon was still a French colony (1922-45), worked tirelessly to insure that the Lebanese people would be divided among themselves and unable to unite against foreign domination. They succeeded to some degree by imposing a "confessional" system of government.

Under this system, representation within the new Lebanese parliament was distributed ostensibly according to the ratio of religious groupings in Lebanon. Seventeen different religious communities had been identified by a *partial* census taken in 1932. Maronite Christians were probably incorrectly deemed the majority then; they are certainly a decided minority today. Hence, in a system wherein particular governmental offices are reserved for members of one or another religious group or sect, the president and the head of the Lebanese Army must always be Maronite Christians. The unspoken goal of French planning was to insure that the Maronite Christians, the sector of Lebanese society most susceptible to French economic and political influence during the colonial period, would remain the most powerful sector even if they were a minority.

The French-groomed Maronites were indeed a potent political force in the 1980s. The Phalangist party, modelled after the Spanish fascist party of Franco, was the embodiment of that force. Founded by Pierre Gemayel, the Phalangist party is composed exclusively of Maronites. The Phalangists lead the right-wing Lebanese Forces, a large militia whose members carried out the massacres in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in September 1982.

Pierre's son, Amin, became president of Lebanon at the height of the 1982 Israeli invasion, thus institutionalizing Phalangist control over Lebanese political life and legitimizing the notorious Phalangist militias. But Amin's ascent to power came at a time when the energies of all political rivals were totally consumed in resisting the Israeli invasion. He can hardly be said to possess real legitimacy.

The Maronite community is less representative of the Lebanese people today than it ever was. So the continuation of the confessional system of government highlights the fundamental flaw in Lebanon's "democracy": large numbers of its people are functionally disenfranchised from political power in their own country. This is a sure invitation to perennial civil war and strife.

Despite Lebanon's confessional divisions, many Lebanese recognize that as an Arab people their fate is bound inextricably to that of the Palestinians who now share their land. More importantly, together they face an implacable enemy to the south, bent on maintaining domination through pro-Israel Lebanese political leaders. Many Lebanese, too, are well aware that confessionalism is the root cause of many of the injustices wracking their society. They know a government designed to serve a small minority of Lebanon's people is accountable least of all to Lebanon's population as a whole.

Lebanese Patriots and Civil War

The long-standing conflicts within Lebanese society, especially the conflict between a wealthy, French-oriented elite and the increasingly disaffected and impoverished mass of the population, led to civil war in 1975.

Opposition to the Phalangist party, particularly in the period just after the 1975-76 phase of the civil war, was centered in the Lebanese National Movement (LNM). The LNM, unlike the Phalangists, was multi-religious. Its political program was predicated on the understanding that Lebanon's problems are social, not religious, in nature. The LNM program advocated the transformation of Lebanon into a secular democracy and called for economic and social reforms in order to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor.

In the 1975 "Transitional Program of the Lebanese National Movement," the LNM wrote:

"We propose the road of democratic political struggle based on the respect of the will of the popular majority. Thus—in order not to let the Lebanese crisis explode in a way that will transfer the natural and legitimate socio-political struggle into repeated internal warfare, and in order to open up Lebanon to new horizons of development that will satisfy the national, economic and social needs of its citizens—it is imperative to introduce some basic democratic reforms in the structure of the Lebanese political system and institutions. . . . The Patriotic and Progressive Forces consider that the elimination of the confessionalism—from the constitution, legislation, and the political institutions, as well as on the level of actual social and political practices—to be one of the basic and urgent goals in this phase of Lebanon's history. This is in order to achieve the complete secularization of the political system and the abolition of all forms of confessionalism in all aspects of Lebanese life."

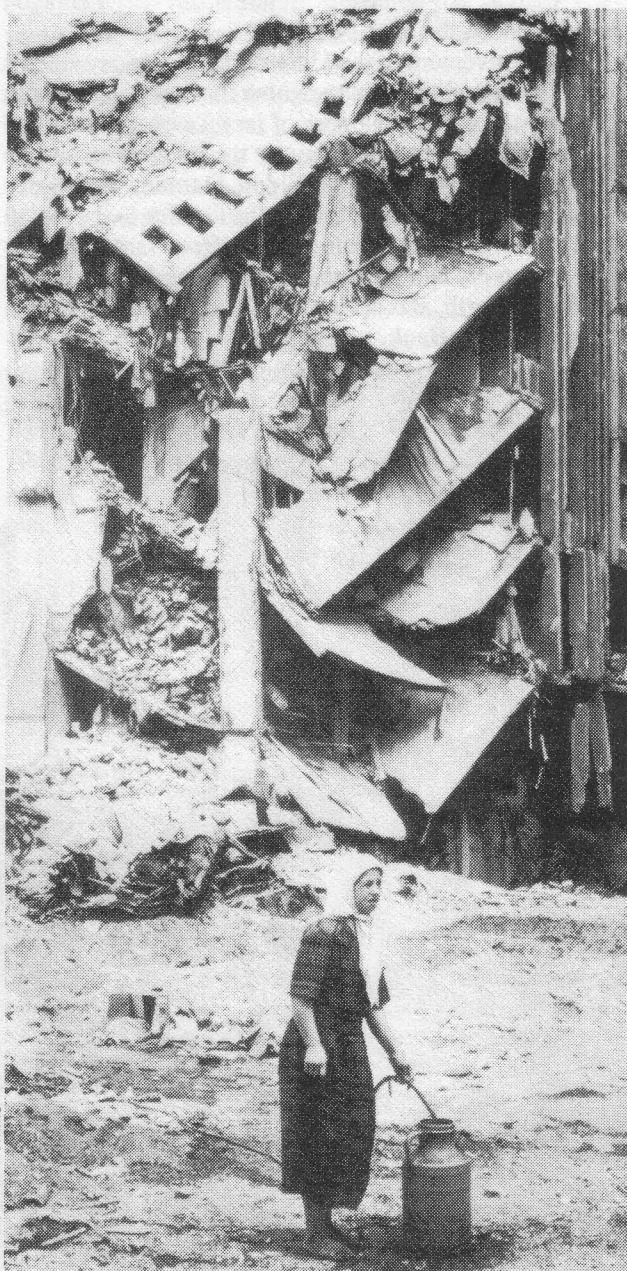
The LNM also supported the right of the Palestinians to national self-determination. From its inception the LNM had strong ties with the Palestinians within Lebanon and with the PLO at large.

