

students, and plans to double this number by the year 2000.

The Applied Research Institute counts about 200 staff members, including 80 research scientists engaged in studies and research on water desalination, mineral technology, brackish water irrigation, sea water irrigation and agricultural and biological research, among other fields.

The difficult realities of the desert have fostered a rigorous task-oriented approach at the institute. As director Forgacs explained, the institute's first concern was to look for a system of desalination, but realizing that it was not economical, because there were not sufficient financial means to sustain such a project, the institute had to look for a way to use salt water in agriculture. Experiments proved that such water was very good for cotton and tomato crops, among others.

Many researchers at the institute complain of the financial constraints under which they currently operate—due to the Israeli economic crisis and inflation—and which have hampered and disoriented the research policies significantly. Long-term planning of research activities has been sacrificed in favor of research lines which may yield quicker results in commercial terms. The institute is under pressure to pursue research on adapting to the desert instead of greening it.

Dr. Shoshana Arad, a biologist, showed us the kind of work the institute does in direct connection with the production areas. Her team of four researchers is presently investigating the problem of cell tissues in melons which collapse, for reasons not fully known, destroying the fruit and endangering production and exports. It seems that it is the lack of calcium which provokes the disintegration of the cell walls.

Dr. Arad is also working on algae, like the red algae which produces carrageenan, a medium for bacteria growth. This algae could serve as the basis of a new branch in agriculture and cultures in sea water. "This research will take on added impetus if and when the Mediterranean-Dead Sea canal is implemented," she added (see interview, page 25).

Professor Aliza Benzioni, a specialist in the research which led to the production of Jojoba, a plant whose seeds contain a special wax and oil with important pharmaceutical applications, described the research done to develop new plants capable of living in desert regions, or growing with only brackish water irrigation.

Professor Dov Sitton is studying the effects of plants for medical uses, like substances unique for chemotherapy against cancer, which could lead to new types of antibiotics in the future.

Dr. Yosef Mirzahi has discovered an inhibitor of ripening processes for fruits and vegetables which could vastly extend their shelf-life. For the time being, this line of research has found an application for the production of the tomato, which, when vine-ripened, has a shelf-life of over six weeks. Dr. Mirzahi is delving into the relationship between the ripening speed and the degree of salinity in the water.

## What solution for the Palestinians?

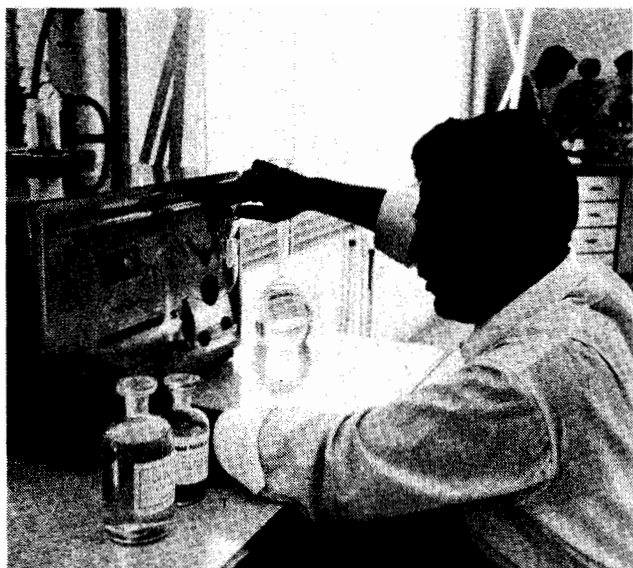
by Paolo Raimondi

If the Israeli government that is voted into office on July 23 should decide to make a genuine overture to the moderate leadership of the Palestinians, it will find that there is a party there with which a rational settlement could be reached.

Contrary to the stereotyped perception of many Israelis and Americans, the Palestinians are not simply machine-gunning terrorists controlled by Moscow—although this is of course true of the wing of the PLO that is locked in battle against Yassir Arafat. Leading Palestinians with whom *EIR*'s correspondents met (at the insistence of Israeli friends) during our trip to Israel are representatives of a cultured elite—doctors, engineers, skilled professionals. Many were educated in Western schools, and look to the United States as their political model—a country that proved capable of integrating different cultures and language-groups into one nation, dedicated to the principle of human development.

