

**URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE RED SEA AREA,  
THE CASE OF EILAT AND AQABA**

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the  
University of London

By  
**NIR SHAMIR**

University College London

April, 1990

## ABSTRACT

This work is a comparative study of the evolution of Eilat and Aqaba over the last four decades in relation to the national and international spatial political organisation of Israel and Jordan. Such a comparison of towns in Israel and Jordan represents a pioneer step in the field of urban studies of the Middle East.

This thesis presents a critical empirical study of two small urban centres, located in remote peripheral areas along an international border. Emphasis is given to the relationship between politics and the urban development of Eilat and Aqaba. It is hoped that this work will help to fill the immense gap in studies of small towns in the Middle East.

Despite the undoubted differences between the two towns, due to fundamental differences in the political, social and cultural systems of Israel and Jordan, Eilat and Aqaba have throughout their development shown great susceptibility to political factors at a local, national and particularly international level. Aqaba is Jordan's only gateway to the sea. Eilat was for many years Israel's only outlet to the south, and an important base from which the government could consolidate its sovereignty over the Negev. Two wars (1956 and 1967), which were landmarks in the development of Eilat and Aqaba, were fought largely as a result of Israel's aim to keep its southern gateway open to international traffic. Moreover, events which appeared to be unconnected to this area eventually had great impact on Eilat and Aqaba. These included the superpower interest in the area, the Arab-Israeli and inter-Arab conflicts in the Middle East, the Palestinian problem, the civil war in Lebanon, the Iran-Iraq War and the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. Thus this thesis is concerned with the implications of political processes at local, national and international level in Israel and Jordan for the urban development of Eilat and Aqaba.

An important role in the development of these towns is played by the centre of political and economic power in both countries, namely Amman, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Many of the decisions regarding the various initiatives in Eilat and Aqaba originated in these centres. This work will describe the relationship between the core and the periphery and will examine the interaction between such decisions and the international political scene.

The various political factors which have influenced Eilat and Aqaba illustrate, unfortunately, the threatening nature of the balance of power in the Middle East and beyond. On the other hand, they have also contributed to the creation of a fruitful atmosphere for the development of tolerant relations between Eilat and Aqaba. This work will also describe this aspect of the local reality.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout the long but rewarding time I have taken over this thesis I have been patiently and warmly advised by Dr. Tony O'Connor, my supervisor in the Geography Department, University College London. He has contributed his experience, energy and enthusiasm, and to him I owe my gratitude. I also wish to extend my thanks to Professor J. A. Allan and Dr. K. S. McLachlan from the School of Oriental and African Studies and Professor C. Vita-Finzi from U.C.L. who helped and encouraged me during a crucial period in writing this thesis.

I especially wish to express my gratitude to Mr. David Lewis in London for enabling me to use the facilities of "Isrotel" in Eilat and to "Ontara-Reisen" (West Germany) for sponsoring my accommodation in Aqaba. Both have greatly assisted my fieldwork. Special thanks to Angela Behrend for helping me to overcome the language barrier; and to Natalie Lev in helping me with the typing task.

Other people who have helped me along the way include Chris Crommarty from U.C.L. who reproduced the aerial photographs in this thesis, the drawing office team in the Geography Department, U.C.L., who assisted in the graphic part of the work. To Dr. David Newman of Beersheba University I owe thanks for helping me to obtain a place at U.C.L. In addition, my warmest thanks go to the people of Eilat and Aqaba and to individuals on both municipal councils, who cooperated in interviews and helped me obtain access to relevant material. I also wish to acknowledge the Shiloah Institute for Middle East and African Studies, Tel Aviv University.

Finally, I would like to thank the Conway family in London for providing me with a warm home in a foreign country. To my father and my mother I am most grateful for support in all forms and at all times for my studies in London.

This thesis is dedicated to my grandmother, Haya Gendler, and to the memory of my grandfather, Tzvi Gendler.

Nir Shamir

## **LIST OF CONTENTS**

Abstract	2
Acknowledgements	3
List of Figures	8
List of Photographs	9
List of Tables	9
List of Abbreviations	10

## **PART I THE EILAT AND AQABA REGION**

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	11
1.1 Introduction	11
1.2 Area of Studies	12
1.3 Objectives	15
1.4 Theoretical Framework	17
1.4.1 Core-periphery - Criticism	20
1.5 Methodology	24
1.5.1 Method of Work and Presentation	29
<i>Notes</i>	32
<b>2. REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE AND REGIONAL LINKAGES</b>	33
2.1 Historical Inheritance	33
2.2 The Period of British Rule	35
2.3 The Zionist Struggle for Eilat	37
2.4 The Red Sea and Domestic and International Politics	41
2.4.1 Israeli Interests in the Red Sea	43
2.4.2 Jordanian Interests in the Red Sea	45
2.5 Environmental Constraints	45
<i>Notes</i>	48

## **PART II AQABA**

<b>3. AQABA: FROM A VILLAGE TO A TOWN 1940s-1972</b>	49
3.1 The Jordanian Political System	49
3.2 Jordanian Politics and Aqaba	51
3.3 Aqaba - From British to Jordanian Rule, the Forties up to 1948	54
3.4 Aqaba between 1948 and 1952	59
3.5 Initial Development, 1953 - 1958	62
3.6 External and Internal Politics, 1960 - 1967	68

3.7	General Development between 1962 and 1967	72
3.8	The Post - Six Day War Period, 1967 -1973	80
	3.8.1 Port Activity	81
	3.8.2 The Post - War Period	84
	<i>Notes</i>	87
<b>4.</b>	<b>AQABA'S DEVELOPMENT BOOM, 1973 TO THE LATE 1980S</b>	<b>89</b>
4.1	Middle Eastern Politics and Jordan after 1972	89
	4.1.1 Jordan and her Neighbours	90
	4.1.2 Internal Politics	91
4.2	Development Planning in Jordan from the 1970s to the late 1980s	91
4.3	Up to the Reopening of the Suez Canal, 1973 - June 1975	94
	4.3.1 The Port of Aqaba 1973 - June 1975	96
4.4	Aqaba's Port, June 1975 - mid-1977	98
	4.4.1 The Port, Mid-1977 to 1980	102
	4.4.2 The Port, 1980 - 1987, and the Iran-Iraq War	106
4.5	Industry in Aqaba after 1975	112
4.6	Tourism in Aqaba after 1975	113
	4.6.1 Tourism as a "Crusader Cause"?	119
4.7	Urban Development between 1975 and 1986	123
	4.7.1 The Iran-Iraq War	127
4.8	The Aqaba Regional Authority, or Development into the 1980s	129
4.9	Summary	135
	<i>Notes</i>	137
	<b><u>PART III EILAT</u></b>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>EILAT - FROM A MILITARY OUTPOST TO A 'TOWN', 1949-1956</b>	<b>139</b>
5.1	Eilat, its Birth	139
5.2	The Israeli Political System	139
5.3	Politics and Eilat	141
5.4	From Army Post to Civilian Settlement, 1949-1951	144
5.5	Hard Times, 1953-1956	148
	5.5.1 Eilat's Port	150
	5.5.2 Tourism	152
5.6	Summary	153
	<i>Notes</i>	155

<b>6.</b>	<b>EILAT - ISRAEL'S GATEWAY TO THE SOUTH; 1956 TO THE LATE 1970s</b>	156
6.1	Major Political Trends between 1956 and 1973	156
6.2	The Port Boom 1956 - 1980	158
	6.2.1 The Oil Port	159
	6.2.2 The Port Becomes a "Real Port"	161
6.3	Between War and Peace, 1967-1980	167
	6.3.1 The Negev Continental Bridge (NCB)	168
	6.3.2 Following the Reopening of the Suez Canal	170
6.4	Eilat's Industry: The Timna Copper Mine	172
	6.4.1 Timna	172
	6.4.2 Other Activities	173
6.5	Tourism in Eilat	175
	6.5.1 New Government Approach, 1967-1973	182
6.6	Eilat, A Town on the Ascendant, 1956-1973	183
	<i>Notes</i>	192
<b>7.</b>	<b>THE CRISIS</b>	194
7.1	Introduction	194
7.2	The First Blow - Tourism	196
7.3	The Second Blow - Timna in Crisis	197
7.4	The Third Blow - The Port	199
7.5	Crisis From Above	202
7.6	Summary	206
	<i>Notes</i>	207
<b>8.</b>	<b>EILAT, THE SUN AND THE SEA</b>	208
8.1	Eilat: a Red Sea Paradise ?	208
	8.1.1 Israel in the 1980s: Political and Economic Constraints	208
8.2	The Port, 1981-1987; Adjusting to Reality	210
8.3	Industry during the 1980s	213
8.4	Tourism - 1975 to the Lebanon War, 1982	214
	8.4.1 New Vistas, 1982 - 1987	219
8.5	Urban Development into the 1980s	227
	8.5.1 From a Town of Emigration to a Town of Immigration	230
8.6	Summary	234
	<i>Notes</i>	236

## **PART IV EILAT AND AQABA**

<b>9. EILAT AND AQABA - A HIDDEN WORLD OF PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE AND COOPERATION</b>	<b>238</b>
9.1 Introduction	238
9.2 The Rule of Fear	240
9.3 Mirror Development	242
9.4 Peaceful Co-existence	245
9.5 Eilat and Aqaba: Local Cooperation	247
9.6 Prospects for Change	251
<i>Notes</i>	254
<b>10. COMPARISON, PROSPECTS AND CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>256</b>
10.1 Eilat and Aqaba Ports	256
10.1.1 Oil and the Ports' Development	262
10.1.2 The Ports and Development in Eilat and Aqaba	264
10.2 Industrial Development	266
10.2.1 Industry and Development in Eilat and Aqaba	268
10.3 Tourism in Eilat and Aqaba	270
10.3.1 Tourism and Development	278
10.4 Urban Growth and the Political Dimension in Eilat and Aqaba	280
10.4.1 The Political Mechanism	285
10.5 Conclusions	287
<i>Notes</i>	294
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>295</b>
<b><u>APPENDICES</u></b>	<b>319</b>
1. Major Political Events Related to Eilat and Aqaba's Growth	320
2. Water in Eilat	321
3. Tourist Maps of Aqaba and Eilat (see also back of thesis)	322
4. Regional and Tourism Cooperation between Eilat and Aqaba	323
5. Tourist Facilities in Eilat	328
6. Aqaba Port, Facilities and Services	329
7. Climatic Elements in the Eilat and Aqaba Region	330

## LIST OF FIGURES

1.1	The Middle East	13
2.1	Proposals for the Division of Palestine	40
3.1	Aqaba Port Traffic (Tons) 1952-1987	70
3.2	Aqaba Port Traffic (Ships) 1952-1987	70
3.3	Aqaba Population 1950-1987	71
3.4	Percentage of Jordanian Cargo Passing via Aqaba, 1965-1987	74
3.5	Aqaba, 1960	76
3.6	Aqaba Employment in 1967	77
3.7	Development Plan for Aqaba, 1967	79
4.1	Aqaba Port, Main Kinds of Export 1976-1986	99
4.2	Aqaba Port	104
4.3	Aqaba Port, Import in Transit 1974-1986	106
4.4	Aqaba Tourism 1975-1987	115
4.5	Aqaba Hotels Occupancy Rate (%)	115
4.6	Aqaba Sub Region	132
4.7	Purchase Orientation of the Population in Maan and Aqaba for Goods and Private Services	133
4.8	Aqaba Employment in 1986	135
6.1	Port of Eilat - General Plan 1986	162
6.2	Eilat Port Traffic (Ships) 1957-1987	164
6.3	Eilat Port Traffic (Cargo) 1957-1987	164
6.4	Percentage of Israeli Cargo Passing Via Eilat, 1966-1987	165
6.5	Eilat Tourism 1966-1987	178
6.6	Eilat Hotels Occupancy Rate (%)	178
6.7	Eilat Population 1950-1987	184
6.8	Eilat Employment in 1968	188
6.9	Eilat 1979	181
8.1	Eilat Employment in 1987	233
10.1	Percentage of Total National Import & Export (Excluding Oil) Passing through Aqaba/Eilat, 1957-1987	257
10.2	Aqaba and Eilat Port Traffic (Tons), 1957-1987	260
10.3	The Situation and Hinterland of Eilat and Aqaba	263
10.4	Eilat/Aqaba Tourism 1966-1987	271
10.5	Aqaba and Eilat Population 1950-1987	283



## **LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS**

Photograph 1	The Northern Area of the Gulf of Aqaba (May 1988)	14
Photograph 2	The Area of Aqaba and Um-Rashrash (September 1945)	57
Photograph 3	The Area of Eilat and Aqaba (August 1956)	154
Photograph 4	Eilat and Aqaba (April 1978)	180
Photograph 5	The Northern Area of the Gulf of Aqaba (May 1988)	282

## **LIST OF TABLES**

1.1	Israel and Jordan, Some Basic Differences	25
3.1	Aqaba Employment in 1967	77
4.1	Labour Distribution in Aqaba, 1986	134
6.1	Labour Distribution in Eilat, 1968	188
8.1	Labour Distribution in Eilat, 1987	233

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APA	Aqaba Port Authority
APT	Aqaba Port Trust
ARA	Aqaba Regional Authority
ATPC	Aqaba Town Planning Committee
CBD	Centre Business District
EFDC	Eilat Foreshore Development Company
GNP	Gross National Product
IAF	Israeli Air Force
IATA	International Air Travel Association
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IDF	Israeli Defence Forces
ISA	Israel State Archive
JDB	Jordanian Development Board
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCB	Negev Continental Bridge
NOG	National Unity Government
NPC	National Planning Council (Jordan)
PDRY	Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen
SRP	South Regional Project (Jordan)
UAR	United Arab Republic
UN	United Nations
UNEF	United Nations Emergency Force
UNRAW	United Nation Relief and Work Agency
YAR	Arab Republic of Yemen

## PART I THE EILAT AND AQABA REGION

### Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

There is a marked absence of comparative studies of recent urban development along both sides of international borders. Developmental and spatial changes in frontier areas along both sides of borders in areas of conflict such as North and South Korea and East and West Germany (until very recently), which received extensive media coverage, have not so far been the subject of comprehensive geographical studies (Brawer, 1986). No such study has yet been made of any of Israel's borders with its neighbours. This work aims to begin to fill the gap and initiate research into the southernmost area of the Israeli-Jordanian border.

Very little is known in the field of social sciences about the spatial development of small urban communities of under 30,000 inhabitants (Funnel, 1976; Eshett, 1986; Gurr and King, 1987), particularly in the Middle East where the subject has "been neglected to an astonishing degree in both academic studies and official planning documents concerned with Middle East urbanisation" (Blake, 1980:209). Thus this study of two small towns in the Middle East will shed more light on the topic and will contribute to a greater understanding of the issue.

Although the importance of the decision-making process in understanding the development of small units in the nation state has been emphasised by political scientists (Curtis, 1978) and geographers (Johnston, 1982; Gradus, 1983), empirical verification of this issue in the case of small towns in the Middle East has been insignificant. Blake and Lawless (1980) suggest that more studies of this nature would be of great value. No attempt to study the interaction and links between political occurrences on the international level, their impact on the decision makers and the subsequent effect on peripheral spatial development in the case of small towns has yet been identified in the context of the Middle East.

In addition to the problems encountered when making a comparative study in an area of conflict, mainly due to the military and political sensitivity of the authorities to any research ventures in their frontier area (Brawer, 1986), any research involving Middle Eastern countries such as Israel and Jordan must contend with the challenge of different historical, economic, political and socio-cultural

developments.

Finally, only limited consideration has been given by social scientists to the spatial organisation of power, perhaps because it is difficult to measure most political variables, including power. Although this work does not aim to construct a scale of values against which to measure political strength, it will look at the nature of the political links and their spatial influence in the light of the decision-making process.

