

**Jerusalem and the Politics
of Settlement in the Middle East**

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Ph.D.
The University of Edinburgh
2002



For my father Jaiml Azem, my mother Khawla, and Rasha

Declaration

All Work, unless otherwise acknowledged, is my own. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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25 September 2002

Abstract

This thesis covers the issue of Jerusalem in the Arab–Israeli conflict since the British occupation of the city in 1917. The main argument is that, contrary to assertions that the Jerusalem question is, and always has been, non-negotiable, the parties to the conflict have defined and redefined their positions regarding the city on different occasions. The construction of nation-states and national identities has been the primary reason for the changes in the definitions. By drawing on the theory of conflict resolution and the literature on nationalism, the thesis validates the core argument by close scrutiny of the positions held by the parties to the conflict.

The thesis comprises an Introduction, five chapters and a Conclusion. The Introduction discusses the theory behind the centrality of defining conflict as a method of conflict resolution. It also mentions some key concepts and ideas of the construction of nationalism and national identity.

Chapter One, “Jerusalem and the Palestinian Politics of State”, describes how the Palestinian leaders did not reject the idea of an international regime in Jerusalem during the pre-1948 era, even though they insisted on establishing sovereignty over the whole of Palestine. After the 1948 war, however, they demanded that sovereignty include Jerusalem, and so rejected the internationalisation of the city. The chapter argues that Jerusalem did not play a vital role in the Palestinian political movement between 1948 and the 1980s. It was revived mostly as part of the programme to build a Palestinian state.

Chapter Two, “Israel and Jerusalem: the Zionist Movement and the Jewish State”, argues that Zionist thought at the beginning of the twentieth century did not assign to Jerusalem a special status in the plan to construct a Jewish state. Until 1967 both Zionist and Israeli leaders accepted a Jewish state without East Jerusalem. Even after that date, there were figures who did not reject a compromise on the city.

Chapter Three, “Jordan and Jerusalem: Second Capital or Arab Solidarity”, explains that Jordan did not object to the internationalisation of Jerusalem during the pre-1948 period. The state’s priority at the time was to annex areas allocated to the Arabs according to the Partition Plan proposed by the United Nations. Later, however, Jordan reached an understanding with Israel to partition the city, which led to the rejection of internationalisation. For a long time Jordan has regarded East Jerusalem as a sacred part of its territory, although recently it has had to recognise the right of Palestinian sovereignty over that sector of the city.

Chapter Four, “The Arab Muslim Jerusalem”, explains that while Jerusalem is of vital importance according to public opinion, for the city enhances the feeling of a common Arab and Muslim identity, it is treated by Muslim and Arab regimes as part of their foreign policy. They have domestic problems that have greater priority.

Chapter Five, “Jerusalem in the International Sphere”, concludes that the concern of the international community about the Jerusalem question is based on its importance in the political settlement and stability of the Middle East, rather than on its religious significance.

The Conclusion outlines the general context on which a redefinition of the positions of the parties to the conflict could be based, with a view to reaching a political settlement. The thesis in general is a critical review of the assumptions and generalisations made about Jerusalem, with the aim of providing a deeper understanding of the whole situation, which could help in finding a peaceful solution.

Acknowledgements

During the years of working on this thesis I have enjoyed the support, encouragement and help of many people. It is not possible to name all of them or to mention everything that they did. First of all there was the generous grant of HH Shaikh Hamdan bin Rashid al-Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai and the Minister of Industry and Finance in the United Arab Emirates. I benefited from "His H. Shaikh Hamdan bin Rashid al-Maktoum Jerusalem Studies Scholarship for Young Researchers"; administered by the Islamic Research Academy in the United Kingdom. My grateful thanks go to His Highness and to the Islamic Research Academy.

The knowledge that I gained at Edinburgh University, especially from my supervisors, will always remain with me. I greatly admire Dr Paul Lalor's level of speciality in the academic field, in particular, his amazing efforts to help his students in every way to produce a thesis of a high standard, to increase their knowledge and develop their academic abilities. In addition, I greatly appreciate the hospitality so kindly extended to me by him and his family.

Dr John Chalcraft's patience in reading my work, his deeply interesting discussions, sound advice, careful notes and stimulating criticism were not only extremely helpful to me in writing this thesis, but also will stand me in good stead for future research and writing.

The dedicated and effective support and guidance from Professor Yasir Suleiman, Director of the Edinburgh Institute for the Advanced Study of Islam and the Middle East, made me aware of the high standard of ethics required of a successful academic and the real meaning of academic life.

I must thank Professor Carole Hillenbrand, Head of the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, that I was never disappointed when I needed to ask her about anything related to my university life. My thanks also go to Mrs Lel Gillingwater, Administrative Secretary of the Department, for the help that she always provided.

The courteous assistance of researchers in the information and research centres with my work is greatly appreciated, especially Mohamad 'Awad of the Royal Committee for Jerusalem Affairs, Dr Subhi Ghusha, Head of the Jerusalem Day Committee, and Mahfouz Jabir, researcher in the Committee's information centre. I should also like to thank Hani al-Hourani, General Manager of the new Jordan Research Centre, and Dr Majid Zubidi in the Research Department of the Palestinian National Council in Amman. Special thanks are also due to the Iqra' Association in Saudi Arabia.

I shall always remember all the help and encouragement that I have received from Mr Musa Shihadeh, and from my friends Rosse Cample, Mohammad Muath and Michael Andrews.

My thanks also go to Miss Sylvia Hunt and Nafisa Abdelsadek for their help in editing this thesis.

The loving support of my family – my father Jamil Azem and my mother Khawla – and the enduring patience of my beloved wife Rasha and my children are the reason why I have come so far.

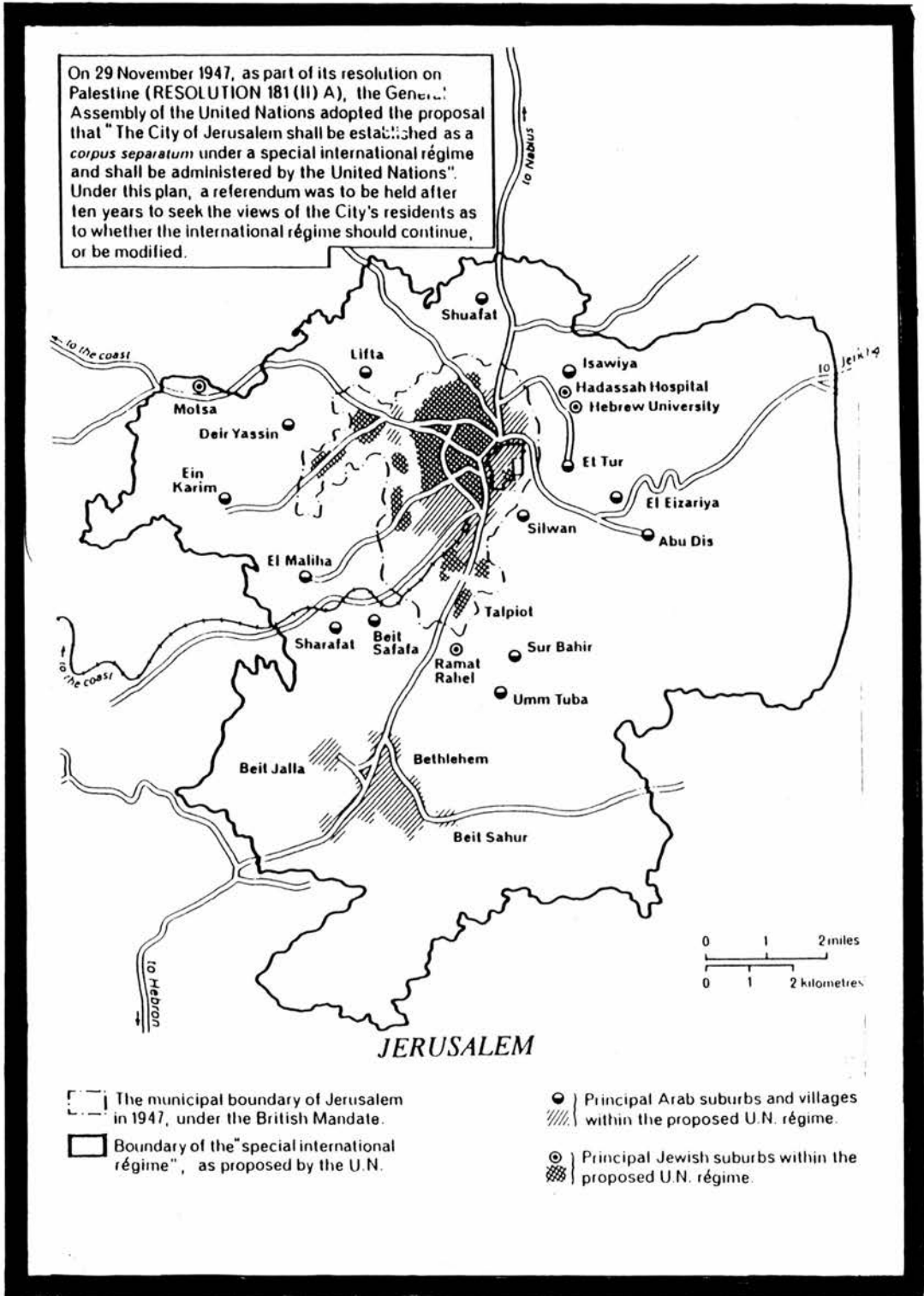
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Abbreviations

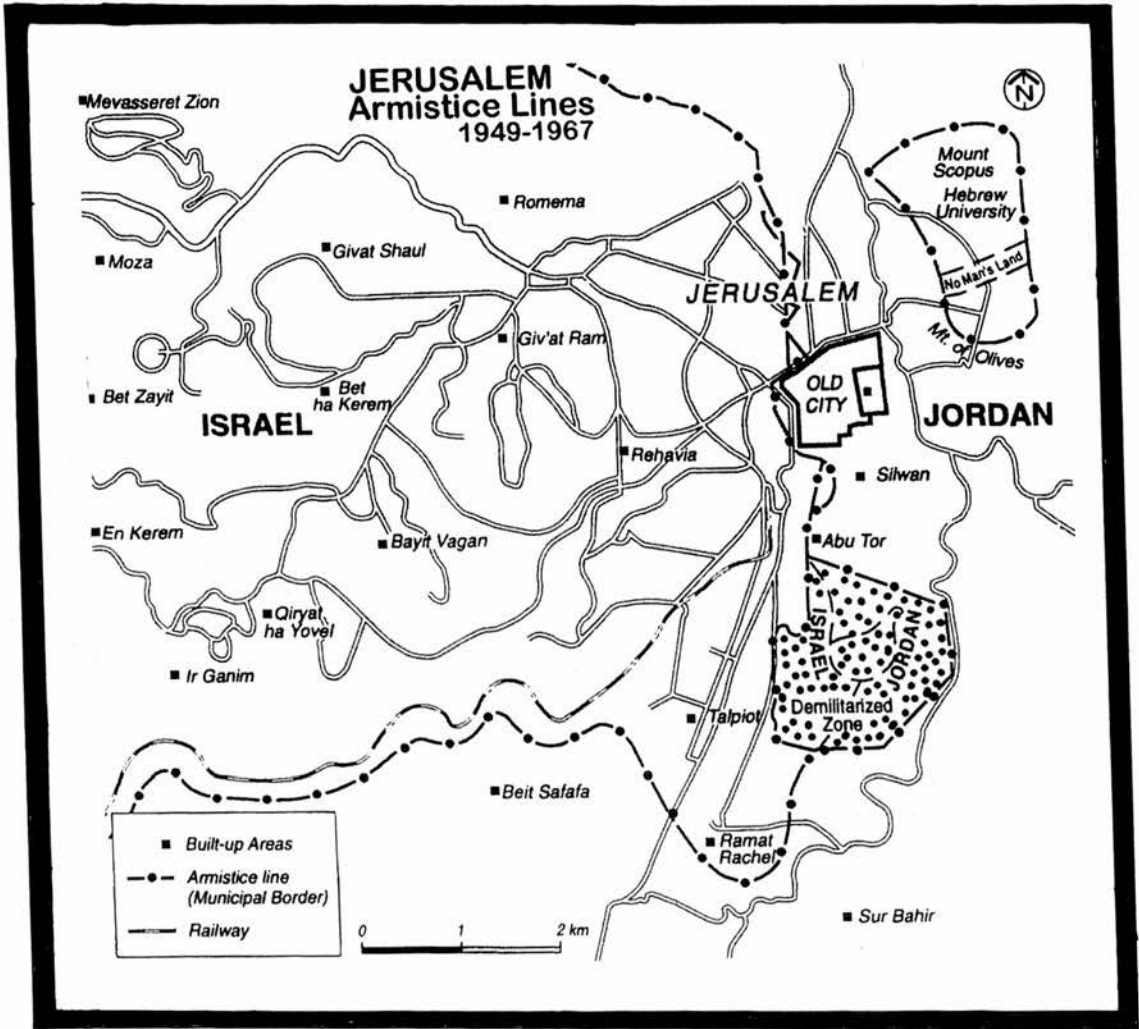
DOP	Declaration of Principles
HAC	Higher Arab Committee
HIC	Higher Islamic Council
MCA	Muslim Christian Association
PCC	Palestinian Central Council
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organisation
PNC	Palestinian National Council
OIC	Organisation of the Islamic Conference
SMC	Supreme Muslim Council
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America

Map 1: UN General Assembly Partition Plan (Resolution 181)



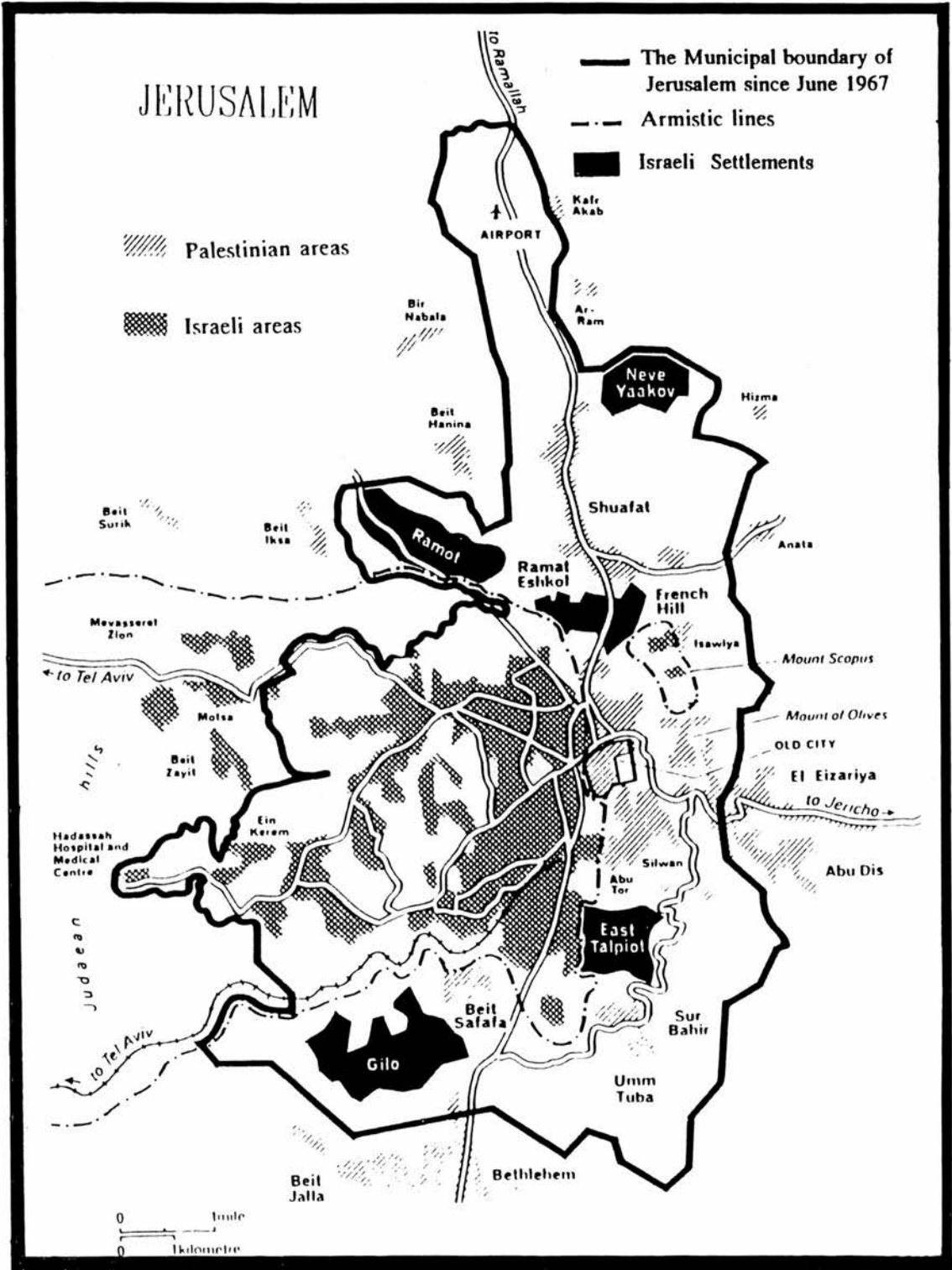
Source: *Documents on Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 1996).

Map 2: Jerusalem Armistice Lines 1949–1967



Source: Documents on Jerusalem (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 1996).

Map 3: Jerusalem: Municipal Area since 1967



Source: Documents on Jerusalem (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 1996).

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Introduction

In 1993 a congregation of Palestinians at al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem made the following statement:

Jerusalem has been an Arab Muslim city ever since the Arabs established the city of Yabūs [Jerusalem] 5000 years ago. This is a fact that is not open to argument or compromise.¹

The Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir, addressed his right-wing party – the Likud – at the Central Committee on 5 July 1989 as follows:

Jerusalem is the eternal capital of our nation and our country. It is engraved in the Bible, on which the exiled in Babylon vowed: If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand lose its cunning! Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy!²

These quotations are examples of the perception that Jerusalem is the subject of a deep conflict, and that in addition to the contemporary legal and political realities, the historic and religious claims form an essential part of it. The examples show how the conflict affects the followers of the three monotheist religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – and its potentially serious consequences. Thus, every room in every home in Jerusalem, every shop, road, shrine, as well as the birth rate, the infrastructure, in fact, every nook and cranny of the city has been seen as part of the daily confrontation.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that Jerusalem has been classified as a non-negotiable issue, and that the postponement of an acceptable solution has, on different occasions, been the bypass that has enabled the signing of peace accords in the region. This was true of the Egyptian accords with Israel in 1979 and the Palestinian and Jordanian accords with Israel in 1993 and 1994.

In the view of many observers, the collapse of the negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis in 2000, which resulted in tension throughout the region, if not the world, was due to Jerusalem.

¹ “Statement of the Popular Gathering in al-Aqsa Mosque, 21 June 1993”, *Documents on Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 1996), p.54.

² “Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir’s Speech to the Likud Central Committee, Tel Aviv, 5 July 1989”, *ibid.*, p.113.

Nevertheless, any final settlement in the Middle East must include a solution to the problem of Jerusalem. This means that the conflict needs to be reconsidered as to whether or not it is negotiable. If it is not negotiable, then why are there dozens of proposals to resolve it? And what is preventing these proposals from producing any results?

The view of the conflict as being beyond a resolution is based on the acceptance that religious and historical constraints prohibit any change in the positions of the parties to the conflict. Therefore, perhaps the right way to deal with the Jerusalem issue is to begin by questioning the authenticity of this view, and whether or not it reflects reality.

This thesis argues that it is not true that the parties to the conflict over Jerusalem hold rigid and uncompromising positions. Instead it argues that the parties to the conflict have defined and redefined their positions regarding the city on different occasions. Moreover, they have been ready to make, and have made, compromises and concessions regarding Jerusalem and will be able to do so again under certain conditions.

It is important to re-examine the various religious and historical claims to Jerusalem, which form part of the parties' positions; not in the sense of investigating or rejecting them, but in finding out how they have been portrayed politically by the different parties to the conflict.

Before tackling the political settlement of Jerusalem, it is important to answer questions such as: Does the religious significance of Jerusalem really mean that the parties to the conflict have no choice but to adopt such political positions? Did the same significance create the same claims in the 1960s? If not, why is it doing so now?

Although there is no doubt that the inherited religious and historical significance of Jerusalem is unique, politicians, however, have ascribed to it varying interpretations to serve their own particular political agendas. Jerusalem itself and attitudes towards it have been continually defined and redefined.

Thus the argument of conflict definition and redefinition will form the assumption of this thesis. It has been derived from the reading of the conflict resolution theories and literature. This thesis builds on this notion by using the

understanding of conflict dynamics according to “conflict definition and redefinition” along with the conflict resolution literature to validate the argument of the thesis that Jerusalem has been treated in varying ways by the parties to the conflict. In addition, I shall refer to the literature of nationalism and the construction of national identity, where the definition of the city has been formed in the context of a larger transformation in the Middle East, that is, the implementation of the nation-state scheme.

Therefore, this thesis will study the positions held by the parties to the conflict between 1917 and 2001. The choice of this fairly long period is for two main reasons; the first being that 1917 was the year of the British occupation of Jerusalem and the British promise to establish a Jewish national home in Palestine (the Balfour Declaration). So this year, for the purposes of the study, can be seen as the beginning of the present conflict. The roots of the present positions can be traced back to the many circumstances and positions at that time. Moreover, to perceive the changeable nature of the definitions of the conflict over Jerusalem, it is necessary to make a comparison of the various positions held during this period. Secondly, the construction of the nation-state scheme and development of national identities in the Middle East were greatly accelerated in the year following the First World War.

0.1 Theoretical Underpinning: Conflict Definition and Redefinition

The notion of conflict definition has not been given much coverage in theoretical works on conflict, and has been treated only perfunctorily* Among the works which

*I began developing this idea of conflict definition and redefinition in the 1990s as a means of analysing conflicts so as to understand the Arab–Israeli conflict in general, rather than Jerusalem alone. In particular, my aim was to discover how changes were made to the definition of the parties to the conflict, and how these changes resulted in a different understanding of the conflict, its development and possible solutions. My initial purpose was to understand how and why the conflict between Israel and the Arab parties had been defined in different ways, and the parties to the conflict given different identities, such as Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims, Jews, Israelis, Zionists, the West, colonialist and imperialist powers. I sought to understand how giving different identities to the parties to the conflict could produce a different understanding of the conflict’s past, present and future, and how decision-making was influenced by these changes. However, the complexity of the issue of Jerusalem seemed to offer a richer and more focused case study to examine and develop this idea of conflict definition and redefinition as a method of studying conflicts. This was especially true where the terminology was changed in defining the issue of the conflict – in

could make a major contribution to the understanding of conflict by explaining conflict definition and redefinition, is that of Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham & Tom Woodhouse: *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts*, first published in 1999.

However, the concept of “conflict redefinition” as applied in this thesis has two major differences from that of “conflict transformation”:

1. Conflict “definition” and “redefinition” indicate a phenomenon broader than that of conflict “transformation”. Transformation means a change in the conflict itself, whereas “redefinition” refers to what politicians or the parties to the conflict understand or assert, whether it is real or not. As John Burton expresses it: “The conflict that is to be solved is the conflict as perceived by those involved, their interpretations of behaviour and events are part of the reality”.³
2. Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse concentrate on the importance and factors of conflict transformations in the context of “ending violent conflicts”. They build on the fact that conflict is a dynamic phenomenon and conclude that conflict resolution requires “a series of necessary transformations in the elements which would otherwise sustain ongoing violence and war”.⁴ In other words, they confine the importance of what they call conflict transformation to conflict resolution, whereas transformation can also happen in other contexts such as escalation. The idea behind using the concept of conflict redefinition is that it expresses the dual direction of conflict administration. Politicians and parties define and redefine conflicts in ways to achieve goals that could be conflict resolution or conflict escalation.
3. However, before elaborating on the functions of conflict definition and redefinition, it should be pointed out that the definition of certain conflicts consists of the definition of certain elements, that is, the cause and type of the conflict, and the parties concerned.

Jerusalem’s case - as religious, territorial, national, etc., which is another important aspect of conflict definition and redefinition.

³ John W. Burton, *Global Conflict, The Domestic Sources of International Crisis* (Brighton, UK: Wheatsheaf Books, 1984), p.135.

⁴ Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham & Tom Woodhouse, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution, The Prevention of Deadly Conflicts* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2001), p.156.

0.1.1 Defining the Causes of Conflict

The definition of a conflict cause can be formed in different ways, each designed to serve a particular function.

First, it is always necessary to distinguish between what are no more than triggers and the underlying long-term causes, which are the actual engine of the conflict.⁵ A famous example of this is the First World War, triggered by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in 1914, although there were other, deeper, causes that could be interpreted in various ways: ideologically, economically, psychologically, national interests, etc.

Triggers usually have an emotional and symbolic value which justifies the eruption of a confrontation or war, but which is not sufficient in itself to support the continuation and the general goals of hostilities, these being based on older and stronger reasons and controversies.

Jerusalem has been described on many occasions as a trigger. According to an analysis of the various clashes between Palestinians and Jews which have erupted in Jerusalem, the city is a trigger rather than the underlying or exclusive reason for the conflict. The Jewish–Muslim dispute over the Wailing Wall of al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem in the late 1920s – as explained in Chapter One – was seen as the trigger, not the real cause, of the widespread confrontations in Palestine at that time. The same can be said of the visit by Ariel Sharon, then the right-wing opposition leader, to al-Aqsa Mosque in October 2000. In both cases the broader context of confrontation between the Israelis and Palestinians was the real engine of conflict, which included territorial, nationalist and economic dimensions. Thus it is normal to hear commentators say that Ariel Sharon’s visit was only a trigger, whereas the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the failure of the negotiations were the real reasons for the Palestinian Intifada, or that the Palestinians launched these confrontations, thereby exploiting the visit to improve their position at the negotiations. There is also the view that Ariel Sharon made the visit with the aim of seeking a confrontation, which would serve his personal interest in the election and his political agenda of destroying the peace process.

⁵ On the immediate and general causes of conflict, see: Amos Yoder, *World Politics and the Causes of War since 1914* (New York, Lanham; London: University Press of America Inc., 1986), p.23.

However, the differences in the definitions of the causes of conflict are more marked than those between the trigger and the underlying longstanding reasons. The description of the motives, results and meanings of a conflict needs to be included, whether they are religious, economic, political or territorial. The definition or redefinition of a conflict according to one of these descriptions can serve particular functions such as the following:

1. Some definitions justify the actions of the political leadership or one of the parties to the conflict. For instance, portraying the cause of a protest inside a country or against a country as rebellion or terrorism could be used to justify a violent reaction and thus avoid recognising other complaints and assertions as reasons for the conflict.⁶
2. Definitions could be chosen to convince domestic public opinion or external powers to support or even take part in a confrontation. Religion, nationalism, history and security are usually invoked to promote support. An example from the 1990s is the Kosovo war in Yugoslavia. Although the Serbs and the Albanians of Kosovo asserted on various occasions that their aspirations were based on nationalism rather than religion, both groups benefited from and invoked religious claims and identities to gain support: the Serbs from Orthodox Christian countries and Kosovo's Albanians from the Muslim world. In the case of Palestine, the highlighting of the Jewish or Islamic significance of Jerusalem has been a common theme in Israeli and Palestinian discourse. Here, the aim has been to gain support from Jews or Muslims all over the world, which could be channelled to serve the establishment of a Zionist secular state or a Palestinian nationalist state.
3. The issue is defined as having a national, religious and historic basis, and members of the elite or leadership declare that they are its "guardians" and must therefore defend it from the "enemy". This is a common method of gaining legitimacy to continue in power, or of winning support over other rival parties. It can even be used to justify economic and political failure or corruption by stating

⁶ Burton, *Global*, p.132.

that it is the result of a national matter of top priority which has consumed the country's resources and governmental efforts.⁷

4. In some cases there are substantial changes in the cause of the conflict, such as the decline or increase in the importance of the resources of a disputed territory, owing to the discovery of new resources or the depletion of those currently being exploited.
5. A change in the parties' abilities and the balance of power, for national or international reasons, could persuade the leadership to aim for peace or escalation. This could result in the emphasis or suppression of those definitions with sensitive emotional connotations.

This thesis gives examples illustrating how the cause of the Jerusalem question was defined in different ways according to the context so as to achieve a particular aim, such as internal unity, the eradication of domestic rivalry, an increase in support, the promotion of ideological claims and policies, or a solution to the challenge of an international situation.

0.1.2 Defining the Types of Conflict

Another basic element in the definition of a conflict is the classification of its type. This is based on different aspects of the conflict according to its size, place and length, etc.⁸

For the purposes of this research, I shall concentrate on the range and intensity as the basis of classification, namely, the division of conflicts into zero-sum and non-zero-sum. This classification is derived from Game Theory, a branch of mathematics which has been applied to politics with increasing frequency since the 1940s.⁹

⁷ Mary Kaldor, *The Politics of New War* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1999), pp.78, 81, 84.

⁸ For the classification of the types of conflict, see Kenneth E. Boulding, *Conflict and Defense: A General Theory* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962), pp.41–44; Theodore A. Coulombis & James H. Wolfe, *Introduction to International Relations: Power and Justice* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall International, 1990), p.161; E.F. Penrose, *The Revolution in International Relations: A Study in the Changing Nature and Balance of Power* (London: Frank Cass, 1965), p.127.

⁹ Boulding, *Conflict and Defense*, p.41.

The term “zero-sum conflict” has been used to describe a situation where the gain by one party is equal to the loss by the other party.¹⁰ In other words, a zero-sum conflict has no room for a settlement or co-operation. Usually “nationality, language, territorial homelands and culture are not easily bargained over. They create zero-sum conflicts.”¹¹

Non-zero-sum games offer scope for co-operation among the players in some positions, or when the parties realise that taking a particular position to avoid playing the game is an advantage to both sides.¹²

Transition from zero-sum to non-zero-sum is possible, for example, where it is imposed by variables. In Game Theory literature there is a known probability called the Prisoners’ Dilemma, where, under certain circumstances, prisoners cannot avoid co-operating with one another to deal with a particular situation or to face a common challenge.¹³ Thus a zero-sum conflict could be redefined as a non-zero-sum conflict.

However, it is important to note that Game Theory depends largely on taking into account the elements of the conflict and the factors affecting it, so as to search for the possibility of a compromise. It must be borne in mind that the parties to the conflict cannot ignore reality and portray the conflict as being beyond a compromise – or zero-sum – in order to justify certain actions or to avoid a compromise.

Jerusalem has been defined or portrayed, especially during the last three decades of the twentieth century, as a zero-sum conflict where no solution nor compromise is possible. However, by taking a long-term view of the conflict since its early stages in the 1920s, and by a deeper examination of the political positions of the parties concerned, this thesis will show that these parties have expressed non-zero-sum views regarding Jerusalem on many occasions, and that they have been ready to make, and indeed have made, concessions to reach a settlement, and that the definition of the type of conflict over Jerusalem has been open to change.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.44.

¹¹ John McGarry & Brendan O’Leary, *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation* (London: Routledge, 1993), p.16.

¹² Boulding, *Conflict and Defense*, p.44.

¹³ Morton A. Kaplan, *New Approaches to International Relations* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1968), p.513.

0.1.3 Defining the Parties to the Conflict

Here again the definition of the parties to a conflict is subject to variation according to the context. It is commonly accepted that the parties have different identities: national, religious, ethnic and ideological. Choosing a particular identity will have several consequences. The conflict between Israel and its opponents has been defined in many ways, such as Israeli–Palestinian, Jewish–Islamic, Arab–Israeli, or a Western imperialist or colonialist issue.

Clearly, each definition has its own meanings and consequences. The conflict can be broadened and intensified, or narrowed and minimised, according to the definition. Jerusalem in particular, and to a greater degree, has been given overlapping definitions of the parties to the conflict over the city. The conflict and solution in a Palestinian–Israeli framework would be different from those of an Islamic–Christian–Jewish framework, for the demands of each party, the balance of power, and the political positions in general would vary according to which definition was adopted.

Miall et al. define what they call “actor transformation” as “a change of leadership, a change in the constituency of leaders or adoption of new goals, values or beliefs” which could “lead to redefine directions, abandon or modify cherished goals or adopt radically different perspectives”.¹⁴

The strengthening of a political ideology or power inside one of the parties concerned could lead to a redefinition in its view of the identity or range of all the parties to the conflict. For instance, the growth in Palestinian patriotism and left-wing secularism in the late 1960s led to a decrease in the concentration on Jerusalem’s significance as a Muslim cause. On the other hand, the growth in Islamism in the Middle East since the 1980s has accompanied an increase in the Palestinian leadership’s concentration on Jerusalem as an Arab and Muslim issue.

However, the main context in which the positions of the parties to the conflict have been defined and redefined has been the establishment of the nation-state and the development of a national identity.

¹⁴ Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse, *Contemporary*, p.157.

0.2 The Nation-State Scheme in the Middle East

The victory of Britain and France over the Ottomans in the First World War and the Franco-British occupation of large areas of the former territories of the Ottoman Empire opened the door to the establishment of a new regional political order. The Sykes–Picot agreement of 1916, which was to divide the Middle East between Britain and France, was an important aspect of the scheme and implied the creation of new separate entities in the region. Although these entities were individual states, they were under British and French Mandates.

There were different meanings and functions attached to the implementation of the scheme. Among the most remarkable was that these states would be expected to express the interests of their own people living inside the newly drawn borders but they were not to be part of a larger Arab and Muslim entity or movement. According to many observers this was the method of “divide and rule”.

If this scheme were to succeed, then causes such as Palestine or Jerusalem would not be seen as Arab or Muslim issues. The definition of the parties to the conflict over Jerusalem would then be Arab Palestinians versus Jews, and the object of the conflict could be incompatible ethnic claims, subject to a compromise supported by the British government.

National identity and interests would replace or have priority over Arab and Islamic identities and concerns, for example. Under this scheme Palestine would be expected to be considered an external question by the populations of the region.

However, the implementation of the scheme was not only a matter of declaring the establishment of new states, but also that of a lengthy construction, especially the development of national identities to match the states. Moreover, the legitimacy of these states and their ruling regimes still had to be promoted among the peoples concerned.

To understand the construction of the nation-state in the Middle East and the analysis of a question such as Jerusalem in this context, it is necessary to explain some key concepts that will be used in the argument in the following chapters.

0.2.1 The Nation-State and Nationalism

The nation-state in general is a phenomenon connected with “nationalism”, the concept of which, according to many scholars, can be traced back to the second half of the eighteenth century. It described the new shape of the states in Europe, such as that of France after the French Revolution, which aimed to establish a state representing not a single class or a city, but a whole population. The nation-state was seen as a state representing what was then believed to be a people of a particular race, language, ethnicity, etc.¹⁵

The association between the establishment of state and nationalism was always crucial and has been described as follows:

I defined nationalism as a political movement having two characteristics: (1) individual members give their primary loyalty to their own ethnic or national community, this loyalty supersedes their loyalty to other groups, e.g. those based on common kinship or political ideology; and (2) these ethnic or national communities desire their own independent state.¹⁶

According to this definition, the peoples of the newly established states in the Middle East are supposed to give priority to the domestic issues of the new states, not only over their narrow kinship and local loyalties but also over those of Islam and the Arab world. However, according to the same definition and to many others of a similar nature, there is the assumption that loyalty is an expression of an already developed national or ethnic identity, in the sense that nationalism or identity precedes the establishment of a state. This logic was the reason why the term “nation-state” was applied to these entities. However, the term was inapplicable to the Arab and Islamic world, where the people of the new states did not have particular identities associated with these borders which could distinguish them from neighbouring states. Certainly, there were relative differences in the situation of these countries with newly drawn frontiers, where some of them once formed an administrative or political unit, whose inhabitants asserted a connection with a

¹⁵ Hass Kohan, *The Idea of Nationalism, A Study in its Origin and Background* (New York: Macmillan, 1946), p.3. See also, Ernest Renan, “What is a Nation?”, lecture given in Paris on 11 March 1882, in Goff Eley & Ronald Grigor Suny (eds), *Becoming National (A Reader)* (New York, & Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.42.

¹⁶ Michael Brown (ed.), *Theories of War and Peace: An International Security Reader* (Cambridge, Mass. & London: MIT Press, 1998), p.258.

particular pre- or post-Islamic era or event. Some of these countries had natural resources and material bases qualifying them as states, whereas others did not. However, the separate nation-state identity in the Western sense was still far from existing in most, if not all, of these countries.

This issue raises two points that have already been discussed in the literature on nationalism: (1) Is nationalism a natural development? and (2) What is the antecedence between nation construction and state building?

0.2.1.2 NATION CONSTRUCTION

Hass Kohan wrote in the 1940s: “[N]ationalism is not a natural phenomenon, not a product of ‘eternal’ or ‘natural’ laws; it is a product of the growth of social and intellectual factors at a certain stage of history.”¹⁷ By the end of the twentieth century, scholars studying the development of nations and their identity indicated clearly that identity and nationalism were constructed by the elite. Mary Kaldor, in analysing the role of the elite, uses phrases such as “identity politics” to mean “movement which mobilises around ethnic, racial or religious identity for the purpose of claiming state power”¹⁸, which some members of the elite implement in their own interests. She describes the construction of identity as follows:

Identity politics tend to be fragmentative, backward-looking and exclusive. Political grouping based on exclusive identity tends to be a movement of nostalgia, based on the reconstruction of a heroic past, the memory of injustice, real or imagined, and famous battles, won or lost. They acquire meaning through insecurity, the rough rekindled fear of historic enemies, or through a sense of being threatened by those with different labels.¹⁹

Kaldor’s analysis is based on her reading of the 1990s Balkan experience, and concentrates on the elite’s self-interest in constructing a sense of nationalism. However, the role played by the elite in other cases goes beyond this. There are the ideologists and intellectuals who seek to exploit nationalism to the advantage of their own circle. There is also an external factor, namely, the role played by colonial powers to establish nations and identities to serve particular political functions. The Arab world in the years following the First World War is an example.

¹⁷ Kohan, *The Idea*, p.6.

¹⁸ Kaldor, *New War*, p.76.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.78.

According to this view, although nation construction in the eighteenth century was largely the result of natural development, being an intellectual solution seeking the group's well being, it became less independent and more firmly manipulated to serve the agendas of domestic or external powers.

Benedict Anderson, in his famous book, *Imagined Communities*, describes "nation-ness" as well as "nationalism" as "cultural artefacts":

The creating of these artefacts towards the end of the eighteenth century was the spontaneous distillation for a complex "crossing" of discrete historical forces; but that once created they became "modular", capable of being transplanted, with varying degrees of self-consciousness, to a great variety of social terrains, to merge and be merged with a correspondingly wide variety of political and ideological constellations.²⁰

It is possible to see examples in the twentieth century of what Anderson calls "nation-building" policies that include "both a genuine, popular nationalism enthusiasm and systematic, even Machiavellian, instilling of nationalist ideology". The instruments used to construct nationalism. As explained in several new works on the subject, included the media, literature, the educational system, administrative regulations, and the creation of national symbols.²¹

Thus it can be said that nations and states could develop or be constructed in ways that varied from one set of circumstances to another and from one era to another. The nation and nationalism are largely phenomena that in the twentieth century came to be constructed by certain external and domestic powers. This explains how, in the Middle East for example, states could be established before the development of their nations.

0.2.1.3 NATION-STATE BUILDING

The establishment of states before the development of their nations is a phenomenon of the post-colonial era. It has been the result of the colonial powers having drawn the borders of these states with the collaboration of the elites or the intellectuals

²⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London & New York: Verso, 1991), p.4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.114. See also, David McCorne, *The Sociology of Nationalism: Tomorrow's Ancestors* (London & New York: Routledge, 1998), p.52.

trying to imitate European nationalism and use it to achieve independence and progress.²²

In the twentieth century, politicians and scholars argued that states establish nations, not the other way round. A Polish politician, Marshall Pilsudki, said: “It is the state which makes the nation, not the nation which makes the state.”²³ This shape of the relationship between states and nations made some scholars suggest using the phrase “state-nation” instead of “nation-state”.²⁴

Roger Owen discusses the establishment of nation-states by colonial powers in the Middle East, describing the common procedure of creating new administrative and political centres; a capital city, a legal system, a flag and internationally recognised frontiers.²⁵

In other words, in the Middle East and elsewhere during the twentieth century, states were first declared and then there began a lengthy process of constructing their identities and nationalism.

The construction of these states and identities has been met with reluctance by large sections of the Arab world, on the grounds that the scheme divides Arab and Muslim nations that are already in existence. The scheme has provoked continual debates and controversies regarding the future of Arab–Arab relations as well as the role that each state is allowed – or required – to play in the affairs of the other states. The question of Palestine and Jerusalem has been at the centre of these debates and controversies.

0.3 Jerusalem and the Nation-state Scheme

Jerusalem has not been a passive element in the construction of nation-states. The redefinition of the region’s identities and states under the nation-state scheme has

²² For examples of Middle Eastern intellectuals who tried to imitate European nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Najīb ‘Āzūrī, *Yaqaḏat al-Umma al-‘Arabiyya [The Awakening of the Arab Nation]*, 2nd edn, English trans. Aḥmad Abū Melḥim (Beirut: The Arab Institution of Studies and Publishing, 1998), p.18. See also, Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.58–63.

²³ Quoted in McCorne, *Sociology*, p.86.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Roger Owen, *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.11.

influenced the cause of Jerusalem, yet at the same time Jerusalem has in turn influenced the construction of nation-states in the Middle East. This is clarified in the following points.

0.3.1 Jerusalem and the Nation-state in Palestine

The policy of the British Mandate in Palestine included tasks similar to those in other mandated countries: the establishment of national and local governments and political regimes, which would be under mandatory state control. Although in Palestine it was not the indigenous inhabitants of the country who would form the regime, but Jewish immigrants, the same process of constructing a nation and its identity was followed.

As Roger Owen has observed, the need for a political centre – a capital city – was essential in establishing the new political entities/states in the region. Because of its symbolic importance compared with other cities in Palestine, Jerusalem was chosen as the centre of the Mandate. At the same time, the majority of the Jewish community in Palestine was living in the city, although most of its members were not Zionist. Zionist leaders, however, established their intellectual and political institutions in Jerusalem, their choice being based on the claim that the city was theirs by right according to Jewish history.

In addition, during the Ottoman era, Jerusalem was the religious, cultural and administrative centre for other Palestinian cities and its notables had a status superior to those elsewhere in Palestine. Thus it was Jerusalem which formed the centre of the Palestinian national movement during the Mandate, and its notables were the Palestinian Arab leadership.

Jerusalem has remained central to the Palestinian and Jewish/Israeli rhetoric as a national capital of the Jewish or the Palestinian state until the present day. As the capital of Palestine and Israel and a symbol of national identity for both, Jerusalem has played a positive role in developing the idea of the nation-state in the Middle East. However, it should be remembered here that symbols used in this way are constructed according to the presentation and interpretation required to enable them to serve particular functions. This thesis will show that the religious and historic significance of Jerusalem has been subjected to this process so as to serve as a

national centre for the sought Jewish and Palestinian nations. From historical examination it appears that the city has been vital in promoting and mobilising support for the nation-state plan. Yet, at the same time, the two sides – the Jews and the Palestinians – have been ready to make concessions regarding their status in the city on various occasions, not only in exchange for establishing their nation-state, but also to maintain their own interests and achieve gains elsewhere in that state.

0.3.2 Jerusalem and Arab–Muslim Identity

Besides its role as a national centre and symbol, Jerusalem has played another, contradictory, role. The question of Palestine in general has been one of the pillars of the argument against the nation-state, in particular that this scheme serves the interests of foreign powers. Much of Palestine's emotional and symbolic status has been derived from the existence of Jerusalem inside Palestine.

Palestine's geographical position and Jerusalem's religious significance were used by Palestinian nationalists to gain Arab support for the Palestinians. At the same time the geographical position has been a theme in the discourse of pan-Arab unity, which rejects the Jewish state, insisting that it is an alien physical body installed to prevent the possibility of unity between the Arab countries of Africa and Asia. Jerusalem is also a vehicle of pan-Arab and pan-Islamic power, around which a united Muslim and Arab movement and public opinion could be mobilised. In other words, Jerusalem could be useful to both the Palestinian nationalist, and Arab/Islamist nationalist movements.

0.3.3 Who is Responsible for the Jerusalem Issue?

One of the crucial questions regarding both Jerusalem and the construction of the nation-state is who is responsible for the Jerusalem issue. Is it the international community and the United Nations, or the Palestinians and the Israelis, or is it a Muslim/Arab–Jewish regional issue?

Arab regimes fell under contradictory pressures: some demanded to maximise their participation in the Jerusalem issue and others to minimise it. International powers and the requirements of nation-state construction were the main pressures to minimise participation. Public opinion and the pan-Arab and Islamic powers and political organisations were demanding maximum participation.

However, it is not possible to deal with the different Arab regimes as one group under the same circumstances or in the same position, nor is it possible to see the whole period of the conflict since 1917 from a single perspective.

During particular periods and under certain circumstances the states controlled by the Mandate had very little freedom to make decisions, especially before independence, or when treaties between them and Britain and France restricted their mobility. However, even when new regimes, such as Egypt, Syria and Iraq, came to power in the 1950s, other regimes such as Jordan and the Gulf states still had to depend on the political and military protection and financial aid of the leading world powers against their new radical neighbours. Moreover, the so-called radical regimes had to act carefully regarding Israel, knowing that they were not ready for confrontation with that state. In addition, much of their sources and energy was wasted settling domestic and Arab internal disputes and confrontations, which were mostly given higher priority than the question of Palestine. Nevertheless, pan-Arab slogans were raised.

On the other hand, the influence of pan-Arab political parties in the various states until the 1970s and the Islamic movement since then have persuaded domestic public opinion to press their governments to take a greater interest in the Jerusalem issue. The regimes in different contexts have been outbidding one another, each attributing the responsibility for the defeat in Palestine to someone else, while publicising its pride in being the real defender of the nation's interests. This kind of competition has appeared in different contexts, such as the rivalry of some regimes over the leadership of the Arab and Muslim world, or their attempts to enhance their legitimacy and popular support by attacking other Arab regimes bearing the responsibility for Arab political and economic crises and defeat, or even in territorial and economical controversies. All this discord turned Palestine and Jerusalem, because of their importance in public opinion, into fertile objects of competition between these regimes, making each of them careful in appearing to bear its responsibility for the Palestinian issue.

As a result, the overlapping contradictory factors facing the Arab/Muslim regimes made complete isolation and abstention from playing a role in the Palestinian and Jerusalem question unthinkable. At the same time, however, these

regimes still wanted to avoid playing a direct role by defining issues such as Palestine, or even Jerusalem, as their own national issue. This situation led to a search for a halfway house.

The solution was the use of vocabulary such as “support” or “solidarity”, thus referring to a situation where one party helps another, without implying that the two parties are united. Solidarity and support in the form of financial and rhetorical help, and an increase in the armies’ action in wars against Israel, were the halfway house between isolation and direct participation. Offering financial and verbal help to the Palestinians could contain angry public opinion, yet at the same time it would not put these states in direct confrontation with Israel, and so it would reduce the pressure from the international powers.

In short, Jerusalem was used and interpreted by the international, Jewish Zionist, Palestinian, Arab and Muslim parties to serve particular and sometimes contradictory functions. It was a pillar of the plan to establish a Jewish or Palestinian nation-state, and an essential component of the pan-Arab and pan-Islamic discourse, which rejected the nation-state. The debate over the definition of the parties to the conflict in Jerusalem reflects the reactions to the question of nation-state construction in the Middle East. The resolution of the Jerusalem issue and the achievement of a political settlement seem to be closely connected with the future development of the nation-state in the region. Meanwhile, the development of the Jerusalem issue itself is expected to continue playing an influential role in this area.

0.4 The Research Contribution and Sources

The aim of this research is to analyse the process of the political settlement of Jerusalem, using conflict resolution theory as an analytical tool. The thesis develops the notion of studying conflict definition and redefinition so as to understand conflict and its development more fully. Jerusalem is therefore viewed not only in the framework of the peace process in the Middle East, but also in the general political transformation of the region. In addition, some commonly held assumptions and arguments in the discussion of the Jerusalem question are examined. By producing a clearer understanding of the situation, it is hoped that this study will contribute to reaching a solution to the conflict.

Although the settlement of the Jerusalem question has been examined in several studies, the focus has been largely on providing the historical documentation for the process rather than a detailed political analysis. Most of these studies have covered only short periods, dealing with occasions when there have been political negotiations or discussions on Jerusalem in progress. Therefore, on the whole, they have not observed the dynamics of the development of the Jerusalem question, nor the changeable nature of the positions of the parties concerned. In other words, by basing their findings on the period following the June 1967 War, many studies have assumed that any change in the positions of the parties to the conflict is impossible. In addition, the limited period covered by these studies and the restriction of the research to the Palestinian–Israeli aspect have made it difficult to see the Jerusalem question in the general context of Middle Eastern politics.

However, it is important to note that the recent focus on Jerusalem in the Palestinian–Israeli negotiations has stimulated a number of studies of the political settlement of the city, resulting in the publication of several books since the second half of the 1990s. Michael Dumper, who has written and lectured extensively on Jerusalem for a long time, has produced the following two books on the topic: *The Politics of Jerusalem Since 1967*, published in 1997, and *The Politics of Sacred Space: The Old City of Jerusalem in the Middle East Conflict*, published in 2002. Both books provide important observations and data, some of which have been collected by the author directly from the field, and which may be unavailable from other sources. The focus is on the development of the situation inside Jerusalem, especially the city's demography, sectarianism, infrastructure, holy places, services, property ownership and economy. These topics form most of the first book and only the last of the eight chapters is devoted to the political settlement. In this chapter, "Jerusalem and the International Community", all the positions taken by the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union, Jordan, the PLO, and the Arab states since 1967 are discussed. The second book adopts a similar pattern but concentrates on Old Jerusalem (the walled city).

In 1996 Roger Friedland and Richard Hecht published their lengthy detailed work *To Rule Jerusalem*. The book, which covers a long period beginning in the nineteenth century, makes two important contributions to the literature on Jerusalem.

Firstly, it touches on the question of Jerusalem and the transformation of the national identity of both the Israelis and the Palestinians, though it does not take the discussion beyond these two parties. Secondly, it provides a field observation of life in the city. This was the result of interviews with numerous Palestinian and Israeli figures living in Jerusalem, with special attention given to the position of the city in the internal Jewish–Jewish, Palestinian–Palestinian, and Palestinian–Jordanian controversies. However, the negotiations on Jerusalem between the conflicting parties and the political and religious position of the city in the Middle East are given relatively little space.

In 2001, Menachem Klein published his book *Jerusalem, the Contested City*, a translation of his Hebrew text *Doves Over Jerusalem*. It covers the period from 1967 until the final negotiations on Jerusalem in 2000. The book focuses on East Jerusalem, which was occupied by Israel in 1967. It examines the demographic and administrative situation inside this sector of the city, the positions of the Palestinians and the Israelis at the negotiations, and the internal conflicts between both parties over the issue of Jerusalem. Readers are given inside data on the discussions and positions of the Israeli side during the negotiations on Jerusalem, especially the Egyptian–Israeli rounds of the late 1970s. It concentrates on the Palestinian–Israeli aspect of the issue, with little attention given to the wider regional and international contexts. Thus the chapter on the Arab League and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference is very general, and examines only on the Jordanian–Palestinian disputes inside these two institutions.

Also in 2001, Bernard Wasserstein published his book *Divided Jerusalem: The Struggle for the Holy City*. This work has a promising prologue, which calls for the review of several commonly held assumptions regarding the links between the parties to the conflict – Jews, Muslims, and Christians – and indicates how these assumptions have been developed to serve certain political aims. The book as a whole provides a comprehensive political history of the city of Jerusalem since the seventeenth century, written in what could be described as an interesting and academically concrete style. However, the historical chronology has no connection with the ideas of the prologue on the constructed political implications for the

religious dimension of Jerusalem, or what it calls “the Heavenly City”, remaining in the circle of general history.

These studies were important sources for this thesis, especially the data collected in Jerusalem and elsewhere. The research also benefited from secondary sources which covered some issues connected directly or indirectly with Jerusalem. Among these works, two examine the development of Palestinian identity. Rashīd Khālidī, in *Palestinian Identity* (1997), concentrates on Jerusalem’s role in this area. Muḥammad Musliḥ’s *The Origin of Palestinian Nationalism* was a most useful source of information about events in Palestinian life in the early 1920s. Additional detail was provided by Y. Porath in *The Palestinian–Arab Nationalist Movement*, Volumes 1 (1974) and 2 (1977), covering 1918–1929 and 1929–1939 respectively, as well as biographies of Amīn al-Ḥusaynī, the Palestinian leader of the 1920s to the 1940s: Philip Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem* (1988); and Zvi Elpeleg, *The Grand Mufti* (1993). There is a shared significance among these secondary sources in that much of their material is not currently available, such as interviews with individuals who are now deceased, or information from personal and family archives as in the case of Rashīd Khālidī and Muḥammad Musliḥ.

Among the published Arabic sources from which I benefited, especially those covering the pre-1948 period, was a biography of Amīn al-Husaynī by ‘Īsā Khalīl Muḥsin: *Filasṭīn wa Samāḥat al-Muftī al-Akbar* [Palestine and His Eminence the Grand Mufti] (1995). This biography is particularly important because it is based on original documents and archives of Palestinian sources rarely used before. Some of the material is no longer available, such as that of the Archives of the Arab Studies Association in Jerusalem, located at Orient House in Jerusalem, which were confiscated by the Israeli authorities in 2001.²⁶

Although, for various reasons, it was not possible for me to visit Jerusalem itself, I had access to several important primary sources. My interviews in Amman, London and Oxford included personalities who had lived in Jerusalem and had played direct and prominent roles in the city’s affairs from the pre-1948 period until the present day (see the Bibliography). I also had access to several official and

unofficial archives. In addition to the Public Record Office in London, I collected information from the Palestinian National Council Archive, the Jordanian Royal Committee for Jerusalem Affairs, the Jerusalem Day Committee Information Centre, the Arab Orthodox Society Files, and the files and minutes of the Jordanian Parliament in the archive of New Jordan Studies Centre, all of which are in Amman, as well as reports from non-governmental organisations and human rights institutions in Jerusalem, and from the Palestinian Statistics Bureau in Ramallah.*

Published documents, especially the three volumes, *Documents on Palestine*, Volumes 1 and 2, and *Documents on Jerusalem*, all published by the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs in Jerusalem were important sources of information.

Last but not least, the newspapers, both British and Arab, covering various periods from the 1940s to the present day, were extremely useful in clarifying certain points and revealing forgotten details.

0.5 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters, in addition to this Introduction and a Conclusion. Each chapter examines the position and policies of one or more of the parties to the conflict. The reason for dealing with each party separately is to enable a comparison to be made of the positions of each party, and to understand the factors influencing its decisions at different stages.

Chapters One and Two on the Palestinian and Israeli positions respectively are longer than the other chapters for two reasons. Firstly, both parties play an active role in the situation and are viewed by many others as being directly responsible for it. Since both Palestinians and Israelis live in the city of Jerusalem, they have a much closer interaction with the issue. Secondly, the two chapters include historical and contextual data that provide the background to the remainder of the thesis.

Chapter One, "Jerusalem and the Palestinian Politics of State", shows that Jerusalem could play a role in both constructing the Palestinian nation-state and adding a wider Arab and Muslim dimension to the Palestinian conflict. However,

²⁶ On the Archives confiscated from Orient House, see the Editorial, "The Looted Archives of Orient House", in *Jerusalem Quarterly File*, Issue 13, 2000.

* The Bureau was also destroyed by the Israeli Army in April 2002.

establishing a nation-state has been the priority in the Palestinians' policies. Thus, while Jerusalem has been emphasised as the capital and symbol of this state, there has also been a readiness to show flexibility regarding the city on various occasions in exchange for advancing the possibility of establishing this state. Most of the time the Palestinians have defended their right of making independent national decisions without Arab intervention. Nevertheless, on certain occasions they have highlighted the Arab and Muslim and even international Christian responsibility for Jerusalem, pointing out that these parties have also been responsible for deciding the fate of the city.

Chapter Two, "The Zionist Movement and the Jewish State", argues that the Zionist leaders have been ready to make concessions over Jerusalem in exchange for other gains. Moreover, the centrality of Jerusalem in the Zionist discourse regarding the Jewish state developed at a late stage in the evolution of the Zionist movement. The hard-line position on the city in recent years expresses the balance of power and Israeli superiority against its adversaries, rather than religious and ideological principles.

Chapter Three, "Jordan and Jerusalem: Second Capital or Arab Solidarity?", is devoted to Jordan, which ruled the East sector from 1948 to 1967, and still has a role in administering the holy places and the *waqf* (religious endowments) institutions in the city. The chapter shows how Jordanian discourse on Jerusalem has been designed to assert the legitimacy of the regime as the city's defender, and to justify the kingdom's union of the East and West Banks. While emphasising the role of Jerusalem as the state treasure in creating Jordanian national pride and identity, the Jordanian government has been careful not to allow the city to develop into a centre of Palestinian national identity. The chapter also points out how for years Jordan asserted that its sovereignty of Jerusalem was irreversible, although in the 1980s and 1990s it was forced to backtrack.

Chapter Four, "The Arab Muslim Jerusalem", describes how the Arab and Muslim states have refused to become directly involved in the Jerusalem question. They have insisted on solving the problem in the framework of the nation-state policy, by supporting Palestinian national rights, though not partnering them at the negotiations, or by using their military means. This kind of response shows that these

states have given economic and political support mainly to contain and satisfy domestic public opinion and in reaction to the rivalry among Arab regimes.

Chapter Five, "Jerusalem in the International Sphere", discusses the position of the four major parties under the headings: "Great Britain and Europe", "The United States of America", "The Vatican and the Churches" and "The United Nations". The chapter examines the gradual change in the international view of Jerusalem. The city's religious significance, namely that of Christianity, had been used to justify political claims by various international powers in the Middle East until the early twentieth century. Nowadays, Western powers concentrate on the importance of Jerusalem in terms of a political settlement in the Middle East and its influence on the relationships between the states of the region. This includes the Vatican, which shows less determination to play a role in shaping the settlement of the issue. Meanwhile, thanks to the United States, the United Nations has small role in the Jerusalem question and now acts only as a mirror for international politics.

Chapter One

Jerusalem and the Palestinian Politics of State

Introduction

By the end of the twentieth century, the slogan “the Palestinian State and its capital Jerusalem” had become the embodiment of Palestinian national aspirations. However, the Palestine intended by this slogan had not been imaginable until the period following the 1948 war. The same thing could be said about Jerusalem. The intended Palestine is around 22 per cent of the Palestine under the British Mandate, or what is now known as the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The intended Jerusalem is what is known as East Jerusalem, or the sector remaining under Arab control after the 1948 war (see Map 2).

East Jerusalem is now the national capital sought by the Palestinians. However, it had never previously been their national capital, so why should it be seen in this light now?

For many in the Arab and Islamic world, as well as among the Palestinians, a nation-state like that which the Palestinians are demanding is considered a symptom of the disunity and weakness which serve the interests of foreign powers. The Palestinians have developed a discourse in which they have defined Jerusalem as a Muslim and Arab issue for which Muslims and Arabs should bear their responsibility in handling, though asserting at the same time that the city would be part of the Palestinian national state.

The nation-state in the Middle East was supposed to bring into being new identities associated with the people inside the borders of these states, and to replace other, older Arab and Muslim identities. Under this scheme, Palestine and Jerusalem were expected to be regarded as an external issue by these states. However, while the Palestinian leadership seeks a nation-state of this pattern, it asserts that Jerusalem is an Arab-Muslim and even a Christian issue.

In fact Jerusalem has played multiple roles. It has been the centre of not only Palestinian nationalism, but also Arab-Muslim discourse. This has been mainly

connected with elite politics. The Palestinian leaderships have managed to benefit from Jerusalem playing different and changeable roles.

In the same sense the Palestinian political position regarding a political settlement in Jerusalem has been changeable. Before 1948 the Palestinian leadership had accepted the loss of control over the city even though it was playing a central role in the Palestinian national movement, which had resulted in various confrontations between the Palestinians and the Jews. It was able to accept an international presence to guarantee freedom of worship and the safety of its Jewish community. This position changed between 1948 and the mid-1970s, when the internationalisation of the city was rejected by the Palestinian leadership. The new attitude was the result of the zero-sum definition of the Arab–Israeli conflict, which denied the existence of a Jewish state in Palestine. When the Palestinian position changed in the mid-1970s and the definition of the conflict changed in turn from zero-sum, or based on the question of existence, to non-zero-sum, that is, a territorial conflict open to compromise, the position towards Jerusalem itself also changed.

The multiple roles of Jerusalem, and the Palestinian leadership's definition and redefinition of its positions on the political settlement in Jerusalem will be examined in this chapter in four chronological phases:

1. From the establishment of the British Mandate to the proclamation of Israel (1920–1948).
2. From 1948 to the Israeli occupation of the rest of Palestine in 1967.
3. From 1967 to the Oslo Accords in 1993.
4. The final negotiations at Camp David and Taba, and the eruption of al-Aqsa Intifada in September 2000.

1.1 Pre-1948 Jerusalem: The Politics of the Notables

The British entry into Jerusalem in 1917 as part of its victory over the Ottoman Empire in the First World War formed a turning-point in the history of Palestine. From that time Jerusalem began to play a larger political and social role under the new British Mandate.

1.1.1 Jerusalem and the New Palestine

From the historical point of view, Palestine had never been a united, independent political or administrative entity. In the late Ottoman era, the northern areas of Acre and Nablus had belonged to the Ottoman province (*vilayet*) of Beirut, while the centre and most of the south formed an autonomous district (*sanjaq*) of Jerusalem.¹ However, the name Palestine had always existed and referred to an area that could not be clearly defined, although it was concentrated mainly around Jerusalem. There were many medieval and nineteenth-century writers who described Palestine as the area that included the Palestinian territory under the British Mandate plus parts of the present Jordan and Lebanon.²

However, it should also be noted that the Ottoman *sanjaq* of Jerusalem, which was established in 1874, had included around 81.4 per cent of what later became British Mandate Palestine,³ that is, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, Beersheeba, Gaza and Jaffa. Moreover, owing to the religious significance of Jerusalem, the *sanjaq* was distinguished by its direct communication with Istanbul instead of through a larger unit, as was the case with other *sanjaqs*.⁴

Consulates and vice-consulates of European countries began to be established in Jerusalem, beginning with Britain in 1838 and followed during the rest of the nineteenth century by France, Prussia, Sardinia, Spain and the United States.⁵

This status made Jerusalem the centre of the drawn borders of a separate mandatory Palestine. On the other hand, the social structure of Jerusalem was crucial

¹ 'Āzūrī, *Yaqāzat*, p.18. See also, Yazid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement 1949–1993* (Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p.5.

² For instance, 'Āzūrī, *Yaqāzat*, pp.49–71. For medieval examples, see citations in Edward W. Said, *The Question of Palestine* (London, and Henley, Oxon: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 10; and Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp.29–31.

³ Amīn Mas'ūd Abū Bakir, *Mulkiyyat al-Arāḍi fī Mutaṣarrifiyyat al-Quds 1858–1918* [Landownership in Jerusalem 1858–1918] (Amman: 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Shūmān Institute, 1996), p.57.

⁴ Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, p.152.

⁵ See C.E. Bosworth, "The Land of Palestine as Mirrored in Western Guide Books of the Closing Ottoman Period", paper in *The Book of the Third International Conference on Bilād al-Shām: Palestine, 19–24 April 1980*, vol. 2, *Geography and Civilisation of Palestine* (Amman: University of Jordan; Irbid, Yarmuk University, 1984), p.5.

in shaping the Palestinian political movement in the early years of the British Mandate. This structure was a pure model for what Albert Hourani calls “the politics of notables”.⁶ This description referred to the members of “great families” resident in cities of the Ottoman Empire, “who can play a certain political role as intermediaries between government and people, and – within certain limits – as leaders of the urban population”.⁷ Such groups varied from one city to another and according to local circumstances. However, there were three major groups of notables, established mostly in the Arab countries, during the Ottoman era:

1. The traditional group of *'ulamā'* or Muslim scholars, whose role was vital to the Ottoman government because “they alone could confer legitimacy on its acts”. They occupied the positions of mufti, *naqīb*, *qāḍī*, etc. (religious judges). Their inherited status depended on their families, and also on their control of the sources of *waqf* (religious endowment).
2. Local military leaders.
3. Secular notables (*a'yān*, agas and amirs), whose power was rooted in certain political or military traditions, or who controlled agricultural production, collected land tax and conscripted men for the armed forces.⁸

These groups, as Hourani explains, had a degree of autonomy, for they were not fully dependent on the government or on the people. Their function was to legitimise the central government and to administer, on its behalf, the areas where they were resident. At the same time they represented their people and could mobilise them when necessary to support or oppose the central government.⁹

Although Jerusalem was without a substantial commercial or agricultural base, its religious status allowed the Ottoman government to provide it with a religious officer, a *qāḍī*, who could appoint deputies in other towns and collect fees for

⁶ Albert Hourani, Philip S. Khoury & Mary C. Wilson (eds.), *The Modern Middle East (A Reader)* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993). See also Albert Hourani, “Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables”, reissue of a paper presented at a conference on *The Beginning of Modernisation in the Middle East* (University of Chicago, 1966), pp.83–109.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 90, 93 & 103. See also A.H. Hourani, “Introduction”, in A.H. Hourani & S.M. Stern (eds.), *The Islamic City: A Colloquium* (Oxford: Bruno Cassier; Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), p.18.

⁹ Hourani & Stern, *The Islamic City*, p.18.

the 'ulamā' of Jerusalem.¹⁰ This made the 'ulamā' the most influential element at the local level.

The power of these religious notables spread across Palestine for different reasons. Firstly, they held religious authority in the other towns and cities. Secondly, the power of the other traditional notables declined as a result of the Ottoman centralisation policy (*tanzimat*) of 1860. This policy ended the power of the notables in spheres such as taxation, justice and security.¹¹ At the same time, new socio-economic powers appeared in Palestine as a result of the increase in external trade.¹² These powers, according to Muḥammad Musliḥ, were newly rich families and individuals, largely consisting of Palestinian and Lebanese Christians, Jews and Europeans, who formed a rising middle class but because of their origins and ethnic identity could not be the "Palestinian bourgeoisie".¹³ As a result, the notables of Jerusalem had the power to be the notables of Palestine and the major political force in the country when the British Mandate was established.

In his chapter "The Constitution of the Islamic City", Stern explains the role usually played by the notables when a new government took power. He says that when the authority of the government began to decline, the notables "stepped into the breach and controlled the cities *de facto*". They would administer the city until the ruling power regained its authority or a new ruler took over from it.¹⁴ Roger Owen observes that "colonial" states in the Middle East tried to sustain the role of such groups so as to benefit from them, and "to create an alliance, implicit or explicit" with them.¹⁵

Jerusalem's religious and historical significance and its religious institutions were transformed into a source of social, financial and political power for certain families and notables controlling the holy places and the municipality in the city.

¹⁰ Baruch Kimmerling & Joel S. Migdal, *Palestinians: The Making of People* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), p.68.

¹¹ Alexander Scholch, "The Decline of Local Power in Palestine after 1856: The Case of 'Akīl Agha", paper in *Third International Conference on Bilād al-Shām*, vol. 3, *History of Palestine* (Amman: University of Jordan; Irbid: Yarmouk University, 1984), pp.114, 116.

¹² Bosworth, "The Land", p.4.

¹³ Muhammad Y. Muslih, *The Origin of Palestinian Nationalism* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1988), pp. 9, 37 & 41.

¹⁴ Hourani & Stern (eds), *The Islamic City*, pp.34–35.

¹⁵ Owen, *State, Power*, p.15.

This subsequently made Jerusalem and its notables the centre of Palestinian political life.

The British authority and the city's notables were the two major parties in Palestine, and Palestine's political future, to a large extent, depended on relations between them. Both sides co-operated to construct a new formula of "politics of the notables". The reconstruction of this formula and its functioning centred largely on Jerusalem, and passed through three main stages as described below.

1.1.2 The Notables at the Crossroads (1917–1921)

The British presence in Palestine caused the Palestinians to face several questions: How should they deal with the British occupation? How should they respond to the colonial plan to divide the Arab region into separate countries? And, of course, how should the issue of Zionism be settled?

Meanwhile, the Jerusalem notables were making efforts to sustain their power. To do so, it was important that Jerusalem preserved its role as a source of power and as the base of the leadership. Between 1918 and 1921 the Palestinians rebuilt their political structure on the Arab Executive Committee and the Supreme Muslim Council. Both of these major institutions led the Palestinian national movement until the mid-1930s. Both were based in Jerusalem and influenced by the political structure and dynamics of the city.

1.1.2.1 THE ARAB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

In 1918, the organisation of the Palestinian political movement was based on the establishment of the Muslim-Christian Associations (MCA) in every district throughout the country. Between 22 January and 10 February 1919 the MCA held a Congress – later known as the First Palestinian-Arab Congress – which was attended by 28 Palestinian notables representing various districts of Palestine.¹⁶

This united structure was attributed largely to Jerusalem's peculiar demography and history, for in several cities there were no Christian communities. Jerusalem was the main mixed city and, more importantly, it also contained the

¹⁶ Şubhî Ghūsha, *Shamsunā lan Taghīb* [Our Sun will not Set], vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Markaz al-Sarāyā li Khadmāt al-Mujtama', 1994), p.261.

Christian notables who lived alongside the Muslim notables and were part of the administrative bodies such as the municipality. This framework had several meanings in relation to the definition of the conflict. Firstly, it showed that it was not a religious conflict, but one of indigenous inhabitants against outsiders. Secondly, it was a sign of building a transcendent nationalist identity over the sectarian Muslim and Christian identities.

The British authorities were aware of the establishment of the MCA and the preparations to hold the Congress. Nevertheless, no objections were raised; on the contrary, there were attempts to exploit the Congress. Britain's main aim at the time was apparently to promote the creation of a separate Palestine. Therefore, Gabriel Ḥaddād, a Syrian official who was on good terms with the city's notables, was invited to visit Jerusalem to convince the delegates at the Congress of the justice of the slogan "Palestine for the Palestinians".¹⁷ Britain hoped that the notables would be the driving-force behind the creation of such a "nationalism" which accepted a separate country as a national goal.

The Congress passed five resolutions:¹⁸

1. Palestine was considered to be part of an Arab Syria and had "never been separated from it at any time".
2. Rejection of a statement made in a speech by M. Pichon, France's Foreign Minister, asserting that France "has rights in our country [Palestine], based on the desire and hopes of the native population". The Congress dismissed this assertion, saying that it had "no foundation".
3. The wish was expressed to keep Palestine allied with the independent Arab Syrian government, bound by Arab unity and free from all foreign influence or protection.
4. Based on President Wilson's principles of self-determination, the Congress refused any promise or treaty regarding Palestine.
5. The Palestinian government would seek the assistance of its friend Great Britain in the development of the country, on condition that this would not prejudice in any way its independence and Arab unity.

¹⁷ Y. Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab Nationalist Movement 1918-1929* (London: Frank Cass, 1974), p.80.

This was the early Palestinian position, which was against the separation scheme. However, this view was not shared by the Jerusalem notables. The city was represented at the Congress by four delegates who actually formed the opposition party. One was 'Ārif Pasha al-Dajānī, who was the President of the Congress. He and Y'aqūb Farrājj, the representative of Jerusalem's Orthodox community, were considered pro-British. When the Congress resolutions were declared, they announced that they supported only the second resolution, opposing the French claim to Syria,¹⁹ and issued a statement condemning the change in Palestine's name to Southern Syria and affirmed that the government of Palestine must be fully autonomous in its home affairs, with only a cultural union with Syria.²⁰

The other two delegates from Jerusalem were considered pro-France: Shukrī al-Karmī, the representative of the Roman Catholics, and 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Abū Ghowsh, the representative of the villages around Jerusalem. Both of them announced that their signatures on the draft of the resolutions applied only to the issue of Palestine's union with Syria.²¹

As a result, Jerusalem's status as the centre of the leadership was threatened by the position of its notables. For example, on 8 February 1919, the Congress decided to elect Rāghib al-Dajānī from Jaffa as the replacement President. In addition, the delegation from Nablus was entrusted with the Congress's documents and authorised to convene the coming Congress in its city.²²

In response, the members of Jerusalem's MCA held a meeting, where the following decision was made:

On behalf of the public in general, we beg that a constitutional and internally independent government be, by the free choice of the indigenous population, established in Palestine. This government will enact all the necessary laws, according to the wishes of its inhabitants, and be politically united with a completely independent Arab Syria...²³

This decision was a form of declaration by the young members of Jerusalem's MCA that the position of the Association members was different from

¹⁸ For the resolutions, see *ibid.*, p.81, Muslih, *The Origin of*, p.181.

