

MELA NOTES 20, MAY, 1980

ALGERIA

My stay in Algeria was limited in time to one week and in space to one city, Algiers, the capital. During that week, I visited publishers, bookshops and a good number of learned institutions. I met with university professors and librarians with whom I discussed the publishing situation and the literary and intellectual currents in the country. While I was there the rumors of President Boumedienne's illness were spreading and guessing was high as to his whereabouts. The political atmosphere was tense, but I had no problems establishing contacts. Transportation within Algiers is extremely inadequate. One has to wait at times for an hour to get a taxi.

The Publishing Situation

Algeria is one of a few Arab countries that has been publishing a national bibliography since 1964. It is supposed to come out twice a year, but it has not always lived up to this frequency. The bibliography is well produced and indexed, reflecting the bilingualism, French and Arabic, still very strong in Algeria. A statistical survey of several issues indicates that the average output is 200 new titles per year with the French surpassing the Arabic two to one. A bibliography entitled Dix ans de production intellectuelle en Algerie 1962-1972 sums up the publishing activities of the Algerians since independence.

In Algeria, the government system is socialistic in orientation. The government exercises control over most means of production including publishing. Most publishing, however, is done by the Société Nationale d'Édition et Diffusion, better known by its acronym SNED (3, Blvd. Zirout Youcef, Algiers, Tels. 63-92-67 and 63-96-43). SNED's publications are both in Arabic and French. The Arabic Section is directed by a vice-president, Mr. Muhammad al-Sharif. A yearly annotated catalog of their Arabic publications is issued listing new and old titles with emphasis of their publishing program on humanities and the social sciences, plus children's books. The director of the general

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publishing program is Mr. <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Rahmān al-Māḍāwī. SNED is not only the largest publisher, it is the only legal distributor of publications. The law in Algeria permits anybody to publish but does not allow anybody to distribute, so most of SNED's business is in the distribution of trade books and of secondary textbooks. SNED has a number of offices, with the main headquarters at 3, Zirout Youcef, and the distribution center at 49 bis, rue Ben Mehdi. SNED will accept orders from overseas. It publishes for the Ministry of Information a periodical in Arabic, al-Thaqāfah, which is one of the leading literary and intellectual journals in the country.

Next to SNED in importance, but not volume or size, is the Office des Publications Universitaires (29, Rue Abou Nouas, Hydra, Algiers. Tel. 60-44-60). The specialty of OPU is university publications which tend to be mostly textbooks in all fields of human knowledge, but particularly in law, science and medicine. The OPU has a major store on one of the main avenues of Algiers (43, Didouche Mourad-Algiers, Tel. 63-65-51) and wherever there are university centers in Algeria. OPU publishes a periodical, L'Université, in an Arabic and a French version. Mr. Youcef Naseeb is in charge of its operation and he is willing to accept orders from overseas. A catalog for their 1978/79 publications has just come out. OPU publications may be available through SNED, but it might be wiser to order them directly.

As in many Arab countries, the Ministry of Information and that of Religious Endowments have publication programs. The Ministry of Information and Culture publishes al-Thaqāfah through SNED. It also publishes Amāl, a literary journal oriented to encouraging young Algerian writers. The Ministry also publishes a series, both in French and Arabic, called "Art and Culture". The elegantly printed series includes works on the major cities and the major historical personalities of Algeria. Another series published by this ministry is "Visages de l'Algerie", a public relations series dealing with various provinces of Algeria and aspects of life.

The purely governmental publications such as reports of agencies and banks were many and I did not have time to survey

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them. However, mention should be made of the publications of AARDES (L'Association Algerienne pour la Recherche Démographique Économique et Sociale) located at 15, Rue Hamani (ex-Charras), Tel. 64-87-22, which publishes series of governmental studies on industry, family and consumer affairs, migration, price indexes and many other publications with statistical studies. Unfortunately, almost all of these publications are mimeographed and produced in small quantities.