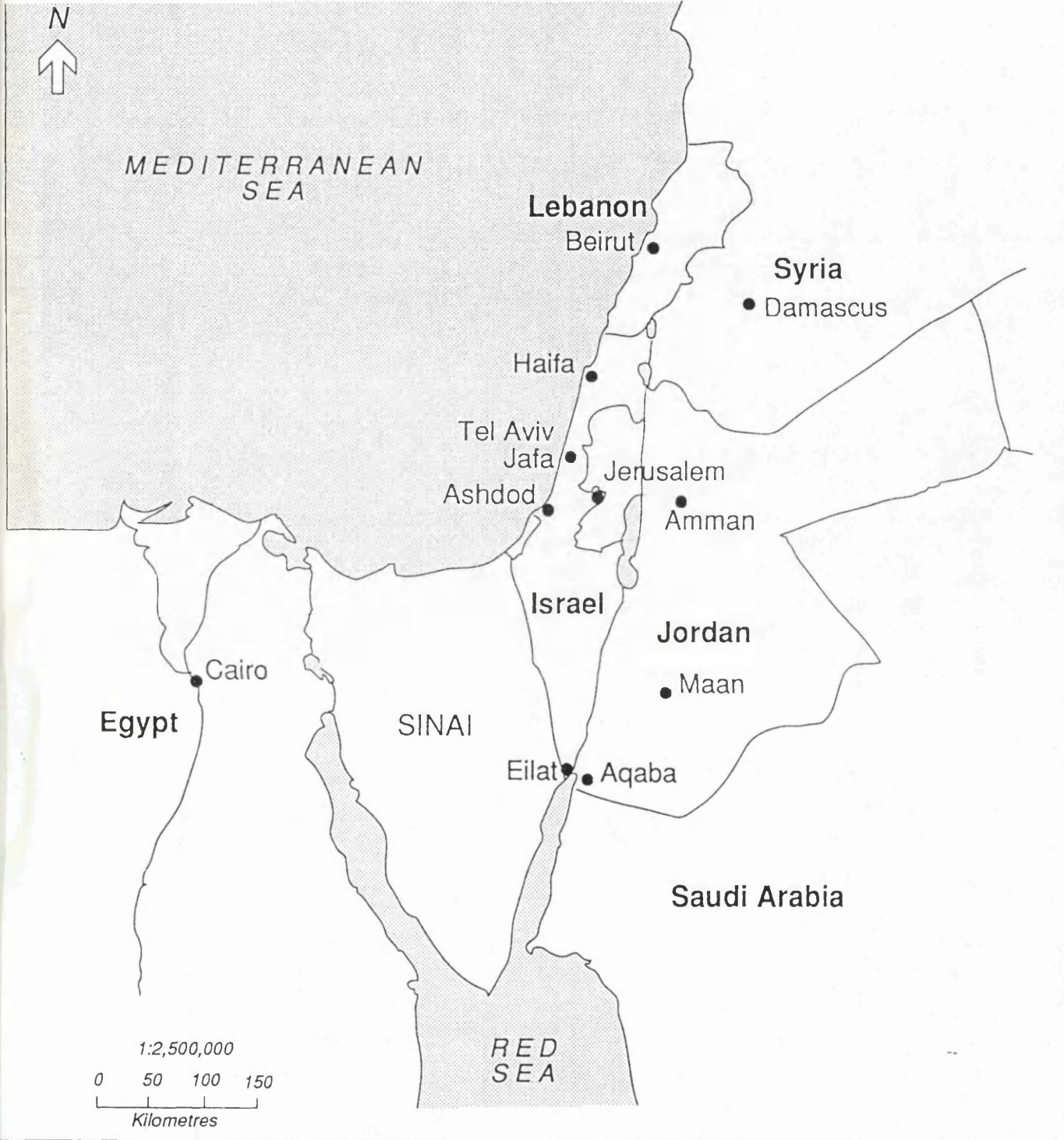
## **1.2 The Area of Study**

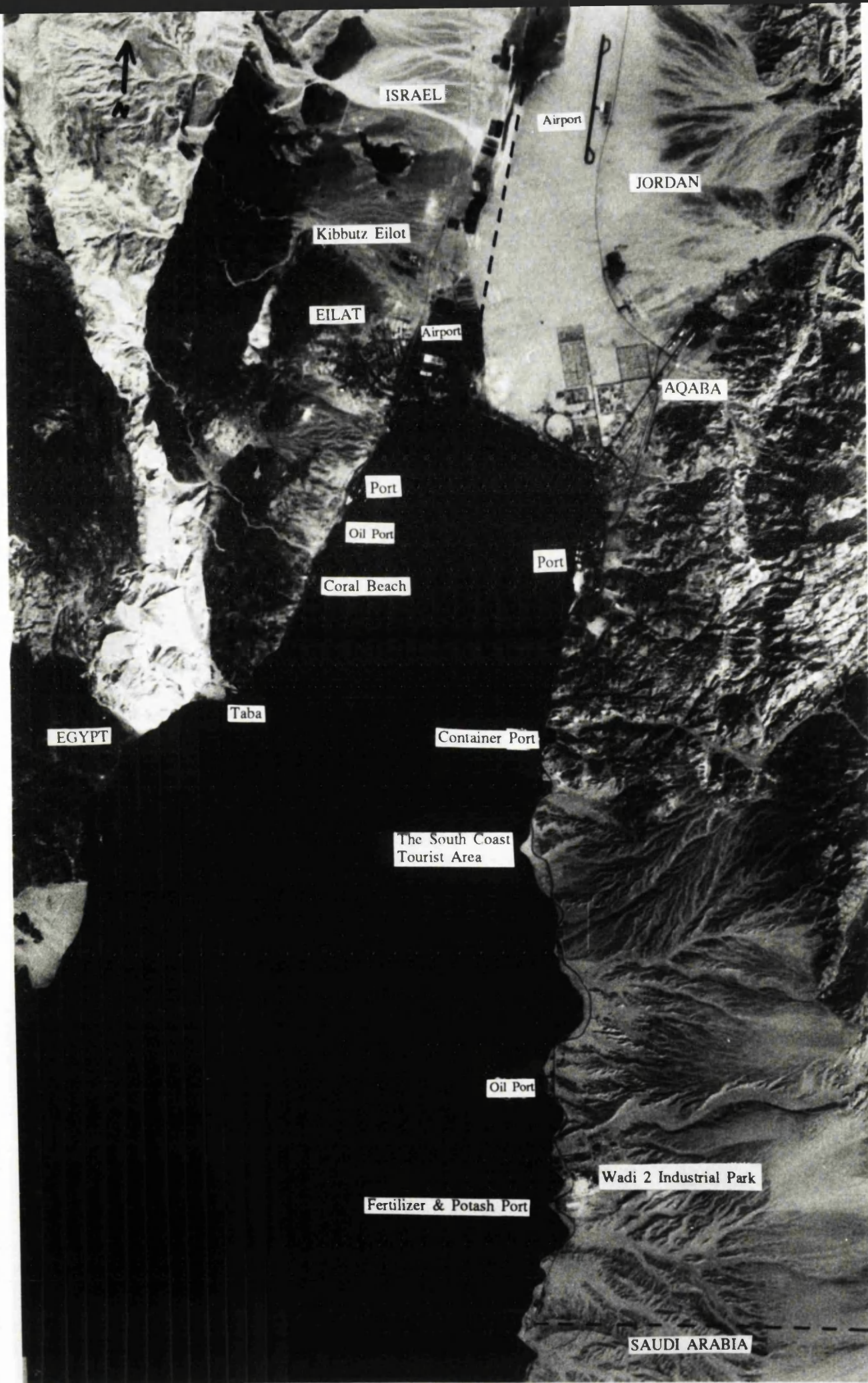
In 1987 the northern shore of the Gulf of Aqaba (1), the meeting - point of Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, had a population of about 72,000 people. Some 47,000 persons lived on the north-eastern shore of the gulf in Aqaba (photograph 1, figure 1.1), the industrial Jordanian port. 25,000 persons lived in Eilat (2), Israel's attractive and busy tourist resort situated on the north-western shore of the gulf, only 4 km west of Aqaba. These are the only towns along the shores of the gulf and within an area along the Red Sea that stretches between Duba some 500 km to the south in Saudi Arabia, and Suez in Egypt about 350 km to the west. Yet only four decades ago Aqaba was the only human settlement at the northern end of the gulf, then under the British mandate. It consisted of about 300 people, subsisting mainly on fishing, the cultivation of dates and provision of basic services to the adjacent British army base. In the area of present-day Eilat, then named Um-Rashrash, were three abandoned mud huts that accommodated the small police station of the Arab Legion.

For many thousands of years the southern frontier of "Eretz Israel" or Palestine was sparsely populated and served mainly as an army post for the various routes in the area. After the establishment of Jordan and Israel this arid area became the southern frontier of the two countries, and Aqaba and Eilat became vital strategic settlements. For Jordan it provided the only direct access to an international water, and for Israel it was the only exit to the south and therefore an alternative to the Suez Canal. In addition, establishing Eilat was a means of strengthening Israel's sovereignty over the southern area of the country. It was therefore to have been expected that no effort would be spared by the respective governments in facilitating rapid growth of the two towns through capital investment and human

Figure 1.1

The Middle East





Photograph 1 The Northern Area of the Gulf of Aqaba (May 1988)

endeavour. However, the results were disappointing and for three decades the towns grew relatively slowly. Only after the mid-1970s did the region enter a new era of dramatic change, with renewed investment of capital and human effort accompanied by a process of transition within the towns. Economic activity increased and led to rapid growth, Eilat turning into a flourishing tourist resort while Aqaba became a busy port town.

An examination of the reasons for the discrepancy between the aspirations and efforts on the one hand and the relatively meagre results on the other, and for the later growth and development, leads to the conclusion that the changes have occurred due to certain political and geopolitical developments in Jordan, Israel, the Middle East and beyond. In many cases it appears that these factors have affected each town in completely different ways. Such a pattern of development is a reflection of urban and economic growth within the wide and varied political environment of the Middle East. It does not merely portray the dynamic organisational abilities of decision-makers in the two countries nor what one may regard as the influence of the local natural environment (see for example: Karmon, 1976, 1979). What has contributed to the towns' development and how the contribution has been made depends primarily upon the nature of the countries' political structure, implying that basic control over provincial politics and economy may be found in the political systems of both countries, and that the towns, as the only urban centres in this area, are the focus of much wider activity. Any attempt, therefore, to understand Eilat and Aqaba's development requires the identification of the spatial base of decision-making which has been responsible for the towns' growth, as well as an appreciation and understanding of the ways in which each town represents and interacts with its respective region, its country's urban policy and the political framework of the Middle East and beyond. Their character, especially as expressed through their port/tourist activity must be regarded as being partly formed and determined by influences from this wider context.

### **1.3 Objectives**

In relation to other Israeli and Jordanian towns, Eilat and Aqaba may be regarded as unique, made so by the mixture of capital and population, by the nature of their economic base and institutional forms and by their location. The intention here is to provide a critical discussion which will empirically examine and attempt to

understand the emergence and development of these urban centres within the political environment of Israel, Jordan, the Middle East and beyond.

An overall aim of this research is to provide a comparative political-geographical analysis of the development of the towns of Eilat and Aqaba in the light of spatial political power relationships on the local, national and international level in Israel and Jordan. The study of these towns may alternatively represent two small urban centres in an isolated area along a mutual border in the Middle East. This thesis seeks to establish empirically the vitality of political factors born out of the turbulent political environment in the Middle East over the last few decades and their distinctive repercussions on most of the planning and development initiatives in these towns.

It also aims to show that many of the key decisions and major initiatives regarding the urban and economic development of Eilat and Aqaba were primarily motivated and affected by international and national political events and their repercussions on the geopolitical environment rather than by economic factors.

Moreover, this thesis seeks to demonstrate that, in some cases throughout the growth of these towns, political factors were directly responsible for local development initiatives that should be regarded as being "imposed" on the towns. These initiatives were primarily aimed at addressing national and international rather than local needs. It is claimed therefore that the growth of Eilat and Aqaba should be regarded and explained as part of local, regional, national and international political development.

This work also seeks to identify the spatial location of the base of decision-making power in each country. This may contribute to a better understanding of the origin of some of the major development initiatives in both towns. In this case it is claimed that the influential role of international political factors has sometimes been so great that although the apparent location of the decision-making base may be Amman, Jerusalem or Tel Aviv, the real decision was in fact made elsewhere in the world, and should be regarded within the international political framework.



This is a pioneering work which compares an Israeli, predominantly Jewish, western-oriented town with a Jordanian Arab Middle Eastern town, a comparison which may also be considered to be between two urban elements in a first world developed state and a third world less developed state. The study presents an attempt to discover common grounds or a common method by which two such cases may be compared, if at all. In this case I will try to employ the general concept of the core-periphery model (Friedmann, 1966) as a general framework for comparison. Whether this concept can create a viable and appropriate framework for such a study, and for an analysis of the development of small towns in peripheral regions in the Middle East, is another question that will be explored.

This work seeks to show that despite the possibility that such cases offer only a meagre basis for comparison in view of the great differences between Israel and Jordan, such differences can be overcome by an examination of the power relationship and the core-periphery concept and contribute to a better understanding of the urbanisation process in the case of small towns in the Middle East.

It is claimed here that the Eilat and Aqaba area has been the arena for some rapprochement and cooperation between Israel and Jordan, mainly due to their geopolitical location and mutual vulnerability. How this has occurred and in what context will form the last part of this work.

#### **1.4 Theoretical Framework**

This work is presented within the context of political geography, a concept widely recognised as an indispensable and most valuable way to study, explain and understand spatial and urban development in the Middle East as a whole and especially in the Red Sea region. This can be seen from the many studies on this area which have emphasised the geopolitical dimension in the spatial and urban changes that have occurred in the Middle East over the last four decades (see for example: Melamid, 1957; Pounds, 1959, 1963; Karmon, 1963; Farid, 1981; Abu-Lughod, 1984; Efrat, 1984, 1987; Brawer, 1986; Drysdale, 1987). However, within the wider context of political geography attention has been paid to the decision-making process as a fundamental element involved in the understanding and analysis of the effect of political decision on spatial development. Whittlesey (1935) wrote:

"Political activities leave their impress upon the landscape, just as economic

pursuits do. Many acts of government become apparent in the landscape only as phenomena of economic geography; others express themselves directly. Deep and widely ramified impress upon the landscape is stamped by the functioning of effective central authority." (Whittlesey, 1935:85).

Two decades later Myrdal (1957) and Hirshman (1958), when explaining the interaction between the centre and its hinterland, and Friedmann (1966) in the centre-periphery model, implied that decision-making processes play an important role in core-periphery relations. This is borne out by the example of Israel and Jordan, where such processes have an unavoidable role to play within the core-periphery relationship and in understanding spatial development and changes. We may illustrate this by examining the political structure and environment in these countries, their influence on Eilat and Aqaba, and the political and economic conditions in the Middle East as a whole. The basic ideas of this concept provide an appropriate and important tool for understanding and analysing the degree to which various factors have influenced the development of Eilat and Aqaba.

The basic theoretical framework relevant to this work is the Friedmann (1966) core-periphery model which will form a general framework for the study and analysis of the spatial development of two small towns in a frontier area along an international border in Israel and Jordan. Related to this framework are the concepts of centralisation/decentralisation, top-down/bottom-up policies and regionalism which will also be considered.

The core-periphery model is an important and useful concept, which has been employed mainly in the social sciences for the analysis of conflicts and the spatial interaction of social, political and ethnic organisations (Shils, 1961; Friedmann, 1972; Rokkan, 1980). A recent revival of the concept, mainly by the Neo-Marxist school, has often used different names and modifications, such as internal colonialism and dependency (Frank, 1978; Reece, 1979; Seers, 1979; Reitsma, 1982).

A core area was regarded by Friedmann (1972) and Williams (1977) as a territorially and socially organised subsystem that has a high capacity for innovative change. It is the functional centre of organisation and derives power and encourages development by its ability to centralise further economic activity, decision-making and other activities linked to the modernisation process. Territory

characterised by poor accessibility to the core is defined as the periphery. It is a subsystem which has limited access to markets, means of production, services, cultural facilities and sources of political and economic power.

In a centralised state the relationship between core and periphery is characterised by the domination of the core over its dependent periphery. This is reflected in four major processes; decision-making and control, capital flows, innovation diffusion and migration. Uneven economic, political and cultural development occurs as a consequence of the strengthening of central control over the periphery (Massey, 1979; Agnew, 1981; Knight, 1982). As a result of the uneven links and the dependency of the periphery on the centre the basis of social integration in the periphery can be undermined. This may cause lasting conflicts, create frustration and increase socio-political tension and regional awareness. Regional alienation emerges as a response to this asymmetrical relationship. It increases with modernisation of the state and its accompanying centralisation and bureaucratisation of technology and management. 'Regionalism' is the manifestation of the desire to achieve a greater degree of regional self-reliance and equality in the access to social and political power, and to enable the people in the periphery to feel part of an integrated national community (Tarrow, 1977; Dear, 1981).

Two important issues associated with the core-periphery concept are centralisation and decentralisation. Centralisation is regarded as reinforcing the authority-dependency relationship between the core and the periphery. It is believed that when the decision-making process is centralised and consolidated, regional disparities arise and regional awareness grows. An attempt to decrease the core-periphery antagonism is represented by decentralisation policies, which provide the periphery with a degree of self-government which may reduce core-periphery tensions (Rokkan, 1980).

Decentralised planning and administration can achieve more equitable and balanced development. Widespread participation in decision-making is essential to the development process, and decentralisation is a way of eliciting that participation. Decentralisation is necessary to accelerate the pace and spread the benefits of growth, to integrate diverse regions, and to use scarce resources more efficiently. It is a means of cutting through red tape and simplifying the highly structured

procedures characteristic of central-planning authorities. It can increase political stability and ease tension between groups and territories by providing for their participation and direct involvement in the decision-making process (Sherwood, 1969; Sharp, 1979).

Studies in regional development currently use terms such as "functional vs. territorial planning" (Friedmann and Weaver, 1979) and "development from above and below" or "top-down, bottom-up" policies (Stohr and Taylor, 1981) as substitutes for the centralisation and decentralisation dialectics. "Development from above" or "top-down" policies refer to centrally planned development originating from an established centre of authority that aims to control lower local and regional levels. It is meant to further the state's interest in maintaining its own legitimacy and to further the interests of dominant classes in society. "Development from below" or "bottom-up" policies are a reflection of changing ideas on the nature and purpose of development. This approach is based primarily on decentralisation, restoration of territorial life, and citizen participation. It is organised on territorial lines and reflects the reaction to the failure of the centre-down approach to achieve greater equity and balanced development (Stohr and Taylor, 1981; Hansen, 1981).

#### **1.4.1 Core-Periphery - Criticism**

In the last few years there has been some criticism of the use of the core-periphery and regionalism concepts in an analysis of spatial organisation within society. They are regarded as a type of structuralism that is almost completely divorced from empirical events (Duncan and Ley, 1982). As an alternative the dialectical approach has been proposed (Agnew, 1981). This attempts to look at the roots of political action in relation to the context in which regionalism has arisen. Agnew identifies the political commitment, nature and relationship of particular interest groups and relates this to underlying objective conditions. He argues that traditionally the core-periphery and the regionalism concept are structural and deterministic in nature, and have been used to indicate causal links between objective conditions of cultural and economic domination and the subjective reaction of regional consciousness or regionalism. Abrebrot (1982) presents another perspective, claiming that the core-periphery concept is an inadequate explanation of intranational tensions in cases where there is a tradition of regional economic strength and state unity. Further criticism includes Clavel's (1980) opinion that the core-periphery concept ignores

the true nature of political power and especially the role of international power in the growth of tensions between different regions of a country.

In the geographical literature on core-periphery relations and the emergence of regionalism, there is little analysis or political explanation of the spatial organisation of local and international political power. The works tend to deal with the concept through conventional variables. Even socio-economic works that recognise the importance of politics, fail in many cases to realise the extent to which the political factors contribute to the core-periphery conflict. Those works which do look at the spatial impact of power relations on regional and urban development have been largely theoretical and lacked verification through empirical case studies (Clavel, 1980). Furthermore, they concentrate on national issues, rather than the crucial international panorama (Castells, 1977; Friedmann and Weaver, 1978).