¹⁹ Porath, *Emergence*, p.83.

²⁰ Muslih, *The Origin of*, p.184.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Porath, *Emergence*, p.84.

that of its delegate. However, a compromise was soon reached to preserve Jerusalem's political leadership. As a sign of its dissatisfaction and disappointment with the Congress resolutions, Britain banned a Palestinian delegation from participating in the Paris Peace Conference as representatives of the Palestinians. This decision provoked mass demonstrations, and Amir Fayṣal in Syria, through popular demonstrations, was declared as the Palestinian representative.²⁴ On 11 March, and as an indicator, Jerusalem's MCA sent a copy of the Congress resolutions to Fayṣal, authorising him to represent Palestine at the Peace Conference on condition that Palestine was to enjoy full internal autonomy within the structure of the union.²⁵

The fact that the letter was sent by the Jerusalem leadership clearly cancelled the resolution to elect a leadership from outside the city. The authorisation of Fayṣal as the representative of the Palestinian problem was a halfway solution between the choice of the Jerusalem notables and the rest of the Congress members. Porath interprets the compromise as follows: "Apparently, the more extremist groups understood that without the Jerusalem leadership their appearance as the representative of Palestine would carry no weight."²⁶

However, it should be noted that the differences appearing inside Jerusalem, as expressed in the declaration by the city's MCA, reflected the differences between two powers. One was known by observers as the old notables, who dated from the Ottoman era, and the other was the young activists, who also belonged to the same class of notable families but supported the Syrian project under the leadership of Fayṣal.

In 1919 and 1920 the young activists managed to mobilise the masses to support the Syrian option. During April 1920 in particular, they took advantage of the annual traditional religious season in Jerusalem, Mawsim al-Nabī Mūsā.* They

²³ Ibid., p.85.

²⁴ Robert John & Sami Hadawi, *The Palestine Diary*, vol. 1, 1914–1945 (Beirut: The Palestine Research Centre, 1970), p.121.

²⁵ Porath, *Emergence*, p.86.

²⁶ Ibid.

* Mawsim al-Nabī Mūsā is an annual religious festival in Jerusalem, dating back to the twelfth century. In the 1920s, however, it became a religious and Palestinian nationalist celebration, in which political slogans and themes were expressed. It is considered a

delivered political speeches promoting their ideas, which were followed by clashes between Arabs and Jews. The British police arrested those responsible for the violence in both groups. Among the accused were two young activists, Amīn al-Ḥusaynī and ‘Ārif al-‘Ārif, who fled to Damascus on 6 April.²⁷

It can be concluded from this that the Palestinian view was divided between the old notables, who were in favour of an autonomous Palestine, and the young activists, who supported the Arabist plan to establish the Syrian Arab state. Jerusalem was to be the focal point of the first view and its leadership to be that of Palestine, whereas the opposition was centred on Damascus.

The Syrian project received a severe blow from its symbol and leader, Amir Fayṣal himself. On 3 January 1919, he secretly signed an agreement with Chaim Weizmann, the representative of the Zionist Organisation, in which he accepted (1) the separation of Palestine from the Arab state that was to be established; and (2) the Balfour Declaration.²⁸ Fayṣal also agreed with the French government on 27 November 1919 that the Arab government would not resist France’s occupation of Lebanon and the coastal regions of Syria north of Alexandretta.²⁹ When the news of his agreements was published, there was widespread strong disapproval and condemnation among the Arab nationalists.³⁰ The final phase in the Syrian project was the occupation of Damascus by French troops on 25 July 1920, following which Fayṣal left for London.³¹

These developments enhanced the power of the old notables in Jerusalem. Therefore, when the Third Palestinian-Arab Congress was held in Haifa on 13

contribution to the development of a united Palestinian national identity, since it was an annual meeting-point for delegations from various cities.

²⁷ Muḥsin Yūsuf, “Intifāḍat al-‘Ām 1920 al-Filasṭīniyya fī Wathā’iq Wizārat al-Khārijīyya al-Bariṭāniyya” [The 1920 Palestinian Uprising in the British Foreign Office Documents], *Shu’ūn Filasṭīniyya*, nos. 227 & 228 (February–March 1992), pp.6–7.

²⁸ For the text of these agreements, see Walter Laqueur, *The Israel–Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969), pp.18–20, 22 & 23.

²⁹ George Antonious, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938), p.301.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.303.

³¹ J.M.N. Jeffries, *Palestine: The Reality* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1939), p.328.

December 1920,³² it requested the establishment of a native government like that of Iraq and Transjordan.³³ The leadership of Jerusalem was recognised when the Congress elected members of the Arab Executive Committee, in which Mūsā Kaẓim al-Ḥusaynī, the former mayor of Jerusalem, was voted in as President, and ‘Ārif al-Dajānī from Jerusalem as Vice-President.³⁴

The Executive Committee became the Palestinian political leadership. Its political positions did not always match the wishes of the British government. For instance, on 28 March 1921, the Committee submitted a report to the British Secretary of the Colonies, Winston Churchill, “On the State of Palestine”, which summed up the view of the Third Palestinian-Arab Congress. The Report asked for:

1. The abolition of the principle of a Jewish National Homeland.
2. The creation of “a National Government” responsible to a parliament elected by the Palestinian people resident in Palestine before the First World War.
3. A ban on Jewish immigration until such a government was formed.
4. The abolition of the plan to separate Palestine from her sister states.³⁵

For the British government in Jerusalem there were signs that the Committee had no intention of taking any practical steps regarding issues such as Arab unity. For instance, Mūsā Kaẓim al-Ḥusaynī was quoted as saying in 1921: “Now, after the recent events in Damascus, we have effected a complete change in our plans here. Southern Syria no longer exists. We must defend Palestine”³⁶ This simply meant that the Palestinian leadership effectively accepted the separation scheme.

There were British predictions that those notables would adhere to the use of peaceful political tools. One of the British Intelligence officers reported in January 1921: “I do not feel that there is much reason to fear the responsible members of the discontented party; but the words and actions of the irresponsible members are apt to

³² In May 1920, the British authorities in Palestine prohibited the holding of the Second Congress. Therefore, the Congress members issued a statement that the Congress had been held (see Muslih, *The Origin of*, p.206).

³³ Porath, *Emergence*, p.109.

³⁴ Muslih, *The Origin of*, p.208.

³⁵ The text of the “Report on the State of Palestine” cited in English in Bayān Nuwayhiḍḍ al-Ḥūt (ed.), *Min Awrāq Akram Zu‘aytir: Wathā’iq al-Ḥaraka al-Waṭanyya al-Filasṭīniyya 1918–1939* [The Papers of Akram Zu‘aytir: The Documents of the Palestinian National Movement 1918–1939] (Beirut: The Palestinian Studies Institution, 1979), pp. 64–72.

³⁶ Kimmerling & Migdal, *Palestinians*, p.81.

be dangerous.”³⁷ In short, and as will be detailed later, the Committee and the Mandate had found enough space in which to coexist.

1.1.2.2 THE MUSLIM RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

The British High Commissioner in Jerusalem seemed interested in co-operating with the religious leaders and institutions in the city, believing that it could help him in his task of administering the Mandate. Jerusalem, a holy city for the Muslim inhabitants and a probable source of tension, emerged as a source of stability for the occupiers.

The political power of the Mufti of Jerusalem had grown under British rule since the entry of the British troops into Jerusalem. The Mufti at that time was Kamil al-Ḥusaynī. He assumed sole responsibility for the Central *Waqf* Committee for the whole of Palestine. In addition, he was appointed Judge of the Shar‘ya Court of Appeal in Jerusalem, and was granted the title of Grand Mufti (*al-Muftī al-Akbar*).³⁸

The British attitude could be seen largely as a reward to Kamil for some of his actions. Together with other religious leaders he organised a welcome for the British military leaders and visits to them when they entered Palestine.³⁹ He participated in the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the Hebrew University.⁴⁰ In addition, he announced publicly that the population could rest assured that the British government, as was its policy everywhere, would do nothing to hinder the Muslims in the practice of their religion.⁴¹ By these actions, Kamil eased the new rulers’ task and normalised their presence as a non-Muslim power in Palestine and Jerusalem.

When Kamil died in early 1921, the election for the new Mufti accelerated what could be called the reproduction of the “politics of the notables” formula. The

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Philip Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem: al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni and the Palestinian National Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p.22.

³⁹ This has been justified by the Arabs’ expectations that the British troops would give them their independence. See Muḥsin Sāliḥ, “Juhūd ba‘ḍ ‘Ulamā’ Filasṭīn fī Ri‘āyat al-Muqaḍasāt al-Islāmiyya fī al-Quds wa- Ḥimāyatuhā 1918–1931” [The Efforts of Some of Palestine’s Scholars in Sustaining and Protecting the Islamic Shrines in Jerusalem 1918–1931], *Majallat Dirāsāt al-Quds al-Islāmiyya*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Winter 1997), p.21.

⁴⁰ Bernard Wasserstein, *Divided Jerusalem: The Struggle for the Holy City*, 2nd edn. (London: Profile Books, 2002), p.87.

⁴¹ Porath, *Emergence*, p.187.

British High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel, had inherited the authority of the *Mutaṣarrif* of Jerusalem, who, in accordance with Ottoman law, had to appoint the Mufti from a list of three candidates chosen by a college of electors comprising the city's '*ulamā*', imams (leaders of the prayers in the mosques), and Muslim representatives of the regional councils and municipality.

When the election took place on 12 April 1921, there were four candidates, among whom was Amīn al-Ḥusaynī, the younger brother of the deceased Mufti. He was only 25 years old, and had spent two years in religious education in al-Azhar and the Egyptian University (subsequently Cairo University). He did not complete his studies because he enlisted in the Ottoman Army and participated in the First World War – though not at the front. While in the army, he protested about Turkish discrimination against Arabs. When Britain occupied Palestine, he worked with the British Army. He was employed in Damascus as an assistant to Gabriel Ḥaddād, Director of the Department of Security and Assistant to the British military governor of Jerusalem. There, he became involved with the nationalist groups centred on Amir Fayṣal. He had just returned to Palestine after his flight a year earlier following al-Nabī Mūsā clashes. Amīn had benefited from a special pardon for himself and 'Ārif al-'Ārif, which had been granted by Herbert Samuel.⁴²

Amīn came fourth and last in the election. However, the candidate who won the highest number of votes withdrew from the election as a result of British pressure. This enabled Herbert Samuel to elect Amīn al-Ḥusaynī on 8 May 1921.⁴³

Some observers interpret the British position as a response to the popular demand to appoint Amīn, or as the British High Commissioner's realisation of the importance of the familial balance in Jerusalem. Therefore, he wished to please the family of al-Ḥusaynī.⁴⁴ Samuel and Amīn had met each other in early April. Norman Bentwich, the legal secretary and a relative of Samuel, reported that Amīn al-Ḥusaynī had declared at this meeting:

⁴² Mattar, *The Mufti*, pp. 13, 16 & 17. Wasserstein, *Divided Jerusalem*, p.105.

⁴³ Zvi Elpeleg, *The Grand Mufti: Haj Amin al-Hussaini, Founder of the Palestinian National Movement* (London: Frank Cass, 1993), p.10.

his earnest desire to co-operate with the government and his belief in the good intention of the government toward the Arabs. He gave an assurance that the influence of his family and himself would be devoted to maintaining tranquillity in Jerusalem.⁴⁵

The role of the religious institutions of Jerusalem was further strengthened by the British approval of the establishment of the Supreme Muslim Council (SMC) in 1921. This measure was the continuation of the British policy to minimise Palestinian opposition to the Mandate by allowing the Arabs autonomy in their religious affairs.⁴⁶

The Council had the responsibility for many institutions, such as schools, courts, orphanages, mosques, and the *awqāf* funds. The British High Commission did not prevent Amīn al-Ḥusaynī from assuming greater power with his election to the Council Presidency on 9 January 1922.⁴⁷

As a result, by the beginning of 1922 the formula of the politics of the notables had been reconstructed in Palestine. The notables' strength was derived largely from their traditional authority and from their religious and administrative positions in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, although there was room for agreement between the Mandate and the notables, there were also reasons for disagreement. In addition to being a source of the notables' authority, Jerusalem was a trigger-point of conflict.

1.1.3 The Notables' Triangular Policy (1922–1937)

During the 1920s the Palestinian notables managed to preserve a balanced triangular relationship. The first angle was the British Mandate and the notables' need for friendly relations with Britain as the new ruler. The second angle was Zionism and the resistance to the policy of a Jewish National Homeland. The third angle was that of the Palestinians–Arabs–Muslims. This balance reflected the Palestinian position regarding the reasons for conflict in Palestine at that time

⁴⁴ 'Īsā Khalīl Muḥsin, *Filasṭīn wa Samā'iat al-Muftī al-Akbar al-Hajj Muḥammad Amīn al-Ḥusaynī* [Palestine and the Grand Mufti al-Hajj Muḥammad Amīn al-Ḥusaynī] (1995), pp.50 & 52; and Mattar, *The Mufti*, p.24.

⁴⁵ Mattar, *The Mufti*, p.26.

⁴⁶ Elpeleg, *Grand*, p.11.

⁴⁷ Muḥsin, *Filasṭīn*, pp.53–54.

1.1.3.1 THE BRITISH ANGLE

Amīn al-Ḥusaynī was officially an employee who was appointed to his post by a decision of the British Mandate. The Executive Committee was a body of traditional leadership which existed before the British occupation and they enjoyed relative freedom of action and organisation. In exchange for this, the British government benefited from the policies of the notables in different ways.

1. The acceptance by this elite, like the acceptance by elites in the surrounding countries, of the idea of a separate country.
2. The notables differentiated between the British and Jewish sides. In their rhetoric they criticised the British Zionist policy, whereas their day-to-day policies showed clear differences in dealing with each side. In this context Mūsā Kāẓim al-Ḥusaynī was reported to have told Ismā'īl Sudqī, the Egyptian politician of the Waṭanī Party in 1921, before a meeting arranged with the Secretary of the Colonies, Winston Churchill, that the Palestinians would ask for full independence. However, if this were not possible, their wish was that the real authority should lie with the British and not with the Jews.⁴⁸

1.1.3.2 THE ZIONIST ANGLE

The policy of a Jewish National Homeland was the angle of dispute between the British government and the notables. The notables rejected any existence of a Jewish state. Therefore, the Palestinians rejected any political proposal that could lead to its establishment.

Jerusalem was the focus of Jewish–Palestinian tension, and if the city was the main source of the notables' power, it was also their main responsibility. There were many Arab–Jewish disputes in the city. Instances of these confrontations began with the clashes during the above-mentioned al-Nabī Mūsā season in 1920, followed by disputes over the right to worship and the administration of the Wailing Wall in 1922, 1925, 1926, 1928 and 1929.

⁴⁸ A.W. Kayyali, *Palestine: A Modern History* (London: Third World Centre for Research and Publishing, n.d.), p.92.

Nevertheless, the Palestinian leadership followed non-violent methods in these disputes. They rejected religious definitions of the conflict and asserted on different occasions that the Jews could live as citizens in a Palestinian state and that before the Mandate they had enjoyed “all privileges and rights of citizenship”.⁴⁹ So the Palestinian leaders continued to use peaceful political methods, which satisfied the British government. In referring to the first eight years of Hajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī’s presidency of the SMC, Herbert Samuel wrote: “with the exception of a small affray in Jerusalem in the following November, for a period of eight years no disturbance occurred anywhere in Palestine.”⁵⁰ Even in the Wailing Wall clashes of 1929, and despite historians, including some of Amīn al-Ḥusaynī’s supporters, holding him responsible for mobilising the Arab side, there is evidence that he was still following peaceful means.⁵¹

The dispute began in September 1928, when Jewish religious leaders brought arks that were larger than usual, and mats to the Wall. They also installed a screen that divided the area in front of the Wall. The Muslims considered this a violation of the *status quo*, and an impediment to the free movement of the inhabitants of the neighbouring Arab district. Although British police ordered the removal of the screen, the Jewish worshippers refused to comply with the order and showed resistance instead. This led to a confrontation between the police and the Jews, resulting in some minor injuries. The event was widely publicised and provoked an international Zionist campaign for the expropriation of the Wall (see Chapter Two).

The Wall was part of the Islamic *waqf*, and Hajj Amīn was the official responsible for it. He tried to deal with the Zionist campaign by using peaceful means. For instance, in October 1928 he formed a committee for the defence of al-Burāq al-Sharīf (the Islamic name for the Wailing Wall). The committee confined itself to peaceful political methods: a publicity campaign in newspapers, pamphlets, statements, messages, conferences and meetings.⁵²

⁴⁹ “Report on the State of Palestine”.

⁵⁰ Elpeleg, *Grand*, p.11.

⁵¹ For examples of such scholars, see Ṣāliḥ, “Juhūd baḍ...”, p.37. For Amīn al-Ḥusaynī’s peaceful methods, see Mattar, *The Mufti*, pp.38–40.

⁵² Muḥsin, *Filasṭīn*, pp.74–83.

The Zionist campaign continued during 1929 and confrontations erupted in September of that year. The following week, Hajj Amīn told the High Commissioner that he wished to renew co-operation with the government and to restore law and order.⁵³ A British officer described Amīn's attitude as follows: "[He regarded] the maintenance of order and co-operation with the government [as] his duty not only to the government but also to God and the people as well as to his own conscience."⁵⁴ The British police sources also reported in November 1929 that Amīn had refused an offer from Syrian leaders to establish guerrilla groups to start a resistance campaign.⁵⁵

1.1.3.3 THE PALESTINIAN-ARAB-MUSLIM ANGLE

As Albert Hourani explains, the notables do not depend on one source of power, for they try to create a balance between their relationships with the ruler and the ruled and gain other sources of power.

The Palestinian leadership worked in the Arab and Muslim arenas to gain political and financial support to face the Zionist movement. An early example of the Palestinian style of addressing Arabs and Muslims was in 1922 on the occasion of the League of Nations Assembly to legalise the Mandate in Palestine. Several appeals and letters were issued for this purpose, the first appeal beginning with the following Qur'anic verse:

Glorified [and Exalted] is He [Allāh] [above all that evil they associate with Him], Who took His slave [Muḥammad] for a journey by night from al-Masjid Ḥarām [in Makkah] to al-Masjid al-Aqsa [in Jerusalem], the neighbourhood whereof We have blessed.⁵⁶

The appeal was addressed to "the Muslim nation from their brothers of Bayt al-Maḡdis [Jerusalem] and the rest of Palestine". Another, similar appeal was addressed to the "Egyptian nation", the "Iraqi nation", and "the Kings, Princes and

⁵³ Ibid., pp.85 & 86.

⁵⁴ Kayyali, *Palestine*, p.47.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ *Sūrat al-Isrā'* (17:1) in Muhammad Taqi ud-Din al-Hilali & Muhammad Muhsin Khan (trans), *Translation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language* (Madinah Munawwarah: King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an, n.d.).

Heads of the governments of Muslims”. It is noticeable that the appeals concentrated on the Zionist issue and did not object to the British Mandate itself.

Jerusalem was the main theme in these appeals. The first paragraph stated: “The Palestinian Muslims, who have guarded al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock for 1,300 years, declare to the Muslim world that these holy places are in great danger of horrible Zionist aggression.”

The second paragraph indicates the common right to Jerusalem’s holy places:

We, as faithful, careful guardians of what God entrusts us to preserve – the third of the *Harams* and the first Qibla [direction of prayer] – commit ourselves to defend it. ... our right to it is the same as that of the Egyptian, the Hejazi, the Moroccan, the Persian, the Turk, the Afghan, the Indian, the Javanese, and every Muslim on the earth, east or west

The appeals then detailed the Zionists’ plans to establish their government in Palestine and expel the Muslims. They concluded by asking the Muslims to protest on the day of the League of Nations Assembly, which was to examine the “Mandate text on Palestine, including the Balfour Declaration, the complete eradication of Islam from Palestine and defeat of the Islamic Nation.”⁵⁷

These appeals were the start of a formula in which the Arab and Muslim identity and significance of Jerusalem were highlighted, yet channelled to serve the goal of establishing a separate independent Palestinian national state. Although there were several Arab and Muslim countries occupied by that time, Jerusalem was the reason why the Palestinians could ask for special support. The assertion of the equality of the Muslims’ rights in Jerusalem, which should have resulted in equal responsibility, was not interpreted as expressing an aspiration for Islamic or Arab unity; it was designed to help establish a separate national state, which would certainly be an Arab-Muslim state.

1.1.4 The Collapse of the “Politics of Notables” Formula

The success of the notables formula in the 1920s could be attributed to a number of auxiliary factors. The Zionist enterprise did not grow rapidly. For instance, Jewish immigration declined sharply in 1927, and in 1928 immigration and emigration

⁵⁷ The text of the appeals (Arabic) cited in Bayān al-Ḥūt, *Min Awrāq*, pp.193–196.

balanced each other. This was in addition to various difficulties faced by the Zionist movement during this period.⁵⁸

By the end of the 1920s, however, the formula had lost its momentum and new factors led to the collapse of the notables' power:

1. If the British authorities had helped to reproduce the formula to sustain the power of the notables in Jerusalem, they did not do the same in other districts. The notables outside Jerusalem had already lost much of their power during the Ottoman era. The remainder disappeared under British rule and this minimised the notables' popular influence.⁵⁹
2. New political and economic powers were emerging outside Jerusalem. Their development was accelerated by the escalation of Zionist immigration and colonisation at the beginning of the 1930s, by the poor state of the economy, and by the Wailing Wall confrontations of 1929.

The new powers were the expression of popular dissatisfaction with the notables' policies, which were criticised for making a distinction between the British Mandate and the Jewish side. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Sā'iḥ, the former Speaker of the Palestinian National Council and one of the activists in the 1930s, writes:

During this period [the beginning of the 1930s] some of the nationalist figures were demanding that al-Hajj Amīn be stronger and tougher in resisting the English. They had noticed that he was strong in resisting the Zionists, but that he softened in the face of the English.⁶⁰

This attitude led to the appearance of groups calling for different methods in handling the Jewish question. There were, for example, the military groups, headed by 'Izz al-Dīn al-Qassām. Al-Qassām was a Syrian scholar of religion who had been active in northern Palestine since the mid-1920s in preparation for a revolution.⁶¹ In addition, there were many other independent local military groups.⁶²

⁵⁸ Kayyali, *Palestine*, p.136.

⁵⁹ See Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separation in Palestine: British Economic Policy 1920–1929* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993), p.40.

⁶⁰ 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Sā'iḥ, *Filasṭīn: La Salāt taḥta al-Ḥirāb: Mudhakarāt al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Sā'iḥ* [Palestine: No Prayers under the Bayonets: The Memoirs of al-Sheikh 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Sā'iḥ] (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1994), p.33.

⁶¹ See Bahjat Abū-Gharbiyya, *Fi Khiḍamm al-Niḍāl al-'Arabī al-Filasṭīnī: Mudhakkarat Bahjat Abū- Gharbiyya, 1916–1949* [In the Midst of the Struggle for the Palestinian-Arab

Al-Qassām criticised the SMC in particular for concentrating on the construction of mosques, including the decoration of al-Aqsa Mosque as well as other construction projects such as building a hotel in Jerusalem. He was quoted as saying: “The jewels and decoration of the mosques must be changed into weapons. If you lose your land, how will mural decorations help you?”⁶³

In 1932 Ḥizb al-Istiqlāl (the Independence Party) was established for the same reasons. The founders of the party were pan-Arab intellectuals, mostly from Nablus in northern Palestine, who opposed the moderate methods of the traditional leadership.⁶⁴

On other hand, by the end of the 1920s a new bourgeoisie had begun to organise itself. On 14 November 1929, some businessmen arranged a congress in Haifa, at which they condemned British discrimination against them in favour of Jewish businessmen. Therefore, they decided to establish a company and a bank to stimulate domestic agriculture, trade and industry. They also pledged not to sell land to the Jews, and declared a boycott on trade with them. The Congress elected a leadership consisting mainly of businessmen from the northern cities.⁶⁵

In the face of the new situation, the notables of Jerusalem responded by re-organising themselves into their own political parties. For example, Amīn al-Ḥusaynī established the Palestinian Arab Party.⁶⁶ In the aftermath of the 1929 confrontations he had tried to balance his relationship with the British authorities and the new powers. He continually presented himself to the British authorities as the moderate leader whose policies prevented the application of more radical ideas. Amīn heightened his rhetoric when addressing the Palestinians and tried to satisfy them by

Cause: The Memoirs of Freedom Fighter Bahjat Abū-Gharbiyya] (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1993), pp.45 & 46.

⁶² See *ibid.*, pp. 58, 63 & 84.

⁶³ Muḥsin Sālīḥ, “Juhūdḍ ba‘d...”, p. 31.

⁶⁴ See Mattar, *The Mufti*, p.66.

⁶⁵ Ibrahīm Ibrāsh , *al Bu‘d al Qawmī lil Qaḍiyya al-Filasṭīniyya: Filasṭīn Bayna al-Qawmiyya al-‘Arabiyya wa al-Waṭaniyya al-Filasṭīniyya*, [The [Arab] Nationalist Dimension of the Palestinian Cause: Palestine between Arab Nationalism and Palestinian Patriotism] (Beirut: Markiz Dirasāt al-Wiḥḍa al-‘Arabiyya, 1987), p.51.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.34–36.

instilling fresh hope in them. He faced the calls for violent resistance by seeking political and financial support from the Arab and Muslim worlds.

Nevertheless, Amīn's plans did not succeed. The Arab regimes did not respond positively (see Chapter Four), and the British Mandate acted against such manoeuvres. For instance, in 1931 he organised the General Muslim Congress in Jerusalem. Firstly, he failed to gain official Arab participation, and secondly, he had to make numerous promises to the British High Commissioner before being granted permission to hold the Congress. Among the promises was that the Congress would not discuss other Arab countries. Speakers were not to make statements that could provoke the Jewish side. These promises were not kept. After the Congress the High Commissioner summoned the Mufti, who defended himself by asserting that he had done his best to keep his promises. The British High Commissioner told Amīn al-Ḥusaynī

that it was particularly desired that no allusion should be made to alleged aspirations of the Jews over al-Aqsa Mosque ... [and] that the reference to the *Burāq*, as being part of al-Aqsa Mosque, had been struck out of the agenda.

According to the minutes of the meeting, the Mufti said that:

he had removed the phrase "Mosque of al-Aqsa" from the agenda [and that during the discussion] there had been no incitement arising from this subject and when some of the delegates proposed that they should go to the Wailing Wall in a body and say prayers and be photographed there, he had with great difficulty persuaded them not to do so and only one or two of them went there individually.⁶⁷

In its analysis of Amīn's aims in holding the Congress, the British Police in Jerusalem said: "Hajj Amīn Ḥusaynī seems to be giving less heed to local opposition and depending more and more for his prestige on the Islamic world."⁶⁸

By 1933, nationalist elements, especially in the northern districts, were able to initiate independent waves of political and armed resistance. The notables of Jerusalem, namely Amīn al-Ḥusaynī and the Executive Committee, had to co-operate with the new powers. Therefore, as a response to calls from different Palestinian

⁶⁷ FO371/16009: Note of an interview between the Mufti and the High Commissioner on 17 December 1931.

⁶⁸ FO371/16009: Report of the High Commissioner, Arthur Wauchop, to the Foreign Office on the General Muslim Congress, December 1931.

groups, the Committee led large demonstrations in Jerusalem on 13 October, and in Jaffa on 23 October 1933. Fifty-three Arabs and seven British were killed, and several Arab leaders were arrested. Mūsā Kāẓim al-Ḥusaynī was injured in Jaffa and died as a result on 26 March 1934.⁶⁹ A few months before his death at the age of 83, he had attended a meeting with the British High Commissioner to discuss the new position of the Executive Committee. He summed up the situation and its developments as follows:

I spent fifty years as an employee of the Ottoman state ... and I was responsible for security, law and order. It is not easy for me to call today for what you consider preaching for security, law and order. It is your inequitable rule and clumsy policy that have forced me to sign the resolution regarding demonstrations and strikes.⁷⁰

In April 1936, in an all-out rebellion, a decision to hold a general strike was made without consultation with the Mufti. The initiative had been taken mainly by committees in the northern cities. Only a few days earlier, Amīn al-Ḥusaynī himself had assured the High Commissioner that no more rioting would occur.⁷¹ On 25 April 1936, as a result of popular pressure, he agreed to head the newly established Arab High Committee (AHC) (*al-Lajna al-'Arabiyya al-'Uliyā*), which was to succeed the Executive Committee.⁷² To sustain his position, Amīn al-Ḥusaynī had to agree to lead the escalating protest. He began to respond to the pressure by adopting tactics such as the decision in May to promote the popular abstention from paying taxes.⁷³ During the summer he gave moral and material support to the armed rebels. In addition, he instructed the imams in the mosques to concentrate on the Jewish danger to Arab Palestine and the Muslim holy places.⁷⁴

1.1.4.1 PEEL COMMITTEE REPORT

In the aftermath of the 1936 rebellion, the Palestine Royal Commission (Peel Commission) was established to seek a solution to the Palestinian question. The Commission's report on 7 July 1937 recommended the termination of the Mandate

⁶⁹ For details of these demonstrations, see Muḥsin, *Filasṭīn*, pp.124,128 & 129.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.24 & 25.

⁷¹ Mattar, *The Mufti*, p.69.

⁷² Elpeleg, *Grand*, pp.41 & 42.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.75.

⁷⁴ Mattar, *The Mufti*, p.78.

and the establishment of two states in Palestine: one Jewish, and the other Arab to be united with Transjordan. Meanwhile, a new Mandate would be inaugurated for Jerusalem and Bethlehem.⁷⁵

Clearly the mainstream among the Palestinians would not accept this plan, since it included the establishment of a Jewish state. The details of the Mandate for Jerusalem and Bethlehem were not crucial since the principle of Jewish state itself was unacceptable. The AHC gave its rejection in a letter dated 8 July and signed by Amīn al-Ḥusaynī. The Committee demanded the cessation of Jewish immigration and land sales to Jews. It also asked for the establishment of a national democratic government, with a treaty safeguarding Britain's interests in Palestine and protecting all the legitimate rights of the Jews.⁷⁶

Even without this rejection, the "politics of notables" formula was already losing its function. Under the "politics of notables" formula the notables of Jerusalem benefited from the city's institutions and the social status that they gained from their religious and administrative posts in the city to lead the Palestinians' national movement into peaceful and moderate channels. In other words, they made the religious significance of Jerusalem play into the hands of the Mandate. By the mid-1930s, however, new military, political and economic powers were rising in other cities, particularly in the northern districts, which objected to the policies of Jerusalem's notables. The notables of Jerusalem responded positively by cooperating with the new powers and started to support some of the resistance activities. The resistance movement was supported by the institutions of Jerusalem which the notables had the power to control under the Mandate. Moreover, Amīn al-Ḥusaynī's movements in the Muslim and Arab arena persuaded Britain that it could lead to a wider Muslim or Arab anti-European movement.(see Chapter Five).

This meant that Jerusalem and its notables entered the counter-camp against British policies. When Amīn al-Ḥusaynī increased his participation in the resistance movement, the Mandate government decided to arrest him on 17 July 1937, a decision that meant abandoning the policy of the notables. Amīn evaded arrest and

⁷⁵ Report of the Palestine Royal Commission (Peel Commission), 7 July 1937. Cited in Mahdī Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 1, *Jerusalem* (PASSIA, 1997), pp.99–100.

hid at home in al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf. Meanwhile, the British authorities declared the AHC illegal and deported some of its leaders to the Seychelles. On 14 October Amīn fled to the Lebanon.⁷⁷ These events inaugurated a new phase in Palestinian politics and witnessed the collapse of the British phase of the “politics of the notables”.

1.1.5 The Revolutionary Notables (1937–1948)

Amīn al-Ḥusaynī, who had already been dismissed from a number of his posts, especially the Presidency of the SMC,⁷⁸ brought together his associates from Lebanon to reorganise themselves. His decision to face the British authorities enhanced his popularity and transformed him into a Palestinian hero.⁷⁹ From Lebanon he created new sources of legitimacy, for on the Palestinian level his status in Jerusalem was not enough to support his leadership. Therefore, he based his revolutionary legitimacy on his leadership of the armed resistance inside Palestine. Meanwhile, on the level of the Arab and Muslim countries, his position as Jerusalem’s Mufti earned him acceptance and popularity.

1.1.5.1 THE 1939 WHITE PAPER

In November 1938 Britain decided to abolish the Partition Plan on the pretext that “administrative and financial” difficulties made it “impracticable”.⁸⁰ While considering the need to enhance its position in the region against the German and Italian challenge, Britain began to seek a solution to satisfy the Arabs, although it refused to deal with Amīn al-Ḥusaynī.⁸¹ On 17 May 1939, a few months before the outbreak of the Second World War, Britain published an initiative to solve the Palestinian problem. It was called the 1939 White Paper. It described a plan that accepted most of the Palestinian demands, especially the virtual cancellation of the Balfour Declaration. An independent Palestinian state for both Arabs and Jews was to be

⁷⁶ Mattar, *The Mufti*, p.81.

⁷⁷ Wasserstein, *Divided*, p.115.

⁷⁸ Elpeleg, *Grand*, p.48.

⁷⁹ For details of the popularity of the Mufti in the 1930s and 1940s, see Said K. Aburaish, *Children of Bethany: The Story of a Palestinian Family* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1988), p.93.

⁸⁰ Laqueur, *The Israel–Arab*, p.63.

⁸¹ Elpeleg, *Grand*, p.52.

established after ten years. In addition, Jewish immigration and land transfers to the Jews were to be restricted.

The AHC rejected the plan, justifying this by (1) their lack of confidence in British intentions, and (2) the condition that the plan would be implemented only after a transition period of ten years and only with the co-operation of both the Arabs and the Jews. Therefore, if the Jews refused to co-operate, the whole plan would be cancelled. The committee asked that Palestine should be independent within the Arab federal union.⁸²

The reason for this refusal could have been the fact that the Palestinian leadership was no longer dependent on the traditional familial and religious status in Jerusalem. Amīn al-Ḥusaynī now had to calculate seriously the power of splinter rebel groups. The rebels inside Palestine issued a declaration in which they rejected the leadership of the Ḥusaynīs and other notables, and the Arab kings who ruled by British sufferance. They demanded total independence in an Arab Palestine.⁸³

In the following period Amīn increased his participation in the Arab countries' domestic affairs in his efforts to play the role of Arab and Muslim leader. He also sought new international alliances, such as the Axis. He launched propaganda campaigns in the Arab and Muslim countries, the theme of which was the threat of Jewish action against Jerusalem's holy places.⁸⁴ Amīn participated in an attempted coup in Iraq in 1941.⁸⁵ Then he presented himself to the Axis as a leader capable of enflaming a revolution against the French and British.⁸⁶

The Allies saw the manoeuvres of Amīn as a dangerous exploitation of the holy places to mobilise the Muslims. In this context an article in the *Foreign Affairs* journal in 1941 analysed Amīn's role as follows:

The ensuing trouble, which led to bloodshed in Jerusalem on Easter Sunday, 1920, was at first looked upon by the Mohammedan world as a local Palestinian issue. It was Haj Amin al-Husayni, the Mufti of Jerusalem, who made Islam conscious of the fact that it was not. It was he who persuaded the more than 150,000,000 Mohammedans under British and French rule to

⁸² Abū-Gharbiyya, *Fī Khīḍamm*, p.132.

⁸³ Mattar, *The Mufti*, p.84.

⁸⁴ Y. Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, vol. 2, *From Riots to Rebellion, 1929–1939* (London : Frank Cass, 1977), p.274.

⁸⁵ For details, see Abū-Gharbiyya, *Fī Khīḍamm*, p.136.

⁸⁶ Laqueur, *The Israeli–Arab*, p.83.

serve notice on the home government that they would not have the support of Islam in the war then in the offing if the Balfour Declaration was not recalled.⁸⁷

After the defeat of the Axis, Amīn al-Ḥusaynī and his associates attempted to use the Arab League to oppose the UN plan for the partition of Palestine. However, they failed. The Palestinian position had been explained at a conference held in London in September 1946. It was attended by Arab states and a Palestinian delegation headed by Jamāl al-Ḥusaynī, the Vice-President of the AHC. The Palestinian delegation made the following demands:

1. Palestine was to be an undivided state governed by all communities, with representatives popularly elected in their respective numerical proportion.
2. Jews who had a minimum of ten years' residency in the country were to be given equal citizenship.
3. Jewish immigration and land transfers to Jews were to be permitted only with the approval of the majority of the Arab members in the legislative assembly.
4. Regarding the holy places, the delegation made the following conditions:

The guarantees concerning the holy places would be alterable only with the consent of the UN, and the safeguards provided for the Jewish community would be alterable only with the consent of a majority of the Jewish members of the legislative assembly.⁸⁸

These demands were understandable, bearing in mind the reasons for and definitions of the conflict. The existence of a Jewish state was the non-negotiable issue, whereas Jerusalem could be under international auspices and the Jewish presence in the city could be accepted with institutionally recognised guarantees.

In general, while Jerusalem in the pre-1948 era had been a trigger-point for some clashes, it had also been a power base for the Palestinian leadership, which managed to use its status and leadership to maintain understanding with the British Mandate during the 1920s and part of the 1930s. Thus despite the general image of

⁸⁷ Pierre Crabites, "Britain's Debt to King Farouk", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 19, no.4 (July 1941), p.859.

⁸⁸ Robert John & Sami Hadawi, *The Palestine Diary*, vol. 2, 1945-1948 (Beirut: The Palestine Research Centre, 1970), p.96.

Jerusalem as a city of confrontation, it played in those early years, in one way or another, a role of pacification and containment.

On the other hand, while the Palestinians insisted on attaining their sovereign independent state, there was flexibility regarding Jerusalem. The Palestinian leadership showed its readiness to accept an international presence to supervise the freedom of worship and the protection of the Jewish community in the city.

1.2 The Dismantling of Palestine: 1948–1967

The British Mandate was terminated on 15 May 1948 and the resulting Arab–Israeli war ended with the partition of Palestine. Israel controlled nearly 78 per cent of the area that had been under the Mandate. According to the records of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees, the organisation was responsible in 1950 for nearly 726,000 refugees who had been expelled from the land that the Jews now declared was their state, while nearly 150,000 remained inside it.⁸⁹

Jerusalem was partitioned. Israel occupied the larger, modern West sector, and Jordan the East sector with its holy places. Amīn al-Ḥusaynī's attempt to establish a Palestinian state was not successful. The Palestinian AHC organised a congress in Gaza on 1 October 1948, at which it was decided to form an "All Palestine Government" that would be the government of all Palestine "on its mandatory borders". The government would be headed by Aḥmad Ḥilmī, and the PNC by Amīn al-Ḥusaynī. Jerusalem was declared as the capital, while Gaza was chosen as a temporary centre. Although the Arab states, apart from Jordan, recognised the Palestinian government, it did not have any role.⁹⁰ On one hand Amman, which was controlling the West Bank, managed to create a union of the East and West Bank of the River Jordan. Even some members of the All Palestine Government recognised the union and held ministerial and other high-ranking posts in the Jordanian government (see Chapter Three). On other hand, Egypt, who had a

⁸⁹ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, p.4.

⁹⁰ Īsā al-Shu'aybī, *Al-Kīyānyya al-Filasṭīniyya: al-Wa'y al-Dhātī wa al-Taṭawur al-Mu'assasātī 1974–1977* [The Palestinian Entity: Self-Awareness and Institutional Development 1974–1977] (Beirut: PPLO Research Centre, 1979), p.17. And Muḥsin, *Falṣṭīn*, pp.350-354.

tense relationship with Amīn al-Ḥusaynī, did not allow the government to act in Gaza, which was controlled by Egyptian troops.⁹¹

This situation transformed the Jerusalem issue to a large extent into a Jordanian-Israeli issue. Meanwhile, the Palestinians suffered political and social fragmentation and lacked any representation. They did not rule any part of Palestine and had no political institutions.

In the view of many Arab sources, it was this situation in the 1950s, not Jerusalem itself, which created the environment for the evolution of the Palestinian national identity. However, it seems that English sources on the subject, contributed by Palestinians, Israelis and others, concentrate on Jerusalem, its elites, its history, and its role as the focus of the conflict with Zionism from the late nineteenth century until the 1930s, as the main accelerator of Palestinian nationalism.

The reasons for this phenomenon could be the writers' way of thinking and the audience targeted in each case. The writers in English apply the general theory of nationalism, in which the role of the elite, the history of the city and the use made of it to construct identity and nationalism are examined. Therefore, Jerusalem has appeared to be the main ingredient. In addition, such works, particularly those by Palestinian authors, have tried to convince readers of the historical existence of Palestine and the Palestinians as a response to the Israeli propaganda that has denied these facts and therefore the right of the Palestinians to establish a state. Jerusalem was always an important piece of evidence for the Palestinians' objective.

On the other hand, the readers targeted by the Arabic works were mostly the Palestinians themselves. The authors were politicians promoting the aim of establishing an independent Palestinian entity without relying heavily on Arab political parties or regimes as the means of liberation.

The demand for an independent Palestinian body has grown mostly in the Gaza Strip and the refugee camps in Lebanon and other Arab countries of exile, and less so in Jordan and Jerusalem. The following reasons for the growth of a Palestinian national identity have been frequently explained in the memoirs and biographies of Palestinian leaders who rose to power in the 1960s:

⁹¹ Smith, *Palestine and the Palestinians*, pp.90-91.

1. A political and legal vacuum resulted from the lack of recognised representative institutions. Palestinians realised that their problem was either neglected, or represented by Arab regimes with their own interests and strategies. Although they were the victims, they were not recognised as one of the parties in the conflict. Indeed, on many occasions they were denied the right to attend debates on the problem.⁹²
2. The Palestinians generally believed that the Arab regimes were responsible for the defeat of 1948, owing to either their weak performance or their particular and secret agendas.⁹³
3. The Palestinians were disappointed with post-war Arab politics, especially the failure of Arab unity, and the resulting disputes and rivalries among the Arab political parties and regimes.⁹⁴
4. Palestinian activists suffered restrictions and punishment by Arab governments when they attempted to establish political organisations and programmes of action.⁹⁵
5. The Palestinians suffered daily hardship in the refugee camps. There were the problems of unemployment, food supplies, accommodation and education. In addition, the refugees were now stateless, possessing neither passports nor identity cards.⁹⁶

In these circumstances Palestinian national groups emerged and demanded independent action without any direct connection with the Arab regimes and political

⁹² Khalīl al-Wazīr, quoted in Muḥammad Ḥamza, *Abū-Jihād: Asrār Bedaytihi wa Asbāb Iḡhtiyāluh* [Abū-Jihād: The Secret of his Beginnings and the Reasons for his Assassination] (Tunis: Arab Institution for United Publishers, 1989), p.138.

⁹³ Mūsā al-Biṭār, “Mudhakkārāt Ibn al-Quds al-Bār 1937–1984” [The Memoirs of Jerusalem’s Righteous Son 1937–1984], personal memoirs, archived in the Jerusalem Day Committee Information Centre. Muḥammad ‘Izzat Darwaza, “Mulahaḡāt Ḥawl Maqāl al-Taswya al-Silmiya linnezā‘ al-‘Arabī al-Isrā’īlī” [Notes on the Arab–Israeli Conflict: Article on a Peaceful Settlement] *Shu’ūn Filasṭīniyya*, no.28 (December 1973), p.107.

⁹⁴ Ibrāsh, *al-Bu‘d al-qawmī*, pp.94 & 95.

⁹⁵ For examples see al-Biṭār, *Mudhakkārāt*, p.41; Shafīq al-Ḥūt, *‘Ishrūn ‘Āman fī Munazzamat al-Taḡrīr al-Filasṭīniyya: Aḡādūth al-Dhikrayyāt, 1964–1984* [Twenty Years in the Palestinian Liberation Organisation: Recollections, 1964–1984] (Beirut: Dār al-Istiqlāl, 1986), p.49; Ḥamza, *Abū-Jihād*, pp.144, 164, 274 & 279.

⁹⁶ See Khālīd al-Ḥasan, entry in *Al-Mawsū‘a al-Filasṭīniyya* [The Palestinian Encyclopaedia], p.979.

parties. A new organisation was established in the late 1950s and was to be known later as the Palestinian National Liberation Movement, or Faṭḥ. Its founders were the future prominent figures of Yāsir ‘Arafāt, Khalīl al-Wazīr, Salāḥ Khalaf, Khālīd al-Ḥassan and others from the refugee camps and the educated middle class.⁹⁷

Jerusalem no longer seemed to be part of the scene. Its traditional leadership lost its power in the face of increased rejection and popular opposition. Many new Palestinian activities attributed the responsibility of defeat to it. Ṣubḥī Ghūsha, who was the leading Arab Nationalist activist in Jerusalem in the 1950s, expresses this attitude as follows: “[those] ‘rich families’ threw away Palestine, and their policies were equivalent to treason.”⁹⁸

However, Jerusalem returned to the centre of the Palestinian national stage when the efforts to create an independent Palestinian entity entered a new phase in 1963 after the death of Aḥmad Ḥilmī, who had served as Palestine’s representative in the Arab League.⁹⁹ Despite his minor role, the selection of a successor opened the case of Palestinian representation.

By the end of the 1950s, the Arab regimes were also considering the establishment of a Palestinian independent body for different reasons. Egypt, Iraq and Syria, for instance, were hoping to contain the growth of independent Palestinian activity and create a loyal institution to be used against other regimes.¹⁰⁰

In September 1963 the Arab League appointed Aḥmad al-Shuqayrī, a lawyer and politician from a notable family in Acre, as the new representative.¹⁰¹ During the First Arab Summit in January 1964, al-Shuqayrī demanded the establishment of a “Palestinian entity”*. King Ḥusayn of Jordan opposed it because he considered it to

⁹⁷ Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation: People, Power and Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p.24.

⁹⁸ Interview, Subḥī Ghūsha, Amman, 19 January 2000.

⁹⁹ Pamela Ann Smith, *Palestine and The Palestinians 1867–1983* (London: Croom Helm, 1948), p.190.

¹⁰⁰ As‘ad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (ed.), *Munazzamat al-Taḥrīr al-Filasṭīniyya: Judūruhā, Ta’sīṣuhā, Masārātuhā* [The PLO: Its Roots, Establishment and Path] (Nicosia: The Research Centre of the PLO, 1987), pp. 66–72; Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, p.68.

¹⁰¹ Smith, *Palestine and the Palestinians*, pp. 190 & 191.

* The word “entity” (*kiyān*) was used then, and in the following years, without a specific meaning. It referred to an organisation that had some of the state’s functions, especially organised armed forces.

be a threat to Jordanian sovereignty. As a result, the Summit issued a decision approving the need “to organise the Palestinian people and enable them to play their part in liberating their homeland and deciding their future.”¹⁰²

Al-Shuqayrī then asked Ḥazim Nusayba, the current Jordanian Foreign Minister and a Jerusalemite, to arrange a meeting with the Jordanian Prime Minister, Wasfī al-Tall. At the meeting in Nusayba’s house, al-Shuqayrī asserted that the proposed entity was no threat to Jordan and that he would comply with Jordanian conditions.¹⁰³

On 28 May 1964 a congress was held in Jerusalem under the name of the First Palestinian Congress, subsequently renamed the First Session of the Palestinian National Council (PNC). The Council proclaimed the establishment of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and adopted a Palestinian National Covenant¹⁰⁴ (al-Mithāq al-Qawmī al-Filaṭīnī) and a Constitution to organise PLO action.

Jerusalem was largely absent from the Council, and reference to it in the Covenant was made indirectly in Article 15, which dealt with the holy places:

The liberation of Palestine, from a spiritual viewpoint, prepares for the Holy Land an atmosphere of tranquillity and peace, in which all the Holy Places will be safeguarded, and free worship and visit to all will be guaranteed, without any discrimination of race, colour, tongue, or religion. For all this the Palestinian people look forward to the support of all the spiritual forces in the world.

The absence of Jerusalem could be attributed to several reasons:

1. Mentioning Jerusalem could provoke Jordan, which considered the city to be its second capital.¹⁰⁵ The Covenant aimed to reassure Arab neighbours that the PLO would not lay claim to areas under the control of Arab states. Article 24 stated: “This organisation does not exercise any regional sovereignty over the Western

¹⁰² ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, *Munazzamat*, p.70.

¹⁰³ Interview, Ḥazim Nusayba, Amman, 3 January 2000.

¹⁰⁴ The Palestinian National Covenant (28 May 1964). Cited in Mahdi F. Abdul Hadi (ed.), (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, Eng. trans., vol. 1 (Jerusalem: PASSIA), pp.204–206. For the Arabic text, see Fayṣal Ḥūrānī, *Al-Fikr al-Siāysī al-Filasṭīnī 1964–1974: Dirāsa li al-Mawāthiq al-Raīsiyya li- Munazzamat al-Taḥrīr al-Filasṭīniyya* [Palestinian Political Thought 1964–1974: A Study of the Principal Documents of the PLO] (Beirut: PLO Research Centre, n.d.), Annexe 2.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

Bank in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, or the Gaza Strip or the Ḥimma Area.”

The Covenant preserved the classical definition of the conflict, that is, the existence of the Zionist state. Therefore, Israel was described as “illegal and false”, and any “coexistence” with it was rejected. This meant that no solution such as the internationalisation or official partition of Jerusalem was acceptable.

The Covenant did not retain the classical Palestinian demand to have an independent state similar to other Arab states, because this could provoke Arab states, especially Jordan. The demand for national independence was replaced with a clear concentration on Arab ideological terms. Therefore, the lack of a demand for a state meant that Jerusalem was not mentioned in national political terms.

The religious currents were weak in the Council and so no religious jargon was used. This meant that there were no traditional religious references to Jerusalem.

The holy places of Jerusalem were not under Israeli occupation.

However, there are those who deny the absence of Jerusalem from the Council. Salīm Al-Za'nūn, the Speaker of the PNC, argues that the question of Jerusalem was addressed: firstly, by holding the Congress in that city, and secondly, that the PLO Constitution stated: “Jerusalem is the centre of the PNC”, and that the Council should be assembled annually “in Jerusalem or Gaza, or any other place according to the circumstances.”¹⁰⁶ In fact, the Constitution also states that Jerusalem is the centre of the PLO Executive Committee.¹⁰⁷

However, the tension in the Middle East was increasing and leading to the June 1967 War, which created a completely new situation.

In general, in the period between 1948 and 1967, the Palestinians lacked representative bodies that could express specific Palestinian political positions, thus the efforts of Palestinian activists concentrated on finding such bodies. At the same time the fact that the Old City of Jerusalem, which includes most of the holy places, was not under Israeli occupation made the situation in West Jerusalem not so much different from the “occupation” of other Palestinian cities such as Haifa and Jaffa.

¹⁰⁶ Interview, Salīm al-Za'nūn. Amman, 2 October 2001.

¹⁰⁷ PLO Constitution (*al-Niẓām al-Asāsī*).

1.3 Redefinition of the Conflict: 1967– 2000

The June 1967 War ended in an Arab defeat and the Israeli occupation of the territories of three Arab countries:

- Jordan lost the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.
- Egypt lost the Palestinian Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula.
- Syria lost the Palestinian Ḥimma and the Golan Heights.

This overwhelming and swift defeat accelerated the political and social transformation of the Palestinians. In particular, it strengthened the calls for increasing independent Palestinian action in the conflict.

The Palestinian discourse in general became more patriotic. The armed resistance factions, which had begun military action against Israel a few days after the war, proliferated and grew rapidly, becoming the strongest Palestinian political power. In February 1969 Faḥ and other factions controlled the PLO, and Yāsir ‘Arafāt, the current spokesman of Faḥ, was elected by the PNC as the PLO Chairman.

The Faḥ Movement leadership had hesitated to head the PLO. They gave a conditional acceptance after their meeting in Kuwait. Among the conditions was the amendment of the Palestinian Covenant. In 1968, the Covenant was altered to emphasise the independence of Palestinian action:

1. The name of the Covenant was changed from al-Mīthāq al-Qawmī to al-Mīthāq al-Waṭanī. (Both names translate into English as the National Covenant.

However, in Arabic al-Qawmī refers to the Arab nation, whereas al-Waṭanī refers to Palestinian patriotism.)

2. Faḥ also required the cancellation of the article that promised not to demand the sovereignty of the West Bank, Gaza and al-Ḥimma.¹⁰⁸

1.3.1 The Absence of Jerusalem from the Palestinian Discourse

The patriotic definition of the conflict, which replaced the Arab nationalist definition was not enough to restore Jerusalem to the platform. The various sessions of the PNC did not reflect any special concern for the city. At the Council’s Fourth Session in

July 1968 (the first following the war), Jerusalem was mentioned in one resolution. This was an assertion of the Muslim countries' support for the Arabism of Jerusalem, because of its religious significance for Muslims, as a result of their having been entrusted for more than a thousand years with the guardianship of its holy places of all the monotheistic religions.¹⁰⁹ It should be noted that Jerusalem was mentioned only in its Islamic dimension in the section of the resolution called "The Universal Struggle for the Liberation from and Termination of Colonialism". There was no reference to a Palestinian relationship with Jerusalem in national terms.

The Fifth Session in February 1969 demanded support for "our people's resistance in the occupied territories, especially Gaza and Jerusalem, and called for the establishment of special committees for this purpose."¹¹⁰ At other sessions either only a passing reference was made to Jerusalem or there was not even any mention of it at all, such as at the Ninth Session in 1971. Even ten days after the fire at al-Aqsa Mosque on 21 August 1969, the only reference to the city at the PNC's Sixth Session in Cairo between 1 and 6 September was in the international section, where Muslims were thanked for expressing their anger at the crime of setting fire to al-Aqsa Mosque.¹¹¹

Apart from the PNC,¹¹² any mention of Jerusalem was made only in passing and was usually in an address to the international community and the Muslim world and to serve certain functions such as giving evidence for the historical existence of the Palestinians. For instance, 'Arafāt in his first speech at the UN General Assembly in 1974 said that the world

must know that Palestine was the cradle of the most ancient cultures and civilisation. Its Arab people were engaged in farming and building, spreading culture throughout the land for thousands of years, setting an example in the practice of religious tolerance and freedom of worship, acting as faithful guardians of the holy places of all religions. As a son of

¹⁰⁸ Interview, Salīm al-Za'nūn.

¹⁰⁹ Nāfi' al-Ḥassan, "al-Quds fī al-Ḥaraka al-Waṭanyya al-Fliastīniyya" [Jerusalem in the Palestinian National Movement], paper presented at the conference on *Jerusalem, the Key of Peace*, vol.5, *al-Quds wa al-Jihād* [Jerusalem and Jihad] (Amman: Faṭḥ Movement, 1993) p.118.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² On my visits to the Council's offices in Amman in September and October 2001, Council researchers joined me in scanning the Council documents, and agreed that the Council had not expressed any particular concern for Jerusalem in the 1960s and 1970s.

Jerusalem, I treasure for myself and my people beautiful memories and vivid images of the religious brotherhood that was the hallmark of our Holy City before it succumbed to catastrophe.¹¹³

Observers refer to the signing of the Camp David agreement in 1979 as the point when Jerusalem again began to attract increasing attention in the PLO discourse, as explained later.¹¹⁴

The interpretation of the city's absence from the Palestinian official discourse could be the circumstances of the Palestinian political movement from 1967 to the early 1980s. These circumstances can be summed up in the following points:

1. **The Ideological Definition:** The armed struggle had been dominated by secular and leftist members who regarded the conflict over Palestine as a national issue or as part of the struggle against imperialism. Meanwhile, the religious elements played only a minor role in the resistance movement, thus the religious significance of Jerusalem did not form an apparent part of these factions.
2. **The National Goals:** The armed factions that assumed the leadership of the PLO in 1968 raised the goal of the full liberation of Palestine through armed struggle. On the one hand these factions depended on this armed struggle as a source of legitimacy, though not on the kind on which Jerusalem's notables of the pre-1948 era depended. In fact the armed struggle in the Palestinian discourse in the late 1960s was more than just a tool, it was on the level of ideology. Article 9 in the new National Covenant¹¹⁵ asserted that armed struggle was "the only way to liberate Palestine" and that it was "the overall strategy, not merely a tactical phase". In this context, Jerusalem's traditional importance as a source of legitimacy declined.

On the other hand, the stage after the liberation did not receive much attention. For example, there was no room for discussing the shape or the capital of the Palestinian state.

At the same time, the insistence on full liberation by an armed struggle was an expression for rejecting any political settlement. This rejection reflected

¹¹³ The speech cited in Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 1, pp. 226–234.

¹¹⁴ Interview, Şubḥī Ghūsha,

¹¹⁵ The Palestinian National Covenant (1968), Arabic text, PNC Archive. Cited in Eng. trans., Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 2, pp.213–215.

concerns that a settlement of this kind would re-create the pre-war situation and that the PLO would be excluded from the negotiations.

The idea of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza was regarded as treachery. For instance, after the clashes of September 1970 in Jordan, ‘Arafāt threatened an “insider” delegation that came to see him in Amman with the suggestion of establishing an independent state: “If a head rises to demand this metamorphic state, we will cut it off.”¹¹⁶ A solution of this kind was seen as the end of the resistance without liberating the rest of Palestine.

3. **The PLO Action inside Jerusalem:** In 1967 the armed factions had only a small presence in the West Bank. For instance, in Jerusalem itself, Fathḥ had only two or three members when it launched its first military operation in 1965.¹¹⁷

The main Palestinian reaction in the territories in 1967 was the establishment of the Higher Islamic Council (HIC) (*al-Hay’a al-Islamiyya al-‘Uliya*)* which was constituted largely of Jordanian officials and asserted ties with Amman. (For details, see Chapter Three.)

The lack of power inside the West Bank encouraged the resistance to Israeli policies in Jerusalem to concentrate on military operations, without making serious plans to build a grassroots organisation. Palestinian propaganda was based on this kind of armed action.¹¹⁸ As a result the armed struggle was the theme of the Palestinian discourse while issues such as Judaising Jerusalem and the settlements was given relatively little attention.

1.3.2 Palestinian Steadfastness* in Jerusalem

The absence of Jerusalem from the PLO discourse, and the limited support inside the West Bank and Gaza in the aftermath of the 1967 War did not prevent the gradual

¹¹⁶ al-Shu‘aybī, *Al-Kiyāniyya*, p.158.

¹¹⁷ Interview, Salīm Al-Za‘nūn.

* There are different translations used by writers for the name of this body, such as the Supreme Muslim Council and the High Islamic Board.

¹¹⁸ Interview, Şubḥī Ghūsha.

* Steadfastness (*ṣumūd*) is a description used to refer to the Palestinian rejection of the Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza including Jerusalem, and their attempts to build their own national educational, economic, health, etc. institutions separately from the Israeli occupation.

growth in the 1970s of a movement in these territories, centred in Jerusalem, supporting the PLO and working to face the occupation policies.

On 15 August 1973, following a decision at the PNC session in January of that year, activists inside Palestine, including journalists, lawyers, professors and students, declared the establishment of the Palestinian National Front in the occupied territories¹¹⁹ as “an inseparable part of the Palestinian national movement represented in the PLO.”¹²⁰ The Front acted until 1978, when it was replaced with the National Guidance Committee, which continued activities until it was dissolved by an Israeli decision in 1982.¹²¹

The two organisations were similar to the HIC and many Palestinian institutions, such as the daily newspapers, and many NGOs, some of which had been established between 1948 and 1967 were based in Jerusalem. The choice of Jerusalem reflected, (1) the historical significance of the city as the centre of Palestinian society, and (2) the effects of the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem, that is, its Palestinian occupants faced fewer restrictions than their fellow citizens in the occupied territories that were subjected to military rule. However, the main Palestinian political weight remained outside Palestine and concentrated on the armed struggle.

The national institutions in Jerusalem managed to oppose Israeli annexation policies on several levels by what they called *ṣumūd* (steadfastness). Jerusalem’s inhabitants refused to apply for Israeli citizenship.¹²² In the same context, whereas 18 per cent of East Jerusalem Arabs participated in the Israeli municipal elections in 1969, only 10 per cent voted in 1973,¹²³ and in the following years only 5–10 per cent.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Jamal R. Nassar & Roger Heacock (eds), *Intifada: Palestine at the Crossroads* (New York; Westport, Conn.; & London: PRAGER, 1990), p.58.

¹²⁰ Samih K. Farsoun & Christina E. Zacharia, *Palestine and the Palestinians* (Boulder, Co.; Oxford: Westview Press, 1997), p.222.

¹²¹ Alain Gresh, *The PLO: The Struggle Within: Towards an Independent Palestinian State*, English trans. (London; Totowa, NJ: Zed Books, 1988). p.221.

¹²² B'TSELEM, *A Policy of Discrimination: Land Expropriation and Building in East Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: January 1997), p.18.

¹²³ Gresh, *The PLO*, p.134.

¹²⁴ Juli Till, *Jerusalem: Its Political Significance in the Palestinian–Israeli Peace Talks* (London: Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, 1994), p.18.

From the demographic point of view, despite all the Israeli policies to limit the proportion of Palestinians in Jerusalem, the Palestinians succeeded in preserving their presence. There was a slight increase in their numbers across the city, the West sector and the annexed East sector, as described in detail later (see Chapter Two). The main reason for the increase was the natural growth rate of the population, which was 3 per cent between 1967 and 1980, compared with 1.4–1.5 per cent in the West Bank. However, the policy of steadfastness was also an important motive for remaining in the city.¹²⁵

1.3.3 Jerusalem and the Political Process

The October 1973 War, which was launched by Egypt and Syria against Israel, clearly influenced the Palestinian position. This war was seen as a step by Egypt not to liberate the Arab land by force, but to create a new balance of regional pressures for launching a political process. The Twelfth Session of the PNC in Cairo on 8 June 1974 adopted what was to be known as the Phased Plan.¹²⁶ The Council stated: “new political circumstances ... have come into existence in the period between the Council’s last and present sessions.” The resolutions embodied clear changes in defining the conflict, for example:

1. Instead of insisting on the armed struggle as the only means of liberation, the programme stated that the PLO’s intention was to “employ all means”, which meant the possibility of considering a political settlement.
2. Instead of insisting on Israel’s immediate and complete withdrawal, the Council adopted the principle of establishing an “independent competent authority for the people over every part of Palestinian territory that is liberated.” This also meant moving from the zero-sum view, at least in the short term, where the immediate liberation and termination of Israel were no longer the only choice. Nevertheless, the plan insisted on rejecting the UN Resolution 242 and any proposal implying the official recognition of Israel’s existence.

¹²⁵ Samīr al-Zabīn & Nabīl al-Sahlī, *Al-Quds Mu‘ḍilat al-Salām* [Jerusalem: The Problem of Peace] (Abu Dhabi: ECSSR, 1997), p.40.

¹²⁶ For the text of the programme, see Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 1, pp.225–226.

Four months later, the Arab Summit in Rabat on 28 October 1974 recognised the PLO as “the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people”.¹²⁷ This decision meant that Jordan could no longer negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians and that the Palestinians were defined as the essential party in the conflict.

Two weeks later on 13 November a new and important step was achieved when ‘Arafāt was invited to address the UN General Assembly, and on 22 November the Assembly decided to grant the PLO observer status.¹²⁸

Progress in the level of PLO representation in the Arab world and the UN was still not complete, for the United States and Israel continued to withhold any recognition of the organisation. In September 1975 Henry Kissinger, the US Secretary of State, signed a secret memorandum, which was leaked in a few days to the press. It was called the “Memorandum of agreement between the U.S. and Israel concerning the reconvening of the Geneva conference”, and included the following statement:

The US will continue to adhere to its present policy with respect to the PLO, whereby it will not recognise or negotiate with the PLO, so long as the PLO does not recognise Israel’s right to exist and does not accept Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.¹²⁹

The PLO’s efforts to engage in a political process were met with external and internal difficulties. Some of the Arab regimes were exerting pressure to reach a peaceful settlement. Others were doing their best to prevent such a settlement. For instance, Iraq in 1973 and 1974, and Syria and Libya in the 1980s supported and financed dissidents to find an alternative leadership of the PLO.¹³⁰ Their main pretext for this action was the political concessions given by the PLO.¹³¹

At a stormy meeting on 20 September 1977, the Palestinian leadership failed to persuade the Palestinian Central Council (PCC) to declare its conditional acceptance of UN Resolution 242. This prevented the Palestinian leadership from

¹²⁷ For the text of the resolutions, see *ibid.*, p.226.

¹²⁸ Cobban, *PLO*, p.63.

¹²⁹ Cited in *ibid.*, p.67.

¹³⁰ See Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, pp.354–355, 377–378, & 573; and Cobban, *PLO*, pp.72–73.

¹³¹ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, pp. 354, 355, 567–573, 580–585; Samīḥ Shabīb, *Munazzamat al-Taḥrīr al-Filasṭīniyya, wa Tafā’ulāṭuha fī al-Bī’a al-Rasmiyya al-‘Arabiyya: Duwal*

responding positively to US President Carter's attempts to start a peace process in the Middle East.¹³² The failure to accept the UN resolutions and the American conditions made PLO representation the main issue consuming political efforts to begin a political process. Therefore, the main concerns of the Palestinians in dealing with the peace proposals were the principles of self-determination and representation.

The main peace proposals put forward in the late 1970s and 1980s dealt with Jerusalem in three ways:

1. Some proposals made no mention of the city but referred to the Israeli withdrawal from the territories captured in 1967. This implied that Jerusalem was included.¹³³
2. In other proposals Jerusalem was put aside for negotiation, such as in the Reagan Plan of 1982.
3. In the third type of proposals there was an explicit reference to Jerusalem. This appeared mostly in the Arab proposals; such as the Saudi Prince Fahd's plan in 1981 and that of the Fez Summit in 1982, which stated that Israel's withdrawal would include Jerusalem.¹³⁴

The Palestinian position was actually in line with the first and third proposals. The Palestinians considered Jerusalem part of the 1967 occupied territories to be included in any Israeli withdrawal.

The Palestinian position towards the Egyptian–Israeli agreement at the Camp David Accords of 17 September 1978 had a special place for Jerusalem. The agreement included an outline of a peace process in the Middle East. It stated that Israeli forces would be withdrawn and redeployed in specified security locations. This was to be done after the formation of a government elected by the inhabitants of these areas. Negotiations for the final arrangement would begin no later than three years

al-Ṭawq, 1982–1987 [The PLO and its Interaction with the Official Arab Environment: The Confrontation States, 1982–1987] (Nicosia: Sharq Press, 1988), pp.30 & 31.

¹³² Cobban, *PLO*, p.88.

¹³³ This strategy appears in the line taken by the Soviet Union. See Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 1, p.287.

¹³⁴ Fahd Plan. cited in Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 1, pp.287–288; also Fez Plan, cited in *ibid.*, p.295.

after this election.¹³⁵ The fate of Jerusalem was not mentioned in the outline plan and there was no indication that the city would be included in the coming negotiations.

The PLO Executive Committee issued a statement criticising the accords in general and mentioning Jerusalem three times. The statement attacked the agreement, describing it as a “conspiracy”, “collusion”, “capitulation” and an “imperial target”. The statement continued: “[it] neglects Jerusalem, which has always been a holy symbol for our Arab nation and for all the Muslims and Christians in the world”. The agreement was also considered a “capitulation to the Zionist enemy position regarding Jerusalem”. The statement added that the accords were “deceiving the people of Egypt and the soldier martyrs who fell for the cause of raising the Arab flag on Jerusalem, Sinai, and Golan.”¹³⁶

When compared with the other views of the Palestinian leadership during that period, its statement appears to have been a kind of propaganda that did not accurately reflect the current Palestinian policy. Certainly, the ambiguity of the agreements and the exclusion of the PLO’s role were the main reasons for this frustrated statement. However, the statement indicates two important points regarding Jerusalem:

1. The Camp David Accords and the escalation of the Israeli government’s settler policy in the city alarmed the Palestinians and highlighted the complexity of the Jerusalem question.¹³⁷
2. The Palestinian statement clearly indicated the Palestinians’ return to making use of Jerusalem when addressing the Arab and Muslim worlds.

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the consequent expulsion of the PLO forces from that country increased the readiness of the Palestinian leadership to engage in the peace process despite Syrian opposition. Thus the PLO leadership tried to overcome the obstacles in President Reagan’s Plan, issued on 1 September 1982, whose aim was to “reconcile Israel’s legitimate security concerns with the legitimate rights of the Palestinians”.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ For the text of the Accords, see *ibid.*, pp.248–250.

¹³⁶ The Executive Committee statement in *Shu’ūn Filasṭīniyya*, no. 84 (November 1978), pp.227–229.

¹³⁷ Interview, Ṣubḥī Ghūsha.

¹³⁸ Reagan Plan, cited in Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 1, pp.289–290.

1. The Plan referred to the Camp David Accords as the basis of the solution.
2. It included the statement: “[The US] will not support the establishment of an independent Palestinian State.”
3. Palestinian self-government would be linked with Jordan.
4. Jerusalem “must remain undivided, but its final status should be decided through negotiations.”

Despite these obstacles, the Palestinians in charge of diplomatic affairs decided to deal with the Plan. They communicated secretly with Arab and European officials. A secret explanatory memorandum covering self-government, borders, settlements, and self-determination was sent to European states from the American administration, and European officials passed a copy to the Palestinian leadership.¹³⁹ The question of Jerusalem was tackled in this secret memorandum. The American administration stated that it would not accept the Israeli annexation of Jerusalem, and that it would accept the participation of the residents of Arab East Jerusalem in the proposed election.¹⁴⁰

According to Khālīd al-Ḥassan, the Palestinian leadership was trying to develop the Plan, especially with the aim of achieving the confederation of a Palestinian state with Jordan. Nevertheless, the American attitude towards the role of the PLO remained the main obstacle.¹⁴¹ Therefore, the formal view of the PNC in February 1983 was to reject the Plan because it “does not respect the established national right of return and self-determination, the setting up of the independent Palestinian state, and also the PLO – the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people...”.

Clearly, as far as the leadership was concerned, the PLO’s priority was the establishment of a Palestinian state. At the same time, however, it appeared that Jerusalem would rapidly become a serious issue before any practical negotiations could take place.

The Palestinian leadership then worked on a solution that could restore it to its place at the negotiation table. This was when it signed the Jordanian–Palestinian

¹³⁹ Khālīd al-Ḥassan, “Qirā’a Siyāsiyya fī Mubādarat Rīghān” [A Political Reading of the Reagan Initiative], *Political Papers 10* (Amman: Dār al-Jalīl, 1985), p.24.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.20 & 72.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp.30, 56 & 78.

Joint Accord on 11 February 1985. The Introduction to the Accord declared that the aim of the Jordanians and Palestinians was to achieve a peaceful and just settlement, in which the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories, including Jerusalem, would be terminated. The agreement stated that the PLO would participate in an international conference as part of a joint Jordanian–Palestinian delegation. Finally, the aim of a confederated state would be the means by which the Palestinians would practise their right of self-determination.¹⁴²

The Accord collapsed because some of the leading figures in the PLO and Faṭḥ refused to co-operate with the Jordanian regime, and because doubts were raised about the status of the Palestinians in the joint delegation.¹⁴³

It can be concluded that between 1974 and the eruption of the Intifada in 1987 the Palestinian political movement was engaged in endeavours to gain world recognition of the Palestinians as a people represented by the PLO and therefore having the political right to establish their state. This formed a priority which overshadowed any other issue, including Jerusalem.

1.3.4 The 1987 Intifada: The Turning-Point

On 8 December 1987 a mass protest erupted in the Gaza Strip and spread to the West Bank. It was triggered by a traffic accident in Gaza, where an Israeli vehicle collided with two cars carrying Palestinians. The fact that the Palestinians belonged to an Islamic movement called Islamic Jihad strengthened the Palestinian conviction that the accident was a deliberate act.¹⁴⁴

The Intifada reflected and triggered a series of changes in the Palestinian political position. Jerusalem witnessed events that it had not seen since 1967. Ten days after the eruption of the Intifada, the confrontations in the city were considered to be the most intensive since 1976, when Palestinians in the occupied territories joined the protest against land appropriation in Galilee.¹⁴⁵ The confrontations

¹⁴² The text of the Accords, cited in Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol.1, p.299.