The publications of the learned institutions are diverse in nature and scope. Foremost among these centers is the recently established Centre Nationale d'Études Historiques (Blvd. Abderrahmane Laala-El-Madania, Algiers, Tel. 66-91-38), which publishes two serials--Majallat al-Tārīkh superseding the Faculty of Letters' Revue d'Histoire et de Civilisation du Maghrab, and al-Wathā'iq al-Tārīkhīyah. The law school, known as L'Institut de Droit, publishes La Revue Algerienne des sciences juridiques économiques et politiques. Most of the research institutions are now part of ONRS (Office Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique) which includes research institutions such as Le Centre de Recherche en Économie Appliquée (CREA), Centre De Science et Technologie Nucliere (CSTN) and the Centre de Recherches Anthropologiques Prehistoriques et Ethnographiques, better known by its acronym CRAPE. This latter center publishes Libyca as well Memoires. ONRS is under the Direction de la Recherche Scientifique in the Ministry of Higher Education.

Statistics on Algeria are published by the Direction des Statistiques et de la Comptabilité Nationale (Chemin Ibn Badis al-Mou'iz, El-Biar, Algiers, Tel. 78-03-23). In addition to a number of publications on foreign trade, industry and population, the Direction publishes the Annuaire statistique de l'Algerie.

Serial publications other than those mentioned above include al-Jaysh (al-Djeich), al-Jazā'irīyah (El-Djazairia), the weekly al-Mujāhid, all are published in French and Arabic editions. There are two literary magazines--Amāl, published by the Ministry of Information, and Alwān, by the Union of Algerian Writers. The Union itself is an agency of the same ministry.

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Because Algeria hosts revolutionary groups and liberation movements, one is likely to find numerous publications of these groups and movements. Among the most important ones are the Palestine Liberation Organization, Polisario, Patriotic Front (ZAPU), South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman, and many others.

The Ministry of Information and Culture (Ministère de l'Information et la Culture)

At the Ministry of Information and Culture (119, Didouche Mourad, Algiers), I visited Miss Fawziah Sahraoui-Tahar, Deputy Director for Cultural Exchange, who had visited the Library of Congress shortly before my departure on the trip. She is a very friendly person and one of a few Algerian women in high ranking positions. The Ministry is a major publisher and an active sponsor in the cultural life of Algeria. Miss Sahraoui provided me with a number of publications, especially the volumes in the series "Collection Art et Culture". She was also instrumental in helping me get other serials such as Amāl and Alwān published by Agencies under the Ministry of Information. Exchange with the Ministry will be made through the Bibliothèque Nationale which is under the administrative responsibility of this ministry.

Secretariat d'État au Plan

This institution, equivalent to a ministry of planning, is in charge of the Centre National de Documentation Économique et Sociale (Chemin Ibn Badis al-Mou'iz, El-Biar, Algiers, or B.P. 478, Algiers, Gare). In the Centre, I met with Mr. Amran Ben Younes, the Deputy Director for Publications and Documentation, who is very much interested in setting up an exchange program.

Centre National d'Études Historiques  
(Blvd. Abderrahmane Laala-El-Makania, Algiers, Tel. 66-91-38)

The Center for Historical Studies is a young but promising

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research center headed by a revered scholar and politician, Ahmad Tawfiq al-Madani, and directed competently by Mr. Mohamed Touili. The Center collects documents on Algerian history and owns a collection of photoreproduced documents, from the Prime Ministers Archive in Istanbul, related to Algeria and North Africa. It also publishes a journal and a series of historical documents. Study facilities are also available for scholars and researchers.

AARDES (L'Association Algerienne pour la Recherche  
Démographique Economique et Sociale)  
(15, Rue Hamani Ex-Charras , Algiers, Tels. 64-87-22  
and 64-89-79.)

Based on the principle that socio-economic phenomena cannot be understood in isolation, this center collects not only statistical data, but prepares studies on the demographic situation, urbanism, rural emigration, fecundity, prices, taking into consideration all the variables that are involved. It is directed by Mr. Mohamed Bokhoubza who provided me with four titles and requested the setting up of an exchange program.

#### TUNISIA

Tunisia is the smallest of the Maghrib states, yet it is one of the most active in the field of publications. Relatively speaking, the political atmosphere is much more relaxed than in Algeria in that opposition groups are allowed to air their opinions although not far enough as to cause a threat to the government of the ruling Destourian Socialist Party. Just before my arrival into the country, the leader of the General Union of Tunisian Workers, Habib Ben Achour, was sentenced to ten years in prison for leading a strike and riots against the government during the month of January 1978.