In the last stage of his development model, Friedmann (1966) suggests that the ideal stage has to some extent been achieved when the inter-metropolitan peripheries are absorbed into the metropolitan economies while local and national backwash and spread effects seem to be generally in harmony. However, this theory neglects the spatial political relationship aspect in the core-periphery conflict, and omits to explain and analyse the spatial organisation of political relationships between the margin and the core. It therefore fails to appreciate the role of political and decision-making factors in the spatial organisation of power.

The core-periphery concept has also been used in studies of small towns. In his discussion of East Africa Obudho (1984) indicated the importance of incorporating such towns into a new development scheme which would be based on development from below rather than on the top-down policy. Findlay (1980) in his studies of population mobility in the Middle East expressed his surprise at the scant attention paid to the role of small towns within core-periphery studies. Detelf and Swan (1984) were of the opinion that the core-periphery concept can form a most useful framework for the establishment of a common understanding in the studies of small towns. In this case, however, they showed little appreciation of the important role of political factors in the core-periphery relationship.

Political centralisation was regarded by Costello (1977) as an important factor in the urbanisation processes in the Middle East, while the core-periphery notion and terms such as 'centralisation' and 'decentralisation' have been widely employed in studies on economic and urban development in both Jordan and Israel. Most of these works deal mainly with economic and social activities and give little consideration to political factors when examining regional development and spatial interaction between the core and the periphery. Studies of Jordan's over-centralised economy as a threat to future development (Nyrop, 1980; Mazor, 1979), and of Amman's aim to decentralise the state economy (Susser, 1977-8) have mainly concentrated on economic aspects. Likewise Sullivan's observation (1987) of the Jordanian government's control over imports, public services and prices. A brief indication of the role of politics in the core-periphery relationship can be seen in Weiss' study (1987) of the Jordanian centralised planning system. Direct indications of the need to decentralise the Jordanian political system to boost national development and improve spatial relations between Amman and the periphery were made by the Jordanian prime minister in an interview in 1980 (Middle East, 2/1980). Later studies by Gubser (1983) suggested that although some measures toward such a process have been made, Jordan's political and economic structure remains very centralised. Friedmann's core-periphery model (1966) was used directly in Jordanian regional planning (NPC, 1981, 1986; SRP, 1982). However, these plans merely considered economic factors and failed to examine the role and the effect of politics on regional development.

In Israel, studies of urban development have paid attention to the questions of where the centre of power is and who is actually governing (Fein, 1970). Problems and complications which arise due to control from afar by centralist systems have also been discussed (Cohen, 1970). However, in both cases the studies remained within the theoretical framework and did not provide any empirical verification. Other recent studies on urban and regional development have tended to look at economic and social factors while omitting an adequate explanation of the role of political factors in such development (see for example: Berler, 1970; Reichman, 1973; Shachar and Lipshitz, 1981). This may also be seen in studies that made some use of the core-periphery notion when examining the increasing gap in the nature and structure of industries between the core and the periphery (Gradus and Krakover, 1977), when studying the evolution of the northern Negev urban system

in the light of planning strategies (Gradus and Stern, 1980), or the centralised Israeli planning system (Efrat, 1984, 1987). The little attention paid to political aspects of regional development in Israel may be regarded as surprising, particularly considering that politics have played such a vital role in public policy making and that the political environment has played a critical role in shaping national planning (Gradus, 1983).

Studies of urban development in the Middle East have generally neglected the issue of small towns. Even studies that attempted to generalise and identify common characteristics in urban processes in the Middle East and pointed to the importance of politics when studying these processes have paid no attention to small towns (see for example: Costello, 1977; Hugh and Roberts, 1979). From a different perspective, the importance of the role of political factors in urban processes, especially in Jordan and Israel, was emphasised by Abu-Lughod (1984). Likewise Korinman (1987), who linked the establishment of Israeli settlements, along the Jordan Valley to Jerusalem's aim to secure and consolidate Israel's eastern border. However, all these studies remain on a superficial level and have failed to provide empirical verification of the role of politics in the development of small towns. In their call to increase studies on small towns in the Middle East, Blake (1980) and Blake and Lawless (1980) have indicated the need to concentrate more research on the political aspects of urban development, such as the decision-making process and the role of government in small town development. Yet even in this case, no attention was paid to the need to consider the role of international political factors in such development.

In Jordan the subject of small towns has remained virtually untouched. The only work I have discovered is on the town of Al-Karak (in 1966 it had 7,422 inhabitants) and its district (Gubser, 1973). It is mainly concerned with the dynamic of its political society and examines the area as an independent entity while generally isolating it from national and international political factors. Other literature on Aqaba is mainly concerned with the port development with only brief references to the town (Melamid, 1957; Hindle, 1966; Tayyam, 1975; Dajani, 1981; Stern and Hayuth, 1984; Drysdale, 1987). Even when greater emphasis is given to the town (Beheiry, 1969), this remains within the framework of a description of the natural environment and its constraints. A unanimous opinion, however, was

expressed by all these studies in respect of the important role played by politics throughout the development of Aqaba and its port.

Small towns have received greater attention in academic studies in Israel, mainly with regard to the issue of development and new towns that have formed an important aspect of Israeli urban strategy since the 1950s (Spiegel, 1966; Amiran and Shachar, 1969; Berler, 1970; Cohen, 1970; Efrat, 1984, 1987). Although the role of national political factors and the Israeli government's part in this process received considerable attention, these studies tend to generalise and look for common characteristics in the development of these towns, thereby failing to appreciate the independent character of each one. Moreover, international political factors were not considered despite their crucial influence on Israeli life as a whole. Those works that have given greater attention to Eilat (Spiegel, 1966; Efrat, 1984A, 1987) or those which deal only with Eilat (Karmon, 1963, 1976, 1979), have remained within the descriptive framework and attempt to explain the town's growth in the light of environmental variables such as the town's isolation, topography and climatic conditions. Other studies have mainly considered the port with only brief references to the town (Melamid, 1957; Gavriel, 1980; Stern and Hayuth, 1984). As in the case of Aqaba, only little attention was given to the role of international politics in the town's growth and the spatial organisation of power.

### **1.5 Methodology**

The purpose of this study is to compare the development of Eilat and Aqaba within spatial political environment, to discuss the effect of political forces on the development of these towns and to indicate the urban and economic changes which have occurred in each town. An analytic description of the area set in its historical perspective and integrated into a political explanatory framework will therefore lead directly to a comparison between the two towns and their interaction with their political environment.

Two major questions had to be confronted when deciding on the method of analysis and presentation to be employed in this work:

- A. What variables and techniques should be employed and within which theoretical framework, in order to provide an appropriate and adequate comparison?
- B. Which method of presentation should be employed?



The decision as to which theoretical framework and which technical method should be used to compare Eilat and Aqaba had to take into account the eminent differences between the political, cultural and social systems in Israel as a democratic, first world developed state, and Jordan, an absolute autocratic monarchy (see also *The Independent*, 26.3.1990:21). So far I have not been able to identify any similar comparative studies either on the Middle East or elsewhere, which have devised a comparative method and a workable theoretical framework for such a study. Indeed it may, at first sight, appear arbitrary to try and compare two towns which represent two such diverse cultures, societies and standards of living, which may appear in some respects to offer little basis for comparison. Indeed, the studies of urban processes in Israel, where the urban spatial structure comprises both traditional Middle Eastern Arab towns and villages, and predominantly Jewish European-oriented towns, have concentrated on either the Jewish or the Arab aspects (for example, on 'Jewish' towns: Eisenstadt et al, 1970; Efrat 1984A. On the Arab sector: Shmueli et al, 1985; Ended and Soffer, 1986). In general terms, Israel should be considered an exceptional case with regard to many aspects of urban processes and standard of living in the Middle East. This was recognised by Hugh and Roberts (1979) who regarded urban standards in Israel to be in line with those in Europe. The following table may further illustrate basic differences between the two countries:

Table 1.1 Israel and Jordan, Some Basic Differences

	<u>Israel</u>	<u>Jordan</u>
Crude Birth Rate	23	42
Crude Death Rate	6	7
Natural population increase (annual %)	1.6	3.6
Urban Population (%)	89	59
Per Capita GNP, 1986 (US\$)	6,210	1,540

(Source: Population Reference Bureau, 1989)

I would suggest therefore that a comparison based solely on absolute figures would be insufficient, while the use of 'conventional variables' (such as telephones, hospital beds and cars per capita, electric light, piped water, etc), would be inappropriate in this work.

Although the use of absolute figures may contribute to some extent to this study, the unsuitability of using conventional variables shifted my search for comparison methods to a more theoretical perspective. It was most likely that the common ground for a comparison could be found within the framework of politics, whose prominent role in Middle Eastern life is obvious. This was also recognised by Cohen (1964) who observed that this area comprised the highest densities of national anxiety and strain in the world. This was later used by Drysdale (1987) to emphasise the role of politics in the growth of Aqaba's port.

The important role of politics in the Middle Eastern urban process was observed by Costello (1977), while Blake and Lawless (1980) attributed many of the abrupt changes in the pattern of settlement and life in the Middle East to political events, especially wars. The influential role of politics in Israel's urban growth since her independence has been well recognised in the social sciences (for example: Amiran and Shachar, 1969; Efrat, 1984, 1987; Korinman, 1987), whereas Gubser (1973) examined the vitality of political factors as part of his work on Al-Karak in Jordan. A precedent to my aim to place Eilat and Aqaba within a single framework could be seen in Abu-Lughod's attempt to identify similar patterns in urban development in the Middle East. She placed Israel and Jordan in the same theoretical category of 'charity cases', as much of their urban development has occurred due to "subsidises from outside, and for noneconomic reasons" (Abu-Lughod, 1984:101).

The core-periphery notion provided me with the general concept within which to examine the spatial relationship between Eilat/Aqaba -- the periphery, and Amman, Jerusalem or Tel Aviv -- the centres. The core-periphery concept has already been used in both Israel and Jordan to examine and analyse regional and economic development and demographic changes (see 1.4). In this study, the core-periphery concept will serve as a general framework for an analytic examination of the development of Eilat and Aqaba in view of their political relationship with the centre of political and economic power.

When examining the political processes behind various initiatives in Eilat and Aqaba, and raising questions about the main motives and power behind such decisions and initiatives, it became evident that any attempt to answer these questions demands wider consideration and understanding than would be achieved

within the national context; i.e. international factors must be considered. Further evidence of the need to consider international factors is provided by the examination of three works on Eilat which have given little consideration to political factors in general and international factors in particular (Spiegel, 1966; Karmon, 1979; Efrat, 1984A). These studies concentrate mainly on environmental influences upon the town's growth. The little consideration given to political factors became especially prominent during the crisis period in Eilat in 1979. Despite the recognition of the importance of political factors in Eilat life (Karmon, 1979; Efrat 1984A), both writers give only minor consideration to the effect of the reopening of the Suez Canal on the town (this will be discussed in section 7.4). Although I am not aiming to diminish the value of either work nor the role of environmental constraints in Eilat's growth, I feel that to rely merely on such data in this case is insufficient to provide an adequate analysis and understanding of the town's growth.

This is essentially a comparative study of Eilat and Aqaba with special emphasis on their interaction with the political environment. Following an analytic presentation of the development of each town as an independent entity, the main sectors in each town's economy will be compared by means of a cross-comparative method. As in the case of choosing the method of comparison, the decision to employ this method of presentation was born of the eminent differences between the political, cultural and social systems in both countries and towns. In addition, as no other work has so far studied the development of either Eilat or Aqaba in the context of their political environment (in fact very little is known about Aqaba in general). I have found this method of presentation to be the clearest and most effective when comparing the towns, while at the same time preserving their individual character as two towns within very different countries.

Examining the development of Eilat and Aqaba and exploring the interaction of this process with the political environment in the Middle East will include an investigation into the towns' growth over the last four decades. Presenting a selected range of examples from the port, industry and tourism sectors will serve the purpose of establishing the structure, functions and dynamics of their growth. Since no methods have yet been devised for measuring the power of political influence which I could identify as a workable framework for this study, political

events will be presented mainly in descriptive passages which will aim to establish the link between local development and the political environment. It is hoped that this will shed additional light on the political mechanisms behind the growth of Eilat and Aqaba. It should be noted, however, that the examples and description in this work are not intended to form a history of the area, but are rather chosen to analyse and demonstrate the kind of problem that each town faces and has had to resolve.

Access to material and the challenge of obtaining sufficient information for this work created a problem, mainly with regard to the basic geopolitical situation of Eilat and Aqaba. The sensitivity of Middle Eastern governments and other official authorities to research activities along their frontier areas and all matters which could be connected to security issues is well recognised (Blake and Lawless, 1980; Brawer, 1986). I was unable to acquire certain documents and evidence, mainly those concerning co-operation between Eilat and Aqaba. Other difficulties emerged with regard to general access to information in Jordan. In general, more information was available on Eilat, especially on its early days. This was mainly due to the Israeli tendency to document Israel's early years, which further demonstrates basic differences between the two countries and their societies. An additional point is the problem of accuracy, particularly of data published by the Jordanian Department of Statistics regarding the port, tourism and demographic issues. However, I do hope that the considerable amount of material which I have succeeded in gathering will create a sufficient base for achieving the goal of this work.

A limited amount of published material on Eilat and Aqaba exists in several forms: commentaries in the Israeli, Jordanian and international media, published and unpublished reports, plans, memoirs, and government and municipal records. A considerable amount of material, mainly on the period between the 1940s and the early 1960s, was obtained from the Israeli State Archive in Jerusalem, the Israel Defence Force Archive in Givataeem, private archives in Israel and the Public Record Office in London. Statistical data were mainly collected from official government publications in Israel and Jordan. In some cases, estimates were provided by local bodies in Aqaba and Eilat (3). By far the greater part of the material, however, was gathered through field research which I conducted during

my stay in Eilat and Aqaba (4). The most valuable part of this research were the numerous interviews which were conducted with Israeli and Jordanian government and municipal officials, hoteliers and other entrepreneurs in Eilat and Aqaba. In the case of tourism, a telephone survey of several travel agents in Europe was also carried out.

### **1.5.1 Method of Work and Presentation**

The initial step in this work aimed to establish the general pattern of spatial development and to identify the main events in Eilat and Aqaba throughout their growth over the last four decades. This was accomplished by examining and analysing four aerial photographs from 1945, 1956, 1978 and 1988 (see photographs 1-5). In addition a limited amount of published material, archival references and interviews portray Eilat's growth during its first decade. Eilat's local newspaper 'Erev Erev' was also a valuable source from which to gain a general picture of local life and the main events until 1987. For Aqaba, in addition to existing published material, a reasonably good picture of the general pattern of growth and the main events until the British withdrawal in 1956 were extracted from archival material in the PRO and the report by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD, 1957). Jordanian government plans and reports, together with information from the Shiloah Institute for Middle East and African Studies, provided the data for tracing Aqaba's general pattern of development up to the present time.

This material, analysed against a table of national and international political events in Israel, Jordan, the Middle East and beyond (appendix 1) has enabled me to suggest possible links between the two sets of data. From this point my efforts were directed towards establishing the existence of these links by tracing a variety of official and unofficial published and unpublished government and municipal documents and plans regarding local initiatives and events. In addition, interviews with officials and residents concerned with various local initiatives and events on both sides of the border enabled me to identify the core of decision-making in each country and provided me with the evidence to test my assumptions.

The order of presentation in this work follows the general trend of Eilat and Aqaba's chronological development. Part I includes the introductory section

followed by Chapter 2, which is devoted to the general background of the area: historical, political and environmental issues which will establish a broad basis for a full understanding of later development. Emphasis is given to the period of British rule, the Zionist movement's political struggle for Eilat and general references to international, Israeli and Jordanian politics in the Red Sea area. The last section discusses the environmental constraints of the region. The rest of the work is divided into three main parts that concentrate on the development of and a comparison between Eilat and Aqaba while emphasising the relationship between politics and development. Parts II and III examine the development of the towns from the late 1940s until 1987. The general approach maintains an over-all perspective on spatial changes in the towns and the development of the main economic sectors, looking mainly at the port, industry and tourism. Special emphasis will be laid upon the dynamics of the political factors and their effect on the towns' development, as well as identification of the spatial location of the decision-making power in each case.

In the first section of Chapters 3 and 5 there is a description of the general political organisation in Israel and Jordan and the relationship between Eilat, Aqaba and their respective cores of political and economic power. Later, the development and growth of each town will be related to its political environment. In Part II, Chapter 3 examines the initial development of the small village of Aqaba from the mid-1940s into a town, up till the temporary halt in this growth in the late 1960s following the 1967 War. Chapter 4 is concerned with the resumption of growth in the town toward the mid-1970s and its port's rapid growth during the 1980s, mainly due to the reopening of the Suez Canal and the Iran-Iraq War. In Part III, Chapter 5 portrays Eilat's first steps from an army outpost to a small isolated settlement on the eve of the 1956 War. Chapter 6 examines the first significant developments between the Suez War and the 1973 War. The town's descent into a crisis toward the mid-1970s is the subject of Chapter 7, while its transformation into a flourishing tourist resort will be described in Chapter 8.

The fourth part will conclude this study, and to large extent could be regarded as the core of the work. Chapter 9 is concerned with the unique character of the hidden relationship between Eilat and Aqaba across the Israeli-Jordanian border. It portrays the various aspects of cooperation between the two towns which are

particularly prominent in view of the general state of affairs between Israel and Jordan since 1948. Chapter 10 provides a comparison between Eilat and Aqaba. It includes a cross-comparative examination of the towns' urban and economic growth. The emphasis will be on the theoretical and practical issues concerned with the political background behind their growth, although absolute figures will also be compared. The conclusion of the thesis will form the last section of this chapter.

