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June 12, 1970 Volume 68, Number 22
LIFE is published weekly except two issues yearly combining two issues in one by Time Inc., 541 N. Fairbanks Court, Chicago, Illinois 60611, principal office Rockefeller Center, New York, N.Y. 10020; James R. Shepley, President; Richard B. McKeough, Treasurer; John F. Harvey, Secretary. Second-class postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department at Ottawa, Canada and for payment of postage in cash. U. S. subscriptions \$11.00 a year and Canadian subscriptions \$12.00 a year.

Scouting both sides of an angry border

Correspondent Peter Young and Photographer Pierre Boulat spent several weeks scouting both sides of the Arab-Israeli border for this week's lead story about Palestinian Arabs. Young cabled from Paris:

"Our starting point was Lebanon. Near the American University of Beirut we met a host of Palestinian upperclassmen, all of them dedicated workers for Al Fatah. The border area, we learned over a banana split, was guarded by Lebanese troops and strictly out of bounds to newsmen. But all we had to do was to disguise ourselves as guerrillas—buy some G.I. fatigues and *hatta* (head wraparounds) and wear sunglasses. Al Fatah would then get us through the army checkpoints.

"The scheme worked pretty well. Traveling under false passes (Pierre became Abu Kawar and I was Abu Khasho), we reached a group of guerrillas camped a mile or so from the border. They drove us in an Al Fatah Mercedes, no less, to a rocky, treeless bluff overlooking the Israeli settlement of Menara. 'We've done a few good jobs over there,' said one of them, proudly, 'but we'd better leave soon. If the Israeli Phantoms strike us, spread out.' We got out, but a little farther along the border we ran smack into the chief of Lebanese intelligence in the area. He sent us packing back to Beirut where we were charged with entering a forbidden area with a camera and traveling under false identities. We were held for eight hours by a fuming intelligence officer who harangued us incessantly until the American and British embassies secured our release. Thus pardoned, we left Lebanon hoping for better luck on the other side of the border.

"From Beirut we flew to Tel Aviv and headed for the Israeli-occupied Arab city of Gaza. Getting there was no problem. We simply rented a car and drove south. The problem was getting out without an Arab bystander tossing a grenade or homemade bomb at the car. We got one tip from a young reservist. 'When they throw their grenades at moving targets,' he told us, 'they usually throw short.' Not much reassured, we drove along the city's potholed streets with a guide named Mohammed, who told us that since everyone in town knew him, we were probably safe. As it turned out, we got through the day without incident. But as Pierre and I drove out of Gaza through the blossoming orange groves to the safety of Israeli soil, we could not help recalling our guide's gloomy predictions: 'It's like a pressure cooker here. The resentment is growing all the time, and unless the Israelis move all the refugees out, something is going to burst.' "



BOULAT AND YOUNG

Ralph Graves

RALPH GRAVES
Managing Editor

TIME

Palestinian Arabs: new pride and unity

CHANGING CAREERS AT MIDDLE AGE

The "Tiger Cubs" train
at a camp in Jordan

JUNE 12 • 1970 • 50¢

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