Jerusalem in Israeli Politics, 1947-1967

For a city with as rich of a history as Jerusalem, the persistence of domestic conflict over several centuries comes as no surprise. However, in the aftermath of the Second World War, the struggle for Jerusalem became a global issue as land-seeking Zionists, wary Arab communities, and the newly established United Nations all sought to implement their own vision for the future of the holy city. Over the course of the next two decades, Jerusalem's political landscape would be shaped by crucial decisions made by prominent Israeli leaders that lay the foundation for present-day Jerusalem. Through their respective articles, Michael Brecher and Motti Golani employ distinct approaches to analyze the motivations and actions of Israeli political leaders during this period and identify the factors that led to partition, relocation of Israel's capital, and integration of East and West Jerusalem. Brecher's "Jerusalem: Israel's Political Decisions, 1947-1977" delves into the three major policy decisions implemented by Israeli leaders during this period and frequently utilizes dialogue and selections from printed media to capture local sentiments.[1] Meanwhile, Golani probes deeper into the roots of Zionist aspirations in his article "Jerusalem's Hope Lies Only in Partition: Israeli Policy on the Jerusalem Question, 1948-67" and examines the evolution of Israeli and Zionist thought during the mid-20th century to suggest that Jerusalem is inherently a divided city.[2] Through their unique selections of evidence, varying degrees of emphasis on cultural context, and closely-aligning perspectives on the influence of Israeli leaders, Brecher and Golani utilize unique approaches to effectively analyze Israel's political actions in Jerusalem during the mid-20th century. Ultimately, Golani's extensive elaboration on the evolution of Zionist thought during this era yields a stronger prediction for future resolution of conflict in Jerusalem.

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[1] Michael Brecher, "Jerusalem: Israel's Political Decisions, 1947-1977," *Middle East Journal* 32, no. 1 (1978): 13-34.
[2] Motti Golani, "Jerusalem's Hope Lies Only in Partition: Israeli Policy on the Jerusalem Question, 1948-67," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31, no. 4 (1999): 577-604.

Brecher frames his discussion of Israeli politics around three turning points and includes in depth analysis of the individuals and circumstances that contributed to Israel's bold ascent to power. After introducing the factors that influenced the partition of Jerusalem in 1949, Brecher identifies the relocation of Israel's capital to Jerusalem, the transfer of the Foreign Office to Jerusalem in 1953, and the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967 as the three defining actions implemented by the Israeli government during the mid-20th century.[3] Brecher utilizes extended quotes from Israeli Cabinet members and political leaders to convey the nature of conflicting viewpoints among government officials and illustrate the manner in which Israel justified its actions to the rest of the world. An excerpt of Prime Minister Ben Gurion's address to the UN General Assembly highlighted the Zionist idea that "Jerusalem is the 'heart of hearts' in Israel."[4] Comments of this nature are present throughout the article and are critical to Brecher's communication of the passion and determination that inspired political decisions. Extensive discussion of the symbolic importance of Israel's control of Jerusalem to the Jewish people at the conclusion of the article further solidifies Brecher's belief that Israeli dominance over Jerusalem is essential to the Jewish people. The potential obstacles presented by this deep-seated cultural sentiment are highlighted through recurring references to the current Israeli perception of Jerusalem as "an indispensable part of a revived Jewish state."[5] Brecher's inclusion of this fact is indicative of his belief that early Zionist pragmatics have been replaced by a passionate, uncompromising Jewish base. Substantial use of primary source evidence in the article represents the author's intent to identify the direct causes and effects surrounding early Israeli political decisions.

While discussing many of the same points as Brecher, Golani contextualizes his investigation of Israeli politics by identifying Jewish ideals regarding control of Jerusalem prior to

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[3] Brecher, "Jerusalem: Israel's Political Decisions," 16.
[4] Brecher, "Jerusalem: Israel's Political Decisions," 14.
[5] Brecher, "Jerusalem: Israel's Political Decisions," 33.