## Notes for Chapter 1

1. The Gulf of Aqaba is also called in Israel: The Gulf of Eilat, or Shlomon's Gulf.
2. The origin of the name Eilat is 'ram' which in Hebrew also means 'strength', 'might'. During the Moslem period the name Eilat became Akabat-Eilat which means in Arabic 'Eilat's obstacle'. This referred to the mountain chain east of the Gulf that created an obstacle on the way from the east to the Eilat region. This later became Aqaba, or Al-Aqaba (See also Levinson, 1961). In the various sources the name Eilat is also spelled Eiloth, Elat, Elath or Eilath, while Aqaba may appear as Al-Aqaba or Akaba.
3. In these cases a mistake in the figures is possible, although it should be indicated that in Israel, many of the official statistics published by national organisation are in fact based upon data provided by local bodies. For example: Eilat Municipality, The Eilat Hotel Association etc.
4. The fieldwork in Eilat was carried during April, September-October 1986, January-June 1987, January-March 1988. In Aqaba: November-December 1986, October 1987.



## Chapter 2 REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE AND REGIONAL LINKAGES

### 2.1 Historical Inheritance

The strategic value of the head of the Gulf of Aqaba, and its importance as a corridor for trade between the Mediterranean countries and East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and the Far East, have been recognised for over 3,000 years. The area has always been an important crossroads for communications. Many of the transport routes of ancient times are still used today (Har El, 1970). The development of settlements in the area throughout history has been a direct result of political events in the Middle East and the geographical location of the area.

As the history of the Eilat/Aqaba region up to the 20th century has been admirably explored by archaeologists and historians (Glueck, 1959; Levinson, 1961; Aharoni, 1963; Braslavy, 1963; Prawer, 1963), I do not feel it necessary to repeat the undertaking. However, for the purposes of this work I find it important to briefly indicate some of the main points of the area's history. These highlight the strong dependence of Eilat and Aqaba since ancient times on external forces, whose policy was generated mainly by geopolitical considerations.

Eilat is first mentioned in the Book of Genesis under the name El-Paran (Genesis 36, 41). Scientists have established that, given the area's location, the northern part of the Gulf of Aqaba has always been populated. Glueck (1959) has indicated that local settlement or the historical site of Eilat, was generally in the north-eastern part of the Gulf (the site Aqaba today). This was mainly due to the availability of fresh water and natural mooring places. Archaeological excavations have discovered flint tools dating back to 4000 BCE, to the Neolithic era. The Chalcolithic era has left evidence of flourishing copper smelting and remnants of developed agriculture. Later, in the Biblical description of the wanderings of the Israelites in the desert, the Eilat/Aqaba region is again mentioned as a crossroads: "And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea to compass the land of Edom" (Numbers 21, 4).

We have more information from the time of King David onwards. David saw the strategic importance of the area as a key point on the *Via Marise* and captured the area (Glueck, 1963). His son, King Solomon, developed a settlement on the north-eastern shore of the Gulf: "...and King Solomon made a navy of ships in Etzion

Geber which is besides Eloth on the shore of the Red Sea..." (1 Kings 9, 26)(1). After King Solomon, the Kingdom split and became weak. The neighbouring kings invaded Israel and Judah, captured Eilat and "Drove the Jews from Eilat..." (2 Kings 16, 6). Later, following the restoration of the Judean kingdom, King Azariah rebuilt Eilat in 785 BCE (2). Around this time Eilat changed hands often. Between 583 and 330 BCE the Persians encouraged the Nabateans to develop Eilat and turn it into a regional trade centre (Levinson, 1961).

The Nabateans remained in control of Eilat during much of the Roman period, mainly because the Romans saw the Nabatean kingdom as a buffer state while they were engaged in war with the Seleucid Kingdom to the east. In the year 36 CE the Romans destroyed the Nabatean kingdom and captured Eilat. They constructed a new road from Eilat to Damascus, developed the town into a major port and made it a junction on their defence line to the east - *The Limes Arabikus* (Gihon, 1963). In the late 3rd century Eilat became the headquarters of the tenth legion. Its inhabitants at this time numbered around 4,000 (Avi-Yona 1963). The town continued to flourish during the Byzantine period. At that time the Middle East was divided between the Persian and the Byzantine Empires. The Persians controlled all the land routes to India and the East, and most of the sea routes in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Only the Gulfs of Suez and Aqaba and the Red Sea enabled the Byzantines to trade with the East. The reinforcement of the town and the appointment of a bishop to Eilat, signifies its importance at this time.

In 630 CE, Eilat was the first town in *Eretz Israel* to be captured by the Moslems in their expansion to the north (since then the name Aqaba has appeared). It continued to function as a sea port and trade centre. In the 10th century the Arab geographer Makadissi described Eilat/Aqaba as a busy and dynamic port (Levinson, 1961). With the exception of the Crusader period, the Moslems ruled the Middle East including the local settlement until the First World War. In 1116, Baldwin I, King of Jerusalem, captured Eilat. He viewed it as a vital strategic point on the Moslem route from Africa to Iraq, and on the *Darb-al-Haj*, the way to Mecca (Praver, 1963). However, in 1171 Saladin occupied the town and built a fort on the Isle of Graye (10 km south of present Eilat, also called Jizrat Faroun or Coral Island). During the Second Crusade, Renaud de Chatillon occupied Eilat in 1178. It became his naval base in the Red Sea.

In 1187 Saladin defeated the crusaders and recaptured Eilat. For the next four centuries the area was dominated mainly by the Mamelukes, who constructed a *Han* - a caravanserai. The Turks took it over in 1526 and in 1588 built a fortress on the eastern shore of the Gulf. Since that time there was no further development in the area. In fact, it lost its significance as a trade centre after the discovery of the sea route to India around the Cape of Good Hope by Vasco da Gama in 1468, which caused most trade to move to the new route. Alternately mentioned as Eilat or Aqaba, it was known mainly as a resting place for pilgrims en route to Mecca. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and construction of the Hijaz Railway in 1905-8 that did not pass via Aqaba further undermined the position of the town. By the turn of the century Aqaba was a remote neglected village within the Ottoman Empire with an estimated population of 200.

## 2.2 The Period of British Rule

The northern shore of the Gulf of Aqaba played a vital role in Britain's 'East of Suez' strategy during the first half of the century (Fielden, 1978). Aqaba was regarded as an alternative route to the Suez Canal as a bridgehead between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean (Har-El, 1970).

Following the opening by the Turks in 1904 of the Hijaz Railway from Amman to Maan (100 km north of Aqaba), Britain saw a potential threat to her control over the Suez Canal and to the sea route from Suez to India (Heyd, 1963). The Turks used the railway to transfer troops to Aqaba and then to Yemen, and planned to build a major port in Aqaba. These events, together with German financial aid to the Hejaz railway, further aggravated British fears of a Turkish-German plan to capture the Suez Canal (Spender, 1923). A secret report from a British official in Istanbul stated:

"...After the Turks complete their railway network, it will be easy to transfer an army to Aqaba to attack Egypt and the Suez Canal" (Heyd, 1963:203).

Lord Cromer (the British governor in Egypt) immediately took steps to establish a British presence and create a clear border between Egypt and Palestine or alternatively the British and the Ottoman Empire on the Rafa - Aqaba line. On 10th January 1906 his Sinai officer Bramly (3) together with a small number of Egyptian soldiers erected a few tents on the west side of the Gulf, then called Um

Rashrash, establishing a British presence in the area. This was followed by strong objections from Istanbul, as expressed by the local Turkish commander, Colonel Roshdi, who maintained that the west side of the Gulf was under Ottoman authority. Bramly and his troops left and Roshdi built two mud huts on the site to serve as a police station for the Turks.

On 22nd January 1906, Britain sent a small ship carrying fifty soldiers to the region. On the same day Bramly returned by land and told Roshdi of his intention to build a British post in Taba, 10 km south of Um Rashrash. Roshdi was determined not to allow Bramly to go ahead with his plan, and so the British were obliged to land on the Isle de Graye. During the following months the Turks sent further armed forces to the area, and soon there were around 3000 Turkish soldiers in Aqaba. On the British side, Lord Cromer sent a battleship to the north of the Gulf of Aqaba.

Meanwhile there were diplomatic struggles in Istanbul. Britain was determined to set the border between Egypt and Palestine at the head of the Gulf, and concentrated her Mediterranean fleet in Piraeus in order to demonstrate her serious intentions regarding this case. The British Ambassador in Istanbul, supported by France and Russia, gave an ultimatum to the Sultan, in which he demanded an immediate agreement on the border. The Sultan surrendered and on 1st October 1906 the agreement on the Taba - Rafa border was signed (4).

During the First World War, Aqaba, then a small fishermen village of about 200 inhabitants, was regarded as an important link for the British army in the east with General Allenby's forces in Egypt. The British could see the potential of extending the Arab front by creating a territorial continuation from east to west (Notting, 1961). In the early years of the war the Allied sea-borne units attacked and occupied Aqaba twice, once by French troops and once by British troops. Yet the Turks holding the hills above Aqaba drove the invaders back into the sea. It was only the arrival of T.E. Lawrence and troops from the desert, catching the Turks facing the sea and unprepared to defend a land attack, which saved the situation for the allies. On 6th July 1917 Lawrence entered Aqaba and linked the British army in the east with the one in Egypt. Lawrence wrote:

"Our capture of Aqaba brought the Hejaz war to an end and gave us the

task of helping the British invade Syria" (Lawrence, 1935:312).

In 1921 Britain partitioned Palestine. Um Rashrash was to be left under the British mandate of Palestine. Yet it was not clear whether Aqaba and its region would become part of the Ibn Saud Kingdom in Arabia or part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan. The long conflict between the Saudis and the Hashemites erupted into continuous war between the two. Britain, in order to protect her interests, annexed Aqaba and joined it to Transjordan (Dan, 1977). The 'Najad' Agreement set the border between Saudi Arabia and Transjordan in 1925 (Shimoni, 1977).

No notable changes took place in Aqaba until the Second World War, mainly because Britain had full control over the Suez Canal and Transjordan and therefore had little interest in developing the north-eastern side of the Gulf at that time. The only importance of the north-eastern shore for the British was the potential to construct an alternative route to the Suez Canal should Egyptian nationalism endanger British control over the canal (Melamid, 1957). A British army camp was built in Aqaba which provided a natural harbour. The British kept a police force of about 10 men in Um Rashrash, but the policemen actually spent most of their time in Aqaba, where they also obtained their water supply from. Overland communication between this police outpost and the rest of Palestine could be made only by means of dirt tracks which passed either through Egyptian or Transjordanian territory (Karmon, 1976). During this period the future of the area was the subject of hectic negotiations elsewhere in Jerusalem, London and Washington.

### **2.3 The Zionist Struggle for Eilat**

The importance of the Eilat and Aqaba region and its strategic and economic value, may be further illustrated by the struggle of the Zionist movement during the 1930s-1940s to include Eilat within the future Jewish state, particularly against the background of British and Arab League resistance to any Jewish presence on the shores of the Red Sea. This political battle, which was fought and determined mainly in London, the U.S. and the U.N., set a pattern for the future development of the area.

An attempt to establish a Jewish settlement near Aqaba, called 'Northern Midian', was made by a Jewish group from Palestine as early as 1892, but the attempt failed (Wasser, 1955). In 1902 Herzl proposed the founding of a Jewish state in southern Palestine between Aqaba and the Mediterranean. The British Colonial Secretary, Chamberlain, to whom the plan was forwarded, dismissed the idea, partly due to the failure of the first attempt and partly in fear of a reaction from the Turks (Bein, 1934).

The idea of a Jewish state with an outlet to the Red Sea developed alongside the growth of the Zionist idea. In 1917 a passionate Zionist named David Ben-Gurion, later to be Israel's first Prime Minister, wrote:

"There is no doubt that when Aqaba's hinterland, the southernmost part of Palestine, will be resettled and in our hands... and connected by railways from Beersheba, Jerusalem and the West, and to the Hejaz line from the East, an important port and commercial centre will arise again... Then Aqaba will be for the south and Palestine what Jaffa and Haifa are for the west" (Sherman, 1977:11).

A year later Dr. Chaim Weizmann, the chairman of the Zionist Representatives in Palestine, and later the first President of Israel, visited Aqaba on his way to a meeting with an Arab delegation in Transjordan. His impression of the importance of Aqaba as an outlet to the Red Sea and of the strategic value of the area can be seen from his letter to Lord Balfour (5), and in a memorandum presented to the Zionist organization in 1919 (6). In a letter to Winston Churchill he wrote:

"...also the southern border has considerable significance in the context of the Jewish Homeland. Economically it is essential that *Eretz Israel* has an outlet to the Red Sea" (7).

In 1934 Ben Gurion visited Um Rashrash, and again announced his ideas regarding the future of the area. Although Um Rashrash only consisted of a few mud huts, for Ben Gurion this was the beginning of the fulfilment of his plans. A year later he took practical steps to develop the area by meeting the U.S. Supreme Court Judge Brandeis. Ben Gurion explained the strategic importance of Eilat and suggested stationing 50-100 people there to farm and fish. Justice Brandeis replied: "I shall be the first to drive a stake into this important site" (Arbel, 1974:32). He also contributed \$100,000 to transform the idea into reality.

Britain rejected any plan to include southern Palestine in the future Jewish state. Any Israeli presence near the Red Sea would be against Britain's interests, and would conflict with the strategic objectives of a strong British-backed Arab League (Eilath, 1974:9). All British plans regarding the partition of Palestine into a Jewish and Arab states excluded the south of the Negev and the Aqaba region from the Jewish part of Palestine (figure 2.1). The Clayton plan and the Peel Committee in 1937 suggested giving the south to the Arabs, while the Woodhead and Morrison committees of 1938 proposed keeping the south under a British Mandate (Fielden, 1978; Alden, 1980).

From September 1947 onward the finalising of the partition plan for Palestine was set in motion and three special committees discussed the issue at Lake Success, New York (8). Bernadotte, the U.N. mediator in Palestine, suggested that the southern Negev be given to the Arabs. In addition the Arabs, who opposed the partition of Palestine, rejected any plan to give access to any form of Jewish state to the Red Sea. They claimed that Eilat would drive a wedge between Egypt, Transjordan and Saudi Arabia, thereby preventing territorial continuity and Arab unity (Eilath, 1971). Despite the assassination of Bernadotte by Jewish terrorists on 17th September 1947, Britain continued to support his pro-Arab plan and succeeded in persuading the pro-British and pro-Arab officials in the U.S. State and Defence Department to support it also. McDonald, the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., wrote:

"The British have been highly pleased with the mediator's ideas, for his plan assures Jordanian control - that is, British control-of the Negev, the much wanted 'land bridge' between Egypt and Jordan" (McDonald, 1951:15).

The Zionist delegation to the U.N. feared losing Eilat and were concerned about American support for the U.N. plan. Their leader, Moshe Sharett, stated:

"We knew the Americans would soon present an ultimatum - give up Eilat or risk U.S. abstention on the partition" (Kenaan, 1958:42).

As the date for the final U.N. vote on partition came closer the Zionists fear of losing Eilat increased. On November 19, 1947 a meeting took place between Dr. Weizmann and President Truman of the U.S.A. The issue of Eilat dominated the meeting and within half an hour the President gave his support to the Jewish plans for Eilat. Later that day Sharett was informed by the American delegation's spokesman:

"President Truman has given us direct instructions not to pressure you about

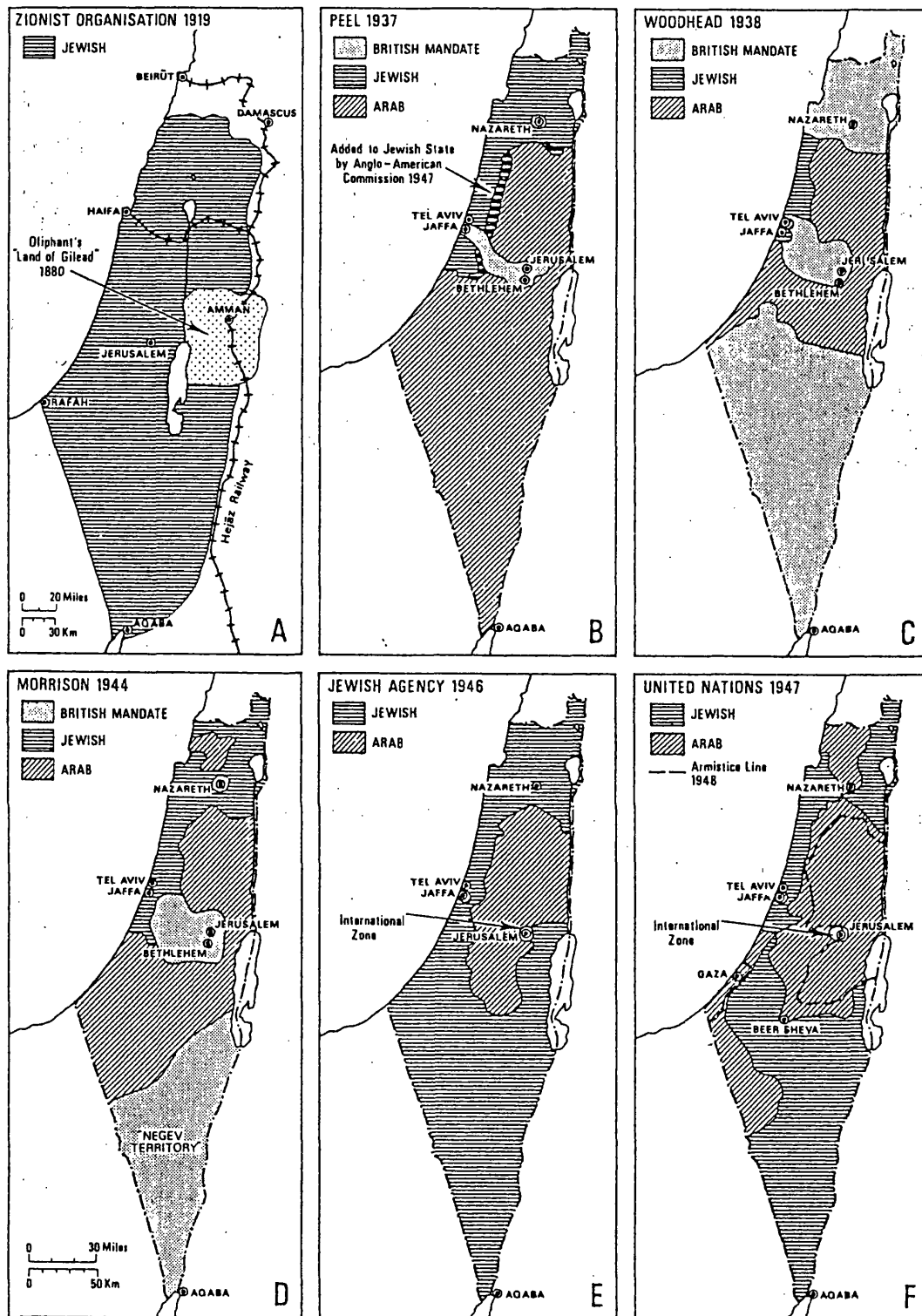


Figure 2.1 Proposals for the division of Palestine

Source, Beaumont, P. Blake, G. Wagstaff, M. (1976:299).