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When planning a trip to Tunisia, one should take into consideration that the business weekend is Saturday-Sunday, but government offices are closed Friday and Saturday afternoons. Bookstores are open between 8:00 A.M. and 1:00 P.M. and between 4:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M. Moving around is much easier in Tunisia than it is in Algiers. The center of town (Centreville) is small and the distances between institutions from which publications are to be procured are not that long. Taxis, furthermore, are easily attainable in two sizes, regular and small. The "petit taxi," as it is known, is readily available all over town.

### The Publishing Situation

Among the Maghrib states, Tunisia produces the highest number of publications. It has an active publishing industry as well as an active intellectual artistic life. The Bibliothèque Nationale has recently begun the publication of a national bibliography with the Arabic title of al-Bibliyūgrāfiya al-Qawmiyah al-Tunisiyah, and the French title Bibliographie Nationale de Tunis, appearing in quarterly and annual editions, both mimeographed. The 1977 annual volume lists 692 titles, including 325 titles in Arabic (92 official and 233 commercial). Although most of the titles listed are 1977 works, some display dates prior to that year. Furthermore, this high number includes translations, reprints and some separata from periodicals.

Most publishing is centered in the hands of two semi-official publishing houses--La Maison Tunisienne de l'Édition (54 Avenue de la Liberté, Tunis, Tel. 285-873 and 285-878) and the Société Tunisienne de Diffusion (5 Avenue de Carthage, Tunis or P.O. Box 440, Tel. 255-000). The latter has launched a joint venture in publishing with the Libyans since 1975, al-Dār al-<sup>C</sup>Arabiyah lil-Kitāb (Libyan address: Ghumah al-Mahmudi St., Wafa' Bldg., or P.O. Box 3185, Tripoli, Tel. 47-287; Tunisian address: 43 Bis Jughartah St., Tunis, Tel. 282-100). MTE also has undertaken several joint ventures with SNED in Algeria and with different Kuwait publishers. MTE's publications are varied, including editions of classical works, literature, history, drama, and linguistic and social studies. Both MTE and STD publish children's books. The latter has an

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impressive list of titles in this field. There are a number of private publishers in Tunisia. Among the most important ones are: Dār al-Najāh (Éditions Ennajah, 11 Rue de la France); Dār Abū Salāmah (Etablissements Bousalama, 15 Rue de la France), Etablissements A. Ben Abdallah (17, Rue de la France, Tel. 230-361), and Ceres Productions (Rue de Besanson) which specializes in deluxe editions. Dār al-Rāyah (was unable to get address) publishes mostly religious works.

Scholarly publications emanate mostly from the University of Tunis and a number of research centers. The University professors publish mostly in French, but many of them do publish in Arabic. Almost all scholarly periodicals in Tunisia are issued by university colleges. Mention should be made of Hawliyat al-Jāmi<sup>h</sup>ah al-Tunisiyah (Annales de l'Université de Tunis), Cahiers de Tunisie, which is now published by the Faculté des Lettres et de Science Humains, Revue Tunisienne de Droit, published by the faculty of law, and the well known Revue Tunisienne de Sciences Sociales, published by the Centre d'Études et de Recherches Économiques et Sociales. L'Institut National des Sciences de l'Éducation (17, Rue d'Irak) publishes La Revue Tunisienne des Sciences de l'Éducation. The Institute National Scientifique et Technique d'Océanographie et de Pêche located in Salambo puts out two periodicals: Annales and Bulletin. Another important institute that publishes scholarly works and journals is the Institut National d'Archeologie (Place du Château) which publishes a monographic series Notes et Documents in addition to books on history and archeology of Tunisia. Another scholarly journal is the Revue d'Histoire Maghrébine, a semi-annual publication in Arabic, French and English dealing with the modern and contemporary history of North Africa.