1947 before meticulously marking the evolution of that vision over two decades in his all-encompassing article. After first introducing Zionists' core principles regarding Jerusalem during the 1930s, Golani frames every Israeli political move in the context of early Zionist goals. This approach is exemplified by Golani's portrayal of the partition of Jerusalem as a means through which Jews hoped to expel Christians and Muslims from Jerusalem and advance their long-term vision for the city. Golani also explores the reasons for Israel's political success in the global arena by discussing dissenting international opinions and detailing the circumstances that enabled Israel to enhance its political presence in Jerusalem without facing further repercussions from foreign powers. Israel's key advantage identified in the article was their distinction "between principle and practice" and their realization that "it was practice that ultimately counted."[6] Golani's reasoning behind Israel's invincibility from foreign influence is one of many examples of the analysis provided throughout the article that reveals the lasting implications of many Israeli political actions. Much of the author's insights are targeted toward assessing the validity of Meron Benvenisti's claim that there was "coerced acceptance of the city's division" from the Israeli perspective during the era of partition.[7] Golani suggests that Israel's decision to occupy East Jerusalem came as a surprise to many due to the prior Zionist notion that "Israel had no deliberate intention to rule in East Jerusalem."[8] This argument supports Golani's conclusion that partition continues to be the answer to a peaceful solution in Jerusalem that would satisfy pre-World War II Zionist aspirations and acknowledge Arab claims to the land.

In accordance with their distinct methods of describing the background and consequences involved in political decisions, Brecher and Golani rely on different forms of evidence to convey the sentiments of Israeli leaders at the time. Both authors discuss the

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[6] Golani, "Jerusalem's Hope," 589.
[7] Golani, "Jerusalem's Hope," 577.
[8] Golani, "Jerusalem's Hope," 598.

Jewish people's shared willingness to compromise and accept the territorial internationalization plan in 1947 but present this position in starkly contrasting manners. Brecher conveys the reasoning behind the decision by citing Prime Minister Ben Gurion's statement that the sacrifice of the opportunity to control Eastern Jerusalem was a "price to be paid for statehood."[9] Comparatively, Golani attributed the acceptance of the partition to the urgent necessity of a Jewish homeland as a result of the Second World War and suggests that compromise was a result of "Zionist pragmatism based on the art of the possible."[10] The discrepancy between these analyses highlights the authors' contrasting approaches. Golani's argument focuses on identifying the process and reasoning behind Zionists' evolving political stance. The article incorporates contemporary perspectives and analysis of Israeli political decisions to emphasize the lasting effects of individual events on future outcomes. Short quotes from historians and interviews of Israeli political leaders assist in conveying the motivations that drove Israel to adopt the policies that it did. Meanwhile, Brecher adopted a more direct approach through his abundant use of data and dialogue from that period. Brecher includes tables showing the UN General Assembly's vote on the issue of territorial internationalization and data regarding Jerusalem population distribution to illustrate the actual political and social environment in Jerusalem at the time.[11] The authors' contrasting use of evidence produces distinct assessments of Israeli politics during this era. Golani seeks to synthesize historical evidence with modern opinions to develop a deep understanding of the source of political conflict in Jerusalem and identify future possibilities, while Brecher focuses on documenting the actual decision-making process and consequences that arose in the immediate aftermath. Golani's repeated references to prevailing Zionist beliefs regarding the status of Jerusalem as a strictly

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[9] Brecher, "Jerusalem: Israel's Political Decisions," 14.
[10] Golani, "Jerusalem's Hope," 580.
[11] Brecher, "Jerusalem: Israel's Political Decisions," 17, 20.

Jewish land contribute to a more holistic approach that includes many considerations that were not mentioned in Brecher's article.