Eilat and to support the Jewish plan" (Eilath, 1974:13).

On 29th November 1947 the U.N. General Assembly voted for the partition. Israel received an 11 km. strip of the Gulf of Aqaba coast.

Early in 1948 Israeli plans for the settlement of this strip of land began to take shape. A plan to form a force of 500 people which would capture, settle and develop Eilat was put forward (Arbel, 1974). On 14th May 1948, Israel declared her independence and was promptly invaded by Arab armies from all directions. At that time 500 people could not be spared by the North to be sent to Eilat. However, the Israelis were sure that whoever controlled both ends of the Arava valley would also control the centre, and thus with the capture of Eilat, the entire Negev would fall into Israeli hands (Clement, 1974).

#### **2.4 The Red Sea and Domestic and International Politics**

"There is hardly any sea space in the world that is as unique as the Red Sea..." (Lapidoth, 1982:1).

The importance of the Red Sea in contemporary history has been well recognised and extensively discussed in a wide range of literature (Bloomfield, 1957; Lapidoth, 1975, 1982; Ayalon, 1975; Fielden, 1978; Abunafeesa, 1984; Farid, 1984; Aliboni, 1985). The sea is Jordan's only outlet to international waters, and Israel's only maritime access to the south. Despite world-wide recognition of the Red Sea and its straits (Tiran and Bab Al-Mandeb) as an international shipping route that should be open to all navigation regardless of origin (Lapidoth, 1975, 1982; Fielden, 1978), it has become a battlefield in which disputes between local countries are fought out.

It is not my aim to discuss the legal and territorial aspects of the various conflicts in and around the Red Sea. Yet for the purposes of this work I find it important to highlight some of the main domestic and international political regarding the Red Sea and the Eilat and Aqaba region. Although a cursory study may not reveal a direct link between some of these events and Eilat or Aqaba, their wider effects have ultimately an important influence on development in the Eilat and Aqaba region. This is a further indication of the strategic value of this region and the Red Sea. It should be remembered that if it were not for the importance of the

Red Sea it is doubtful whether these towns would have existed at all.

In spite of a decline in her 'East of Suez' role, Britain remained the prominent foreign power in the area until the mid 1950s. She continued to emphasise the importance of the Red Sea and its immediate area to her interests. This could be partly seen by her opposition to any Israeli presence on the shores of the Red Sea. Yet despite Britain's vigorous opposition to Zionist demands regarding Eilat, and even before the U.N. decision to include Um Rashrash within Israel, Foreign Secretary Bevin negotiated with Ben Gurion the possibility of British military bases in the southern region of the future Jewish state, should Israel gain a foothold on the shores of the Gulf. Later, during the 1948 War, Britain tried to persuade King Abdullah of Jordan to capture the Negev in order to further British interests. Yet as the king did not display particular concern over his small kingdom's only outlet to the sea, and was not in a rush to send his army to the south in case of Israeli attack (Kedorie, 1969), it was Glubb Pasha who finally sent Arab Legion troops to Aqaba in order to prevent any Israeli threat to the town (9). Britain's recognition of the importance of Aqaba and the Red Sea may also be seen in the March 1948 renegotiation of the 1946 Anglo-Jordanian agreement. In the new treaty Britain insisted on retaining her military and naval presence in Aqaba (Vatikiotis, 1967). Moreover, in 1955 the Foreign Minister, Harold Macmillan, together with the Americans, proposed the 'Alpha Plan'. This aimed to pressurise Israel into abandoning most of the Negev, which would then be turned into Arab territory under Western guarantees (Jewish Chronicle, 3.1.1986, 10.1.1986).

Since the early 1950s the role of the superpowers in the Red Sea area increased substantially. Russian aid to the Arab countries grew rapidly and its naval presence in the Red Sea gradually built up (Alden, 1980). As its status in Egypt diminished after the early 1970s, the USSR increased its role in the southern area of the Red Sea, especially in the conflict between North and South Yemen, and in Ethiopia (Freedman, 1982). In response, the U.S.A., who by the early 1950s reversed her 'non-alignment' policy in favour of Israel (Fielden, 1978), increased naval manoeuvres in the area together with her NATO allies, and sent part of the U.S. 6th Fleet on symbolic visits to various ports including Aqaba (Zelniker, 1982; Aliboni, 1985). Following the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai in 1982, American soldiers were assigned to the Sinai peace keeping force, establishing a command

presence in the region and creating a possible bridgehead should Washington decide to take action (O'Sullivan and Miller, 1983)(10). El-Badri (1984) has summarised:

"The two superpowers view the Red Sea as an indispensable part of their global strategy. For a great power to include this sea in its sphere of influence would be a significant step towards naval supremacy and possible world hegemony" (El-Badri, 1984:67).

Many of the problems of the Eilat and Aqaba region arise from the conflicting territorial claims over parts of the Red Sea. Both Egypt and Saudi Arabia claim the Tiran Straits and the Arab Republic of Yemen (YAR) claims the Bab Al-Mandeb Straits. These claims aimed at blocking sea transport to and from Israel (Bloomfield, 1957; Ayalon, 1975). Some of the countries surrounding the Red Sea tried to justify their territorial claims by regarding the Red Sea as an 'Internal Sea' or an 'Arab Lake' (Morti, 1967; Farid, 1984; Hewidi, 1984). This idea has been disputed (Blum, 1965; Lapidoth, 1975, 1982)(11).

For many years Egypt was the most influential country in the Red Sea region (Ayalon, 1975; Hewidi, 1984). Its president, Nasser, refused to accept the physical division of the Arab world by Israel and Eilat (Alden, 1980). Egypt's long-standing attitude to the Red Sea was described by Muhammad Hasanein Heikal, the editor of Al Aharam:

"There is no doubt that one day a united (Red Sea) Arab naval force, under a single leadership with a single headquarters, will be formed which will dominate the Red Sea routes..." (Al Aharam, 4.7.1969:1).

However, following the Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement in 1979, tension has declined and Saudi Arabia, regarded as the second most important Arab country in the region, has increased her influence. Her petro-dollars and generous loans to the surrounding Arab countries have placed her in a senior position. With the increase of port activity at Jeddah and Yanbo the Saudis desire peaceful and safe navigation in the Red Sea, and her influence has been felt strongly in the last few years.

#### **2.4.1 Israeli interests in the Red Sea**

Israel's main interest in the Red Sea has been the security of navigation for her ships and for all international sea traffic to and from the port of Eilat. This interest is related to Israel's economic development, strategic security and, ideologically, to sovereignty (Melamid, 1957; Herzog, 1982; Lucas, 1984). Thus the blockades of the Tiran Straits for navigation to and from Eilat in 1956 and 1967 were major

causes of the wars in those years. This is shown by the famous U.N. Resolution 242 of 22th November 1967:

"After a thorough discussion of the Arab - Israeli conflict, the necessity for guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area is affirmed. Undoubtedly, freedom of navigation is an indispensable prerequisite for peace in the Middle East" (Lapidoth, 1975:9).

After the 1956 War, Israel developed political, economic and cultural relations with many countries in Africa and Asia, the Red Sea providing the vital transport link. To ensure freedom of navigation to and from Eilat, a United Nation Emergency Force (UNEF) was stationed in the Sharm el-Sheikh region (Blum, 1971). Upon the withdrawal of UNEF from Sinai in May 1967, the Egyptians re-imposed a blockade on Eilat. Israel saw this blockade as a threat to her sovereignty, and regarded it as a *Causus Belli*. This contributed to the fateful escalation of events that culminated in the 1967 June War in which the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) occupied Sinai and the Tiran Straits.

After the 1967 War the Arab campaign against Israeli shipping lines in the Red Sea shifted to the Strait of Bab al-Mandeb (12). In 1969 Britain withdrew from Aden and a new anti-Israeli Arab country was established; the Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY). This period also saw a cooling of French relations with Israel while her relations with the Arab countries strengthened, and Soviet influence in the area increased. This raised new questions regarding the security of Israel's navigation in the area. Yet in the meantime the American naval base in Ethiopia and the close relations between the latter and Israel, which according to Ayalon (1975) enabled Israel to establish bases on certain key islands near the Bab al-Mandab (see also Freedman, 1982), guaranteed Israel's use of the Straits. However, during the 1973 War, Ethiopia cut off diplomatic relations with Israel, leaving the latter without an ally in the region. The local Arab states, led by Egypt, increased the tension in the Bab Al-Mandab Straits, and during the War Israel's ships were debarred from using the straits (13).

The peace agreement between Israel and Egypt has significantly eased Israeli - Arab tension in the Red Sea area. Article V2 states:

"The parties consider the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba to be international waterways open to all nations for unimpeded and non-suspendible freedom of navigation and overflight. The Parties will respect each other's right to navigation..." (As cited in: Lapidoth, 1982:223).

Today Israel claims 6 nautical miles of territorial water from the shore at Eilat. There is an Israeli naval base in Eilat where missile boats are anchored, and an Israel Air Force (IAF) base near Eilat. Both reflect Israel's determination to defend her rights in the Red Sea.

#### **2.4.2 Jordanian interests in the Red Sea**

As Jordan's sole access to maritime waters, Aqaba is of crucial importance to the Kingdom. Yet until 1952 Jordanian interests in the Red Sea were limited and Aqaba was used by the British navy (Beheiry, 1969; See also 3.3, 3.4). Only after Jordan gradually began to use the port did she begin to appreciate the importance of the Red Sea. Jordan has never played a significant role in Red Sea politics, nor has she been considered to have a meaningful position in the Red Sea balance of power. She has never taken part in any hostile action in the Red Sea, and has kept a low profile in the various disputes between the Arab world and Israel concerning the Red Sea. Indeed until 1956 there was no Jordanian navy. Even in 1985 the Jordanian navy consisted of only 10 small patrol crafts and around 200 men, used mainly for coast guard missions (Heller, 1985). Only in 1980 did she begin operation of her first two merchant ships. Yet in the past, when tension grew between Jordan and other Arab countries, it suffered from acts of hostility against ships heading for Aqaba (14). Jordan claims three nautical miles of territorial water from the shore at Aqaba. It aims to win fishing rights in Saudi Arabian and Egyptian territorial waters, and is taking part in the Red Sea committee set up by Sudan and Saudi Arabia to exploit the Red Sea's mineral resources (Swat Al-Saab, 7.3.1984).

#### **2.5 Environmental Constraints**

The development of Eilat and Aqaba has been greatly influenced by the topographical configuration of the area. Both towns are located on the northern extremity of the Gulf of Aqaba, which together with the Gulf of Suez, bounds the Sinai Peninsula. The length of the Gulf of Aqaba is about 185 km, while its width varies between 13 and 26 km. Being on the north-eastern end of the Red Sea has meant that maritime access is dominated by the countries who control the Tiran and Bab al-Mandab Straits and the Suez Canal. As it forms a stretch of the Great Rift Valley, dramatic landscape patterns are a prominent characteristic of the area.

The depth of the Gulf of Aqaba reaches 1200 metres. Along the eastern and western shores of the Gulf the sea bed slopes steeply off-shore on a down faulted block, and therefore a 50 metre depth may be found only 100 metres from the shore (Cohen, 1975). This has the advantage of facilitating easy anchorage for even the largest supertanker. In contrast shallow water, less than 3 metres deep on the northern shore of the Gulf, restricts the construction and expansion of port facilities northward. Yet the area has always been highly suitable as a bathing beach with potential for tourism and recreation facilities.

Along the eastern and western shores of the Gulf rises almost sheer granite mountain terrain, leaving an extremely narrow coastal plain. In some cases the mountain extends to the water front leaving no place even for a road; such as at Jebel el-Bureij in Jordan, and Mount Zefahot in Israel, requiring the use of explosives for the creation of basic infrastructure (photograph 1). Consequently all development along both side of the Gulf was restricted to the few alluvial fans. As in the cases of the fertiliser industry south of Aqaba, or the necessity to remove part of the granite hills as in the case of Eilat's port.

Both towns are bordered by igneous massifs which produce barren areas of extremely rugged and very steep topography, cut by many narrow wadis. These barriers occur to the north-west, west and south of Eilat and to the north-east, east and south of Aqaba. Such areas cannot be included as potential development regions for either town. The main development of both towns has been restricted to alluvial fans, several hundred metres thick, running down to the sea from the igneous mountains on the western and eastern sides of the Gulf. Potential growth areas for Aqaba are confined to the alluvial fans of Wadi Yutam, although expansion is possible on unlimited flat lands stretching northwards over the wide bottom of Wadi Arava. In Eilat the alluvial plain has a maximum width of 2 km and it becomes narrower to the south where the igneous mountains reach the sea. Construction in Eilat demanded expensive levelling and filling of ravines. Moreover, the alluvial plains are formed of unconsolidated soil which provides a poor base for building foundations. The lower part is mainly a mud-flat of saline underground water, which for lack of firm ground demands a special stabilising process for the foundations of all structures, making all construction very expensive. The harsh environmental conditions on the Israeli side are best reflected

by the fact that throughout history the site of the local settlement (Eilat or Aqaba) was in the north-eastern part of the Gulf (for further discussion see: Ben Tur, 1963; Schattner, 1963; Turner, 1968; Har El, 1970).

Harsh climatic conditions have been an additional obstacle for local development. As the area is located on the northern edge of the desert belt of North Africa and Arabia and enclosed by mountains on three sides, its climate is marked by aridity and extremely high temperatures. Annual rainfall averages 25 mm, which may come down in three to five heavy showers, resulting in instant flooding. The temperatures in the north of the Gulf of Aqaba are the highest in Israel and Jordan, except for the area of the Dead Sea. The two main seasons are characterised by pleasant temperatures between October and March (16C-24C), and very hot temperature (26C-44C) between April and September. The meteorological station in Eilat has often recorded temperature of above 40C, and up to 48C (appendix 7). The average annual temperature in the area is 27C, compared with annual values of 17.1 in Jerusalem, 19.1 in Tel Aviv and 17.4 in Amman. A further factor is the winds that constantly blow from the north-north-east over the Negev desert, creating very dry conditions with a humidity level of 20% in the summer (40% at night), and 45% in the winter (60% at night) (see also Ashbel, 1963; Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1986:19-21).

The most obvious result of the geographical constraints on the development of Eilat and Aqaba is "copy-cat" development. One glance at a map of the head of the Gulf shows similarities in the location of Eilat and Aqaba and in the manner of land use. This can be seen as far back as the construction of the first mud huts in what was then called Um Rashrash. Their construction site on the north-western side of the Gulf was parallel to the location of the old village of Aqaba. Later on, as Eilat grew, similar patterns of land use appeared. The initial development of both towns took place on the two alluvial fans on either side of the Gulf. Eilat's port, for example, was built on the west beach opposite Aqaba's port. Eilat's airport was located on the western edge of the salt marshes of the Arava, 4 km west of Aqaba's airport on the eastern edge of these salt marshes. For both towns, their public beaches and main tourist area are on the northern shore of the Gulf, east and west of the border line.

## Notes for Chapter 2

1. During King Solomon's reign the name Etzion Geber appeared. Yet Aharoni (1963) and Har-El (1970) suggested that Etzion Geber was a fort built in Biblical time east of the town of Eilat (This area is known today as Tel el-Halifa, about 50 metres east of the Israeli-Jordanian border, 200 metres north of the sea-shore). Etzion Geber and Eiloth are mentioned again during the period of King Solomon in 2 Chronicles 8, 17. See also The Holy Bible, New International Version, (1984) Thompson, F.C. (ed) P-1661.
2. Etzion Geber is also mentioned during the reign of King Jehoshaphat. He attempted to send ships to the south, but they were wrecked in the Gulf of Aqaba (1 Kings 22, 48-49).
3. More details on the life of W.E. Jennings Bramly can be found in The Times, 12.3.1960:8, 23.3.1960:15.
4. Further information regarding the so-called 'Aqaba incident' or 'Taba Crisis' may be found in: Spender, 1923; Wasser, 1955; The Geographical Journal, 1959, Vol. 125:459; Heyd, 1963.
5. Weizmann Archive, Aqaba and the Gulf of Aqaba (1917-1947). From a letter sent by Weizmann to Lord Balfour in 20.5.1918.
6. Weizmann Archive, Aqaba and the Gulf of Aqaba (1917-1947). Aharonson, A. (1919) The borders of *Eretz Israel*.
7. Weizmann Archive, Aqaba and the Gulf of Aqaba (1917-1947). From a letter sent by Weizmann to Winston Churchill, 22.11.1919.
8. The three special committees were part of the United Nations Hed-Hook Committee for Palestine. Discussions took place at Lake Success, U.S.A., following the recommendation by the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) to partition Palestine into an Arab and Jewish state that would give the Jewish State access to the Red Sea near Aqaba.
9. This became particularly relevant after the Israelis' political campaign to include Um Rashrash within the newly-born state.
10. O'Sullivan and Miller (1983) have suggested that certain elements within the 82nd U.S. Airborne Division, which was part of the Sinai peace keeping force, were in fact members of the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF), retained in case of emergency in the Middle East.
11. Even the USSR regarded the idea of an 'Arab Lake' with increasing concern. See: Freedman, 1982:280-281.
12. On the 11th June 1971, the 'Coral Sea', a Liberian-flag tanker chartered by Israel, was attacked on its way to Eilat while passing through the Bab al-Mandab Straits. This terrorist attack was launched from South Yemen. A further incident between a Soviet cruiser and an Israeli freighter brought the head of the C.I.A. to Jerusalem. Ayalon (1975) has suggested as indicative of the sensitivity of Israel and the U.S.A. regarding the right of free passage through the Bab al-Mandab Straits. Israel's Chief of Staff visited Ethiopia to emphasise Israel's firm stand on the issue. See also: Abir, 1972; Ayalon, 1975; Reuters (London), 25.6.1971; Time 1.3.1971, 19.3.1971; Al-Aharam, 15.9.1971.
13. On 24th of October 1973 an American ship on her way to Eilat was attacked while passing through the Bab al-Mandab Straits. Regarding this affair and the wider issue of the straits during the 1973 War see: Maariv, 1.11.1973, 5.11.1973, 14.11.1973; Middle East News Agency (MENA) Cairo, 31.10.1973; Lapidot, 1975.
14. As early as 1948, during the Arab war against Israel, an ammunition ship heading for Aqaba was stopped by Egypt in the Suez Canal and its cargo, mainly arms, was confiscated (Snow, 1972). Later, in July 1951, the British ship 'Empire Rouch' was fired upon by the Tiran Batteries and denied entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba. Similar action was taken against the U.S. Freighter 'Allion' in September 1953, and the British merchant ship 'Anshum' in April 1955 (Bloomfield, 1957). In early 1980 a series of mine explosions in the Red Sea caused concern to shipping (see: Abunafeesa, 1985). Several sources suggested that the aim of these mines may have been to threaten Jordan as it continued to help Iraq by allowing her the use of Aqaba's port, and to damage Jordan's economy by paralysing navigation to and from Aqaba (Foreign Report, 9.9.1984; Al-Dustur, 27.8.1984).