Outside Intervention—Past and Present

The United States and its Western allies (including Israel) have long valued the importance of Lebanon as a conduit for U.S. and European weapons, dollars, francs, and political influence in the region. They also knew that the potential for major change in Lebanon resulting from civil war threatened that conduit.

Therefore, these outside powers did not stand idly by when internal social and political tensions in Lebanon gave rise to civil war. The intervention by U.S. Marines two decades earlier in 1958 had already demonstrated Washington's determination to maintain U.S.-defined

political stability in Beirut. This resolve was revealed again in 1975 when political pressure from Washington and Paris was matched by increasing Israeli military pressure. Small-scale Israeli assaults gradually escalated into the torching of entire towns, such as the



Woman collecting water amidst the destruction of West Beirut.

destruction of Kfar Shuba by Israel in January 1975 and the Israeli invasion of 1978.

Admitting the fragility of Amin Gemayel's unpopular government after Israel's 1982 invasion, Washington responded, as in 1958, with direct military intervention. An initial 1,200 Marines, engaged in an ostensibly passive "peacekeeping" mission around the Beirut airport, proved to be inadequate to their real task of

protecting the isolated Gemayel government. The U.S. sent thousands of additional Marines and Navy troops, backed by an awesome array of military aircraft, warships, and firepower. The term chosen by the Reagan administration to justify this escalation of the U.S. role is "aggressive self-defense," reminiscent of Pentagon double-talk in the Viet Nam era.

The involvement of the United States also provided a diversion allowing Israel to tighten its control over south Lebanon. The consequences of Israel's occupation and domination are felt every day by the inhabitants of Ein el-Hilweh, Nabatiyeh, Tyre, Sidon, Damour, and scores of other towns and hamlets from the Galilee to the Awali River. U.S. military reinforcement frees Israel to concentrate on its campaign to remake Arab Lebanon into Israel's "North Bank"—an ominous parallel to the occupied West Bank.

ence, already at the center of Lebanese political life, into the form of the Lebanese National Movement. At the same time, their links with the Palestinian movement grew even stronger. For example, the PLO's extensive network of hospitals and clinics run by the Palestine Red Crescent Society were open free of charge to all poor Lebanese as well as Palestinians. In turn, the LNM opened hospitals in Tyre and Nabatiyeh in south Lebanon and served the predominantly Palestinian population of those regions. Their national identities and the political embodiments of those identities—the LNM and PLO—moved closer together so that the victories and setbacks of one were shared by the other. After all, they shared common goals and common obstacles.

The alliance between the LNM and Palestinian resistance was a large factor behind the growing strength of the progressive forces in Lebanon. During the 1982



Resisters cleaning their weapons.

Outside intervention, however, only aggravated Lebanon's festering social wounds. Although the civil war officially ended in October 1976 when several Arab countries intervened, the underlying tensions remained untouched and unremedied. In fact, they broke out again with even greater force after 1982.

Lebanese and Palestinians —United in Resistance

During the civil war and immediately following it, the progressive nationalist forces consolidated their pres-

invasion, their combined military strength was the principal reason many of Israel's goals were never fully realized.

To Israel's initial benefit, however, the PLO and Lebanese defenders finally suffered military defeat in Beirut. Moreover, the forced evacuation of PLO cadre out of Lebanon deprived the Palestinian resistance movement of a vitally needed center of national life and political mobilization.

Israeli troops were able to consolidate their presence and power in southern Lebanon while a fascist, ardently

pro-American, pro-Israeli government assumed power in Beirut, and in effect surrendered to Israel under the terms of the Shultz agreement in May 1983. The Shultz agreement essentially gave Israel free rein in southern Lebanon. "Secure borders" for Israel, as defined by the agreement, means violated Lebanese borders and occupied Lebanese territory.