Despite their differing approaches, both articles clearly outline the immense influence that powerful individuals such as Prime Minister Ben Gurion, Foreign Minister Moshe Sharrett, and Military Governor Dov Joseph exerted on the political decision-making process at every stage. Ben Gurion's role as a spokesperson and advocate for the Zionist movement is made clear by the relevance of his statements both during the implementation of government action and through comments shared years afterward. Golani includes Gurion's bold proclamation that "Jerusalem is an integral part of the State of Israel and its eternal capital" to demonstrate how defiant the Prime Minister was in the face of a strongly supported UN resolution.[12] The symbolic nature of Gurion's words is further emphasized by Brecher's inclusion of an excerpt from Gurion's statement to the Provisional State Council in which he speaks of Jerusalem "as within the boundaries of the Jewish state."[13] Both authors' use of direct quotes from Ben Gurion to emphasize the magnitude of his power and influence within the Knesset and on the global stage reveal a mutual acknowledgement of Gurion's critical contributions. Foreign Minister Sharett's aversion to crisis was another point of emphasis in both articles, reflecting the authors' shared intention of capturing the conflicting sentiments prevalent among Israeli leaders as controversial actions were discussed. Brecher characterized Sharett as lacking "the passionate commitment to Jewish sovereignty over Jerusalem" that was a common feature of Gurion's statements.[14] Similarly, Golani relayed Sharett's reluctance to incite international condemnation by including the minister's doubt prior to the relocation of the Foreign Office that Israel "should turn the matter into a conflict."[15] The inclusion of Sharett's dissenting opinion in both articles is evidence

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[12] Golani, "Jerusalem's Hope," 582.
[13] Brecher, "Jerusalem: Israel's Political Decisions," 15.
[14] Brecher, "Jerusalem: Israel's Political Decisions," 15.
[15] Golani, "Jerusalem's Hope," 587.

of both authors' success in identifying and emphasizing the wide range of opinions that were present at the time when many political decisions were made.

Despite their common understanding of the political circumstances and important individuals that influenced Israel's policy for Jerusalem, Brecher and Golani arrived at fundamentally different conclusions regarding the future of Jerusalem. Based on the repeated failure of efforts to reach a solution addressing both Jewish and Arab demands for control of Jerusalem, Brecher expresses little optimism for a potential solution. At the core of the issue is lack of compromise on the "three critical elements of the problem: sovereignty; municipal government, and the Holy Places."[16] Without a mutual willingness to engage in political negotiations regarding these issues, a lasting solution is unlikely to be reached. While Golani acknowledges that any Israeli support for division of the city is "difficult to imagine," he maintains that "East Jerusalem still exists in the Israeli consciousness."[17] Based on the lack of a formal annexation of East Jerusalem by Israel and the persistence of pre-1967 Zionist ideals regarding the division of Jerusalem, Golani suggests that "an Arab-Palestinian political presence in East Jerusalem" is gaining support among Israelis.[18] The authors' arrival at contrasting outlooks for future possibilities for the governance of Jerusalem are a reflection of their differing presentation of this topic. Golani belief in the possibility of partition is expressed by his repeated emphasis on the Zionist plan from 1937, which is shown to be a strong influence on Israel's leaders' political motives. Though the current Israeli posture on re-partition is evidently unpromising, Golani is confident that the early 20th century Zionist ideal persists in the Jewish conscience. Conversely, Brecher's emphasis on the immediate cause and effects of Israel's political decisions during this era lead him to the belief that a partition is highly unlikely given Jerusalem's extraordinary symbolic importance to Israeli Jews. Unlike Golani, Brecher identifies a distinction between the

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[16] Brecher, "Jerusalem: Israel's Political Decisions," 30.
[17] Golani, "Jerusalem's Hope," 599.
[18] Golani, "Jerusalem's Hope," 599.

Zionist perspective of the 1930s and the contemporary Jewish perspective that will inhibit future attempts at reconciliation between Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem. While both authors present valid predictions for Israeli policy in Jerusalem, Golani's tracing of Jewish motivations from the 1930s through the mid-20th century and his emphasis on the absence of any substantial shift in fundamental ideals is the strongest evidence presented in either article supporting future predictions.