## PART II AQABA

### Chapter 3 AQABA; FROM A VILLAGE TO A TOWN

#### **3.1 The Jordanian Political System**

In November 1952 a Royal Decree was issued establishing the port of Aqaba. This "re-establishment" 6 years after Britain handed over the port to the Jordanian government is only one example of a series of events marking the beginnings of the creation of a Jordanian nation. The administration was expanding and the quality and quantity of its services began to improve. Many historians regard this period as a turning point in Jordan's history (Aruri, 1972; Shimoni, 1977; Gubser, 1983).

In August 1952, although still a minor, Hussein was crowned king. A Regency council ruled the country until May 1953, when he took the constitutional oath. King Hussein is the highest authority in Jordan. He is the chief decision-maker and holds wide-ranging powers which he may exercise through his prime minister and council of ministers. The king appoints the prime minister and members of the cabinet. The Jordanian constitution places legislative authority in the hands of the National Assembly, which consists of the Senate and House of Deputies (Parliament). The latter is elected by universal suffrage. However, the King retains extensive power including a veto over all decision and legislation. In the past, when conflicts of interest arose between the king and his government or parliament, he did not hesitate to dissolve either one. Examples of this occurred in 1951, 1956, 1961, 1974 and 1976 (El-Edroos, 1980). Political parties were banned in 1957 and remained illegal until 1989 (elections to the parliament were once again held in late 1989). King Hussein's power rests upon a loyal army and upon control of the distribution of material benefits (Vatikiotis, 1967; Jureidini and McLaurin, 1984).

Hussein, together with his brother, Prince Hassan, and the government, determine the degree of power which they will delegate to various local bodies. Policy decisions are made at the centre - Amman - and implemented by local authorities with only marginal discretionary powers. The central government maintains control over politics at the lower levels mainly through military and budgetary means. Government departments view local bodies very much as administrative arms of central government. Jordan emerges as a country with strong governmental involvement in the detailed operation of the economy. Government personnel of all

categories are involved in the planning effort: employees of the National Planning Council (NPC), functionaries in the ministries, and even local governors (Harris, 1958; Gubser, 1983). The government frequently introduces national plans, to the extent that Jordan has been described as "plan happy". The first was a general five-year plan covering the period 1962-1967. Since this plan was revised in 1964, a further five have been introduced. Although the plans were not entirely realised, they have been of significant help in the development process (Nyrop, 1980; Susser, 1977-78). The King has been actively involved in planning, and in military and foreign affairs (Harris, 1958), while Prince Hassan has taken direct charge of economic development efforts as well as being the chairman of the NPC and the Royal Scientific Society.

Regional development planning in Jordan is a direct reflection of the political organisation of the country as a whole and is structured to fulfil the aims of the centre. Officially, municipal elections are supposed to take place every four years. Secret democratic elections are held to determine who will be the mayor, who in turn appoints the local council (only in Amman is the mayor obliged by law to be appointed by the prime minister). In reality municipal elections took place only when the King decided that it would not endanger Jordan's fragile politics (local elections were cancelled between 1966 and 1975, and later in 1982). In addition, the Minister for Local Government can suspend municipal elections for an unlimited period for reasons of "state security". Alternatively he can dismiss the elected mayor and appoint someone else. In Aqaba this has been the case since the 1966 municipal election, mainly because the government was concerned that the town council would fall into the hands of the Palestinian majority. In order to keep Aqaba apolitical, and to avoid problems in this sensitive corner of the kingdom (both internal and with Israel), the local mayor was appointed by Amman. Even though he was an "Amman's person", Aqaba's mayor was always subordinate to whichever higher authority was the dominant body.

Officials in the various regions are tied to the overall plans and are judged by their superiors as to the degree of implementation of the relevant aspects of those plans. This leads to the further imposition of development activity from the centre and from above. In this functional top-down regional development approach, interaction among the various planning activities at regional level is limited and uncoordinated.

Every agency determines its budgets and human resources accordingly (Cooper and Sidney, 1971; Nyrop; 1980). Because the functional decision makers in the core are remote from the peripheral regions, the decisions reached are often unrealistic or narrow and in some cases irrelevant to the problem involved.

### **3.2 Jordanian Politics and Aqaba**

The historical development of Aqaba demonstrates this centralist top-down approach. Aqaba was regarded by the Jordanian government primarily as a port which would serve the country's development aims by providing access to the sea. Thus most of the plans and development work invested in the town until 1967 were dedicated to the port. The town, with its growing population, was generally neglected from a social, cultural and political point of view, especially during the initial stages of development. However, even the first development plan intended for the port (APT, 1953) suffered from lack of implementation, mainly as a consequence of economic and political factors both inside and outside Jordan. Even when more consideration was given to the social and cultural aspects of Aqaba, the investment of capital and effort was, until the mid-1970s, never quite adequate.

The Jordanian government's approach to Aqaba as a 'port' rather than as 'town' is echoed by the few papers on Aqaba which exist within the field of human geography. Hindle (1966) and Beheiry (1969) treat the development of the port as the main issue in their work. Tayyam (1975) and Dajani (1981) stress the development of the modern port, while recent works by Stern and Hayuth (1984) and Drysdale (1987) examine the link between the development of Aqaba's port and political events in the Middle East.

One of the reasons for this emphasis is the geographical location of Aqaba. Without this narrow access to the sea, Jordan would be a landlocked country and completely reliant on trade through Syria and Lebanon. The 7 km stretch of sea-shore that Jordan had in 1952 near Aqaba provided the country with the possibility to develop its own port, and indeed for many years development activity did take place only in the port. This pattern of development emphasises the use of the periphery's resources by the centre.

I do not wish to underestimate the vital role of the port in the town's development. It should be realised, however, that although the existence of the port has been fundamental to the growth of Aqaba, its development is entirely the result of decisions made in Amman, heavily influenced by a wide range of internal political and economic factors. Two in particular have had an enduring and inevitable role in the development of Jordan and Aqaba until the early 1970s: these are the Palestinian problem and the port of Beirut.

The vital issue influencing Jordan in all aspects of life after the 1948 war with Israel was the Palestinian problem (Plascov, 1981; Kartin, 1987). This radically changed the demographic map of Jordan. To the modest population of approximately 400,000 in 1948 were added 400,000 Palestinian residents of the West Bank, and around 450,000 Palestinian refugees who had fled the newly-founded State of Israel. Of the latter, 250,000 settled on the West Bank and 200,000 came to the East Bank. Many of the refugees were attracted to the various urban centres of Jordan (Mishal, 1974; Kartin, 1978). This was due to the absence of any migration policy on the part of the Jordanian government in the early 1950s, together with the developments taking place in the main urban centres, especially Amman. An additional factor was the relatively high socio-economic status of many of the refugees and their urban background in Palestine where many had been businessmen and professionals.

It is difficult to make precise statements about how many Palestinians arrived in Aqaba before 1952 because until that date no population census had been carried out in Transjordan. The first population census in Jordan in 1952 counted 2835 people in Aqaba. It is estimated that about 900 were refugees who came before 1952 and 84 arrived as refugees during 1952-3 (UNRWA, 1951-1969). Besides the economic potential of Aqaba as a port town, it appears from interviews with people who arrived during this period that one of the reasons for this migration was the fact that some fishermen in Palestine thought they would be able to earn a livelihood fishing along the Red Sea.

The Palestinian migration was of people whose circumstances and way of life contrasted sharply with those of the people of Transjordan. The Palestinians regarded themselves as more educated and sophisticated than most Jordanians. They

considered the Hashemite government a lackey of the British and bitterly blamed it for the loss of most of their homeland in Palestine (Plascov, 1981). Palestinian hostility found its expression in political opposition to the Hashemite regime, and in the many armed clashes between the army, loyal to the king, and the Palestinians (Jureidini and William, 1971). Much of this was due to the unwillingness of the PLO to obey Hussein who tried to impose his will on the issue of PLO activity against Israel. The hostility reached its peak during the civil war in 1970-1971. Shortly afterwards King Hussein was described thus by Abu-Iyad, one of the PLO leaders:

"He (Hussein) is the worst enemy of the Palestinians, even more so than the Israelis" (Abu-Iyad 1978:53).

However, despite their opposition to or even outright rejection of the Hashemite regime, Palestinians increasingly came to participate in the state system and thus, at least tacitly, to accept it. Over the years integration increased as social links, aided by a considerable rate of intermarriage, were created. The Palestinians contributed to the development of Jordan in all areas of life (IBRD, 1957; Abu Jaber, 1986). Furthermore, the relatively rich areas of the West Bank contributed a large share to the Jordanian gross national product (GNP), thus enhancing the country's economic activity and its potential for export.

A new stage in this relationship was reached in the mid-1980s when the King announced the severance of relations with the West Bank and declared that the Palestinians should represent themselves and determine their own future. This closed a 38- year chapter, at the beginning of which Hussein's grandfather Abdullah annexed the West Bank and imposed Jordanian citizenship on all the Palestinians under his rule.

It is safe to say that no event in Jordan's history - neither independence nor the advent of the British nor the assassination of King Abdullah (which, like virtually all major events since 1948, was directly linked to the Palestine problem) - has been as profound in its impact on Jordanian life as the Palestinian issue (Jureidini and Mclaurin, 1984).

Beirut was the rival port to Aqaba until the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war in the late 1970s. Initially Beirut had an economic advantage over Aqaba, and if the

two ports had competed freely without the interference of political factors, it is doubtful whether Aqaba's port would have been developed at all. Beirut had been an important economic and commercial centre in the Middle East, with competitive banking, insurance and shipping sectors in the city. It was a principal port of call for many shipping lines. The competition from other Mediterranean ports, together with the high volume of traffic, contributed to low port charges (McClullin, 1983). Aqaba, on the other hand, had extremely limited port facilities, and many services were totally lacking in the 1950s. Ships travelling from Europe to Aqaba had to pass through the Gulf of Suez and detour up and down the gulf of Aqaba. The Gulf was not a principal shipping lane and Jordanian trade with other countries was not sufficiently large to induce many shipping firms to use the port (Dearden, 1958).

In addition, nearly 90% of the Jordanian population lived in the West Bank and around Amman which is almost equidistant from Beirut and Aqaba. Land communications between Amman and Aqaba in the early 1950s were much worse than between Amman and Beirut (IBRD, 1957; Beheiry, 1969).

### **3.3 Aqaba - From British to Jordanian Rule, the Forties up to 1948**

In the mid 1940s Aqaba was a small village at the southern tip of the British mandated Emirate of Transjordan. Its approximately 200 inhabitants from the local semi-nomadic Bedouin tribe *Howeitāt ibn-Najab* were mainly engaged in farming and fishing, which had comprised the basis for permanent civilian settlement in Aqaba over the last few centuries (Patai, 1958). During the Haj season, Aqaba's population would double when more people from the *Howeitāt ibn-Najab* tribe came from the surrounding area to trade in the local bazaar with pilgrim caravans on their way to Mecca. Many pilgrims continued their journey from Aqaba's port by sea to avoid the harsh route through the desert. It is hard to speak of a 'port' in Aqaba at this time. It had very poor facilities; there were no lifting appliances, warehouses, or power plant. Of the three piers, the 'Chatham Pier' extending off the shore near the village was used by the British navy, while south of the village was the 'Imperia Wharf' (British Admiralty, 1944).

North of the village was located the British army-navy base which housed one infantry battalion and the two frigates stationed in Aqaba (1). Probably the best

picture of Aqaba at this time is provided by the British Naval Intelligence Division report, (1943):

"The village is merely a collection of roughly built huts of granite masonry owned from time immemorial by the Howeitat bedouin. It still shows the effect of occupation during the war of 1914-1918, and the ruined buildings have been partly replaced by mud huts, chiefly occupied by fishermen. Some military huts overlook the bay from the slopes to the east. The old square fort, at the south end of the village, is not visible from the sea, and the white, well-built custom-house is the only conspicuous building. It is used as a general-purpose government office" (Naval Intelligence Division, 1943:523).

Aqaba was controlled by Britain from World War I until 1946. During this period Sir Alec Kirkbride was the British Resident in Transjordan (2), under the High Commissioner for Palestine and Transjordan in Jerusalem. The Transjordanian army, then called the Arab Legion, was part of the British army in the Middle East under the command of Lieutenant-General John Bagot Glubb, known as Glubb Pasha. Many of the officers in the army were also British (Lunt, 1984. Vatikiotis, 1967). In Aqaba the village headman was subordinate to the commanding officers of the local Arab Legion post. Indeed, Britain was the main political and economic power in this region during the 1940s, and most of the area development was dependent upon the British authorities.

In order to achieve maximum control in Transjordan the British established local councils in 12 settlements including Aqaba, encouraged migration of professional labour into these towns, and intervened in local economic activity, especially after the mid 1930s (Drysdale, 1987). Amman was declared the capital, and with British help in concentrating most of the government activity the town developed rapidly. The population increased from 15,000 in 1915 to 60,000 in 1948, by which date most Jordanian commercial activity was centred in the town. This, together with the inadequate communication and transportation routes between the capital and the periphery, caused neglect of the latter. Rural development around Amman and Irbid benefited these towns by strengthening economic links and increasing trade and economic activity (Kartin, 1987). Aqaba, 100 km south of the nearest town of Maan, surrounded by desert and lacking any hinterland, did not benefit from the development of the centre. It was regarded chiefly as a port used by the British. International political factors influenced the early stages of development in Aqaba during the early 1940s. Decisions were made in Amman and Cairo without seeking

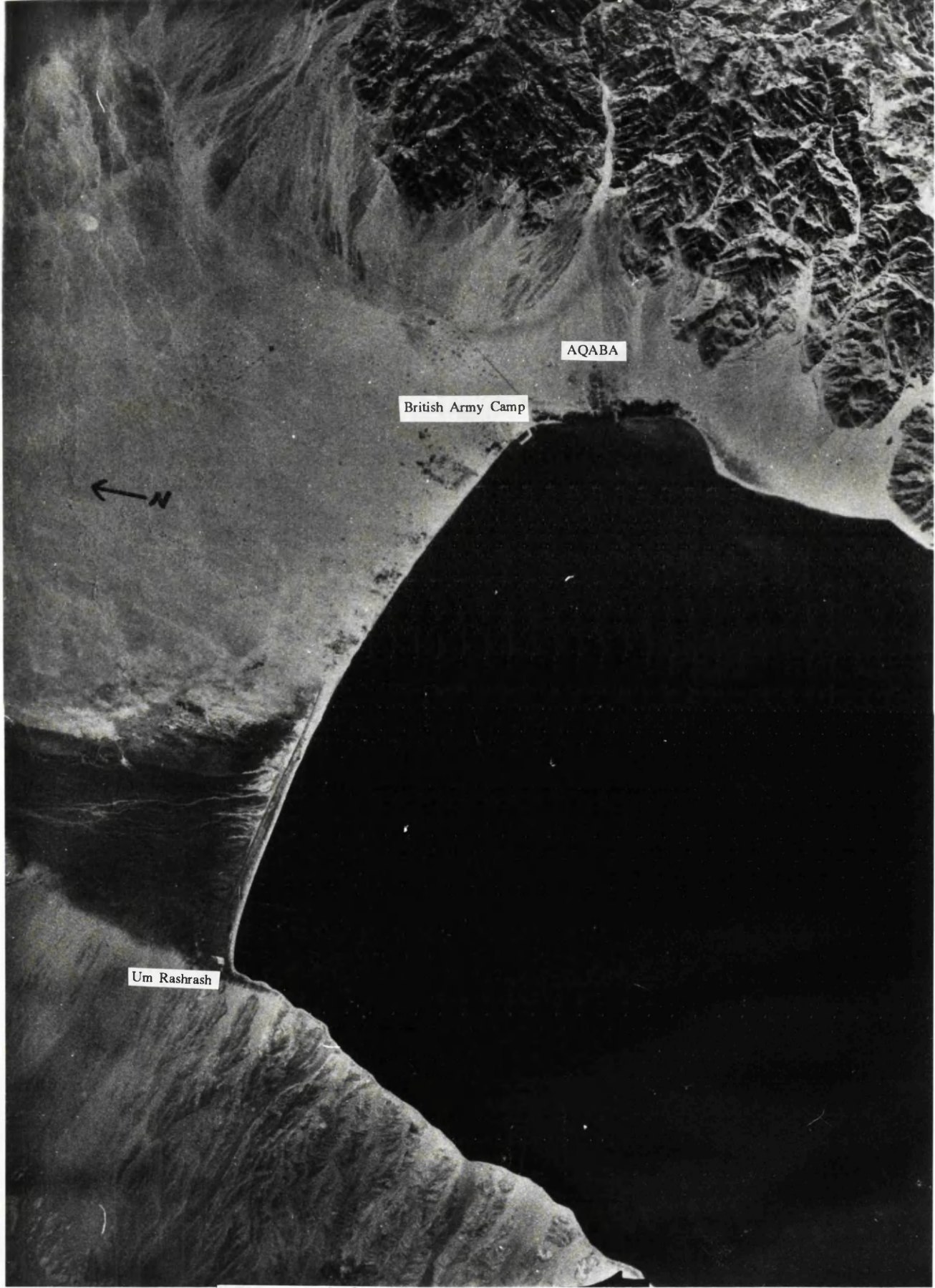
local advice. Occasionally local leaders were asked to provide the labour for various types of construction work without prior consultation. It was the 1942 German offensive in the Western Desert which brought about the first development plans for Aqaba in this century. The German army heading towards Egypt was regarded as a threat to the Suez Canal. The Middle Eastern British headquarters in Cairo and the Amman headquarters saw Aqaba as an alternative bridgehead for the route between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, and so a plan to improve the port was drawn up (3). In early 1942, construction materials were brought to Aqaba from Amman, construction of a new lighter basin (Victoria) began north of the village and a temporary wharf (Imperia) was built to the south (see photograph 2). The port handling capacity increased from 100 tons per day in 1941 to 600 tons per day by the end of 1943 (Naval Intelligence Division, 1943), though these figures are low and fairly insignificant. At the same time, improvements to the road between Aqaba and Amman had begun, the Hijaz railway in Maan was extended 40 km. south to Naqb-A-Shtor, and work began on an asphalt road linking Naqb-A-Shtor with Aqaba, 80 km to the south. However, after the Allied victory in El Alamein in October 1942 the British abandoned the plan. Kirkbride wrote later to the foreign office in London:

"The possible need for this alternative way of communication for British troops disappeared, all outstanding work was stopped and movable material was taken elsewhere"(4).