¹⁴³ Khālīd al-Ḥassan, "*Filasṭīniyyāt: Afāq al-'Amal bayn Dawratay al-Majlis al-Waṭani al-Sāi' 'Ashra wa al-Thāmina 'Ashra*" [The Horizons of Palestinian Action between the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Sessions of the PNC], *Political Papers 9* (Amman: Dār al-Karmil, 1987). pp.124, 129, 151&152.

¹⁴⁴ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, p.607.

¹⁴⁵ *The Times* (20 December 1987).

between the Palestinian youths and the Israeli soldiers were similar to those in other areas. The fact that the Israeli settlers circulated freely in the Arab quarter of the city made it easier for the Palestinian youths to attack them with knives and other weapons.¹⁴⁶ In short, East Jerusalem resembled part of the occupied territories rather than a part of Israel, as successive Israeli governments had tried to portray.

Nevertheless, this situation did not mean that Jerusalem played the leading role in the Intifada. It was not the trigger, nor was it the assembly-point where large groups of people from other cities gathered to organise joint protest marches as they had done at the beginning of the twentieth century or even in the 1970s and 1980s, despite Palestinian attempts to revive such roles. For instance, in the second month of the Intifada, when the confrontations were losing their momentum,¹⁴⁷ the United National Leadership for the Intifada (which included the PLO's main factions), tried to exploit the status of al-Aqsa Mosque to maintain the escalation of the protest. On 15 January 1988 a demonstration was launched from the Mosque after the weekly Friday prayers.¹⁴⁸ However, on subsequent Fridays the Israelis imposed a curfew on the Old City of Jerusalem for the first time since 1967, and thus succeeded – more or less – in containing the situation and preventing large-scale protests.¹⁴⁹

The remarkable role played by Jerusalem was in the political arena. Leading figures from the West Bank and Gaza began to act as the Intifada's political spokespeople. They issued statements and held Press conferences to publish the Intifada's demands from Jerusalem.¹⁵⁰ This was an implicit assertion of Jerusalem as the political centre inside Palestine.

The return of Jerusalem to the Palestinian discourse occurred because of the shift in the PLO's political position and its acceptance of the two-states solution. The Palestinian leadership decided to take further steps to meet the American conditions, so it developed what was known as the Palestinian "peace offensive". This offensive was actually strengthened in the aftermath of the Intifada. King

¹⁴⁶ Roger Friedland & Richard Hecht, *To Rule Jerusalem* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.330.

¹⁴⁷ *The Times* (3 January 1988).

¹⁴⁸ *The Times* (16 January 1988).

¹⁴⁹ *The Times* (23 & 30 January 1988).

¹⁵⁰ For instance, at a Press conference on 14 January 1988, the demands by the Intifada comprised 14 points. See Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol.1, pp.306–307.

Husayn declared in August 1988 his historic decision to cut the legal and administrative ties between Jordan and the West Bank (see Chapter Three). This decision enhanced the status of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians and gave it more power to start a political process.

The Intifada had also become a vital card in the hands of the PLO, for it gave a strong message that the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 had backfired, resulting in the shift in emphasis of the Palestinian resistance movement to the occupied territories themselves and strengthening the PLO leadership there.

The Palestinian leadership capitalised on the new situation by forming a political initiative based on the partition of Palestine, or the two-state solution. The PNC held a session in Algiers between 12 and 15 November 1988, where it officially accepted UN Resolutions 242 and 338. At the same time, it put forward the Palestinian political programme, which included the declaration of an independent Palestinian state according to the UN Partition Resolution 181. The declaration of independence did not define the borders of the state although Jerusalem was designated as its capital.¹⁵¹ In the first sentence of the declaration Palestine was defined as “the land of three monotheistic faiths”. The core paragraph stated: “The PNC in the name of God, and in the name of the Palestinian Arab people, hereby proclaims the establishment of the State of Palestine in our Palestinian territory with its capital Holy Jerusalem (*al-Quds al-Sharīf*).”

The restoration of Jerusalem to the Palestinian discourse, as will be elaborated later, could be based on several factors:

1. Palestinian nationalism in search of a state needed a capital, and Jerusalem was the undisputed capital.
2. The solution of creating a state on less than 22 per cent of the historical Palestine needed emotional symbols that could compensate for the absence of the highly emotional parts of Palestine, such as Haifa and Jaffa, which were now part of Israel. Jerusalem was the city that could provide such compensation.

¹⁵¹ “Palestinian Declaration of Independence, 15 November 1988”, in Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 1997), pp.331–333.

3. The importance of Jerusalem for the Arab and Muslim worlds would help in gaining support for the proclamation.

Subsequent to the PNC resolutions, and after hesitation and several assertions from ‘Arafāt, upon Washington’s demands that the PLO “renounce all forms of individual, collective and state-sponsored terrorism”, and that it recognise Israel’s right of existence,¹⁵² the Reagan administration declared that the PLO had met the American conditions to begin a dialogue with the PLO.¹⁵³ However, the dialogue was not the breakthrough desired by the Palestinians. Officially, it took place through the American envoy Robert Pelletreau, who was also the US Ambassador in Tunisia, and it remained at a general level without any real progress or practical action to set in train an active political process. Then the Americans stopped the dialogue a few months later when a small faction of the PLO carried out an unsuccessful military attack on the Israeli coast in May 1990 and the PLO Chairman, Yāsir ‘Arafāt, refused to condemn their action.¹⁵⁴ This was followed by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, which suspended the peace process for nearly 18 months.

However, before moving to the post-Gulf War era, it is important to elaborate on the political role of Jerusalem in the Palestinian discourse during that period. ‘Arafāt’s speeches and statements seemed to be creating a formula that made use of the collective Arab and Muslim identity to forge a national Palestinian identity. On the one hand, he was repeating and highlighting the common Arab, Muslim and Christian interest in Jerusalem. Yet, on the other hand, he regarded the common interest as a support for the independent Palestinian national state that had sovereignty over the city. For instance, in his speech at the Arab Summit in Baghdad in May 1990, he called for the development of the relationship of the “surrounding Muslim states” and “the development of Muslim–Christian co-operation”, and added, “Jerusalem is the centre” of this development. Then he attacked the intention of the American Congress in issuing a decision that recognised Jerusalem as the Israeli capital: “This is an aggression against Arab dignity, against the international will, ...,

¹⁵² Mahmoud Abbas, *Through Secret Channels* (Reading, Berks, UK: Garnet, 1995), pp.32 & 33.

¹⁵³ Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 1, p.337.

¹⁵⁴ Interview, ‘Afīf Ṣāfyia, London, 9 November 2001.

and against the status of Jerusalem, which is in the hearts of millions of Muslims and Christians.” Finally, he concluded:

[Jerusalem] is part of the occupied Palestinian land, and it is the capital of the Palestinian state, and any alteration in its legal, religious, cultural and historical status is an extreme violation of the international resolutions and principles.¹⁵⁵

1.3.5 Madrid Negotiations

The end of the 1991 Gulf War increased the urgency of settling the situation in the Middle East. The Americans were building the New World Order and this required a new regional order in the Middle East as well as in other parts of the world to sustain the American interests (see Chapter Five). Meanwhile the Palestinians were suffering intense isolation from the Arab regimes and international community as a punishment for the PLO because of its support for Iraq in the war.

PLO representation formed the main obstacle to launching the peace process. In addition, Israel rejected any representation of East Jerusalem. The PLO was in a situation where it needed to show flexibility in its role:

1. Owing to its isolation, it was not in a position to manoeuvre for long.
2. More importantly, “inside delegation” virtually meant a delegation affiliated to the PLO. Therefore between March and October 1991, inside delegations met James Baker in Jerusalem several times. At these meetings the delegations made it clear that the PLO authorised them to transmit its instructions.¹⁵⁶

On the other hand, Jerusalem was allocated more space in the Palestinian political discourse, and clearly there was a correlation between Jerusalem and the Palestinian identity and national state.

During 1991 and the preparations for the international peace conference, Jerusalem was given increased priority in the Palestinian discourse. The PNC held its Twentieth Session, entitled “al-Quds al-Sharīf and the Martyrs’ Session”, in Algeria between 23 and 28 September 1991. In his speech at the meeting, ‘Arafāt mentioned Jerusalem 16 times, and called for the restoration of Arab dignity “in the name of

¹⁵⁵ ‘Arafāt’s Speech, *Filasṭīn al-Thawra* (3 June 1990).

¹⁵⁶ “PLO Political Department report to the PNC Session, Algeria 1991” (Amman: PNC Office Archive).

Jerusalem”, declaring that the Israeli withdrawal was to include Jerusalem, which would be the capital of the Palestinian state.¹⁵⁷

This emphasis provoked those Palestinians who believed that the repossession of Jerusalem did not justify concessions on their historical rights in the rest of Palestine. Khālid al-Ḥassan addressed the Council as follows:

Can we find a formula to restore the Arabism of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including Jerusalem, without closing the file on the Palestinian problem in the future? ... I am Khālid al-Ḥassan, a son of Haifa. If I lose the right – and subsequently my hope – to return to Haifa, then I do not need you. [Following applause from Council members] ... by God, Haifa and Jerusalem are equal to me, because all Palestine is holy.¹⁵⁸

The PNC compiled a list of six principles for the Madrid Peace Conference, four of which included Jerusalem:

1. The UN resolutions, including 242 and 338, were to be the basis of the conference, and the application of these resolutions were to include Jerusalem.
2. Jerusalem was an inseparable part of the occupied territories; therefore, what was applicable to these territories was also applicable to Jerusalem.
3. The construction of settlements in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, should be halted.
4. The PLO had the right to form the Palestinian delegation from both inside and outside the homeland, including Jerusalem.
5. The Arab position should be co-ordinated and unilateral solutions rejected.
6. There should be a guarantee that the successive phases of the solution would be put into effect until a comprehensive settlement was reached.

Baker eventually managed to convince the Palestinians to be more flexible on the procedures of forming the delegation, stating that the substantive talks would create a solution closer to their wishes than to those of Israel. He also promised Fayṣal al-Ḥusaynī and Ḥanān ‘Ashrāwī, both holders of Jerusalem identity cards, that although they would not be among the delegation members, he would maintain contact and co-ordination with them.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ ‘Arafāt’s Speech, Algeria 1991 (Amman: PNC Office Archive).

¹⁵⁸ Sa‘īd al-Ḥassan, *Hawl Ittifāq Ghazza–Arīḥa Awwalan, Wathāi’q wa Dirāsāt*. [The Gaza–Jericho First Agreement: Documents and Studies], (Amman: Dār al-Shurūq, 1995), p.238.

¹⁵⁹ Menachem Klein, *Jerusalem, the Contested City* (London: Hurst, 2001), p.126.

As a result the Palestinians agreed to attend the conference as part of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation consisting of 28 members. (Delegations from the other states consisted of 14 members.) The negotiators who were entitled to sit at the negotiating table were to be insiders, not known as PLO members, nor residents of Jerusalem.¹⁶⁰

However, the Palestinian mission included a steering delegation that was on the same level as the Americans regarding “residence, security and communication”, although it was not permitted access to the conference hall. This delegation included Palestinians from Jerusalem and the countries of exile.¹⁶¹ The insider Palestinians also received an American letter of assurances on 18 October 1991, which included the following statements:

The US understands how much importance Palestinians attach to the question of East Jerusalem. Thus we want to assure you that nothing Palestinians do in choosing their delegation members in this phase of the process will affect their claim to East Jerusalem, or be prejudicial or precedential to the outcome of negotiations. ...
It is also the US position that a Palestinian resident in Jordan with ties to a prominent Jerusalem family would be eligible to join the Jordanian side of the delegation.¹⁶²

The letter added that it was the US position that Palestinians from East Jerusalem should be able to vote in the elections for the interim autonomous government. It should be noted here that the US did not support the Palestinians’ right to stand for election.

On the other hand, the letter stated that the US believed that Palestinians from East Jerusalem and from outside the occupied territories should be able to participate in the negotiations of the final status. The US also supported the right of the Palestinians to bring any issue, including that of East Jerusalem, to the table.

It was clear that there was a Palestinian concession on the inclusion of Jerusalem at the conference, through the acceptance of not representing Jerusalem in the delegation, and having no guarantees regarding the solution in Jerusalem. This was in contrast to the escalated style that characterised the Palestinian discourse on

¹⁶⁰ Reb‘ī al-Madhūn, “Sab‘at Shuhūr Mubāḥṭhāt Qabla Madrīd” [Seven Months of Talks before Madrid] *Shu‘ūn Filasṭīniyya*, nos. 223/224 (October/November 1992), pp.137–139.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.138.

¹⁶² “US Letter of Assurances”, Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol., pp.8–10.

Jerusalem at the time, and despite the centrality of Jerusalem in the discourse on the independent state. The Palestinians chose flexibility and accepted compromises. However, the negotiations increased the status of Jerusalem in Palestinian politics.

In the negotiation arena, despite the absence of Jerusalem's representatives at the table, the city came under the spotlight in several ways. At the conference on 30 October 1991, the opening Palestinian speech, delivered by Ḥaidar 'Abd al-Shāfī, a resident of Gaza and co-founder of the PLO in 1964,¹⁶³ referred to Jerusalem as part of Palestine's historical existence and described it as the "cradle of the world religions". He said: "[Jerusalem] defines Palestinian existence, past, present and future." He used the phrase that had become the theme in the Palestinian discourse, when describing Jerusalem as the "capital of our homeland and future state" and "Jerusalem, the heart of our homeland and the cradle of the soul, is shimmering through the barriers of occupation and deceit."

Fayṣal al-Ḥusaynī was the President of the whole delegation, and 'Ashrāwī was its spokeswoman. Both of them attracted international media attention. Moreover, diplomatic meetings and press conferences continued to be held in Jerusalem, that is, from the delegation office at Orient House.

During the negotiations the Palestinians repeatedly asked for East Jerusalem to be included in the interim arrangement. They argued that the final negotiations would deal with Jerusalem as a unified city and that the Palestinians from the West Bank, including Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, as well as those people who had been displaced and deported since 1967, should participate fully in the election of the legislative assembly.¹⁶⁴

Following its victory in the Israeli election of 1992 the Labour Party officially accepted the direct participation of Fayṣal al-Ḥusaynī in the negotiations.¹⁶⁵ Nevertheless, disputes continued and the Palestinians did not accept the Labour Party's offer that the Palestinians could vote but not stand as candidates for election. On 1 July 1992 Fayṣal al-Ḥusaynī sent to the American side responses to an

¹⁶³ The speech text cited in *ibid.*, pp.21–25.

¹⁶⁴ For Jerusalem in the Palestinian proposals, see *Shu'ūn filasṭīniyya*, nos. 229/230 (April 1992), p.142; and Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 2, pp.59–60, 73–77, 96, 133 & 136.

¹⁶⁵ Klein, *Contested*, p.134.

American draft of an Israeli–Palestinian joint declaration of principles.¹⁶⁶ The memorandum criticised the American draft’s statement: “once negotiations on permanent status begin, each side can raise whatever issue it wants including the question of Jerusalem.” The Palestinian memorandum replied that the US should consider Israeli annexation and settlement in Jerusalem as prejudicial to the implementation of Resolution 242. It also criticised the American position because instead of considering Palestinian empowerment during the interim period, whether territorially, functionally or personally, as a step towards the implementation of the resolution, “the draft implies that this empowerment could be reserved by an Israeli claim to sovereignty in the final status.”¹⁶⁷

The Palestinian response was according to the instructions of the PLO.¹⁶⁸ This was different from the result of the secret negotiations that were taking place in Oslo at the time, as is explained later. However, the Palestinian delegation delivered to the American Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, on 5 August 1993, a proposed plan for an interim period which accepted delaying “the final status of Jerusalem” for the final status negotiations. Nevertheless the plan stated: “[the]Palestinian Interim Autonomous Government will exercise its territorial jurisdiction on the occupied Palestinian territories... including Jerusalem.”¹⁶⁹

Some of the negotiators submitted their resignation in protest against the PLO’s latest action. The plan was prepared in the PLO’s head office in Tunis and was sent to the delegation, which was reluctant to submit it, and considered it capitulation to the American conditions. When the PLO leadership insisted on the submission of the document, the delegation required written instructions from ‘Arafāt personally. They submitted the document only when they received these written instructions. ‘Arafāt invited them to Tunisia and resolved the problem of the resignations.¹⁷⁰

However, the role of Jerusalem in Palestinian politics at this time was not confined to the peace process. The Palestinian leadership transferred Jerusalem to the

¹⁶⁶ “The US Draft”, Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 2, pp.134–135.

¹⁶⁷ “Memorandum from Faysal al-Husayni to Dennis Ross, US Department of State, 1 July 1993”, *Documents on Jerusalem*, pp.55–56.

¹⁶⁸ *Filasṭīn al-Thawra* (18 July 1993).

¹⁶⁹ *Filasṭīn al-Thawra* (15 August 1993).

theme of its efforts to break the isolation from which it had been suffering since the Gulf War. This attitude was based on the supposition that the Arab and Muslim worlds could renounce their support for the Palestinian cause but not for Jerusalem.

The PLO asked for support against the escalation of the Israeli “Judaization” policies. At first this request was only partly successful. For instance, in August 1991 the conference of the foreign ministers of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) declared “the Islamic nation’s commitment to liberate al-Aqsa Mosque ...”.¹⁷¹ However, the OIC Summit in Dakar, Senegal, four months later saw a crisis between ‘Arafāt and the heads of the Arab Gulf states. Some of these states insisted on omitting the word “jihad” from the Summit’s final communiqué, although the word had already been used at the Mecca 1981 Summit. This attitude caused ‘Arafāt to speak at length twice in protest against the amendment, and when he failed to change their minds, he withdrew from the Summit.¹⁷²

‘Arafāt continued to move in different directions to revive the issue of Jerusalem. He sent two letters to the head of al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo and the Coptic Patriarch in Egypt on the occasion of an international Islamic-Christian conference on Jerusalem to explain the Israeli attempts to exclude the city from the peace process.¹⁷³ Following the OIC Summit, the PLO also organised a seminar under the title “Jerusalem: the Key to Peace”.¹⁷⁴

Attempts at the official level also continued. On 23 January 1992, less than one month after the Dakar Summit, the 15 member states of the “Jerusalem Committee” of the OIC concluded their first meeting since the Gulf War. ‘Arafāt attended the meeting and asked for urgent help to restore the holy places in Jerusalem and to deal with the Israeli policies in the city. His style of language on this occasion was very similar to that of the Palestinian leadership when asking for Arab and Muslim support in the 1920s. ‘Arafāt had brought with him a list of houses in the city which needed urgent repairs to prevent collapse and to avoid their occupants being forced into “moving outside the city, which means evacuating

¹⁷⁰ Klein, *Contested*, pp.136–137.

¹⁷¹ *Filastīn al-Thawra* (1 September 1991).

¹⁷² *Filastīn al-Thawra* (22 December 1991).

¹⁷³ *Filastīn al-Thawra* (3 November 1991).

Muslims, who are the guardians of al-Aqsa Mosque, from Jerusalem".¹⁷⁵ He said, "Jerusalem has not received a penny for 20 months."

The Committee passed resolutions that helped to remove the isolation of the PLO. Nevertheless, it was theoretically confined to Jerusalem. So it decided to contact the Christian religious leaders regarding Jerusalem. Asked the OIC members to pay their contributions to the Jerusalem Fund.¹⁷⁶

Jerusalem continued to play this active role in rebuilding the Palestinian-Arab, Muslim and Christian relations. The imam of al-Aqsa Mosque visited Malaysia in February 1992 and was received as a top official visitor. His visit was made during a solidarity campaign in the Muslim countries of South-East Asia, apparently as a means of raising funds for Palestine.¹⁷⁷ These activities spread to the Arab countries, including the Arab Gulf states, during 1992 and 1993. Exhibitions and conferences were organised under titles such as "Jerusalem: Past and Present" (Qatar),¹⁷⁸ "The Anniversary of al-Aqsa Mosque Fire (Cairo),¹⁷⁹ and "The Mosques" (Mecca).¹⁸⁰ Palestine in general was discussed through Jerusalem, and Jerusalem's religious significance again became active in mobilising support for the Palestinian national movement.

1.3.6 Oslo Accords

On 13 September 1993, Maḥmūd 'Abbās, on behalf of the PLO, and Shimon Peres, on behalf of the Israeli government, signed at the White House in Washington a "Declaration of Principles (DOP) on Interim Self-Government Arrangements". It was agreed to establish a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority after an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the district of Jericho in the West Bank. To begin with, the Israelis were to withdraw from the populated areas before the eve of the election for the Self-Government Authority Council.

¹⁷⁴ The papers of the seminar are held in the Archives of the PNC office in Amman.

¹⁷⁵ Compare these words with those used in the Palestinian letters to the Muslim nation in 1922. See pages 43-44.

¹⁷⁶ *Filastīn al-Thawra* (2 February 1992).

¹⁷⁷ *Filastīn al-Thawra* (23 February 1992).

¹⁷⁸ *Filastīn al-Thawra* (31 May 1992).

¹⁷⁹ *Filastīn al-Thawra* (21 June 1992).

¹⁸⁰ *Filastīn al-Thawra* (21 March 1993)

The elected Council would have responsibility for education and culture, health, social welfare, direct taxation and tourism during an interim stage lasting five years. This would lead to negotiations – scheduled for not later than the beginning of the third year of the interim stage – on the final status agreement based on Resolutions 242 and 338. Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders and other issues of common interests were shifted to the final negotiations.¹⁸¹

Following the Declaration, Yāsir ‘Arafāt and Yitzhak Rabin signed on 4 May 1994 an accord in Cairo regarding the “Gaza Strip and Jericho”. From 10 May 1994 the PLO forces from exile began to enter the two areas. ‘Arafāt himself arrived in Gaza on 12 July 1994.¹⁸²

The accords and the establishment of the autonomous authority together formed a radical redefinition of the conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis:

1. The type of conflict was officially redefined. Each side – the Palestinians and the Israelis – recognised the other, and each – at least officially – dismissed attempts to solve the conflict by eliminating the national existence of the other. Their acceptance of the partition as a solution transformed the conflict from a zero-sum to a non-zero issue.
2. The cause of the conflict was amended from being that of national existence to that of territory.
3. The accords were important in identifying the parties to the conflict. The fact that they were signed bilaterally, not as part of a comprehensive or co-ordinated Arab-Israeli agreement, emphasised the Palestinian problem as Palestinian-Israeli, rather than giving it a general Arab/Muslim-Jewish definition. The Palestinians found that they had the right to sign agreements – including reference to Jerusalem – without being governed by an Arab decision of any kind.
4. The Accords also meant the official renunciation of violence to resolve the conflict.

¹⁸¹ The DOP text, Abbas, *Secret Channels*, p.225.

¹⁸² Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, pp.658, 659.

With regard to Jerusalem in particular, it is important to study the position of the city at different stages: during the negotiations, and during the implementation period, which was intended to include the final status negotiations beginning in 1996.

1.3.6.1 JERUSALEM IN THE OSLO NEGOTIATIONS

At the beginning of December 1992, Aḥmad Qray‘, a PLO official, was in London to supervise the multilateral Palestinian negotiations. He was the co-ordinator of the negotiating committees and his role, like that of other PLO officials, was informal. Since he had the telephone number of a relative of Yair Hirschfeld, an Israeli academic with connections in the Israeli Labour government, Qray‘ asked the Palestinian General Delegate in London, ‘Afīf Ṣāfyia, to help arrange a meeting. This move had been suggested by the Palestinian negotiators, Ḥanān ‘Ashrāwī and Fayṣal al-Ḥusaynī, whose intention was to help gain Israeli recognition of the PLO. The meeting took place at the Ritz Hotel. Because it was the first face-to-face contact between Qray‘ and the Israelis, he asked Ṣāfyia, who also attended, to keep it secret. Ṣāfyia agreed, although he did not think that there was anything special about the occasion, for it was similar to many other meetings.¹⁸³

Qray‘ later asked the Terje Larsen, a Norwegian researcher who happened to be in London at that time and, being in contact with Hirschfeld and Palestinian officials, knew about the meeting, to help him organise further meetings in Norway. These meetings began on 21 January 1993 and comprised 13 face-to-face rounds. The Palestinians delegation consisted of Aḥmad Qray‘, Ḥassan ‘Aṣfūr (Assistant to Maḥmūd ‘Abbās), and Mahir al-Kurd (‘Arafāt’s economic adviser), the last being replaced later with another member. The Israeli delegation began with two academics, Yair Hirschfeld and Ron Pundak, who declared in the first four rounds that they were not authorised by the Israeli government to negotiate. In the sixth round on 21 May 1993, the General Director of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Uri Savir, joined the delegation, and in the seventh round on 13 June, Joel Singer, Yitzak Rabin’s personal representative, was added to the Israeli side.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Interview, ‘Afīf Ṣāfyia.

¹⁸⁴ Abbas, *Secret Channels*, pp.149 & 151.

Jerusalem held a prominent place in these negotiations. Appendix 2 is a comparison of the Palestinian and Israeli positions regarding the city. The Palestinian positions can be summarised as follows:

1. **The basis of the negotiations:** In the first round the Palestinians demanded that Jerusalem should be discussed by a multilateral committee, including the Arab countries.
2. **Authority:** The Palestinians demanded that East Jerusalem should be considered to be under Palestinian control during the interim period.
3. **Election:** Residents of Jerusalem should have the right to participate in the election as both candidates and voters.
4. **The text of the agreement:** Jerusalem was to be included in the text of the agreement.

As result of the negotiations, the Palestinians accepted the following:

1. Jerusalem was to be negotiated on a bilateral track.
2. Jerusalem was to be discussed at the final status negotiations. The city would not be under Palestinian control during the interim period.
3. The Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem would have the right to participate in the election as both candidates and voters according to a special future agreement.

The secret meetings resolved several problems that had arisen in the public negotiations. Firstly, the negotiators were not subjected to the pressure imposed by the media and public opinion. Secondly, the PLO had direct access to the negotiating table without the need to form a delegation consisting purely of insiders as was the case in Madrid with the consequent concern about the representation of Jerusalem, exiled Palestinians and refugees. All the representation formalities that had consumed the peace efforts for 17 years were removed by these secret negotiations.

This led to a swift take-off in dealing with the actual subjects of dispute, including Jerusalem. At first, the Palestinians held to their traditional view, which considered East Jerusalem to be part of the 1967 occupied territories. Therefore, they rejected any Israeli formula excluding reference to Jerusalem in the Declaration of Principles. In April, however, the Palestinians agreed to delay the question of

Jerusalem to the final status negotiations. This concession led to the other important concession: that Jerusalem would not be included under the interim authority.

The Palestinians' new position has been analysed by various politicians and researchers. Anīs al-Qāsim, member of the PNC, a prominent Palestinian lawyer in exile, and a member of the Madrid steering committee, was one of those who thought that the priority of the Palestinian leadership was to return to the occupied territories and to be recognised as the representative of the Palestinian people, while "everything else was secondary".¹⁸⁵

Nevertheless, there have been other opinions. For instance, from an examination of the minutes of the Oslo meetings (see Appendix 2), and the details of 'Arafāt's meeting with the Norwegian mediator Terji Larsen (described in various sources), it is clear that the Palestinian leadership's entry into the occupied territories was not a sticking-point in the negotiations. Early in the third and fourth rounds, before agreeing to find a solution to the question of Jerusalem, the Israelis had willingly accepted the return of the Palestinian leaders.¹⁸⁶

This is not to suggest that the Palestinian negotiators did not make concessions on East Jerusalem. Their priority was to set the political process in motion and then to develop it. This meant delaying discussion of some of the conflict issues while achieving agreement over others, but without giving up those issues. This is almost what Qray' told the Israeli delegation in Oslo: "We have accepted the harsh conditions for the interim period with courage because there was the hope that at the final stage we would deal with all the awkward and unresolved issues."¹⁸⁷

However, the postponement of Jerusalem highlighted an important difference. On the one hand, the city could be used in the national discourse to construct a national identity as part of a solution relying on an independent state and the mobilisation of Arab and Muslim support. On the other hand, the PLO had to recognise the reality of its political position. The concessions could be seen as an acceptance to delay the discussion of the symbol and capital of the state in order to

¹⁸⁵ Interview, Anīs al-Qasim, Amman, 20 September 2001.

¹⁸⁶ Abbas, *Secret Channels*, pp.134, 135 &139; Jane Corbine, *Gaza First, The Secret Norway Channel to Peace Between Israel and the PLO* (London: Bloomsbury, 1994). p.121.

¹⁸⁷ Abbas, *Secret Channels*, p.169.

achieve progress in creating this state, which reveals how much Jerusalem served the state programme, rather than the other way round.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the PLO position in Oslo, a detailed examination of Jerusalem's status in the text of the Accords is necessary.

1.3.6.2 JERUSALEM IN THE TEXTS OF THE OSLO ACCORDS

In addition to the Oslo DOP, there was the Palestinian-Israeli interim agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip – Oslo II – which was signed in Washington on 28 September 1995, stating in detail the implementation of the Principles.¹⁸⁸ In both documents Jerusalem was briefly mentioned in three points:

1.3.6.2.1 THE ELECTION

According to the Oslo Accords elections are supposed to take place for the Palestinian Authority Council. Regarding Jerusalem, the DOP stated: "Palestinian residents of Jerusalem will have the right to participate in the election, according to an agreement between the two sides." The Interim Agreement, dated 28 September 1995, stated that the Palestinian candidates in Jerusalem were to apply for a permit to conduct their campaign from the Palestinian organisation responsible for the election. This organisation should, in turn, apply for a permit from the Israeli side. The agreement also designated six Post Offices as the city's polling stations.¹⁸⁹

1.3.6.2.2 THE SITUATION DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD

The only document that addressed the question of Jerusalem during the interim period was a letter dated 11 October 1993 from Shimon Peres to the Norwegian Foreign Minister. It confirmed the following:

Palestinian institutions of East Jerusalem and the interests and well-being of the Palestinians of East Jerusalem are of great importance and will be preserved.

Therefore, all the Palestinian institutions of East Jerusalem, including the economic, social, educational and cultural, and the holy Christian and

¹⁸⁸ The text of Oslo II Agreement, Abdul Hadi, *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 2, pp. 246–256.

¹⁸⁹ "Ittifāqiyyāt Oslū: al-Ittifāqiyya al-Isrā'īliyya al-Filasṭīniyya, ḥawl al-Ḍaffa al-Gharbiyya wa Qitā' Ghazza [Oslo Accords: The Israeli–Palestinian Accords on the West Bank and Gaza Strip] (Amman: Dār al-Jalīl, 1998), pp.143 &144.

Muslim places, are performing an essential task for the Palestinian population.

Needless to say, we will not hamper their activity, on the contrary, the fulfilment of this important mission is to be encouraged.¹⁹⁰

This text was written on the demand of the Palestinians, as a guarantee that Israel would not exploit the interim period to create a new situation in the city. Although the letter was not supposed to be publicised, it could have been helpful in arousing Palestinian and Arab public opinion. On the other hand, though, it neither mentioned the interim period nor contained any specific Israeli obligations. Moreover, it did not make any connection between the West Bank or the Gaza Strip and the city. Nor did it refer to any political institutions such as Orient House.

By restricting the reference to Jerusalem during the interim period in this way, the Israelis could reasonably argue that the city was excluded from any other agreement, for example, the release of detainees and prisoners resident in Jerusalem. Moreover, Palestinian residents of the city could not work in Palestinian institutions such as the police and security forces.¹⁹¹ Even texts stating “Neither side shall initiate or take any step that will change the status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip pending the outcome of the permanent status negotiations” could be seen as inapplicable to Jerusalem.

It should also be remembered that during the negotiations the Israelis offered to implement some measures favourable to the Palestinians, such as constructing a certain number of housing units, or granting a particular status to Orient House, the Palestinian political headquarters in Jerusalem.¹⁹² However, none of these offers was mentioned in any text and no such agreement was made.

The negotiators themselves had their own view of the status of Jerusalem in the agreements. Maḥmūd ‘Abbās, the second man in the PLO and the person responsible for the negotiations, evaluated it as follows:

It is known that a Knesset resolution annexed Jerusalem to Israel, but by placing the issue on the agenda for the permanent status negotiations, the Israelis admit that the issue is subject to debate; in other words, the annexation of Jerusalem has now become null and void. But we must be aware that issues require a great deal of effort, patience and a long time to

¹⁹⁰ Abbas, *Secret Channels*, p.241.

¹⁹¹ *Ittifāqiyyāt Oslū*, p.52.

¹⁹² Abbas, *Secret Channels*, pp.124 & 128.

resolve. There will be a struggle ahead and there will be risks, but have there been agreements reached without risk?¹⁹³

However, the implementation of the agreements and the subsequent negotiations are important indicators for judging the Palestinian decisions in the negotiations.

1.3.6.3 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OSLO ACCORDS: JERUSALEM

Delaying Jerusalem for the final status negotiations did not stop the ball from rolling. The continuous Israeli siege around Jerusalem and the escalation of the Israeli annexation policies increased the urgency of organising a Palestinian counter-strategy to save the Palestinian presence in the city. Nevertheless, Palestinian activities continued under the general term of steadfastness (*ṣumūd*), rather than following a combined strategy. Jerusalem became the focal point of tension in Palestinian–Israeli relations, and disputes erupted on political, demographic, cultural and religious levels.

1.3.6.3.1 THE CLOSURE

Since the Gulf War, Israel had prohibited Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza from entering Israeli territory (within the 1948 borders) or what was known as the Green Line, to which Jerusalem was annexed since 1967.¹⁹⁴ The Oslo Accords had no points to ensure that Palestinians had free access to Jerusalem and its holy places.

The closure separated Jerusalem from the West Bank, which affected not only the city but also the Palestinian national project of establishing an independent state. In particular, the geographical link between the south and north of the West Bank was broken.

Jerusalem began to lose its central role in the daily life of the Palestinians of the West Bank. Many of them became unemployed and lost educational opportunities. They lacked health services and had no access to the religious Christian and Muslim places. Because Jerusalem is in the centre of the West Bank, Palestinians needing to travel between the north and south were now restricted to the

¹⁹³ Ibid., p. 221.

¹⁹⁴ Abraham Ashkenasi (ed.), *The Future of Jerusalem* (Frankfurt-on-Main, Germany: Peter Lang, 1999), p.37.

routes outside Jerusalem – narrow and rugged roads through the hills skirting the city – a detour that increased the journey time six or sevenfold compared with the direct route.

Jerusalem itself suffered a decline in visitors, passing traffic, shoppers and workers in the city. One of the effects of this situation was that investors moved out of the city or opened branches elsewhere.¹⁹⁵

1.3.6.3.2 THE DEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE

The resistance to changes in the demographic structure was conducted on two levels: individual and collective. Individual resistance meant accepting poor housing conditions to avoid leaving the city and losing one's identity card.* For instance, Palestinian residents continued to live in small, overcrowded old houses owing to Israeli restrictions on building new houses for Palestinians or on repairing old ones. According to Israeli statistics, in 1996 the proportion of Jewish households in Jerusalem having three or more occupants per room was 2.4 per cent, compared with 27.8 per cent of Palestinian households. The proportion of Jewish households having two occupants per room was 13.5 per cent, compared with 61.5 per cent of Palestinian households.¹⁹⁶ In other cases Palestinians abandoned plans to go abroad for study or employment, or even to live with their spouses or other relatives who were not allowed to live in the city. If they had done so, their right of residence and identity cards would be withdrawn according to Israeli law.¹⁹⁷

Owing to the severe Israeli restrictions on building new houses, some Palestinians built their homes at night and on Saturdays, when the municipal inspectors were off duty. Fayṣal al-Ḥusaynī was reported to have said: "The most important Palestinian activity as this time is building, even without permission."¹⁹⁸

The refusal to sell houses and land to Israelis was another common resistance tactic. Except for a few cases, no land nor houses were sold to Israelis. Moreover, on

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p.58.

* The Palestinians of East Jerusalem have special identity cards different to the West Bank and Gaza and give them the ability to live in the city.

¹⁹⁶ *Dir'āsāt Filasṭīniyya* no. 32 (Autumn 1997), pp.144 & 145.

¹⁹⁷ For examples see B'TSELEM "The Quiet Deportation Continues: Revocation of Residency and Denial of Social Rights of East Jerusalem Palestinians" (Jerusalem: April 1997), pp.24–32.

3 May 1997 the Palestinian Authority (PA) issued a decree forbidding the sale of any land in Palestine to foreigners, and warning that anyone who sold land in this way or assisted in its sale would be liable to punishment.¹⁹⁹ This was clearly a firm decision against the sale of land to Israelis. It was followed by the assassination of several estate agents in ambiguous circumstances.²⁰⁰ Jerusalem's Mufti, 'Ikrima Ṣabrī, asserted that religious law imposed the death penalty for selling land to Israelis, and that the bodies of those found guilty would not be purified before burial, nor would they be buried in an Islamic cemetery.²⁰¹ At the same time, there were many cases of Palestinian families waging lengthy battles in the Israeli courts against the confiscation of their property by the Israelis or its forced sale to them.²⁰²

The Israeli settlements were another major challenge for the Palestinians. (See Chapter Two) An attempt to construct the Abū Ghunīm/Har Homa settlement to house around 30,000 Jews south of Jerusalem provoked widespread demonstrations and protest in various Palestinian cities. Although there was the expectation of a full-scale uprising during these protests, the Palestinian leadership seemed to prefer using international diplomatic efforts to tackle the matter. Nabīl 'Amr, 'Arafāt's adviser, stated on Palestinian Radio: "The fruits of world support arrive gradually. Thanks to such support we have come this far."²⁰³ As a result, Palestinian protest and international opposition were insufficient to prevent the construction of the settlement.

1.3.6.3.3 THE HOLY PLACES

One of the direct results of the closure was the blocking of the Palestinians' access to their Muslim and Christian holy places, something that had probably never happened since the era of the Crusades. The increasing hostility aroused by the situation erupted in September 1996, when the Likud government decided to open a tunnel

¹⁹⁸ Nadav Shragi, *Haaretz* (5 June 2000).

¹⁹⁹ Abdul Hadi, *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 2, p.353.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.356.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² For six examples of testimonies made after the Oslo Accords by Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem who were being pressured by the Israeli government or settlers to give up or sell their properties, see the report of B'TSELEM "A Policy of Discrimination: Land Expropriation, Planning and Building in East Jerusalem" (Jerusalem: 1997), pp.92–96.

²⁰³ *The Independent* (21 March 1997).

under al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf. The measure provoked an unprecedented wave of protests, “The Tunnel Intifada” in which 37 Palestinians and 11 Israeli soldiers were killed and 200 Palestinians and 55 Israeli soldiers wounded on the first day.²⁰⁴

The tunnel was seen as a trigger, or as the last straw in the accumulated disappointment with the results of the peace process, especially after the Likud Party’s return to power following the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. Marwān Barghūthī, the head of Faḥ’s High Committee in the West Bank, said during the Intifada that closing the tunnel would not be enough to stop the armed clashes, and that the Israeli government would have to implement the agreements, continue the redeployment from the West Bank and release the prisoners.²⁰⁵

The direct results of the tunnel confrontations enhanced the status of Yāsir ‘Arafāt and the PA. The Palestinian police forces had returned fire against Israeli soldiers and defended the Palestinian protesters, which discredited the accusation that the PA was a collaborator.²⁰⁶ The Intifada highlighted Jerusalem’s return to its pre-1948 position as a trigger in the conflict. The Intifada showed also how the city could, once again, be a source of political power for the Palestinian leadership of ‘Arafāt.

1.3.6.3.4 THE NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN JERUSALEM

The numerous plans and attempts to develop Palestinian strategy or large-scale national organisations and institutions to encompass the Palestinian movement inside Jerusalem had failed before the establishment of the PA. For instance, in October 1992 the Palestinian Central Council decided to revive the Palestinian Municipality in the city.²⁰⁷

After the establishment of the Authority, a meeting of representatives of syndicates, associations, and Islamic and Christian institutions was held on 6 June 1994 in Jerusalem. Fayṣal al-Ḥusaynī was given the responsibility for establishing a

²⁰⁴ *The Independent* (27 September 1996).

²⁰⁵ *The Independent* (28 September 1996).

²⁰⁶ Farsoun & Zacharia, *Palestine & the Palestinians*, p. 289.

²⁰⁷ *Filasṭīn al-Thawra* (1 November 1992).

central body for Jerusalem to challenge Israeli plans and to observe the negotiations on the city.²⁰⁸

Such attempts were fruitless, or at least had only modest success. For instance, the Arab Municipality Council was revived in 1995. Of the original sixteen members of the elected Council when the 1967 war erupted, there were now only six still living. One of those six, Amīn Majaj, was asked to head the Council. However, he died in 1998, and Zakī al-Ghūl, another surviving member, was appointed as the new mayor, along with twelve Council members.²⁰⁹ Like other members, al-Ghūl lived in Amman, regarded the move as symbolic, and believed that the revived Council functioned in two ways: (1) paying the pensions of the surviving employees of the pre-1967 municipality; and (2) providing a platform for the media activities conducted by al-Ghūl and the Council members!²¹⁰

One of the main reasons for such a failure was the disagreement between the Palestinian leaders, especially between the head of the PA, ‘Arafāt, and leaders in Jerusalem, including Fayṣal al-Ḥusaynī. Disputes between the two parties were interpreted in different ways:

1. There was the asserted disagreement over the status of Jerusalem in the Oslo negotiations, where the city’s local leadership opposed the exclusion of Jerusalem from the interim authority.²¹¹
2. There was also ‘Arafāt’s insistence on holding the Jerusalem profile himself, which limited the role of Fayṣal al-Ḥusaynī, despite his being appointed in 1994 to take charge of the file for the PLO.²¹² This was a kind of remaining role for Jerusalem as a source of legitimacy and leadership.²¹³

²⁰⁸ *Filastīn al-Thawra* (12 June 1994).

²⁰⁹ Klein, *Contested*, p.197.

²¹⁰ Interview, Zakī al-Ghūl.

²¹¹ Sa‘īd al- Ḥassan, *Ḥawl Ittifāq*, pp.132 & 287.

²¹² Interview, As‘ad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān.

²¹³ ‘Arafāt has been claiming that he himself descended from al-Ḥusaynī family, a claim that some observers reject. See Aburish, *Arafat*, pp.8–12.

However, the absence of a Palestinian central institution in Jerusalem became more marked. As a result the role of Orient House was strengthened, for it served as a kind of PLO official arm in the city, with the Palestinian flag flying on its roof.*

Nevertheless, it is important to note that Orient House was owned by the al-Ḥusaynī family, and its status depended on the personality of Fayṣal al-al-Ḥusaynī himself, the son of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Ḥusaynī, who was the cousin of al-Hajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī, and the leader of the Holy Jihad Volunteer Army in 1948.²¹⁴ Fayṣal al-Ḥusaynī’s personality gradually developed as much from his political positions as from his notable origins.

However, this situation did not develop into a polarisation or leadership rivalry, especially since the main personality in Jerusalem, Fayṣal al-Ḥusaynī, showed no ambition for leadership outside the city. This relationship increased the multiplicity of Palestinian arms in the city, making it more difficult to create a clear and united strategy.

The closure of institutions created more problems for the NGOs. For instance, the staff and clients, who benefited from their activity mostly from outside the city, no longer had access to the offices. According to an estimate, 80 per cent of these institutions had moved beyond the military checkpoints outside the municipality boundaries, meanwhile retaining only skeleton offices and Post Office boxes in the city.²¹⁵ This is in addition to Israel’s refusal and banishing of any presence by the PA institutions and security forces in the city.²¹⁶

* Orient House is a palace built in 1897 as a residence for a notable of Jerusalem, Ismā‘īl al-Ḥusaynī. It is situated one kilometre from the Old City, in a neighbourhood named after one of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn’s military leaders, al-Sheikh Jarrāḥ, who defeated the Crusaders in the twelfth century. Since its construction, the palace has hosted Jerusalem’s official guests such as the German Emperor in 1898 and other VIPs until the 1930s. After the 1948 war the palace was used as the UNRWA centre before being converted into a hotel. In 1967 it became a private residence. In 1983 Fayṣal al-Ḥusaynī rented part of the building for use as the office of the Arab Studies Association which he had established. However, the Israeli authorities closed it in 1988. It was then reopened in 1992 as the office for the negotiations delegation. (See *Al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ*, 25 April 1999.)

²¹⁴ Friedland & Hecht, *To Rule*, p.433.

²¹⁵ Mohammad Shtayyeh, (ed.), *Scenarios on the Future of Jerusalem*, (Al-Bireh: The Palestinian Centre for Regional Studies, 1998), p.199.

²¹⁶ For details see Klein, *Contested*, pp. 191–192 & 249.

1.4. The Final Negotiations

Officially the final status negotiations were begun in Taba in Egypt as scheduled in May 1996.²¹⁷ However, the meeting was merely ceremonial, for the negotiations had to be postponed owing to an early Israeli election.

The new Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, revived Israel's old veto on: Jerusalem, the Palestinian state, the refugees and the settlements. He insisted on new negotiations regarding the implementation of the phases of the interim agreement not yet implemented. Thus the Hebron Agreement, signed on 15 January 1997, rephased the interim agreement.²¹⁸ Then the implementation of the newly agreed phases was also renegotiated for several months, during which Netanyahu suggested cancelling the agreed interim phases and moving on to quick final negotiations.²¹⁹ Finally, a new implementation agreement was reached after a 9-day summit held between Netanyahu and 'Arafāt and attended by the American President Bill Clinton at Wye Plantations in Washington on 23 October 1998. It included the statement that Israel would carry out a three-phase withdrawal from 13 per cent of the West Bank. That agreement was not implemented either. The Netanyahu government collapsed in December and Israel again went to the polls in May 1999.

Yet another new agreement on implementing the Wye Plantations Memorandum was signed in early September 1999 between Yāsir 'Arafāt and the new Israeli Labour Prime Minister, Ehud Barak. The date of 13 February 2000 was appointed for reaching a "frame agreement" on the final negotiations.²²⁰

Again, the latest new agreement was not implemented. Therefore, on 8 and 9 March Yāsir 'Arafāt and Ehud Barak met in Ramallah, and in Sharm al-Shīkh in Egypt. They decided to include villages adjacent to Jerusalem in the coming withdrawal, and to resume negotiations immediately on a frame agreement by May in preparation for a final agreement in September.²²¹ The agreement was not implemented and a new summit had to be convened.

²¹⁷ Farsoun & Zacharia, *Palestine & the Palestinians*, p.308.

²¹⁸ Hebron Protocol, Abdul Hadi, *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 2, pp.317–321.

²¹⁹ *al-Quds al-'Arabī* (14 October 1998).

²²⁰ *The Guardian* (3 September 1999).

²²¹ *al-Quds al-'Arabī* (9 & 10 March 2000).

1.4.1 Camp David 2000.

The period covering the Camp David summit in July 2000 and the subsequent negotiations until January 2001 will remain a remarkable chapter in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations as a whole and with regard to Jerusalem in particular. The Palestinian position can be understood as much from the circumstances of the interim period and the summit as from the negotiations themselves.

The Palestinians were reluctant to go to a summit in the US in July. They realised that to begin final negotiations at that time was a radical change – at their expense – in the agreed strategy of the peace process. The move to final negotiations without implementing the interim agreement would clearly be a loss to the Palestinians. They believed that they had made concessions and paid the price for the agreements. Therefore, moving to final negotiations meant that they would pay the price for the same goods yet again. Thus, the Palestinians tried to delay the final negotiations until other agreed withdrawals had taken place or at least until they were given an assurance by the Americans that they would take place, whatever the results of the summit. The Palestinian interpretation of the interim agreement was that it would give them control over 90 per cent of the West Bank and Gaza before the final negotiations.²²² At the time they had control over 65 per cent of Gaza plus scattered areas equal to no more than 40 per cent of the West Bank. These areas were divided into two categories. The larger area was designated as category B, where the PA had only part control, and the remainder was category A, where the PA had “full control”.²²³ Moreover, in February 2000 the Palestinian Negotiation Department declared that there were 32 points in the agreement, which the Israelis had not implemented.²²⁴

The experience of the protracted negotiations over the interim period made the Palestinians uneasy about reaching any general agreement. They insisted on complete and fully documented agreements – with the necessary maps attached – at any future meetings.

²²² Report submitted by the Speaker of the PNC, to the PCC meeting (2–3 July in Gaza). (Amman: PNC office archive).

²²³ Afif Safieh, “Diplomacy in the Middle East: The Art of Delaying the Inevitable”, *RUSI Journal*, vol. 164, no.4 (August 2001), p.29.

Meanwhile, the final negotiations had been in session since March. Some were public, others were secret, and they had taken place in Stockholm and various parts of Washington. The Israeli negotiators proposed a long phased final agreement. However, the Palestinian negotiators emphasised between February and April that they would not be “dragged” into phasing and fragmenting the solutions, and they rejected any agreement that did not contain a solution for Jerusalem and the refugees.²²⁵ Then Ehud Barak demanded the cancellation of the interim agreement and the initiation of the final negotiations. Such an attitude provoked resentment among the Palestinians, who felt that they had been negotiating for months in vain.

The Palestinians rejected the idea of a quick summit and presented the American administration with two demands: (1) the implementation of the agreed withdrawals; and (2) sufficient preparation for the summit.²²⁶ The Palestinian leadership had suspicions as to why “the Americans and the Israelis are so sure that a treble summit is able to reach a final deal”²²⁷, especially since Ehud Barak was taking a hard line. The suspicions of the Palestinians increased when the American Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, agreed with them on two weeks’ preparation for the summit. Then there was an unexpected telephone call from the American President inviting them to a summit in one week.²²⁸ The Palestinians “had to go to avoid being accused of spoiling the negotiations.”²²⁹

Owing to overlapping factors, including the deficient peace process, the PA was in a critical situation regarding its popular support. For instance, the results of a poll conducted in March 2000 showed that ‘Arafāt’s popularity in the West Bank and Gaza was in decline: only 39 per cent supported his policies compared with 47 per cent in February. In addition, 71 per cent believed that the Authority contained

²²⁴ *Dirāsāt Filasṭīniyya*, no.42 (Spring 2000), p.202.

²²⁵ For these statements, see Ḥassan ‘Aṣḫūr in *al-Quds al-‘Arabī* (22 February 2000); Nabīl ‘Amr, *al-Quds al-‘Arabī* (10 April 2000); and Aḥmad Quray’, *al-Quds al-‘Arabī* (25 April 2000).

²²⁶ Hussein Agha & Robert Malley, “Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors”, *The New York Review of Books* (9 August 2001).

²²⁷ Interview, Salīm al-Za‘nūn.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ See the PLO Executive Committee Report to the PCC session 9–10 September 2000 in Gaza. (Amman: PNC Office archives).

corruption, and only 22 per cent believed that the Authority was democratic.²³⁰ This situation certainly restricted the ability of the negotiators to make concessions.

Any negotiation on Jerusalem itself was now to be viewed completely differently from before. The continual tension in the city and the increased concentration on the city in the Palestinian, Arab and Muslim discourse was developing it into an almost uncontrollable public opinion issue. The establishments of the PA and the PLO in Jerusalem were, like the Israelis, creating and institutionalising barriers to making concessions on the city. At the end of June, the HIC in Jerusalem, which included members close to the PLO such as 'Ikrema Şabrī and Fayşal al-Ḥusaynī, issued a *fatwa* forbidding any concession on Jerusalem.²³¹

The negotiations began in complete isolation from the media and delegations were limited to twelve members. The summit was divided into four committees: security, borders, refugees and Jerusalem.²³² There were no minutes nor documentation; there were no written or specific offers or ideas, and discussion was spread between formal and informal meetings.²³³

The common view held by American and Israeli politicians was that Israel had made generous offers on various issues but that Yāsir 'Arafāt had rejected them.²³⁴

The official Palestinian account of events was given in the PLO Executive Committee Report submitted to the PNC in September. The Israelis' "view" of a solution was that the Palestinians would be granted sovereignty of the villages around Jerusalem. The quarters outside the Wall (of the Old City) would remain under Israeli sovereignty and have a kind of autonomy, although they would be responsible to the "Abū-Dīs Municipality". The quarters inside the Wall were to be divided: the Jewish and Armenian quarters were to be dealt with separately, while the rest would be under a special system. According to the report, the "offer" changed several times although the substance was the same. For instance, there was

²³⁰ *al-Quds al-'Arabī* (10 April 2000).

²³¹ *al-Quds al-'Arabī* (22 June 2000).

²³² PLO Executive Committee Report, 2000.

²³³ Interviews: As'ad 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Salīm al-Za'nūn and 'Afif Şāfyia.

²³⁴ See the view of the American envoy, Dennis Ross, in the *Jerusalem Post* (22 June 2001); and in *The New York Review of Books* (20 September 2001).

an offer “to grant sovereignty to a Palestinian Presidency centre inside Jerusalem’s walls ... for example an embassy”. “Sovereignty over al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf would be Israeli, and the Palestinians would have only a custodianship role.” The Palestinians’ access road would reach only al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf.²³⁵

Apart from this report, Palestinian sources said that the American and Israeli ideas were presented in vague and ambiguous wording. For instance, it was proposed to give the Palestinians “functional sovereignty” in Jerusalem. According to the Palestinians, such sovereignty was only symbolic, for Israel would maintain its control over the city. The same interpretation could be put on the Israeli proposal to divide the sovereignty into two parts: the Palestinians would have control of everything above the ground in al-Aqsa Mosque, and everything beneath the ground would be under the control of the Israelis. A Palestinian official commented that such “a trick would not convince a first-year Law student.”²³⁶

Ehud Barak tried to personalise the issue of al-Aqsa Mosque by offering Yāsir ‘Arafāt an office in the village of Abū-Dīs, and allowing him to pray in al-Aqsa Mosque every day. ‘Arafāt was provoked into replying that his office would be on his family’s own land in the Maghribī (Moroccan) neighbourhood²³⁷ (originally situated in the Western Wall Plaza and destroyed by the Israelis in 1967).

Jerusalem was main reason for rejecting the Israeli offer. The offer of 92-95 per cent of the West Bank excludes areas that were not defined as the West Bank. The Israeli offer excluded four areas: the expanded East Jerusalem; the Latroun Salient; the no-man’s-land around the West Bank between the 1948 and 1967 borders, and the shores of the Dead Sea. This makes the Israeli offer no more than 95 per cent of 90 per cent which is closer to 85 per cent, since expanded Jerusalem alone is around 8% of the West Bank.²³⁸

‘Afīf Ṣāfyia explained that Ehud Barak explored the possibility of returning one out of every three neighbourhoods in occupied East Jerusalem, while maintaining Israeli control of almost half of the Old City: the Jewish quarter, the

²³⁵ PLO Executive Committee Report, 2000.

²³⁶ Interview, Salīm al-Za‘nūn. For the proposals, see the *Jerusalem Post* (21 July & 4 August 2000).

²³⁷ *al-Quds al-‘Arabī* (26 July 2000).

Armenian quarter, the Wailing Wall (50 metres) and/or the entire Western Wall (450 metres).²³⁹

The Palestinians according to the Executive Committee Report offered a solution consisted of three points:

1. The partition of Jerusalem: "East Jerusalem would be returned to full Palestinian sovereignty."
2. Israel would have "authority and not sovereignty" over the Jewish quarter.
3. Jerusalem would remain an open city and co-operation would be on a municipal level.

However, other Palestinian officials mentioned further details. 'Arafāt was reported to have offered the Israelis full recognition of [West] Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, in exchange for full Palestinian sovereignty over East Jerusalem. In addition, the Jewish neighbourhood and the Western Wall in the Old City would be under Israeli sovereignty.²⁴⁰ The Palestinian officials said that internationalisation could also be accepted, although not for East Jerusalem nor al-Aqsa Mosque, but for the whole city; the West and East sectors.²⁴¹

When the summit ended on 25 July, a trilateral statement was issued, pledging to continue the efforts to reach an agreement.²⁴²

Jerusalem was only one of the issues being disputed. The Palestinians also rejected the Israeli suggestions for the withdrawal, the Israeli requirement to control the airspace and monitor the arrivals and departures at the crossing-points, and the proposed solutions to the refugee problem.²⁴³

Nevertheless, the reality of the Israeli and American proposals was that Jerusalem had become a subject for formal negotiation. The Palestinians, for the first time, had officially accepted that parts of the Old City would remain under Israeli control. The media, which were prohibited access to the summit site, focused their attention on Jerusalem. Palestinian negotiators accused the Israelis of arranging such

²³⁸ Safieh, "Diplomacy.", p.29.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ *Jerusalem Post* (23 July 2000).

²⁴¹ *al-Ra'y* (6 September 2000).

²⁴² *Jerusalem Post* (26 July 2000).

²⁴³ The PLO Executive Committee Report, 2000.

coverage to mislead public opinion by asserting that Jerusalem was the only obstacle to reaching an agreement.²⁴⁴

By the end of the summit, the Jerusalem snowball was growing bigger and moving faster. The city had become daily news, and the Arab-Israeli conflict seemed to have been reduced to a dispute over Jerusalem. The post-summit Jerusalem was no longer the pre-summit Jerusalem. The Arab and Muslim aspect of the conflict had strengthened. And ‘Arafāt was welcomed back in Gaza as the hero who had refused to make concessions on Jerusalem.²⁴⁵

Clearly, a new definition of the Israeli-Arab conflict was taking shape. During the summit ‘Arafāt, to escape pressure, declared that Jerusalem was an issue not only for the Palestinians, but also for the Arabs and Muslims.²⁴⁶ According to some stories, the American administrations tried to use this declaration to expedite the summit by offering Arab backing for a solution. As‘ad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān related the following story. During the summit Yāsir ‘Arafāt had only restricted access to the telephone, for the Americans controlled any communication between the summit site and the world. When ‘Arafāt asserted the Arabs’ right to participate in the decision on Jerusalem, Madeleine Allbright declared that the Arab leaders were in favour of compromise and offered ‘Arafāt a telephone line to contact some of them. When ‘Arafāt telephoned the leaders, he began with the sentence “Your Majesty/Your Excellency, they want me to sell Jerusalem”, following which, according to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, he continued the discussion. However, his opening sentence had already directed the conversation against radical concessions, and turned the Arab position into support for his refusal to make further concessions.²⁴⁷

Moreover, during the summit ‘Arafāt had warned the Americans that Ehud Barak’s handling of Jerusalem as an issue of religious division would “turn the

²⁴⁴ *al-Quds al-‘Arabī* (24 July 2000).

²⁴⁵ For details of the welcome, see *al-Quds al-‘Arabī* (26 July 2000) and the *Jerusalem Post* (27 July 2000).

²⁴⁶ *al-Quds al-‘Arabī* (20 July 2000); *Jerusalem Post* (21 July 2000).

²⁴⁷ Interview, As‘ad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān.

conflict from a political national issue into one of religion, and then neither he himself nor the Israelis would have the ability to control the situation.”²⁴⁸

After the negotiations, ‘Arafāt toured several Muslim and Arab countries in search of political and financial support, especially after American criticism that he was not flexible enough and that his position could affect his relations with the American administration, leading to a suspension of American financial aid.²⁴⁹

The heavy concentration on Jerusalem provoked some Palestinians into issuing a warning that inflating the status of the city in that way was a conspiracy to justify avoiding other problems such as the refugees and the borders.²⁵⁰

However, ‘Arafāt’s efforts to mobilise official Arab support did not achieve the success that he sought. Arab leaders continued to refuse to hold a summit.²⁵¹ And Only the Committee of Jerusalem of the (OIC) was invited to a special meeting in Morocco at the end of August. The meeting issued a usual supportive statement for the Palestinian national rights in Jerusalem. This was not what ‘Arafāt was aiming at, he wanted an Arab and Muslim decision saying that Jerusalem is a Muslim and Arab issue and its fate would be decided only by an Arab Muslim decision. (See Chapter Four).

Nevertheless, ‘Arafāt’s efforts did not fail completely. For instance, the Egyptian President asserted on various occasions that no one in the Arab and Muslim worlds could concede East Jerusalem and al-Aqsa Mosque.²⁵² The new atmosphere created by the dispute over Jerusalem enhanced fears of a possible explosion in the region. President Mubārak, for instance, said that conceding Jerusalem could trigger endless violence.²⁵³ There were also Israeli and American reports and analysis that since May the possibility of a violent eruption had increased owing to the tension in the territories.²⁵⁴ The popular moods showed how Jerusalem could be at a certain

²⁴⁸ As‘ad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān reported this story as he heard it from Mahmūd ‘Abbās and the Chief negotiator Ṣa‘īb ‘Urayqāt and at the joint Palestinian leadership meeting.

²⁴⁹ Fayṣal al-Ḥusaynī in the *Herald Tribune* (7 August 2000).

²⁵⁰ For instance, Sarī Akram Zu‘aytir, “Concentrating on Jerusalem: Ploy or Conspiracy?” in *al-Ra’y* (10 September 2000).

²⁵¹ *al-Quds al-‘Arabī* (2 August 2000).

²⁵² Interview, As‘ad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān; and *al-Ḥayāt* (13 August 2000).

²⁵³ *Jerusalem Post* (25 August 2000).

²⁵⁴ Interview, Dennis Ross, *Jerusalem Post* (22 June 2001).

moment an uncontrollable public opinion issue, and out of the hands of the official level.

During August and September the snowball continued to roll. Jews and Palestinians in the city organised several rival activities. The Israeli municipality and other organisations held rallies and celebrations to mark the fast of Tisha B'Av, which were bigger than in previous years. The Palestinian *Waqf* and other institutions organised several activities to highlight the anniversary of the fire at al-Aqsa Mosque in 1969.²⁵⁵

The Israeli Income Tax Department escalated its raids on the city, confiscating goods from shops and homes, including fruit, vegetables, domestic electrical appliances, and so on. These raids made the Palestinian main roads in the city, according to the *Haaretz* newspaper, appear "very much like a battlefield."²⁵⁶

Ariel Sharon, the Likud Party leader, in such an atmosphere decided to visit al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf on 28 September. His visit was seen as an unprecedented provocation, for he was supported by a bodyguard in the form of a huge military parade of several thousand soldiers. He had ignored the warnings by the Palestinian Legislative Council, the Palestinian Ministry of Information, Faḥ, Ḥamās and other organisations of the possible consequences.²⁵⁷

On the second day Israeli soldiers killed 5 and injured 90 of the demonstrators that had gathered in al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf to protest against the visit.²⁵⁸ The visit and its fatal consequences triggered al-Aqsa Intifada, marking the beginning of a new chapter in the Middle Eastern Arab-Israeli conflict.

The eruption of al-Aqsa Intifada was a strong reminder that Jerusalem was a cause of the Palestinian national movement, and was a focal point in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This fact was in addition to the political concentration on the city at the Palestinian and Arab-Muslim levels.

Between October and December, efforts were directed at containing the situation and resuming the negotiations. Although a number of meetings and summits between the Israelis and Palestinians took place under American

²⁵⁵ *Haaretz* (28 August 2000).

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ *al-Quds al-'Arabī* (28 April 2000).

supervision, no effective results were achieved.²⁵⁹ In November, during the Intifada, Barak and the American President discussed ways of amending the Camp David proposals.²⁶⁰ In December Clinton suggested the following:

1. Israel would withdraw from 95 per cent of the West Bank and 100 per cent of the Gaza Strip.
2. The refugees would be dealt with on the basis of compensation, with most of them being settled outside Palestine.
3. Jerusalem was to be divided according to the principle of “Arab sections to the Palestinians, Jewish sections to the Jews.” The Palestinians would be granted the Arab neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem and the Arab quarter of the Old City, including the Temple Mount/al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf. Israel would be granted the Jewish neighbourhoods and part of the Armenian quarters of the Old City, including the Western Wall.
4. The problem of the “Temple Mount” would be solved by giving the Palestinians sovereignty above the ground and Israel sovereignty beneath it. Or an international mechanism could be established to limit Palestinian sovereignty under the area and prevent excavation of the holy sites declared to be Jewish.
5. A special administration would manage the Old City and so, there would be no barriers or border checkpoints to control freedom of movement.²⁶¹

The Palestinians asked for explanations and refused to agree on the ideas in general without details. On 2 January ‘Arafāt met Clinton in the White House, where he asked for maps showing the Israeli withdrawal. The principle of granting the Arab sections to the Arabs and the Jewish section to the Jews was not clear, because its application could provoke a dispute over the identities and boundaries of the sections. Clinton replied that he had no further details and that he expected an answer immediately. According to Salīm al-Za‘nūn, ‘Arafāt knew that the American

²⁵⁸ *al-Ḥayāt* (30 September 2000).

²⁵⁹ *al-Ḥayāt* (5, 10, 17, 18 & 19 October 2000).

²⁶⁰ *Haaretz* (5 & 15 November 2000).

²⁶¹ See *Haaretz* (24 & 28 December 2000).

President was merely presenting the Israeli proposals, which was why he could not give any explanation.²⁶² This led to further negotiations in Taba the following month.

1.4.2 Taba 2001

Two weeks before the Israeli election for Prime Minister, bilateral negotiations without American attendance began in Taba, Egypt. They lasted for six days, finishing on 27 January. They were different from those at Camp David. The negotiations did not concentrate on Jerusalem, but rather on the Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank. The negotiations did not fail but were halted because of the imminent Israeli election. The two sides declared at the end of the negotiations that

1. the “Taba talks were unprecedented in their positive atmosphere”;
2. “circumstances and time constraints” were the reasons for bringing them to a halt; and
3. both “sides took into account the ideas suggested by President Clinton together with their respective qualifications and reservations.”²⁶³

The talks were indeed unprecedented. According to the Palestinian negotiators, the Israelis abandoned their demand for their personnel to monitor the border checkpoints and airports.²⁶⁴ Both the Israelis and Palestinians presented maps showing a suggested withdrawal from the West Bank, in which many settlements would be removed. Meanwhile, no advancement had been made in the negotiations on the Old City, both sides remaining largely in their previous positions. Outside the Old City, however, the Palestinians had made concessions, including the acceptance that settlements around Jerusalem would remain under Israeli sovereignty.²⁶⁵

The end of the Taba talks brought to a halt the most serious and comprehensive Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, which had continued from the Camp David summit in July 2000 until the end of January 2001. The election of Ariel Sharon in early February signalled the close of these negotiations. So the region had to begin another discussion on how to bring the Palestinians and Israelis together

²⁶² Interview, Salīm al-Za‘nūn.

²⁶³ *Jerusalem Post* (28 January 2001).

²⁶⁴ *al-Quds al-‘Arabī* (27/28 January 2001).

²⁶⁵ *Al-Ḥayāt* (31 January 2001).

again for the next stage and whether negotiations should start before or after the Intifada and confrontations were brought to an end.

The Palestinian rejection of the American-Israeli proposals in Camp David could be interpreted in two ways: (1) the proposals did not satisfy the Palestinian side; and (2) their experience of the interim agreement discouraged the Palestinians from accepting any general proposal that was not complete in all its details. However, there is a third reason that observers do not exclude, which is the personal factor or ‘Arafāt’s personal position. It was believed that ‘Arafāt “could pressure and convince his party (Fath) to support further concessions on Jerusalem, whereas he himself, while accepting the delay in discussing Jerusalem, refused to make further concessions. This personal position could be interpreted in different ways as personal ideological and religious belief or that ‘Arafāt knew that such concessions could damage his political and religious status among the Palestinians and in the Arab and Muslim worlds. He himself told one of his aides at an informal meeting at the beginning of 2000 that he would never accept Barak’s offer to pray in al-Aqsa Mosque. According to ‘Arafāt himself he had personally decided in 1967 not to pray in the Mosque until it was liberated. He had taken the decision because while he was praying in the Mosque that year, a female Israeli soldier had entered the building and behaved provocatively.²⁶⁶

1.5 Conclusion

1.5.1 From Camp David to Taba: The Current Political Position

The study of the Palestinian position on the issue of Jerusalem between the Camp David summit in July 2000 and the end of the talks in Taba in January 2001 provides an understanding of it at the present time and its possible direction in future negotiations.

The Palestinians have still insisted on considering East Jerusalem as part of the occupied territories and that it should be returned to Palestinian sovereignty like the rest of the West Bank. They have also refused to make concessions except on the Jewish quarter and the “Wailing” Wall.

²⁶⁶ Interview, As‘ad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. (Yāsir ‘Arafāt told ‘Abd al-Raḥmān this story during an aeroplane trip at the beginning of 2001.)

It is interesting to note that the Palestinian refusal to recognise the Israeli's expansion of the city's boundaries became an element of flexibility. The Palestinians have defined East Jerusalem according to the boundaries fixed by Jordan between 1948 and 1967, comprising around 6.5 square kilometres. Therefore, the Israeli settlements in the expanded Jerusalem have been considered part of the West Bank, and the Palestinians accepted provisionally at the Camp David and Taba talks that this area could be part of a compromise and land exchange.²⁶⁷

1.5.2 The Changing Definition of the Conflict

East Jerusalem in the geographical and political sense came into being only in the aftermath of the 1948 war and was the result of political developments. The Palestinian leadership confined its claims to it in recent years for political and legal reasons. At the same time some Palestinians have disagreed with this view of Jerusalem, insisting that the religious and historical definition did not divide the city into West and East sectors. They have also rejected the two-state solution, for they consider the whole of Palestine to be holy.

These differences of view summarise the changeable political definition of the conflict with Israel. They indicate the two main positions held by the Palestinians throughout the twentieth century. The first covered the period 1917 to 1974. During this stage the official and mainstream attitude was to define the conflict as a zero-sum issue, in which there was no room for conciliation or compromise. The subject of the conflict was the existence of the Jewish state itself. Therefore, as far as Jerusalem was concerned, there was no question of partition or conceding any sovereignty to the Jewish state. Nevertheless, especially during the British Mandate, the Palestinians did not oppose an international presence or guarantees in the city. This meant that while the sovereign state of Palestine was not compromised, the administration of Jerusalem could be placed under international control to guarantee freedom of worship in a Palestinian state where Muslims, Christians and Jews could live alongside one another as equal citizens.

When, in 1974, the PLO decided to follow the phased programme, in which Palestinian authority would be established in any liberated part of Palestine, it

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

entailed changing the definition of the conflict. It implied the acceptance of Israel's existence and the abandonment of the zero-sum definition. Consequently, political compromises and solutions began to be considered. East Jerusalem was now seen as part of the 1967 occupied territories and therefore part of the possible Palestinian state.

In November 1988 the PNC proclaimed the Palestinian state in exile and designated Jerusalem as its capital. This proclamation, together with the pressure of the Intifada and other international developments, initiated the political process leading to the signing of the Oslo DOP in 1993, in which Jerusalem was designated as part of the final negotiations. At Camp David in July 2000 and in Taba in January 2001 Jerusalem was discussed in the final status negotiations and neither side declared that the city was a non-negotiable or zero-sum issue. Like any other dispute, the conflict over Jerusalem has had a changeable definition subject to the wider political context and the continuing management of the issue.

1.5.3 Arab-Muslim Jerusalem and the Capital of Palestine

It is important to note, however, how the Palestinian leadership, highlighted the city's historical importance and holiness especially before 1948, in the early 1990s and in the Camp David summit of 2000. The Palestinian leaders drew the attention of Muslims to the holy places in Jerusalem by visits, campaigns and communication with Arab and Muslim leaders until Palestine became an Arab-Muslim cause. But it should also be noticed that such Arab and Muslim involvement was not in the context of a solution that depended on building Islamic or Arab unity. The Palestinian leadership managed to assert that support was needed to give the Palestinians their national state, which could then protect the Islamic identity of Jerusalem.

Chapter Two

Israel and Jerusalem:

The Zionist Movement and the Jewish State

Introduction

This chapter discusses the status of Jerusalem in Israeli politics and Zionist political thought during the following stages:

1. The evolution of Jewish political nationalism, or Zionism from the end of the nineteenth century up to the proclamation of the State of Israel in May 1948.
2. The construction of the State of Israel between 1948 and 1967, when the historic holy places of Jerusalem were outside the Israeli borders.
3. The post-1967 years and the change in Israel's discourse regarding Jerusalem after the Israeli occupation and annexation of the Eastern sector of the city and the surrounding areas.
4. Jerusalem during the Middle East peace negotiations between 1991 and 2001.

Observers and scholars have suggested that there has been internal agreement in Israel over the present and future status of Jerusalem, and that for the Jews the conflict over the city has been a zero-sum issue on which no compromise was possible. In Chapter Two it is suggested that this image does not reflect the actual situation. Jerusalem was not central to Zionist thought for many years, and Zionist leaders on many occasions have been ready to make concessions over the city in exchange for the establishment and viability of the Jewish state. Moreover, ultra-Orthodox Jewish groups do not have a clear or decisive opinion of Jewish sovereignty in Jerusalem. The Israeli hard-line attitude towards the city in the post-1967 era is part of the definition and redefinition of the conflict. This attitude has produced a discourse that asserts an Israeli consensus on the whole of Jerusalem as a zero-sum issue. In this chapter, the Israeli attitude is closely scrutinised to discover whether this has been true of the conflict over Jerusalem at any stage.