In their articles, Golani and Brecher utilize unique approaches to synthesize the evidence and analysis concerning circumstances of Israeli politics and Jerusalem between 1947 and 1967. Brecher's more factual leaning approach supplements Golani's extensive analysis of Zionist thought to create a holistic portrayal of the background and immediate context of every political decision. The contrasting types of evidence implemented by the authors further strengthens the overall understanding they provide regarding Israeli politics and lead both authors to a common understanding of the challenges facing peace efforts in Jerusalem today. Ultimately, Golani arrives at a stronger conclusion regarding the future of peace in Jerusalem due to his ability to identify the unchanged motivations behind Zionist efforts. However, both authors' mutual acknowledgement of the complexity of factors influencing all sides involved yield their articles as works of high quality and merit.

Annotated Bibliography

Brecher, Michael. "Jerusalem: Israel's Political Decisions, 1947-1977." *Middle East Journal* 32,

no. 1 (1978): 13-34. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4325710.

Brecher's account on the policies and decisions that characterized Israel's relationship

with Jerusalem between 1947 and 1977 describes the negotiations and deliberations

that ultimately led to Israel seizing complete control over Jerusalem. In defiance of the

UN Partition Plan, Israel under Prime Minister Ben Gurion officially claimed Jerusalem

as the state's capital in December of 1950 and moved quickly to relocate the Foreign

Ministry to Jerusalem. This highly political move by Israeli leaders in the face of global

opposition proved Israel's resistance to the internationalization of Jerusalem and led to

widespread condemnation from foreign powers. The next major policy enacted by Israel

was an occupation of the Old City in 1967 in response to Jordanian military action along

the demarcation line between East and West Jerusalem. International rebuke of Israel's

actions was met by defiance from Foreign Minister Abba Eban, who rejected the

accusation that Israel had effectively annexed East Jerusalem. Beginning in 1971,

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) began a

persistent political pressure campaign to urge Israel to cease its archaeological

excavations and construction in the holy city. Israel's global isolation became an

increasingly pressing issue as demands for a peaceful compromise between Arabs and

Jews in Jerusalem contributed to the dialogue concerning Israel's policies in Jerusalem.

The source provides a thorough documentation of significant Israeli policy decisions

regarding Jerusalem, but largely focuses on the most significant actions taken by the

Israeli government during this period. Primary source excerpts from dialogue and

documents issued by Israel provide additional context and add detail to Brecher's

account. The article addresses both positive and negative perceptions and outcomes of

Israel's actions and offers a comprehensive description of the context behind political decisions regarding Jerusalem.

Golani, Motti. "Jerusalem's Hope Lies Only in Partition: Israeli Policy on the Jerusalem Question, 1948-67." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31, no. 4 (1999): 577-604. http://www.jstor.org/stable/176463.

Golani's article offers detailed insight into the foundation of Israel's political approach toward Jerusalem and identifies major players that influenced many important decisions. With the outbreak of war and the establishment of the Knesset in 1947, Israel quickly became a globally recognized power and by extension received greater jurisdiction of the governance of Jerusalem, at the expense of foreign support of internationalization of the city. In their quest to annex West Jerusalem, Israel found an ally in Jordan, who also opposed internationalization. The two states' leaders engaged in armistice talks in 1949 that resulted in the division of Jerusalem between East and West, which at the time was believed to be the only reasonable solution to Arab and Jewish coexistence in Jerusalem. The next decades would be marked by Jewish settlement of Jerusalem and strong efforts by Israel to make West Jerusalem an undeniably Jewish territory, regardless of official designation. Israel did not actively seek military engagement over East Jerusalem until the opportunity presented itself in 1967, and Jerusalem continues to be commonly perceived as a divided city. The author utilizes detailed accounts of Israel's intentions and goals for Jerusalem throughout the article and frames the transformation of Jerusalem during this period. Particular emphasis is placed on Ben Gurion's role in influencing Israeli policy on Jerusalem, and Jerusalem's symbolic value for both Zionists and Arabs is well documented. Similar to the Brecher article, Golani provides sparse information on Israel political actions between 1950 and the beginning of the Six Day War. The main point revisited repeatedly in the article is the idea that

Jerusalem remains a partitioned city with distinct cultures and values in each region that will inhibit reconciliation efforts.