For the government of Israel, there is not a moment to lose in abandoning the thuggery against the Palestinian population that has characterized the Likud coalition government, under the influence of Ariel Sharon. The danger to Israel itself from these policies is broadly recognized. In a recent interview with the Israeli weekly *Newsview*, Prof. Yehoshafat Harkabi, former chief of military intelligence, identified Jewish terrorism on the West Bank as the outcome of the government's own policy of creeping annexation of "Judea and Samaria." Declared Harkabi: "Any fool can see that if we annex these territories, with their Arab population, we will commit national suicide. It follows, therefore, that we must scare the Arabs away." Although Harkabi added that he did not agree with the solution of forcing the Palestinians into emigration, he had no alternative to propose, except that the issue should become the focus of debate during the election campaign.

The refusal of the present Israeli political leadership to go for a settlement of the Palestinian question is radicalizing the West Bank population dangerously, we were told. At the universities of Hebron, Bethlehem, and Gaza, only the communists and the Islamic fundamentalists within the Palestinian community are permitted by the Israeli authorities to organize politically. Moderates cannot act publicly, for fear of being arrested as "PLO sympathizers."



United Nations

*Skilled Palestinian workers could play a significant role in the development of the Mideast. Shown is a Jordanian technician from the potassium industry.*

The fundamentalist backers of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini are moving onto the campuses, radicalizing the Arab youth. This has already provoked several violent clashes at the universities. Our sources report that the Palestinian communists get their money from the Israeli communist party, whose pro-Soviet credentials are impeccable.

Doctors from the Gaza strip told us that the Israeli authorities have restricted funding for the construction of hospitals, schools, and other social services serving the Palestinian population—this in the most densely populated area in the world, which is now a powderkeg.

Palestinian moderates believe that such Israeli policies are meant to drive Palestinians to emigrate, or at least to leave the West Bank and Gaza.

Like the Jews, the Palestinians have a traditional commitment to high education and cultural achievement which, despite their tragic fate during the last 40 years, has produced a population with a large number of skilled workers. The *Jerusalem Post* reported May 23 on a study by the Jerusalem Center of Public Affairs which concluded that the Palestinian high school population in the occupied territories had increased by 108% between 1967 and 1982, whereas the total population had increased by only 23%. During that period, 16,000 Israeli students and 13,000 Palestinian students were matriculated. There are 20,000 Palestinian students enrolled in post-secondary education programs, and 30,000 are expected to be enrolled by the end of the decade. This is a proportion as high as that of the Israeli Jewish population, higher than France and England, and the highest in the Arab Middle East.

The majority of these people represent the moderate

backers of Arafat and the Fatah-dominated mainstream of the PLO. Their political orientation is clear: They want an end to the state of war existing in the territories, and they want to concentrate their efforts upon solving the economic and social problems of the Palestinian people. Some are ready to join in a confederation with Jordan; others want to negotiate with the Israelis for the creation of a Palestinian state which could live in peace and recognize Israel's right to existence.

### **What role for the United States?**

Our Palestinian sources warned that the factional situation inside the PLO presents increasingly formidable obstacles to a settlement. Arafat, who can count on the support of the Palestinian majority, does not dare to attack head-on the radical wings of George Habash and Naif Hawatme, because this would split the movement. The Syrians are telling Arafat: If you declare a government in exile, then you will no longer represent the PLO. Arafat's major concern, these sources report, is the position of the U.S. government. Arafat would risk a major battle in his own movement and the danger that the terrorist wing would try to assassinate him, provided he had a guarantee that the United States would support a just solution for Israel and Palestinians, and would guarantee the implementation of the settlement, these sources declared.

This is the same analysis that pro-peace forces in Israel have outlined in the recent period: Even if Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia were to agree to support Arafat's declaration of a government in exile, the key question remains the position of the United States.

During our stay in Israel, we circulated an April 8 policy document by Lyndon LaRouche, "U.S. Policy toward Israel," which calls for an American-supported economic revival of the region as the basis for a peace agreement. LaRouche recommends that the United States recognize a declared Palestinian government in exile. "Israel's policy, thus far," LaRouche argues, "forces the PLO to maintain a state of warfare with Israel, since the Palestinian Arabs are permitted no place in the world where they might live in peace and among neighboring Arab peoples with whom they often share close family ties and deep cultural affinities. Moreover, there is no possibility of durable peace between Israel and any among its Arab neighbors until the present condition of the Palestinian Arabs is remedied. . . ."

"It is our proper desire that Israel become part of a community of republican principle with the United States, and that that nation prosper as a beacon radiating the best features of Western European culture into the Middle East as a whole."

This document was warmly received by our Israeli interlocutors, and one said that if Arafat were to combine the recognition of the Israeli state with a program of economic cooperation between a newly formed Palestinian entity and Israel, he would get the support of up to 35% of the Israeli population.