2.1 Jerusalem and Zionism: pre-1948

The second half of the nineteenth century was a transition in Jewish history in the establishment of the Jewish political national movement or Zionism. It was mainly the result of the hostility towards the Jews (or anti-Semitism as it was known) in Europe during that period, which manifested itself as discrimination, massacres and persecution.¹

There were three points of view among the Jews on the means of emancipation:

1. The assimilation of the Jews in their societies.
2. A return to the religious roots and salvation by migration to Palestine.
3. The Jewish political nationalist movement that worked to reconstruct the Jews as a nation.

The first option failed, for no formula could be found to combine the Jews' desire to integrate in the European communities and gain full citizenship without losing their inherited religious and cultural identity.² Those Jews of the second and third points of view collaborated to form the Jewish Nationalist Movement (Zionism).

Among the most prominent intellectual figures that developed Jewish political nationalism were Moses Hess, Leo Pinsker and Theodore Herzl, all of whom were secular, basing their views on socialist or revolutionary theories.

In 1862 in France, Moses Hess wrote his book *The Revival of Israel*, which was later retitled *Rome and Jerusalem*. This book followed Hess's long personal history as a socialist close to Karl Marx and Engels. Three years earlier he had considered religion to be the symptom of a pathological state of mind, and the history of religion a history of human error.³ He believed in the Jews as a race with a special historical experience and therefore eligible to have their own nationalism. Moses

¹ For details of the Jews' circumstances in Western Europe, see James Parkes, *A History of the Jewish People* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1962), p.177. For Eastern Europe, see Moshe Menuhin *The Decadence of Judaism in Our Time* (Beirut: The Institute for Palestine Studies, 1969), pp.58–60.

² For the contradiction between self-preservation and assimilation, see Parkes, *A History of the Jewish*, pp.175–178.

Hess saw the solution to the Jewish question in the recognition that “[e]ach and every Jew, whether he wishes it or not, is automatically, by virtue of birth, bound in solidarity with his entire nation.... Each has the solidarity and responsibility for the rebirth of Israel.”⁴

In this sense Hess regarded Jerusalem as the necessary historical component in the construction of nationalism. In the Introduction to his book, Hess wrote: “It is the thought of my nationality, which is inseparably connected with my ancestral heritage, with the Holy Land and the Eternal City.”⁵ Nevertheless, this did not mean for him that the national rebirth had to take place in Jerusalem. He was referring to the historical phase when Jews formed one group or what could be seen according to 19th century jargon as a nation. But he did not ask then for Jerusalem or any other designated place to be chosen for this rebirth of Israel.

Another intellectual Zionist pioneer was Leo Pinsker, who published his book *Auto-Emancipation* in Berlin in 1882. He also recommended the construction of Jewish nationalism and a state, although he referred to Jewish history in these words: “the road cannot seem too long to the wanderers of two thousand years.” Nevertheless, he did not select Jerusalem as the place of this nationalism and state, for he wrote: “some preferred America, or even SpainBut the majority, however, preferred Palestine”.⁶

The most famous pioneer, Theodor Herzl, published his book *The Jewish State* in 1895, in which he described the Jewish state as a solution. He discussed proposals for the location of the Jewish state, comparing between Argentina and Palestine. His opinion was: “We shall take what is given to us, and what is selected by Jewish public opinion.”⁷

The works of such thinkers reveal that Jewish beliefs regarding the history of Jerusalem did not mean for them that Jerusalem or Palestine had to be the site of the Jewish state. Actually some contemporary Israeli scholars in reviewing such works

³ Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (London: Weidenfeld Nicolson, 1972), pp.47, 53.

⁴ Menuhin, *Decadence*, p.25.

⁵ Laqueur, *History of Zionism*, p.47.

⁶ Menuhin, *Decadence*, p.29.

⁷ Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*, 6th edn. (London: H. Pordes, 1972), p.30.

say “Jerusalem in general and East Jerusalem in particular was not part of the Zionist identity.”⁸

However, there was also the religious trend among the Jewish activists, which consisted of two major divisions:

1. The philanthropic practical trend, consisting of rich Jews, such as the English Jew Moses Montefiore, who worked to help Jews wishing to live in the Holy Land. These activities began in the first half of the nineteenth century – when the Jews in Palestine numbered only nine thousand – although there were no clear political implications.⁹
2. A new scholarly Jewish trend of plans with political implications regarding Jerusalem and Palestine. It introduced a new interpretation of the classical Jewish Zionism, in which the restoration of the Jewish Kingdom in “Eretz Yisrael” would take place only with the arrival of the Messiah, and then the Jews would return to Palestine.¹⁰ Religious scholars in the nineteenth century, influenced by the circumstances of the Jews as well as powerful European nationalism, worked to change this view. One of the early efforts was made by Judah Alakaly, who, while confirming that the full occupation of the Promised Land must await the coming of the Messiah, stated that human agency might begin the task.¹¹

Intellectual secular thinkers and activists assembled with philanthropic and religious groups at the First Zionist Congress in 1897. It was declared at the Congress: “the aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law.” The means of achieving this home were the colonisation of Palestine “by Jewish agricultural and industrial workers”, and “by means of appropriate institutions, local and international”, and the “strengthening and fostering of Jewish national sentiment and consciousness”.¹² These resolutions united the religious and secular Jews, and Palestine was designated as the location of the Jewish home.

⁸ Interview, Menachem Klein, Oxford, 19 February 2002. See also Wasserstein, *Divided*, p.4.

⁹ Menuhin, *Decadence*, p.24.

¹⁰ Mark A. Tessler, *A History of the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict* (Bloomington & Indianapolis, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp.16, 17, 19.

¹¹ Parkes, *History of the Jewish*, p.186.

¹² The Basil Programme, Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol.1, p.14.

Attitudes toward Jerusalem and the role of the city in the years following the 1897 Congress until the proclamation of Israel – which could be labelled the period of the construction of Jewish Nationalism – are described below.

2.1.1 Jerusalem's Indigenous Jewish Society

The first point to be noted is that Jerusalem was not a place that would accept the Zionist pioneers and their project. The city was not suitable for the colonisation with farmers and factory-workers as hoped by the international Zionist movement. It was not the ideal place to establish agricultural enterprise or factories.

In addition, the residents of Jerusalem, including the Jewish community, did not welcome the Zionist movement. In 1914 there were 85,000 Jews in Palestine,¹³ nearly 45,000 of them in Jerusalem.¹⁴ This community, however, consisted largely of non-political religious Jews and refugees benefiting from philanthropic aid from rich Jews, and many of them were against working on the production line. Attempts by Jews such as Montefiore to put Jerusalem's Jewish population to work had already failed. In the second half of the nineteenth century, he had established projects around the Old City such as a windmill, workshops and agricultural settlements. All these had failed because the city's inhabitants preferred to continue their dependence on donations from abroad, and saw their task as the maintenance of Jerusalem's sanctity.¹⁵ They also saw the Zionist enterprise as a threat to their lifestyle and their coexistence with the other communities.¹⁶ There were also the Orthodox Jews who still thought that the Jewish home should be God's work only after the arrival of the Messiah.¹⁷ Moreover, the geographical definition of Jerusalem appeared controversial among Jews. For instance, when Montefiore conceived his project to expand beyond the Old City, he was also trying to resolve the Jews' housing problem in the city by establishing a settlement called Mishkenot Sha'anaim. However, there was extremely strong resistance to the project, especially by the Ashkenazi (European Jewish) rabbis, who argued that living outside the Old City's walls was

¹³ Laqueur, *History of Zionism*, p.213.

¹⁴ Leonard Stein, *Zionism* (London: Ernest Benn, 1925), p.65.

¹⁵ Friedland & Hecht, *To Rule*, pp.54, 56.

¹⁶ See Laqueur, *History of Zionism*, p.213.

¹⁷ Tessler, *Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, p.20.

moving outside Jerusalem's sacred space. It was the Sephardis (Oriental Jews) who accepted Montefiore's invitation and the Ashkenazis followed them only later.¹⁸

2.1.2 Jerusalem as an Intellectual Centre

After the First World War, there were only around 55,000 Jews in Palestine. The decline in their numbers was attributed to famine, disease and emigration during the war.¹⁹

The increased immigration after 1917, when Palestine was captured by the British troops, provided the Zionists with the opportunity to strengthen the nationalist trend among the new Jewish settlers. Between 1918 and 1924 nearly 40,000 immigrants entered Palestine. Although the classical Jewish philanthropic religious societies of cities such as Hebron, Safed and Tiberias were weakened, intellectual immigrant Jews created a new identity for the Jewish community in Jerusalem.²⁰

If the agricultural colonies in the coastal plain of Palestine were the material basis of the Jewish national home, Jerusalem was where the Zionist leaders worked to construct the Jewish collective sentiment and to promote political and intellectual consciousness. The intellectual, cultural and mythical infrastructure was concentrated in Jerusalem. On 24 July 1918, an important step was taken to revive the Hebrew language when the foundation stone of the Hebrew University was laid on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem.²¹ This was to be an academic centre producing the scholarly works necessary to form the collective narrative of the history and future of the Jewish nation. Jerusalem was the centre of most of the Jewish institutions, such as the Jewish Agency, the Jewish National Fund and the Va'ad Leumi (National Council for Jews in Palestine).²² The instruments to generate the national myths were laid in the city, mostly in the Western sector, the tombs of Zionist pioneers were also there, and those pioneers provided the heroes necessary to the Jewish nation.²³

¹⁸ Friedland & Richard, *To Rule*, p.53.

¹⁹ Stein, *Zionism*, p.150.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.65.

²¹ Stein, *Zionism*, p.148.

²² Edwin Samuel, "The Government of Israel and its Problems", *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 3, no.1 (January 1949), p.9.

²³ Friedland & Hecht, *To Rule*, p.8.

2.1.3 The Confrontations in Jerusalem

The development of the Zionist movement contained its own dynamics that helped to turn Jerusalem into a symbol of Zionism. Confrontations and differences with others are important motives for creating internal unity between groups, and thus produce or strengthen nationalism. Clearly Jerusalem played an important role in this process.

Jerusalem's holy places in particular were the cause of frequent controversies and confrontations between the Arab Palestinian and Jewish communities. The most important holy place for the Jews in the city is the Western Wall.

Zionist politicians aimed to exploit this Wall politically. There were attempts during the 1920s to purchase the Wall or to convince the British authorities to confiscate it for the benefit of the Jews. Such a strategy by secular Zionists aimed, as Colonel Frederick H. Kisch, the Head of the Political Department of the Zionist Executive, said in 1926, "to break the Muslim sanctity of the whole property as a Muslim *Waqf*." Three years later, he wrote: "the political effects would be very great" if the wall were purchased and the Muslims were evacuated from the immediate neighbourhood.²⁴ Such attempts were part of the Zionist propaganda regarding Jewish history and historical rights in Palestine, and reflected the need to challenge the existence of the Arab population, for whom Jerusalem was also the main centre.

Disputes over the Wall were exploited to encourage Jewish immigration into Palestine. Many Jewish and Zionist newspapers both inside and outside Palestine presented the clashes of 1929 as a continuation of the Russian pogroms of the 1880s or in some cases even worse.²⁵ Ironically, however, while the Russian pogrom justified emigration from Russia and Eastern Europe, the asserted pogrom in Jerusalem was used to encourage immigration into Palestine, where the claimed pogrom was happening. Chaim Weizman, as President of the Zionist Organisation, wrote in *New Palestine*, the official magazine of the American Zionist Organisation:

²⁴ Mattar, *The Mufti*, p.40.

²⁵ For examples of these newspapers, see *ibid.*, p.36.

“The only rational answer” to the dispute of 1929 over the Wall “is to pour Jews into Palestine.” He added, “We must reclaim [our] homeland [and] the wall.”²⁶

It should be noted how Jerusalem and the Western Wall were exploited not only in the conflict against the Palestinians but also in internal Jewish rivalry and in gaining support for Zionism. A major confrontation was triggered on 15 August 1929 when the followers of the revisionist Vladimir Jabotinsky went in procession to the Wailing Wall and held an anti-Arab demonstration. This power parade coincided with the Sixteenth Zionist Congress in Zurich, where the radical Jabotinsky was calling for the abandonment of any political solution that required Arab-Jewish co-operation until the Jews were in the majority in Palestine and could negotiate from a position of strength.²⁷ This exploitation of the escalation of hostilities in Jerusalem to influence the leadership, impose a hard-line attitude and score points in internal rivalries was to continue in domestic Israeli politics during the following decades.

The exploitation of confrontation is a common strategy in the construction of nationalism. Politicians usually connect confrontation with historical roots and territories that encourage national grouping and the mobilisation of support. In this sense, the definition of Jerusalem as the symbol of the Jewish nation and a focal point of confrontation with the Palestinian Arabs was used to bring Jews together and mobilise them as a nation.

2.1.4 Proposals for Political Settlement

If Jerusalem were vital in inspiring nationalism, the image was to change when the Zionist leadership had to make a stand against a certain proposed political settlement in Palestine.

In 1937 the British Royal Commission (Peel Commission) recommended a Partition Plan in which Palestine would be divided into two states. Although the Twentieth Zionist Congress in August of that year welcomed the principle of establishing a Jewish state, it rejected the suggested borders. Two months later, the Jewish Agency proposed a new map of the partition in which Jerusalem would be

²⁶ Cited in *ibid.*, p.38.

²⁷ John & Hadawi, *Palestine Diary*, vol. I, p.205.

divided between the Jewish state and the zone under the British Mandate.²⁸ Mount Scopus and the modern West sector outside the Old City would belong to the Jewish state, while the Old City and the East sector would be part of the British Mandate. In justification of the plan the Jewish Agency stated:

The need of a special regime for that part of the town cannot justify the exclusion of the whole of Jerusalem from the Jewish State. It has been truly said that Jewish Palestine without Jerusalem would be a body without a soul. Jerusalem has throughout the ages been the spiritual centre of the Jews, dispersed as they were over the face of the earth.... It is a symbol of Jewish national life and practically synonymous in the mind of Jews in Palestine. Throughout the ages, Jews have persisted, in spite of all obstacles, in attempting to re-establish themselves in Jerusalem. In this latest phase of the return to Zion, Jews have built the greater part of new Jerusalem outside the city walls.²⁹

The importance of such position is that:

1. Under the need of establishing the Jewish state the agency made a distinction between religious significance and sovereignty. While emphasising greatly religious historical ties between Jews and Jerusalem it accepted that the historical parts of Jerusalem could be excluded from the Jewish state.
2. There was acceptance for the idea that “new” Jerusalem could be constructed and Jews could accept it as their Jerusalem.
3. This position, forming the Zionist/ Israeli position until 1967, contradicts the later insistence of Jerusalem as the unified eternal capital of Israel.

During the discussions of the UN plan for partition in 1947, the Zionist leadership reserved a special slot for the status of Jerusalem. However, according to Abba Hillel Silver, Chairman of the American Section of the Jewish Agency, the discussion was to be confined to the “new Jewish city outside the [western] walls of Jerusalem”. He thought that the exclusion of this sector would hinder the development of the Jewish state.³⁰ The fact that in the 1930s and 1940s the Jews were willing to accept a Jewish state without the holy places of Jerusalem reveals that the creation of a state was top priority. A Jewish state without the Old City of Jerusalem actually matches the original ideas of the secular pioneer Zionist thinkers,

²⁸ H. Eugene Bovis, *The Jerusalem Question, 1917–1968* (Stanford, Calif: Hoover Institute Press/ Stanford University, 1971), p.28.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.29.

³⁰ *The Times* (3 October 1947).

that is, the location of the state was not as important as the establishment of the state itself.

Moreover, the Jewish demand to include the West sector of the city in the Jewish state indicates how Jerusalem could be defined in different ways. This part of the city has had neither religious nor historical importance for the Jews. Its importance developed only during the Zionist colonisation movement in Palestine in the first half of the twentieth century. This proves how the importance of Jerusalem could be constructed and promoted in the same way as nationalism. While newly constructed Jerusalem could be defined as a symbol of the Jewish nation, the ancient sector of the city, where the asserted historical rights were concentrated, was not a crucial issue. A claim to this sector could provoke a refusal and threaten the major goal of the Zionists, that is, the establishment of the Jewish state. During the 1948 war and its aftermath more evidence appeared to prove the difference between the discourse of nationalism and the practical politics of creating a Jewish state.

2.2 The Jewish State and Divided Jerusalem: 1948–1967

The Israeli position during the 1948 war and in the years up to the 1967 war was an example of how the status of Jerusalem was subjected to power politics and how a Jewish state could be acceptable without Jerusalem. Israel existed for 19 years without the historic East sector of Jerusalem and this situation did not cause serious concern in that country at the time.

The following section is a discussion of Israel's position regarding Jerusalem during the war of 1948, as well as in the following years at the negotiations under the supervision of the UN, and the bilateral negotiations with Transjordan. The discussion then turns to the situation inside Jerusalem and Israeli policy until the June War of 1967.

2.2.1 The 1948 War

By April 1948, Jewish forces were already occupying Arab areas of Jerusalem which had been placed under a special regime or *corpus separatum*, that is, under international administration, according to UN Resolution 181 (the Partition Plan). Glubb Pasha, the British head of the Transjordanian "Arab Legion" arranged a secret

meeting between one of his British officers, Col. Desmond Glodie, and the Jewish Hagana representative, Shlomo Shamir. Among other questions, Desmond asked about the Jewish plans for Jerusalem. Shamir's answer was that if the Legion refrained from attacking the Jewish settlements around Jerusalem and the roads leading to them were not endangered, he thought there would be no reason for conflict.³¹ However, his answer was given when the Jewish forces were already controlling areas allocated to the *corpus separatum*. This meant that the Jewish forces had no intention of complying with the Partition Plan for the city. In effect, the answer offered a compromise with King 'Abdullah, and did not ban the Legion from entering some areas of the city.

The daily developments of the war explain the Zionist plans to capture Jerusalem, especially the West sector.³² The Jewish Agency declined a truce in the city during the days leading up to 15 May, and did not accept the British High Commissioner's invitation to a meeting to arrange a truce.³³ Henry Gurney, the British Chief Secretary for Jerusalem, wrote the following in his diary for 10 May:

The Jews are still rankling at their not having been told of our meetings with the Arabs in Jericho. It has wounded their vanity, and has exposed them to the charge of refusing to agree to obviously reasonable terms for peace in Jerusalem. At this stage they do not really want a truce at all.³⁴

According to observers, however, "Israel did not invest the same efforts in the conquest of the Old City as it did in the West."³⁵ In fact, the idea of invading East Jerusalem persisted in the minds of the Israeli leaders. For instance, David Ben Gurion, the first Israeli Prime Minister, in September 1948 suggested a plan to capture the rest of the city. However, his suggestion was opposed by military leaders and cabinet members for logistical and political reasons.³⁶ Another attempt was made on 19 October, when Jewish forces attacked the strategic village of Bīt-Jālā, south of

³¹ For the meeting see Avi Shlaim, *Collusion across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist movement, and the partition of Palestine* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), pp.182–183.

³² For the war diary, see P.J. Vatikiotis, "The Siege of the Walled City of Jerusalem, 14 May–15 May December 1948", *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 31, January 1995, pp.139–145.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.194.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.195.

³⁵ Klein, *Contested*, p.45.

³⁶ John & David Kimche, *Both Sides of the Hill; Britain and the Palestine War* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1960), p.240; Bar-Zohar, *David Ben Gurion: A Biography*, trans. Michael Peretz Kidron (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1978), p.181.

Jerusalem, in preparation for the occupation of Bethlehem and Hebron. This manoeuvre was to clear the southern road for the occupation of the rest of Jerusalem. However, local snipers in the village defeated the Jewish forces.³⁷

2.2.2 Israel and the UN Proposed Settlements: 1948–1950

On 14 May 1948, the UN named the Swedish Count Folke Bernadotte as mediator in the task of promoting “a peaceful adjustment of the future situation in Palestine.”³⁸ During a truce arranged and observed between 11 June and 9 July, Bernadotte suggested including Jerusalem in the Arab state of Transjordan.³⁹ After Israel rejection of this solution the Security Council instructed Bernadotte to continue his efforts to bring about the demilitarisation of Jerusalem as stated in UN Resolution 181.⁴⁰

Bernadotte was preparing a new proposal to be submitted to the UN General Assembly when he was assassinated by the Zionist Stern gang on 17 September 1948.⁴¹ His plan was a return to the idea of the special regime under international administration, as stated in the 181 Resolution. The UN would control the city according to the Resolution, although with a high level of local autonomy granted to both the Arab and Jewish communities.⁴²

The Israeli attitude seemed contradictory and changeable at that time. To understand it would be useful in understanding Israel’s real plans for Jerusalem in the coming years. The current Israeli position could be summed up as follows.

2.2.2.1 INTERNATIONALISATION VERSUS ARAB SOVEREIGNTY

The Zionist leadership declared its acceptance of the international regime (*corpus separatum*) in Jerusalem, while preparing to capture the West sector, if not all of the city. However, developments during the war persuaded the Israeli leadership to defend the internationalisation, that is, to accept Bernadotte’s proposal of June 1948

³⁷ Kimche, *Both Sides*, p.249.

³⁸ Shlomo Slonim, “Israeli Policy on Jerusalem at the United Nations”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.30, July 1994, p.582.

³⁹ Kimche, *Both Sides*, p.221.

⁴⁰ Slonim, “Israeli Policy...”, pp.582-585.

⁴¹ Kimche, *Both Sides*, p.235.

⁴² Bovis, *Jerusalem Question*, p.65.

to include Jerusalem in the Arab state. An official Israeli statement responded to the proposal as follows

The fact is that after an exhaustive study ... the General Assembly resolved that Jerusalem be placed under an international regime. ... the Jewish people, the State of Israel and the Jews of Jerusalem will never acquiesce in the imposition of Arab domination over Jerusalem.⁴³

The interpretation of this position that as a result of their power on the ground, the development of the war and their interpretation of the international view, the Israelis had been trying to gain more than what they had originally been granted by the 181 Resolution. However, when international powers began to propose solutions that would take from the Israelis their original allocation, the Israelis reacted by defending the Resolution.

2.2.2.2 JERUSALEM: FACTS ON THE GROUND.

The Israeli political acceptance of internationalisation was a temporary measure that could be amended later. In particular, the 181 Resolution stated that a reassessment was to be carried out ten years after the establishment of the *corpus separatum*, when the city's inhabitants could decide if they wished any modification to be made to the city's status. According to the UN Partition maps, the Jewish population of the city in 1947 was slightly less than half of the total. Since the establishment of the Jewish state would open the gates to immigration, this could create a Jewish majority in the city and thus eventually secure the superiority in strength desired by the Jews.⁴⁴

Here it is important to show how demographic and geographic definitions could change and lose some of their political importance. According to many sources, in the municipal area of Jerusalem enclosed by boundaries fixed under the British Mandate, the Jews had been the majority since the beginning of the twentieth century (see Table 2.1).⁴⁵ However, if the *corpus separatum* were implemented, the Jews are not the majority.

⁴³ Slonim, "Israeli Policy...", p.583.

⁴⁴ Bovis, *Jerusalem Question*, p.61.

⁴⁵ However, some of these statistics considered pro-Zionist sources and have been the subject of dispute and repeatedly criticised inflating the Jewish presence in Palestine in general. For details see Donald E Wagner, *Dying in the Land of Promise, Palestine and Palestinian Christianity from Pentecost to 2000*, (London: Melisende, 20001), pp.146-150

When Israel managed to occupy the Western or larger sector of the city, its leadership gave the following reasons in defence of its action:

1. The Jewish side had accepted internationalisation because of the special holy places in Jerusalem, and because of “an overwhelming consensus of Christian opinion.”⁴⁶
2. The Christian world and the UN had done nothing to protect Jerusalem from the “Arabs” and “Islam”, or to implement internationalisation. It was the Jews who were protecting the city. This view was expressed in a letter sent by the Israeli Foreign Minister, Moshe Shertok, to Bernadotte on 25 July: “The Christian world abandoned the Holy City to its fate, and lifted not a finger to its defence”.⁴⁷
3. Following on from the previous two points, Israel asserted that it would continue ruling the area that it occupied in Jerusalem, treating it as part of the territory under Israeli control. This position was stated in Shertok’s letter:

The Jews alone stood in the breach; they are now in control of practically the whole of Jerusalem, with the exception of the walled city, and of a firm land bridge between it and Israel. Henceforth, no constructive examination of the future of Jerusalem can be undertaken in disregard of these cardinal facts.

Table 2.1 Population of Jerusalem 1922–1946

Year	Jews	%	Muslims, Christians and others	%	Total
1922	33,971	54.3	28,607	47.7	62,578
1931	51,222	56.6	39,281	43.4	90,503
1944	97,000	61.7	60,080	38.3	157,080
1946	99,320	60.4	65,120	39.6	164,410

Source: Government of Palestine, Survey of Palestine, cited in Michael Brecher, p. 17.

However, discussions within Israel were based on exploiting the situation. For instance, Leo Kohn, the Israeli Liaison Officer with the UN, sent a memorandum on 22 July 1948 to the Israeli Foreign Minister, stating that in the light of “the actual military position”, Israel should stop advocating “the international city idea”.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Israeli official statement on 5 July 1948 cited in Slonim, “Israeli Policy...”, p.583

⁴⁷ The letter text cited in *Ibid.*, p.584.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.587.

Israel quickly imposed administrative measures, as shown in Table 2, aimed at strengthening its position in the city and emphasising that it would not cede the areas already under its control. As a result of the Israeli victory in West Jerusalem, the Israeli leadership called for a “functional internationalisation” to be confined to the Old City and its holy places. The reason given was that the Western sector of the city did not have the same spiritual characteristics that justified the imposition of an international regime.⁴⁹

2.2.3 The Israeli-Jordanian Negotiations and Agreements

By the beginning of June 1948, in addition to the West sector of Jerusalem, Israel was occupying sites on Mount Scopus such as the Hebrew University and Hadassa Hospital. These sites comprised an enclave inside East Jerusalem, which had been captured by Transjordan (see Map 2).

Table 2.2 Israeli administrative measures in Jerusalem:
July 1948 – January 1950

Date	Measure
25 July 1948	The Israeli Cabinet decided to extend its authority to Jerusalem (the occupied West sector) and to impose Israeli law there.
2 August 1948	The Israeli Minister of Defence passed a retroactive decision to make West Jerusalem subject to Israeli law, and considered it “Israeli-occupied territory”.
20 December 1948	Israeli government institutions were transferred to Jerusalem.
2 February 1949	Military rule in the city was ended and West Jerusalem came under civilian administration similar to that of the rest of Israel.
14 February 1949	The first Israeli Knesset (Parliament) was opened in Jerusalem.
23 January 1950	The Knesset declared “Jerusalem” Israel’s capital.

On 7 July an agreement was signed under UN supervision, in which arrangements were made to supply this enclave with food, and allow public access to the sites. In addition, a no-man’s land was to be created to separate the two sides.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Abba Eban, *An Autobiography* (New York: Random House, 1977), p.141.

⁵⁰ The Agreement text cited in *Documents on Jerusalem*, p.79.

This agreement was to establish the *status quo* in Jerusalem and reflected the mutual desire to reach a political understanding.

During the remainder of 1948 and 1949, several rounds of secret and open negotiations took place between the two sides. Israel's goals during the war (until December) included the prevention of clashes in Jerusalem so as to neutralise the Arab Legion on this front while Israel carried out operations on the southern (Egyptian) front. Therefore several agreements were signed under UN supervision to confirm the cease-fire and the boundaries of the no-man's land.⁵¹ These agreements were combined with secret negotiations and meetings to produce principles of permanent agreement. Meanwhile, Israel had still not abandoned plans to attempt an invasion of the rest of Jerusalem, especially during September and October, as has been explained.

However, another goal for Israel in its negotiations with Transjordan was to create a united opposition to the internationalisation of the whole of Jerusalem according to the 181 Resolution. In other words, Israel was working to preserve the Partition in case the attempt to occupy the whole city was unsuccessful. Therefore, in August a meeting took place in Paris between Amir 'Abd al-Majīd Ḥaidar, the Transjordanian minister in London, and Eliaho Sasson, the head of the Middle East Department in the Israeli Foreign Ministry, who was acting in co-ordination with the Israeli Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion. Sasson made the following three points:

1. He had no confidence in the international mediator, Bernadotte, and called for direct co-operation to abort the idea of internationalisation.
2. He suggested that King 'Abdullah could keep an (unspecified) part of Jerusalem, while Israel would keep the modern Western sector with a corridor to Tel Aviv. The Old City would be administered jointly under international auspices. This suggestion was Israel's attempt to unite with Jordan to resist the internationalisation of the whole city, while allowing the internationalisation of the Old City, which was under Transjordanian control
3. Sasson put forward the demand that Transjordan absorbs refugees.⁵²

⁵¹ Moshe Dayan, *Story of My Life* (London: Sphere Books, 1978), p. 139. Shlaim, *Collusion*, p.355.

⁵² see Shlaim, *Collusion*, p.282.

These negotiations were not completed because the King was disturbed by a press leak, and because of Israel's resumption of military operations.

On 5 December Sasson sent a letter to King 'Abdullah stating Israel's acceptance of the King's annexation of the West Bank, and urging him not to make a decision on Jerusalem's future, but to leave it for direct negotiations.⁵³

The official armistice negotiations in Rhodes in early 1949 failed to reach an agreement. On 10 March 1949, Israel occupied Um Rash-Rāsh (Eilat) on the Red Sea in the extreme south. Furthermore, in secret negotiations Israel demanded that Transjordan facilitate Israeli occupation of the Triangular area north of the West Bank, which was currently under Iraqi control.⁵⁴ Israel gave hints of its intention to capture the area and maybe further territory if the matter were not settled politically.⁵⁵ Direct secret negotiations took place between the Israeli delegation, comprising Moshe Dayan and other military officers, and Transjordanian representatives headed by King 'Abdullah himself. In the early hours of 24 March a map was agreed, in which the Triangle would be left to Israel after Iraqi withdrawal.⁵⁶ This deal opened the door to the official signing of the armistice on 3 April. It is noticeable that Israel required the Jordanians to grant concessions not on Jerusalem but elsewhere. In contrast, Jerusalem was a means of co-operation with the Jordanians rather than an issue of conflict, for the two sides agreed to unite to prevent internationalisation.

Jerusalem occupied a special status in the official armistice agreement from two aspects.

1. The current structure of the city was a record of the outcome of the war since the boundaries were set according to the truce lines.
2. The functioning of the city was arranged as follows:

Free movement of traffic on vital roads, including the Bethlehem and Latrun-Jerusalem roads; resumption of the normal functioning of the cultural and humanitarian institutions on Mount Scopus and free access thereto; free access to the Holy Places and cultural institutions and use of the cemetery on

⁵³ Mohamed Heikal, *Secret Channels: The Inside Story of Arab-Israeli Negotiations* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1996), p.85.

⁵⁴ Adnan Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians & the Hashemite Kingdom in the Middle East Peace Process*, (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999), p.47.

⁵⁵ Kimche, *Both Sides*, p.147.

⁵⁶ Dayan, *Story of My Life*, p. 49; Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, p.186.

the Mount of Olives; resumption of operation of the Latrun pumping station; provision of electricity for the Old City; and resumption of operation of the railroad to Jerusalem.

These arrangements could be regarded as essential for the Jewish holy places and, in one sense, were an important Israeli achievement. East Jerusalem, containing the Arab population and the holy places would be under UN supervision, while the Western sector of the city would be under Israeli control. However, it is important to note that the Jews could not return to the Jewish Quarter in the Old City, nor could the Arabs return to their neighbourhood in West Jerusalem. Nevertheless, Israel's acceptance of this arrangement included access by Jews to the Old City, which was defined as freedom of worship.

The first stage of the agreement was implemented in May, when barriers and fences were built to create the no-man's-land separating the two sides.⁵⁷

However, the arrangements for the holy places and free passage to Mount Scopus were not implemented. Although a long series of direct and indirect, secret and open negotiations took place between the two sides on this matter, there was no tangible result.⁵⁸

This stalemate did not prevent the continuing collaboration in opposing internationalisation. For instance, Israel did not try to put international pressure on Jordan to implement the agreements because this could renew the discussion on internationalisation. The collaboration was emphasised in a secret meeting between King 'Abdullah and the Israeli Foreign Minister Shareet on 5 May when the negotiations on Jerusalem were confined to Jordan and Israel.⁵⁹

Secret negotiations commenced on 27 November 1949 in al-Shūna in East Jordan and continued until the assassination of King 'Abdullah in July 1951. Israel had been represented by Shiloah and Sasson, and Jordan by Samīr al-Rifā'ī, the Minister of the Royal Court, under the direct supervision and frequent visits of King 'Abdullah. From the very beginning of these negotiations, Israel had demanded the annexation of the Jewish Quarter in the Old City right up to the Wailing Wall in

⁵⁷ Dayan, *Story of My Life*, p.152.

⁵⁸ Shlaim, *Collusion*, p.454.

⁵⁹ See *ibid.*, p.449.

addition to the area of Latrun, and the creation of a territorial link with Mount Scopus.⁶⁰

Jordan insisted that any settlement in Jerusalem should be negotiated after Israel had made concessions on Negev, where Jordan would control the southern area so as to gain territorial access to Gaza and to share a frontier with Egypt.⁶¹ The priority of the Israeli Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion, had apparently changed. During the war he was more enthusiastic than other Israeli leaders to give priority to Jerusalem. Now he was concerned about immigration, the economy and security. Therefore, he rejected his aides' advice to agree to Jordan's demand to have a corridor through the south of Negev in exchange for Israel's demands in Jerusalem.⁶² He also rejected military plans to achieve Israel's demands by force.⁶³ This attitude shows that Israel's priority was the creation of the Jewish state, whether it contained the Holy City or not.

On 13 December the UN General Assembly passed a resolution to place Jerusalem under an international regime. Jordan and Israel reacted by accelerating their efforts to reach a speedy agreement. A "paper" was drafted which included the following points:

1. Jerusalem would be partitioned.
2. Israel would have sovereignty over the Jewish Quarter in the Old City up to the Western Wall, as well as secure access to Mount Scopus.
3. Jordan would be granted territory as far as the Bethlehem-Jerusalem road.
4. Jordan would have sovereignty over a corridor from Hebron to the Gaza coast.⁶⁴

The agreement made no headway owing to opposition within the two parties. There were various reasons for the opposition, such as the details of the solution in Gaza, though Jerusalem was not among them. Resistance to internationalisation became the essential motive in continuing negotiations and communication between

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.520.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp.521–523.

⁶² Ibid., p.524.

⁶³ Dayan, *Story of My Life*, p.155.

⁶⁴ Shlaim, *Collusion*, p.527.

the two sides.⁶⁵ The negotiations made no progress and came to a complete halt after the assassination of King ‘Abdullah.

In the following years, the military front between the Israeli and Jordanian armies in Jerusalem remained relatively calm with only a very few exceptions. One of the exceptions occurred in late June and early July 1954, when Israeli guns and mortars were fired in the direction of the holy places in the Old City and the Mount of Olives in the Eastern sector. British officers in the Arab Legion asserted that Israel had initiated these attacks, though for no clear reason.⁶⁶

2.2.4 Redefining West Jerusalem as Jerusalem

The proclamation of the State of Israel on 14 May 1948 did not mention Jerusalem.⁶⁷ This was because any reference to Jerusalem as the capital of Israel would clearly be a violation of the Partition Resolution, which the Jewish Agency had accepted. Although Israel used the word Jerusalem when designating it the capital, it implied West Jerusalem, or, in the early stages, referred to it as “Jewish Jerusalem”, which suggested that the rest of Jerusalem was not Jewish.⁶⁸ Therefore, the official definition of West Jerusalem was Jerusalem.

In addition to the balance of power, there were other reasons why a Jewish state without East Jerusalem was acceptable at that time. The Zionists agreed to the 1947 Partition Plan because the internationalisation of Jerusalem would satisfy the Orthodox Jewish groups, who were still questioning the right of establishing a Jewish state before the coming of the Messiah. Therefore, the internationalisation of Old Jerusalem was acceptable as a solution to the problem of creating a state that at least would not include the Holy City.⁶⁹

However, the acceptance of the war boundaries meant that the Jews would lose access to the holy places. In the late nineteenth century, Orthodox Jews had refused to live outside the Old City, insisting that holy Jerusalem included only the

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.540.

⁶⁶ FO371 /111104, The Arab Legion Headquarters, Amman, July 1954.

⁶⁷ Israel Proclamation of Independence, cited in Abdul Hadi, *Documents on Palestine*, p.p. 185-186.

⁶⁸ For examples see Robert O. Freedman, “Religion, Politics, and the Israeli Election of 1988”, *Middle East Journal*, vol. 43, no. 3 (Summer 1989), pp. 406–408. *Documents on Jerusalem*, pp. 97–98.

area inside its walls. Therefore, it could be expected that the Old City and the access to its holy places would become a hot issue of debate inside Israel. Surprisingly, this was not so.

Moreover, Orthodox Jewish groups were important to the Israeli leadership in the early stages of establishing the state of Israel. The Israeli leadership sought to satisfy them to avoid the trouble that they could provoke such as by questioning the legitimacy of establishing a Jewish state in this era instead of waiting for it to be granted by “the Hand of God”. In addition, the co-operation of these groups was necessary to attract new immigrants to the state, and to gain international financial and political support, especially from the activities among the Diaspora.

East Jerusalem did not seem to be an obstacle. Understanding and agreement were achieved by a formula in which the religious sects were granted rights such as sectarian autonomy and the application of their religious rules to the lives of their members. Sects also benefited from state aid to build their social and religious institutions, and their members enjoyed economic and civilian privileges such as exemption from military service. In return, the Israeli leadership managed to turn the religious groups into organisations actively working to attract immigrants, to collect donations from the Diaspora, and to organise and mobilise the loyalty of the immigrants.⁷⁰

Even Orthodox Jews participated, consciously or unconsciously, in the redefinition of Jerusalem. West Jerusalem became the centre of most, if not all, of their religious groups for the religious immigrants were concentrated here. Thus districts such as Mea Shearim and Bukhara came to be known as the districts of “organised religion in Israel”.⁷¹

The religious sects came to be numbered among the decision-makers, the various sects forming political parties based on religion. An examination of the political blueprints of these groups as well as those of other Israeli parties during the election campaigns between 1948 and 1967 reveals that the focus was on issues such

⁶⁹ Bovis, *Jerusalem Question*, p. 61.

⁷⁰ Eliezer Don-Yehiya, “Religious Leaders in the Political Arena: The Case of Israel”, *Middle East Studies*, vol. 20, no. 2 (April 1948), pp.156 – 164.

as a comparison of the Orthodox Jewish and the secular lifestyles. The Sephardi political parties concentrated on fighting discrimination against them by the Ashkenazim in an attempt to gain a better economic and political status within Israeli society.⁷² As with the secular parties, East Jerusalem did not form part of their manifestos. Clearly, the Israelis were satisfied with the state borders.

In other words, the Israeli government and religious leaders, who were expected to create trouble over East Jerusalem, joined with the rest of the Israeli elite in redefining West Jerusalem as the Jewish Jerusalem. This attitude supports the assumption that holy cities and holy territories can be created and used by those in power to their own political or economic advantage. The construction of a national symbol was essential in the establishment of a nation-state and the mobilisation of its people. However, this construction was in fact another redefinition of Jerusalem, in which claimed historical and religious rights were subordinated to the stability, security and material requirements of the state.

Israel made great efforts to gain international recognition of West Jerusalem as its capital and to create the impression that its control of this sector of the city was irreversible. It achieved the second goal. Gradually the international powers accepted the new structure and that Israel would not agree to any solution that would end its control of the West sector. In 1953, the British Ambassador in Tel Aviv sent the following assessment to the Foreign Office in London:

I doubt whether the Israelis would now accept any formula which did not provide some recognition of their sovereignty over the new city. They might have been prepared to overlook this point three years ago in their desire to reach at least a partial solution to the Jerusalem problem. Since then their attitude has hardened considerably. Jerusalem is now firmly established as the capital of Israel and has assumed great symbolic significance.⁷³

⁷¹ Terence Prittie, *Israel: Miracle in the Desert* (New York & London: Fredrick A. Praeger Publishers, 1967), p. 109; John Gray, *A History of Jerusalem* (London: Robert Hale, 1969), p. 306.

⁷² See M.Z. Frank, "God of Abraham in the State of Israel", *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 5, no. 4 (Autumn 1951), pp. 415–416; Don Peretz, "Reflections on Israel's Fourth Parliamentary Elections", *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 14, no.1 (Winter 1960), p.16; Walter P. Zinner, "Sephardic Communal Organisation in Israel", *The Middle East Journal*", vol. 21, no. 2 (Spring 1967), p. 173; Scott D. Johnston., "Election Politics and Social Change in Israel", *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 16, no.3 (Summer 1962), pp.319–320.

⁷³ FO 371/ 104775.

However, there was only little success in gaining official recognition of West Jerusalem as Israel's capital. For instance, only a few countries opened embassies in Jerusalem. The British Ambassador in Tel Aviv described the Israeli efforts to encourage foreign governments in this direction as follows: "It is a fairly open secret that the Israeli Government has offered inducements to make it financially advantageous for the smaller countries to set up shop in Jerusalem".⁷⁴ (See Chapter Five).

In conclusion, between 1948 and 1967 Israel had coexisted with the fact that East Jerusalem, including the holy sites, was under the control of another power. While giving priority to the construction and security of the state, Israel also developed its own Jerusalem, or as Ian Lustick comments:

What is important to note is that this version of Jerusalem, even without the Old City, could be made politically and emotionally satisfying as a symbolic evocation of Zionism's response to age-old Jewish yearnings for a return to "Zion and Jerusalem".⁷⁵

2.3 Israeli Expansion in Jerusalem: post-1967

Israel won an overwhelming victory in the Six-Day War of June 1967, in which it occupied the remainder of Palestine that had been under the British Mandate, including East Jerusalem. It is important to mention that Israel asserts that its attacking Jerusalem and the West Bank had not been among the war plans, and that this war was launched only against Egypt, but the Jordanian initiative to attack Israel led to the war and the occupation.⁷⁶ However later that month, three laws, on Jerusalem, were passed by the Israeli government:⁷⁷

1. On 27 June 1967, the Law of Israel's Protection of the Holy Places, which imposed a punishment on anyone who "desecrated" or "violated" the holy places. The law could be interpreted as a declaration of Israel's intention to preserve the safety and *status quo* of these sites. In practice, however, it meant that Israel intended to continue occupying at least the area containing them.

⁷⁴ FCO 17/ 956 E.J.W.

⁷⁵ Ian Lustick, "Yerushalayim and al-Quds: Political Catechism and Political Realities", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. 30, no.1 (Autumn 2000), pp.5–21.

⁷⁶ Uri Bar-Joseph, *Israel's National Security Towards the 21st Century* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), p.180. See also, Michael Brecher, "Jerusalem: Israel's Political Decisions, 1947–1977", *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 32, no. 1 (Winter 1978), p.13.

⁷⁷ For the text of these laws see *Documents on Jerusalem*, p.99.

2. On 28 June 1967, the Municipalities Ordinance Amendment, which authorised the Israeli Minister of the Interior to “enlarge, by proclamation, the area of a particular municipality”. This law prepared the ground for the third governmental decision.
3. On 28 June 1967, the Enlargement of the Area of the Municipality of Jerusalem. This was done by annexing East Jerusalem to the Israeli municipal borders of West Jerusalem.

There are reasons to interpret Israel’s annexation of East Jerusalem in the 1967 War, an action that it did not attempt in the 1948 War. Two examples are the balance of power and international relations. For instance, in 1967 Israel was enjoying special American protection embodied in the UN resolutions (see Chapter Five). Meanwhile, the Soviet Union showed little inclination to take part in the war and support the Arab regimes. Moreover, in 1948 there was the Israeli fear that occupying the Old City could result in losing the whole of Jerusalem. Now, such a loss was inconceivable because the international powers and the Arab regimes were concerned with eradicating the results of the war. Therefore, the maximum possible loss was the restoration of the pre-war boundaries.

The decisions made by the Israeli government in June 1967 were aimed at strengthening the country’s position at any future negotiations. They included a guarantee that the pre-1967 situation of denying Jews access to holy places would not be repeated, and that the holy places would remain largely under Israeli control. The decisions also satisfied the Israeli expansionists who were seeking to shift the borders for ideological reasons.⁷⁸

However, in 1967 the Israeli government avoided ideological discourse, at least on the international level. Since the Israeli decisions took the form of administrative measures, some scholars argue that there were no Israeli laws nor resolution adopted in 1967 to annex East Jerusalem to Israel. This argument could be supported by Israeli official statements, such as a letter sent by Abba Eban, the then Israeli Foreign Minister, to the UN Secretary-General, U Thant, in which he asserted:

⁷⁸ See Elizabeth Monroe, “The West Bank: Palestinian or Israeli?” *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 31 (Autumn, 1977), pp. 399, 404.

“The term ‘annexation’ ... is out of place. The measures adopted relate to the integration of Jerusalem in the administrative and municipal spheres.”⁷⁹

Nevertheless, other scholars assert that the Israeli laws at the time were concerned with annexation because they were linked to an earlier, self-explanatory law, namely, the 1948 Area, Jurisdiction and Power Ordinance, which states:

Any law applying to the whole of the state of Israel shall be deemed to apply to the whole of the area including both the area of the State of Israel and any part of Palestine which the Minister of Defence has defined by proclamation as being held by the Defence Army of Israel.⁸⁰

In this context the Israeli laws and proclamations of 1967 form a declaration of Israeli sovereignty over the expanded Jerusalem. Nevertheless, it was clear that international pressure could effect changes in Israel’s treatment of the city. This proves yet again that on certain occasions Israel had to act according to political realities rather than ideological rhetoric.

However, Israel’s denial of the annexations was abandoned once it was internationally convenient to do so. For instance, in Eban’s autobiography – published in the mid-1970s – the author was now saying, in contrast to his 1967 statements: “On June 27 the Israeli Parliament voted in favour of adding Jerusalem to the area of Israeli sovereignty.”⁸¹ Although his autobiography contained detailed documentation of his activities during the war, there was no indication that the Israeli government’s decisions were purely administrative, as he had alleged in 1967.

2.3.1 Israeli Policy in Jerusalem: post-1967

Israel’s concern after the war was to render inconceivable the pre-war borders and structure and to exclude East Jerusalem from any future settlement. The Israeli plans were clear to observers from the very beginning. For instance, on 2 August 1967 a confidential letter sent from W. Morris, the head of the Eastern Department in the British Foreign Office, to R. Beaumont, the British Ambassador in Iraq, described Israel’s aim as follows:

⁷⁹ Terry Rampel, “The Significance of Israel’s Partial Annexation of East Jerusalem”, *Middle East Journal*, vol. 51, no. 4 (Autumn 1997), p. 521.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.521.

⁸¹ Eban, *Autobiography*, p.438.

It has been the Israeli objective since they occupied the West Bank to get it accepted as widely as possible that, irrespective of the merits of the case, the *fait accompli* is irreversible, the fate of Jerusalem is not negotiable, and the whole subject almost undiscussable. That (a) no one is in a position physically to remove them from the Old City, and (b) they can and will resist all other forms of pressure.⁸²

2.3.1.1 FACTS ON THE GROUND

Israel worked to strengthen the Jewish presence in the city and weaken that of the Palestinians, and to absorb East Jerusalem into Israel with a new cultural, social and political identity. This was to be accomplished by, for example, replacing the Arab institutions in the city with Israeli, and by increasing the ratio of Jews to Palestinians. Such a policy was important to create a new image for the city matching the Israeli ideological and historical discourse about the city's identity, and at the same time creating a material situation to prevent a return to the pre-1967 situation.

In 1967 the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem to the Israeli municipality was accompanied by the extension of the city's eastern boundary to increase the area of 6.5 square kilometres formerly under Jordanian rule to 70.9 square kilometres. The whole of Jerusalem, East and West, now covered an area of 108.5 square kilometres (see Map 3). This and a later extension (in 1993 to 123 square kilometres)⁸³ were designed to annex the maximum area of land with the minimum number of Palestinians. Therefore, densely populated towns and villages that had historically comprised parts of the district of Jerusalem were excluded from these extensions. Of the 66,000 Palestinians estimated by the Israelis in 1967 to be residents of Jerusalem, 44,000 were living within the original Jordanian boundaries, which covered an area of 6.4 square kilometres.⁸⁴

The ratio of inhabitants within the new boundaries of Jerusalem in 1967 was 74.2 per cent Jews (1,97,000 residents) to 25.8 per cent Palestinians (686,000 residents) (see Appendix 1).

The Israeli aim in the years following the annexation was to increase the proportion of Jews in Jerusalem to 80–90 per cent.⁸⁵

⁸² FCO 17/251, 2 August 1967.

⁸³ Klein, *Contested*, p.19.

⁸⁴ LAW, "*The Demographic Imperative in Jerusalem*", Jerusalem, 2000, p.6.

⁸⁵ B'TSELEM, *Policy of Discrimination*, p.45.

By 1973 it was clear that the plan to increase the proportion of Jews was not working. So instead, the Israeli government recommended that the current “demographic balance” between Jews and Palestinians should be maintained. The recommendation was based on the 1972 ratio of 73.5 per cent Jews to 26.5 per cent Palestinians.⁸⁶ Below are listed the main policies implemented to create the new Israeli-style Jerusalem.

PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT

The Israeli policies to increase the ratio of Jews in the city included granting them privileges that were not available to the Palestinians or even to the Jewish residents of other cities. In 1980 the Jerusalem Basic Law was passed, according to which Jews could buy their homes with low-interest or interest-free mortgages, enjoy high-quality services that were heavily subsidised and tax exemptions.⁸⁷

PALESTINIAN HOUSING

Conversely, Israel imposed restrictions on the granting of planning permission to Palestinians to build their needed homes. In 1968 Israel began to expropriate Palestinian-owned land inside the expanded East Jerusalem. Most of the land was owned by private individuals. Between 1967 and 1995, five major expropriation orders had been issued, affecting a total area of 23 square kilometres, or over one-third of the area annexed to the city since 1967.⁸⁸

Israel also applied the Absentees’ Property Law of 1950 to East Jerusalem. According to this law, most, if not all, of the Palestinians in East Jerusalem were considered to be absentees. The legal definition of an absentee was a Palestinian individual who owned property in Israeli territory, or a national or citizen of an Arab state that had engaged in war with the state of Israel. As one scholar pointed out, had the law been applied fully, “all Palestinian inhabitants of East Jerusalem who owned

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ LAW, “*Demographic Imperative*”, p.8.

⁸⁸ Meron Benvenisti, *City of Stone: The Hidden History of Jerusalem*, trans. Maxine Kaufman Nunn (London: University of California Press, 1996), p.113.

property in the city and held Jordanian passports would have been required to cede title to their property to the state.”⁸⁹ However, the law was applied only partly.

To prevent Palestinians from building their homes, another strategy of land control was implemented under the pretext of zoning lands as Green Areas, where building was prohibited. Of the land covered by East Jerusalem, 44 per cent was classified as Green Areas. Practically speaking, the aim of this classification was to preserve the land for planned settlements. Ramot, Reches Shu’fāṭ and Har Homa are examples of settlements built on land originally classified as Green Areas.⁹⁰

Theoretically, the Palestinians had the right to build on a total of 7.4 per cent of the annexed land in Jerusalem. In practice, however, this was very difficult because of the other obstacles to acquiring planning permission. For instance, an application for planning permission costs a Palestinian nearly US\$20,000 and takes up to five years to be granted.⁹¹ The result is that 88 per cent of the housing units that have been built in Jerusalem since 1967 have been allocated to Jews.⁹² This is in addition to the policy of justified house demolition such as the removal of an illegal building.⁹³

SETTLEMENTS

The building of Jewish settlements in Jerusalem was the main instrument for creating the new Israeli identity of the city. Construction began in 1968, and by 1995, 64,000 apartments had been completed.⁹⁴ The settlements in general have been designed as an obstacle to any surrender of East Jerusalem.

2.3.1.2 THE SUCCESS OF THE ISRAELI POLICIES

Evaluating the success of the Israeli policies inside Jerusalem could be controversial, for although there has been success in some areas, there has also been a clear failure in others. What could be regarded as success from one point of view could also be regarded as a failure from another. This situation could be described as relative

⁸⁹ Rampel, “The Significance”, p.527.

⁹⁰ LAW, “*Land & Settlement Policy in Jerusalem*”, Jerusalem: January 2000, p.14.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17; and *Jerusalem Quarterly File*, Issue 1,1998.

⁹² B’TSELEM, “Policy of Discrimination”, p.8.

⁹³ LAW, “*Demographic Imperative*”, p.16.

success or relative failure.

For instance, it could be argued from the statistical point of view that the Israeli demographic policy failed in Jerusalem because the targeted ratios of inhabitants were not achieved. Despite all the earlier Israeli policies, the Palestinians clearly managed to increase their numbers in the city. The growth in the Jewish population between 1967 and 1998 was 119 per cent, whereas that of the Palestinian population was 192 per cent.

The situation looks even bleaker when the demographic movement inside Israeli society itself is borne in mind. It is estimated that a quarter of a million Jews left Jerusalem between 1980 and 1998.⁹⁵ It is particularly indicative when the sociological aspect of the demographic structure of Jerusalem is examined. Polarisation already existed in Israeli society, especially between the Orthodox and secular Jews. The bulk of those who left the city were the young, secular and financially better-off members of Israeli society. Their exodus threatened to transform Jerusalem into a community of elderly *Haredim* (religious adherents).⁹⁶ This situation could, in turn, change the city from a symbol of national unity into a centre of internal division.

From another point of view, however, Israeli policies could be interpreted as successful. For instance, although the ratios of inhabitants in the whole city were not achieved, it is important to note the Israeli achievement in East Jerusalem. By 1994, Jewish settlers in this sector outnumbered the Arab population at nearly 190,000 to 180,000.⁹⁷

Nevertheless, it should be remembered that all these statistics are based on the extended boundaries of Jerusalem. To accept them as a point of discussion or negotiation is already an Israeli triumph in itself, not only because of the new demographic balance in East Jerusalem but also because further alterations to the maps by the Israelis are likely to be accepted. If new maps were to be accepted as the basis of statistical analysis and negotiation, all the present statistics and their political implications would be meaningless. Here one could refer to another geographical

⁹⁴ Benvenisti, *City of Stone*, p.162.

⁹⁵ See LAW, "Demographic Imperative", p.10.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.10–11.

⁹⁷ Benvenisti, *City of Stone*, p.162.

definition of the city as put forward by the PA after 1994. According to the Palestinian administrative division, the Governorate of Jerusalem should include thirty villages, camps and populated Bedouin areas that were excluded from the Israeli municipal boundaries. This division meant that the Palestinian census of 1999 showed another 113,557 Palestinians living inside the Governorate – who were not recognised as such by the Israeli government – and thereby increasing the Palestinian population within the city to 323,766.⁹⁸

At the same time it was observed that East Jerusalem remained different from the West sector. There were two cultures, two types of urban design and two levels of lifestyle, economy and services. In addition to the Palestinian resistance to annexation this was partly also due to the Israeli method of administration. Teddy Kollek, the Israeli Mayor of Jerusalem between the 1960s and the early 1990s observed this difference between the two parts and interpreted it in an interview on 10 October 1990:

For Jewish Jerusalem I did something in the past 25 years. For East Jerusalem? Nothing! What did I do? Nothing! Sidewalks? No thing. Cultural Institution? Not one. Yes, we installed a sewerage system for them and improved the water supply. Do you know why? Do you think it was for their good, for their welfare? Forget it. There were some cases of cholera there, and the Jews were afraid that they would catch it, so we installed sewerage and water system against cholera....⁹⁹

In other words, the policy discrimination aimed at strengthening the Jewish presence in the city had misfired. All it had done was to maintain the distinction between “Jewish Jerusalem” and what the Israelis used to call East (not Arab) Jerusalem.

2.3.2 The Ideological Discourse

If the important themes of Israeli discourse since the 1970s are examined, it can be easily stated that the main Israeli slogan for Jerusalem was that it was the non-negotiable united and eternal capital of Israel. This description was frequently expressed in stirring words such as “the capital of a sovereign Israel ... a united city

⁹⁸ See Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Jerusalem 1999, *Statistical Year Book*, no. 2 (Ramallah: 2000), pp.27 & 163.

⁹⁹ Cited in *Documents on Jerusalem.*, p.115.

which will never again be torn apart.”¹⁰⁰

History and religion have been used not only to assert a special kind of ideological relationship between the Jewish nation and the West and East sectors of Jerusalem and therefore to justify annexation and exclusive sovereignty, but also to justify the application of hostile policies against the Palestinians in the city. Meron Benvenisti, a former Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem and a well-known politician and historian, has written several volumes on Jerusalem. He states: “The Israeli government imposed Israeli law, justice, and administration on Jerusalem, establishing permanent operating procedures that most Israelis consider non-negotiable, except on marginal matters.”¹⁰¹ Then he tries to explain that this ideology justifies the policies against the Palestinians: “The Israelis have not sought legitimisation from the people they annexed ... they demanded compliance, not consent.”¹⁰² He continues: “The Israelis needed only self-legitimation, ... all Jerusalem belonged to them by historical right.”¹⁰³

Benvenisti then raises the following argument:

Of course, it is possible to argue that a democratic society would never annex a hostile population against its will. A democratic society will not persevere in a situation of imposed rule, but will grant the subject population the right of self-determination.

There are, however, situations – and the situation in Jerusalem is a clear example – in which a democratic society is motivated and acts in accordance with imperatives that it considers absolute and of greater importance than democratic-universal values. For the Israelis, Jerusalem is fundamental to their identity as a nation and country, and their control of it symbolises their control of their own destiny and their ability to determine the future. They see these values as absolute, so any concession is perceived as a threat to their survival as a nation.... Their superior rights as a collective, their unilateral approach and advancement of their own interests – and, therefore, discrimination against the dominated population – are based on a feeling that their demands regarding Jerusalem exclude all other rights, national or democratic.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ “Statement by Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 21 August 1980”, cited in *Documents on Jerusalem*, p. 111. See also other similar official statements in various years: pp.113, 115, 117 & 118, etc.; and see Klein, *Contested City*, pp.92 & 94.

¹⁰¹ Meron Benvenisti, *Intimate Enemies: Jews and Arabs in a Shared Land*, (Berkeley ; London: University of California Press, 1995), p.30.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.31.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.32.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

This description gives a clear message that Jerusalem is a zero-sum issue, and Israel's relationship with the city is beyond rational calculations: it is ideological, emotional, overwhelming and uncontrolled. This view is intended to convince internal powers, adversaries, and international powers that any Israeli concessions on this matter are inconceivable.

Israel has been developing this discourse since its occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967. The aim has been to win international acceptance that the alleged Jewish significance of the city creates and justifies the Israelis' right of annexation.

This type of discourse was not the same before the 1967 war. There was no such claim of a right to subjugate other people using ideological-historical and religious justifications. The new discourse largely reflects the post-1967 balance of power.

2.3.3 Israel and the Political Settlement: 1967–2000

When the Israeli Cabinet adopted the decision to occupy the whole of Jerusalem, there was a discussion about the future of the city, especially the Old City. At this early stage, at least two ministers – H.M. Shapira (Interior) and Aranne (Education) – said that they would support internationalisation, and no further suggestions were made.¹⁰⁵ This is an indicator that at that early stage annexation was not the only choice.

In contrast, during the aftermath of victory, mainstream opinion in Israel saw to it that Jerusalem would not be included in any future withdrawal. Instead, Israeli officials promoted municipal and religious solutions, although on some occasions their positions were cloaked with ambiguity.

Among the municipal solutions was one put forward in 1968 by Meron Benvenisti, the current aide to the then Mayor of Jerusalem. He suggested a dual administration “with dual sovereignty [which] would be similar to that of the Greater London Council”. The city would be divided into boroughs or sub-municipalities with an overall, federal or higher municipality which would have defined areas of responsibility and authority.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ For the Cabinet meeting, see Brecher, “Israel's Political Decisions...”, p.23.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p.29.

In 1976, Ya'acov Hazan, the Mapam Party leader, outlined a similar plan. Although Jerusalem would continue to be the united capital of Israel, a subsidiary township would be established and administered by the municipal government. Meanwhile, the Old City would remain an “inseparable” part of Israel, managed by a council representing the three religions and their sects. According to the plan, Israel would guarantee Muslims world-wide the right of pilgrimage to their holy places. In addition, if the Jewish religious establishments permitted Jews to enter the Temple Mount, a special section would be set aside for Jewish worship.¹⁰⁷

Another plan, which was suggested by Yigal Allon in the same year, was based on “a religious and not a political solution” because Jerusalem was considered holy by the three great religions. He said that a “special status could be granted to the representatives of the various faiths in the places holy to them”, and that it might be possible “to base the municipal structure of the city upon sub-districts that take ethnic and religious criteria into account.”¹⁰⁸

On many occasions Israel statements regarding Jerusalem were deliberately cloaked with ambiguity. This strategy was used to avoid further international pressure and protest against its policies in the city as well as to counter accusations of evading a political settlement.

A report by the Foreign office, Near Eastern Department noticed this ambiguity, for it stated that when Abba Eban was asked at the Royal Institute of International Affairs on 16 December 1970 “what sort of arrangements Israel might accept in Jerusalem, he did not give a full answer”:

He started by saying that the Israelis regarded the unification of the city as irreversible. Unity was the normal condition of a city. But the Israelis did not seek to exercise exclusive control over the Islamic and Christian holy places, but rather a control with corollary access agreements for all.¹⁰⁹

Another example highlights this deliberate ambiguity in a more practical sense. In 1970, the then Israeli Foreign Minister, Gideon Rafael, sent through a Romanian official a message to President Jamāl ‘Abd Al-Nāṣir of Egypt, asserting that Israel was prepared to discuss all issues with Egypt without preconditions, and

¹⁰⁷ The Archive of the Royal Committee for Jerusalem Affairs, Amman (Arabic trans.).

¹⁰⁸ The Allon Plan – Israeli Foreign Minister Yigal Allon on his Plans for Peace, October 1976; cited in Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol. I, p.243.

would make a new offer once negotiations were under way. He pointed out that Israel would not annex the occupied territory because this could dilute (by including the Arab population) the Jewish identity of Israel. Israel would offer solutions to all the problems, although it did not want to show its hand in advance of negotiations.¹¹⁰ Nāṣir's response showed resentment of Israel's refusal to make an open and clear-cut offer. He also emphasised that Egypt's aim was Israel's total withdrawal, including from Jerusalem, and that no solution leaving Jerusalem as part of a Jewish state would be acceptable.¹¹¹ Nāṣir's response clearly indicates the deliberate ambiguity displayed by Israel on different issues, especially Jerusalem.

This kind of prevarication still avoided the hard-line attitude in the face of the resolutions that continued to be issued by the UN against Israel policies, in addition to criticism by governments world-wide (see Chapter Five). However, the Israeli-Egyptian negotiations formed the first real analysis of the Israeli position.

2.3.3.1 THE ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN NEGOTIATIONS: 1977-1980

The Israeli Egyptian negotiations, which were launched after the visit by President Anwar Al-Sādāt of Egypt in November 1977, resulted in the Camp David Agreement. They are considered to be the first public, official and direct negotiations that aimed to reach a permanent peaceful settlement between Israel and an Arab country. They created the opportunity of analysing the Israeli attitude in practice and in real negotiations.

The Israeli attitude concerning Jerusalem was changeable during the negotiations. It was different from the normal pattern, in which the parties to the dispute display a hard-line stance at the beginning, and then gradually become more flexible as the discussions progress. In contrast, although Israel's initial attitude showed possible flexibility, by the end of the negotiations this had changed to an explicit, hard-line undiplomatic position.

A secret meeting was held in Morocco in September 1977 between the Israeli Foreign Minister, Moshe Dayan, and President Sādāt's emissary and Deputy Prime

¹⁰⁹ FCO17/1365.

¹¹⁰ Heikal, *Secret Channels*, p.155.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

Minister, Ḥassan Toḥāmī. The latter demanded that Israel present a constructive programme that took into account Arab sensitivities regarding Jerusalem. Moshe Dayan's answer, as reported later, was that regarding

the Settlement on the Golan Heights, the Western Wall, and the Jewish Quarter, [of the Old City], the Mount of Olives and the [Hebrew] University, and new population centres [in the southern Gaza Strip and northern Sinai]...A solution to the problem of the Holy City could be easy and satisfactory to all parties.¹¹²

Menachem Klein comments that Dayan did not insist on the annexation to Israel of "Arab East Jerusalem" or of the new Jewish neighbourhoods built on the eastern side of the city, and that "Dayan stood firm on Israel's religious rights in East Jerusalem, yet he refrained from naming the Temple Mount as a holy site for the Jews." Another observer said: "Dayan made no distinction between the new Jewish neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem and the Israeli settlement in the Golan Heights and in eastern Sinai, even though their status was different under Israeli law."¹¹³

The visit to Jerusalem by President al-Sādāt of Egypt and his speech in the Israeli Knesset on 21 November 1977 was interpreted positively by the Israelis as his recognition of the city's status as the capital of Israel.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, al-Sādāt clearly stated: "We insist on complete withdrawal from these [Arab] territories [occupied in 1967], including Arab Jerusalem"¹¹⁵ the Israeli Prime Minister, Menachem Begin's response was: "Everything must be negotiated and can be negotiated".¹¹⁶ So Israel did not declare then that Jerusalem was nonnegotiable.

When negotiations began in earnest, Israel displayed a different stance. It wanted to exclude Jerusalem from the negotiations and refused any change in the city's situation except a religious solution. As Begin stated before the Israeli Knesset on 28 December 1977, his plan for the Autonomy of the Occupied Territories included a provision for the holy places of the three religions in Jerusalem, and that a

¹¹² See Klein, *Contested*, p. 85.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp.85 & 86.

¹¹⁴ Benvenisti, *City of Stone*, p. 40.

¹¹⁵ Anwar Sadat of Egypt speech to the Israeli Knesset, cited in *Documents on Jerusalem*, p.148.

¹¹⁶ Klein, *Contested*, p.87.

special proposal would be drawn up to include the guarantee of freedom of access to members of all the faiths to the shrines holy to them.¹¹⁷

Even at this stage Israeli officials were suggesting compromises that would allow another political power in Jerusalem. Begin's Assistant, Eliahu Ben-Elissar, revealed later that the Israeli Prime Minister was thinking of a "temporary proposal", in which one representative from each neighbouring country and from other countries such as Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Iran, in addition to representatives of the proposed administrative council for Palestinian autonomy, would form an organisation to administer the Muslim holy sites. Begin informed President Carter of the US of his ideas, and when Carter asked if this meant giving the holy sites a status similar to that of the Vatican, Begin replied, "We will consider all kinds of possibilities. We have not decided yet."¹¹⁸ If we recall that the Vatican is a sovereign state, we can say that until then, Begin had not refused a solution that would alter the Israel's political status in the city.

At the Camp David talks, which began on 6 September 1978 and near the end of the negotiations, the Egyptian President made several proposals concerning the city. However, he was faced with an adamant Israeli rejection of any alteration in the city's *status quo* or even its mention by name in the text of the agreement. The Israelis also refused the symbolic gestures that were suggested by the American President, such as flying Islamic flags over the Islamic holy places.¹¹⁹

On 17 September, the last day of the Summit, the Americans again raised the question of Jerusalem. In contrast to his initial diplomatic manner, Begin responded with frustration and recalled his refusal to include Jerusalem in the agreement or to discuss the issue, and threatened to leave the conference.¹²⁰

As a result, the Israelis succeeded in imposing their wishes: Jerusalem was not mentioned in the agreement. Instead, letters were exchanged between the American, Israeli and Egyptian leaders regarding the city, though these were merely a repetition of the declared positions of the three parties. (see Chapter Four) The

¹¹⁷ Begin's Autonomy Plan, cited in Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 1, p.247.

¹¹⁸ Klein, *Contested*, p.88.

¹¹⁹ Benvenisti, *City of Stone*, p. 40.

¹²⁰ See Klein, *Contested City*, p. 92.

Israeli letter that was addressed to the US President said: “the Government of Israel decreed in July 1967 that Jerusalem is one city indivisible, the Capital of the State of Israel”.¹²¹

These changes in the Israeli attitude could be explained by overlapping factors. More importantly, however, was the actual procedure of the negotiations. The imposition of the Israeli veto on the issue of Jerusalem at the beginning of the negotiations could have aborted the whole negotiations. The continuation of the negotiations at Camp David and the postponement of discussions about Jerusalem were important for two reasons:

1. It became clear that Egypt was going to sign a bilateral agreement, whatever the Arab position.
2. It would have been difficult for Egypt as well as the US to allow the agreement to fail at this stage, even over a question such as that of Jerusalem.

Therefore the situation of these two countries was the main reason for the change in the Israeli attitude.

This is yet another example of how the status of Jerusalem and Israel’s attitude could be used as tools in conventional political calculations and manoeuvres, capable of showing flexibility as well as obduracy according to the circumstances.

The hard-line Israeli attitude was combined with the acceleration in settlement building in Jerusalem. Between 1980 and 1985 there were 53,800 new Jewish settlers in the expanded Jerusalem. This policy was important in pre-empting the approaching negotiations with Egypt on the future of the occupied territories. It was now also possible to implement such a policy because American protection of Israel had been strengthened in the UN after the Camp David Summit. President Carter had promised Menachem Begin that the issue of Jerusalem would be confined to negotiations and that the aim would be the minimisation of the international role (see Chapter Five).

Accordingly, in 1980 Israel passed the Basic Law of Jerusalem, which stated explicitly: “Jerusalem, complete and united, is the Capital of Israel.”¹²² Therefore,

¹²¹ The letter text, cited in Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 1, p.253.

¹²² Israel’s Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel; cited in *Documents on Jerusalem*, p. 110.

what Israel could not declare explicitly in 1967 became possible after the Camp David Accords.

In the 1979 negotiations with Egypt on the interim period of Palestinian self-rule, Israel adamantly refused to discuss Jerusalem. Nevertheless, at this stage the Israeli position was not automatically unanimous. The then Israeli Foreign Minister, Moshe Dayan, did not object initially to the demand to include the Palestinians of the city in the election of the autonomous authority. However, the Israeli Cabinet rejected the demand, considering it to be a kind of recognition of Jerusalem as part of the occupied territories.¹²³

2.3.3.2 AFTER CAMP DAVID: 1980–1990

Jerusalem was among the reasons for the collapse of these negotiations before the assassination of President al-Sādāt on 6 October 1981 and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June 1982.

After the evacuation of the PLO from Lebanon, political efforts were renewed to launch a peace process in the region. In the early 1980s, Israel rejected several American, Soviet and Arab peace plans. Both the suggested international conference and the participation of the PLO were the main justifications for the Israeli rejection of the negotiations.¹²⁴

The Israeli view of a peace process, as presented by Prime Minister Shimon Peres on 10 June and 21 October 1985, was based on two requirements. Both of them concerned the procedure of the negotiations, emphasising the rejection of an international conference and the PLO,¹²⁵ while the details of a solution were to be left to the discussions.

The 1987 Intifada precipitated new American and Arab peace proposals. As explained in Chapter One, the Israelis realised that East Jerusalem was still far from being considered part of Israel, and that it remained a political centre for the Palestinians. However, the years up to the Gulf War in 1991 were consumed in

¹²³ Benvenisti, *City of Stone*, p.42.

¹²⁴ See David Horowitz (ed.), *Yitzhak Rabin, Soldier of Peace* (London: Peter Halban, 1996), p.80.

¹²⁵ Madiha Rashid al-Madfai, *Jordan, The United States and the Middle East Peace Process, 1974–1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.186–187.

discussing the same questions of the procedure of the negotiations and their attendance by the parties concerned. Israel continued to reject an international peace conference, demanding instead direct bilateral negotiations. It also rejected any negotiations with the PLO.¹²⁶

On 14 May 1989 the Israeli government put forward a proposal for a political settlement. It reconfirmed the Camp David agreements between Egypt and Israel as a valid basis for a peace process in the region by direct negotiation, and renewed the Israeli rejection of a Palestinian state and any discussion with the PLO. Not a single word was mentioned regarding Jerusalem, as if to emphasise that the city was not part of the negotiations.¹²⁷

Pressure from the Intifada and the international community to begin a peace process persuaded some figures inside Israel to consider the details of a solution. Different influential groups in Israel discussed a possible solution to the question of Jerusalem. The leader of the Labour Party, Shimon Peres, declared in 1990 that he himself and his party acknowledged that an overwhelming majority of Israeli Jews supported the idea of a "united city" serving as Israel's capital. At the same time he pointed out that the geographical definition of the city, that is, its boundaries, were subject to government decision, and could be changed accordingly.¹²⁸ The significance of this statement was that it referred to the geographical definition of Jerusalem, and raised the issue that it was the boundaries of the expanded Jerusalem that were changeable, not those based on religious or historic tradition.