Tunisia is rich in serial publications. The major newspapers are L'Action, al-<sup>h</sup>Amal, La Presse, and al-<sup>h</sup>Sabāh. The latter two enjoy some independence, but on the whole follow the government or the party line. An opposition newspaper, al-Ray (Errai) has been allowed since late 1977. The Tunisian official gazette, al-Rā'id al-Rasmī is one of the oldest (1860) in the Arab world and is still running strong.

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There are a number of weekly, monthly, and quarterly magazines and journals. Fikr is the leading literary monthly. Qisas specializes in short stories and literary criticism. IBLA published by the White Brothers who run the Institut des Belles Lettres Arab deals with literature, arts and sociology and usually contains significant studies on these subjects. The Union Nationale des Femmes de Tunisie publishes al-Mar'ah in Arabic and Femme in French. There are two religiously oriented serials, al-Hidāyah and Jawhar al-Islām.

#### Maison Tunisienne de l'Edition

This government sponsored institution is the largest publisher in Tunisia. Most of its publications are in the field of humanities and social sciences. Classical works and reprints are common in its list of publications. The director of MTE is Mr. Azzuz al-Ribaei who knows Dr. S. al-Hagrassi rather well. Mr. al-Ribaei had some business transactions with the Cairo office during the 1975 Cairo International Book Fair at which time he discussed with Mr. Hagrassi the possibility of bringing to the fair 25 copies of each of his publications. When I talked with him he was not very enthusiastic about the idea of taking that many copies to Egypt.

#### La Bibliothèque Nationale

The Tunisian National Library, housed in an old and picturesque building in one of the winding streets of the Medina (old town), is a busy institution in that it attempts to build up its collections, to survey comprehensively the national publishing scene and to publish its own series of bibliographies and documents. The Librarian, Dr. Ezzedine Guillouz, is a well known scholar who pursues an enlightened policy of expansion and growth.



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Centre d'Études et de Recherches Économiques et Sociales (CERES)  
(23, Rue d'Espagne, Tunis)

This well known center affiliated with the University of Tunis is one of a very few in North Africa provided with facilities to accomodate non-Tunisian scholars who come to do research on Tunis. The Center's library of about ten thousand volumes is rich in materials (in French) dealing with sociology, demography, economics, and psychology.

Institut National d'Archéologie et d'Arts  
(4 Place du Château, Tunis)

This institute formerly called Direction des Antiquites et Arts, is in fact the antiquities department, serving as a center for archaeological and historical research. It has a library (not open to the public) of about 6,000 volumes containing material on art and archaeology in particular. I met with the Director of the Institute, Mr. Ezzedine Bachaouch and with Mr. Ibrahim Shabbouh, the Senior Specialist on Islamic art.

The National Archives  
(Place du Gouvernement, Casbah, Tunis)

The Archives are located in the offices of the Prime Minister and are divided into two major collections: the historical section, which includes archives from the end of the 16th century to 1881, and the modern collection containing archives from 1881 to 1955. There, I met with Drs. Abdel Jalil Temimi, Deputy Archivist, and Rashad Lamam, a Senior Specialist, both of whom are old acquaintances of mine and also serve as professors at the University of Tunis. Dr. Temimi is indexing the documents and organizing them by subject, geographical name and proper name. The Archives are a great source for investigators, but they still need a great deal of organization and space.

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### LIBYA

My original plan was to visit Tripoli and Benghazi, as both cities are capitals in a way. Tripoli is the Federal capital but Benghazi is the capital of Cyrenaica and the seat of the University of Qaryunis. Unfortunately, all commercial flights between Tripoli and Benghazi were cancelled immediately after my arrival in Tripoli which coincided with the pilgrimage season. As a result, all Libyan airline planes were diverted to carry pilgrims to Mecca. Since no airlines other than Libyan fly between these two cities, I was unable to visit Benghazi. The cancellation of the trip to Benghazi provided me with more time in Tripoli and enabled me to visit a greater number of institutions in that city.

