

ISRAEL AND ITS ARAB MINORITY—

One Step Forward, One Back

By AL FINDLEY

The Israeli government has taken two new steps in relation to the Arab minority within the country—one a step in the right direction of liberalizing the restrictions on the Arabs, and the other a backward step in placing further legal restrictions on them.

The government has lifted some of the controls on the movement of Arabs in one district of Galilee where about 75,000 Arabs live. Other parts of the country are not affected, nor is a part of Galilee which lies three miles from the frontier.

As is well known, Israeli Arabs need special passes to leave their villages. This requirement had a very serious effect on the employment of Arabs. Not only did it make them subject to undue red tape, not only did it mean that they had to travel to a military post before going to work, but in most cases very few "passports" were issued.

The General Zionists who have de-

manded the lifting of military rule over Arab areas have not succeeded in this demand, but they do seem to have gained a moderation of the severities of such rule. In addition, the cabinet minister announced that further liberalization would follow.

The step backward was the introduction of a bill by Pinchas Lavon which empowers the government to deport "security risks" from "danger areas." The Israeli army has in the past deported Arabs without the benefit of a special law. The adoption of this law will only legalize the lack of civil rights that features the position of the Arabs in Israel.

The defense minister also introduced a bill extending the military rule over Arab areas for another year. The only opposition to these measures came from the Arab deputies supported by the Mapam and the Communist Party. The other parties supported them as a government bill despite extensive private opposition.