Also in 1990, the members of the Knesset passed a resolution reaffirming the following statement: "United Jerusalem is under Israeli sovereignty and there will be no negotiations on its unity and status." Of the 120 members, only 45 voted for the resolution, whereas 71 either absented themselves from the balloting or abstained, and 4 voted against it.¹²⁹ The resolution reflected the fear that the status of the city was changeable and that there was no consensus on its future. The result of the vote

¹²⁶ See the communications between Israel and both Egypt and the US on these topics in Heikal, *Secret Channels*, pp.384, 385.

¹²⁷ David Makovsky, *Making Peace with the PLO, The Rabin Government's Road to the Oslo Accord*, (Colorado and Oxford: Westview Press 1996), pp.185–189.

¹²⁸ Ian Lustick, *Unsettled states, disputed lands: Britain and Ireland, France and Algeria, Israel and the West Bank-Gaza* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p.382.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

revealed that there was a foundation for these fears. Even more revealing was that serious negotiations on Jerusalem could lead to a major review of the Israeli attitude towards the city.

2.3.3.3 THE MADRID NEGOTIATIONS AND THE OSLO ACCORDS

2.3.3.3.1 THE MADRID AND WASHINGTON NEGOTIATIONS

It was in 1991 during the aftermath of the Gulf War that the US resumed its efforts to reach a settlement in the Middle East, and it succeeded in creating the Madrid Conference formula. According to such a formula this conference would be only ceremonial, while the real negotiations would be later on a bilateral level for the bilateral issues between Israel and its Arab neighbouring countries and multilateral for regional issues. Israel, under pressure from the administration of the US President George Bush, attended the conference and started the negotiations.¹³⁰

Israel demanded that Jerusalem should not be mentioned in the invitations to the conference. The US solved this difficulty by not mentioning it in the invitation sent to Israel, but including a reference to it in the letter sent to the Palestinians. Israel then imposed the condition that no Palestinian holding an Israeli/Jerusalem identity card was to be part of the negotiator delegation.¹³¹ The meaning of such condition was that Israel did not recognise the Palestinians of Jerusalem as part of the negotiations, which could imply that Jerusalem itself was not to be the subject of discussion.

During the Washington negotiations, Jerusalem emerged quickly as a subject of dispute, although Israel refused to discuss it. By 1992, and after the Labour victory in the Israeli election, the ban on participation in the delegation by Arab residents of Jerusalem was lifted. So Fayṣal al-Ḥusaynī became a directly participating member of the delegation. This was the result of the Labour view that the Palestinians of Jerusalem could have a certain role in the negotiations. For instance, the Labour government accepted that the Palestinian residents of the city could vote in the elections for Palestinian autonomy but not stand as candidates for election.¹³²

¹³⁰ *Middle East International*, 25 October 1991.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Klein, *Contested*, p.134.

5.3.3.3.2 OSLO ACCORDS

The negotiations did not appear to be serious until the Oslo rounds were announced in 1993, and they emerged as the real thing. Israel was represented in the early stages by academics so that the Israeli government could assert that they had acted without any official mandate if no agreement were reached or if news were leaked to the media. (See chapter One).

Israel's position during these negotiations, as listed in Appendix 2, developed in the following way:

1. The Israeli representatives tried to persuade the Palestinians not to mention Jerusalem in the text of any agreement. In exchange, they offered to construct thousands of housing units, as well as implement other "confidence-building measures" including granting permission for the establishment of offices for foreign diplomats in East Jerusalem.
2. When the Palestinians insisted on dealing with the question of Jerusalem, the Israeli delegation demanded that the discussion be postponed to the next phase, which could be during the interim period.
3. The Israelis tried to persuade the Palestinians not to define the problems of the final status in the text of the interim agreement. In this way, Jerusalem would not be mentioned explicitly; instead the text would confirm that either side would be entitled to raise any issue.
4. During the negotiations the Israeli attitude varied towards reference to Jerusalem in regard to the elections. For instance, in the eighth round on 27 June 1993, the Israelis demanded that Jerusalem should not be mentioned other than in connection with the elections. Then in the ninth round, on 6 July, they refused to mention it even in that context.

The fact that at the beginning of the negotiations the Israeli representatives offered in exchange for excluding Jerusalem from the agreement to ease certain demographic and political restrictions affecting the Palestinian residents of Jerusalem contradicted the Israeli policy of transforming East Jerusalem into a part of the Jewish city. Clearly, the Israeli negotiators realised that Israel would need to change its attitude towards the Palestinians. It would have to acknowledge, at least

implicitly, their presence in Jerusalem as well as their political role and connections with Palestinian national bodies. At the same time the Israeli negotiators had to bear in mind the discourse on East Jerusalem which had been developed in Israel since 1967. To move too far from it would have risked a strong reaction from the political opposition.

The negotiators pointed out that the government could collapse as a result of an agreement over Jerusalem. Although this statement might have been true, it was a tactic that was to be expected from the Israelis in negotiations. Since 1967 Israeli action and ideological discourse concerning the historical rights over the city had been part of the strategy aimed at excluding Jerusalem from any possible political settlement. The Palestinian acceptance of dealing with Jerusalem on a different basis from the rest of the occupied territory meant that the Israeli policy had been at least partly successful.

Nevertheless, Jerusalem was eventually mentioned in the signed accords, and the Israeli position throughout the text can be analysed as follows:

1. Israel accepted that Jerusalem was to be a negotiable issue in the final status negotiations. It abandoned its previous refusal to discuss the matter.
2. Israel accepted: “[The] Palestinians of Jerusalem who live there will have the right to participate in the election process, according to an agreement between the two sides.” The significance of this acceptance is that the Israeli side had previously seen such participation as recognition of Jerusalem as part of the occupied territories.
3. In the letter from Shimon Peres to the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Israel declared: “[The] Palestinian institutions of East Jerusalem and the interests and well-being of the Palestinians of East Jerusalem are of great importance and will be preserved.” Although the letter was secret, it was publicised by the Palestinian President, ‘Arafat.¹³³

The letter did not contain any specific pledges, nor imply the ending of the Israeli closure in the city. Nor did the letter guarantee that Israel would not use the interim period to implement new policies in Jerusalem. But the letter was sent secretly to avoid arousing violent opposition in Israel. This fact raises yet more

doubts about the affirmation of consensus inside Israel on Jerusalem, for it appears that the Israeli plan for the city could provoke a dispute.

2.3.3.4 ISRAEL-JORDAN AGREEMENTS

Jerusalem was mentioned not only in Israel's agreements with the PLO but also in those with Jordan in July 1994 (see Chapter Three). Israel asserted (1) that it respected Jordan's present special role in the Islamic holy shrines in Jerusalem; and (2) that it would give the Jordanian historic role in these shrines "high priority" in the negotiations on the permanent status agreement.

Meron Benvenisti analysed Israel's motives in accepting this agreement as follows:

The Israelis were delighted to oblige: it helped them to distinguish between the religion aspect of Jerusalem, on which they are flexible, and the sovereignty issue, on which they are not. In addition, they knew that by granting Ḥusayn's wish, they would inflame Palestinian-Jordanian rivalry, which indeed occurred.¹³⁴

However, the Israeli position in the agreements signed in 1993 and 1994 with the PLO and Jordan would be clarified in their application.

2.3.3.5 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OSLO ACCORDS

Israeli policy after the Oslo accords was a clear example of how the truce and interim period could be exploited to implement fresh policies so as to influence the final stage of the conflict or the settlement. Israel imposed drastic measures affecting settlers, and the population and administration of the city, and escalated its policies against the Palestinian residents.

Before Oslo, as part of its demographic policy, the Israeli government used to withdraw Jerusalem identity cards from Palestinians for several reasons. The average number of cards withdrawn was 125 annually. Between 1994 and 1998 the average number rose to 545.2 annually, affecting nearly 2,500 citizens every year.¹³⁵ This

¹³³ Ibid., p.120.

¹³⁴ Benvenisti, *Intimate*, p.229.

¹³⁵ See Michael Dumper, *The Politics of Sacred Space: The Old City of Jerusalem in the Middle East Conflict* (Boulder, Co. & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), p. 30; PA formal web site (in Arabic): www.pna.net.

meant an increase of 436 per cent in the withdrawal of the Palestinians' right of residency in Jerusalem.

However, Israeli policies apparently backfired, for Palestinian activities and countermeasures produced an increase in the city's Palestinian population. This situation was revealed by the Israeli Attorney-General, Daniel Seidman, who pointed out: "[The Israeli policy] has clearly backfired, ... the Israeli authorities have discovered that for the satisfaction of depriving 500 Palestinians of their residency in East Jerusalem, they are getting 5,000 Palestinians returning to their homes."¹³⁶

Israeli efforts to achieve a marked increase in the Jewish population of Jerusalem were not successful. Despite the addition of 32,600 Jewish residents to the city between 1992 and 1998, the Palestinian population increased by 44,600 in the same period.

Nevertheless, there is the counter-argument that a substantial success was achieved by the increase in settlers and settlements adjacent to the city. Whereas there were nearly 110,000 settlers in the Occupied Territories (excluding Jerusalem) in 1994, there were 195,000 in June 2000. This meant that before the peace accords of 1993 the number of settlers grew by an average influx of 4,230 per year, whereas afterwards, it had risen to 12,142 per year, or 287 per cent.¹³⁷ The importance of this increase for Jerusalem could be understood in the light of Israel's plans to expand the city's boundaries. In 1995 Israel put forward a plan of Metropolitan Jerusalem which annexed large Israeli settlements around the city. In 1998 the Israeli government approved the plan for future implementation. If the plan were carried out, it could add around 250,000 settlers to Jerusalem by the year 2015.¹³⁸

2.4 The Final Negotiations

2.4.1 Jerusalem: Unanimity and Irreversibility

Scholars have argued, at least until the year 2000, that Jerusalem and the settlements

¹³⁶ Graham Usher, "Doves over Jerusalem? An Interview with Menachem Klein", *Jerusalem Quarterly File*, no. 1 (1998).

¹³⁷ See the web site of Americans for Peace Now, Fact Sheet: "West Bank & Gaza Strip Settlement", 30 March 2001; www.peacenow.org. And the PA, "web site: www.pna.net/Jerusalem."

were not the subject of dispute among the Israeli political parties with regard to the final negotiations, and that the two leading political forces, Labour and the Likud, as well as most of the smaller parties in each block, all shared the same main principles “they all agreed that Jerusalem and most of the settlements should remain in Israeli hands”.¹³⁹

However such an argument started to face an apparent challenge by the end of the 1990s. In 1999 and early 2000, after the election of the Prime Minister, Ehud Barak, there were discussions with the Palestinians on the application of the remaining interim agreements, and there were attempts to lay down the principles of the final status negotiations. This provoked public and political debate, which was clear evidence that the issue of Jerusalem was subject to changing political circumstances and could be redefined accordingly. The following observations challenge the assertion of unanimity inside Israel regarding the irreversible status of Jerusalem:

1. REALISATION OF THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE

The aforementioned escalation of the Israeli plans to create a new Jerusalem with a new identity in preparation for the final status negotiations was combined with further analysis of the city’s demographic and political structure. For instance, the Jerusalem Institute for Israeli Studies, established in early 1994, published detailed studies carried out by its think tank. Menachem Klein, one of the Institute’s experts, said that two parallel processes took place during these years, leading to serious debate within Israel, although in the end they accelerated changes in Israel’s treatment of Jerusalem.

- (a) Experts from the Institute and members of the Socio-Economic Co-operation Foundation Organisation, including academics such as Yair Hirschfeld and Ron Pundak, were active at the Oslo rounds. Politicians such as Yossi Beilin explained to the public the political implications of the demographic structure of Jerusalem, the fact that the Palestinian existence there could not be ignored and that many policies to minimise it had backfired.

¹³⁸ For these plan, see George Giacaman & Dag Jorund Lonning (eds.) *After Oslo, New Realities, Old Problems* (London & Chicago: Pluto Press, 1998), pp.32–38.

(b) In contrast, the Likud Party and the right-wing nationalists intensified their campaign of criticising the Labour Party for allowing the Palestinians to “take over” East Jerusalem, instead of – according to the right-wing view – opposing the Palestinian organisations and institutions in the city.

Despite the debate between the two sides, Klein said: “[The] Likud became an agent of our argument by confirming the Palestinian existence, and that their presence and their institutions were much bigger than we had thought.”¹⁴⁰ The experts argued that the debate plus the outcome of the 1987 Intifada had created a reaction in Israeli public opinion by 1998-1999. However, Klein argued that changes in Israeli public opinion concerning the city and the relevance of the municipal boundaries in achieving a political settlement and preserving Jewish Jerusalem began before any official acknowledgement of the fact.

2. NEW LEGISLATION ON JERUSALEM

In addition to the resolution passed by the Knesset in 1990, further legislation was proposed in May 2000. While there was a real possibility of negotiations on Jerusalem, the Likud Party put forward bills on the city and refugees. One bill stated that at least 61 of the members of the Knesset were required to agree to the transfer of any part of Jerusalem to a foreign power, and that any amendment to the city’s boundaries would be the responsibility of the Knesset. Although the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Barak, was not present at the ballot, and the Minister from Meretz, Yossi Sarid, voted against the bill, the Israeli government supported the passage of its preliminary reading. It would have to go through further stages before finally becoming law.¹⁴¹ It should be noted, however, that this bill was passed by a vote of 68 to 21 of the 120 members, and that the original proposal was that any resolution on transferring parts of Jerusalem should be valid only if supported by at least 80 votes. Nevertheless, a compromise was reached and the bill stated the requirement of at least 61 members voting in favour. This means that the law adds nothing, because any

¹³⁹ Ibid., p.65.

¹⁴⁰ Interview, Menachem Klein.

Israeli government needs the support of at least 61 votes for any bill to be passed. If the opposition had the support of 61 votes, it could bring the government down at any time. Finally, the attempt to restrict the government with this law casts further doubt on the existence of unanimity in Israeli public opinion on the irreversibility of the situation in Jerusalem.

3. REVIEW OF THE AREAS CONSIDERED HOLY

In May 2000 a political conflict erupted in Israel as a result of the Israeli Labour government's declaration of its readiness to withdraw from villages adjacent to Jerusalem as part of the interim stage agreement. The government argued that these villages were not part of Jerusalem, which raised the question of the city's geographical definition. The Minister without Portfolio, Haim Ramon, declared in the Knesset: "Israel today controls more territory in Jerusalem than has ever before been in its possession, since Solomon's Kingdom." Ramon added, referring to the villages around Jerusalem: "This is not Jerusalem. ... We annexed in 1967 everything which we thought was Jerusalem, even a little more than it."¹⁴² Clearly, his words referred not only to the area around Jerusalem, but also to areas inside the annexed city.

In a similar vein, Shlomo Bin A'ami, the then Minister of Internal Security, said: "When our grandfathers sought Jerusalem they did not seek Abū Dīs and 'Eīzariyya. [the proposed villages]."¹⁴³ The significance of these statements was that they opened the way to the reconsideration of the geographical definition of Jerusalem, and clearly indicated changes in the Labour Party discourse on Jerusalem.

It should be remembered that in the 1993 polls on Jerusalem, some questions were included which were phrased differently from those usually put to the Israelis about the city. The poll asked them whether "they would be willing to trade Arab neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem outside the Old City" for peace with the Palestinians. The result was a 35 per cent response in the affirmative.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ See *Jerusalem Post*, (18 May 2000).

¹⁴² *Haaretz*, (2 May 2000).

¹⁴³ *Al-Hayāt*, (28 April 2000).

¹⁴⁴ Lustick, "Yerushalayim", p.15.

Other kinds of questions revealed more evidence on the importance of the geographical redefinition. In 1999, 28 per cent of the Israelis said that they were in favour of East Jerusalem becoming the capital of a Palestinian state in order to achieve peace. Only a minority regarded the Arab neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem as part of Jewish Jerusalem (Yerushalayim): Wadī al-Jūz – 30 per cent; Sheīk Jarrāḥ – 32 per cent; Shu‘faṭ – 42 per cent; Rās al-‘Āmūd – 42 per cent; and Abū-Dīs and ‘Eīzariyya – 22 per cent.¹⁴⁵ It is important to notice that these figures were before the negotiations of Camp David and Taba when a further change in Israeli public opinion appeared.

These results show that there are two Jerusalems for the Israelis: (1) an imaginary city constructed from the political discourse and campaigns of successive Israeli governments; and (2) a real, solid city when the Israelis are faced with specific practical questions. The difference between the two Jerusalems is a classic example of the difference between national rhetoric and the physical reality. The Israelis started to see facts that the previous ideological rhetoric covered. The tension there could also be seen as causing a genuine loss of interest by the Israelis in parts of East Jerusalem, and made them face the fact that another people lived there with their national institutions and existence.

In the months leading up to the Camp David Summit in 2000, Israeli newspapers published several articles calling for a review of the boundaries of Jerusalem and asserting that the Old City was the real Jerusalem. One of these articles, in *Haaretz*, described a meeting of political figures including Shimon Peres, Ehud Olmert, Shaul Mofaz, Ariel Sharon and Chief Rabbi Lau. They discussed the poetry of Uri Zvi Greenberg, who represented the Herut Party (the forerunner of the Likud) as a member of the Israeli Knesset in 1967. They recalled his speech in that year, in which he stressed that the name of Jerusalem referred to Jerusalem within the walls, “where the Temple Mount is located”.¹⁴⁶ In *Maarive* another article reveals the transformation of the Israeli mood on East Jerusalem.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Nadav Shragai, *Haaretz*, 19 June 2000.

The Jerusalem of today is a city of extreme conflict, a city of escalating war,... the time has come to end all the slogans and fanaticism, and to re-establish the link between the Israelis, including the secular, with the charming, beautiful city. If a peace agreement is reached it will elevate the real Jerusalem and neighbourhoods around it with us.¹⁴⁷

These political statements and questions on the real Jerusalem reveal the importance of the geographical definition of the city in reaching a compromise on its status and the extent to which it could be manipulated or exploited.

4. RELIGION AND SOVEREIGNTY OVER EAST JERUSALEM

Even if the religious connection between the Jews and Jerusalem is considered one of the most important justifications for the continuation of the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem, there is also the argument that certain influential religious leaders and groups are less enthusiastic about the annexation and exclusive sovereignty over the city.

Before discussing the examples of 2000, we need to look at those of earlier times to explain the root of the problem and to show that there have always been differing views on Jerusalem among the Israelis.

In 1950 a Jewish group of Neturei Karta refused the establishment of the Jewish state for religious reasons. They sent a cablegram to the UN Trusteeship Council, declaring that “the wishes of the Jewish Orthodox population Neturei Karta in Jerusalem [were] to live under the international protection of the UN and not under the sovereignty of the State of Israel.”¹⁴⁸ Another, more modern, example is in 1969, when a Sephardi Knesset member, Andre’ Chouraqui, asked:

Would it not be in Israel's interests to house in its capital a Palestinian assembly and a Transjordanian provisional government by guaranteeing them extra-territorial status if these were the conditions for peace? ... This city [Jerusalem] has the mission, in the future, of being the federal capital of a reconciled, pacified, renewed Near East.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Arabic trans. from the Hebrew *Maarive* (25 July 2000); published in *al-Quds al-'Arabī*, 26 July 2000.

¹⁴⁸ The cablegram cited in *Documents on Jerusalem*, pp. 98–99.

¹⁴⁹ Maurice M. Ruumani, “The Sephardi Factor in Israel Politics”, *Middle East Journal*, vol. 42, no.3 (Summer, 1988), p.433.

In the early 1970s a former president of the Council of the Sephardi Community in Jerusalem, Elie Elicachar, wrote a book *To Live with Palestine*, in which he asked “why are we against the establishment of a Palestinian entity that with our help will be integrated with us into a federation?”. As to Jerusalem he advocated a “condominium” a joint capital with an Arab Palestinian state or with Jordan.¹⁵⁰

In contrast, some Jews with religious views acted, though not deliberately, to minimise political confrontation with Muslims. For instance, according to a religious announcement publicised weeks after the 1967 War, dozens of prominent rabbis warned Jews not to enter the “the entire area of the Temple Mount”, fearing lest they violate the “strict prohibition against desecrating the purity of the Temple site.” The warning included the justification that owing to the passage of time, “we no longer know the exact location of the Temple, so that anyone who enters the area of the Temple Mount is liable, unknowingly, to enter the place of the Temple and the Holy of Holies.”¹⁵¹ This view was clearly in opposition to the wishes of other Zionist movements eager to build the Temple after the destruction of the mosques.

During the final negotiations of 2000, prominent religious groups did not seem to express any political interest in Jerusalem nor show any enthusiasm to engage in the debate over the future of the city. The most prominent of these was the Shas Party, which was also number three on the Israeli political ladder. It had been a permanent partner in the Israeli government since the 1980s, whatever the political agenda of the ruling power. In the 1999 elections the Shas Party won 17 seats compared with 19 for the Likud and 22 for the Labour coalition. The main concern of the party has been religious issues and the government subsidies for the party’s educational and social institutions. Therefore, when Barak’s government declared its intention to withdraw from the villages around Jerusalem, other right-wing and religious parties met the Shas Party’s spiritual leader, Ovadia Yusuf, to persuade him to oppose such a step. A group of rabbis, including the former Chief Rabbi, Avraham Shapira, paid a visit to Yusuf on

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ *Haaretz*, 7 August 2000.

Friday 12 May 2000. The daily newspaper, *Haaretz*, published quotations from the discussion, which is useful in understanding Shas's position regarding Jerusalem.¹⁵²

The rabbis reminded Yusuf of the close proximity of the neighbourhoods of Abū-Dīs and 'Eīzariyya to the Mount of Olives. "How will a future Jerusalem look if Jews are deterred from going there?" This argument reveals the emphasis on the security of access to the holy places of Jerusalem. The rabbis did not attempt to convince Yusuf with religious arguments against the loss of Israeli control over these areas, but highlighted practical issues instead.

Another issue raised by the rabbis was that Prime Minister Barak's promise to support the Shas educational network financially would not stand the test of the High Court of Justice. This connection between a subsidy and the attitude towards Jerusalem was purely political and revealed the real concern of the Shas Party. Clearly, its religious nature did not show much concern for the territories in the West Bank, the expanded Jerusalem or even the villages close to the Old City. Furthermore, in another meeting with Yusuf, the Mayor, Ehud Olmert, argued that if a Palestinian police station were to be sited on the "Temple Mount", Palestinians could open fire on Jewish worshippers in front of the Western Wall below.¹⁵³ This argument revealed yet again that the concern of the biggest religious party was security of access rather than an ideological or religious view of the sovereignty question.

The point here is that a religious connection with Jerusalem did not necessarily mean support for the annexation of territory to the city, nor the rejection of a withdrawal from territories. Issues such as sovereignty had little religious importance in the minds of these groups.

2.4.2 Negotiating Jerusalem at Camp David 2000

2.4.2.1 THE NEGOTIATIONS STRATEGY

The Israeli-Palestinian-American Summit at Camp David began on 12 July, (see Chapter One). The Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Barak, had been asking for the

¹⁵² See *Haaretz*, 14 May 2000.

¹⁵³ *Haaretz*, 13 July 2000.

Summit since the end of May. In the view of his associates as well as observers, Barak regarded any negotiations conducted by those below the level of leaders as being unlikely to succeed. If no progress were made quickly, he would face trouble inside Israel, including the possibility that his ruling coalition would collapse.¹⁵⁴

In contrast to his predecessors, Barak was hostile to the interim and phased agreements negotiated at the Oslo rounds in 1993.¹⁵⁵ This could have been the result of his experience as an army officer during that period. He would have known the effects of such agreements on security and that they could generate tension at different levels. It would have been easier to sell a final comprehensive agreement to his people, thus avoiding opposition campaigns in the aftermath of each phase or partial agreement.

Now that the final negotiations were to be set in motion, the moment of truth for Jerusalem had arrived. If the Israelis had no intention of reaching a quick final agreement, maybe they would at least open the negotiations by declaring that Jerusalem was not negotiable, or that any negotiations must take into account the fact that Israeli sovereignty over any part of Jerusalem was irreversible.

That was what actually happened in the early days of the Summit. Barak asserted that Jerusalem must remain united under Israeli sovereignty, and that the Palestinians in East Jerusalem would be granted a large measure of autonomy.¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, it was clear even before the arrival of the delegations at Camp David that the Israeli Prime Minister and his team would bring another kind of jargon to describe the solution to the problem of Jerusalem.

The Israeli team came with certain ideas. It was not difficult to understand the recommended strategy from reading the Israeli newspapers. Barak was advised to consider new implications for the concepts, especially sovereignty, autonomy, and partition, etc. For instance, experts from the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies urged Israeli statesmen to consider a new kind of sovereignty when resolving the vexing issue of Jerusalem.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Dennis Ross, Interview, *Jerusalem Post*, 22 June 2001.

¹⁵⁵ Agha & Robert, "Camp David..".

¹⁵⁶ *Haaretz*, 19 July 2000.

¹⁵⁷ For Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies recommendations see *Haaretz*, 13 June 2000.

Another aspect of the Israeli strategy was the geographical redefinition of Jerusalem. The proposal was to expand its boundaries to contain areas adjacent to the city, and then to hand over parts of these areas to the Palestinians to establish their capital.¹⁵⁸ This proposal had already been discussed in what was known as the ‘Abbās–Beilin document of 1995. It consisted of expanding the city boundaries to include Israeli settlements and Arab villages that were not currently considered part of the city. Israel would have sovereignty over these settlements in addition to settlements in Jerusalem, and the Palestinians would establish their capital in villages such as Abū-Dīs, ‘Eīzariyya, and al-Rām.¹⁵⁹

The main point of the recommended strategy was the expectation that the Palestinian side would accept only a solution that differed from the classic Israeli position and encompassed sensitive aspects such as sovereignty and a national capital. In reality, however, the Israeli strategy would not make big concessions, nor would it end Israeli sovereignty completely. Some Israeli observers criticised the expected proposal before it had been put forward at the Summit. Meron Benvenisti wrote in *Haaretz* on 13 July:

The experts who have sweated over these plans [the concentration on the concepts and meanings of Jerusalem] must understand that, if they can persuade the Israeli public that what they are proposing is a compromise, they will be playing into the hands of extremists, because, when the Palestinians reject this compromise, everyone can then self-righteously argue that the Palestinians, as usual, are adopting an extreme position.¹⁶⁰

2.4.2.2 THE ISRAELI OFFERS

Before the Camp David Summit, secret Israeli-Palestinian negotiations took place in Stockholm between March and May. Ehud Barak banned any official negotiations on Jerusalem, although he agreed to informal discussions. At the meeting Bin ‘Ami suggested to Aḥmad Qray‘ some ideas that were similar to those which were put forward later at Camp David.¹⁶¹ According to the reports in the Israeli Press, the plan was to establish autonomous Palestinian districts in Jerusalem under overall Israeli

¹⁵⁸ *Jerusalem Post* (14 July 2000).

¹⁵⁹ For the plan’s details see the conclusion.

¹⁶⁰ *Haaretz*, 13 July 2000.

¹⁶¹ Interview, Menachem Klein.

sovereignty.¹⁶² In fact, the word “autonomy” in the Israeli proposal was no more than another version of the municipal solution. It stated that a large measure of municipal responsibility would be granted to the Palestinians.

The Israeli proposals at Camp David itself centred on the strategy of redefining the sovereignty and geographical boundaries of Jerusalem. A variety of ideas were presented by the Israelis at the Summit and it is not possible to pinpoint a definite proposal or view. After his initial hesitation and refusal to relinquish Israeli sovereignty over any part of Jerusalem, the Israeli Prime Minister agreed to offer the Palestinians “limited sovereignty” in the city.¹⁶³ It was also known as “functional sovereignty” and defined as “full sovereignty over certain functions”.¹⁶⁴

This kind of sovereignty could not be understood without knowing its practical details. The Israelis put forward many suggestions that were neither documented nor clearly defined. For example, according to the *Jerusalem Post*, one of the Israeli suggestions was that the Palestinians be granted a large part of East Jerusalem so that 90 per cent of their fellow citizens in the city would be under “Palestinian civilian control”.¹⁶⁵ Another proposal was that the Palestinians be granted full sovereignty over the outlying areas of Jerusalem but not inside the Jordanian borders of East Jerusalem. In addition, all the buildings on either side of the road from the West Bank to al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf would be Palestinian, and there would be a guarantee that the passage of Palestinians and Muslim pilgrims would not be obstructed by an Israeli road block. At the same time, however, the Israelis demanded the right to build a synagogue inside al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf itself. They also offered ‘Arafat the option of establishing an office near al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf.¹⁶⁶ Ehud Barak accepted that the areas under Palestinian control would be known as al-Quds (the Arabic name for Jerusalem).¹⁶⁷ Another proposal to resolve the problem of the holy places or al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf/Temple Mount was yet again an invented sovereignty. The area would be divided horizontally, the Palestinians having

¹⁶² *Haaretz*, 18 May 2000.

¹⁶³ *Haaretz*, (19 July 2000).

¹⁶⁴ Interview, Menachem Klein.

¹⁶⁵ *Jerusalem Post* (19 July 2000).

¹⁶⁶ Interview, Menachem Klein.

¹⁶⁷ *Haaretz* (27 July 2000).

sovereignty on and above the ground, and the Israelis sovereignty beneath the ground. The idea was based on the Jewish claim that the Jewish temple was originally on the present site of al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf.

The Israeli arguments and explanations can be summed up in the following points:

1. The notion of functional sovereignty and the Israeli argument in attracting the Palestinians to this proposal was created by legal experts. Although it might have been different from the classic example of full territorial sovereignty as practised in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, it had been known to exist. This kind of sovereignty would create a “dramatic change in daily life”. Palestinians would have the Jerusalem municipality that they currently lacked, as well as a capital in the area of Jerusalem in which villages such as Abū-Dīs and ‘Eīzariyya were not then part of, although historically they had been part of the district of Jerusalem. This solution would give the Palestinians authority in education, sewerage, and civil security, as well as limited powers in housing development and zoning, etc.¹⁶⁸
2. In addressing Israeli public opinion, the argument of the Israeli negotiators would be that this solution would create a more Jewish Jerusalem. The inhabitants of the settlements surrounding Jerusalem would be part of the city, and this Jewish Jerusalem would be recognised officially by the world as Jerusalem. “Al-Quds”, on the other hand, would consist of the Palestinian residents, and therefore the demographic balance would not be altered, nor would the Jewish identity of the city be affected.

Moreover, the functional Palestinian sovereignty would be under Israeli “superior” sovereignty, which would mean that Israel would not cede its control of the city. At the same time, the very outline of the Israeli offer on the Old City reveals that Israel would retain full direct control without the Palestinian functional presence in most of the city. Israel would keep the Jewish quarter, which had been expanded mostly in the aftermath of the 1967 War and which formed nearly one-sixth of the city, and the Armenian quarter, which formed a

¹⁶⁸ This argument was explained to the researcher by Menachem Klein, who pointed out that this was not necessarily his personal view.

second one-sixth. The Western (Wailing) Wall, which was then around 50 metres, would be expanded to include the whole Western Wall of al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf, which is around 450 metres. This was in addition to the Israeli demand for sovereignty beneath the ground. In other words, according to Michael Dumper, “Barak may have moved a great deal further on Jerusalem than his predecessors, but the shift was much less than it first appeared when measured against the reality on the ground.”¹⁶⁹

3. There are various unclear and unanswered questions on the Israeli ideas. How would Israel impose its superior sovereignty over, for instance, the proposed limits on the Palestinian authority regarding housing development, or the shared responsibility for al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf/Temple Mount?¹⁷⁰
4. It seemed as though the Israelis at the Camp David Summit acknowledged the Palestinian presence in Jerusalem and the need to change their definition of the city. Evidently, the municipal borders and demographic structure were no longer relative to Jewish Jerusalem. Furthermore, the taboo against negotiations on Jerusalem had been broken and compromise on the city was now conceivable. This was clear at the popular level, for polls conducted at the request of the Israeli Prime Minister during the Summit showed that 62–65 per cent of Israelis were in favour of compromise on Jerusalem.¹⁷¹ However, despite this result, the Israeli negotiators continued to insist on retaining Israel’s “superiority”. This meant that they rejected the demand that Israel withdraws from East Jerusalem and refused to end Israeli sovereignty there.

In other words, the Israeli negotiators acknowledged the Palestinian presence and its national and political implications, that is, requiring Israel to redefine the issue of Jerusalem and its rights in the city. However, they refused to accept that the existence of the Palestinian nation would mean full Palestinian sovereignty and the termination of any Israeli sovereignty over even the proposed areas to be transferred to what the negotiators called Palestinian functional sovereignty.

¹⁶⁹ Dumper, *Sacred Space*, p. 164.

¹⁷⁰ During the interviews, both Salīm al-Za‘nūn and Menachem Klien pointed out the lack of details in the Israeli plans.

¹⁷¹ *Haaretz* (23 July 2000).

2.4.3 Al-Aqsa Intifada and the Washington-Taba Negotiations

In July and August 2000 a debate took place in Israel over whether Jews would be permitted to pray on Temple Mount.¹⁷² The debate was provoked by the fear of the outcome of the negotiations on the holy places as well as by rivalry between the different parties, especially since an early election was expected. It was in this atmosphere that the opposition leader, Ariel Sharon, made his famous visit to al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf, escorted by a bodyguard of thousands of soldiers. The visit caused the eruption of al-Aqsa Intifada on 28 September 2000.

Ariel Sharon justified his visit by saying: “[The State of Israel] cannot afford that an Israeli citizen will not be able to visit part of his country, not to speak about the holiest place for Jewish people all around the world.”¹⁷³ However, it seems difficult to separate the visit from the context of the negotiations and the expected elections.

Al-Aqsa Intifada was the turning-point in the peace process. Israel’s initial reaction was that no negotiations would be considered until the “violence” was brought to an end.¹⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the continuation of the Intifada and the early election for the premiership caused the Israeli government to backtrack and engage in two rounds of negotiations in December and January.

A minister, Yossi Sarid, asserted on 17 December – before the departure of an Israeli delegation to Washington – that two main issues were to be negotiated: sovereignty over East Jerusalem, and the Palestinian refugees’ right of return. Another minister, Ben Ami, highlighted the Temple Mount as a core issue.¹⁷⁵ An Israeli official emphasised that Israel had made it clear to the Palestinians that the refugees’ right of return was out of the question, although it would be more flexible regarding the “Temple Mount”. He added: “We are looking for a creative formula regarding the term “sovereignty”.”¹⁷⁶ These statements were important, for they indicated that while Israeli officials thought that a solution to the problem of

¹⁷² *Haaretz* (7 August 2000).

¹⁷³ *The Independent* (30 September 2000).

¹⁷⁴ *Jerusalem Post* (2 October 2000); *Haaretz* (14 November 2000).

¹⁷⁵ *Haaretz* (18 December 2000).

¹⁷⁶ *Jerusalem Post* (18 December 2000).

Jerusalem was possible, there were more difficult questions to answer on “refugees”. This view was clearly a departure from Israel’s zero-sum definition of the future of Jerusalem.

In Washington the Palestinians demanded clarification and maps in order to give their decision on Clinton’s proposal of Palestinians having sovereignty over the Arab neighbourhoods and Israel over the Jewish neighbourhoods. (see Chapter One). The Israelis insisted on hearing the Palestinians’ decision before answering. One of Barak’s aides pointed out that if the Palestinian response were positive, “we will continue talking”, and added that Israel was “inclined to accept the proposal if the Palestinians also [did] so.”¹⁷⁷ This strategy, while encouraging the Palestinians to make concessions, did not put the Israelis under any obligation.

In the Taba negotiations in January 2001 Israel’s offers on Jerusalem were little different from those made at Camp David. The negotiators told the Press that Israel offered the Palestinians “sovereignty” over the Arab neighbourhoods of Jerusalem. It also suggested a “joint-municipality” to oversee the administration of everyday matters in an area called the “sacred zone”, which comprised the Old City, the Temple Mount, the Mount of Olives (outside the Old City), the City of David, Mount Zion, the Ophel, and the archaeological garden outside the walls of the Old City.¹⁷⁸ Barak declared in a speech to high school pupils that the Western Wall, the Mount of Olives, the City of David, and the Old City would be under Israeli sovereignty.¹⁷⁹

The details of Palestinian sovereignty and the nature of the relations between the two sides in the city were still to be negotiated. Nevertheless, the two sides discussed and accepted the principle that Israel would annex settlements in Jerusalem as President Clinton had suggested. However, the Palestinians rejected the Israeli demand for sovereignty over settlements in the Jerusalem metropolitan area, namely, Ma’ale Adumim and Givat Ze’ev, as well as the newly established settlements of Har Homa and Rās al-‘Āmūd. On the other hand, Israel agreed to discuss Palestinian

¹⁷⁷ *Haaretz* (24 December 2000), and (3 January 2001).

¹⁷⁸ *Jerusalem Post* (24 January 2001).

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

property claims in West Jerusalem.¹⁸⁰ The Palestinian demand for land compensation in exchange for settlements inside Jerusalem was also discussed.¹⁸¹

As described in Chapter One, the two parties could not complete the negotiations in Taba. Nevertheless, this round of negotiations ended on an overwhelmingly optimistic note that real progress had been made. “Unfortunately”, further rounds had to be suspended owing to the Israeli election.

The victory of Ariel Sharon in the election at the end of January 2001 and the formation of a coalition government of the Likud, Labour, Shas and hard-line right-wing parties created a new situation. The new Prime Minister took a different view of the peace process. He rejected the large-scale withdrawal by Israel from the West Bank and had no intention of reaching a quick final agreement as had his predecessor. The focus shifted to the conditions for ending the clashes between the Palestinians and the Israelis and the basis on which negotiations would be resumed. Therefore, no serious new ideas for the comprehensive final solution to the problem of Jerusalem or other issues was officially discussed.

Conclusion

During the last three decades of the twentieth century there was widespread view that the Israeli position on Jerusalem was not negotiable. Owing to the religious and historical significance of the city, the Israelis could not make any concession on their rule over either West or East Jerusalem. However an examination of the Zionist/Israeli positions through the twentieth century would cast doubts on this view, bearing the following main points in mind:

1. **Ideological - Religious Observation:** A review of the works by the early thinkers in the Zionist movement shows that their central idea was the call for a Jewish grouping and the building of their national state or home. The location of that state was not a crucial question. There was no emphasis that Jerusalem had to be the location where Jews grouped as a nation. Until the present day, the

¹⁸⁰ These details were included in a “non-paper” prepared by the European Union Special Representative to the Middle East, Ambassador Miguel Moratinos, and his team to describe the outcome of the negotiations in Taba. Published in the electronic archive of *Haaretz*. (The Researcher has a printed copy).

¹⁸¹ Interview, Menachem Klein.

mainstream Jewish religious groups have not regarded sovereignty over Jerusalem from a religious perspective. In other words, they have not asserted that Israel's sovereignty over the whole of Jerusalem, or part of it, is based on religious principles. Instead their view has been built largely on security, freedom of worship and political consideration.

- 2. Historical Observation:** The history of the Zionist movement in Palestine shows how Jerusalem's religious significance was interpreted and presented to create certain political implications that would promote Jewish national sentiment and national awareness, and how Jerusalem's religious status has been connected with the concept of sovereignty. This has been done in various ways: political discourse, media and propaganda, production of literature and a particular narrative of the city and the Jewish history, the construction of intellectual and national Jewish institutions and monuments in the city, and the construction of colonies and settlements that alter not only the demographic structure of the city, but also its architectural identity. However, until 1967 the Israeli and Zionist leaders were able to accept a Jewish state without the inclusion of Old Jerusalem. In 1937 and in 1947, those leaders accepted partition plans excluded Jerusalem from the Jewish state. Moreover, Israel co-existed for nineteen years between 1948 and 1967 with East Jerusalem under Arab rule. West Jerusalem was called the capital of Israel, and the name "Jerusalem" was used to refer to that sector. It was a form of geographical redefinition of the city. The balance of power after the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967 enabled Israel's claim of historical and religious right to sustain its rule in East Jerusalem and to keep it a "united eternal" sovereign capital of the state of Israel. Accordingly, Israel worked to develop a particular image of its relationship with Jerusalem and to promote the idea of Jerusalem, West and East, as unnegotiable depending on asserting the relevant religious and historical themes. This line has been followed despite the fact that the claim of exclusive sovereignty was not made before the 1967 war.

3. **The Present Situation:** By the end of the 1980s, prompted by the eruption of the 1987 Intifada, the Israelis realised that the image of Jerusalem as a united capital was not accurate. The Palestinian national presence in East Jerusalem, and the cultural, economic, social and political distinction between the two parts of Jerusalem came to the fore. The continuation of the tension in the city, the failure of creating the targeted alteration in the city's demographic structure meant that the existence of Palestinian nationals there was undeniable. This has led to gradual changes in the Israeli view of Jerusalem and the political settlement of the city. The change became apparent at the Camp David Summit, 2000, where the image or the taboo of the undebatable and unnegotiable city broke down, and compromise began to be viewed as necessary. However, it seems that the rhetoric promoted for more than three decades on irreversible Israeli rule in East Jerusalem was still strong enough to prevent further changes in the position of the Israeli government on the relinquishing of sovereignty in East Jerusalem. Thus, while Israel effectively recognised at the Camp David negotiations the existence of Palestinian nationals in East Jerusalem and accepted that the Palestinian state would be able to function in that part of the city, it is still tried to find a formula to sustain the Israeli "superior" sovereignty in East Jerusalem as well as the holy places.

However, despite the halt in negotiations owing to al-Aqsa Intifada, it was difficult to envisage that the Israeli position towards Jerusalem would cease to evolve. The Israeli definition of the conflict as a zero-sum issue had broken down, opening the door to further changes and ending the picture of Jerusalem as an unnegotiable city.

Chapter Three

Jordan and Jerusalem:

Second Capital or Arab Solidarity

Introduction

Jordan ruled East Jerusalem between 1948 and 1967 and still has an important administrative and financial role in the city, especially in the holy shrines and *al-waqf* affairs. The Jordanian national discourse has constantly emphasised the city's special religious and historic status and asserted that Jordan under the Hashemite leadership has borne "Arab and Muslim responsibility" towards the city.

However Jordanian positions on political settlement in Jerusalem, and towards the definition of relations between the Jordanian state and the city have been different from one period to another.

This chapter explains how King 'Abdullah I, pre 1948, did not reject internationalisation of the city, while he refused it in post-1948 years, and how Jordan now accepts that the PLO is the responsible party for negotiating the city, while until several years after 1967 it continued to insist that Jerusalem should be restored to Jordanian sovereignty.

The chapter will show again the role Jerusalem could play and how it could be used in different ways to generate different kinds of identities. The city has constituted an essential part in the national state and identity construction in Jordan, through concentration on the high religious and cultural significance of the city and the Jordanian regime and army in defending it. On some occasions the city played a supportive role to Jordan's two banks unity, but on other occasions it formed a base for another national identity, namely the Palestinian.

The different Jordanian positions on Jerusalem, and Jerusalem's different role in Jordanian politics, all largely connected with the development of different stages of the nation-state construction in Jordan, will be tackled in this chapter through four stages:

1. From the establishment of the Emirate of Transjordan in the 1920s to the 1948 war.
2. From 1948 to the Jordanian defeat in 1967 and Israel's occupation of the West Bank.
3. From 1967 to the disengagement decision in 1988.
4. The period of the Madrid peace conference and the agreements with Israel in the 1990s, ending with the negotiations at Camp David and Taba 2000/2001.

3.1 Transjordan and Expansionism: 1921–1948

The appearance of Amir ‘Abdullah ibn al-Ḥusayn along with hundreds of tribesmen in the town of Ma‘ān (in the south of present-day Jordan) on 21 November 1920 was a significant event that influenced the discussions in London on the future of the area east of the River Jordan.

‘Abdullah’s father, Sharif Ḥusayn, the Amir of Mecca, had been a party in an alliance with Britain during the First World War, in which London had pledged to recognise large areas of the eastern Arab countries as an independent Arab kingdom under Ḥusayn’s rule, in exchange for leading the “Great Arab Revolution” against Turkish rule. However, Britain had other agreements with France, which resulted in the division of the territories between the two countries, and included a promise to the Jews to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine.¹

Winston Churchill, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, supported a policy known as the “Sharifian Policy”, which consisted of forming a number of small states in Arabia, Iraq and natural Syria, all headed by members of the Hashemite family [Sharif Ḥusayn’s family, which is believed to be descended from the Prophet Muḥammad] under full British influence and guidance, these states to be compensation for not establishing the promised Arab Kingdom.²

A few months before the appearance of ‘Abdullah I, the Foreign Office in London had supported the establishment of Zayd, Ḥusayn’s youngest son, as a ruler in this area. However, Herbert Samuel, the first British High Commissioner in

¹ For the details of these agreements and the resulting disputes, see Antonius, *Awakening*.

² Shlaim, *Collusion*, p.22.

Palestine, influenced by his sympathy for Zionism, wanted to incorporate Transjordan, or at least its fertile western edge, into Palestine.³

‘Abdullah declared that he had come to Transjordan to instigate a resistance movement against France in Syria. However, Churchill decided to benefit from ‘Abdullah’s visit and he met him in Jerusalem on 24 March. An agreement was reached, in spite of the rejection of most of ‘Abdullah’s demands, such as the establishment of an Arab state comprising Palestine and Transjordan. With regard to Syria, the agreement stated that Britain should use its good offices with France to secure the restoration of an Arab administration in Syria with Amir ‘Abdullah at its head.⁴

In exchange, ‘Abdullah was to remain in Transjordan, restrain all hostile action by the disaffected population, and thus pave the way to reconciliation with the French. ‘Abdullah was to receive financial assistance from the British government to create and maintain a locally recruited Arab force.⁵

Such was the background to the establishment of Transjordan, which was declared an autonomous entity in 1923. ‘Abdullah regarded this state as the beginning of a bigger role and a bigger Arab state, what was known at the time as the project of Great Syria. Palestine thus became part of ‘Abdullah’s expansionist programme. He followed two main paths in his aim to acquire a role in Palestine.

3.1.1 Jerusalem and Transjordanian–Palestinian relations

During the first stage of approaching the Palestinians, ‘Abdullah sent in 1924 a donation from his father, Sharif Ḥusayn, to the campaign launched by the Muftī, Amīn al-Ḥusaynī, to restore the shrines of Jerusalem. This move seemed to be fruitful, for on 30 July 1924 he received a letter from Amīn al-Ḥusaynī thanking him:

The Supreme Muslim Council and al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf Restoration Committee have received with thanks and overwhelming gratitude your confidence in us... . May I press Your Highness for another kindness, which

³ Mary Wilson, *King Abdullah, Britain and the Making of Jordan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.44,55.

⁴ See Antonius, *Awakening*, p.318.

⁵ *Ibid.*

is to accept that all the restoration in al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf be under your presidency.⁶

The letter included the promise that Amīn al-Ḥusaynī would send monthly statements of accounts detailing with the expenditure, and ended with “May God preserve you to glorify the Arabs and Islam”.⁷

However, relations between Amīn al-Ḥusaynī and Amir ‘Abdullah deteriorated: rivalry and political disagreement were to continue until the death of the latter. So ‘Abdullah formed an alliance with another leading family in Jerusalem, namely, Raghib al-Nashāshībī, the Mayor of Jerusalem in the 1920s.⁸

In short, the restoration of the holy places and contact with the notables of Jerusalem were doors that ‘Abdullah tried to open to enter Palestine. However, he did not achieve any significant success at the popular level in the pre-1948 period.

3.1.2 Transjordan: British and Jewish Relations

With the escalation of tension in Palestine in the 1930s, Amir ‘Abdullah presented himself to Britain as the saviour who could restore stability, and as the eligible leader for a halfway solution. In 1934 he wrote to Arthur Wauchope, the High Commissioner in Jerusalem:

I do not deny that the interests of Great Britain have expanded in Palestine and in other Arab countries after the war. Would you not agree with me, considering all this, that the maintenance of the true affection which the Arabs feel for your noble nation a matter of central importance, worthy of due attention and care? I have continuously attempted, with all the ability with which I have been endowed, to strengthen these links between the two nations, being firmly convinced that their consolidation is in the interest of the Arabs, as it is in the interest of the British. I do not contest that my Arab people, in Palestine, have committed many political errors. In my opinion, however, this has been entirely due to the fear that has overcome them with respect to their threatened existence.⁹

At that time ‘Abdullah was faced with the Palestinian leaders’ opposition to giving him a mandate to speak on their behalf. Wauchope had already written to London

⁶ Rāi’f Najm, *al-E’mār al-Hāshimī fī al-Quds* [The Renovation by the Hashemites in Jerusalem] (Amman: Dār al-Bayraq li al-Ṭibā‘a wa al-Nashr), 1993, p.73.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.74.

⁸ See also, al-Bīṭār, *Mudhakkārāt*, p.7.

⁹ Kamal Salibi, *The Modern History of Jordan* (London & New York: I.B Tauris, 1993), p.136.

that ‘Abdullah had no “body of opinion” behind him that could make him the representative of the Palestinians.¹⁰

‘Abdullah continued his attempts to play an active role in the Palestinian case, although expressing a different view from that of the Palestinian leaders. So, whereas in 1937 the Palestinians rejected the Partition Plan of the Royal Commission (Peel Commission: see Chapter One), ‘Abdullah accepted it, for it would incorporate the areas in Palestine allocated to the Arabs into Transjordan.¹¹

On the other hand, ‘Abdullah was proposing a settlement of the Palestinian question, namely, the creation of a kingdom comprising Transjordan and Palestine. Jews could settle in either half of the state and enjoy full citizenship and a kind of autonomy. He put his proposals to the Zionist leaders at several meetings and gave Jewish investors permission to establish businesses in Transjordan. In 1927 the Palestine Electric Company bought 6,000 *dunams* (6 square kilometres) of land in Transjordan and began selling electricity to consumers in the following year. In 1929 the Palestine Potash Company, also Jewish, won a concession to extract potash from the Dead Sea.¹²

When ‘Abdullah realised that the Zionist leaders insisted on founding an independent Jewish state, he acknowledged the partition of Palestine to be a realistic option. Thus in 1947 he supported UN Resolution 181 to this effect. He also contacted Zionist leaders and arranged with the British government that the Arab Legion would control the allocated Arab areas that would be annexed to his Kingdom.¹³

When the Arab countries decided to declare war in Palestine in 1948, ‘Abdullah complied with this decision. Golda Meir, the then Head of the Political Department in the Jewish Agency, wrote that when she asked the King at a meeting in Amman a few days before the outbreak of war why he had changed the deal that had been agreed, he answered: “When I made that promise, I thought I was in control

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.135.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.122.

¹² For details, see Wilson, *King Abdullah*, pp.104–105.

¹³ These contacts have been well documented in several scholarly works. See, for instance, Shlaim, *Collusion*, Golda Meir, *My Life* (New York: G.P. Putnam Sons, 1975), p.215; Muḥammad Haykal, *al-Juyūsh wa al-‘Urūsh* [The Thorns and the Armies] (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1995), pp.31–32, 36, 40–42.

of my own destiny and could do what I thought right, but since then I have learned otherwise, ... I am one of five [Arab countries].”¹⁴

There is no indication that ‘Abdullah tried to find a particular solution to the problem of Jerusalem during his communications with the Jews or the British. Internationalisation at that time was acceptable to him.

When Jewish attacks on Jerusalem continued in May, Palestinian delegations visited Amman, asking King ‘Abdullah to save the city. He answered them positively and enthusiastically, using expressions such as “I swear that we shall not abandon [my] father’s grave, or the Aqsa Mosque, or the people. No matter how great the sacrifice, let martyrdom be our fate,”¹⁵ and said that he did not want to confine his army to Jerusalem, but to “smash the snake’s head in its den in Tel Aviv.”¹⁶

Despite Palestinian appeals to enter the city quickly, and although the Arab Legion had been close to its boundaries (17 kilometres east of the city) since 15 May, the Legion did not enter Jerusalem until 18 May.¹⁷

Ḥazim Nusayba, the Assistant Manager of Palestinian Arab Broadcasting, and brother of Anwar Nusayba, Secretary of the National Committee in Jerusalem which organised the resistance in the city, summarised the situation: The Jews had launched a comprehensive attack on Jerusalem. The inhabitants of the city, with the help of the Palestinian police and volunteers, had withstood it for three days until their ammunition was exhausted and Jerusalem was close to capitulation. So efforts were concentrated on delaying the Israeli attack until King ‘Abdullah could be persuaded to enter the war.

Nusayba added that the Jordanian entry into Jerusalem on 18 May was a violation of the Partition according to the map. He recalled the common story about the controversy between the British head of the Arab Legion, Glubb, who refused to enter the war in Jerusalem, and the King, who had insisted on this.¹⁸ Nusayba said that the Jews were in a bad state in Jerusalem and ready to lay down their arms. He was invited, as the Assistant Manager of Broadcasting, to witness the capitulation at

¹⁴ Meir, *My Life*, pp.218–219.

¹⁵ Haykal, *al-Juyūsh*, p.69.

¹⁶ Abū- Gharbya, *FīKhiḍamm*, p.263.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.287–288.

¹⁸ See also, Abu-Odeh, *Jordanian*, p.40.

the Hebrew University. However, an urgent appeal came from Ben-Gurion to the Jews in the area, asking them to stand firm, because the situation would be saved, somehow. This was the first truce.¹⁹

Arab soldiers in the Legion told the local Palestinian fighters during the war that they had strict instructions from the Legion's British officers not to attack certain Jewish sites on Mount Scopus in East Jerusalem and to leave the West sector alone.²⁰

If the Jews had abided by the Partition Plan conditions, it would have been unthinkable for the Arab Legion to occupy the East sector of the city. The then American Ambassador in London stated that the Legion had not entered the Jewish state as defined by the UN: "The attack on parts of Jerusalem was the consequence of the breaking of the cease-fire by the Jews. We are confident the attack would not have taken place if the Jews had accepted the truce for Jerusalem."²¹

The role of the Arab Legion in Jerusalem could have been the most remarkable Arab success in the war, and, as explained below, this achievement was vital in facilitating the annexation of the West Bank to Transjordan.

3.2 Jerusalem and the Jordanian State: 1948–1967

In the aftermath of the war Transjordan had to deal with the following issues:

1. The unification of the remaining Palestinian territories west of the River Jordan with Transjordan.
2. The political settlement with Israel.

3.2.1 Jerusalem in the Construction of the Nation-State

3.2.1.1 THE UNIFICATION

The achievement of the Arab Legion in Jerusalem was important for the unification of the East and West Banks and in gaining Palestinian support for this step.

1. One of the direct results of King 'Abdullah's success in defending East Jerusalem was that the Muftī, Amīn al-Ḥusaynī, lost much of his influence in Jerusalem, which had been his power base. Many of his supporters joined King 'Abdullah's

¹⁹ Interview, Ḥazim Nusayba.

²⁰ Abū- Gharbya, *FīKhiḍamm*, p. 295.

²¹ Wilson, *King Abdullah*, p. 172.

camp when the forces of the Arab Legion took control of the Jewish quarter in the Old City.²²

2. The achievement in Jerusalem was used to justify the failures elsewhere, such as not defending the northern cities of Lydda and Ramla, or not helping the Egyptian army in the south of Palestine. The reason given was that if Jordan had taken part in the battles in those places, the Legion would not have been able to protect East Jerusalem.²³
3. Although there was general official Arab support for the internationalisation of Jerusalem, the Palestinians backed King ‘Abdullah in his rejection of this proposal. Even Amīn al-Ḥusaynī who was living in Cairo, shared this view and instructed his followers to participate in an official Jordanian festival in 1949, organised as a public rejection of internationalisation.²⁴

3.2.1.2 THE CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

In 1950 the unification of the East and West Banks of the River Jordan was declared officially by the Parliament that had been elected from both sides. The state was named the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan with Amman as its capital. In the same year, the government passed a law to abolish the use of the name “Palestine” and to replace it with “West Bank” to refer to the state’s Palestinian territories.²⁵

This could be seen as part of the plan to construct a national identity of a unified Jordan. This was important for two main reasons:

1. A Jordanian identity was an essential aspect of constructing the state itself.
2. If one day Jordan were to achieve a peace treaty with Israel, the citizens of Jordan, especially the refugees, would already be imbued with a Jordanian identity and would therefore be willing to accept the state as their permanent homeland.

The identity that Jordan tried to create seems to have been complex:

²² For examples, see Pamela Ann Smith, *Palestine and The Palestinians*, pp. 90–91; Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians*, p.40.

²³ For example of this argument, see Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians*, p. 42.

²⁴ Abū- Gharbya, *Fī Kḥiḍamm* p.386.

²⁵ Kimberly Katz, “Jordanian Jerusalem: Postage Stamps and Identity Construction”, *Jerusalem Quarterly File*, Issue 5, 1999.

1. It was necessary to create an identity that would transcend that of Palestine and Transjordan, in other words, an Arab Islamic identity, which would unite the two peoples.
2. At the same time, however, this identity should serve the development and preservation of the Jordanian nation-state, and should not be connected with any other country. King Ḥusayn explained his interpretation of Arab nationalism:

My own concept of Arab nationalism is different from what I understand President Nāṣir's to be. If I interpret his aims properly, he believes that political unity and Arab nationalism are synonymous. Evidently he also believes that Arab nationalism can only be identified by a particular brand of Arab unity. I disagree. This view can only lead, as it has done in the past, to more disunity. The seeking of popular support for one point of view or one form of leadership in countries other than one's own has fostered factionalism to a dangerous degree, splitting countries to the point of revolution. It is nothing but a new form of imperialism, the domination of one state by another.²⁶

This view could summarise the Arab identity sought by Jordan: one that transcended domestic divisions but did not entail a hurried Arab unification or an unprepared confrontation with Israel.

The construction of a national identity was gradually effected by means such as political speeches, the media, museums, education, art, etc. Jerusalem was a theme in the content of the messages conveyed by these means.

1. THE DEFENDER OF JERUSALEM

The focus was on the fact that Jordan was the Arab power capable of defending Jerusalem and the Palestinians. In 1948 the Arab Legion was the only Arab army who succeeded in its task. This message was important in creating the acceptance of the unification and to justify Jordan's role in Palestine.

In this context one can find many political statements and newspaper articles describing King Ḥusayn as the "defender of the Holy Places".²⁷

2. THE NATIONAL CULTURAL TREASURE

Jerusalem was portrayed as the state treasure. Its Muslim and Christian holy places enhanced the state's cultural, historic, and political value. This was important, especially when opponents to the Hashemite regime declared that Jordan was a state

²⁶ Salibi, *Modern History*, p.200.

without historical roots. Therefore political speeches concentrated on the theme that the Muslim and Christian holy places of Jerusalem were part of the civilisation of humankind.²⁸ This message gave the Jordanians a reason for national pride

3. NATIONAL SYMBOLS

Jerusalem and its holy places were among the symbols used to create Jordan's national consciousness. Jerusalem and the Hashemite family, together with other historical places in Jordan, were presented as the state's national symbols. In her research "Jordanian Jerusalem: Postage Stamps and Identity Construction", Kimberly Katz analysed symbols that were used in Jordan to construct the state's national identity. She surveyed the designs of Jordanian postage stamps and bank notes, and scanned the media coverage of certain events related to Jerusalem. She found that the holy places of Jerusalem appeared frequently on Jordanian postage stamps and bank notes, especially between 1948 and 1967, and were linked to the Hashemite Family and King Ḥusayn. Regarding a series of stamps issued in 1955 once the renovation of the Dome of the Rock was under way, she says:

King Ḥusayn's renovations on [*sic*] the Dome of the Rock were undertaken almost immediately after his ascension to the throne in 1953. His renovations of the Dome of the Rock in 1953-1964 continued a link between the Hashemite Family and the holy places of Jerusalem, cementing this tradition into the national consciousness.²⁹

However while Jordanian governments tried to incorporate or use Jerusalem in developing Jordanian nationalism, at the same time they feared that Jerusalem could be a center of Palestinian identity or center of political powers supporting the Egyptian and other Arab regimes' political views on Israel and Arab nationalism which differed from those of Jordan.

Actually there were groups in Jerusalem which, despite their support for the unification of the East and West Banks, did not agree that such a move necessarily meant the end of the Palestinian identity. They insisted that Jerusalem be the centre of Palestine, as well as the centre for confronting Israel. Therefore, the choice of Amman as the Kingdom's capital seemed to raise the reservations of some powers.

²⁷ See, for instance, the Editorial of the daily Jerusalem based newspaper, *al-Difā'*, (19 January 1960).

²⁸ Katz, "Jordanian Jerusalem".

²⁹ *Ibid.*

The importance of studying such reservations is that they have an important role in influencing the Jordanian positions regarding the nature of the Jordanian state with the Palestinian question in general and the question of Jerusalem in particular, as discussed in later parts of this chapter.

Jerusalem had served as the political centre of Palestine for a long time, especially during the British Mandate. During the early years of unification, the feeling grew among Palestinians that Jerusalem was losing its status. In the 1950s the inhabitants of the West Bank frequently expressed their resentment, accusing the government in Amman of discrimination against the city by moving its businesses and institutions to Amman.³⁰ Palestinians demanded that Jerusalem be given a special political status in the state similar to that which the Israelis had established in West Jerusalem.

These accusations and demands formed part of the debates in the Jordanian Parliament. In 1952, following the assassination of King ‘Abdullah, and in what could be described as a call for the general reconsideration of the shape of the unification, 14 of the 20 West Bank deputies sent a memorandum to the government, listing several demands. Those concerning Jerusalem included:

1. The preservation of the moral and material status of Jerusalem by establishing in the city branch offices of the various ministries to solve all the problems of the inhabitants of the West Bank.
2. The establishment of the Tourist Board in the city.
3. The strengthening of the municipality.³¹

The memorandum was apparently asking that the status of the West Bank in the unification be reconsidered, and that Jerusalem be regarded as the centre of the West Bank. In fact, it was a demand that Palestine identity be recognised, with Jerusalem as its centre.

On various occasions the deputies of Jerusalem demanded that the city be the Kingdom’s second capital, or its spiritual capital, or at least the centre of Cabinet and parliamentary sessions. Kamil ‘Irīqāt put forward this request several times in the

³⁰ Such accusations have been well documented in several sources, such as Friedland & Hecht, *To Rule*, pp.30, 247–249; Naim Sofer, “The Political Status of Jerusalem in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 1948–1967”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 12, no.1 (January 1976), pp. 79–83; Al-Bīṭār, *Mudhakkarāt*, pp.38–49.

1950s.³² Dawūd al-Ḥusaynī made the same demand.³³ In 1956 ‘Irīqāt gave the reason that the Israelis had made Jerusalem their capital; therefore, “Jerusalem must be a second capital in order to make the people aware of the city’s superior importance and that the Third [World] War would erupt as a consequence.”³⁴

Deputies accused the government of neglecting and discriminating against the city. During the Budget Debate of 1958, Dawūd al-Ḥusaynī said:

The Zionists built the sector that had been seized unlawfully and used force to establish it as their capital, not Tel Aviv, ... they constructed great institutions and buildings, wide roads, beautiful gardens, ... For goodness’ sake, though, what did the former governments do for Jerusalem, except neglect it and more or less seek to weaken it?³⁵

The deputies of Jerusalem frequently requested the implementation of projects in the city such as the establishment of a “scientific university”, the expansion of the airport near the city, the construction of new schools and the opening of a branch of the Tourist Board.³⁶ Amman itself was lacking some of these facilities. However, the residents of the West Bank thought that Jerusalem should have equal status to that of Amman, for they regarded it as the centre of their lives, rather than the capital of Jordan.

Meanwhile, the possibility of reopening the settlement file on Jerusalem, that is, the implementation of the UN internationalisation resolutions, or some other settlement, provoked fear and insecurity in the city. Activists working there in the early 1950s said that they were aware of attempts by certain sides to strengthen their position. One example of this was the efforts of the Catholic Church to purchase land in the city. Such activities were regarded as a plan to enhance its status should internationalisation be negotiated,³⁷ for the Catholic Church was defined by those activists as a foreign power.

Therefore, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) worked in the city on a national basis to protect its Palestinian-Arab identity. In a similar vein, the founders

³¹ Sofer, “The Political Status”, p.86.

³² See the Minutes of the Jordanian Deputies Council: 7 November 1954, 24 August 1955, 21 February 1956, 8 January 1957 and 19 January 1960.

³³ Minutes of the Jordanian Deputies Council, 13 May 1958.

³⁴ Minutes of the Jordanian Deputies Council, 21 February 1956.

³⁵ Minutes of the Jordanian Deputies Council, 13 May 1958.

³⁶ See the Minutes of the Jordanian Deputies Council, 24 August 1955.

³⁷ Interview, Ṣubḥī Gūsha.

of al-Maqāṣid Association, which was established in 1956 to construct charitable hospitals, surgeries, schools, etc., asserted that among their unwritten primary goals was the protection of city land against “foreign powers”. It is significant that although the leaders of al-Maqāṣid were secular and leftist, the organisation was granted Islamic *waqf* land to establish its institutions.³⁸

Not only was charitable work of a national political nature, but the survival of profitable companies in the city was also regarded as a national concern. For instance, the Jerusalem Cigarette Company faced bankruptcy in the early 1960s. This led national economists to hold a meeting and form a savings plan to bring new investment into the company. Zakī al-Ghūl, a member of the Jerusalem municipality and a businessman, participated in the rescue. He said that saving the workers’ livelihood was the main motive for such action, but also “we were struggling to keep Jerusalem alive”.³⁹

However, there were persistent demands that Jerusalem be the centre of a collective Arab effort to liberate Palestine. For instance, in 1955 and in other years ‘Irīqāt demanded that a special meeting be held there of the Prime Ministers as well as the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence in the Arab world to conduct a serious inquiry into the Palestinian cause.⁴⁰ If the Jordanian regime was seeking a peaceful settlement on the basis of preserving the *status quo*, Jerusalem had actually become the symbol of the opposition project of rejecting the *status quo*. The editorial of the daily newspaper *Filasṭīn* [based in Jerusalem] said in 1960: “The status of Jerusalem must be higher than that of any other city, because it is the origin and centre of Arab politics regarding Palestine.”⁴¹

Nevertheless, it should be noted that all the previous demands and complaints were a request not for separation,^{*} but for a better status within the unification, and a

³⁸ Ibid. Also interview, Zakī al-Ghūl, Amman, 23 September 2001. However, in the constitution of al-Maqāṣid Charitable Islamic Association in Jerusalem, there is no mention of these goals (Amman: Archives, Jerusalem Information Centre, Jerusalem Day Committee).

³⁹ Interview, Zakī al-Ghūl.

⁴⁰ Minutes of the Jordanian Deputies Council, 11 January 1955.

⁴¹ *Filasṭīn*, (19 January 1960).

* A remarkable piece of evidence of the support for unification as a principle was the election in the mid-1950s of Ya‘qūb Zayyādīn, a Christian physician from al-Karak in East Jordan

rejection of a political settlement with Israel which recognised the *status quo* that resulted from the war, or a political settlement leading to the internationalisation of Jerusalem.

During the 1950s the Jordanian government did not respond positively to these criticisms and demands. For instance, in reply to the question of considering Jerusalem the second capital, the Jordanian Prime Minister said in 1955: "The constitution states that Amman is the capital, thus unfortunately nothing can be done concerning such a demand."⁴² In some cases there appeared to be political implications in some of the measures imposed. One example was the disbanding of important institutions connected with the Mufti, Amīn al-Ḥusaynī, such as the SMC, and transferring its tasks to the Ministry of "the *Awqāf* and the Islamic Shrines" in Amman.⁴³

Such governmental actions could be interpreted as an expression of fear that strengthening Jerusalem could lead to the strengthening of a separate Palestinian national identity. This in turn could jeopardise the unification of Jordan and the target of a united national identity.

This attitude changed by the end of the 1950s. In 1959 Prime Minister Hazzā' al-Majālī declared his intention to ask the Arab League to agree to the holding of an Arab summit in Jerusalem "between al-Aqsa Mosque and the Sepulchre Church, so that the decisions of the participants would be inspired by the stolen homeland."⁴⁴ In 1960 several other Palestinian demands were accepted, including the holding of Parliamentary and Cabinet sessions in the city.⁴⁵

In fact the change was a result of demands by Arabs and Palestinians, mostly from outside Jordan, to create what they called the Palestinian entity (see Chapter One). The Jordanian response was to revive the political role of Jerusalem as the Palestinian political centre so as to mobilise a Palestinian rejection of these demands. The minutes of the parliamentary debate in Jerusalem on 19 January 1960 explain these changes in government opinion regarding the political role of the city.

and a leading figure in the Communist Party (later its Chairman), as deputy for Jerusalem in Parliament.

⁴² Minutes of the Jordanian Deputies Council, 21 February 1956.

⁴³ Friedland & Hecht, *To Rule*, p. 29.

⁴⁴ *Al-Difā'* (22 June 1959).

Speeches by the Members of Parliament and the government were strongly opposed to the demand to establish a Palestinian entity. Kāmil ‘Irīqāt launched a lengthy attack on the AHC, the Arab regimes in general and the Iraqī regime in particular for demanding this entity. He considered it “a pathetic suggestion, and a conspiracy”, and ended his speech by asking that Jerusalem be the second capital of Jordan.

The Foreign Minister, Mūsā Nāṣir, opened his speech with the words: “We assemble now in Jerusalem, the capital of Palestine, and we should confine our search today to Palestine’s cause in particular,” and at the end of the speech he stated that he had “no use for the demand concerning the Palestinian entity”. The Prime Minister had begun the session with a speech, in which he asserted: “Jerusalem is the heart of Palestine” and that Jordan had borne its responsibility and would bear it forever. The aim of the meeting in Jerusalem was to inquire into “one cause, that is, our first cause”, namely Palestine. After speaking at length on the Arab failure to do anything for Palestine, he concluded that any plan for Palestine must first recognise the Jordanian entity as the legitimate entity for the unification of the East and West Banks.⁴⁶ This reconsideration of Jerusalem’s status was clearly the result of facing the possibility of a Palestinian entity.

Such a change reflected a deeper change in the view of the creation of a national identity. Jordanian policy by then was no longer aiming for a national identity to replace the other identities. Instead it was based on a kind of unification where regional identities could coexist within the nation.

Nevertheless, the demands to establish a Palestinian entity continued to roll in. As a result of Arab and Palestinian pressure, Jordan accepted the official establishment of the PLO in Jerusalem in 1964. It was agreed that the city was to be the headquarters of the PLO and that a Palestinian flag could be flown on the PLO office building. Aḥmad al-Shuqayrī, the PLO Chairman, began to initiate action from Jerusalem. He had disputes with Amman, which rejected some of his demands such as organising military units and imposing conscription on behalf of the Organisation.⁴⁷ This led to political and media campaigns between the two sides, followed

⁴⁵ *al-Difā’* (19 January and 12 July 1960).

⁴⁶ Minutes of the Jordanian Deputies Council, 19 January 1960.

⁴⁷ Al-Shu‘aybī *Al-Kayaniyya*, pp. 118–120; ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, *Munazzamat*, p. 107.

by military action by Faṭḥ against Israel and Israeli retaliation against Jordan. As a result, Jordan felt justified in its decision in January 1967 to close the PLO office in Jerusalem, and publicly withdraw its recognition of al-Shuqayrī as a representative of the Palestinian entity.⁴⁸ The Egyptian President, Nāṣir, effected a conciliation, which led to the reopening of the PLO office and the return of al-Shuqayrī to Jerusalem just a few days before the outbreak of the June 1967 War.⁴⁹

3.2.2 Jordan and the Political Settlement of Jerusalem: 1948–1967

As described in Chapter Two, the negotiations between Transjordan and Israel began during the war and continued until the assassination of King ‘Abdullah I in 1951 without reaching an agreement.