On the 22nd of March 1946 the independent Kingdom of Jordan was proclaimed following the signing of an Anglo-Jordanian agreement. The terms of the treaty did much to keep Britain in a powerful position and place restrictions upon Jordan. It was not an agreement between equals in that Britain maintained much influence and control over economic and political activity in Jordan. Kirkbride became the British ambassador in Amman, and owing to his role as Abdullah's adviser and personal relationship with the King, became a strong and influential figure in Jordanian politics (Shwardran, 1959). The influential position of the British may be seen partly from a secret report sent by the British Embassy's Political Department in Amman to London at the beginning of 1949:

"...We are in the position of being able and willing to control Abdullah's action..."(5).





Photograph 2 The Area of Aqaba and Um-Rashrash (September 1945)

Britain kept control of Aqaba until November 1946 when the port was transferred to the Jordanian government in Amman, together with a £50,000 loan to improve the port facilities, while still maintaining control over the northern jetty for its naval use. Although the Jordanians were keen to take control of the port (6), there is no evidence of any plans or efforts to develop or build new projects in Aqaba during this period. In the mid-1940s Abdullah did not have much interest in developing Aqaba and its port, as may be illustrated by the following British report on the situation at the end of 1946:

"...No pilot facilities available..., it is pretty unsafe in a northerly wind... it seems that it is still very far from being a picnic port" (7).

This attitude may be partly explained by the fact that during the 1940s Jordan, with a total population of less than half a million, had a very modest volume of foreign trade which was easily handled by the Palestinian ports of Haifa and Jaffa. Most of the Jordanian road and rail network was in an east-west direction, meshed with the routes in the British mandated territory of Palestine (Beheiry 1969). An additional explanation by Nahaman (1942) and Kirkbride (1956) was that the King was 'a man of the desert' and maritime routes did not appeal to him as an important issue. The Maan-Aqaba region was regarded as the way to Mecca rather than an important outlet to the sea. Kirkbride's report of 1947 describes the lack of Jordanian interest in Aqaba:

"Since the port and its installation were taken by the Transjordanian government from the army it has never been worked or used. In other words, no ship has never called there and no merchandise or passengers have been embarked or discharged" (8).

Minimal Jordanian trade to the south through the Red Sea, and the availability of the Mediterranean ports, meant there was little interest in developing Aqaba. Moreover, Kirkbride's report held out little hope for speedy port development:

"The quantities of commodities are too small to justify separate purchases for Transjordan or arrangement for their transportation via Aqaba... The chances of the port being of any use in the future are not bright unless a new scheme will arise"(9).

The British were in fact the only ones to use Aqaba's port. Mainly naval and supply ships called at the port, providing the army with the necessary resources. Eventually the road from Maan was swept away by various floods and never

repaired, and the Hijaz railway became unusable due to lack of maintenance.

The outbreak of the 1948 war with Israel emphasised the neglect of Aqaba by the Jordanian government. The King was very keen to conquer Jerusalem and the Jordan River's west bank. However, he refused to send his army to defend Aqaba (section 2.4). It is important to note that in the 1940s, under British and Jordanian rule, any initiatives regarding the development of Aqaba were confined to the port, in order to serve central government purposes.

### **3.4 Aqaba Between 1948 and 1952**

Following the 1948 war with Israel, Jordan was cut off from its historical ports in Jaffa and Haifa, and Aqaba became its sole direct exit to an international water. Jordan's external trade routes had to be reorganised in the hitherto little-used north-south direction and all goods other than those from or for neighbouring countries had to travel either south through Aqaba or north via Beirut.

The journey through Syria and Lebanon was by rail or an inadequate road. Jordanian traffic agreements with Syria and Lebanon required that all imports unloaded at Beirut in transit to Jordan be carried by rail, with the exception of a few designated commodities such as petroleum products. The rail service was limited to 120,000 tons per year each way, and served both Jordan and Syria until the development of ports at Latakia and Tartus. Transport charges had to be paid in each country in local currency, and at least three customs controls involving much bureaucratic paperwork had to be negotiated. Goods had to be carried in Lebanese or Syrian wagons and the service suffered from frequent technical difficulties. Thus it is no surprise that only few months after he fought against Israel, King Abdullah was engaged in negotiations with the Israeli government to renew Jordan's use of the ports of Jaffa and Haifa (Maariv, 22.12.1949).

The 440 km road link from Beirut to Jerusalem - the nearest main economic centre to Amman - was likewise inadequate. The Beirut-Damascus road climbs to 1600 metres over the Lebanon Mountains, and in winter it sometimes became blocked by snow. From Damascus south to the Jordanian border portions of the road were in such poor condition that they needed to be rebuilt completely to withstand heavy truck traffic. As Syria derived no financial gain at this time from the transit traffic

moving by road, it was unlikely that she would rebuild the road in near future, especially as much of her own internal transportation network desperately needed attention. Part of the direct road from the Syrian border to Amman was unpaved, and the all-weather surface road via Mafraq was almost twice as long. From Amman the road descended 1000 metres to the Jordan Rift 300 metres below sea level, then a steep road climbed to Jerusalem 750 metres above sea level. Furthermore, frequent congestion in Beirut's port caused delays of several days in unloading vessels and Syrian customs posts were closed to trucks at night. Travel time between Beirut and Jordan was 2-3 days, much longer than might be expected when one considers the distance involved. The cost of transportation raised the prices of many essential imported goods and created a burden on the Jordanian economy (IBRD, 1957).

The greatest drawback of the Syria-Lebanon route from a Jordanian perspective was its unreliability. The trade and economy of Jordan essentially depended on its neighbours' goodwill, and that was not always forthcoming. The Kingdom often found itself at the mercy of political events over which it had little control. Syria in particular exploited its pivotal location for political ends and frequently disrupted or impeded Jordanian as well as Iraqi and Lebanese in-transit trade (Shimoni, 1977).

In Aqaba, however, there was no deep harbour where ships could anchor. They had to stand out in the bay and be unloaded or loaded by lighter. Moreover, the journey from Aqaba to Amman was extremely hazardous (Dearden, 1958). The village in 1949, populated with about 500 people, was small and neglected, still looking very much as it did in the early 1940s. A visitor in 1949 described what he saw:

"There is noting really in Aqaba. No stores, no civilization-just another "place". When one reads of Aqaba in the papers, one imagines a town with buildings, army installations, machinery, activity, and so on. But actually seeing it is a let-down. Nothing! only a strategic position for whatever it may prove to be worth in the future" (Bloomfield, 1957:4).

By 1950, Randall (1968) described Aqaba as consisting of a handful of mud brick houses, scattered among palm groves.

It would not have been unnatural to expect that the Jordanian government would be interested in developing the town and its port in order to achieve adequate facilities independent of other countries. Yet until 1952 no Jordanian policy regarding Aqaba existed, and no plans were made to improve the port's facilities. However, to keep Jordanian problems in perspective it should be noted that at this time her economy and trade were small by any standards. Jordan's total imports between 1948 and 1952 were 380,000 tons and exports were 25,000 tons. Most of the exports were agricultural products sold to nearby Arab countries which did not require maritime shipment. For example, in 1950-52, 96% of total exports went to Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. Jordan's imports from neighbouring Arab countries were between 35-40%, traffic easily handled by Beirut's port (Jordan, 1952).

Although Jordan was now an independent country it appeared that until 1952 the only people concerned with initiating development in Aqaba were the British. They regarded it as a vital port connecting Jordan to the outside world and serving Britain's interest in the area. It was hoped that Aqaba would develop into an active port through extended facilities and good road connections with Amman, and that Jordan's dependence on Lebanon for the transit of goods could be eliminated (10). At that time Jordan's financial resources were limited and to initiate such a project the British had to use their own resources. The British embassy in Amman was considering Britain's interests as well as foreseeing future prospects for Jordan when they wrote:

"The development of the road and of the port would, we consider, make it possible for the Jordanian government to develop the fisheries in Aqaba and would also prove to be of great validity if, as we hope, markets for Jordanian phosphates begin to open in Persia, India and other Eastern countries" (11).

Other British bodies also saw the strategic advantages. The British Middle Eastern office in Cairo supported the plan and suggested that an all weather road between Amman and Aqaba is undoubtedly needed for British strategic requirements in the Middle East (12).

An interest-free loan of £250,000 was approved in London to improve port facilities and roads. However, no use was made of the loan in Aqaba, and there is no evidence of any attempts to build or improve facilities or roads in the town.

Phillips (1954) in his research on Jordan does not mention any projects or new enterprises in Aqaba and its region at the beginning of the 1950s. Yet he considered the town as a potential port for the future.

Jordan's inactive policy may be explained mainly by two reasons. The first was mentioned previously: King Abdullah was a 'man of the desert' (Nahaman, 1942; Kirkbride, 1956) and was unaware of the potential importance of Aqaba, especially as Beirut fulfilled Jordan's needs sufficiently. The second lies in the political situation in Jordan during this period. In 1949 and 1950 the king was deeply involved with his plan to annex the West Bank. This plan, together with the discovery that the king was conducting direct negotiations with Israel for a peace treaty (Zak, 1985), created a harsh political reaction in Jordan and outside. This led to problems with the Jordanian parliament while the unstable government was shaken by frequent changes of prime minister. This turbulent period kept Abdullah busy without much spare time for peripheral issues. On July 20, 1951, two months after he dissolved parliament, King Abdullah was assassinated. Prince Talal was crowned as his successor, but he was mentally ill. No further developments or new schemes were introduced at this time, when the main issue in Jordan was Talal's ability to hold the throne. He was eventually removed in 1952.

1951/1952 was the end of the paternal, almost sheikh-like rule of Abdullah, a reign characterised mainly by its preoccupation with political issues, and by a limited administrative system centred on Amman. Indeed, scarcely any development activity may be seen in the Jordanian periphery during this period (Kartin, 1987).

### **3.5 Initial development, 1953-1958**

Centralist top-down planning has characterised Jordanian development policy since the early 1950s. The Jordan Development Board (JDB) established by the king and the government in Amman at the beginning of 1953 was the chief decision-making body, with wide economic powers. It was responsible for formulating and implementing the various plans, as well as coordinating government involvement with international agencies and private groups (Harris, 1958). In mid-1953 the JDB set up the Aqaba Port Trust (APT) to be responsible for drawing up plans and initiating development in Aqaba port. The establishment of the APT may serve to illustrate the government's neglect of the village and may further emphasise the

government policy of concentrating effort on projects that would mainly be of benefit to the centre.

The APT launched a study to investigate Jordan's expected needs regarding the port of Aqaba over the next decade. The first plan was drawn up towards the end of 1953 (APT, 1953). It suggested the construction of deep-water berths for bulk phosphate and general cargo, each with a handling capacity of 100,000 tons per year, scheduled for completion in 1955. In the meantime the APT decided to use the old wartime facilities (APA, 1969). The southern area of the village and the Imperia Wharf were selected as the site for the port. This was preferable to the site close to the military basin (Victoria Wharf), because here deep water lay closer to the shore and more building land was available for port installations (section 2.5). The JDB also decided to finance the construction of a 3 km asphalt road from the military base north of the village to the port site.

Increased imports and the beginning of phosphate exports through Aqaba raised the port traffic from 12 ships in 1952 to 112 in 1953 and 173 in 1954. Yet facilities in the port were still meagre, and ships were handled by lighter further out to sea. The road link to Aqaba from Maan was still inadequate and the Hejaz railway service was slow and infrequent (Harris, 1958). It appeared that although optimistic plans were being drawn up in Amman, they were far from being implemented in Aqaba. The port was functioning badly due to poor management and a shortage of equipment and finance. A British report of 1953 criticised the operation of the port, accusing management of being unprofessional (13). A later report from 1955 suggested that there had not been much progress in improving efficiency:

"When full shiploads are unloaded, storage areas and transport links are quite inadequate... The present method of loading phosphate is extremely inefficient and in urgent need of improvement" (IBRD, 1957:278).

It should be noted that Jordan was heavily dependent during these years on foreign financial aid, mainly British. Loans from Britain contributed between 46% and 61% of total Jordanian government expenditure in the years 1952-1956 (IBRD, 1957). Reports such as those above, together with other political developments during this period (to be discussed later in the chapter), led to cuts in these grants. For example, towards the end of 1953 political disagreement between British and Jordanian officials led to Britain's withdrawal of a £250,000 grant intended for

building a new berth in the port and constructing a new road from Aqaba to the Dead Sea (14).

Development work continued slowly and by the end of 1954 the completion of the warehouse and a 3 km. asphalt road to the lighterage wharf were reported. By mid-1956 four oil tanks and a few administrative buildings had been constructed. However, ships were still being handled by lighter out to sea. (This may be seen in photograph 3. Local residents also confirm this fact. Pers. comm.).

The 1953 plan was not completed until 1959. The unprofessional management of the port together with slow implementation of the development plans in these years, however, should not be regarded only in the context of Aqaba's dependence on Amman, but also in the light of the important role of the core in the periphery's initial stages of development (Myrdal, 1957; Friedmann, 1966). Yet in these years the Jordanian core - Amman - was also badly affected by the harsh realities of Middle Eastern politics and was unable to sink either capital or innovation into the periphery. It was within the wider context of the Middle Eastern political environment that Jordanian efforts and limited resources were deployed during the 1950s.

A vital influence on the Middle East and Jordan in the 1950s was the emergence of Gamel Abdul Nasser as president of Egypt in 1952. Through his speeches and writings he spread the spirit of Arab Nationalism and Pan-Arabism. His ideas contributed to the outbreak of demonstrations and riots around the Middle East. This was especially felt in Jordan after 1954. The political unrest stimulated by the increasing activity of the Moslem Brotherhood and the communist parties found Jordan, with its poverty-stricken Palestinian refugees (especially those in the refugee camps), easy ground in which to recruit members. A major part of the Palestinian activity was against Israel, resulting in severe Israeli border raids against West Bank villages. The Arab Legion's attempts to avoid clashes with Israel and to prevent Palestinians from acting against Israel were regarded as an unwillingness and inability to protect the West Bank. This was another cause of unrest and bitterness against the Hashemite regime.



In 1955 the Baghdad Pact (Ziring, 1984) saw Jordan become the last battleground between Britain, Turkey and Iraq (still under Hashemite rule) on one side, and Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia on the other. The latter were adamantly opposed to the treaty which they saw as merely retying them to their former colonial masters and undermining Arab Nationalism (Alden, 1980). Each group put considerable pressure on Jordan to join its side. King Hussein's willingness to accept the terms of the Pact was bitterly opposed in the streets all over the country. Moreover, the British troops stationed in Jordan under the 1948 Anglo-Jordanian treaty and the British commanders of the Arab Legion were regarded as anti-Arab Nationalism and Pan-Arabism. This further seriously undermined the King's position. As part of the effort to reduce tension, in March 1956 Hussein dismissed General Glubb Pasha and the other British officers. He replaced them with Arab officers and changed the name of the Arab Legion to the Jordanian Arab Army (Vatikiotis, 1967).

The tense political atmosphere and instability of the government increased to a confusion now bordering on anarchy. Hussein was deeply involved in trying to stabilise the situation. At this time development plans around the country were neglected or frozen. A British report in March 1956 noted that poor work performance together with a severe shortage of construction materials resulted in slow progress and long delays in implementing the APT's 1953 plan (15).

Towards the end of 1956 political tensions mounted in the Middle East. King Hussein was busy manoeuvring between Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria, who were all trying to pull him into their orbit away from the Hashemite-Iraqi connection. President Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal, setting off an international crisis which culminated in the Israeli-British-French invasion of Egypt in October 29, 1956.