#### The Publishing Situation

There is a growing interest in Libya in libraries and in library science. A national library is being set up with two main centers, one in Tripoli and the other in Benghazi. The building for the Benghazi center is already in place and functioning. The Tripoli center has not completely taken shape. It exists as a nucleus of a national library in the form of a book preparation unit (Wahdat Tajhiz al-Kutub) under the jurisdiction of the General Administration of Culture and National Guidance. The official name in English of the book unit is Technical Preparing Section. At the time of my visit it was directed by Mr. Rajab al-<sup>C</sup>Allam (Box 447, Tel. 49617). The Section, in addition to building up the collections of the national library, has been publishing since 1972 the Arab Bibliography of Libya. The last volume I have seen of this publication (1976) contains 309 titles in Arabic and 21 in Western languages organized according to the Dewey classification system. A section on serials lists fifty-six publications in Arabic and nine in Western languages. The bibliography cites trade and government publications as well as textbooks. It includes a list of publications that have failed to be included in the 1975 issue. Publishing in Libya is not dominated by a single government sponsored institution. al-Sharikay al-<sup>C</sup>Ammah lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzi<sup>C</sup> wa-al-I<sup>C</sup>lam (Box 959, Tripoli) (The General

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Publishing Distribution and Advertisement Company), which is government sponsored, is not as developed as SNED in Algeria and MTE in Tunisia. Perhaps the strongest of the publishing companies at present is al-Dār al-<sup>C</sup>Arabīyah lil-Kitāb. The above is a joint venture with Tunisia. Other important trade publishers include Dār al-Miṣrātī, (12 Muḥammad al-Maqrīf Street), Maktabat al-Farajānī (54 <sup>C</sup>Amr ibn al-<sup>C</sup>Ās Street, and 9 First of September Street). In Benghazi, Dār al-Kitāb al-Lībī (Box 769) is perhaps the only and most important trade publisher.

Most scholarly publishing is done at the universities and research centers. There are two major universities in Libya--The First of September University (al-Fātiḥ), and the University of Qaryunis in Benghazi. Both publish scholarly periodicals. al-Hikmah, a journal dealing with philosophy and sociology, is published by the College of Education, al-Fātiḥ University. Majallat Kullīyat al-Adāb is published by the Faculty of Letters, Qaryunis University. The Bulletin of the Faculty of Engineering is published in Tripoli, as are The Libyan Journal of Science and Majallat Kullīyat al-Tarbiyah. Both publications are in English and Arabic. al-Khawārizmī, which ceased recently, was published by the Department of Mathematics in Tripoli. Libya Antiqua, which deals with archaeology, has been published since 1964 by the Directorate General of Antiquities. It is one of the most scholarly journals in the country. A new center, the Libyan Studies Centre (al-Andalus Quarter, P.O. Box 5070, Tripoli) was about to issue a new journal Majallat al-Buḥūth al-Tārīkhīyah when I visited. The Arab Development Institute publishes two important serials; one is the Arab Development Journal for Science and Technology in Arabic and English and the other, al-Fikr al-<sup>C</sup>Arabī. Both are edited and printed by the Institute's branch in Beirut, Lebanon. The Union of Arab Writers publishes al-Fuṣūl al-Arba<sup>C</sup>ah, a literary journal.

In the legal fields, the Official Gazette is published irregularly by the Ministry of Justice. The University of Qaryunis issues al-<sup>C</sup>Adālah; Majallat al-Maḥkamah al-<sup>C</sup>Ulyā is issued by the Supreme Court and al-Muḥāmī, a quarterly that began appearing in 1976, is published by the Bar Association. The Cultural Committee of the Faculty of Law in Qaryunis University publishes Dirāsāt Qānūniyah.

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The most important serials in the field of economics are al-Iqtisād wa-al-Tijārah, a quarterly publication of the Chamber of Commerce and Industries and al-Nashrah al-Iqtisādīyah, the journal of the Central Bank of Libya.

There are two major serials of a general nature, both monthlies: al-Thaqāfah al-<sup>C</sup>Arabīyah and al-Shūrah. The latter is less general in that it is ideologically oriented. It represents the national progressive thought, as its subtitle states, of the ruling organization in Libya.

Libya, which not so long ago had several daily newspapers, is limited now to one paper in Arabic, al-Fajr al-Jadīd. Two supplements, one cultural and the other political, are published weekly. An English weekly newspaper, The Jamahiriyah Mail is printed in Valetta, Malta. There are other serials, mostly specialized and of less research value. The above listed ones seem to be the most important.