‘Abdullah had tried to include Arab leaders in the negotiations. On 3 October 1948 he sent a personal message to King Farūq of Egypt, informing him that many Palestine Arabs wished to bring the war to an end and to reach a settlement, and that he thought that this should be given consideration. However, he could not take such a step on his own and therefore wished to consult with his colleagues.⁵⁰ However, Arab regimes in general were opposed to the expansion of the Hashemites in the West Bank on the grounds of rivalry and disputes with ‘Abdullah (see Chapter Four). ‘Abdullah, who had an understanding with Israel to reject the internationalisation of Jerusalem, said at the time that he feared that he might encounter “more difficulty from the Arab states [regarding this issue] than from the foreign states.”⁵¹

During the negotiations, King ‘Abdullah, like the Israelis, showed more concern about issues outside Jerusalem. ‘Abdullah was hoping that showing what he considered flexibility over Jerusalem would encourage the Israelis to be flexible elsewhere. At a meeting with Israeli officials in Paris on 9 and 10 November 1948, ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Karmī, the King’s envoy, told his opposite numbers that the King hoped that the Israeli side appreciated the arrangements that he had made for free passage to Mount Scopus through the area held by the Arab Legion. He offered to

⁴⁸ Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians*, p.131.

⁴⁹ As‘ad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, *Munazzamat*, p.97.

⁵⁰ Shlaim, *Collusion*, p.340.

⁵¹ King ‘Abdullah of Jordan, *My Memoirs Completed “Al-Takmilah”*, Eng. trans. Harold W. Glidden (London: Longman, 1978), p.69.

continue this arrangement and to provide Israel with a new and better road there. The King asked in exchange that Israel hand over the areas of Transjordan in Negev in the south of Palestine to secure a passage to the sea. The King asked also for the return of refugees from Lydda and Ramla to their homes. No agreement resulted from that meeting since the war was still continuing and so Israel was not interested in this offer.⁵²

In twenty meetings of secret negotiations, until the death of King ‘Abdullah, Jordan’s main concerns were the outlet to the Mediterranean and the return of the refugees. Israel, however, did not accept either of these demands and this was the main obstacle to the progress of the negotiations.

‘Abdullah al-Tall, the Jordanian representative at some of these secret meetings, agreed with Sasson on 13 December that rejection of the UN resolutions on the internationalisation of the city was a common interest. He asked if Israel agreed to the partition of Jerusalem, pointing out that this would be the ideal solution. Sasson did not give a clear answer, saying that the question would be resolved later in the negotiations.⁵³

Al-Tall himself proposed on 5 January 1949 that, in addition to demanding the corridor to the sea through the Negev, the Jewish Quarter of the Old City could be exchanged for Arab neighbourhoods in West Jerusalem such as the Qaṭamūn, the German Colony, Talpiot, and Kibbutz Ramat.⁵⁴ Also, in exchange for restoring the supply of electricity to the Old City, he was willing to grant the Jews free access to the holy places.⁵⁵ However, Israel refused these offers.

Jordanian internal opposition to a political settlement recognising Israel impeded the progress of the negotiations. There was even difficulty in applying the terms of the armistice agreement of April 1949, which included allowing access to the holy places. At the special committee established for the application of the armistice agreements, Jordan was represented by ‘Abdullah al-Tall, Ḥamad al-Farḥān and Aḥmad Khalīl. The Jordanian delegation, acting under the pressure of public resentment and Arab hostility, demanded that Israel return neighbourhoods in

⁵² Shlaim, *Collusion*, p.350.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 356–375.

⁵⁴ Dayan, *Story of My Life*, p.140.

⁵⁵ Shlaim, *Collusion*, p.357.

West Jerusalem as a condition for further agreements.⁵⁶ However, the shared rejection of internationalisation seemed to be holding, which helped in the continuation of secret contacts and negotiations.

When the negotiations were brought to a halt by the death of the King ‘Abdullah, Jordan – with Israel – had apparently managed to gain an implicit international acceptance of the *status quo* of the partition of the city.

In short, whereas many observers considered Jerusalem the most difficult problem of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Jordanian negotiations with Israel in the aftermath of the 1948 war created a situation where Jerusalem was the meeting-point and the subject of agreement, while other issues remained unresolved. This period also shows that Jerusalem could be redefined geographically by the parties concerned. Israel defined West Jerusalem as the Jewish Jerusalem and Jordan defined East Jerusalem as the Arab Jerusalem.

3.3 The Loss of Jerusalem and Redefinition of the Role of Jordan: 1967–1988

In the war of June 1967 Jordan lost the West Bank including East Jerusalem. Nevertheless, perhaps this event prevented more radical changes within Jordan, which had been expected if King Ḥusayn had decided not go to the war. ‘Adnān Abū-‘Ūda expressed it as follows: “The military defeat boosted the King’s credibility.”⁵⁷ The reason for this statement was that although King Ḥusayn and Jordan had always been the target of attack and accusation by other Arab states, namely Egypt and Syria, regarding its willingness to negotiate with Israel, and its relationship with the Western countries and Israel, the Jordanian army had gone into battle as soon as Israel had launched its attack upon Egypt. Meanwhile, Syria, which had held an extremely hard-line political position against Israel, did very little in the first two or three days of the war apart from firing across the border.⁵⁸ This situation caused ‘Abd al-Nāṣir, in particular, to review his relationship with King Ḥusayn and the political settlement, is described in detail below.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.454.

⁵⁷ Abu-Odeh, *Jordanian*, p.136.

⁵⁸ Randolph S. Churchill & Winston S. Churchill, *The Six Day War* (London: Heinemann, 1967), p.151.

3.3.1 Jordan without Jerusalem

The West Bank as a whole comprised one-third of Jordan's population, contained its richest agricultural land, and contributed 38 per cent of the country's gross domestic product.⁵⁹ The loss of Jerusalem had two immediate consequences within Jordan, economic and political life.

Economically, the 1960s plans to develop Jerusalem so as to satisfy Palestinian public opinion and increase the income from tourism had produced a boom in the city's economy. A month after the war, W. Morris, the head of the Eastern Department in the British Foreign Office, described it as follows:

There has been a heavy investment in new hotels..., and we ourselves have invested quite heavily in extending the water supply and, earlier, in building Kalandia Airport. The West Bank without the Old City would be deprived of its main economic asset. If therefore we decide that we have an interest in a stable and self-supporting Jordan, we have an interest in seeing that any arrangement made for Jerusalem takes account of Jordan's economic interests.⁶⁰

Jordan without East Jerusalem and Bethlehem could no longer promote itself as the Holy Land. It has been estimated that 85 per cent of the country's income from tourism was contributed by East Jerusalem. In 1966 a total of 617,000 tourists had visited Jordan, compared with 291,000 visiting Israel.⁶¹

From the political point of view, the loss of Jerusalem was a severe blow to the state rhetoric and the regime's long-promoted image as the defender of the holy places. The responsibility for the loss could be portrayed as a failure by the regime, giving influential groups both inside and outside the country a reason to question its legitimacy.

Moreover, the future of the West Bank was in question concerning not only the occupation, but also the consequences of a potential withdrawal by the Israelis. There was awareness among political circles that the occupation could lead to "the revival of interest among Israelis, Jordanian West Bankers, and Saudis in the idea of a semi-autonomous Palestinian state on the West Bank, possibly with Gaza."⁶²

⁵⁹ Peter Gubser, *Jordan, Crossroads of Middle East Events* (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press; London: Croom Helm, 1983), p. 101; Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians*, p.137.

⁶⁰ FCO 17/251.

⁶¹ Michael Dumper, *The Politics of Jerusalem since 1967* (New York: Columbia Press, 1997), p.215.

⁶² FCO 17/251: Anonymous report dated 9 August 1967, [Secret – Nodis].

In the days following the defeat, the King and the government in Jordan made every effort to absorb the shock and raise public morale. There was emphasis on the fact that the army had fought heroically, the media giving the impression that tens of thousands had been killed in the war. The Prime Minister, Sa'ad Jum'a, stated that 6,094 had been killed, although it appeared later that the true total was 696. The difference in numbers was attributed to the wartime chaos.⁶³

Emphasis was also placed on the fact that the unification would continue. The Prime Minister asserted: "The Jordanian entity of the two Banks is sacred (...). The West Bankers should realise that their souls and future are all tightly and sacredly bound to this Bank."⁶⁴ To cement the continuing links between the East and West Banks, the government adopted the policy of open bridges, and maintained an institutional presence in the West Bank, where its population could move between the two sides. Jordanian institutions, such as the *waqf*, continued to work in the West Bank. Once again, Jerusalem seemed to be the place where historic questions could be answered. The Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem at the end of July created an opportunity to emphasise the Jordanian status in the West Bank in general.

The Israeli Mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, failed to enlarge the Municipal Council with the Arab councillors of East Jerusalem.⁶⁵ The *Amin* (Mayor) of Jerusalem and seven of the twelve members of the Municipal Council (the remaining five had left for Amman) sent a letter dated 23 July to the Israeli Assistant Administrative Officer of Jerusalem, Rofael Levy. The letter stated that they refused to join the Municipal Council of Jerusalem under Israeli law, because this would be an official recognition of the annexation of "Arab Jerusalem", and they asked that "things be returned to what they were before 5 June 1967."⁶⁶

To deal with the Israeli measures in Jerusalem, leading figures in the city established the Higher Islamic Council (HIC). In particular, this was a reaction to the Israeli law governing properties owned by absentees. According to this law, *waqf* properties, which comprised nearly 25 per cent of the properties in East Jerusalem in addition to the city's mosques (including al-Aqsa Mosque), were subject to control

⁶³ Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians*, p.136.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.140.

⁶⁵ FCO17/251: Letter dated 12 July 1967 from J.H. Lewen, British Consul-General in Jerusalem, to W. Morris, Eastern Department, reporting a discussion with Teddy Kollek.

by the Israeli government, including the right of sale, leasing, demolition, etc. Therefore, on 24 July 1967 a meeting was held by a number of Jerusalem's prominent figures, including *waqf* officials, lawyers, Shar'ya judges, political activists and other Jordanian officials. The participants issued a memorandum addressed to the Israeli Military Governor of the West Bank, rejecting the annexation and insisting that "Arab Jerusalem" was part of Jordan and that the inhabitants of Arab Jerusalem rejected the Israeli measures. The memorandum also declared the establishment of the Council to direct Islamic affairs in the West Bank until the end of the occupation.⁶⁷ The result was a wave of support in the form of statements from municipalities and professional and workers' syndicates in the West Bank.⁶⁸

In the following weeks the Council seemed to be turning into the political leader of the occupied territories. With overwhelming popular support, it managed to dissuade the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs from imposing censorship on al-Aqsa Mosque by asking to see the text of the Friday sermon. The Board refused and threatened a general boycott of the prayers. Moreover, on 31 January 1968 another victory was achieved with the transfer of Islamic affairs from the Ministry of Religious Affairs to the Ministry of Defence.⁶⁹ The result was that Islamic affairs in Jerusalem were more closely linked to the military occupied territories than to annexed Jerusalem.

In retrospect, some of the leaders and prominent figures of Jerusalem, by means of the HIC and with the support of the heads of the municipalities, had the opportunity to revive a kind of "politics of the notables" in Jerusalem. It was similar to the role that had been played by the SMC in the 1920s and 1930s, although this time it was linked to Amman and its leadership was not yet fully developed.

The punitive measures imposed by Israel were responsible for bringing the progress of the Council to a halt. In September 1967 the Israeli government expelled the Council Chairman, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Sā'iḥ, and in May 1969 expelled six other

⁶⁶ FCO 17/251: Translated copy of the Arab Councillors' letter.

⁶⁷ For the details of the establishment of the Council, see Ibrāhīm Bakir, *Mu'tamar al-Salām wa al-Mufawḍāt al-Mubāshira ma' Isrā'īl* [The Peace Conference and Direct Negotiations with Israel] (Amman: Dār Ḥammūda, 1992), pp.91–98 and 359–363.

⁶⁸ al-Shu'aybī, *Al-Kayniyya*, p.138.

⁶⁹ Dumper, *The Politics of Jerusalem*, p.169.

members.⁷⁰ More important, though, was the way in which Jordan dealt with the Board. It was placed under the administration of the Jordanian Ministry of *Awqāf* in Amman, with its tasks confined to the reactivation of the Shar‘ya court and *awqāf* affairs. Gradually the members of the Council became Jordanian employees restricted to certain functions without a political role.⁷¹ Although the Council played a fairly important role in promoting the city’s Arab and Muslim identity and in dealing with the Israeli policies, it did not achieve the political target of maintaining Amman’s power in the West Bank. In other words, the Council was transformed into a bureaucratic Jordanian body instead of developing into a grassroots organisation. Meanwhile, the PLO was creating its own grassroots branches as described in Chapter One.

Thus, while Jordanian flags still appeared in the anti-occupation demonstrations and on the martyrs’ graves until 1973, it was observed in that year that the Palestinian flag appeared without its Jordanian companion in symbolic funerals held in the West Bank for Palestinian leaders assassinated in Beirut by Israeli commandos.⁷² Moreover, at the end of that year an opinion poll in the West Bank showed that 44 per cent of its inhabitants wanted an independent Palestinian state, whereas only 19 per cent wanted to return to Jordan.⁷³ This could be attributed to the failure to begin peace efforts, and to the clashes between the Palestinian armed factions and the Jordanian Army between 1969-1971. Nevertheless, the lack of grassroots organisation was the crucial factor. By 1976 Jordan had also lost its control of the municipalities when PLO supporters won the elections,⁷⁴ although not in Jerusalem, where the Palestinians boycotted the elections.

Jordan’s role in subsidising education, health and municipal services, *awqāf*, etc., was important for the daily life of the Palestinians and for providing them with the wherewithal for dealing with the Israelis. The “Hashemite renovation” of the holy places and the maintenance of the shrines and *waqf* properties continued to be a

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.170.

⁷¹ For the Council’s relations with the Ministry of *Awqāf* in Amman, see *ibid.*, pp.170–172; and Dumper, *Sacred Space*, pp.82–84.

⁷² al-Shu‘aybī, *Al-Kayaniyya*, p.185.

⁷³ Gresh, *The PLO*, p.134.

⁷⁴ Friedland & Hecht, *To Rule*, p.258.

special task in Jerusalem, and was usually the subject of intense publicity and media coverage aimed at sustaining the image of the Hashemites as the guardians and defenders of Jerusalem, and at mobilising popular support and loyalty.

In the mid-1980s Jordan tried to counter the PLO influence in the territories by establishing a grassroots influence, and by granting a greater political role to those Jerusalem deputies in the Jordanian Parliament who returned to Jerusalem, or who visited it frequently, in an effort to revive the support of Amman.⁷⁵ In the same way, in 1986, Amman backed a split in Fath, led by the prominent figure in the movement, ‘Aṭallah ‘Aṭallah, whose supporters began to act in the occupied territories. In September of that year, ‘Aṭallah’s “personal representative” held an official press conference in East Jerusalem. These activities were followed by Jordan’s declaration of a 5-billion dinar development plan for the territories.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, all these plans failed. The discourse of the PLO political resistance attracted the support of young people, and gradually new figures connected with the PLO dominated the institutions and political life of Jerusalem. The leaders of the Intifada of 1987 publicly declared their hostility towards Amman. In March 1988 they called upon the Palestinian deputies who had been “appointed by the King” to the Jordanian Parliament to resign their seats immediately.⁷⁷

On reading the messages of the Intifada, the Jordanian government decided on 28 July to cancel the five-year development plan, and on 30 July the King dissolved Parliament. The next day, 31 July, he declared his decision to dismantle the legal and administrative links between the East and West Banks.⁷⁸ This was the official end to the unification of Jordan and the West Bank, and to the possibility that Jordan would negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians. The King’s disengagement speech did not mention Jerusalem at all.⁷⁹ Amman continued funding and administering the Shar’ya Court and the *awqāf*, so the holy places and subsequently many aspects of Jerusalem’s affairs were exempted from the decision.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.315.

⁷⁶ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, pp.588–589.

⁷⁷ Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians*, p.226.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ “The Speech on Jordan’s Disengagement from the West Bank”, cited Abdul Hadi, *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 1, pp.312–314.

The exemption of Jerusalem in such a way had different meanings; firstly that Jordan was aware of the danger of leaving Jerusalem and that it could create a vacuum to be exploited by Israel, which would not let the PLO fill it. And secondly such exemption was important to preserve the Jordanian Hashemite regime image as defenders and guardians of the holy places. However, according to such exemption, Jordan continued to define its relationship with the cause of Jerusalem differently from other aspects of the Palestinian cause. In the case of Jerusalem, Jordan remained a partner and a responsible party in any alteration in the city's *status quo*.

3.3.2 The Political Settlement

The events of June 1967 seemed to be a possible opportunity for reaching a peace agreement between Jordan and Israel without fear of Arab rejection, or the reaction of President Jamāl ‘Abd al-Nāṣir. In 1998, King Ḥusayn recalled the Egyptian President telling him before the [Egyptian] Revolutionary Command Council in 1967:

“My brother, because of us you lost the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza as well. Go kiss Lyndon Johnson's hand and beg him to return the West Bank and Jerusalem.” I told him: “I will beg to no one; I never have. With God's help we will work hard to regain our lands.” He then promised this: “Let them [the Israelis] stay in the Sinai and in the Suez Canal and let the Canal remain closed. I will accept no changes in the *status quo* until we regain the occupied lands. We went into a war and we lost it; we have to pay the price. There is one condition, however—none of us should sign a peace treaty with Israel alone, and any solution must be part of a comprehensive settlement.”⁸⁰

These were the grounds on which King Ḥusayn aimed to reach a settlement that would not only restore the occupied territory, but would also be a victory for the original Jordanian point of view that a settlement should recognise the existence of Israel, and that the partition of Palestine was a realistic solution.

Jordan made efforts in various directions to achieve a political solution. It played a pivotal role in persuading the international powers to push for a political settlement, leading to the UN Security Council Resolution 242.⁸¹ In addition, direct and indirect, secret and open negotiations were taking place at that time. King

⁸⁰ King Hussein, “Address to Members of the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches, Amman, 20 May 1998”; English trans. on King Hussein's web page (www.Kinghussein.gov.jo).

⁸¹ Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians*, pp.152–153.

Ḥusayn told British diplomats that the armistice lines “[made] no sense”, and would require revision.⁸² This was not intended for Jerusalem in particular, rather it was to give an indication that the armistice borders and the pre-war situation could be reviewed in terms of a peaceful settlement.

For its part, Israel approached prominent personalities in Jerusalem in an attempt to deal with them as representatives of the Palestinians. However, they refused to act independently, instead co-ordinating their moves with Amman. For instance, in July 1967 information began to leak that Anwar Nusayba was holding meetings with Israeli “thinkers” at his home.⁸³ Later, it appeared that these meetings were more than think tanks. Nusayba told the British Ambassador in Amman on 11 March 1968 that he and other prominent figures in the West Bank had been summoned to Amman by the King and expected to be invited with others, after the ‘Eid, to join the government, when there would be a real prospect of negotiations getting under way and leading to a fair settlement. He told the Ambassador that he was in contact with Israeli politicians, and the Ambassador reported that Anwar Nusayba “described an arrangement whereby Israel was sovereign throughout Jerusalem and Arab flags were permitted to be flown on mosques as ‘just not on’.”⁸⁴ Nusayba revealed years later that he had been negotiating a municipal solution based on the “borough plan”, with shared sovereignty in Jerusalem. However, Jordan had rejected it and insisted on divided sovereignty.⁸⁵

According to King Ḥusayn, he had at least eight unannounced meetings with Israeli officials between 1967 and 1974, and another six meetings in the following two years. The King concluded from his meetings with officials such as Abba Eban, Yaakov Herzog, Yigal Allon, Moshe Dayan, Chaim Bar-Lev, Golda Meir and Yitzhak Rabin: “The Israeli attitude was different from what we had expected”, and “we were so far apart”. He explained that he was offered “the return of something like 90-plus per cent of the territory, 98 even, excluding Jerusalem.” The King did not accept these offers, and by the mid-1970s negotiations had come to a halt. The

⁸² FCO 17/225: “Secret – Nodis”, 9 August 1967.

⁸³ FCO 17/251, 12 July 1967: Telegram from the British Consul in Jerusalem, reporting his telephone conversation with Rawḥī al-Khatīb, the Mayor of Jerusalem.

⁸⁴ FCO 17/648: Telegram no. 187, Amman, 13 March 1968.

⁸⁵ Friedland & Hecht, *To Rule*, p. 287.

King, as he said later, “could not give an inch of Palestinian territory or an iota of Palestinians’ rights.”⁸⁶

‘Adnān Abū-‘Ūda, who had been an official close to the King since 1970, said: “The secret communications of King Ḥusayn with the Israelis were important because he realised Jerusalem was a difficult topic, and he was careful for he was unable to make peace without Jerusalem.” Abū-‘Ūda explained that Jordan recognised that Jerusalem’s pre-1967 situation was bizarre, in that Jews were denied access to the city, although he indicated at the same time that the situation was the same on the other side, where Jordanian [Christians] were denied access to Nazareth and Tiberias. All this would have changed if there had been a peace settlement.⁸⁷

These manoeuvres show that although Jordan accepted changes in the pre-war situation, it would not accept a settlement without Jerusalem and rejected the idea of shared sovereignty. The Jordanian official position was that “Arab” Jerusalem was occupied territory included in UN Resolution 242 regarding the Israeli withdrawal.⁸⁸ At the same time Jordan emphasised its intention to guarantee free access to “Arab Jerusalem” and to the various holy places.

The failure to reach a settlement was not unconnected with the rise of the PLO and armed resistance. Jordan had to calculate the direction and level of public opinion, and knew then that the resistance movement could mobilise public support against a solution based on the pre-1967 situation. It was in this context that King Ḥusayn proposed a plan on 15 March 1972, which renamed the “Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan” the “United Arab Kingdom”. It would consist of two regions – Palestine and Jordan – with Jerusalem the capital of Palestine, and Amman the central capital of the state to be headed by the King. Each region would have a high level of independence in its internal affairs.⁸⁹ This offer clearly meant accepting a state with a new identity that would not be called Hashemite, while the Palestinian identity would be recognised.

⁸⁶ See Avi Shlaim, “His Royal Shyness: King Hussein and Israel”, *The New York Review of Books* (15 July 1999) (an interview with the King on 2 December 1996 concerning his meetings with Israeli leaders).

⁸⁷ Interview, ‘Adnān Abū-‘Ūda, Amman, 13 January 2000.

⁸⁸ Euronews, *Prisma*: Interview with King Husayn, 1 July 1995, the King’s web site: www.kinghussein.gov.jo.

⁸⁹ For the plan, see Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 1, p.221.

The Palestinians rejected the plan on the grounds that it was only a partial solution, whereas they demanded the full liberation of Palestine. In addition, King Ḥusayn's solution would mean the cancellation of the refugees' right of return.⁹⁰

Meanwhile, according to 'Adnān Abū-'Ūda, "Jerusalem persisted as a theme in Jordan's official discourse of mobilisation, and the occupation of Jerusalem led to highlighting the Arabism of the city in this discourse."⁹¹

However, another interpretation of the emphasis on the city's Arabism is reflected by the political changes in the region, namely, the decision of the Arab summit in 1974 to recognise the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. This resolution helped in bringing the Jordanian negotiations with Israel to a halt, which, in turn caused a change in Jordan's discourse on Jerusalem. A Jordanian researcher noticed that:

Jordan in the past called clearly to restore East Jerusalem to Jordanian sovereignty, dealing with the issue as a Jordanian issue. During this present stage, however, [after 1973] it has dealt with Jerusalem as an Arab issue, with a kind of particularity, because of factors related to the Jordanian role in the city.⁹²

The researcher was referring in particular to the fact that while Jordan was previously calling to restore Jerusalem to "Jordanian sovereignty", it had begun to call for restoring it to "Arab sovereignty". The change was a result of the resolution passed at the Arab summit and an attempt to avoid provoking the PLO. At the same time, however, it reflected Jordan's refraining from giving explicit recognition to the PLO as the party responsible.

Then the American administration decided to adopt the step-by-step negotiations, in which each Arab country would negotiate with Israel bilaterally and separately. On this basis, the US sponsored the Camp David agreement between Israel and Egypt in 1978, which was rejected by Jordan. Maḥmūd Riyāḍ, former General Secretary of the Arab League, wrote:

Reference in the agreement is made to Jordan and Jordanians fourteen times as if Jordan was one of the states of the US or an Egyptian province, with

⁹⁰ As'ad 'Abd al-Raḥmān, *Munazzamat*, pp.220 & 221.

⁹¹ Interview, 'Adnān Abū-'Ūda.

⁹² 'Abdullah al-'Arqān, *Qaḍiyat al-Quds fī al-Taswiya al-Silmiyya li al-Sira' al-'Arabī al-Isrā'īlī* [The Problem of Jerusalem in the Peace Settlement of the Arab-Israeli Conflict] (Amman: Military Press, 1997). p.109.

the assumption that the King of Jordan will hurry to either Washington or Cairo to do their bidding.⁹³

A statement by the Jordanian government in September 1978 declared that since Jordan had not been part of the Camp David negotiations, it had no legal nor moral responsibility for issues in which it had not participated in discussing or formulating. The statement called for a comprehensive settlement and rejected separate bilateral agreements. It added that any final settlement should include an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and the West Bank, “especially the return of the Arab sovereignty over Arab Jerusalem”. In addition, any final and just settlement had to give the Palestinian people the right of self-determination.⁹⁴

After Camp David, Jordan’s aim was to find a formula of joint movement with the PLO, which would lead to a political settlement and would give the Palestinians the right of representation. This formula was to be a halfway house between the PLO and Arab regimes calling for complete separation between the Palestinians and Jordan, and the Jordanian position of the 1950s and 1960s, in which the government rejected the Palestinian entity and Palestinian identity.

On 11 February 1985 Jordan and the PLO signed an agreement to go to an international peace conference as a joint delegation. The agreement was designed to tackle the question of representation, and to find a formula acceptable to the US and Israel, which would allow the PLO a place at the negotiations. Although the core issues such as Jerusalem were mentioned, the agreement in general represented the known positions of the Jordanians and Palestinians. It emphasised the total Israeli withdrawal from the lands that had been occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem (see Chapter One).

Having declared the failure of the joint agreement on 19 February 1986 to be due to PLO hesitation, King Ḥusayn decided to work for peace without the PLO. Therefore Jordan put forward a five-year development plan and backed an alternative Palestinian leadership, as described in the previous section.

Abū- ‘Ūda explained the King’s plans:

⁹³ Mahmoud Riad, *The Struggle for Peace in the Middle East* (London: Quartet Books, 1981), p.323.

The rationale behind the development plan was to improve the Palestinians' quality of life, create jobs, and eventually stop or at least slow down Palestinian emigration to Jordan. The Plan was also designed to create a local Palestinian leadership free of PLO influence. Such a leadership would, at the right time, become Jordan's Palestinian partner in negotiating a peaceful settlement with Israel within an international conference.⁹⁵

This was a change in the Jordanian position of accepting, albeit reluctantly, the resolution passed at the Arab summit of 1974, in which the PLO was recognised as the sole representative of the Palestinians. On 11 April 1987, a secret meeting was held in London between Shimon Peres and King Ḥusayn, resulting in a document in which it was understood that an international conference would be held, where the Palestinians would be part of a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. The purpose of the conference was formulated in a general text: "To negotiate an agreement based on UN resolutions 242 and 338 with the purpose of attaining comprehensive peace in the region and security for the countries in the area, and granting the Palestinian people their general legitimate rights."⁹⁶

Shimon Peres, the current Foreign Minister, was acting without the Israeli government mandate and so the understanding did not go far. More importantly, however, the Intifada erupted in December, resulting in the decision of disengagement between Jordan and the West Bank.

To conclude: in contrast to the period between 1948 and 1967, Jerusalem, after the war of June 1967 became a significant obstacle to reaching a Jordanian-Israeli peace agreement. However, it is still possible to say that the PLO role in the settlement and the constituents of the parties taking part in the negotiations were the most noticeable questions at the time and the main obstacle to setting a peace process into motion.

3.4 The Madrid Conference and the Israeli-Jordanian Peace Agreement

Jordan refused to join the international side against Iraq in the Gulf War of 1990-91.

⁹⁴ Munīr al-Hūr and Ṭāriq al-Mūsā, *Mashārī' al-Taswiya li al-Qaḍiya al-Filasṭīniyya 1945–1985* [The Proposals for the Settlement of the Palestinian Problem 1945–1985] (Amman: Dār al-Jalīl, 1986), pp.189, 190.

⁹⁵ Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians*, p.223.

⁹⁶ Al-Madfai, *Jordan, The United States*, p. 335.

This was combined with the increased use of Arab nationalist and Islamist slogans at both popular and official level. The Muslim Brothers entered the Jordanian Cabinet and held several portfolios.

In this context Jerusalem returned to the scene not only as part of the nationalist discourse but also as a rival to Arab regimes, namely Saudi Arabia. A dispute erupted in the aftermath of the war, largely as a result of wartime tension. For two weeks in May 1992 Saudi Arabia and Jordan competed publicly for the responsibility of restoring the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. The dispute began when Egyptian experts visited the site and criticised the standard of its maintenance. This criticism was considered provocative by Jordan, which had highlighted its role as guardian of the holy places, having spent 240 million dollars between 1952 and 1991 on the Islamic religious places in Jerusalem. In response to the experts' report, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia donated 9 million dollars to repair the Dome, and ignored Jordan's role by sending the donation through UNESCO. In frustration at this move, a huge media campaign was instigated in Amman.⁹⁷ The current Jordanian Minister of Information, Maḥmūd al-Sharīf, criticised any attempt to bypass Jordan's role in the restoration of the holy places. He warned that by sending the donation through UNESCO, Saudi Arabia was opening the door to the internationalisation of Jerusalem, a step that could be exploited by Israel to capture the holy places.⁹⁸ King Ḥusayn sold his house in London and donated 8.5 million dollars to repair the Dome. This action triggered a large solidarity campaign in Jordan in support of the King. It was led by Jordanian and Palestinian pro-Jordanian figures and took the form of visits by delegates to the King and the publication of telegrams and advertisements in the newspapers praising the Hashemites' role in Jerusalem.⁹⁹ The campaign was an opportunity to revive the role of Jerusalem in the Hashemite discourse.

The importance of these events was that they occurred while Jordan was taking part with the PLO in a joint delegation at the negotiations that had begun in Madrid in October 1991. They indicated that the King, in spite of the disengagement with the West Bank and his help to the PLO at the negotiations to achieve their independent entity, was still insisting on his rights and his role in Jerusalem.

⁹⁷ Lamis Andoni, *Middle East International* (29 May 1992).

⁹⁸ *Al-Mustaqbal al-'Arabī*, no.161 (July 1992).

Meanwhile, American attempts in the aftermath of the Gulf War to begin the peace process and the Israeli rejection of an independent Palestinian delegation resulted in Jordan and the PLO agreeing to participate in the Madrid peace conference as a joint delegation. However, Jordan insisted that the delegation should comprise 28 members, as opposed to 14 in the case of the other delegations. Jordan also insisted that each delegation should negotiate its issues separately. As the current Foreign Minister, Kāmil Abū-Jābir, explained, it meant that “practically the Palestinians were acting independently, and this is what we explained to the Americans.”¹⁰⁰

In November 1993 the Jordanian delegation reached an understanding with the Israeli delegation on the agenda for the negotiations. The Jordanian delegation gave copies of the agenda to the Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian delegations even before sending a copy to Amman. Syria was dissatisfied, considering the agenda to be the beginning of unilateral agreements. Upon the King’s instructions, the agenda was shelved and Israel was told that no further negotiations could take place before there was parallel progress on other tracks.¹⁰¹

When the Oslo declaration was leaked to the newspapers in late August 1993, it was a surprise to the Jordanian side. The King and the Jordanian negotiators were angry that they learnt about the agreement only from the media. The Jordanian government and negotiators spent the whole night discussing the next step, and whether they should express their resentment at the behaviour of the Palestinians. Finally, it was decided to express support for the Palestinian choice, to “avoid weakening the Palestinians”.¹⁰²

The Jordanian negotiators realised that the Oslo interim agreements had weakened Jordan’s position regarding Israel over issues such as Jerusalem and the refugees. Nor could Jordan ask for any more immediate changes in the city’s situation, since the Oslo agreement had delayed all further negotiations on the city until the final status phase.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Andoni, *Middle East International*.

¹⁰⁰ Interview, Kāmil Abū- Jābir, Amman, 18 January 2000.

¹⁰¹ Interview, Fāyiz al-Ṭarāwna, Amman, 12 January 2000.

¹⁰² Interview, Kāmil Abū-Jābir.

¹⁰³ Interview, Fāyiz al-Ṭarāwna.

On 14 September, the day after signing the Oslo Accords, Israel and Jordan signed the “Common Agenda”, which designated the issues to be negotiated, namely, security, water, refugees and displaced people, borders and territories, and bilateral co-operation within a regional context. There was no mention of Jerusalem.¹⁰⁴

The Jordanians informed the Palestinians that Jordan would transfer the administration of the *awqāf* and the Islamic shrines to the PA in any area from which Israel withdrew. When King Ḥusayn negotiated with the Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, he took care to clarify Jordan’s role in the holy places.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, when Israel and Jordan signed the Washington Declaration (a declaration of principles) on 25 July 1994, it contained the following article: “Israel respects the present special role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in Muslim holy shrines in Jerusalem. When negotiations on the permanent status takes place, Israel will give high priority to the Jordanian historic role in these Shrines.”¹⁰⁶

The Palestinians reacted angrily to this article, and voiced their complaints in the media and in contacts with Arab leaders on the Jordanian position, considering Jerusalem a Palestinian affair. The Jordanian counter-argument contained many dimensions and explanations:

1. The article was in the interests of the Palestinians, because it confirmed a change in the Israeli position, albeit a very small one. Israel, which had insisted at length on exclusive sovereignty in the city, had now accepted a degree of Jordanian participation in sovereignty, which could be the first step to further changes.¹⁰⁷ The Jordanian Minister of Information commented as follows on the Palestinian protest: “We [Jordan] achieved a religious liberation for Jerusalem.” Fāyiz al-Ṭarāwna added that the article had placed the “Arab and Islamic custodians” of al-Aqsa Mosque in the final status negotiations, “and now it is for the Palestinians to tackle the border issue.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ “The Israeli Common Agenda; cited in Abdul Hadi, *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 1, p. 153.

¹⁰⁵ Interview, Fāyiz al-Ṭarāwna.

¹⁰⁶ Israel–Jordan Washington Declaration; cited in *Documents on Jerusalem*, p. 122.

¹⁰⁷ Interview, Kāmil Abū-Jābir.

¹⁰⁸ Interviews: Fāyiz al-Ṭarāwna.

2. Jordan explained through different channels to the Palestinians that when the Palestinians gained sovereignty over Jerusalem, the article would be invalid.¹⁰⁹
3. From the Jordanian point of view then, the article could be made to function in particular ways. For instance, the Palestinians might be forced into reaching an agreement that excluded or delayed the question of Jerusalem. Or that no agreement would be reached at all.¹¹⁰

However, on various occasions afterwards, Jordan took care to emphasise that it had no interest in competing with the PLO in Jerusalem. So when the final Jordanian-Israeli bilateral peace agreement was signed on 26 October 1994, it emphasised the article in the Washington Declaration without any additions.¹¹¹

It could be assumed that the sensitivity between Jordan and the PLO dissuaded Jordan from making any further attempts to clarify the issue of Jerusalem in greater detail during the negotiations with Israel. Subsequently, neither Jordan nor the PLO in their agreements with Israel managed to gain any practical change in the city for the Arab side during the interim period. In other words, the Arab-Arab sensitivity eased the task of the Israelis.

Despite the death of King Ḥusayn in February 1999 and the ascent of his son King ‘Abdullah II to the throne, no major changes occurred in the Jordanian position on Jerusalem. But the new King has shown more interest in concentrating on internal development and came to the throne at a time when the general trend to play a smaller role in the Palestinian cause had already crystallised among the Jordanian officials.

Jordan showed no interest in participating in the negotiations on Jerusalem, which took place between Israel and the Palestinians at Camp David and Taba in 2000, nor in raising the issue of its role in any future settlement, despite the Israeli commitment in the peace agreement with Jordan to give “priority” to the Jordanian role in Jerusalem. Senior Jordanian politicians had expressed their intention to avoid direct participation in the final negotiations. For instance, in August 1999 the current Jordanian Prime Minister, ‘Abd al-Raūf al-Rawābda, said that Jordan had the right to

¹⁰⁹ Interviews: Fāyiz al-Ṭarāwna and ‘Ādnān Abū-‘Ūda.

¹¹⁰ Interviews: Fāyiz al-Ṭarāwna and Kāmīl Abū-Jābir.

¹¹¹ Treaty of Peace between Israel and the Jordan; cited in Abdul Hadi, *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 2, pp. 224–230.

participate in the final negotiations to protect its interests, although “without being partners in the signing”.¹¹²

This position reveals Jordan’s attitude towards its role in the political settlement of the Palestinian question. It had developed over years, and become clearer following the Oslo Accords.

Fāyiz al-Ṭarāwna, the current head of the Royal Court, summarised this attitude. He based his view on what he called the “responsibility theory”.^{*} This is a reference to the trend common in many Palestinian and Arab regimes and influential groups to place the responsibility on Jordan for the numerous Arab failures in dealing with the Palestinian question. This trend made Jordanian politicians believe that any agreement reached with Jordan, or with Jordanian participation in achieving it, would not be accepted, whatever its content, and would be portrayed by some powers as a conspiracy. Al-Ṭarāwna expressed his view as follows:

In the final negotiations we shall declare our position in spheres where we have an interest, such as the refugees and Jerusalem, and we shall co-operate with, support, and back the Palestinians. However, we shall not be a direct party to the agreement, nor shall we sign it. The negotiations could lead to concessions, which, in turn would lead to accusations that Jordan is part of a conspiracy. We do not want to be part of these concessions, nor do we want to return to the “responsibility theory”.¹¹³

This position completed the redefinition of Jordan’s political role in the Arab-Israeli conflict, even where Jerusalem was concerned. Jordan, which had once regarded its unification with the West Bank as sacred and Jerusalem as the jewel in the Hashemite crown, had now become an “external” Arab party supporting its “brothers” in Palestine. Jerusalem as well as the West Bank were no longer national internal issues for the Jordanian nation-state.

Nevertheless, it is expected that Jordan will continue to carry out its responsibilities in the city until an agreement is reached.¹¹⁴ If there is no agreement on Jerusalem, or if the peace process collapses completely, then Jordan could ask to

¹¹² *Al-Mustaqbal al-‘Arabī*, no. 248, October 1999.

^{*} Al-Ṭarāwna used the Arabic word (*Wizr*) that I translate as “responsibility”.

¹¹³ Interview, Fāyiz al-Ṭarāwna.

¹¹⁴ For instance, in January 2001 the Jordanian Ministry of the *Awqāf* declared the appointment of 160 new teachers in the *awqāf* schools in Jerusalem (see *al-Ra’y*, 14 January 2001).

have the article in the treaty with Israel on Jerusalem put into effect so as to clarify Israeli recognition of Jordan's responsibilities in the city.

At the same time, bearing these responsibilities in the city will continue to be a source of national pride, and a useful theme in the discourse on the mobilisation of support. It would also be evidence that Jordan was contributing its share to the Palestinian cause, especially in times of escalating tension. An example was al-Aqsa Intifada, when Jordanian public opinion demanded that more support be given to the Palestinians to confront the Israelis. The Jordanian newspapers and political statements at that time offered several examples of how Jerusalem could serve such a function. For instance, in early 2001 the government-owned newspaper, *al-Ra'y*, published a leader quoting an unnamed "senior Jordanian official" who said: "[Jordan] will not give up the Muslim and Christian Shrines in Jerusalem until the achievement of (full) Palestinian sovereignty over the city". The article concluded:

The Hashemite relationship with the shrines preceded the unification of the two Banks in 1950. On 30 August 1924 al-Hajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī, the then President of the Supreme Muslim Council, asked Amir 'Abdullah bin al-Husayn that the whole construction of al-Ḥaram al-Qudsī be under the full patronage of Amir 'Abdullah, and since that day the Hashemite patronage of the shrines has not ceased.¹¹⁵

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has described the development of the association between Jerusalem and the Hashemite regime of Jordan, and how this was used in the construction of a national state. The significance of Jerusalem brought about the achievement of the Transjordan Arab Legion in defending the city against the Jewish troops, which, in turn, facilitated the unification of the East and West Banks of Jordan.

Nevertheless, the chapter has also shown that, despite religious and ideological beliefs and discourse, political factors such as the balance of power and domestic political agendas have greater power.

The calculation of the balance of power was the reason why King 'Abdullah I accepted the partition of Palestine in the pre-1948 period as a solution for the conflict between the Jews and the Palestinian Arabs, and so accepted the internationalisation

¹¹⁵ *Al-Ra'y*, 13 January 2001 (see the text of the letter mentioned in the first section of this chapter).

of Jerusalem. However, developments during the war and the control by the Arab Legion over East Jerusalem caused the King to reject internationalisation and to reach an understanding with the other power in Jerusalem – Israel – to partition the city. Thus it was that Israel gained West Jerusalem and called it Jerusalem, and Jordan gained East Jerusalem and called it Jerusalem, or Arab Jerusalem.

The role of Jordan in Jerusalem also changed in a similar way, for the state redefined its relationship with the city several times. In the 1950s it considered Jerusalem part of the Jordanian state and refused to regard it as a centre of sub-identity within the state (the Palestinian identity). However, in deference to Palestinian wishes and Arab pressure, Jordan was gradually forced to change its view and regard the city as a centre of Palestinian identity, although links continued to be maintained. Finally, by the late 1990s, Jordan had completely redefined its relationship with Jerusalem, for it recognised that the Palestinians were the party responsible for negotiating the city's future.

Jordan has expressed the religious Arab Islamic discourse on Jerusalem since the 1920s, and the city has become part of the country's Arab Islamic national identity, which has been constructed over the years. That is why Jordan is expected to continue bearing its responsibilities there. However, it is no longer because Jerusalem is part of the Jordanian state or because Jordan is seeking to re-establish its rule in the West Bank, but on the basis of Arab and Islamic solidarity.

In short, the Arab Islamic discourse and the association between Jordanian identity and Jerusalem did not prevent the redefinition of Jordan's political positions towards the political settlement and the state's relationship with Jerusalem according to the current political circumstances.

Chapter Four

The Arab–Muslim Jerusalem

Introduction

This chapter discusses the Arab–Muslim dimension of the Jerusalem question, especially whether the religious and historical significance of Jerusalem makes Arab and Muslim countries see themselves as directly responsible for the future of the city. Or, according to the nation-state scheme, do these countries define their role as that of a group of states supporting another state or nation (Palestine), though not as partners in the issue?

The argument is that since the Arab and Muslim countries have in general aimed to establish their own nation-states, rather than a union, they have defined their role as supporters, not direct players, in the Jerusalem issue. Nevertheless, their position and the degree of their participation have changed as a result of the influence of various factors.

Chapter One also analyses how the question of Jerusalem has affected the construction of nation-state and identity in the Arab and Muslim worlds. The chapter is divided into two sections:

1. Jerusalem and the Muslim world.
2. Jerusalem and the Arab world.

4.1 Jerusalem and the Muslim World

Unlike the idea of Arab unity, there were no serious attempts in the first half of the twentieth century to establish Muslim unity, especially at the official level. However, during the 1920s and 1930s, the Palestinian leadership had managed to gain Muslim support by publicising the Zionist threat to the holy places of Jerusalem. The highlighting of Jerusalem as the centre of the conflict in Palestine, as explained in Chapter One, certainly contributed to making Palestine a subject of public concern in the Muslim and Arab worlds during the twentieth century.

Muslim interest in the Jerusalem question was reinforced by three major events: the campaign in the 1920s to restore the holy places, the Muslim General

Congress in 1931, and the establishment of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1969.

4.1.1 The Holy Places Restoration Campaign (1920s)

After assuming the presidency of the Supreme Muslim Council (SMC), Amīn al-Ḥusaynī began an intensive campaign in 1923 to restore the Islamic holy shrines in Jerusalem, especially al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. Thus delegations visited Hijaz, India, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Egypt, Turkey and other countries, explaining the dilapidated and dangerous state of these shrines, and emphasising the necessity of restoring them to prevent their collapse. The declared aim of the delegations was to raise funds for restoration, and Amīn signed a written pledge on their behalf and before the Mandatory authority that they would not take part in political activity of any kind.¹

In reality, what happened later was completely the opposite: during their visits, the delegations took the opportunity to emphasise the Zionist threat to Palestine. Amīn al-Ḥusaynī himself explained to his hosts, and to General Allenby, during a dinner party in Egypt, that he wanted to direct the attention of the Muslim world to their holy places.²

During this period Amīn al-Ḥusaynī established relations with non-Arab-Muslim leaders, most importantly the Indian Muslims, such as the well-known Indian leader Muḥammad ‘Alī, whom he met in 1924 during a conference in Hijaz. Those leaders promised to back the Palestinians in saving the holy places from Jewish aggression.³

The campaign was vital in persuading Muslim public opinion to take a religious view of the Palestinian question by means of the situation in the holy city of Jerusalem. At the same time, the campaign provided an opportunity for the Palestinian leadership to open channels of communication with prominent Muslim activists in other countries.

¹ Porath, *Emergence*, p.205, Mattar, *The Mufti*, p.29.

² Muḥsin, *Filastīn*, pp.59–61.

³ FO 371/16009: The Pan Islamic Movement.

4.1.2 The General Muslim Congress: 1931

In the shadow of the escalating dispute over the Wailing Wall in 1929 and 1930, intensive communication took place between Palestinian leaders and Muslim activists in other countries to initiate united institutional action. Most remarkable was the co-ordination between Amīn al-Ḥusaynī and the Muslim Indian activist Shawkat ‘Alī. It was decided that the vehicle of the joint Muslim action would be the establishment of an Islamic University in Jerusalem. In December 1931, in one of his reports to the Colonial Office in London on the High Commission in Jerusalem, Arthur Wauchope discussed the idea of this university. He explained that an agreement had been reached between Amīn al-Ḥusaynī and Shawkat ‘Alī in the previous year when the latter visited Jerusalem to attend the burial of his brother Muḥammad ‘Alī in the vicinity of al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf. The High Commissioner commented in a letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in December 1931:

A Muslim university in Jerusalem would of course attract Muslim students from all over the Muslim world, and make Palestine an important Muslim religious and intellectual centre. The idea has also certain political implications and in particular the possibility of providing the object and the means of a world-wide Muslim propaganda which also has its centre in Jerusalem.⁴

This was an early recognition of how Jerusalem could

1. define the Palestinian question as a Muslim Arab rather than a Palestinian national issue; and
2. play a role in reviving the Islamist identity and the pan-Islamic political movement.

Amīn al-Ḥusaynī and Shawkat ‘Alī began preparations to hold a congress in Jerusalem. However, various powers opposed the congress. The official reaction from the Arab countries was not in its favour, especially after news that it intended to discuss the matter of the Caliphate. King Farq of Egypt,⁵ the Hashemite leaders of Iraq and Transjordan, and the Saudi government, all of whom were competing for the

⁴ FO 371/16009.

⁵ Muḥsin, *Filasṭīn*, p.107.

leadership of the Muslim world, were afraid that the congress would prejudice their opportunities.⁶

Amīn al-Ḥusaynī visited Cairo and assured King Farq that the congress would not discuss the matter of the Caliphate. He also met the governing board of al-Azhar University, which not only opposed the congress, but also mobilised demonstrations against it. Amīn assured the board's members that the proposed university would be a challenge to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, not to al-Azhar. After two weeks of attempting unsuccessfully to convince them to support the congress, Amīn al-Ḥusaynī turned to members of the Opposition in Egypt and Syria and invited them to attend the congress instead.⁷

At the same time the French diplomatic delegation in Cairo contacted the High Commissioner in Egypt and expressed its anxiety that at the congress the question of the Islamic University would recede into the background, and that the proceedings of the congress would be mainly anti-European.⁸

These reactions were signs that Arab as well as European governments preferred to minimise Arab involvement in Palestine, out of fear that collaboration on that issue would provoke popular movements in the Arab countries against the current regimes as well as European policies. This was an early indicator that nation-state politics was already directing Arab policies on Palestine in the sense that the latter was considered an external issue.

As a result of this disapproval, Hajj Amīn had to make several concessions and changes in his plan to hold the congress:

1. He had to depend on Opposition elements to attend the congress instead of official representatives, which was not what he had expected.
2. He had to pledge to the High Commissioner that the congress would follow a moderate line on the Jewish question and would not provoke the Jews (see Chapter One).

⁶ Elpeleg, *The Grand Mufti*, p.28.

⁷ FO 371/16009: Arthur Wauchope's letter dated December 1931.

⁸ FO 371/16009: Secret Telegram no. 1046 dated 26 November 1931 from the High Commissioner in Cairo.

3. No Arab affairs would be discussed, especially Italian policies and the alleged atrocities in Libya, which was the current hot topic.⁹

The congress opened in al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf on 7 December 1931 and continued for two weeks. Around 145 members attended, of whom 32 were Palestinian, 24 Transjordanian, 31 Syrian, 25 Egyptian, 8 Iraqi, 7 Indian, and 18 Muslims from other parts of the world. With the exception of Yemen, no country was officially represented.¹⁰

The congress adopted an Organic Law, in which it was stated among other items: “[the] Congress of all Muslims shall be held in various parts of the world and shall be called ‘the General Muslim Congress’.” The Law defined the objectives of the Congress as being:

to safeguard Muslim interests and to preserve Muslim holy places from any interference, [and] to establish universities and educational institutions which will endeavour to create conformity in Muslim culture and to teach the Arabic Language to Muslim children, provided that the first step to be taken in this respect shall be the establishment of a university at Jerusalem to be called the “University of the Masjed Aqsa”.¹¹

The conference virtually died at that point. There was no follow-up, nor did the elected executive committee meet or act, nor was al-Aqsa Mosque University built. This failure could be attributed to various factors. The British government in Jerusalem had highlighted the danger of a successful congress of this kind, especially “on the policy of creating a Jewish National Home in Palestine”.¹² British officials and some of Amīn al-Ḥusaynī’s Palestinian rivals communicated with personalities and governments that the congress leaders had contacted to collect donations, and asked them not to donate. Doubts were raised by the officials about the motives of the congressmen, and this contributed to the failure of the fundraising efforts.¹³ Another possible reason was that Amīn al-Ḥusaynī’s original target had been to attract the support of official Arab and Muslim leaders. However, the invitation to Opposition leaders made the congress a grassroots organisation with radical leanings, which would lead to confrontation with Britain (see Chapter One).

⁹ FO 371/16009: Minutes of an interview between the High Commissioner and Hajj Amīn.

¹⁰ FO 371/16009: Police Report to the High Commissioner in Jerusalem.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² FO 371/16009: Report dated 8 February 1932 from Jerusalem to the Secretary of State.

However, the congress, the restoration campaign and other related activities clearly produced noticeable effects and indications:

The holy places of Jerusalem were vital in giving the conflict in Palestine a religious definition, and in raising the awareness of Muslim public opinion on the issue.

At the official level, Arab rulers were hesitant to become embroiled in the Palestinian question, especially if this would clash with British policy. Nevertheless, the development of public opinion made their participation unavoidable. A study conducted by the British Police in Jerusalem – and sent to the Foreign Office in London – stated:

The vehemence with which the cause of the Palestine Muslims was then [after 1928] taken up by the neighbouring countries of Transjordan and Syria and later on, in a lesser degree, in other Islamic countries, brought home to the Arab leaders the political strength of religious propaganda and the unity of Islam.¹⁴

From the study it appears that Jerusalem was a factor in the driving-force towards joint action and unity, despite the requirements of the separate state construction, which necessitated the concentration on domestic affairs.

1. While united Muslim action was considered important by the Palestinians to help them face the Jewish National Home policy, Islamist leaders regarded Jerusalem as a focus for mobilising their programme of unity. Two of these leaders were the Indian brother activists, Muḥammad and Shawkat ‘Alī, whose main goal was united Muslim action, and who considered the mosques of Jerusalem as a means of achieving it.
2. The “pan-Islamism” that was being created on the basis of Jerusalem and Palestine was estimated by the European powers who were ruling the region, especially Britain and France, as a serious challenge which could abort their political plans. British officials observed that while nationalist leaders in the Arab countries had become “absorbed in local affairs”, having only “intermittent discussions of contemplated plans”, and “discussions of arrangements for Arab confederation”, the Indian Muslim activists and the interment of the deceased

¹³ ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Sā’ih, *Filasṭīn*, p.30.

¹⁴ FO 371/16009: The Pan-Islamic Movement.

Indian leader Muḥammad ‘Alī in Palestine (in al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf) changed the trend. A campaign started “of distinctly anti-European, pan-Arab and pan-Islamic character” with calls for the reinstatement of the Caliphate, and other demands.¹⁵ In other words, Jerusalem was triggering a programme which challenged the scheme of separate nation-states and enhanced a collective identity in opposition to the national identities of the newly established states.

4.1.3 The Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC)

On 21 August 1969, an Australian member of the Pentacostal sect of the Church of God set fire to al-Aqsa Mosque.¹⁶ As a result the heads of Muslim states convened a summit in Morocco from 22 to 25 September, at which it was decided to establish the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The Organisation’s charter included aims such as strengthening “Islamic solidarity among member states”, and “cooperation in the political, economic, social, cultural and scientific fields”, in addition to “the struggle of all Muslim people to safeguard their dignity, independence and national rights”.¹⁷

The Organisation’s headquarters were located temporarily in Jeddah, although al-Quds al-Sharīf (Jerusalem) would be the “permanent seat [after] the liberation”. The aims of the Organisation also included co-ordinated action to “safeguard the Holy Places” and to “support the struggle of the Palestinian people and assist them in recovering their rights and liberating their occupied territories.”¹⁸

Between 1969 and 2001 nine Islamic Summit Conferences and 28 Conferences of Foreign Ministers were held and dozens of committees formed to deal with matters of politics, economics, health, education, science, sport, etc. In addition, universities, research centres, funds, information agencies and financial institutions were established, some of which became active and vital such as the Islamic Development Bank, which supports numerous enterprises and participates in expanding the banking sector in the Muslim world.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ *Guardian* (25 August 1969).

¹⁷ OIC web site: www.oic-un.org

¹⁸ Ibid.

The establishment of all these institutions – in 56 states – could be seen as a result of the arson attack on al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem in 1969. Nevertheless, the question remains: what role does the OIC play in the issue of Jerusalem?

On the one hand, the Islamic summits have tackled this problem. A number of them have been named after events or places related to the city, such as the Third Summit in Mecca in 1981: “Session on Palestine and al-Quds al-Sharīf”; the Sixth Summit in Dakar in 1991: “Session on al-Quds al-Sharīf Concord and Unity”, and the Ninth Summit in Doha in 2000: “Session on Peace and Development: al-Aqsa Intifada”.¹⁹ On the other hand, however, it could be asserted that no efficient or practical role has been played by the OIC regarding Jerusalem. This assertion could be supported by an analysis of the Organisation’s attitudes and actions regarding the various aspects of the conflict over Jerusalem.

4.1.3.1 THE SOLUTION IN JERUSALEM

The summits and meetings of the OIC have rejected the Israeli policies on Jerusalem and called for the solution to the problem by the Israeli withdrawal to the boundaries of June 1967, asserting at the same time the right of free access to the holy places for the three religions after the liberation. The second conference in 1974 declared: “Muslims alone could be [the] honest guardians of [Jerusalem], because they believe in the religions of the three prophets”.²⁰

In the early years of the Organisation there was the assertion that Israel was occupying “parts of three Islamic states” and that the OIC supported “the brother Arab–Muslim states in restoring their occupied territories”.²¹ After 1974, when the PLO was recognised officially as the representative of the Palestinians, there was a change in the terminology of the OIC, which now began to declare “Arab sovereignty”, “Muslim and human rights” and “religious freedom,”²² and to stress

¹⁹ “OIC Summits” (Arabic), PNC Archive, Amman; OIC web site.

²⁰ “Second OIC Conference”, PNC Archive, Amman.

²¹ “Resolutions of the Fourth Conference of Foreign Ministers” (Arabic), Benghazi, 24–26 March 1973, PNC Archive, Amman.

²² “Resolutions of the Sixth Conference of Foreign Ministers” (Arabic), Jeddah, 12–15 July 1975, PNC Archive, Amman.

that the solution was to return Jerusalem “to its previous Arab and Muslim status”.²³ However, asserting “Arab sovereignty” was not an expression of united identity but a symptom of disunity and dispute. Using such an expression instead of referring to states’ rights could indicate the tension between the PLO and Jordan, because of the Palestinian insistence on being the sole representative of the Palestinians and on building an independent entity in Palestine. Thus omitting any reference to a state’s sovereignty over Jerusalem avoided provoking the PLO, while a reference to Arab and Muslim sovereignty avoided provoking Jordan.

It was a similar situation when the OIC decided to establish a permanent committee for Jerusalem in 1975. Although the Jordanians would have liked to be in charge of it, the OIC members decided to appoint Morocco instead to avoid problems between the Palestinians and Jordanians. One Jordanian official said:

When the Jerusalem Committee was established, we thought it would be better if we were in charge. We were there in Jerusalem, and we were responsible for financing the *waqf*, but the Arabs wanted things to be otherwise, and the Palestinians wanted to distance Jordan from Jerusalem. So choosing Morocco or any other country except Jordan was in their interests. Actually, the issue was not Jerusalem...²⁴

However, the development of the idea of the Palestinian state caused the OIC to declare that Jerusalem would be its capital. The Third OIC Summit in Mecca in 1981 produced the statement that the OIC had “the commitment to liberate Arab Jerusalem to be the capital of the Palestinian state”.²⁵

Nevertheless, the OIC documents continued to hold the almost unchangeable position that Israel must withdraw from East Jerusalem and the rest of the territory occupied in 1967 as part of the solution to the problem between Arabs and Muslims and Israel.

4.1.3.2 THE METHODS AND TOOLS OF THE SOLUTION

The OIC view of the method and tools to deal with the issue of Jerusalem has been changeable. At the First Summit a debate was held on the mechanism of dealing with

²³ “Resolutions of the Ninth Conference of Foreign Ministers Conference” (Arabic), Dakar, 24–28 April 1978, PNC Archive, Amman.

²⁴ Interview, ‘Adnān Abū ‘Ūda. (The member states of the committee are Bangladesh, Egypt, Ghana, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mauritania, Niger, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Senegal and Syria.)

the Israeli occupation. There were those who wanted to call for struggle, and those who preferred political means. The controversy was resolved by calling on the international powers to secure a speedy Israeli withdrawal from Arab lands occupied in the June 1967 War.²⁶ At the same time, however, the determination to liberate Jerusalem by struggle or jihad was expressed, which was repeated in subsequent sessions. For instance, the Fourth Conference for Foreign Ministers in 1973 asked the member states “to open offices in the Muslim countries for volunteers to participate in jihad to liberate the holy lands”.²⁷ In addition, the Third Summit in 1981 declared: “Jihad has its clear Islamic concept that could not be misunderstood” and that practical measures would be adopted along these lines “according to consultations with the Muslim states”.²⁸

However, the 1991 Summit in Dakar, called the “Session of al-Quds al-Sharīf: Concord and Unity”, rejected a call from Chairman ‘Arafāt to promote jihad as a method of liberation. It stated instead: “we solemnly pledge to unite our efforts in defence of all Islamic causes, and in the first place the cause of al-Quds al-Sharīf, the foremost cause of Islam”.²⁹ This change was a result of both ‘Arafāt’s position in opposing the current war against Iraq, and the United States’ preparations to hold an international peace conference.

Here again the situation reflected how controversies on issues unconnected with Jerusalem influenced the policies of the Muslim states towards that city. The refusal to reaffirm jihad as a means of solving the problem of Jerusalem aimed at punishing Chairman ‘Arafāt, and this was a manifestation of how Muslim states dealt with Jerusalem as a problem of Palestinian national identity, not as their own issue.

The subsequent OIC Summit in 1994 “appreciated” the peace accords and “supported” the current peace process. It called for similar progress on both the

²⁵ “Third OIC Summit”, Mecca, 1981, PNC Archive, Amman.

²⁶ *Guardian* (26 September 1969).

²⁷ “Resolutions of the Fourth Conference of Foreign Ministers”, 1973, PNC Archive, Amman.

²⁸ “Third OIC Summit”, Mecca, 1981, PNC Archive, Amman.

²⁹ “Sixth Islamic Summit”, Dakar, 9–11 December 1991; OIC web site www.oic-un.org

Syrian and Lebanese tracks, and demanded an independent Palestinian state comprising all the occupied territories, with al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.³⁰

In 1997, in the shadow of tension in the occupied territories, the Teheran Summit used the word “liberation” again, and declared the Muslim states’ “resolve and determination to regain the Holy City of al-Quds and noble sanctuary of Masjid al-Aqsa”.³¹

The final communiqué of the Ninth OIC Summit held in Doha in November 2000, two months after the eruption of the al-Aqsa Intifada, contained long and detailed resolutions to the Palestine and Jerusalem question. It “hailed” the “heroic” uprising in defence “of al-Quds al-Sharīf and all sacred shrines”, supported the PLO’s demand for an international supervision and monitoring committee to “prevent colonial settlement in al-Quds and the Occupied Arab territories”, and demanded that member states having relations with Israel sever them. However, there was no return to the declaration of jihad or similar methods.

In fact, the debate on jihad and liberation was only a rhetorical expression without any practical results. The OIC did not succeed in implementing even modest practical action regarding Jerusalem. For instance, the OIC continually failed to raise funds for the Palestinians in general, and for Jerusalem in particular. In 1970 it was decided to establish a Palestine Fund to collect donations from states and peoples.³² No progress was achieved, and so a Jerusalem Committee was established in 1975. The Committee, however, did not manage to play a tangible political role. In 1976 it was decided to establish a Jerusalem Fund, into which Muslim states were invited to pay voluntary donations. However, only minimal contributions were made. In 1978, despite the small amount of money that had been donated, it was decided that the Fund would consist of 100 million dollars. Yet by 1980, many states had still not even fixed the amount that they were going to pay. So, the annual Conference of Foreign Ministers decided to activate the collection of donations by establishing a

³⁰ “Seventh Islamic Summit”, Casablanca, 13–15 December 1994; OIC web site: www.oic-un.org

³¹ OIC web site: www.oic-un.org

³² “Resolutions of the Third Conference of Foreign Ministers” (Arabic), Jeddah, 26–28 December 1970, PNC Archive, Amman.

waqf with the same targeted capital of 100 million dollars.³³ In 1995 the Jerusalem Committee created the Bait-Māl al-Quds al-Sharīf (Jerusalem Fund Agency) with the same targeted capital. It took five years to hold the first meeting of the Agency's Board of Directors consisting of the finance ministers of the member states. At this first meeting – in Morocco in February 2000 – the Director of the Agency, the Palestinian Ambassador to Morocco, Wajīh al-Qāsim, revealed that the Agency's plans for housing, education, health, restoration, etc. needed 100 million dollars to implement them, whereas the Committee had received only 2 million.³⁴

This inefficiency was attributed to various factors: (1) The OIC is only a co-ordinator and therefore lacks authority. (2) The member states give priority to their national policies, and are guided by other frameworks such as the Arab League. (3) Continual disputes between these states affect their ability to implement joint policies. (4) The OIC has apparently had the function of showing rhetorical support and acting as a containment institution to satisfy domestic Arab and Muslim public opinions, as explained below.

4.1.3.3 DEFINITION OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT

The establishment of the OIC following the fire in al-Aqsa Mosque, and the formation of a range of committees on Jerusalem indicate the Islamic significance of Jerusalem to the Muslim world. However, the actions of the OIC reveal an attitude in dealing with it as though it were a crisis instead of constructing a strategy for solving the long-term problem. The OIC's strategy has been directed at domestic public opinion in the Muslim nation-states rather than at the issue itself. The governmental policies reflect the care taken by these states not to define themselves as bearing direct responsibility for the parties to the conflict, but as states supporting other states (Jordan, followed by the Palestinians).

Among the evidence for this definition is the rhetorical nature of the OIC discourse, which declares positions without implementing or complying with them. For instance, Turkey is a major military ally of Israel, while according to the former Indonesian President 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abd al-Wāḥid, Israel has hundreds of

³³ "Resolutions of the Annual Conferences of Foreign Ministers (1970–1981)", PNC Archive, Amman.

millions of dollars invested in Indonesia, which is the largest Muslim country in the world.³⁵

Other evidence shows that some Arab/Muslim leaders insist that the Palestinians alone have the right to negotiate and decide the fate of the city, and so they refuse to take part in this process. A practical example of this attitude was the eighteenth session of the Jerusalem Committee on 30 August 2000. The session was held after the American–Israeli–Palestinian summit at Camp David, where great pressure had been put upon Chairman ‘Arafāt to reach a compromise on the Jerusalem problem. When Chairman ‘Arafāt’s attempts to hold an Arab or Muslim summit failed, the Jerusalem Committee was seen as a possible alternative and so it was invited to a special meeting in Morocco (see Chapter One). The US government contacted the participating states to persuade them not to adopt any action, and advised them to leave the issue to the Israelis and Palestinians alone.³⁶ The Israeli newspaper, the *Jerusalem Post*, reported:

Prime Minister Ehud Barak said he hopes the intensive behind-the-scenes diplomatic activity of the last few weeks would prevent the conference from passing resolutions tying Arafat’s hands on the Jerusalem issue, thus precluding any possible agreement.³⁷

Attitudes of this kind indicate that while the Palestinian leadership has, over several decades, defended an “independent Palestinian decision” against any intervention or control, it does not claim the same exclusive right over independent decisions regarding Jerusalem. ‘Arafāt wanted Arab and Muslim support against American–Israeli pressure. He wanted an Arab or Muslim body to define Jerusalem as an Arab–Muslim–Christian issue that could not be decided at the Palestinian–Israeli level.³⁸

However, it is clear that the result of American pressure, in addition to Arab and Muslim hesitation to bear any responsibility, was that the Committee asserted its previous position on Jerusalem and would “support the stand of the State of Palestine firmly adhering to its sovereignty over al-Quds al-Sharīf”. The Committee’s decision

³⁴ See *al-Quds al-‘Arabī* (14 February 2000).

³⁵ *al-Khalīj* (5 December 1999).

³⁶ *al-Ra’y* (27 August 2000).

³⁷ *Jerusalem Post* (28 August 2000).

³⁸ *al-Ḥayāt* (27 August 2000).

seemed to be in line with the American–Israeli demand. Israeli Radio broadcast a statement attributed to an unnamed senior Israeli official, welcoming the Committee’s decision because it “did not make the decision instead of ‘Arafāt and gave the Palestinian Chairman complete freedom to reach an agreement.”³⁹

The Palestinians wanted greater Arab and Muslim participation in the Jerusalem issue, whereas the United States and Israel wanted to confine it to the Palestinian–Israeli level, which is what the Committee actually decided.

In short, the Muslim world has realised that Jerusalem is the core of the Palestine issue, and that there are special ties between Muslims and its cause. Nevertheless, at least on the official level, the Muslim world has dealt with Jerusalem according to the rules of nation-state policies. The Muslim countries do not define Jerusalem as a direct nation-state concern, but as a Muslim issue that may need a special kind of solidarity. However, it is not possible to discuss the Muslim world’s policies regarding Jerusalem in complete isolation from those of the Arab world, especially at the popular level. This is explained in greater detail in the following section.

4.2 Jerusalem and the Arab World

Factors that dictate the actions of the Arab world regarding Jerusalem are different from those in the Muslim world. Firstly, the Arab nationalist movement was already active when the conflict in Jerusalem escalated in the 1920s. Secondly, in addition to the religious and historical role of Jerusalem in mobilising Muslim and Arab public opinion, Palestine was also crucial for the Arab world’s search for geographical and cultural unity as a link between the Arab countries of Africa and Asia. Thirdly, Palestine has been part of the expansionist ambitions of several Arab regimes and leaders.

By the mid-1930s, the confrontations in Palestine and the communication between Palestinian leaders and activists and those in other Arab countries had become a daily religious and nationalist issue around the Arab world. Arab leaders, either because of public opinion in their countries or because of the regimes’ regional policies, were compelled to show concern for the Palestinian cause.

³⁹ *al-Quds al-‘Arabī* (reporting from Israeli Radio, 30 August 2000).

The situation was also recognised in London, where a British Cabinet Committee was formed in 1938, holding its first meeting in October of that year. From the very beginning, its members accepted the Arab dimension of the conflict. During the discussion of the proposed Jewish–Arab conference, the new Colonial Secretary, Malcolm MacDonald, said that the participation of neighbouring Arab countries was necessary since a settlement “would never be reached” if Palestine was treated in isolation. This view was supported by the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, who added: “[Palestine] has now become a pan-Arab question and the Arab ‘princes’ would be more likely to form a united front if they were omitted from the conference than if they were invited to attend it.”⁴⁰ Clearly, Britain now recognised that Palestine was no longer the issue of the Palestinians alone. However, the British politicians decided to take advantage of this fact by directing the Arab regimes to support those solutions which matched British interests, instead of supporting the Palestinian resistance.

During the Second World War there was serious consideration of an idea to resolve the Jewish–Palestinian question inside an Arab framework. The idea, which was suggested by various parties, including Arab leaders, and supported by prominent Zionist leaders such as Chaim Weizmann and David Ben Gurion, was to establish a Jewish state as a unit in a larger Arab federal state.⁴¹

In August 1943, a British Cabinet Committee studied a proposal to establish a federal state comprising Palestine, Transjordan, Syria and Southern Lebanon as the state of Great Syria, which would also include a Jewish state and an international state consisting of the Jerusalem area and Bethlehem. However, following an evaluation of the scheme, the Committee abandoned the idea, in particular because the Arab parties would not accept the continuation of foreign rule in the state, France would not support such a scheme, and there was the strong likelihood of rivalry for the leadership of the state.⁴²

These ideas had been the basis of the historians’ argument that the formation of the Arab League in March 1945 was a British invention aimed at containing the

⁴⁰ Ahmed Mahmoud H. Gomaa, *The Foundation of the League of Arab States* (London & New York: Longman Group, 1977), p.7.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp.11, 134.

⁴² For details, see *ibid.*, pp.142–150.

radical attitudes in the Arab states, which had been mobilised by the issue of Palestine.⁴³ However, further studies since the end of the 1970s, when the British documents of the 1940s became available, have proved that this assumption was not accurate. Public opinion in the Arab world, the need to organise relations between the Arab states, in addition to the Palestinian issue, encouraged Arab leaders, namely Muṣṭafā al-Naḥās, the Egyptian Prime Minister, to form the Arab League.⁴⁴

It cannot be said that the Palestinian issue was the direct reason for establishing the League, which was different from the OIC, as has been explained. This can be seen from the League's Pact, which did not include any particular reference to Palestine, but only an annex regarding the choice of Palestinian representatives for the League's meetings, owing to Palestine not being an independent state nor having an officially recognised representative.⁴⁵ Indeed, Palestinian political parties and leaders criticised the Pact because it did not adopt a clear position on the Palestinian issue.⁴⁶

However, the Arab League was a prominent influence in shaping the Arab region. It was a framework for organising relations between the Arab states, rejecting the idea of establishing them as separate political units. This was important in terms of how these states would deal with a range of issues, including Palestine and Jerusalem. In a framework of this kind, Palestine would be viewed as the land of one of the Arab nations who sought the establishment of its own nation-state, and this shifted issues such as Jerusalem from the domestic sphere to that of external policy.

The Arab League did assume responsibility for the Palestinian question, not only in choosing the Palestinian representative in the League but also in having the authority to respond to international proposals and resolutions, especially through the

⁴³ See, for instance, Jamīl Maṭar & 'Alī al-Dīn Hilāl, *Al-Niẓām al-Iqlīmī al-'Arabī: Dirāsa fī al-'Alāqāt al-Siyasiya al-'Arabiyya* [The Arab Regional Order: A Study of Arab Political Relations] 6th edn (Beirut: The Arab Unity Studies Center, 1999), p.175.

⁴⁴ See examples of these studies in Gomaa, *The Foundation*, pp.142–150 & 190; Yūnān Labīb Rizq, *Mawqif Bariṭāniya*, pp.181–196; Marwān al-Buḥayrī, *Bariṭāniya wa al-Jām'a al-'Arabiyya: al-Sanawāt al-Ta'sīyya* [Britain and the Arab League: The Foundation Years]; *al-Mustaqbal al-'Arabī*, vol. 8, no.76 (June 1985) pp.11–14.

⁴⁵ "The Arab League Pact", Annex on Palestine, in Gomaa, *The Foundation*, p.301.

⁴⁶ Khayriya Qasimiyya, "Filastīn fī Siyāsāt al-Bilād al-'Arabiyya 1920–1948 [Palestine in the Arab states politics], *al-Mustaqbal al-'Arabī*, vol. 3, no. 21 (November 1980), p.39.