New Resistance Organizations

Yet those gains fell far short of Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon's dreams. The siege of Beirut, the second direct Israeli assault on an Arab capital (the first was on Jerusalem in 1967), spurred the creation of the Lebanese National Resistance Front, an incessant thorn in Israel's side from its start. The Lebanese National Resistance Front represents nearly all of the progressive, anti-Phalangist militias, and in the early stages of the invasion worked in close coordination with the PLO. Even after the PLO fighters were forced to leave Beirut, the Resistance Front was self-sufficient enough to carry out an average of six military actions per day against the Israeli occupiers. These continuing attacks were instrumental in fueling the growing anti-war movement in Israel, whose increasing influence helped to force the Israeli Army to withdraw from Beirut in the fall of 1982 and to pull back to the Awali River a year later in September 1983. Even there they have experienced up to twenty attacks in one day.

Equal in significance to the creation of the Lebanese National Resistance Front was the formation of the Lebanese National Salvation Front in the spring of 1983. The Lebanese National Salvation Front comprises not only the patriotic resistance forces which were active in the now-superseded LNM, but an even broader range of community and religious affiliations. In fact, the National Salvation Front encompasses most of Lebanon's religious and political tendencies. It is united in opposing the U.S.-Israeli attempt to make Lebanon a "Western oasis" in the Middle East through the Shultz agreement, and it is dedicated to a political solution to the conflict in Lebanon.

The National Salvation Front is headed by Walid Jumblatt of the Progressive Socialist Party, Sunni leader Rashid Karami, and Maronite Christian and former Lebanese president Suleiman Franjeh (thereby breaking the traditional hold of the Phalangist party on the Maronite community). It is supported by Nabih Berri's Shiite Amal militia. The formation and consolidation of the National Salvation Front, politically supported by the PLO and Syria, represents an important realignment in the traditional patterns of Lebanese politics and demonstrates the isolation of the Phalangist-backed Gemayel government. The Lebanese government isolated itself from the Lebanese and Palestinian people, leaving them to the mercy of the Israeli invaders and their Lebanese allies.

The death and suffering of the countless victims of the invasion have not been in vain. The invasion, much as it tried, failed to destroy the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples and nations. The Palestinian resistance endures and continues growing now that the important lessons of 1982 have been learned. At their side is the Lebanese resistance, broader and stronger.

Nor did the invasion lessen the long-standing support of the progressive sectors of Lebanese society for the Palestinians' own struggle to regain their homeland. Rather, there was a mutual shoring up of resolve and solidarity. The unity of the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples will continue to flourish just like the traditional orange and olive trees whose branches entwine and embrace Lebanon as one. Their hopes and dreams, poetry and music, future victories and lessons, are deep and commonly grounded—never to be uprooted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Promises of the Storm was originally recorded in Paris by Chant du Monde. The version that you are holding was produced by the Marcel Khalifé Cultural Project in conjunction with Paredon Records. We hope that this record will bring the American public a greater awareness of the culture of endurance and resistance in Lebanon as practiced by one of its leading exponents—Marcel Khalifé. Khalifé reflects the solidarity between the Lebanese and Palestinian people—our hope is that this work will contribute to building strong ties of solidarity between the people of Lebanon and Palestine and the progressive people in the U.S.

The production group included: Phyllis Bennis, Christopher Hershey, Raghida Jounoubi, Barbara Lubinski, Hilton Obenzinger, Bruce Occeña, Eihad Rashide, Natalie Reuss, Ermena Vinluan and Pam Weatherford.

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Resources on Lebanon and Palestine

Organizations

Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)

1731 Connecticut Avenue N.W. Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20009
(202) 797-7662

Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG)

556 Trapelo Road
Belmont, Mass. 02178
(617) 484-5483

Palestine Congress of North America (PCNA)

P.O. Box 9621
Washington, D.C. 20016
(202) 244-5573

Palestine Human Rights Campaign (PHRC)

20 E. Jackson Blvd.
Suite 1111
Chicago, Ill. 60604

November 29th Coalition

P.O. Box 115
N.Y., N.Y. 10113
(212) 695-2686

Newspapers and Periodicals

Palestine Focus

National Newsletter of the
November 29th Coalition
P.O. Box 27462
San Francisco, Ca. 94127

Journal of Palestine Studies

P.O. Box 19449
Washington, D.C. 20036

MERIP (Middle East Research and Information Project)

P.O. Box 1247
N.Y., N.Y. 10027

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been copywritten by Paredon for the artists.
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ADDENDUM

Page 6: Marcel Khalifé appeared in the United States, touring thirteen cities, in the Spring of 1982.

Recent tape recordings of Marcel Khalifé and Al-Mayadeen Ensemble include *Al-Jissr* (The Bridge-1982) and *Ma'a-al-Joumhour* (With the People-1982)

ERRATUM

Page 6: “ *'Ala-l-Ard 'Ala-l'Hudud*, (On the Frontier-1979)” should read, “ *'Ala-l'Hudud*, (On the Frontier-1979)”.