The book trade in Libya is still not well organized. In Tripoli as well as Benghazi there are a few good bookstores where you can find Lebanese publications and some Western language material, but on the whole, private publishing and book distribution is limited in scope. Maktabat al-Farajānī is perhaps the largest private publisher and book trader.

#### The University of al-Fateh

At the University of al-Fateh I visited the deans of the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Sciences. Both visits were mostly for courtesy purposes and for discussing ways and means of cooperation in general. However, I visited twice the Head of Printing and Publications Department, Mr. El-Hadi A. El-Buesi (Box 18104, Tel. 39100 ext. 2476). He is in charge of all publishing and distribution at the University.

#### Ministry of Culture

I paid two visits to the Ministry, a courtesy visit to Mr. Muhammad al-Turki al-Tājurī, the Director General of the General Administration of Culture and National Guidance, and a working visit to Mr. Rajab al-<sup>C</sup>Allām of the Technical Preparing Unit (Box 447, Tripoli, Tel. 49617). Mr. al-<sup>C</sup>Allām

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showed me around the unit which, in good time, shall become the Libyan National Library in Tripoli. This unit prepares the national bibliography for publication and catalogs or gives some bibliographic control to the incoming materials. Mr. al-<sup>C</sup>Allām was very generous in letting me select books from their storehouse.

The Arab Development Institute

(Box 8004, al-Nasr Street, Garden City, Tel. 34021)

Directed by a Libyan scientist, Dr. <sup>C</sup>Ali ibn al-Ashhar, the Institute's main function is to prepare studies and feasibility studies on all development projects. The Institute has a branch in Beirut, Lebanon where most of these studies are made and where most of its serial and monographic publications originate. In both Libya and Lebanon, the Institute is building specialized research collections to meet its research needs.

Libyan Studies Centre

(P.O. Box 5070, al-Andalus Quarter)

When I was visiting Libya, this center had not been officially launched, although it was already functioning. The mission of this center seems to be multiple. Its Arabic name, which may be translated as "The Center for the Study and Research of the Libyan Struggle", indicates emphasis on the struggle led by Omar al-Mukhtar against the Italians, but the Center will serve as a kind of national archive and a research center on the history of modern Libya. It also is responsible for the Islamic Museum which houses a collection of art objects, photographs, and documents from Libya. The director of the Center is Dr. M. Taher Jerary. Dr. Jerary is interested in preparing a bibliographic list of sources on Libya.

The Union of Libyan Writers (Box 1017) is housed in the same building as the Center. I was able to visit there briefly and procure four issues of the quarterly al-Fuṣūl al-Arba<sup>C</sup>ah published by the Union. I also visited briefly the offices of the General Organization Company for Publishing

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Distribution and Advertisement (Gouma al-Mahmoudi Street, P.O. Box 959) to procure back issues of al-Shūrā and al-Thaqāfah al-<sup>C</sup>Arabīyah.

#### THE ARAB EAST AND ISRAEL

My trip was originally to be limited to Northwest Africa. However, as the time to take off approached, other business that needed personal attention became evident. I therefore visited Cairo, Amman, Jerusalem, Beirut, and Riyadh--each for a short period of time. The following is a summary of my findings on the publishing situation in these places without going into much detail.

#### CAIRO, EGYPT

In Cairo I visited mainly the LC office and discussed the forthcoming changes that are to take place as a result of the depletion of the PL-480 funds. Publishing in Egypt has remained basically the same in the last five years--a great number of reprints, editing of classical works, "potboilers" in support of and against Nasserism, and popular editions of religious and literary classics. The effects of the isolation of Egypt in the Arab world, as a result of President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, was beginning to be felt in the book trade. The Iraqi Book Center was about to fold up, and books and periodicals arriving into Egypt from other Arab countries were becoming scarce. One important event, which was then rumored about and became a reality in the early summer of 1979, was the resignation of Dr. Mahmoud Sheniti from the Book Organization. The poet Ṣalāḥ <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Ṣabūr was appointed in his place.

#### AMMAN, JORDAN

In Amman there is more publishing going on, although not