League's delegations to the United Nations.⁴⁷ This could be attributed to the fact that the Palestinians had no recognised leadership at the time, and that the Arab regimes were in dispute with Amīn al-Ḥusaynī, who was regarded by many Palestinians as their leader. The dispute was due to Amīn's support for the Axis powers in the Second World War and his role in mobilising opposition and rebellion in some of the Arab countries (see Chapter One).

The League held a number of meetings including summits between 1945 and 1948, at which a special committee was established to deal with the Palestinian problem. A new Palestinian leadership was formed by establishing a Higher Arab Executive Committee in Palestine with financial bodies to deal with the problem.⁴⁸ However, confusion and internal controversies were characteristic of Arab policies on the Palestinian issue. The decision to enter the war was taken only after long hesitation, and until the end of 1947 there was no sign that any Arab country had any intention of becoming involved. The primary position in the Arab League was to support the Palestinians and to facilitate the entry of volunteers into Palestine. The factors affecting the decision of Arab states to enter the war included public opinion, the competition among regimes and the fear that King 'Abdullah I would succeed in establishing rule over the territories allocated to the Arabs in the Partition Plan.⁴⁹

The hasty decision to enter the war reflected the lack of Arab political or military strategy to deal with the Palestinian issue. The Israeli occupation of West Jerusalem and the Jordanian annexation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem created two dimensions of the issue of Jerusalem: Arab–Israeli, and Arab–Jordanian.

The remainder of this section is devoted to the discussion of two topics: the general Arab view of the solution of the Jerusalem issue, and the Arab response to the Israeli policies for the city.

⁴⁷ See, for instance, the participation by the League General Secretary in the debate on the Partition Plan in 1947, *The Times* (7 & 10 October 1947).

⁴⁸ al-Buḥayrī, *Biriṭānyā wa al-Jām'a*, p.15.

⁴⁹ For the decision-making in late April 1948 regarding the war, see Haykal, *al-Juyūsh*, pp.49–50, 72–76 & 83–86.

4.2.1 The Arab View of the Political Solution to the Jerusalem Question

4.2.1.1 FROM 1948 TO 1967

In the aftermath of the 1948 War the Arabs were divided into two camps with regard to Jerusalem. Jordan's position, which was supported also by the Palestinian leaders and personalities, was to reject the internationalisation of the city (see Chapter Three). Jordan was trying to reach an understanding with Israeli to partition Jerusalem, whereas the Palestinians were looking for full liberation, so both parties opposed internationalisation. The rest of the Arab countries were demanding internationalisation according to UN Resolution 181, and rejecting the claims by Israel and Jordan to sovereignty over the West and East sectors of Jerusalem respectively. This position had several implications and interpretations.

1. The situation was largely a symptom of Jordanian–Arab rivalry and the enmity between King ‘Abdullah I and other Arab leaders. The Arab countries refused to recognise the union of the East and West Banks or any expansion of the King's territory. Al-Azhar in Egypt denounced the resolutions of the unification conference held in Jericho on 1 December 1948 and declared anyone who supported them a non-believer.⁵⁰ In this context, Arab leaders would oppose any special terms of the King's rule over the holy places of Jerusalem.

One of the commonly held interpretations of the Arab stance at that time was that it was a kind of “jealousy” of King ‘Abdullah's achievement in the city. A British official commented: “The Arabs are jealous of Jordan's occupation of part of Jerusalem.”⁵¹ Jordanian officials said also that the Arab position had resulted “from ignorance of the position on the ground” and that the Israeli border extended to the city. Therefore, internationalisation “would merely have the result of admitting the Israelis into a strategically vital area.”⁵² These comments reveal how inter-Arab rivalry and disputes could influence the Arab position towards Jerusalem and prove that it was not only an Arab–Israeli conflict.

2. Arab support for the UN resolution advocating internationalisation was part of a general policy calling for the implementation of all UN resolutions concerning

⁵⁰ Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians*, p.45.

⁵¹ FO371/104775: P.S. Falla to Harold (Foreign Office), 24 December 1953.

⁵² FO371/104775: Report from the British Embassy in Amman, 3 September 1953.

Palestine, which meant that Israel had to withdraw from those areas of the territories under its control.⁵³

3. The acceptance by the Arabs of internationalisation as a solution in Jerusalem clearly implied their acceptance of Israel's existence. Therefore the Arab countries did not see the conflict with Israel as a zero-sum issue (that of the state's existence), but as one of territory.

In subsequent years Arab regimes continued their attempts to raise the issue of internationalisation at the UN General Assembly. However, by 1952/1953 it was clear that the necessary two-thirds majority to reaffirm the UN decisions on internationalisation did not exist. There were new international trends for a more limited internationalisation or international protection, which prevented the Arab countries from raising the problem of Jerusalem at the United Nations.⁵⁴

The changes in the Arab world in the 1950s and the *coups d'état* that brought new regimes into being raised the banners of revolutionary Arabism and Socialism, resulting in fewer demands for a political settlement of the city and consequently internationalisation. Nevertheless, East Jerusalem remained a major bone of contention between the Jordanian and other Arab regimes. Arab countries continued making frequent attempts, especially during periods of tension with Jordan, to assert their denial of Jordanian sovereignty in the city as an expression of their refusal to recognise the union of the West Bank and Jordan.

A noteworthy example was the dispute between Jordan and Egypt in 1959–1960, when Egypt decided to open a consulate in East Jerusalem although the consul had not been officially installed.⁵⁵ The controversy was Egypt's refusal to submit credentials through the Jordanian Foreign Ministry, submitting them instead to the city's governor as did Western consulates. This tactic indicated that Egypt did not recognise East Jerusalem as part of Jordan but only Jordan's *de facto* power, a position that Jordan could not accept.⁵⁶

⁵³ FO371/104775: P.S. Falla to Harold.

⁵⁴ FO 371/194775: Letter from P.M. Crosthwaite [UK representative to the UN], to James Bowker [Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office], 4 September 1953.

⁵⁵ *Filastīn* (19 January 1960).

⁵⁶ Interview, Ḥazim Nusayba.

The inter-Arab controversies over the Palestinian question continued over the years. In January 1964 an Arab summit, later known as the First Arab Summit, was convened after President Nāṣir's call to "forget all our differences for the sake of Palestine."⁵⁷ The PLO was officially established by a decision at that Summit. Another three Arab summits were held before the outbreak of the Arab–Israeli war in 1967, when Israel occupied the rest of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was not given any particular attention at these summits, although the establishment of the PLO was a significant step. Perhaps the intention of that decision was to weaken Jordan's hold on the West Bank and its role as the representative of the Palestinians. However, this move clearly showed that the Arab states viewed the solution to the Palestinian problem to be within the framework of the nation-state scheme. The participation of Arab states in the Palestinian question would be minimal, the main responsibility being on the shoulders of the Palestinians. Thus Arab states could devote their efforts to their own internal construction. In other words, this was a step towards emphasising the definition of the Palestine question as an external question.

4.2.1.2 THE AFTERMATH OF THE 1967 WAR

The Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967 provoked substantial changes in the Arab position towards the Jerusalem question. The dispute with Jordan over the city was set aside, though disputes over other issues continued. The Arab position was that Jerusalem had the same status as the other territories occupied in the 1967 war, and therefore Israel should withdraw from the city.

There was concern that if no quick solution were to be reached, Israel would alter the character of the city. For instance, at the Arab Summit in Khartoum between 29 August and 1 September 1967, the Chairman of the PLO, al-Shuqayrī, stressed that no concessions be made on the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and al-Ḥimma, and he asserted the need "to place particular emphasis on the Arab character of Jerusalem".

⁵⁷ Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Research Paper), "The Arab League and Arab Summit Conferences", London, October 1986 (Archives, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh).

President Nāṣir, who was also attending the Summit, supported the idea that priority should be given to regaining the “West Bank and Jerusalem”.⁵⁸

The efforts to reach a settlement continued to be made by Egypt and Jordan and by international mediators (see Chapter Three). When the Arab Summit in Khartoum passed the decision of its three famous noes – “no peace, no recognition, no negotiation” – with Israel, President Nāṣir asked King Ḥusayn not to comply with the Summit’s resolutions, but instead to use political means with the United States. He told the King: “I am afraid that with time the Israelis would find an opportunity to fill the West Bank with settlements and change the character of Jerusalem”.⁵⁹

From the Sixth Arab Summit in November 1973 in Algeria, and in the aftermath of the October War, there was a marked change in the Arab position. The Summit imposed two conditions for peace: (1) that Israel withdraws from all the “Occupied Arab Territories and Jerusalem in the first place”; and (2) that the Palestinian people retain its national rights.⁶⁰ These conditions were repeated at every subsequent Arab summit.

At the Arab Summits held in Fez in 1982 and Algiers in 1988, two detailed proposals were adopted which included the following three major points:

1. The withdrawal of Israel from all Arab territories occupied in 1967 including Arab East Jerusalem.
2. The guarantee of the freedom of worship and practice of religious rites for all religions at the holy places.
3. The establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.⁶¹

These principles became the general Arab position towards Jerusalem.

⁵⁸ al-Ḥūt, *‘Ishrān*, p.146.

⁵⁹ Heikal, *Secret Channels*, p.132.

⁶⁰ Communiqué of the Arab Summit in Algeria, 28 November 1973, in Yūsuf Khūrī (ed.), *al-Mashārī’ al-Wahdawiyya al-‘Arabiyya 1913–1989 Dirāsa Tawthīqiyya* [The Arab Unity Project 1913–1918: Documentary Study] (Beirut: The Arab Unity Studies Center, 1990), p.219.

⁶¹ “Fez Declaration”, in Abdul Hadi (ed.), *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 1, p.295. See also, “Resolutions of the Arab Summit in Algeria in September 1988”, in Yūsuf Khūrī (ed.), *al-Mashārī’*, pp.731–733.

4.2.1.3 THE EGYPTIAN–ISRAELI ACCORDS

In addition to the positions described above, and the conditions of the Palestinian and Jordanian treaties with Israel, there was the Egyptian–Israeli peace treaty of March 1979.

At the initial secret meetings held in preparation for President Sādāt's visit to Jerusalem, Ḥassan Toḥāmī the Egyptian emissary, in a discussion with Moshe Dayan in Morocco in September 1977, explained how crucial it was for the Arabs to have a constructive programme on Jerusalem.⁶² At the negotiations the Egyptian President demanded that Israel withdraw to the 1949 armistice lines, Arab sovereignty be established in East Jerusalem and that a joint Israeli–Palestinian municipal council be formed of equal numbers of members from each side. The two sides were to commit themselves to freedom of worship and free access to the holy places.⁶³

In response to American wishes, President Sādāt agreed to set the Jerusalem issue aside at the Camp David Summit negotiations in September 1978 until other issues had been resolved.⁶⁴ Thus an agreement was reached at the Egyptian–Israeli level though not in relation to Jerusalem. To resolve this dilemma and to enable the signing of an agreement, the three sides – American, Israeli and Egyptian – exchange letters explaining their views on Jerusalem. The letter from Egypt affirmed the following:

- Arab Jerusalem is an integral part of the West Bank.
- Arab Jerusalem should be under Arab sovereignty.
- The inhabitants of Arab Jerusalem are entitled to exercise their legitimate national rights, being part of the Palestinian people in the West Bank.
- Relevant Security Council resolutions,..., must be applied with regard to Jerusalem. All the measures taken by Israel to alter the status of the city are null and void, and should be rescinded.
- All peoples must have free access to the city and enjoy freedom of worship.
- The holy places of each faith may be placed under the administration and control of their representatives.

⁶² Klein, *Contested*, p.85.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.90.

- Essential functions in the city should be shared and controlled by a joint municipal council composed of an equal number of Arab and Israeli members.⁶⁵

The letter did no more than declare a position, for it had no practical meaning in terms of the peace treaty, nor did it bring about any change in the situation of the city under the Occupation.

Egypt's signature to a bilateral agreement with Israel was a current example of nation-state politics. The state gave priority to its own national interests, and to achieve them, it was ready to start negotiations alone. However, as the subject of negotiations, Jerusalem was either an Arab-Muslim or a Palestinian issue, though certainly not exclusively that of the Egyptian nation. So when the Egyptian government found that the question of Jerusalem could prevent the signing of the treaty, it agreed to set this obstacle aside while signing the treaty to repossess its own occupied territories.

The Egyptian treaty had far-reaching consequences in Arab politics. However, the political position towards Jerusalem in particular did not change, in the sense that the Arabs continued to demand the Israeli withdrawal from East Jerusalem. Moreover, the Camp David negotiations clearly indicated that Jerusalem would be a very complex issue in any future negotiations.

4.2.2 The Arab Response to Israeli Policies in Jerusalem

Arab policies failed to compel Israel to withdraw from East Jerusalem, and to prevent the Israeli government from implementing its policies of imposing a new *fait accompli* on the city. There was no Arab strategy to resolve the problem of Jerusalem by military means, nor was there any effective policy to encourage international pressure to be put on Israel to withdraw from or to halt its annexation of the city.

Internal disputes in the Arab world were apparent on various occasions, which clearly weakened Arab performance. One example was the reaction to the torching of al-Aqsa mosque in August 1969. Throughout the Arab world there was the feeling that there must be a response of some kind. Two ideas were suggested. The first was a call from King Ḥusayn for an Arab summit: "On this black day, I

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.92.

⁶⁵ The text of the letter in *Documents on Jerusalem*, p.148.

urge you all to cooperate effectively to save Jerusalem from occupation.” The second idea was the call by King Fayṣal of Saudi Arabia to organise an Islamic summit.⁶⁶

Two days later, King Fayṣal, in a cabled reply to King Ḥusayn, said that he supported the idea of an Islamic meeting to discuss the Israeli occupation of the Islamic holy places, while ignoring the call for an Arab summit.⁶⁷

The demand for an Islamic conference seemed to be a Saudi attack on the Arab League, which was controlled by President Nāṣir, and which, according to his adversaries, had become a tool for Egyptian foreign policy. An Islamic summit, however, could be a rival organisation beyond his control.⁶⁸

To avoid a crisis over the issue, President Nāṣir supported the convening of both Arab and Islamic summits, and suggested to King Fayṣal that they be held near the holy places in Saudi Arabia.⁶⁹ The result was that the first Islamic summit was convened in Morocco in September. It was not attended by Syria, which had severed its diplomatic ties with Morocco owing to other disputes. India, with 60 million Muslims, was not invited because of an administrative mistake by the organising committee.⁷⁰

In late December an Arab summit was held also in Morocco. It did not give much attention to the issue of Jerusalem or the torching of al-Aqsa Mosque. It ended in failure with disputes erupting over the share that each state should pay to aid Egypt and Jordan in confronting Israel. The sessions were not completed, nor were any final statements or resolutions made.⁷¹

These methods of dealing with Jerusalem indicate how its religious and historic status could be exploited by some nation-states to achieve gains that might not be in the interests of the city itself. Clearly, the significance of Jerusalem did not help in creating an effective Arab policy that would transcend inter-Arab rivalry. Indeed, on many occasions the OIC provided a face-saving substitute for the failure to organise collective Arab action. The large number of members in the OIC meant

⁶⁶ *Guardian* (22 August 1969).

⁶⁷ *Guardian* (25 August 1969).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Guardian* (27 August 1969).

⁷⁰ *Guardian* (22 September 1969).

⁷¹ See *The Times* (22 & 23 December 1969).

that its meetings could not deal with disputes between the Arabs themselves, unlike the Arab League. In other words, the OIC was a refuge where Arab countries were able to show general rhetorical solidarity when they had no ability to act in a tangible manner either jointly or independently.

Another example of how disputes weakened the power of Arab action concerning Jerusalem was in August 1980, when Israel passed its Basic Law, which considered Jerusalem its united capital. At that time, an Arab summit had already been scheduled for November in Amman. The PLO, Algeria, Syria, Lebanon, Libya and Yemen boycotted the Summit.⁷² Egypt was also absent owing to its earlier suspension from the Arab League as a result of its treaty with Israel. Certainly, such widespread boycotting weakened the resolutions of the Summit, which affirmed that “liberating” Arab Jerusalem was a national duty. It asked the world to take an unambiguous stance against the Israeli measures in the city, and threatened to sever Arab state relations with any state that recognised Jerusalem as an Israeli capital or transferred its embassy there.⁷³

In addition to the disputes described above, Arab action regarding Jerusalem was certainly hesitant and confused. In mid-August, at the time of the passing of the Israeli Basic Law, the then Saudi Crown Prince, Fahd, issued a strong statement on this latest Israeli action: “One must wonder what has been the benefit of moderation if this is the way the West understands ‘just peace’.” He added: “Is not the Arab and Muslim call for a prolonged and persistent Jihad the only reply to this Zionist religious and racist haughtiness?”⁷⁴ The statement appeared to be a demand for some kind of confrontation.

The call was supported by various Arab countries and organisations, including the PLO, Yemen, Bahrain, Kuwait, Mauritania, and the General Secretary of the Arab League.⁷⁵ However, the Arab disputes and the lack of joint institutions made it unlikely that a response to this call would materialise. In reply to a letter from the then President of the Jerusalem Committee of the OIC, King Ḥassan II of

⁷² *al-Mustaqbal al-‘Arabī*, no.24 (February 1981).

⁷³ See “Final Communiqué of the Arab Summit in Amman, 1980”, in Yūsuf Khrī (ed.), *al-Mashārī*, p.230.

⁷⁴ *The Times* (15 August 1980).

⁷⁵ *al-Mustaqbal al-‘Arabī*, no.21 (November 1980).

Morocco, President Sādāt said he did not believe any Arab or Muslim collective work to be possible until the inter-Arab and inter-Muslim conflicts were brought to an end.⁷⁶

However, as evidence of his retraction, Prince Fahd himself said to the Press at the beginning of November that his invitation to Jihad was not an encouragement to take up guns or swords or to move to Palestine, but an exhortation to the Muslims to realise what was facing them, and a call for Arab and Muslim unity.⁷⁷

However, the Arab and Muslim worlds were not completely passive concerning Jerusalem. To avoid damage to their interests in the Arab states, the international powers did not recognise Israel sovereignty over any part of Jerusalem (see Chapter Five). The Arab reaction apparently achieved a positive result regarding the relocation of embassies to the city. Following the passing of the Israeli Basic Law in 1980, the Arab governments threatened a boycott of any country that moved its embassy to Jerusalem.⁷⁸ The Netherlands, the only European country with an embassy in that city, moved it to Tel Aviv, fearing lest its interests with Arab states be adversely affected.⁷⁹

Meanwhile, Arab donations were reaching Jerusalem, though they were neither sufficient nor allocated for any clear purpose. It was not possible to speak of regular institutional Arab funding for Jerusalem. Moreover, disputes erupted frequently between countries claiming the right of supervising or carrying out restoration work in the holy places (see Chapter Three).

Another example of their ineffectiveness was the refusal by the Arab states to hold a new summit after that convened in Cairo in 1996, despite many calls to do so. It was especially necessary to challenge the actions of the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu in Jerusalem's holy places, and the acceleration in the construction of settlements in the city. The refusal was repeated even in response to the Palestinian Chairman's request following the collapse of the Camp David 2000 Summit over the issue of Jerusalem. The pretext for this refusal was the fear lest the dispute escalate owing to Iraq, and tension be provoked if the Iraqi case were to be discussed.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ *al-Mustaqbal al-'Arabī*, no.24 (February 1981).

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ *The Times* (24 August 1980).

However, as a result of the unprecedented escalating protest in most, if not all, of the Arab and Muslim countries after the eruption of al-Aqsa Intifada in September 2000, the Arab leaders, in less than one month, were compelled to convene a summit in Cairo on 21 and 22 November. During the meeting they welcomed the Intifada and commended the response “of the Arab masses to the Intifada of the doughty Arab Palestinian People”. The Summit asserted that Israel was responsible for the Intifada, because of its violation of al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf and the holy places, and because of the continuation of the occupation. The Summit decided to establish two funds: al-Aqsa Fund, with a sum of 800 million dollars to “preserve the Arab–Muslim identity of Jerusalem”, and the Jerusalem Intifada Fund of 200 million dollars, established to support the “Palestinian martyrs’ families”.⁸⁰

The PA later faced a critical financial crisis because the money that had been promised had not been paid. In March 2001, another summit was held in Amman, in accordance with a resolution adopted at the Cairo Summit that the Arab League should meet annually. The mechanism of paying the money to Palestinians was the subject of a dispute at the Amman Summit, and that in itself was used to justify the withholding of the sums promised. Consequently, the Summit agreed to loan the Palestinian Authority 60 million dollars, together with another 180 million in instalments over six months.⁸¹ This arrangement meant that the sums which had been earmarked for Jerusalem, would now be diverted to covering the current expenditure of the PA.

The official Arab position at these summits was again the expression of solidarity with the Palestinian people, though not that of a united strategy. The Palestinians were still considered the responsible party in the conflict, with the support of Arab states. It was noticeable, however, that Arab public opinion on the Jerusalem question was intensifying and pressuring Arab regimes for greater participation.

It is possible to see a steady rise in the level of Arab and Muslim public concern about the issue of Jerusalem since the late 1970s. This rise can be attributed to various reasons, among which are the expanding implementation of Israeli policies

⁸⁰ “Communiqué of the Arab Summit in Cairo, 2000”, *al-Ḥayāt* (23 November 2000).

⁸¹ “Final Communiqué of the Arab Summit in Amman, 2001”, *al-Ḥayāt* (29 March 2001).

in the city and the growth in the power and influence of Islamist groups and the popular support for them. In addition, there has been an increase in organised effort to highlight the Arab and Islamic importance of Jerusalem, especially by Palestinian official and popular bodies. So exhibitions, seminars, conferences, fundraising activities, etc. for Jerusalem have become regular events in the Arab and Muslim worlds. The activities that were organised in the Muslim world in the early 1990s, as explained in Chapter One, were an example of how Jerusalem could unite public opinion at times of fragmentation such as the period following the Gulf War.

It is difficult to make accurate documented observations of Arab and Muslim public reaction on the issue of Jerusalem, and maybe a separate detailed study would be necessary for this purpose. Nevertheless, the strength of public reaction is clearly visible.

For instance, the anniversary of the torching of al-Aqsa Mosque, and that of the liberation of Jerusalem by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn from the Crusaders on 2 October 1187, initiated the organisation of dozens of activities by Arab and Muslim peoples. According to official Palestinian sources, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's victory was the basis of around 250 festivals, seminars, exhibitions, talks, etc. in 2001.⁸² Although some were single events, others became part of the national institution. For instance, in the 1980s, some Palestinian activists in Kuwait began to celebrate Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's victory and this was continued in Amman under the name "The Committee of Jerusalem Day" throughout the 1990s up to the present day. The Committee's record has included the annual publication of books on Jerusalem, seminars, exhibitions, and the construction of an information centre to house documents on the city's history. Among the Committee's successes is the lobbying in 1999 of the Association of Arab Universities to declare that Arab universities should teach a special course on Jerusalem and to organise a "Jerusalem Day" on 2 October every year.⁸³

⁸² The researcher was informed of this figure by Ibrahīm Muhanā, the Palestinian Information attaché in the Palestinian Embassy in Amman, in an interview on 2 October 2001.

⁸³ Copies of the correspondence between the Association of Arab Universities Resolutions and the Jerusalem Day Committee between 1994 and 1999, and the Association Resolutions dated 14 & 19 December 1999 are archived in the Jerusalem Day Committee Information Centre, Amman.

The eruption of the Al-Aqsa Intifada revealed the importance of Jerusalem in Arab and Muslim public opinion. To declare solidarity with the Palestinians' position in al-Aqsa Intifada, thousands of demonstrations, conferences, fund-raising campaigns and other expressions of solidarity were organised throughout the Muslim world and among Muslim and Arab communities internationally. In a random sample of two days in the first week of the Intifada, I calculated that demonstrations and other forms of protest took place in twenty-one countries in support of the Palestinians.⁸⁴

Some Arab Gulf states saw the first demonstrations in their history during the last few decades of the twentieth century. In Kuwait, where there had been an unfriendly attitude towards the Palestinians since the Gulf War in 1991, and where there were friendly feelings towards the United States, demonstrators shouted "Death to America" and burned the American flag.⁸⁵ In Jordan the government counted 276 demonstrations and rallies up to 6 October 1986. The atmosphere that followed al-Aqsa Intifada made the Arab countries accept the participation of Iraq at the Arab Summit for the first time since its invasion of Kuwait.⁸⁷ Under these circumstances, the United States declared a temporary closure of its embassies in thirteen Arab states five days after the eruption of the Intifada.⁸⁸

4.3 Conclusion

Jerusalem has been important in accelerating the establishment of collective Muslim and Arab institutions as in the founding of the OIC in 1969. Events in the city have also hastened the restoration of solidarity to these institutions, such as the convening of the Arab Summit in Cairo in 2000.

Jerusalem has played an essential role in uniting Arab and Muslim public opinion. Examples are the campaigns of the 1920s and 1930s in support of the Arabs and Muslims in Palestine, the solidarity campaigns of the early 1990s, and the eruption of al-Aqsa Intifada in the city in September 2000.

⁸⁴ *al-Ra'y* and *al-Ḥayāt* (1 & 7 October 2000).

⁸⁵ *al-Ḥayāt* (7 October 2000).

⁸⁶ *al-Ra'y* (7 October 2000).

⁸⁷ *al-Ḥayāt* (11 October 2000).

⁸⁸ *al-Ra'y* (6 October 2000).

However, the following points should be borne in mind:

1. **Effectiveness and Rhetoric:** Official concern with the problems of Jerusalem remains at the level of rhetoric. The inadequacy of Arab and Muslim government organisations that deal with this area underlines the assumption that they are designed to absorb and contain angry public opinion.
2. **Arab–Muslim Identity and the Politics of the Nation-state:** As a means of uniting Arab and Muslim public opinion, Jerusalem forces governments to come together and declare an agreed position through their collective institutions. This in itself emphasises the Arab and Muslim identities of the pre-nation-state era. It promotes the ideology of those powers which demand states based on Arab or Muslim unity and identity. However, the official Arab and Muslim structures and institutions are designed to express nation-state politics, that is, to declare a kind of solidarity with issues such as Jerusalem, while preserving their individual entities and giving priority to domestic construction and interests. The result is that the actual support which Jerusalem receives from the Arab and Muslim countries is much less than is due to its status as proclaimed in Arab and Muslim rhetoric.
3. **The Arab–Muslim Role in the Political Settlement:** The situation also prompts the question of the roles that the Muslim and Arab states could play in the settlement of Jerusalem.

The continuing tension in Palestine, especially al-Aqsa Intifada, and the emphasis on the central importance of Jerusalem to the Palestinians heightens the concern of Arab and Muslim public opinion regarding this issue. The situation stimulates support for identities that are broader than those of the nation-state and forces the political regimes in the Arab and Muslim worlds to devote greater attention to the Palestinian issue. Yet this is in opposition to the clear preference shown by some of these regimes to concentrate on the construction of their nation-states and individual identities. The conflict between regimes and powers supporting the agenda of giving priority to domestic requirements and those which demand greater participation in Arab and Muslim issues such as Jerusalem could provoke

tension to the level where the stability of these states is threatened. This means that Jerusalem could also – indirectly – play a role against the nation-state scheme in the Arab and Muslim worlds. Another consequence is that greater efforts would need to be made to find an acceptable political solution to the problem of Jerusalem, and a fragile situation would make the granting of concessions more difficult.

However, Jerusalem's expanding role in Middle Eastern politics could be transformed into a positive force in reaching a political settlement. It could stimulate international efforts to solve the Palestinian question in general and that of Jerusalem in particular. It could produce changes in the Israeli view of Jerusalem, which would recognise that there are other peoples with rights and ties to the city, and that a peaceful life in Israel requires compromise on the issue. The participation of Arab and Muslim states or organisations in finding a solution by creating a direct international presence throughout the city could reduce Israeli fears about security and the sensitivity of the question of sovereignty in the city, as well as satisfying Arabs and Muslims regarding their holy places.

Chapter Five

Jerusalem in the International Sphere

Introduction

Jerusalem has been seen by many observers as the focal point of repeated conflict. The city has been contested for centuries between the followers of various Christian doctrines, Christians and Jews, and Christians and Muslims. According to these observers, the present conflict between Jews/Zionism and Palestinian/Christian and Muslim Arabs/Muslims, is only the latest episode in the never-ending conflict.

This chapter discusses how the issue of Jerusalem has been defined and treated by some international powers and actors during the current conflict.

Two important points should be noted here. Firstly, until the early twentieth century, the European colonial powers had taken a particular interest in Jerusalem, considering the city's holy places and Christians to be among their direct interests, which justified European intervention and presence in the region. However, this is no longer true – at least since 1948.

Secondly, since the 1930s the international powers had clearly desired that Jerusalem should not become an issue for the Arab or Muslim world, but should remain in the arena of the conflicting parties inside Mandate Palestine. In other words, it should be restricted to a national issue between the Palestinians (or Jordanians after 1948) and the Jews/Israelis. This requirement was one of the consequences of the British–French understanding after the First World War, according to which the region was divided into separate units. These units, which later formed the states of the region under what was known as the nation-state scheme, were supposed to develop individual interests instead of defining themselves as parties to issues such as Palestine or Jerusalem. Collective action by the new units could result in the reconstruction of a regional Arab/Muslim identity, which would oppose the interests of the international powers and threaten the present regional order that depended on separate nation-states.

These points will be explained in greater detail below. The first section discusses the position of Europe, especially Britain, and the second section, that of

the United States. The third section examines the position of the Christian churches of Jerusalem, which have mostly had close administrative and religious connections with the churches of Europe and the United States. It is argued that the churches of Jerusalem are increasingly expressing views that coincide more with those of the Palestinians and other Arabs than with those of their protectors.

The last section analyses the general principles and views of the United Nations in dealing with Jerusalem, and the reasons for its ineffectiveness in dealing with the problem.

5.1 Great Britain and Europe

5.1.1 Historical Background

The Ottomans had captured Jerusalem in 1516. Between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, during the Ottoman era, European countries continued to claim the right to protect the holy places in Jerusalem and Christians in the Middle East. Following the decline in their economy and military power, the Ottomans gradually granted concessions to the European countries, allowing them to play an increasing role in the affairs of Jerusalem's holy places and those of the Christians in the empire. In 1604 and 1673, France signed agreements with the Ottomans, known as the "Capitulations", which gave the Franciscans the right to supervise the holy places.¹ Russia had made similar agreements, under which it was granted the guardianship of the Orthodox interests.²

In the mid-nineteenth century, under European pressure, the Ottomans issued regulations to classify and register the various sects around the empire. A special section covered the relationship between the rival Christian churches in Jerusalem. These regulations were included in international treaties, such as the Paris Peace Convention in 1856 and the Congress of Berlin in 1878, and became known later as the *Status Quo*. In fact, these treaties were the result of the Crimean War (1853–56). France was applying pressure to secure primacy for the Latin Catholic

¹ Wagner, *Dying*, p.71.

² Sergio I. Minerbi, *The Vatican and Zionism: Conflict in the Holy Land, 1895–1925* (New York & Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.3.

Church. However, thanks to Russian support, the Greek Orthodox Church won primacy in the holy places according to Ottoman regulations.³

Religious claims and agreements constituted another aspect of the rival political ambitions of the European countries in the Middle East. This became more apparent in the late nineteenth century, when their governments intensified their efforts to colonise areas of the region. The holy places of Jerusalem were one of the reasons given by these states to justify their political interference. The importance of Palestine lay in its geographical position, for it formed a link between the Arab countries of North Africa and Asia.⁴ Therefore, the control of Palestine was essential for the control of the Middle East.

According to British and French newspapers and documents published in the nineteenth century, public and official opinion was concerned with Palestine for two main reasons:

1. The holy places were significant as part of the Catholic–Protestant rivalry.
2. The geographical position of Palestine was of particular importance to the plans of the two countries in the Middle East.⁵

The relationships with the Christian communities in the region were among the tools used by the colonial powers to create local alliances and justify their presence there. However, Britain faced the problem of an insignificant number of Protestants in Palestine compared with the number of Catholics, a matter which weakened British claims to the Holy Land. This led to ideas being proposed in Britain in which the Jews played a central role. Lutheran missions sponsored by England in the nineteenth century, and later by the United States, concentrated on the conversion of Jews, which was viewed by Anglicans as a means of returning Jesus to the Holy Land.⁶ The plan did not succeed, since Jews did not convert. So British experts proposed an alternative, which was to create a Jewish colony in Palestine

³ Dumper, *The Politics of Jerusalem*, p.181; Special Report, “The Rights of Muslims and Jews in Connection with the Wailing Wall at Jerusalem”, *Palestinian Year Book of International Law*, vol. 9 (1996/1997), p.391; Wagner, *Dying*, p.83.

⁴ Uri Ra’anan, *The Frontiers of a Nation: A Re-examination of the Forces which Created the Palestine Mandate and Determined its Territorial Shape* (London: Batchworth Press, 1955), p.44.

⁵ For the statements and opinions of politicians and journalists on the religious rivalry in Palestine, see *ibid.*, p.42.

⁶ Wagner, *Dying*, p.72.

under the sponsorship of Britain.⁷ Other experts such as Harry Johnston, in 1912, proposed internationalising Palestine. Johnston advocated internationalising “Judea” in the context of partitioning the Middle East between the rival European powers.⁸

France was first to make a concession in January 1915. It renounced its claim to the right to rule the holy places in Jerusalem and accepted their internationalisation in exchange for controlling the northern part of Palestine, which was of commercial and military importance. Russia refused this solution, declaring that Orthodox interests covered the whole of Palestine.⁹ However, when France and Britain drew nearer to an agreement to partition the Arab East between them, Russia communicated with France, offering to accept its rule over the whole of Palestine in exchange for territorial concessions to Russia in Armenia. In the event, no agreement was reached upon the offer.¹⁰

Britain had the opportunity to occupy Jerusalem in 1917 after the Sykes–Picot Agreement with France in 1916. The need to have the right to keep Palestine under British control prompted the idea of a Jewish settlement. Britain’s understanding with the Zionist leaders reveals how closely religion and politics are intertwined. Jewish Zionism, Christian Zionism (Anglicanism) and colonial interests were merged to produce the Jewish national home in Palestine.

5.1.2 The British Rule and Mandate (1917–1948)

British policy towards Jerusalem during the Mandate can be assessed from two main aspects: (1) the political role of Jerusalem in implementing the British Mandate policies in Palestine; and (2) the British view of a political settlement in the city.

5.1.2.1 THE MANDATORY POLICIES INSIDE JERUSALEM

British policies in Jerusalem during this period reveal the awareness that the city could be a source of trouble for the Mandate, although it could also be helpful in applying the authority of the Mandate if handled properly. Therefore, the government in Jerusalem tried to exploit the city’s special status to implement its policies.

⁷ Ra’anan, *Frontiers*, pp.42–43.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.55.

⁹ Antonius, *Awaking*, p.247.

¹⁰ Ra’anan, *Frontiers*, p.74.

Chapters One and Two have already discussed a large part of the British policies in Jerusalem during the Mandate. Jerusalem was important in the British plan to establish separate mandatory units in the region, each with a sense of separate national identity. It served as the capital and centre of a separate Palestine. Its religious and administrative leaders were the right sort of members of the elite, who were acceptable to the people while maintaining an understanding with the Mandate. Thus, in the 1920s, when the Jerusalem notables were taking care of Muslim religious affairs, they played an active political role in channelling the popular movement away from radical and opposition trends.

British policies were carefully framed so as not to turn the holy places of Jerusalem into a source of tension, either with the Mandate or between the different communities in Palestine. So, although the text of the Mandate gave Britain full responsibility for the holy places in Palestine and the right to control their administration, it also preserved the Ottoman *Status Quo*. No Christian sect was given new privileges not accorded to the others, nor were the followers of any religion given privileges at the expense of the others. Both Christians and Muslims, in particular, enjoyed full autonomy in their affairs and had the opportunity to extend their properties and expand their religious institutions in Jerusalem.

Nevertheless, although Jews could, in general, maximise their presence in the city, maintaining the Ottoman *Status Quo* resulted in the government preventing them from strengthening their position in locations that were the subject of dispute with the Muslims. For instance, the government responded positively on several occasions to Muslim complaints regarding Jewish attempts to change the *Status Quo* of the Western Wall of al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf by installing instruments or changing the character of the place, such as in 1922, 1923, 1925, 1926 and 1928.¹¹

By the early 1930s, however, as a result of the growth of the Zionist project, it seemed that maintaining an understanding with the Palestinian leaders of Jerusalem was no longer possible. The city had become the subject of confrontation between Arabs and Jews, especially after the dispute over the Western Wall. The city had also become an issue of Arab and Muslim public opinion. British as well as French and other European diplomats saw that the active support for the Palestinians in the

¹¹ Special Report, "The Rights of Muslims and Jews", pp.402–403.

Muslim world was the beginning of an “anti-European” movement against the European presence and interests in the region.¹² By the mid-1930s, the formula of the politics of notables had collapsed, and Jerusalem, based on its traditional leadership, could no longer be a factor of stability.

5.1.2.2 THE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT AND JERUSALEM

In 1937 and 1947, during the Mandate, two of the most important political solutions were proposed for Jerusalem. On both occasions, partition plans for Palestine were suggested and Jerusalem was omitted from the areas under consideration.

5.1.2.2.1 THE 1937 PLAN

After the Palestinian rebellion of 1936, a British Royal Commission, headed by Earl Peel, recommended partitioning Palestine between Jews and Arabs. The plan comprised the establishment of a permanent British mandatory zone including Jerusalem and Bethlehem, as well as a narrow corridor by way of Nazareth and Lake Tiberius to allow access to the sea.¹³ In this context the report of the Commission stated that the mandated area would be excluded from the Balfour Declaration. This recommendation was justified in the report by the need for free access to the holy places for “all the world”.¹⁴ Nevertheless, in his address to the League of Nations, the British delegate, Anthony Eden, did not hide Britain’s particular concern for the Christian holy places:

His Majesty’s Government...concluded, from the terms of Article 28 of the existing Mandate, that it was the intention and wish of the League that the holy places, including the Christian holy places, should remain permanently under League supervision and control.¹⁵

International developments and escalating tension between the Allies and Axis Powers led to the suspension of the Partition Plan to avoid losing Arab support in the expected Second World War.

¹² FO 371/16009, Letter from the British High Commissioner in Cairo to the Foreign Office on 26 November 1931, on his discussions with French delegation. And letter from P. Cunliffe-Lister to the Colonial Office on 8 February 1932.

¹³ Bovis, *Jerusalem Question*, p.23.

¹⁴ “Peel Commission Report”, *Documents on Jerusalem*, p.213.

¹⁵ Bovis, *Jerusalem Question*, p.25.

5.1.2.2 THE 1947 PLAN

A second partition plan was proposed by the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) in 1947. Britain, now in a different situation from that of 1937, was seeking to withdraw from Palestine as soon as possible, where, in addition to the economic and political difficulties that it suffered after the Second World War, its troops had been under continual attack from Zionist groups in Palestine. The British delegation in the UN declared on 26 September that if the UN recommended a policy unacceptable to Jews and Arabs, Britain would not be able to implement it, and that if no settlement were reached, Britain planned an early withdrawal.¹⁶

The consequences of the British plan of evacuation were clear and discussed many times at different levels. For instance, in Jerusalem the High Commissioner warned through the Press that the people of Palestine should realise the possible consequences of Britain's departure should the Jewish and Arab leaders not make a last effort to come together, and that this might lead to economic chaos and bloodshed.¹⁷ The British government refused international, American and Soviet appeals to continue the Mandate for some time longer,¹⁸ and British troops began their withdrawal on 16 November,¹⁹ even before the UN vote on the Partition Plan.

In a debate in the British parliament, Sir W. Smithers spoke about the result of British policy on Jerusalem in particular. He said that there would be chaos and anarchy, and that the final struggle between good and evil would be fought in the cockpit at Jerusalem, and he asked the Foreign Secretary to work towards creating an international enclave in Jerusalem.²⁰

Britain's position towards Resolution 181 and internationalisation or any other solution for Jerusalem was summed up later by a British official as follows:

The basic attitude of the British Government has consistently been that no solution of the Jerusalem problem can be adopted unless accepted by both Jews and Arabs. Because of this the UK Delegate abstained in the vote on General Assembly Resolution No.181 (II) of 29 Nov 1947 which called for the establishment of a "*Corpus Separatum*" under a special international

¹⁶ *The Times* (11 October 1947).

¹⁷ *The Times* (9 October 1947).

¹⁸ *The Times* (14 November 1947).

¹⁹ *The Times* (17 November 1947).

²⁰ *The Times* (13 December 1947).

regime to be administrated by the Trusteeship Council on behalf of the UN.²¹

In short, Britain's plans to enter and establish a presence in Palestine included religious justifications and pretexts. In addition, the religious sectarian map of Palestine was studied and used by British politicians, and an alliance with Jewish Zionism was seen as an effective means to control the state. Since political goals and general interests in the Middle East were crucial to British policy, religious considerations in the Mandatory policy were assessed according to their political meaning. Indeed, the decision to leave Palestine in 1947 did not show much concern for the religious considerations of the city.

5.1.3 Israeli–Jordanian Rule (1948–1967)

After the 1948 War, Britain, like the rest of the international community, refused to recognise Israeli and Jordanian sovereignty over Jerusalem and adhered to UN Resolution 181, which called for the internationalisation of the city. In reality, however, Britain especially, and other European countries to a lesser degree, supported a new kind of internationalisation.

British policy, as observed from the correspondence between the various diplomatic delegations and departments, as well as the minutes of meetings of British diplomats with American, European and other diplomats, showed opposition to internationalisation as laid down in the Resolution. What the United Nations had in mind was known as “territorial internationalisation”, whereas Britain supported “functional internationalisation”, which, according to a Foreign Office official, was a solution “under which Israel and Jordan would continue the administration of their sections, while the control and supervision of the Holy Places would be in the hands of a UN commissioner.”²²

This policy could be attributed to the British consideration for its relationship with the various parties concerned, and for what were described as practical considerations. In 1967, a draft paper prepared by the Foreign Office on

²¹ FCO 19/115: Letter from P. Yarnold to Tripp, 3 June 1969.

²² FO 371/104775: P.S. Falla, Comment on Brazilian proposal to start process to resolve the question of Jerusalem, 1953.

how to deal with the situation after the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem, summarised the British position between 1948 and 1967 as follows:

The position, in short, has been that the general opinion in the UN favoured and maybe still favours “territorial” internationalisation. But H.M.G, both because of its interests in the Arab countries (Jordan in particular) and because internationalisation was not practical politics since the city was divided between Israel and Jordan...²³

Other European countries also held overt and covert positions; declaring their support of internationalisation according to the UN Resolution, whereas in reality supporting another solution, that of partitioning Jerusalem but keeping an international presence or administration in the holy places. France, for example, declared its support for the Vatican’s demand for the implementation of the UN Resolution. However, French diplomats, such as the French Consul-General in Jerusalem, told their British counterparts and others: “the French Government would now support anything which is practical and which does not openly conflict with the Vatican stand.” They might also accept a formula of an “international regime...to supervise access to the holy places and the preservation of the rights of the religious communities”.²⁴

5.1.4 The Israeli Annexation: Post-1967

The general view of the European states on Jerusalem in the post-1967 years was that the city was not of direct interest to them. They no longer considered themselves to be closely associated with the parties to the conflict, unlike their assertions in the early years of the twentieth century.

A typical example of this view is the following statement from the above-mentioned Foreign Office draft paper of 1967:

There is no direct British interest... which need put us out in front. The Protestant churches can look after themselves. (...). Our indirect interest in the Arab world is merely that we should not stand too conspicuously for too isolated an opposition to Arab views.²⁵

²³ FCO 17/648: British Position Past and Present “Draft on our attitude to the Jerusalem Problem”, 13 July 1967.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ FCO 17/648: Draft Paper. (From the Foreign Office records for the years following 1967, it appeared that what was called a “Draft Paper” was a reference to the British diplomats in handling the Jerusalem issue. There was no final version.)

The reactions of other parties, and how a certain position could influence European interests in the Middle East became the yardstick of European policy in dealing with the Jerusalem question. However, in practical terms the European position on Jerusalem can be understood by examining the following points:

5.1.4.1 ISRAEL POLITICS OF RELIGION

The main issue to be tackled by Europe regarding Jerusalem was the Israeli emphasis on the religious rights of the Jews to justify the occupation. W. Morris, the head of the Eastern Department in the Foreign Office, was fully aware of Israel's attempt to redefine the identity of Jerusalem. He commented as follows on the Israeli policies and actions in this regard:

The Israeli case does not bear close examination. Until 5 June, they were putting forward no claims to the Old City, except on the question of access to the Wailing Wall. Since then they have been attacked from the Old City by the Jordanians; this gives them a claim to security against future attack, but not to annexation of a wholly Arab city against the wishes of its inhabitants, on the basis of their military success in occupying it.²⁶

There were yet other examples of Europe's doubts about Israel's exploitation of religious claims. The Venice Declaration of the European Community in June 1980 asserted "the special importance of the role played by the question of Jerusalem for all the parties concerned".²⁷

This doubtful view justified the European countries' rejection of Israel's occupation and annexation policies in East Jerusalem. Their rejection was confirmed by their voting in favour of UN resolutions "calling on Israel to desist from measures altering the status of the city".²⁸

The emphasis on the religious rights of different parties explains why European countries supported the international administration of the holy places of Jerusalem. However, as time passed, Europe placed less emphasis on this policy. The Venice Declaration stated: "any agreement on the city's status should guarantee freedom of access for everyone to the holy places". This statement did not demand an international role. Any agreement negotiated by the parties seemed acceptable to Europe. The acceptance of negotiations as a means of reaching a solution was

²⁶ FCO 17/251: W. Morris to R. Beaumont, 2 August 1967.

²⁷ "Venice Declaration on the Middle East", *Documents on Jerusalem*, p.219.

emphasised several times, for example, during the Camp David negotiations in 2000.²⁹

5.1.4.2 THE LEGAL STATUS OF ISRAEL IN JERUSALEM

The frequent declarations of European countries condemning Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem and its annexation policies should be seen in combination with action taken towards recognising Israel's presence in West Jerusalem. As long as the action did not provoke the Arabs, the European states were prepared to take it.

After the 1967 occupation, Europe considered that the Arab countries "tactically" accepted that West Jerusalem was "Israeli territory". Accordingly, European countries began to be less reserved about declaring their official appearance in West Jerusalem. For instance, in late 1967, the German and British embassies held, for the first time, reception parties in West Jerusalem, believing that the Arab countries would not protest against these events as long as they did not take place in East Jerusalem.³⁰

At the same time, the European countries continued to refuse to move their embassies to Jerusalem, or to recognise officially the West sector of the city as part of Israel. In August 1980, after Israel had issued its Basic Law, which defined the whole of Jerusalem as the Israeli capital, the Netherlands had to move its embassy from West Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. The Dutch government issued a strong statement deploring Arab pressure on it to take this step (it was the only European embassy in Jerusalem). The statement said: "ultimatums in relations between friendly states are unacceptable." Then the statement declared that the Dutch government would move its embassy to Tel Aviv and emphasised that this action was in response to the decision by the UN Security Council on 20 August, asking countries with diplomatic missions in Jerusalem to withdraw them.³¹

²⁸ FCO 17/648: 1968.

²⁹ See the interview with the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, *al-Ḥayāt* (23 March 2000).

³⁰ FCO 17/251: Letter from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv to the Eastern Department, 16 November 1967.

³¹ "Statement by the Netherlands Government, 26 August 1980", in *Documents on Jerusalem*, p.219.

On some occasions, European governments seemed concerned to appear to be playing a role that would satisfy the Arab states, though not necessarily with the firm intention of reaching a solution. For instance, after the 1967 occupation, British officials had a particular wish for Jordan to regain sovereignty over the Old City, or at least have a “special position” there, were any settlement to be reached. Apparently, this indicated British recognition of Jerusalem’s political and economic importance to Jordan. At the same time, however, it is interesting to read the following recommendation by a British official:

If in the end negotiations between Israel and Jordan fail for any reason ... it is necessary that both we and the government of Israel be in a position to show that every reasonable effort towards an agreement has been made, and made in good time and good faith.³²

This is an example of how far more importance was attached to the impact on relations with the parties to the conflict over Jerusalem than to the problem of the city itself.

In short, European interests in the Christian religious aspect of Jerusalem was the main justification for the intervention and colonisation of Palestine during the Ottoman era. Since the Second World War, however, attention was turned to the question of Jerusalem’s impact on the settlement in the Middle East and on Europe’s relations with the parties to the conflict. Europe no longer declared that Jerusalem’s religious significance was of paramount importance. Therefore, Europe was likely to agree to any solution acceptable to those parties directly involved in the conflict.

5.2 The United States of America

5.2.1 The Pre-1967 Era

In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson of the United States appointed the King–Crane Commission, comprising two American scholars, whose purpose was to study the situation in Palestine by touring the country, meeting its inhabitants and finally reporting back to the Peace Conference in Paris.³³ This Commission was to be the earliest official American concern with the issue of Palestine.

³² FCO 17/251: A report entitled “Secret – Nodis”.

³³ Wagner, *Dying*, pp.110–111.

Jerusalem played a crucial role in shaping the Commission's recommendation, which favoured the Arabs and found the Islamic view of the holy places justified Muslim custodianship of these places, and also justified not establishing a Jewish state. According to the report, Palestine was:

“the Holy Land” for Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike. Millions of Christians and Muslims all over the world are quite as much concerned as the Jews with conditions in Palestine, especially with those conditions which touch upon religious feeling and rights. (...) With the best possible intentions, it may be doubted whether the Jews could possibly seem to either Christians or Moslems proper guardians of the holy places, or custodians of the Holy Land as a whole. The reason is this: the places which are most sacred to Christians – those having to do with Jesus – and which also are sacred to Muslims, are not sacred to Jews, but abhorrent to them. It is simply impossible, under those circumstances, for Muslims and Christians to feel satisfied to have these places in Jewish hands... There are still other places about which Muslims must have the same feeling. In fact, from this point of view, the Muslims, just because the sacred places of all three religions are sacred to them, have made very naturally much more satisfactory custodians of the holy places than the Jews could be.³⁴

Britain and France did not react positively to the idea of sending a commission of this kind and refused to participate in it. The text of the report was suppressed and was not published until 1947. The circumstances influencing this action remained ambiguous.³⁵ Nevertheless, the report clearly showed that public opinion in the United States had not yet veered in support of Zionism, nor had the Anglican or Christian Zionists in the American churches begun supporting Israel.

The role of the United States in Palestine was highlighted after the Second World War. At that time American policy dealt with the issue of Jerusalem with two main considerations in mind. At the international level, the United States was careful not to let its position regarding the Palestine issue harm its interests with the Arab oil countries. In addition, the withdrawal of Britain from the region created a vacuum that the United States had to fill, not only because it was the new world leader, but also because its rival, the Soviet Union, could exploit the situation. At the same time, however, the decision to increase the role of the United States in the region required

³⁴ “The King–Crane Commission Report”, in Walter Laqueur, *The Israel–Arab Reader*, p.30.

³⁵ Wagner, *Dying*, p.110.

careful thought, especially since it could provoke a confrontation with the Soviet Union.³⁶

At the domestic level, there was an increase in the power of the Zionist lobby in American politics. There was also a rise in Christian Zionism, which believed in the necessity of establishing a Jewish state in order to prepare for the return of Jesus.³⁷

These factors were largely the reason why the United States was concerned not with the details of the solution to the Jerusalem question, but with its consequences on international politics. This explains the United States' apparent hesitation to express its position at the United Nations during the debate on Palestine in 1947. On 10 October 1947, both the American and Soviet delegations to the Palestine Committee kept silent, each waiting for the other to begin, so the Indian head of the Committee proposed to close the proceedings if no one wanted to speak.³⁸

On 11 October, American sources revealed that the United States would support a plan adopted by the majority of the Assembly, although it warned against implementation, declaring that the Palestine problem should be kept "out of the arena of the great powers' conflict"³⁹ The American delegation was aware of the special requirements for the implementation of the UN internationalisation plan in Jerusalem. On 13 October it stressed that the Partition Plan implied that the United Nations would assume responsibility as the administrative authority of the city of Jerusalem under international trusteeship.⁴⁰

The United States tried to deal with the implementation problem by asking Britain to carry out the task;⁴¹ however, Britain refused. Nevertheless, on 29 November the American Administration played an active role in influencing the members of the General Assembly to adopt the resolution in favour of partition,

³⁶ For the factors affecting American policy in the Middle East, see Steven L Spiegle, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making American Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 3–10.

³⁷ For the Jews' role in American politics in the 1940s, see Zvi Ganin, *Truman, American Jewry and Israel, 1945–1948* (New York, London: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1979), pp. xiv–xvi, 144–145.

³⁸ *The Times* (10 October 1947).

³⁹ *The Times* (11 October 1947).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *The Times* (1 November 1947).

although the problem of implementation remained unresolved.⁴² Moreover, it could be said that the failure to create a suitable international role to implement UN Resolution 181 led to the 1948 Arab–Israeli war.

Between 1948 and 1967 the United States continued to show little interest in finding a solution for Jerusalem. Its policy in the Middle East was influenced more by the escalation of the Cold War and the confrontation with the Communist bloc. Therefore, American policy regarding Jerusalem at that time avoided provoking either the Zionist lobby or the Arab states, which was generally achieved by adhering to the UN resolution favouring internationalisation. This support by the United States was expressed on various occasions during the 1950s and 1960s. For instance, in 1952 it condemned Israel's decision to transfer its Foreign Office to Jerusalem. It also rejected Jordan's intention in 1960 to consider Jerusalem a second capital, declaring its adherence to the international regime and the United Nations' special role in the city.⁴³

5.2.2 The Post-1967 Period

In the aftermath of the June 1967 War, the American Administration increased its political support for Israel. The United States wanted the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories to be part of a comprehensive political settlement that would guarantee Israel's existence and security. For months the United States prevented the adoption of a resolution by the UN calling for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories.⁴⁴ Israeli security rather than the question of Jerusalem was the main American concern. Therefore, the Israeli decision to annex the East sector of the city was not taken with American approval. On 16 June, around ten days before the Israeli annexation, the American Secretary of State spoke in strong terms to the Israeli Ambassador in Washington about the "unwisdom" of annexing the Old City of Jerusalem.⁴⁵ It was only after Israel's decision to go ahead with the annexation that the United States Administration abandoned its attempt to reach an immediate comprehensive solution between the Arabs and Israel. As a result, Soviet–American

⁴² See Ganin, *Truman*, pp.147–151.

⁴³ See the US Statement on the two occasions, in *Documents on Jerusalem*, pp.173 & 174.

⁴⁴ Spiegel, *The Other Arab–Israeli*, pp. 154–155.

⁴⁵ FCO 17/251: Report by W. Morris, 17 June 1967.

collaboration led to the passing of UN Resolution 242, which called for Israeli withdrawal “from territories occupied in the recent conflict”.⁴⁶ Washington also issued a statement saying that it did not “accept or recognise these measures as altering the status of Jerusalem”.⁴⁷

The failure in 1967 to reach a quick settlement of the Arab–Israeli conflict led the United States to consider the long-term aspect of the problem. Over the following years, the US administration continued its efforts to reach a settlement in the region. Calculations on the Cold War and relations with the Arab world as well as the influence of the Zionist lobby inside the United States remained the main considerations in formulating a political settlement. However, the international aspect of the American position gradually became less crucial. The Soviet Union’s abstention from intervening in the June 1967 War and the decline in Arab–Soviet ties after the ascendance of Anwar al-Sādāt to power in Egypt gave the United States greater opportunity to increase its support for Israel.

Against this background, the American position towards the question of Jerusalem from 1967 until the present day can be understood by examining the following points.

5.2.2.1 THE STATUS OF ISRAEL IN JERUSALEM

From 1967 the United States was more inclined to recognise Israel’s presence in West Jerusalem. It is noticeable that in some cases the declaration of rejecting Israeli measures regarding East Jerusalem implied a recognition of West Jerusalem as a part of Israel. For instance, on 1 July 1969 the American representative to the United Nations issued a statement at the UN Security Council regarding Israeli policies in what he termed “occupied portions of the city”.⁴⁸ Despite the statement’s rejection of Israel’s policies, its reference to East Jerusalem as “occupied portions” implied a recognition that West Jerusalem was unoccupied.

Calls to move the American embassy to Jerusalem increased. In February 1972, President Gerald Ford declared his support in recognising Jerusalem as the

⁴⁶ For the American dismay with the annexation and its influence on Resolution 242, see Spiegel, *The Other Arab- Israeli*, p. 155.

⁴⁷ “Statement by Arthur Goldberg, US Ambassador to the UN, 9 May 1968”, *Documents on Jerusalem*, p.175.

“historic and lawful capital of Israel” by moving the American embassy there.⁴⁹ Political calculations prevented the implementation of this view. In 1984, a bill was proposed for the relocation. Ronald Reagan’s Administration opposed it and prevented its adoption on the grounds that it would “convey a message that the US accepted the position of one party to the issue”, that the issue of Jerusalem “must be resolved through negotiations,” and that it “would seriously undermine [the United States’] ability to play an effective role in the Middle East peace process.”⁵⁰

After signing the Oslo Accords, Congressmen reopened the question of the American Embassy. In May 1995, 41 senators and 31 representatives signed a bill to relocate the Embassy in Jerusalem. President Clinton’s Administration responded that the legislation would jeopardise the peace process and the American role as mediator.⁵¹ Despite this response and the American patronage of the agreement that made Jerusalem part of the final status negotiations, the bill was passed in the Senate by 95 to 5 votes and in the House of Representatives by 374 to 37 votes in October.⁵² The bill now gave the President the right to delay the relocation for reasons of “national security.” It implied, however, that Jerusalem had “been the capital of the state of Israel” since 1950, and that between 1948 and 1967 Israeli citizens of all faiths, as well as Jewish citizens of all states, had been denied access to the holy places in the area controlled by Jordan. However, under Israeli administration since 1967, “persons of all religious faiths have been guaranteed full access to holy sites within the city”. The bill concluded that US policy should be based on “Jerusalem remaining an undivided city”, the aim that “Jerusalem should be recognised as the capital of the state of Israel”, and that “the US Embassy in Israel should be established in Jerusalem no later than May 31, 1999.”⁵³ To date, however, the American Administration has still not taken the decision to relocate its embassy.

⁴⁸ “Statement by Charles W. Yost, US representative to the UN”, *ibid.*, pp.175–176.

⁴⁹ Spiegle, *The Other Arab–Israeli*, p.232.

⁵⁰ “Statement by Lawrence Eaglburger, Under-Secretary for political Affairs, Department of State, 23 February 1984”, in *Documents on Jerusalem*, pp.180–181.

⁵¹ “Senate of the US, 104th Congress, 1st Session S.770, ‘Jerusalem Embassy Relocation Implementation Act’”, in *Documents on Jerusalem*, p.196.

⁵² *Documents on Jerusalem*, p.203.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp.201–203.

Although the United States has refused to accept Israeli action in East Jerusalem,⁵⁴ it has also refused to take any practical steps to prevent it. It has even discouraged verbal condemnation by the United Nations. For example, in a comment by the American State Department on 29 June 1967 concerning the Israeli annexation (the application of law and administration within the expanded boundaries of Jerusalem), there was no mention of Israel by name, although there was criticism of other states in the region:

The hasty administrative action taken today cannot be regarded as determining the future of the holy places or the status of Jerusalem in relation to them. The US has never recognised such unilateral actions by any of the states in the area as governing the international status of Jerusalem.⁵⁵

The United States was giving Israel increasing protection at the United Nations by vetoing resolutions against Israeli action in Jerusalem. This behaviour became much more apparent after the signing of the Camp David agreement in 1978. The American Administration promised the Israeli government at the time that Jerusalem was the subject of negotiations that should not be held in an international framework. A famous story marked the beginning of the implementation of this policy, the events of which took place during February 1980. Jordan and Morocco had proposed a resolution against the construction of settlements in the occupied territories. Ḥāzim Nusayba, Jordan's current representative at the United Nations, said that the American representatives engaged in long negotiations with him, and asked him to change certain words in the proposal, such as substituting "deplore" for "condemn". Finally, after lengthy discussions in which the American delegation was in contact with the White House through the Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, the representatives imposed the condition that if the United States were to vote in favour of the proposal, a particular paragraph on Jerusalem had to be removed. Nusayba agreed and the delegation was accordingly instructed to vote in favour. The American decision provoked enormous Israeli frustration and a campaign against President Carter. The reason, as Nusayba explained, was that the remaining text of

⁵⁴ See various American resolutions and statements, *Documents on Jerusalem*, pp.175–178, 183, 186.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.174.

the resolution referred to the “deplored policies” as those implemented in the “occupied territories including Jerusalem”.⁵⁶

The American Administration declared that it had not intended to vote affirmatively and that a communication fault with the American delegation was responsible. President Carter, whose failure in the next election was attributed to this incident, was against including Jerusalem in the resolution because of his promise to the Israeli Prime Minister, Menachem Begin. The “communication fault”, as President Carter’s aides asserted, was the result of a misunderstanding. When the delegation told Cyrus Vance that the paragraph on Jerusalem would be removed, he assumed that all the other references to Jerusalem would be removed as well. However, the delegation saw this paragraph as the reason for the President’s reservations, while the content of the resolution had already been accepted (in the past) by American officials.⁵⁷

After this incident the United States showed greater opposition to discussing Jerusalem at the United Nations and this attitude was strengthened after the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993. In 1994, after the American abstention from the vote by the UN Security Council to condemn the killing of dozens of Palestinians by Israeli settler in the Massacre of Hebron, the American delegate to the Council, Madeleine Albright, declared:

Under the Declaration of Principles, [Jerusalem] is an issue which Israel and the PLO have agreed will be dealt with in the final status negotiations. My government does not believe that it is helpful to the negotiations to include the kind of reference that is made to Jerusalem in this resolution.⁵⁸

It can be concluded, therefore, that although the American Administration still does not recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, there is increased pressure from Congressmen and other politicians to step over that threshold. The American role as a mediator in a political settlement in the region, and the possible reaction from the Arab and Muslim world to such a decision are largely the reasons why the American Administration has not taken that step.

⁵⁶ Interview, Hāzim Nusayba.

⁵⁷ For the details, see Spiegle, *The Other Arab–Israeli*, p.378.

⁵⁸ “Albright’s Statement”, in *Documents on Jerusalem*, p.186.

5.2.2.2 THE AMERICAN VIEW OF THE POLITICAL SOLUTION

The United States did not recognise Israel's occupation or annexation of East Jerusalem. It described East Jerusalem as occupied territory and tried to convince the Israelis not to annex this part of the city. Nevertheless, American ideas of a peaceful settlement in Jerusalem favoured Israeli gains in the city compared with the pre-1967 situation.

Among the early American proposals for a solution was a paper compiled by the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs in the State Department around September 1967. Although the paper was not published, it was discussed with certain parties such as the British. The compilers of the paper thought their ideas "the most likely eventually to prove acceptable". The proposal was detailed and comprehensive.⁵⁹

Under the title "Geographic Limits" the paper proposed partial internationalisation. An international sector was to be established in the former Jordanian-controlled Jerusalem, including the Old City and adjacent areas, while the various areas between the armistice lines were to become part of Israeli Jerusalem. The proposal suggested that the United Nations administer this area and control functions such as movement in and out of the internationalised sector in co-ordination with Israel and Jordan to guarantee free access to the holy places. The United Nations would also be responsible for the protection of the holy places in the internationalised sector, while their maintenance and operation were to be left to the religious representatives in Jerusalem. The paper also discussed "civil administration", though not in detail, and stated that a city council was to be elected and local courts established. The paper detailed economic and financial arrangements: taxation and revenue would be shared between Jordan and Israel; the currencies of both states would be legal tender; and branches of the banks of both states would be opened.

Although the paper was not officially published, perhaps because the peace process had not yet reached a suitably advanced stage, it was important in revealing the current American view and the fact that there was some practical thinking about the issue of Jerusalem during that period.

⁵⁹ FCO 17/251: 21 September 1967.

When there were no negotiations in progress, the United States, from time to time, suggested principles for a solution to the problem of Jerusalem. On 25 September 1971, the current American Ambassador to the United Nations, George Bush, listed the following four:

1. Jerusalem should be a unified city.
2. There should be open access ...for persons of all faiths and nationalities.
3. Administrative arrangements for the unified city should take into account the interests of all its inhabitants and of the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities.
4. There should be roles for Israel and Jordan in the civic, economic and religious life of the city.⁶⁰

George Bush's view did not differ greatly from the ideas suggested in the paper compiled by the Near Eastern Affairs Department, except that it did not define the geographical boundaries of the "unified" city. However, since the American position was that "the instrument and process of negotiations"⁶¹ would determine the future of Jerusalem, no practical action was taken to implement this view.

It is important to note that these ideas did not match the frequent declarations by the United States that its Administration had not accepted Israel's unilateral action in Jerusalem and its description of East Jerusalem as occupied territory. However, American policy in the mid-1970s was that unilateral agreements could be an ideal mechanism for negotiations. This policy resulted in the Camp David agreement between Egypt and Israel.

The real revival of plans for a comprehensive peace agreement in the region came in the wake of the Gulf War in 1991. The war against Iraq and the continuing collapse of the Communist bloc led to a comprehensive political review by the United States of the shaping of a new world order. This required the reorganisation of the affairs of various economic and political regions around the world, including the Middle East. This had to be done by building new regional institutions in a way that would guarantee American interests and prevent the repetition of an attempt – such as that of Iraq – to create a regional order opposing American interests in the

⁶⁰ The text of the statement in *Documents on Jerusalem*, p.177.

Gulf. The American-based order would be one in which both of the United States' non-Arab allies in the region, namely Israel and Turkey, could participate. The Palestinian question therefore emerged as a source of tension that could prevent the creation of a structure which included Israel.

After intensive efforts, the United States managed to persuade the various parties to attend the Madrid Peace Conference (see Chapters One and Two). Although the interim agreement – known as the Oslo Accords – was welcomed by the United States, its main concern had been to reach an agreement rather than the details of the agreement itself.

The final status negotiations that took place at Camp David in July 2000 were a moment of truth for American policy. The question of Jerusalem was more critical now than at any other time. A comprehensive agreement made it impossible to delay finding a solution for Jerusalem – as had happened before – and at the same time tension inside the city was growing. When the Summit collapsed and the problem of Jerusalem emerged as the main reason, President Clinton's Administration decided to play a more active role in dealing with the situation. Until that time the United States had been playing the role of facilitator without taking a direct part in the negotiations, leaving most of the issues for the two parties to negotiate. Now, however, it decided to propose a specific solution. So, in late December 2000, President Clinton put forward a proposal for peace. He described the problem of Jerusalem as “perhaps the most emotional and sensitive of all”, and made “four propositions” to solve it:⁶²

1. Jerusalem should be an open and undivided city, with assured freedom of access and worship for all. It should encompass the internationally recognised capitals of two states, Israel and Palestine.
2. What is Arab should be Palestinian, for why should Israel want to govern in perpetuity the lives of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians?
3. What is Jewish should be Israeli. That would give rise to a Jewish Jerusalem, larger and more vibrant than any in history.

⁶¹ “Statement by William Scranton, US representative to the UN, 1976”, in *Documents on Jerusalem*, p.178.

⁶² *Haaretz* (9 January 2001).

4. What is holy to both requires special care to meet the needs of all. No peace agreement will last if not premised on mutual respect for the religious beliefs and holy shrines of Jews, Muslims and Christians.

As explained in previous chapters, the proposal was not accepted by either the Palestinians or the Israelis, for further negotiations were needed to reach an agreement. A new American Administration and Israeli Prime Minister came to power in early 2001, the conflict escalated, and negotiations came to a halt.

In general, it could be concluded that the United States has had two main considerations in mind when dealing with the Jerusalem question. Firstly, it viewed the issue of the city according to its impact on the overall situation in the Middle East. Therefore, American policies have shown a certain amount of care not to provoke the Arab and Muslim countries and public opinion, for example, by not recognising the city as Israel's capital. Secondly, the special relationship between Israel and the United States made the American Administration view the pre-1967 partition of Jerusalem as an unacceptable solution, and recognise an Israeli presence in East Jerusalem in any forthcoming settlement. Yet the United States was giving Israel increasing protection by preventing any international action against the Israeli annexation policies in the city.

5.3 The Vatican and Churches in Jerusalem

The major Christian churches in Jerusalem were, until recent years, administered by European clerics. The Vatican and Western states had been claiming the right to protect the laity of these churches, and had provided support for them in various ways such as missionary services. As a result, the churches and their laity had been viewed by many as representatives of their international protectors. In other words, they were portrayed as expressing foreign attitudes. However, before discussing this assertion, it is important to look at the Christian presence in Jerusalem.

5.3.1 The Christian Presence in Jerusalem

In 1922, Christians in Jerusalem numbered around 14,700, forming 23 per cent of the total population. This increased to 31,300 in 1946, though now forming only 19 per cent.⁶³ The change in the percentage was largely due to Jewish migration to the city.

However, the 1948 War was a severe blow to the Christians' existence in Jerusalem. It was estimated that at least 40 per cent of the city's Christians fled or were forced out of West Jerusalem until none remained there. It was also estimated that 25 per cent of the land lost in West Jerusalem was owned by churches or Christian institutions and 13 per cent of the residential properties lost were those of Christian individuals and families.⁶⁴

In 1961 the number of Christians in East Jerusalem was 11,000. According to 1998 statistics, there was no increase in this number in the whole of Jerusalem. The 11,000 Christians of 1998 in Jerusalem, mostly in the Old City,⁶⁵ accounted for less than 2 per cent of the city's population.

The sharp decline in the Christian presence was largely due to the occupation and the difficult economic situation in Jerusalem (unemployment among Christians in the city in the late 1980s was 35 per cent⁶⁶), to the marked increase in Jewish migration to the city and the natural growth in the population of Palestinian Muslims.

Historically, the Greek Orthodox Church had accounted for the majority of Christians in Palestine and Jerusalem, followed by Roman Catholics⁶⁷ and the Armenian Orthodox Church. However, there have been changes in the proportions. The followers of the Greek Orthodox Church declined from 4,000 in 1967 to 3,500 in 1998, the Armenian Orthodox from 2000 to 1,500, while the Roman Catholics remained around 3,900. Other small Christian groups in the city have shown slight increases or decreases, although the Orthodox presence has been declining noticeably, with a slight increase in the numbers of Catholics and Protestants.⁶⁸

⁶³ Dumper, *Sacred Space*, pp.111–112.

⁶⁴ Wagner, *Dying*, pp.151, 209.

⁶⁵ Dumper, *Sacred Space*, pp.111–112.

⁶⁶ *Filastīn al-Thawra* (22 July 1990).

⁶⁷ In some sources the Roman Catholic Church is called the Latin Catholic Church.

⁶⁸ For statistics, see Dumper, *Sacred Space*, p.113.

Until the 1980s, most of these churches were controlled by non-Arabs and non-Palestinians. The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, theoretically independent of any other Patriarchate in the world, has in reality been controlled by Greek bishops for hundreds of years. During the nineteenth century it enjoyed Russian support, which was replaced with Greek support after the independence of Greece and the Communist Revolution in Russia.⁶⁹ The Catholic churches, namely the Roman Catholic, had links with the central universal Catholic leadership of the Vatican, and in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had received support and protection from France, Italy and other Catholic countries. The third major Christian group in Jerusalem, the Armenian Orthodox Church, is completely non-Arab and expresses pride in its Armenian national culture and heritage.⁷⁰

The Christian presence in Jerusalem has been analysed in various ways, including the political aspect. Some Israeli views tried to negate the Palestinian national identity of Christians in Palestine, or to deny that the Christians of Jerusalem are indigenous. Teddy Kollek, the former Mayor of Jerusalem, said

Christianity... sprang up and developed far from the scene of Jesus' last ministry, notably in Antioch and other parts of the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean, where his disciples recounted his teachings, his parables, the stories of his miracles in his lifetime and his resurrection and ascension. Jerusalem itself...remained comparatively untouched by the views expounded by the latest victims of Rome.⁷¹

This view attempts to minimise the significance of Jerusalem as the cradle of Christianity. However, another Israeli argument says that the establishment of the Jewish state is in the interests of the Christians since it protects their holy places from Muslims (See Chapter Two). There are also those who assert that in 1967 the Christians of Jerusalem welcomed the capture of the city by the Israelis.⁷²

Assumptions and questions are raised in connection with assertions of the role played by the Christians of Jerusalem, churches and laity in the conflict over Jerusalem. Among these assumptions, there are those which suggest that Christians

⁶⁹ On the history of the Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem, see P.J. Vatikiotis, "The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem between Hellenism and Arabism", *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.30, no.4 (October 1994).

⁷⁰ On the Armenian Church, see Daphne Tsimhoni, "The Armenians and the Syrians: Ethno-religious Communities in Jerusalem", *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 20, no.3 (July 1984).

⁷¹ Cited in Wagner, *Dying*, p.27.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p.159.

in Jerusalem might accept Israel's presence, and would be influenced by the position of the states and churches to which they are attached.

Historical examination disproves such assumptions. This can be shown by examining the Christian view of the question of national identity and the political solution in Jerusalem.

5.3.2 Christians and National Identity

A distinction must be made between the position of the Churches of Jerusalem and that of the Christians of Jerusalem and Arab Christians in general.

It could be argued that the sense of Arab and Palestinian national identity was growing among Palestinian Christians, especially in Jerusalem, even before the appearance of Zionism. This was certainly true of the members of the Orthodox Church, who comprised the overwhelming majority of the Christians of Palestine and Jerusalem. During the late nineteenth century, the laity of the Greek Orthodox Church was struggling on two fronts against two foreign powers: Turkish political rule and Greek control over its Churches in Jerusalem. This situation has led to waves of protest by Arab Orthodox Christians since that time, demanding that the Church be Arabised. In 1908 they asked that local secular members be elected along with the clerics to administer the affairs of the Patriarchate, especially property and financial resources. The Greek clerics vigorously rejected the request, asserting that the Patriarchate endowments "are not national but belong to all the Orthodox in the world".⁷³ The dispute became a national issue between the Orthodox Arab Christians, who styled themselves "nationals" (*Waṭaniyyūn*) or "the Palestinian Orthodox People", and who called the other side the "Greek element".⁷⁴ Subsequently in late 1908 and early 1909, demonstrations were held in protest against the Greek Patriarchal policies in various cities in Palestine. It is noteworthy that Muslims

⁷³ Sheḥada & Niqūlā Khūrī & Ra'ūf Abū-Jābir, *Khulāsat Tārīkh Kanīsat Ūrshaīm al-Ūrthodhuksiyya, Iḍāfa ilā Nubtha 'an Tārīkh al-Qaḍiyya al-Ūrthodhuksiyya* [A Summarised History of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem in Addition to a Brief History of the Orthodox Issue in Palestine and Jordan between 1925 and 1992] (Jerusalem: Maṭba'at Bayt al-Maqdis, 1925; 2nd edn, Amman: Maṭba'at al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ, 1992), p.241.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.245.

participated in these demonstrations,⁷⁵ clearly indicating that the development of national identity transcended religious divisions.

The appearance of the Zionist movement exacerbated the dispute between the two sides, especially after news of the sale of properties owned by the Patriarchate to Zionist organisations. For instance, in 1914 some intellectual members of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem, such as Khalīl Sakākīnī and George Anṭūnyus, led a wave of protests, asking to have the Greek language used in the Church replaced with Arabic, and to have the sale of properties to Zionists halted.⁷⁶

Christians in Palestine in general took part in the struggle against the Zionists by joining with Muslim Palestinians in forming the Muslim–Christian Associations that led to the Palestinian national movement in the early 1920s (see Chapter One).

The situation in the other Churches was different. There were no demands for Arabisation, maybe because on the one hand, there was no sense of exploitation among local Christians, namely the Catholics, and, on other hand, the Vatican, as the new protector of Catholics in the early 1929s, was not enthusiastic about Zionism and was even wary of British rule. So a dispute over Zionism was not expected between the local laity and the universal spiritual leadership.

In the aftermath of the 1948 War, the assertion that the Christians of Palestine held a different position from that of the Palestinian Muslims was almost baseless. Not only did the Christians of Palestine in general, and of West Jerusalem in particular, suffer as refugees with the rest of the Palestinians, but also the new middle-class, educated, secular or leftist Christian figures established resistance movements, and some of them took their place among the symbols of the Palestinian national struggle. For instance, one of the leading figures was George Ḥabash, a “Greek” Orthodox Christian, who was a co-founder of the Arab Nationalist Movement in Beirut in the 1950s, which promoted Arab unity and liberation. He and other Palestinian Christians participated in establishing a Palestinian successor to the Arab Nationalist Movement in the 1960s: the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Kamāl Nāṣir, another Palestinian Christian, was a member of the Faḥ

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.247.

⁷⁶ Wagner, *Dying*, pp.87–88.

leadership and a Palestinian spokesman in the early 1970s until his assassination by the Israelis.⁷⁷ There are many other examples of Christian figures who have played a prominent role in the struggle to liberate Palestine. It must be pointed out that these leading figures were secular and leftist, and that they were not acting on a religious basis. Nevertheless, the importance of their participation is that any attempt to assert that the Christians of Palestine hold a position different from that of Palestinian Muslims can be easily challenged.

The establishment of Israel increased the overlap between the two fronts on which the Arab members of the Orthodox Church had to fight, especially because of the sale of land in West Jerusalem and Israel by the Patriarchate to Zionist organisations.

During the 1950s, many attempts were made by Arab Orthodox Christians to spur the Jordanian government into passing a new law to organise the affairs of the Orthodox Patriarchate and its relations with its members. This action indicated that Arab Orthodox Christians in Palestine and Jordan felt closer to their Arab governments than to their Greek clerics. Between 1956 and 1958, the Arab Renaissance Orthodox Association* contacted the current leftist Arabist government in Jordan (headed by the leader of the National Socialist Party, Sulaymān al-Nābulṣī), demanding legislation to end the exclusive Greek control of the Patriarchate. They wanted “secular” members to participate in a “mixed council” to administer the Patriarchate, and the regulations to be changed so that Arabs could be elected as clerics to lead the Church. A bill was drafted in 1957 and sent to the Deputy Council, which approved it and sent it to the Upper House. However, the government was dismissed before the end of the legislative procedure.⁷⁸ A new bill was hastily drafted and agreed in Parliament after governmental pressure and amid objections from Members of Parliament, who said that they had not even read it. The new bill was passed in the Upper House without any discussion, some of the members pointing out that they had not even seen it.⁷⁹ The name of the Patriarchate remained the “Greek Orthodox Patriarchate”, although the first bill had called it the “Orthodox Patriarchate”. So the

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 198–199.

* Established in Transjordan in 1923.

⁷⁸ Interview, Raʿūf Abū-Jābir, Amman, 19 September 2001.

⁷⁹ The Minutes of the Jordanian Upper House, 22 May 1958.

new law ensured that power remained in the hands of the Patriarch.⁸⁰ The behind-the-scenes influence that led to changing the bill in this hasty manner is not known, although Greek pressure is one of the possible reasons. However, the new law allowed the inclusion of Arabs in the Patriarchate, yet to the present day the Greek heads of the Patriarchate have refused to appoint Arab members.⁸¹

The occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967 maximised the importance of the role that Churches in Jerusalem could play, because of their acceptance of the Israelis, who became the ruling power, or the controversy over the sale and leasing of property by the Churches to the Israelis. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the number of land sales, particularly in the district of Jerusalem, by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, had rocketed. Ra'ūf Abū-Jābir, the head of the Orthodox Society in Amman, allowed the researcher access to a file containing documents of numerous contracts for the sale and leasing of properties from the late 1960s up to the late 1990s. The file included documents and information about contracts to sell, lease, and exchange properties with Israel, either inside Israel itself or in West and East Jerusalem. Among these properties was land where parts of settlements such as Ma'ale Adumim, Har Homa and Gilo were built, as well as land adjacent to the Old City.⁸²

However, during the 1970s, the Armenian Patriarchate was also selling land and property to the Israeli government, including a tract along the western side of the city wall of Jerusalem, while other plots were lost by confiscation.⁸³

Some of these deals were justified by Israeli pressure. This meant that Israel used its authority in issuing visas and residence permits for foreign bishops, as well as the granting of planning permission and similar issues to force the Churches into accepting these contracts. Various statements issued by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate deny some of the contracts, such as the sale of land, although it admits to

⁸⁰ The texts of the first bill cited in Khūrī & Abū Jābir, *Khulāsāt*, pp.447–468; and Law No. 27 of 1958, “Law of Greek Orthodox Patriarchate”, *Official Gazette*.

⁸¹ Interview, Ra'ūf Abū-Jābir.

⁸² Copies of some of these documents and reports were given to the researcher by Ra'ūf Abū-Jābir. Details of other land sales and long-term leases are found in journalist reports such as *Al-Nahār* (3 September 1997), and *al-Ḥayāt* (1 September 2000),

⁸³ Dumper, *The Politics of Jerusalem.*, p.189.

leasing land for long periods, some of these leases lasting fifty or a hundred years or for ever.⁸⁴

The nationalist struggle against the occupation during the late 1980s in the West Bank and Gaza seemed to be entering a new stage with the Churches drawing closer to the Palestinian national movement. The Intifada of 1987 was significant in that Christians participated on some occasions in a way unlike that in other places in the West Bank and Gaza. For instance, the Christian town of Bayt Sāḥūr, between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, was unique in its practice of civil disobedience, especially the refusal to pay taxes to the Israelis. This action prompted the Israelis to launch vigorous campaigns of arrest, siege and confiscation of property. All these events were covered by the international media.⁸⁵ The Intifada led the Christian Churches in Jerusalem to adopt a new style of discourse in the form of joint public statements. It seemed as if the Intifada had created Palestinian national unity, in which the Churches had to play their part.

Since the end of the 1980s, the Churches have expressed political views in their joint statements, such as calling on the United Nations “to give urgent attention to the plight of the Palestinian people, and to work for a speedy and just resolution of the Palestinian problem,”⁸⁶ as well as “international protection to preserve our universal Christian heritage”.⁸⁷ A historic step was taken in 1988 by appointing to the Roman Catholic Patriarchate an Arab Patriarch, Michel Şabbāḥ, who, together with his Palestinian aides, expressed criticism of the Israeli policies.⁸⁸

In reaction to the anti-occupation struggle, Israeli measures in targeting Church properties were intensified by the increase in the numbers of religious right-wing settlers on the Jerusalem Municipality Council and in Israeli politics. In April 1990, a confrontation took place when a group of settlers broke into St John’s

⁸⁴ For instance, the Arabic statement “Explanation by the Greek Orthodox Church in Jerusalem” in 1998 and other statements given to the Israeli courts in defence of the Patriarchate in civil cases initiated by Arab Orthodox Christians (Orthodox Society Archive, Amman).

⁸⁵ See Dumper, *Sacred Space*, p.117.

⁸⁶ “Statement by the Head of the Christian Communities in Jerusalem, 27 April 1989”, *Documents on Jerusalem*, p.22.

⁸⁷ “Statement by the Head of the Churches in the Holy Land, Jerusalem, 14 January 1992”, *Documents on Jerusalem*, pp.24–25.

⁸⁸ Interviews, ‘Afif Şāfiya & Ra’ūf Abū-Jābir; also Wagner, *Dying*, pp.71, 161 & 252.

Hospice, owned by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, in the heart of the Christian quarter in the Old City, and claimed it for Jewish residence. The Patriarch, Diodorus, despite his past co-operation with Israeli officials was, among others, physically assaulted during the attempt to restore control over the building.

The Churches in Jerusalem issued a joint statement under the heading "Christian Churches and Communities in Jerusalem". It contained three measures of protest: closing the holy places in Jerusalem, Nazareth and Bethlehem, and elsewhere in the Holy Land for one day; tolling the funeral bell in the churches; and declaring a special day of prayer on behalf of the Christian Community of Jerusalem and inviting Christians throughout the world to take part.⁸⁹

This action prompted a campaign of protest inside and outside Israel against its policy towards the Christian areas. President Chaim Herzog refuted these accusations and asserted in letters to the United Nations and the American President that the campaign was part of a revival of Christian "classical hostility" against Jews, and was exploiting a "property deal".⁹⁰

The importance of these events was that they increased the gulf between the Arab Christians and the Israelis, enhanced the nationalist trend in the Churches, and established joint Christian action.

The increasing tension between the Churches of Jerusalem and the Israeli government and settlers over the status and properties of the former was exacerbated by the escalation of another dispute, that is, the status and role of other non-indigenous Churches in Jerusalem. These Churches were known as Zionist Christianity or American Fundamental Christianity. The dispute between Jerusalem's old Churches and American Protestantism had begun in the nineteenth century, when American archaeological/biblical missions carried out research in the city. They concluded that the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus had taken place not at the site of the Holy Sepulchre but somewhere outside the Old City. At the same time, they

⁸⁹ *Documents on Jerusalem*, pp.23–24.

⁹⁰ *Filasṭīn al-Thawra* (27 May 1990).

supported the establishment of a Jewish state, or Israel, which would “bring back” the Jews to the land of Israel, considering it to be a duty laid down in the Bible.⁹¹

According to this research, a group asserting that it represented Christians “everywhere” declared itself – in response to the international condemnation of Israel for its Basic Law on Jerusalem in 1980 – to be the “International Christian Embassy Jerusalem”. The group asserted that its membership comprised 1,400 Christians from forty countries.⁹² The mutual support and co-operation between these groups and Churches and the Israeli government have provoked the established Churches in Jerusalem and added another dimension to the tension between the two sides. For instance, in 1988, the established Churches in the city issued a statement that this embassy neither represented nor replaced the Christian community in Jerusalem or the majority of the Faithful throughout the world. The statement also rejected the political interpretation of the Holy Scriptures by this Church and pointed out: “We do not expect people coming from abroad, unaware of our problems, to act on our behalf.”⁹³

Meanwhile, the confrontation inside Jerusalem continued. In 1992 another joint statement by the heads of the Churches in Jerusalem was issued to express concern about the situation in the occupied territories. In this statement the issue of the holy places and Church properties was viewed in a wider framework. The Churches condemned the Israeli demographic policies to change Jerusalem’s “unique character and status”, and condemned settler activities not only against certain Christian properties and personalities but also throughout the whole of the city.⁹⁴ In 1996, during the escalating tension in the occupied territories, the Christian Churches expressed a more nationalist position. In joint and individual statements they

⁹¹ For the origins of the American Protestant views and projects regarding Jerusalem and Israel, see Edward Fox, *Palestine Twilight: The Murder of Dr Albert Glock and the Archaeology of the Holy Land* (London: HarperCollins, 2001), pp.51–63.

⁹² See the web site of International Christian Embassy Jerusalem: www.icej.org.il. However, it must be emphasised that some sources do not accept some of these Churches in Jerusalem, which support Israel, as Protestant Churches. See, Jane Betty Bailey & Alison Hilliard, *Living Stones Pilgrimage* (London: Cassell, 1999), p. 42.

⁹³ “Statement by the Christian Churches on the ‘Christian Embassy’ in Jerusalem, 15 April 1988”, in *Documents on Jerusalem*, p.21. Also, in June 2002, ‘Aṭṭāalla Ḥannā, spokesperson for the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, commented: “There are in the United States groups that claim Christianity under different names. They are actually Zionist businesses, whose aim is to serve the Zionist project by defrauding, penetrating and destroying the Christian religion.”

protested against Israeli action against Islamic holy places, namely, the excavation of the tunnel under al-Aqsa Mosque. The joint statement described the Israeli policies as “injustice” and declared that the excavation “touched the religious nerve of our Muslim brothers and sisters”. The statement also protested against the Israeli closures and other issues, such as education, health, work, worship, freedom of movement, policies, etc.⁹⁵

The movement to express closer solidarity with the Palestinian national position against the Israeli occupation were combined with further attempts by Arab Orthodox Christians to change the situation of their own Patriarchate. Although the Patriarchate had to join with other Churches in expressing support for the Palestinians, the disputes over the sale of land and Greek domination continued. In July 1987, a few months before the Intifada, a large demonstration took place in front of the Patriarchate in Jerusalem to protest against the land sales.⁹⁶ In 1992 various actions along these lines were taken in Israel, the occupied territories and Amman. Simultaneous action in these three arenas highlighted the question of identity. It was as if the action transcended the identities and borders that resulted from the establishment of Israel, where Palestine and East Jordan had consisted of one Patriarchate since the Ottoman era. In other words, Arab Orthodox Christians were not restricted to the invented borders of the nation-state scheme in the region, but were acting within an earlier, broader structure.

In October 1992, a conference entitled “A Church for Our Palestine” was organised in Jerusalem by the Arab Orthodox community from both Israel and the occupied territories to discuss the Patriarchate policies.⁹⁷ An organiser said to the Press on this occasion: “We see land being sold to the Israelis and the Greek bishops being driven around in luxury cars to their beautiful villas, and yet there is never any money when a church roof needs fixing.”⁹⁸ This statement clearly linked the

⁹⁴ Ibid.; *Documents on Palestine*, p.24.

⁹⁵ Ibid., *Documents on Jerusalem*, pp33–34; see also, “Jerusalem First” – a Message by the Latin Catholic Patriarch of Jerusalem, 29 September 1996., *ibid.*, pp.34–35; “Urgent Appeal for Assistance and Action to the Bishops of the World”, issued by the Commission for Justice and Peace of the Roman Catholic Patriarchate of Jerusalem, 10 October 1996 (*ibid.*, p.35).

⁹⁶ *The Bulletin of the Orthodox Association*, Amman, no.21 (July 1998).

⁹⁷ *Filasṭīn al-Thawra*, (22 November 1992).

⁹⁸ *The Times* (3 October 1992).

traditional accusations of financial corruption and the issue of relations with Israel. The conference established the Arab Initiative Committee, which brought together the Arab Orthodox community in Palestine.

Two months later, the conference of Amman was attended by around three hundred representatives from Israel, the occupied territories and Jordan. The PLO was represented by high-ranking officials. ‘Abbās Zakī, head of the Higher Committee of the Intifada in the PLO and member of the Faḥ Central Committee, attended on behalf of the PLO Chairman, Yāsir ‘Arafāt. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Sā’ih, Speaker of the PNC and a prominent scholar of Islam also attended.⁹⁹ The attendance strongly implied a union of the Arab Orthodox struggle against Greek control with the general Palestinian national cause.

From the Conference resolutions and documents, it can be seen that Israel and the occupied territories were described in one word, that is, “Palestine”, not “Israel”. The most important resolution was establishing the Central Orthodox Council of 44 members, with Ra’ūf Abū-Jābir from East Jordan as its President. The council declared itself to be a body representing Palestine and Jordan’s 200,000 Orthodox Church members.¹⁰⁰ A representative body that operates in Israel, the occupied territories and Jordan may be the only united organisation of its kind. The Islamic movement, for instance, does not operate jointly in the three places.

In the following years, the Central Council made every effort in Amman to change the situation of the Patriarchate. It asked the Jordanian government and the King to intervene and make the Patriarch in Jerusalem appoint a mixed council of secular Jordanian members and clerical members according to the 1958 law.¹⁰¹

Inside Israel and the occupied territories the Orthodox Central Council went to the Israeli courts several times in an attempt to prevent contracts for the sale and leasing of land, declaring that the Patriarch should not have the right to deal with

⁹⁹ Interview, Ra’ūf Abū-Jābir.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., and documents on the conference (Orthodox Society Archive, Amman).

¹⁰¹ Letter from the Orthodox Society to King Ḥusayn in 1997, and other correspondence with the Jordanian Prime Minister on various occasions between 1993 and 1998 (Orthodox Society Archive, Amman).

endowments of “national” importance which were not the “exclusive property of anybody”.¹⁰²

In late 2000, the death of the Patriarch Diodorus reopened the case of Greek domination of the Church, and linked it more strongly than at any time before with the Arab–Palestinian national cause, by concentrating on the sale of properties to Israel. The two parties, the Greek and the Arab, tried to use similar methods, especially the recruitment of governmental support: the Arabs looked to Jordan and Palestine, and the Greeks to Israel and Greece.

According to Jordanian law, bishops participating in the election of the Patriarch, as candidates or voters, must have Jordanian nationality. At the beginning of 2001, the Jordanian government refused to grant nationality to 76 Greek monks,¹⁰³ in response to the demands of Arab Orthodox Christians.

However, the Jordanian government later granted 21 Greek monks Jordanian nationality so that they could participate in the election. In what appeared to be a compromise, and after intensive efforts from the Orthodox Society in Amman, ‘Aṭṭāalla Ḥannā, an Arab Israeli Orthodox Christian, was also granted Jordanian nationality to enable him to participate in the election and stand as a candidate for the post of Patriarch in the future.¹⁰⁴

Although approval to hold the elections had been granted by the Jordanian government and the Palestinian Authority, it was refused by the Israeli government. Since the Patriarchate’s responsibility included the Churches and institutions in all three states, permission had to be granted by all three authorities before any elections could be held. Israel insisted that some figures in the Patriarchate, who did not observe the Israeli demands, could not stand as candidates. This inflamed the dispute within the Orthodox bodies, and gave the election a stronger nationalist nature. Some sources inside the Orthodox community declared that if Israel continued its intervention, an election could be held without its consent.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Statement from the Executive Committee/The Orthodox Conference in Israel., 28 November 1993 (Orthodox Society Archives, Amman).

¹⁰³ *al-Ḥayāt* (28 April 2001).

¹⁰⁴ Interview, Ra’ūf Abū-Jābir; *Haaretz* (3 July 2001).

¹⁰⁵ *Haaretz* (3 July 2001).

The Arabist party in the Orthodox Patriarchate focused on the sale of land in facing its rivals. ‘Aṭṭāalla Ḥannā issued the following statement:

We reject anyone who has relations with Israel to be the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and anyone who conspired with the Israeli occupation authorities ..., or who acted to assimilate with the occupiers and sell Church land to them, because such an act is high treason against the Church and its humanitarian values.¹⁰⁶

After long debates Bishop Irianus, who was the Palestinian choice, won the election. However, it is interesting to see how the Israeli question interacted with the Arabisation of the Patriarchate in this campaign. Ra’ūf Abū-Jābir said: “We stopped asking for the Arabisation of the Church. Now we are asking for our participation in reaching the right decisions on what is the nationality of the Patriarch.” He justified his view as follows: “Israel welcomes conflict in the Orthodox Church; it would welcome an Arab declaration that we do not recognise the [1958] law”,¹⁰⁷ because this would offer them the opportunity to impose new laws and to confiscate land, etc.

By using this language, the Arab Orthodox Christians gave priority to the general national cause of Palestine and Jerusalem over their own specific aim of Arabising the Orthodox Church, although this was also a national cause in their view. However, the problem of Jerusalem was a double front for the Arab Orthodox Christians in their struggle against the Israeli occupation and Greek domination.

The role of ‘Aṭṭāallah Ḥannā, as former election candidate, spokesperson for the Patriarchate, and champion of Palestinian nationalism, as well as a probable change in the new Patriarch policy toward the sale of land, could bring the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate into the Palestinian and Arab nationalist camp.

It can be said that while the Palestinian Christians have always been part of the Palestinian and Arab nationalist movement, the Christian Churches in Jerusalem have made every effort to associate themselves with it. The external influence on these Churches has been declining, whereas that of the Palestinian laity has been gradually increasing. The Churches of Jerusalem are thereby influencing international Churches and Christian bodies into giving more support to the Palestinian cause.

¹⁰⁶ *al-Ḥayāt* (7 July 2001).

¹⁰⁷ Interview, Ra’ūf Abū-Jābir.

5.3.3 The Churches and the Political Solution

There are two main political opinions held by Christian Churches regarding the solution to the conflict in Jerusalem: firstly, that of the Vatican, the leader of the Catholic Church worldwide, and at the same time an independent sovereign state; and secondly, that of the local Churches in Jerusalem.

As a state, the Vatican has been expected to, and has had the power to hold opinions on issues when the other Churches have been unable or have not been required to express their position. For instance, the Vatican participated in the League of Nations debate over the establishment of the British Mandate in the 1920s, and had to decide whether to recognise Israel in 1948.

The Vatican officially welcomed the British capture of Jerusalem in 1917 because a Christian power had achieved victory for "Christian Civilisation".¹⁰⁸ In reality, however, there was a strong fear that the British victory could create an opportunity for Protestantism to control Jerusalem. This fear was expressed informally by Cardinal Pietro Gasparri, the Vatican Secretary of State, who said that he preferred Muslim rule to that of Protestants or Zionists.¹⁰⁹

However, several factors persuaded the Vatican to support the Mandate. Firstly, that there was rivalry with France over who would represent the Catholic Church in Jerusalem. The British authorities assured the Vatican that they would no longer consider France the protector of Catholics in Palestine.¹¹⁰ Both the Vatican and the Catholic Church in Jerusalem protested against Zionist colonisation activities on several occasions, and criticised the methods of modernisation, which could damage the character of the Holy Land.¹¹¹ Cardinal Gasparri was reported to have said in 1919: "We are very worried about Palestine. Zionism is threatening to invade every place, to take everything, actually to buy Palestine."¹¹² The Pope himself on

¹⁰⁸ Minerbi, *The Vatican*, pp.18, 20.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.21.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.42, 43.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.43,44.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p.127.

several occasions deplored Jewish activities to transform the holy places into “pleasure spots”.¹¹³

In 1948, the Vatican insisted that Jerusalem should be internationalised. It refused to recognise Israel and continued to do so until 1993. However, meetings with Israel had taken place after 1967. In 1969 the Pope met the Israeli Foreign Minister, and in 1972 the Prime Minister.¹¹⁴

Besides the Arab states, the Vatican was the main power to support the internationalisation of Jerusalem in the aftermath of the 1948 War, according to the borders of the Partition Plan or the *corpus separatum* decided by UN Resolution 181.¹¹⁵ The Vatican’s view meant that Catholic states in Europe and Latin America could not support any other resolution. Even in Jerusalem itself the Latin Patriarch, Gori, expressed his support for other resolutions in closed meetings during the early 1950s. He told the French Consul-General in Jerusalem that he would favour a UN resolution which, while paying “lip-service” to the principle of internationalisation at some future date, would establish a system of “international supervision” for the time being.¹¹⁶

The Vatican changed its position gradually, although it was not expressed clearly since no serious peace process began before 1967. On various occasions after that date the Vatican took care to participate in any political negotiations over Jerusalem. In 1973, at the international conference in Geneva, which was attended by Israel and its neighbours after the October War, the Vatican issued a statement asking the conference not to adopt resolutions that might affect the future of Jerusalem.¹¹⁷

In 1979, after the failure of the Egyptian–Israeli negotiations at Camp David, the Vatican put forward a solution to the problem of Jerusalem. It stated that a solution should be part of the settlement of the whole Middle East crisis. However the question of sovereignty was to be resolved, Jerusalem must have special status

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p.149.

¹¹⁴ Eban, *Autobiography*, pp.298, 604.

¹¹⁵ FO 371/104775: Letter from H. Beely, British Embassy, Washington, DC, to Paul Falla, Eastern Department, Foreign Office, 14 October 1953.

¹¹⁶ FO 371/104775: Letter from A.R. Walmsley, British Consulate-General, Jerusalem to G.H. Baker, Eastern Department, Foreign Office, 6 August 1953.

¹¹⁷ Heikal, *Secret Channels*, p.227.

including international guarantees for the freedom of worship and access to the holy places. All three religious communities should enjoy equal rights, including adequate opportunities for economic progress, education, employment, etc. The Vatican also asked to be enabled “to make its voice heard” when negotiations took place.¹¹⁸

It was clear that the Vatican no longer insisted on the type of internationalisation described in UN Resolution 181 and that it could accept solutions based on a different international role. At the same time, however, the Vatican considered itself part of the solution and demanded to have a role in determining the future of the city.

The peace process that began in Madrid in 1991 opened the case of the Christian position on Jerusalem. The Vatican, which had not been invited to the negotiations, and which for years had been under pressure from Israel and countries such as the Netherlands and Germany to recognise Israel, opened negotiations with Israel itself shortly after the Madrid Peace Conference. At the same time it informed the PLO that it could now receive a Palestinian diplomatic mission.¹¹⁹

In December 1993 the Vatican signed a Fundamental Agreement¹²⁰ with Israel. The Agreement’s preamble emphasised the “process of reconciliation and growth in mutual understanding and friendship between Catholics and Jews”. It established diplomatic relations and Israel recognised the right of the “Catholic Church to carry out its religious, moral, educational and charitable functions”. Nevertheless, the agreement did not include a specific view of the political future of Jerusalem, or the role of the Vatican in the negotiations. On the contrary, it stated:

The Holy See, while maintaining in every case the right to exercise its moral and spiritual teaching office, deems it opportune to recall that owing to its own character, it is solemnly committed to remaining a stranger to all merely temporal conflicts, which principle applies to disputed territories and unsettled borders.

The text restricted the rights of the Vatican, in particular the right to express an opinion at future negotiations.

The Agreement did not please various parties, such as the PLO, which was late in appointing a delegation, for no reason other than bureaucracy, and which

¹¹⁸ “Statement by the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the UN, 3 December 1979”, in *Documents on Jerusalem*, pp.19–20.

¹¹⁹ Interview, ‘Afif Şāfiya.

wanted the Vatican to wait until a final agreement was reached between the Palestinians and the Israelis. The Palestinians were wary because the annex to the Agreement contained a list of Catholic institutions in East Jerusalem. The Vatican explained that it did not mean its recognition of Israel in East Jerusalem, but merely its awareness of the fact that Israel currently had *de facto* control there.¹²¹

In October 1994 official relations were established between the PLO and the Vatican and on 15 February the two parties signed the 2000 Basic Agreement. Unlike the Fundamental Agreement with Israel, the Basic Agreement emphasised the uniqueness of the Jerusalem issue, and called for a solution based on international resolutions. It rejected any decisions or unilateral actions “altering the specific character and status of Jerusalem”, and called for a particular statute for Jerusalem, internationally guaranteed.¹²²

The Israelis criticised the Basic Agreement, pointing out that it contradicted the Fundamental Agreement which had been signed with them, because the Vatican, according to the Israeli government, had agreed not to intervene in the negotiations.¹²³ The Vatican later asserted its demand to take part in the negotiations on Jerusalem, and during the Camp David 2000 Summit it declared that it must be heard in determining the future of the city.¹²⁴

The peace process seemed to provoke even the Churches in Jerusalem itself to express a joint opinion on the future of Jerusalem. On 14 November 1994 they issued a statement entitled: “The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians”.¹²⁵ It was a discussion of the political process and the future of Jerusalem. It criticised both the Israeli insistence on exclusive sovereignty over the whole of Jerusalem, and the

¹²⁰ “Vatican–Israel Fundamental Agreement, 30 December 1993”, *Documents on Jerusalem*, pp. 25–27.

¹²¹ Interview, ‘Afif Şāfiya.

¹²² “PLO–Holy See Fundamental Agreement”, in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. 29, no.3 (Spring 2000).

¹²³ *al-Ḥayāt* (17 March 2000).

¹²⁴ Interview, ‘Afif Şāfiya.

¹²⁵ Statement by the Patriarchs and Heads of the Christian Communities in Jerusalem: “The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians”, 14 November 1994 (Archive of the Royal Committee for Jerusalem Affairs, Amman). (The signatories were the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, Latin Patriarch, Armenian Patriarch, Custos of the Holy Land, Coptic Archbishop, Syrian Archbishop, Ethiopian Archbishop, Anglican Bishop, Greek-Catholic

Palestinian demand for exclusive sovereignty over East Jerusalem. The statement said that “Jerusalem should be open to all, shared by all” and “the capital of humanity”. It highlighted, firstly, the significance of Jerusalem “in the heart of Christianity everywhere”, and secondly, the continuity of the Christian community’s presence in the city for almost two thousand years. Building on these two elements, the Churches claimed the “legitimate demands of Christians for Jerusalem”. These rights included free access to the holy places, and the Churches’ rights of “property ownership, custody and worship”. The statement demanded that “the *Status Quo* of the Holy Places according to historical *firmans* and other documents...should continue to be recognised and respected”. At the same time the social, cultural, political and national rights of the “local Christian communities” were emphasised.

Therefore, the signatories demanded a “special status for Jerusalem”, and a role in its creation:

In order to satisfy the national aspirations of all its inhabitants, and in order that Jews, Christians and Muslims can be “at home” in Jerusalem and at peace with one another, representatives from the three monotheistic religions, in addition to local political powers, ought to be associated in the elaboration and application of such a special statute.

Furthermore, the representatives of the Churches opposed a solution based on a municipality or partition, demanding instead an international role in the city:

Because of the universal significance of Jerusalem, the international community ought to be engaged in the stability and permanence of this statute. Jerusalem is too precious to be dependent solely on municipal or national political authorities, whoever they may be. Experience shows that an international guarantee is necessary.

The statement clearly adopted a position very different from that in the Israeli–Vatican agreement that had been signed a year earlier, especially by demanding a role for the Christian Churches in determining the city’s future and by declaring support for an international authority in the city.

The political position of the local Churches seems to be continually evolving, especially in response to the escalation of tension in Jerusalem after the Oslo Accords. The Churches issued the following statement after the 1996 Tunnel Uprising: “If Israel maintains an exclusive sovereignty over the city, and continues its

Patriarchal Vicar, Lutheran Bishop, Maronite Patriarchal Vicar and the Syrian Patriarchal Vicar.)

‘Judaization’, Jerusalem will never be a city of peace.” The statement declared support for shared sovereignty and did not mention the international arrangements, while its conclusion seemed to adopt a Palestinian point of view:

“Jerusalem first” is now a priority. It is the heart of the conflict and the key to peace. When the closure of Jerusalem is lifted and the two parties share sovereignty over it, Jerusalem will become the city of peace. If Israel maintains an exclusive sovereignty over the city, and continues its “Judaization”, Jerusalem will never feel secure and Palestinians will never submit to it. We therefore insist on an open Jerusalem, the capital of two states.¹²⁶

During the negotiations at Camp David in 2000, the leading Churches in Jerusalem – the Greek Orthodox, the Roman Catholic and the Armenian Orthodox – sent a message to the Summit, demanding a role in the discussions and that their representatives be allowed to attend Camp David and any future meetings. The three Churches also refused to divide the Christian neighbourhoods inside the Old City. This refusal was in response to the Israeli Prime Minister’s suggestion to give control to the Palestinians of the Muslim and Christian quarters but not the Armenian,¹²⁷ and indicated that if any kind of partition were to take place, they would prefer it to be under Palestinian control. Ḥanān ‘Ashrāwī pointed out that the representatives of the Churches had made their views clear to the Palestinian officials.¹²⁸ Yāsir ‘Arafāt benefited from the Churches’ position. He included their representatives at the meeting of the Jerusalem Committee of the OIC, which was held in Morocco in August. At the meeting the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, Diodorus I, declared “Jerusalem must not continue under the Israeli occupation, and it must be the capital of the Palestinian state.”¹²⁹

We can conclude the discussion of the Christian aspect in Jerusalem with two observations. Firstly, the Christian presence in Jerusalem is threatened by the decline in its population in the city. This will change the identity of the city and lessen the interest of international Christian public opinion in events there. Secondly, the Churches of Jerusalem are gradually being nationalised as the foreign influence over them is steadily decreasing. The result is that the position of these Churches is approaching that of the Palestinians.

¹²⁶ *Documents on Jerusalem*, pp.33–34.

¹²⁷ *al-Quds* (24 July 2000).

¹²⁸ *al-Quds al-‘Araī* (25 July 2000).

5.4 The United Nations

Between 1947 and 1995 the United Nations adopted 141 resolutions on Jerusalem.¹³⁰ Further resolutions were added over the following years until 2001, which is the closing point of this study. Such a large number would raise doubts about the importance and efficiency of the international organisations in dealing with an issue like that of Jerusalem. However, before resolving these doubts, it is necessary to give an overview of the most important international resolutions on Jerusalem.

5.4.1 The UN Resolutions on Jerusalem

A useful starting-point for discussion is an examination of the international resolutions on Jerusalem since 1922, when the League of Nations included in the text of the British Mandate an article entitled “The Holy Places Commission”. It was decided that a commission be established with the Mandate “to study, define and determine the rights and claims in connection with the Holy Places and the rights and claims relating to the different religious communities in Palestine.”¹³¹ The method of nominating the commission was disputed between Britain and the Vatican, and yet the League was supposed to approve the commission before it could begin functioning. The Vatican had fears that the commission could be formed in a way that would change the *Status Quo* of the holy places in favour of the Protestants or the Greek Orthodox Church. The continuation of the dispute prevented the establishment of the commission,¹³² with the result that there was no review of the affairs and rights of the holy places. This was an early example of a situation where positions on Jerusalem were adopted but not implemented.

The UN resolutions applicable to Jerusalem can be classified according to their topic.

¹²⁹ *al-Quds al-‘Arabī* (29 August 2000).

¹³⁰ These Resolutions are documented in Maḥmūd ‘Awād, *Jerusalem in the UN Resolutions 1947–1995* (Amman: Royal Committee for Jerusalem Affairs, 1995).

¹³¹ Article 14, “The Mandate of Palestine”, cited in Jacob Stoyanovsky, *The Mandate for Palestine: A Contribution to the Theory and Practice of International Mandates* (London: Longmans, Green, 1928), pp.355–362.

¹³² Bovis, *Jerusalem Question*, p.17.

5.4.1.1 INTERNATIONALISATION

According to the UN General Assembly Resolution 181, adopted on 29 November 1947 and known as the Partition Plan,¹³³ “[t]he City of Jerusalem shall be established as a *corpus separatum* under a special international regime and shall be administered by the UN.” Arabs and Jews residing in the city were to be entitled to vote in the Arab and Jewish states respectively. The Trusteeship Council of the United Nations was required to prepare, no later than 1 October 1948, “a detailed Statute of the City”.

This solution was proposed for the following reasons: (1) It was difficult to persuade one of the antagonists to hand over control of the city to the other side; and (2) it guaranteed freedom of worship and secured international Christian public opinion.

The municipal boundaries of the city were enlarged to include surrounding villages and towns. According to the UNISCOM statistics, the population inside these boundaries comprised 100,000 Jews compared with 105,000 Arabs and others. In the district of Jerusalem, Jews comprised 38 per cent of the population compared with 62 per cent of Arabs and others. In the same area, Arabs and others owned 84 per cent of the land and the Jews 2 per cent.¹³⁴

The Resolution included arrangements together with obligations on the two states to guarantee free access to the holy places. In addition, rules were implemented regarding the administration of these places, tax exemption and maintenance requirements.

The failure of the implementation of this Resolution was mainly a consequence of the lack of international will to provide the necessary authority and resources, as has been explained in the first and second sections of this chapter.

Moreover, one of the major problems of the Resolution was that while the *corpus separatum* regime was not scheduled to begin until 1 October 1948, the British evacuation was supposed to be completed by 1 August. In the event, the

¹³³ UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (Partition Plan), 29 November 1947, Abdul Hadi, *Documents on Palestine*, vol. I, pp.172–184.

evacuation was completed earlier – in May – and the Resolution itself left a possible two-month vacuum that the conflicting parties on the ground could exploit to control the city.

Nevertheless, irrespective of its present legal and political validity, Resolution 181 introduced the most comprehensive view of a solution in Palestine. It stated two major principles: the partition of Palestine, and the internationalisation of Jerusalem.

5.4.1.2 THE ISRAELI ANNEXATION OF EAST JERUSALEM

Since 1967, the UN organisations have issued dozens of resolutions in response to Israeli policies inside Jerusalem. On 4 July 1967 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution against the “measures taken by Israel to change the status of the city”, considering them “invalid” and asking Israel to “desist” forthwith from taking any action that would alter the state of Jerusalem.¹³⁵ On 14 July the General Assembly issued another resolution condemning Israel’s failure to implement the previous resolution.¹³⁶

Neither of the resolutions explicitly mentioned Israel’s “annexation”. The reason could have been that the annexation was implemented as administrative measures. However, on 12 September the UN General Secretary, U Thant, reported to the General Assembly as follows:

In the numerous conversations which the Personal Representative had with Israeli leaders, including the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, it was made clear beyond any doubt that Israel was taking every step to place under its sovereignty those parts of the city which were not controlled by Israel before June 1967.¹³⁷

Resolutions concerning Jerusalem continued to be issued by the United Nations though without implementation, except in rare cases where, it could be argued, they were respected by some of the parties. As an example, when Israel

¹³⁴ See Special Report introduced to the General Assembly by a special committee formed to study the minority plan in the UNISCOM, Abdul Hadi, *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 1, pp.164 & 165.

¹³⁵ General Assembly Resolution 2253 (ES-V), cited in ‘Awād, *Jerusalem in the United Nations*, p.38.

¹³⁶ General Assembly Resolution 2254 (ES-V), *ibid.*, p.39.

passed its Basic Law on Jerusalem in 1980, the UN Security Council and General Assembly reaffirmed their positions. The Council described the declaration of the Law as “null and void”,¹³⁸ and on 20 August 1980 adopted a resolution calling upon “those states that have established diplomatic missions in Jerusalem to withdraw such missions from the Holy City”.¹³⁹ Several embassies of the Latin American countries and the Netherlands withdrew from the city in protest against the Israeli resolution. Nevertheless, various observers raised doubts that these states acted upon the UN Resolution itself, suggesting that Arab pressure was the real reason for their withdrawal. It is important to remember, however, that the states concerned had no direct interests in the Middle East, and that their embassies were already in a bizarre situation since most countries, including the international powers, had their embassies in Tel Aviv.

5.4.1.3 THE UN VIEW OF A SOLUTION IN JERUSALEM

UN Resolution 181 was apparently replaced with Resolution 242 of 1967 as the basis of a solution to the issue of Palestine and the Middle East..

Resolution 242 stated that the settlement in the Middle East was based on Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in June 1967. Although the Resolution did not refer to Jerusalem by name, various other resolutions passed by the Security Council and the General Assembly emphasised that Jerusalem was included in the description of “territories occupied by force”. Some of the resolutions were based on the Israeli withdrawal “from Palestinian territory occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem, and from other occupied territories” as the principle for “the achievement of a comprehensive peace”.¹⁴⁰

The United States provided protection for Israel at the Security Council by the right of veto, and the American administrations insisted that negotiations were

¹³⁷ The Report of the UN Secretary-General Concerning the Situation in Jerusalem (UN Doc. A/6793), *Documents on Jerusalem*, p.284.

¹³⁸ Security Council Resolution 478 (1980), ‘Awād, *Jerusalem in the United Nations*, pp.551–552.

¹³⁹ UN Security Council Resolution 478, *ibid.*, pp.551–552).

¹⁴⁰ See, for instance, General Assembly Resolution 45/68, 6 December 1990, in ‘Awād, *Jerusalem in the United Nations*, pp.331–332; also Security Council Resolution 681, 20 December 1990, pp.562–563; and various other resolutions.

the means of resolving this question, though they rejected any role for the United Nations. This situation led the General Assembly to express views different from those of the United States, though without the ability to translate them into practical solutions.

For example, the General Assembly expressed indirect reservations about the Egyptian–Israeli peace accords. In its resolution on 10 December 1981 the Assembly stated the following:

[The General Assembly] decides that all actions, measures and negotiations to implement or execute such accords and agreements, or any part thereof, are null and void in so far as they purport to determine the future of the Palestinian people and of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem.¹⁴¹

The United Nations welcomed the Madrid Peace Conference of 1991, though at the same time it revealed a different view of the principles for solution. The General Assembly issued the following resolution on 11 December 1991:

[The General Assembly] considers that the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the UN, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Council Resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people...¹⁴²

The principles of a comprehensive peace were to include “the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from other occupied Arab territories”. The resolution also referred to Resolution 181 as a basis for the recognition of secure boundaries for all states in the region. Palestine’s refugee problem was to be tackled on the basis of Resolution 194, the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967 were to be dismantled, and freedom of access to holy and religious places was to be guaranteed. At the same time it “expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory under the supervision of the UN for a transitional period, as part of the peace process.”

The Resolution required another peace conference and illustrated the solution, not leaving it open to negotiation. It recognised all the territories occupied

¹⁴¹ UN General Assembly Resolution 36/120, 10 December 1981, ‘Awād, *Jerusalem in the United Nations*, pp.95–99.

¹⁴² General Assembly Resolution 46/75, 11 December 1991. ‘Awād, *Jerusalem in the United Nations*, pp.410–411.

since 1967, including Jerusalem, as Palestinian. It is important to mention that this resolution was adopted by 104 votes in favour, 2 against, 43 abstentions and 15 absentees.

Nevertheless, the situation seemed devoid of practical meaning. Negotiations in Washington and Oslo continued and the United Nations found itself in a position only to support the peace process under actual exclusive American supervision.

5.4.2 UN Ineffectiveness in Solving the Jerusalem Question

There are several noticeable characteristics in the UN treatment of the Jerusalem question, which also illustrate its inability to participate effectively in finding the answer.

5.4.2.1 A MEANS OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT

The dates of the UN resolutions on Jerusalem indicate that there are long periods in which Jerusalem disappeared from the UN debate, a fact that reflects the lack of international effort to resolve the issue during that time. It also supports the assumption that international organisations move mostly to contain and manage crises rather than solve problems. An example is the period between 1951 and June 1967; during which only one resolution was issued – in 1958 – whereas the number soared after the 1967 War.

The main reason is that between 1948 and 1967 there was implicit mutual acceptance of the situation between the two countries that controlled Jerusalem; Jordan and Israel, and there was no real tension over the city. So it appears that the United Nations, like other regional and international organisations in dealing with Jerusalem and Palestine questions, acts only to contain tension rather than solve problems. A similar attitude is shown by the Arab countries' actions inside the United Nations. Arab delegations' insistence on issuing certain resolutions, and entering long compromises on formulating acceptable text to avoid an American veto, have been received by Arab public opinion as "just a face-saving attempt, which resulted in the Arab failure in deterring Israel from Judaising Jerusalem."¹⁴³ Resolutions of this kind are used to calm the situation and contain crisis.

¹⁴³ *Shu'ūn Filasṭīniyya*, no.5 (November 1971), p.215.

5.4.2.2 THE DECLARED AND ACTUAL POSITIONS

As explained in the previous sections of this chapter, in cases where particular governments declared their support for some of the UN resolutions, they did not actually mean what they declared. Support of the internationalisation of Jerusalem according to Resolution 181 has always been an alternative for the failure to reach another solution, and in order to preserve relations between international powers and some of the parties to the conflict. For example, between 1948 and 1967, the partition of the city with some kind of international role in the holy places was a solution supported by many international parties. Political circumstances, however, were not suitable for declaring such a position, so preserving the *de facto* position was the ideal solution in the view of these governments.

5.4.2.3 THE PARTIES' REJECTION OF THE RESOLUTIONS

Another reason for the ineffectiveness of the United Nations in dealing with the question of Jerusalem is the Arab–Palestinian and Israeli rejection of some of the resolutions. Israel has usually insisted on its rights in Jerusalem, and has considered it a domestic affair, whereas the Palestinians, especially in the early 1970s, rejected those resolutions which they found ineffective or not sufficiently forceful.¹⁴⁴ On other occasions, the Palestinians and Arabs accepted American demands to make Jerusalem the subject of further negotiations, instead of implementing resolutions already issued by the United Nations, thereby lessening their effectiveness.¹⁴⁵

Israel's rejection was crucial since the country was protected by international governments who refused to enforce the implementation of these resolutions, unlike other cases where UN resolutions were implemented by force. US protection was crucial, and US insistence that Jerusalem was a question of negotiations rather than international resolution, considerably weakened the role of the United Nations.

Despite all these factors and the resulting ineffectiveness, the resolutions of both the League of Nations and the United Nations are still judged by many powers

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ See the criticism of the Palestinian acceptance of the Madrid negotiations on bases different from those of the international resolutions: Bakir, *Mu'tamar al-Salām*, pp.19, 37.

to be a valid basis for a solution in Jerusalem, and the United Nations is considered an organisation capable of playing a role in the operation if it were allowed to do so.

Conclusion

In the study of any international conflict it is always necessary to analyse international opinion and its influence. The United Nations and the leading powers, in addition to those governments which could be concerned with the conflict for one reason or another, usually have an influence that needs to be taken into account so as to understand the situation. The question of Jerusalem is rather different since several international powers have declared a special interest in the conflict, pointing out that they should participate in the determination of the city's future. However, the number of these aspiring participants is smaller now than that of a century ago.

Examination of the issue of Jerusalem in the international sphere reveals that the religious claims or interests in the city which had been used to justify some of the colonial campaigns in the Middle East in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries no longer exist. This is largely because colonialism in its traditional style of a physical presence in the region has also ceased to exist.

The regional order of the nation-state scheme, started by the establishment of separate mandates in the hands of the colonial powers in the 1920s, was based on the boundaries, sovereignty and national interests of the established states, not on religious or wider universal and regional common interests. Conversely, an emphasis on Christian special interests in the region, through Jerusalem, would provoke Arab and Muslim reaction, and even raise questions about the existence of the Jewish state and Western support for it.

In the context of the nation-state scheme as the regional order that succeeded colonialism in the Middle East, we can understand why Europe no longer expressed a particular interest in Jerusalem. There were also other factors, such as the decline of the religious role in European society and politics. That could be why the United States insists on keeping the question of Jerusalem as the subject of mutual negotiations between the parties to the conflict. Simply giving the United Nations the responsibility of resolving issues such as Jerusalem could revive or enhance public opinion in various countries, especially those of the Arab and Muslim world, which

insist on regarding Jerusalem as an Arab–Muslim issue. This would play into the hands of pan-Arab and pan-Islamic groups which oppose the present regional order of separation under the nation-state scheme. There is also the possibility of invoking Christian public opinion, though perhaps to a lesser degree, in asking for a special role in determining the future of Jerusalem. That would not be in the interests of Israel, the regional ally playing an important part in guaranteeing American interests in the Middle East, maintaining a strong lobby in American political life and enjoying public support at the United Nations. Therefore, a religious definition of the issue of Jerusalem, and a wider inclusion of all those who could be concerned in it, are not in American or European interests in the Middle East, and run counter to the present regional order of nation-states.

In recent decades the Vatican has shown more flexibility in its position on Jerusalem and less determination in playing a role in settling the future of the city. The evidence is that the Vatican has abandoned its insistence on the broad territorial internationalisation of Jerusalem, and signed an agreement with Israel which has more or less dismissed its demand to take part in the negotiations over the compromise on Jerusalem. The participation of the Churches of Jerusalem, in an external or international position, has gradually become less realistic. They are clearly undergoing a steady nationalisation and so there is a diminishing interest among the international Christian institutions, including the Vatican, in playing a political role in determining the future of Jerusalem.

Since the UN reflects the balance of the international powers, it is understandably subject to ineffectiveness and limitations when dealing with problems such as that of Jerusalem.

However, there are other factors that are apparently working against the international trend to restrict the issue of Jerusalem to a conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Firstly, there is in the Arab world a continuing struggle in the form of political currents which reject the redefinition of identity in the region. The participants still declare a commitment to a broader Arab or Muslim identity, and view Jerusalem from a religious–national perspective. Secondly, the Israeli claims in Jerusalem are also based on a religious nationalism that provokes counter-claims. Thirdly, the Christian significance of Jerusalem still enables certain powers, such as

the Vatican and some of the Churches, to express a special interest in the city. Fourthly, some of the parties to the conflict, such as the Palestinians, see an advantage in widening the range of interested parties in Jerusalem. Recently, Palestinian clerics and Churches of Jerusalem have been participating in the Palestinian leadership and nationalist movement, asserting the Arab, Muslim and Christian aspects of the issue of Jerusalem, which refutes the Israeli claim of exclusive sovereignty over the city.

Conclusion

During the very early stages of preparing this thesis I visited the Royal Committee for Jerusalem Affairs in Amman. The aim of the visit was to obtain a volume published by the Committee, documenting the UN resolutions on Jerusalem. However, when I explained my thesis proposal to the researchers there, they were generous enough to offer me files of dozens of proposals dealing with the question of Jerusalem. They included copies of original proposals, translations of proposals written in Hebrew, and cuttings from newspapers and journals, etc.

A scrutiny of all these proposals gave rise to two questions: (1) why did the proposals fail? and (2) what could be added to them?

An examination of the history of the conflict shows that there are several reasons for this failure. After identifying these reasons, it is possible to outline some of the steps required to deal with the question of Jerusalem.

Among the most important reasons for the complexity of the Jerusalem question is the tendency of the international powers and the parties to the conflict to avoid facing the problem by using delaying tactics as a means of dealing with other issues in the wider conflict between Israel and the other parties.

At the international level, as shown in Chapter Five, there is an impression or belief that the United States and the European countries have no "direct interests" in the question of Jerusalem. Deferring its solution to a later stage and dealing with other, easier issues have formed the favoured method for these countries. The delaying tactics had started during the Mandate era, when the Vatican and the United Kingdom could not reach agreement over the formation of a special committee to review claims and settle controversies regarding the holy places in the city. Although the two parties agreed on the principle of forming the committee and stated this in the Mandate text, the committee's structure was deferred to future discussions. As a result, the committee has never been formed and confrontations over issues that this committee was supposed to tackle have continued and intensified. The same thing happened in 1947, when the international powers did not shoulder their responsibilities in implementing the internationalisation of the city as stated in UN

Resolution 181, and so the city was abandoned to the armed conflict between the Arabs and Jews. Even when there have been peace accords between Israel and the Arab countries such as Egypt in the late 1970s, and the Palestinians and Jordanians in the 1990s, Jerusalem has been set aside for future negotiations. These tactics were adopted in the hope that agreements on other issues would make it easier in the future to resolve complex issues such as Jerusalem. Unfortunately, the opposite has happened. The parties to the conflict, especially the Israelis post-1967, found that they could avoid giving really urgent consideration to the political settlement of the city. The situation that led Israel to adhere to a particular rhetoric addressed domestic public opinion and was designed to avoid making any compromise on Jerusalem in a future settlement, and so was created the concept of Jerusalem as a non-negotiable issue.

Gradually the international community, as well as observers and academics, acknowledged a situation in which neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians were willing to compromise on their demands for the city. It meant that these parties accepted that religion and historical rights could justify certain political positions. In other words, it was not until 1967 that religion and history were exploited to justify or assert that “all Jerusalem” must be the Israeli or the Palestinian capital. Furthermore, there had been no clear connection between religion and the claim of an “exclusive” sovereignty. All these possibilities began to be considered by different parties in their reactions to the question of Jerusalem.

Until the early 1990s Arab proposals insisted on returning to the pre-1967 borders, whereas Israeli proposals refused any territorial change, concentrating instead on municipal and religious solutions. Meanwhile, the international powers made no serious efforts nor proposals.

In the early 1990s a new regional order in the Middle East was being designed to guarantee American and Western interests in the region by accepting Israel – the Western ally in the region – as part of the structure. The Palestinian question had to be solved to enable the construction of the new order, which could be seriously hampered by the territorial tension. This produced fresh attempts to deal with the Jerusalem question in a different and more satisfactory way and so new proposals with different terms began to be put forward. However, since the 1993

Palestinian–Israeli interim agreements deferred Jerusalem to the final status negotiations, there was no serious reconsideration of this question until the mid-1990s.

The 1990s proposals show a different trend from those previously suggested. First of all, the need for agreement motivated some voices to reject the zero-sum definition and to look for a half-way house. It is noteworthy that intellectuals and academics played a major role in this round. However, those proposals did not even try to question the premises of the definitions of the conflict, especially those based on religious and political pretexts justifying certain political positions. Instead, the aim was to invent solutions to satisfy the various parties.

The following two examples are of particular importance. ‘Adnān Abū-‘Ūda published his own personal proposal, which was not the official Jordanian view, in 1992 in the *Foreign Affairs* journal. It received wide publicity. The starting-point was the recognition that “Arabs (Muslims and Christians) and Jews are equally bound to Jerusalem with the same intensity for the same reasons: religious attachment, historical attachment and political attachment.”¹ The formula that would give a political interpretation of this recognition was what Abū-‘Ūda called “conceptual” treatment by using the name of the city. He suggested three names for the city: “al-Quds” (Arabic), “Yerushalayim” (Hebrew), and “Jerusalem” (as used by the rest of the world).

The Plan divided Jerusalem into three areas: firstly, the walled city: “the true and holy Jerusalem [which] would belong to no single nation or religion”. It would belong to the “whole world”, and therefore no state would have political sovereignty over it. This part would be named “Jerusalem” and no flag would be raised there and it would be open to all Muslims, Christians and Jews, governed by representatives of the three religious authorities, each responsible for administering its holy places and participating on an equal footing in administering “Jerusalem”.

The second area, to be called “al-Quds”, would include the east, north-east and south-east of the walled city. It would be the Arab quarter and the Palestinian flag would be flown there. Jewish settlements would be dealt with according to the

¹ Adnan Abu Odeh, “Two Capitals in an Undivided Jerusalem”, *Foreign Affairs* (Spring 1992), pp.183–188.

solution reached for other settlements in the occupied territories. The third area, “Yerushalayim”, would include the west, north-west and south-west of the walled city, where the Israeli flag would be raised.

Before commenting on this proposal, another proposal – what is known as the Beilin–Abū Māzin understanding – will be examined. According to Israeli sources, this understanding was reached on 31 October 1995 after secret negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian teams, which largely consisted of academics. The Israeli side consisted of the two academic members of the secret negotiations in Oslo, Ron Pundik and Yair Hirschfeld, under the direction of Yossi Beilin, and the Palestinian side of two UK-based Palestinian academics, Aḥmad Khālidī and Ḥusayn Aghā, under the direction of Maḥmūd ‘Abbās (Abū Mazin).² According to the Palestinian side, namely Maḥmūd ‘Abbās himself, “this document does not exist”; it was only an academic discussion completed on that occasion, and he himself had no role in it.³ However, the ideas behind the “understanding” still deserve to be examined, especially since they seem to be similar to those presented by the American Administration and President Clinton at the Camp David Summit in December 2000⁴ (see Chapter Five).

The “understanding” uses the idea of three names for the city, al-Quds (the East sector), Yerushalayim (the West sector), and the City of Jerusalem, which would be the whole city including the two parts. Al-Quds would be the Palestinian capital, and Yerushalayim the Israeli capital. The city would remain “open and undivided” with “free access for people of all faiths and nationalities”. The municipal system and boundaries would be reformed, and new areas annexed to the City of Jerusalem: the Arab villages of Abū-Dīs, ‘Eizariyya, al-Rām, al-Zu‘aim, together with the Jewish settlements of Ma’ale Adumim, Givat Ze’ev, Givon and other areas. The neighbourhoods inhabited by Palestinians would be defined as “Palestinian boroughs” and those inhabited by Israelis would be “Israeli boroughs”. The exact borders of the city of Jerusalem were to be left to the final negotiations. However, it

² Klein, *Contested*, p.301.

³ *Al-Ḥayāt* (10 September 2000).

⁴ The text of the plan in: Jewish Virtual Library: www.us-israel.org

was stated that the number of boroughs allocated to each side would reflect the present demographic balance of 2:1 in favour of Jewish interests. A joint higher municipal council would be formed by representatives of the boroughs and those representatives would elect the city mayor. However, the paper did not state the number of representatives from each party who were to sit on the municipal council. Clearly, if it reflected the 2:1 demographic balance, there would be a Jewish majority and therefore a Jewish mayor. It was also specified that a joint parity committee was to be elected for the Old City (where the Arabs have a clear majority).

Two sub-municipalities would be formed: one Palestinian and the other Israeli, each elected by its respective boroughs. In all matters relating to the areas under Palestinian sovereignty, the joint municipal council would seek the consent of the government of Palestine, and the same arrangement would be applied to the areas under Israeli sovereignty. The sovereignty beyond these boroughs and within the municipal boundaries was to be left to further negotiations.

The solution for the Old City remained unclear. The paper stated that it would be granted a "special status" and that the Israeli and Palestinian sub-municipalities would each be responsible for its citizens in that area. In cases of dispute, the joint parity committee would have the final decision. The issue of sovereignty over the Old City remained ambiguous. It was declared that the State of Palestine should be granted extraterritorial sovereignty over al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf. While the Palestinian sub-municipality would manage the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the joint parity committee should still "examine the possibility of assigning [to it] extra-territorial status". This implied that Israel would have sovereignty over the Old City.

The importance of these two proposals, and the reason why they are discussed in this conclusion, is that they contained a different attitude from those proposed previously. Firstly, they clearly regarded the type of conflict as non-zero-sum. Secondly, each of the parties to the conflict fully recognised the existence of "the other". Instead of trying to annihilate it, it was ready to coexist peacefully. As for the cause of the conflict, that is, "Jerusalem", Abū-'Ūda's proposal distinguished between what was called "true Jerusalem", and what could be called "untrue Jerusalem". This idea was also implicit in the second proposal. There was the holy Jerusalem with its religious significance, that is, the walled city, which included the

holy places, and there was also the modern construction of al-Quds and Yerushalayim.

The negotiations at Camp David in 2000 and Taba 2001 seemed to follow more or less the same line of breaking the taboo of the non-negotiable city. Nevertheless, they failed: at least the Camp David Summit failed and the negotiations at Taba were brought to a halt (see Chapters One and Two).

The reason why the negotiations did not succeed was that further reconsideration of the existing definitions was required. The fact that academics and intellectuals played an essential role during the 1990s in shaping these ideas was important, since they could distinguish between constructed “taboos”, “myths” and definitions, which served certain political agendas, and realities. They recognised the existence of the two parties to the conflict, and that to deny the presence of one of them was useless. They were also aware of the distinction between religious significance and its political interpretations, which were used to achieve certain political functions. However, it seemed that further action was still necessary.

The tension following the collapse of the Camp David Summit, Ariel Sharon’s visit to al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf, and the confrontations that triggered the al-Aqsa Intifada could give the impression that the peace process had come to an end and that the progress achieved no longer existed.

However, some of the taboos had already been broken and would not be reconstructed, such as that Jerusalem was non-negotiable. A return to the negotiations has been strongly demanded by many international and regional powers and factors. Moreover, a better understanding of the conflict will always be required, whether there is a political process or not. Therefore, further study of the question of Jerusalem is still needed.

Much action is yet to be taken and progress made if an agreement is to be reached through negotiations. Academics and intellectuals are those best qualified to carry out this task. It is not enough to recognise realities and reject claims and taboos that some powers and politicians try to construct: they need to be confronted and alternative visions promoted.

Although it could be asserted that this aspect has been tackled, further efforts are necessary. The idea of giving the city three names – Jerusalem, al-Quds and

Yerushalayim – was suggested so as to grant each party its own imagined Jerusalem. This was to satisfy the images projected and promoted by nationalist rhetoric. To achieve further success, it is important to confront the rhetoric by reconsidering it instead of inventing solutions to satisfy it. Instead of finding a solution to comply with the present slogans of insisting that the city’s religious status and history qualify each party to claim exclusive sovereignty, or that religion means that the city must be the capital of each state, the ideas behind the slogans should be questioned. Instead of accepting that each party must gain what it claims now, and what each justifies by reference to religious and historical claims and interpretations, it is important to ask these parties to reconsider their claims. This is not a call to challenge religious beliefs, but to question many political positions promoted in the name of religion, and to confront newly constructed positions and invented premises, which are presented as historical and holy principles.

As a practical example, Chapter Two shows how it could be argued that Orthodox Judaism has no religious nor ideological position on the sovereignty issue in general. The question of who should rule Jerusalem in the present era depends on considerations of security and politics, not ideology and religion. Moreover, the assertion of the centrality of Jerusalem in Zionist thought could be examined. Indeed, several Jewish and Israeli scholars in recent years have been questioning the status of the city in this school of thought. Although he does not deny that “Jerusalem has been central to the thought and symbolism of Judaism”,⁵ Bernard Wasserstein states quite clearly in his book (published in 2001) that “religious devotion did not carry with it, until very recently, a demand for [what he describes as] restoring sovereignty.”⁶ He notes also: “early Zionist thinkers generally avoided attributing special importance to Jerusalem”.⁷ Therefore, what I mean here is challenging not religion and beliefs, but what has been lately projected in the name of religion, and so restore to the conflict its territorial/political identity.

In the other camp, the Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims need to remember the following comments by a prominent Muslim scholar, Yūsif al-Qaraḏāwī:

⁵ Wasserstein, *Divided*, p.3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.1.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.4.

Some pious people think that the battle is to support belief, in the sense that we fight Jews because they are Jews and do not believe in Muhammad's message, ...and this view is completely wrong....the battle started because of the occupation of the Islamic land.⁸

It cannot be said that religion does not affect the Muslim view of Jerusalem. Nevertheless, there is a great difference between fighting Jews because they are Jews, as some powers try to define the cause, and fighting them over a piece of territory. Another point needs to be mentioned at the Palestinian level; that is, the emphasis on Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state. This demand is now largely accepted by international governments and even the Israelis, although the boundaries of the capital are still disputed. From a historical point of view, however, Jerusalem had never been the capital of a Palestinian or Muslim state before the British Mandate, even as an administrative centre. It did not achieve that status until the nineteenth century and it was applicable only to the southern area of the present Palestine. 'Adnān Abū-'Ūda, in challenging the Israeli attempt to capitalise on this fact at the United Nations, gave a religious historical interpretation. He indicated that none of the holy cities in Islam had ever been the political centre or capital: neither Mecca, nor Medina, nor Jerusalem. Nevertheless, this did not reduce the religious importance of the city.⁹ It also means that religious importance does not always have to be reflected as political status.

The history of coexistence, including modern examples such as the mixed Jewish–Arab municipality in Jerusalem pre-1948 and the 1948–1967 partition, must be invoked to show the extent to which the present position has been exploited as an instrument of propaganda. Yet, new cultural and intellectual contexts that question the very bases of the definitions have been promoted need to be developed. Academics could contribute by finding the appropriate contexts and confronting public opinion with the necessity of reconsidering many of the slogans and claims presented by certain elites and treated as if they were immutable holy principles.

However, it should be borne in mind that these views and recommendations imply that the peace process will be resumed under the same conditions of the

⁸ Yūsif al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Quds fī al-wa'ī al-Islāmī* [Jerusalem in the Islamic Awareness], *Journal of Islamic Jerusalem Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Winter 1997).

⁹ Interview, 'Adnān Abū-'Ūda.

present regional order, which was originally based on the nation-state scheme implemented in the Middle East. It is also important to remember that the region is not immune from challenges and instability. The Jerusalem question could be affected by the situation in other Arab and Muslim countries, just as the Arab and Muslim countries could, in turn, be affected by the question of Palestine and Jerusalem.

Appendix1
Population of Jerusalem by groups
 "According to Israeli statistics"
 1967- 1998

Year	Total	Jews	Arabs & others	Jews	Arabs & others
	Thousands			Per cent	
1967	266.3	197.7	68.6	74.2	25.8
1970	291.7	215.5	76.2	73.9	26.1
1972	313.8	230.3	83.5	73.4	26.6
1974	252.8	252.8	93.2	73.1	26.9
1976	366.3	266.0	100.3	72.6	27.4
1977	376.0	272.3	103.7	72.4	27.6
1978	386.6	279.4	107.2	72.3	27.7
1979	398.2	287.4	110.8	72.2	27.8
1980	407.1	292.3	114.8	71.8	28.2
1981	415.0	297.6	117.4	71.7	28.3
1982	424.4	304.2	120.2	71.7	28.3
1983	428.7	306.3	122.4	71.4	28.6
1984	447.8	321.1	126.5	71.7	28.2
1985	457.7	327.7	130.0	71.6	28.4
1986	468.9	336.1	132.8	71.7	28.3
1987	482.6	346.1	136.5	71.7	28.3
1988	493.5	353.9	139.6	71.7	28.3
1989	504.1	361.5	142.6	71.7	28.3
1990	524.5	378.2	146.3	72.1	27.9
1991	544.2	392.8	151.3	72.2	27.8
1992	556.5	401.0	155.5	72.1	27.9
1993	567.2	406.4	160.8	71.7	28.3
1994	578.8	411.9	166.9	71.2	28.8
1995	602.7	420.9	181.8	69.8	30.2
1996	613.6	426.2	184.6	69.5	30.1
1997	622.1	429.1	189.5	69.0	30.5
1998	633.7	433.6	200.1	68.4	31.6

Source: Jerusalem Statistical Yearbook, 1998

Appendix 2: Jerusalem in the Oslo Negotiations

Round No.	Topic	Palestinian Position	Israeli Position
<p>One* 21 January 1993</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — The situation during the interim period — Housing — Negotiations framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — PA will extend to all Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 — Asked for confidence-building measures including housing projects in Jerusalem — Demanded, then agreed to dismiss the demand to negotiate Jerusalem in multilateral committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Suggested “the construction of 7,500 housing units in Jerusalem” an important “confidence-building measure”. — Against negotiating Jerusalem in multilateral committee. Suggested holding “various sorts of unofficial talks on Jerusalem”.
<p>Two* 11 February 1993</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Diplomatic status — Election 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — The election of the interim council includes East Jerusalem. — No agreement can be reached without reference to Jerusalem. — Jerusalem will be under the Interim Palestinian Authority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Reveals intention to approve the establishment of an independent office for the European Union representation in East Jerusalem. — Refused the demand, indicating that its acceptance would lead to the collapse of the government. Suggested that Palestinian leaders in Jerusalem could vote through Ramallah. — Asked to delay discussion of Jerusalem until after the council election.
<p>Three* 20 March 1993</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Agreement text — Interim period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — It is not possible to sign an agreement text without reference to Jerusalem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — It is difficult to mention the word Jerusalem at any venue of negotiations. Special language will be needed when referring to it. — Offered to implement measures favourable to the Palestinians: the status of Orient House.

Three* 20 March 1993 (contd)	— Elections	— Citizens of Jerusalem must participate in the election, which could take place at al-Aqsa Mosque and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre	
Four** 30 April 1993	— Interim period	— The Palestinians accepted the exclusion of Jerusalem from interim self-rule, but asked that the Palestinians of the city participate in the election.	
Five* 8 May 1993	— Elections — General	— Jerusalem would be one of the final negotiation topics. Palestinians would participate in the election as candidates and voters.	— The Israelis asked to delay Jerusalem and negotiate other issues. They said that they would consult their government regarding the election in Jerusalem.
Six** 21 May 1993	— Accord text		— Israel still refused to include Jerusalem in the Accords.
Seven* 13 June 1993	— General		— The Israelis addressed questions from Rabin to the Palestinians, some of which were about Jerusalem: — Will the annexation of Jerusalem and the displaced persons [in the Declaration text] be discussed before or after the election? — What is meant by the scope of authority? — What is its relationship with the [Jewish] settlements, Jerusalem, the army, camps, and security? — Where will the people responsible for the various activities reside when these are transferred to the PA after the Declaration? In Jerusalem or Jericho? If your answer is Jerusalem, this will create a problem.

<p>Eight* 27 June 1993</p>	<p>— Election</p>		<p>— Asked whether the people of Jerusalem would put themselves forward for election — Stressed that Jerusalem would not be mentioned except in connection with the election, but it would be discussed at the permanent status negotiations.</p>
<p>Nine* 6 July 1993</p>	<p>— Election</p>	<p>— Palestinians from Jerusalem may participate in the election, though they may not necessarily vote. — Asked to link the Institutions of Jerusalem to the elected council.</p>	<p>— The Israelis refused to mention Jerusalem, especially regarding the election, saying that it would lead to the fall of the government.</p>
<p>Ten* 21 July 1993</p>	<p>— Election</p>	<p>— Jerusalem cannot be ignored or left to the final stage without any mention of it now.</p>	<p>— Refused the link between the institutions of Jerusalem and the elected council; but they would seek a pragmatic solution to the participation of Palestinians as candidates and voters — Jerusalem to be discussed in the future.</p>
<p>Eleven* 25–26 July 1993</p>	<p>— Agreement text — The texts — Interim period</p>	<p>— Wanted to mention Jerusalem among the final negotiation issues. — Demanded a letter to be sent from the Israeli Foreign Minister to his Norwegian counterpart about the preservation of Jerusalem's religious, social, cultural and other institutions.</p>	<p>— Did not want to include Jerusalem explicitly as part of the final negotiation issues, but to say that the party could raise any issues.</p>
<p>Twelve* 14 August 1993</p>			

<p>Telephone* conference between Tunis ('Arafat, 'Abd Rabbo, Qray' and 'Abbas) & Stockholm (Peres, Singer). 17/18 August 1993</p>	<p>— Agreement text</p>	<p>— Insisted on specifying the final status negotiations, and including Jerusalem in the text declaration. This was their final demand.</p>	<p>— Tried to persuade the Palestinians not to define the issues and that either side would be entitled to raise any issue. However, the agreed text defined these issues, including Jerusalem.</p>
<p>Thirteen* 20 August 1993</p>			

Source: * Mahmoud 'Abbas, *Through Secret Channels*, pp. 119–183.

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Menachem **Klein**: Expert at the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies (Oxford, 19 February 2000).
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