In this already tense atmosphere Hussein dissolved his parliament and called for new elections on October 21, 1956. The National Socialist Party, which opposed most of the king's policies, won the election and their prime minister, Sulayman Nabulsi, challenged the basic existence of the state. He claimed that Jordan could not live forever as an independent country and should be linked fundamentally to another Arab state. On October 25 Hussein signed a military agreement with Egypt and Syria which placed the armed forces of the three countries under Egyptian

command. The British invasion of Egypt mounted pressure on the king to cut relations with Britain. He initiated negotiations to remove British troops from Jordan, which was completed in July 1957 with the evacuation of Mafraq and Aqaba. Tension continued to build up. In early April 1957 an attempted coup d'état against Hussein was suppressed by the king and his army.

The Suez campaign and the closure of the Suez Canal had a direct effect on Aqaba. It led to a precipitous decline in port traffic; 219 ships called at Aqaba during 1955 and 132 called during the first ten months of 1956. But only 8 ships called in the last two months of 1956 and only 95 docked there in 1957. Britain froze all development work in Aqaba during the war months and put its forces in the area on alert, thus paralysing all construction work in the town. The APT did not initiate any further development during these months, but the Jordanian government did put out a contract to international tender for continuation of the port master plan.

Jordan's efforts to receive aid from other countries apart from Britain is only one sign of declining British influence in the region in these years, against the growing American and Soviet influence. This marked the end of almost 200 years of British policy 'east of Suez' intended to maintain a free route for communication with the East (Fielden, 1978). The situation further contributed to the crisis atmosphere. King Hussein established a relationship with the U.S. which he hoped would be a source of funding and security to replace the British subsidy, especially in the light of the Eisenhower Doctrine. The new relationship was first articulated during the 1957 Jordanian cabinet crisis, concomitant with demonstrations and riots in the country's major towns that continued to threaten the throne. The U.S. declared that:

"The independence and integrity of Jordan were vital to U.S. national interests and that it would assist Jordan if necessary..." (Shimoni, 1977).

The creation of the United Arab Republic (UAR) in February 1958 by Syria and Egypt was regarded by many of Jordan's Palestinian citizens as a new form of Arab unity which would help them regain their lost land. They put pressure on the king to join the union. However, Hussein was wary of this new form of Arab unity and countered the UAR by concluding a federation agreement with the Hashemites of Iraq.

The Jordan-Iraq treaty was broken off following the anti-Hashemite revolution in Iraq on July 14, 1958 and the assassination of the Iraqi king by General Abdel Karim Qasim, accompanied by the killing of Jordan's leading politicians in Baghdad by Qasim's forces. Jordan was now isolated among its Arab neighbours who were meddling in its political life. Hussein faced a severe threat and consequently Jordan complained to the U.N. (Shimoni, 1977) asking for American and British aid. The U.S.A. flew in supplies and Britain sent troops to Aqaba, which never saw action but were nevertheless a stabilising force. The king declared martial law and once again called on his loyal army to control the streets. After a few months this crisis passed and the British troops left.

The period following the Suez campaign continued to affect Aqaba. Britain, still officially offended by the dismissal of Glubb Pasha, now with no bases in Jordan and with her influence and interests in the region sharply declining, no longer regarded Aqaba as vital. She therefore cut much of her financial aid and was unenthusiastic about taking part in the development of the port. This may be illustrated partly by the following correspondence:

"The Jordanians think that we (Britain) are deliberately delaying the development of Aqaba port" (16).

Furthermore, due to the high tension, British companies refused to work in Jordan, as may be seen from the following letter addressed to the British Foreign Office:

"It will be unwise in view of the political situation in Jordan to accept the Jordanian government's invitation to tender for the construction of a mineral exports berth at Aqaba's port" (17).

It should also be remembered that during this period Beirut's port continued to have many economic advantage over Aqaba, and in the late 1950s it was expected that it would continue to handle about half of the total Jordanian trade (IBRD, 1957). Until the late 1950s, Jordan's established political system, lack of financial resources and poor plan implementation affected all other areas of life. Economic development around the country was extremely limited and Aqaba in the remote periphery was no exception.

### 3.6 External and Internal Politics, 1960-1967

The post-1958 period was characterised by a relatively calm atmosphere in Jordanian political life. During the next few years King Hussein achieved much greater control than he had previously enjoyed. In the early 1960s Jordan embraced a new phase of strong economic and urban development, much of which was concentrated around the Amman region. The aim was to consolidate the centre and develop the Jordan Valley as the capital's rural hinterland. The policy intentionally neglected peripheral development, especially before 1967 (Kartin, 1987; IBRD, 1983).

To achieve its development aims it was important to ensure free and reliable external trade routes to and from Jordan, linking up with its main sources of supply in the West. At the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s Jordan's dependence on the northern route placed her in a vulnerable position. She was frequently prevented from using this route, often due to external political circumstances in which Jordan was not directly involved. Until 1963 Syria experienced frequent military coups d'etat and chronic political instability with the result that its borders were briefly closed on several occasions and travel curtailed for reasons of internal security. The 1958 Lebanese Civil War frequently paralysed the port of Beirut during 1958 and 1959. In addition, disputes between Syria and Lebanon over the issue of Syrian exiles - some of whom plotted against the Syrian regime from the sanctuary of Beirut - soured Syrian-Lebanese relations and occasionally resulted in boundary closures. Furthermore, during the 1960s Jordan had frequent ideological disputes with Syria over most major regional issues, such as the Arab 'Cold War' between the pro-Western monarchies and the radical pro-Eastern bloc to which Syria belonged, or the Jordanian government's ban on the PLO in summer 1966 following heavy Israeli reprisals. These disputes resulted in several border clashes between the two countries, leading to sealed borders and severe disruption of traffic. This led to the stockpiling of essential goods in Beirut during 1958 and 1959, causing serious economic repercussions in Jordan. Eventually the goods were reloaded onto ships in Beirut and sent via the Suez Canal to Aqaba (Radio Amman 5.9.58; 6.10.58; Radio Beirut 3.2.59; 3.3.59). Loading facilities at Aqaba were still insufficient, however, and the port operation was slow and inadequate. Traffic increased from 305 ships in 1958 handling 410,217 tons to 370 ships carrying 590,306 tons in 1959 and 407 ships with

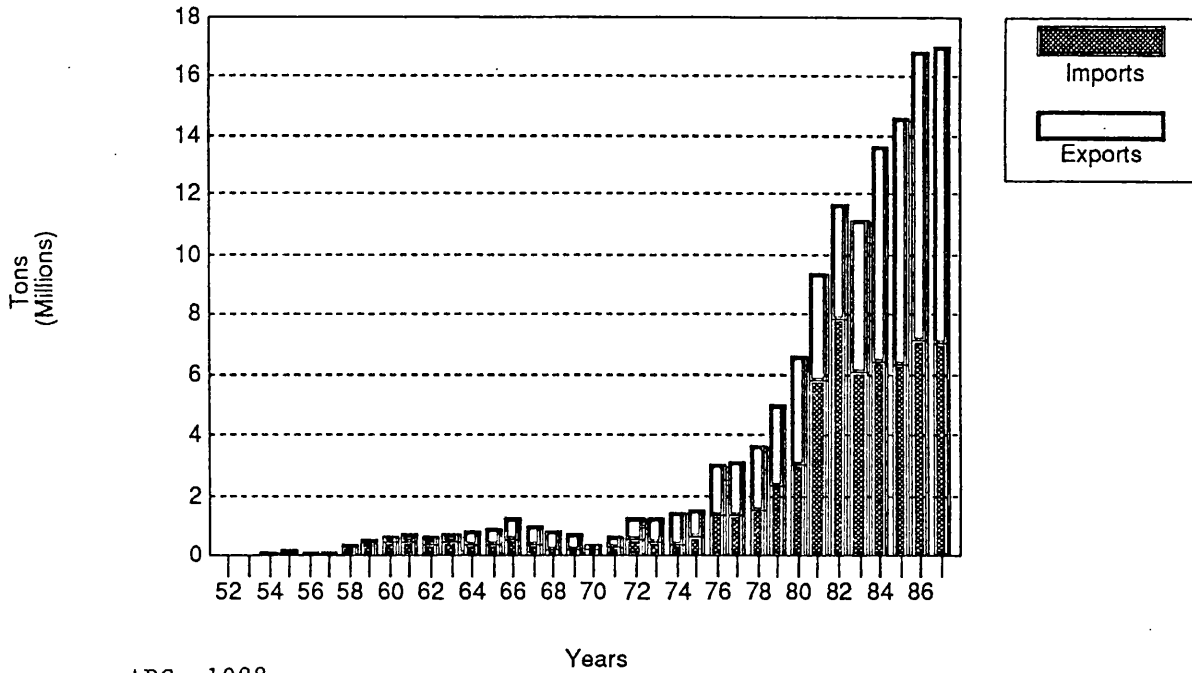
684,920 tons in 1960. This created a need to improve port operations (figure 3.1, 3.2).

In order to provide Jordan with a reliable external trade route the JDB decided in February 1959 to restructure the APT under a new name; the Aqaba Port Authority (APA), and grant it massive financial support. Under this reorganisation the development of the port gained new momentum and by October 1959 the original plan (APT, 1953) was completed. The two deep docks went into operation, and an electricity station and maintenance workshop were built. In 1961 a DM15m loan from West Germany enabled the JDB to finance the construction of another berth alongside the existing one and to its north, having a total length of 340 metres and the ability to handle three ships simultaneously. British grants enabled improvement work on the road from Amman to Aqaba port. Both projects were completed in mid-1964 (JDB, 1966).

The expansion of the port with the accompanying employment opportunities attracted new migrants to Aqaba, increasing the town's population from 3,600 in 1958 to 8,908 in 1961 and 13,500 in 1967 (figure 3.3). Sufficient information is not available as to how many of the new settlers were Palestinians or local nomadic Bedouin encouraged to settle in urban areas as part of a wider government programme. However, as the Minister of Local Government decided to appoint the local mayor in 1966 (regardless of the municipal elections), it appears that at this time Palestinians formed the majority of Aqaba's population. During this period Aqaba was not equipped to accommodate so many people. A lack of housing forced many immigrants to seek initial shelter in shacks and tents. Topography restricted the built-up area to a narrow strip less than one km wide across the steeply-inclined surface of the alluvial piedmont. Although expansion was possible on unlimited flat lands stretching northwards over the wide bottom of Wadi Arava, frequent sand blizzards and dust storms funnelling through the thalweg of the wadi rendered expansion undesirable in this direction. However, a new housing district was built by the new migrants over a one and a half km area north of the existing town. A limited water supply was another handicap the town now had to face. The little oasis which formerly had satisfied the needs of the original settlement produced only a negligible fraction of the growing town's demands and was a serious drawback for any industrialisation or agricultural development plans. To

Figure, 3.1

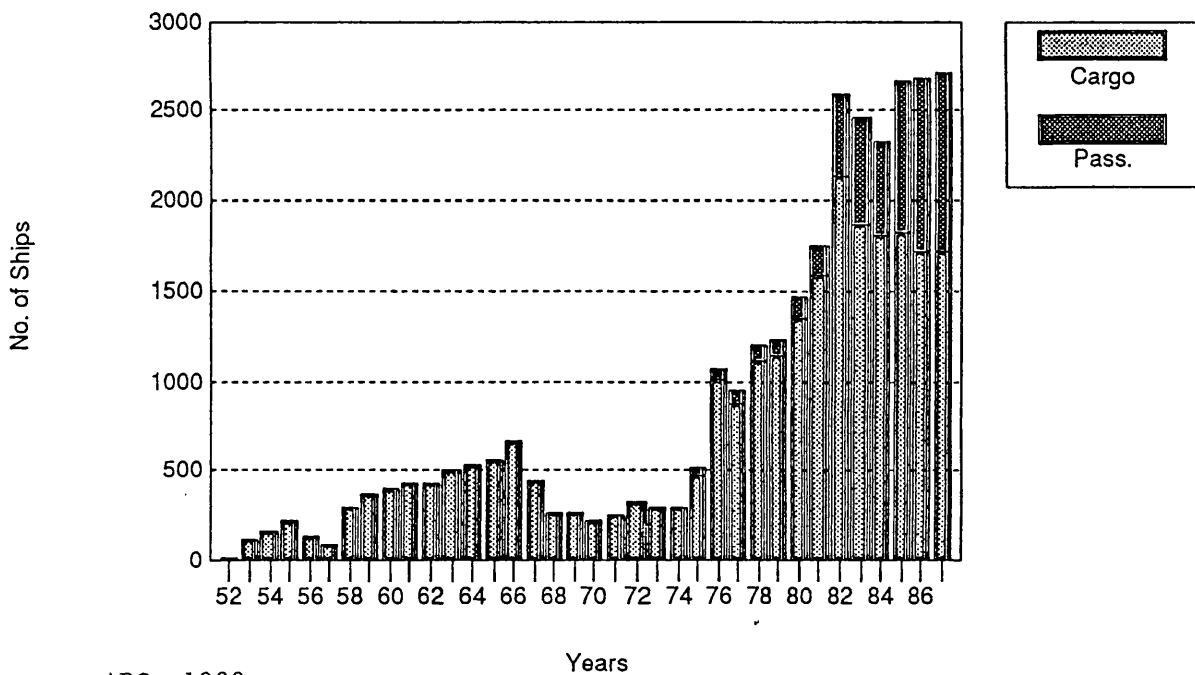
### Aqaba Port Traffic (Tons) 1952-1987



Source, APC, 1988

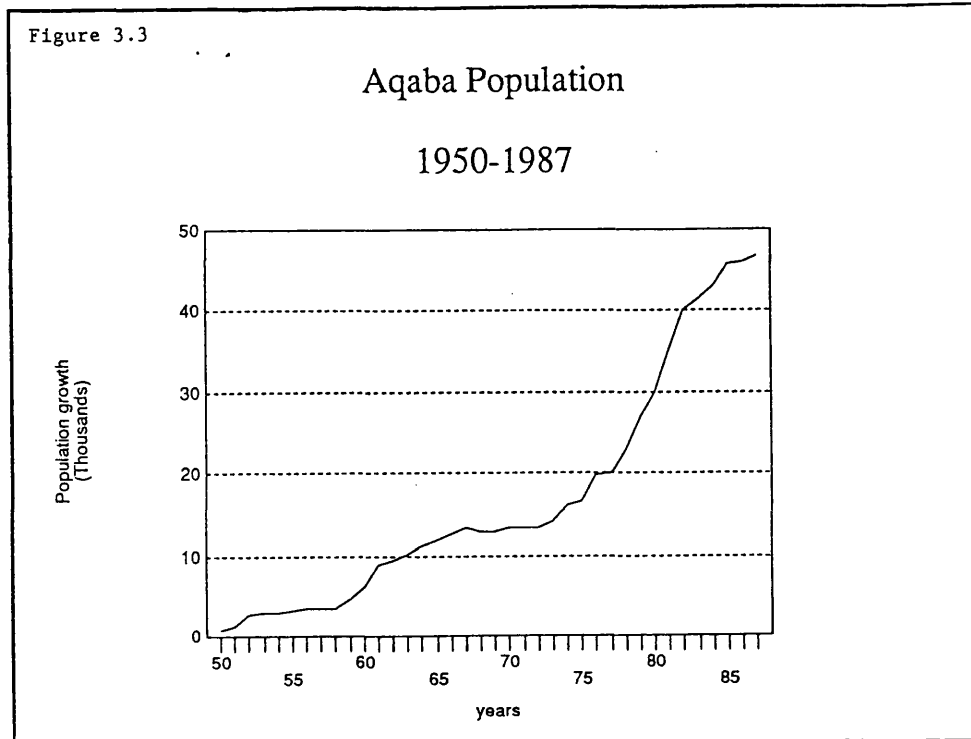
Figure, 3.2

### Aqaba Port Traffic (Ships) 1952-1987



Source, APC, 1988

solve the problem a new pipeline was laid, bringing water from natural springs 30-50 km north-east of Aqaba.



Source, for 1950-51 Estimation by local population (pers. comm.)  
1952 UNRWA, 1951-1969  
1953-60 Estimation by Aqaba municipal officials (pers. comm.)  
1967-87 Jordan, Department of Statistics, various years.

The late growth of Aqaba increased the need for expanding local services and civic organisation. The local council, built upon the traditional tribal and family structure and led by sheiks, was no longer sufficient for controlling the town. In the growing vacuum in local government it was only natural to expect that the APA with its financial resources and as the highest and most powerful local authority would increase its participation in local life. It was feared that this would create a burden on the APA's activity and would slow down work and future plans for the port's development (JDB, 1963).

In order to release the APA from greater involvement in the town's life and to enable it to concentrate on development of the port, the Jordanian government established the Aqaba Town Planning Committee (ATPC) in October 1960. Under special legislation the ATPC was granted all the rights of a municipal council. It became responsible for the planning and government of the town of Aqaba (Jordan, 1960). Furthermore, the government granted the ATPC a wide range of powers:

"In addition to the rights of a municipal council, by this law the ATPC are

given special powers regarding urban planning and implementation... in the case of Aqaba the right of a municipality to do urban planning is not merely theoretical as it is in the case of most of the other municipalities in the Southern Region" (Jordan, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1976:242).

In fact the establishment of the ATPC was another reflection of the top-down policy, giving the Jordanian government tight control over the region's development. It was expected that under the new committee the port's development would not be affected by any slowness in development of the town, and that the ATPC would meet the challenge facing it in an efficient manner. It was expected that it would:

"Expedite the construction of a modern city equipped with such public building and facilities that conform with the prosperity of the port and increasing scope of its activities" (Jordan, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1976:230).

The nomination of the APA director as ATPC chairman together with several senior managers of the APA created a dual system in which the ATPC duplicated the work of the APA to some extent. Even the local mayor was nominated as a member of the ATPC. He was subordinate to the committee and regarded only as a link between the municipal council and the ATPC. Actually the local council duties were limited to the collection of tax on buildings (this was also according to government regulations), the licensing of private enterprises and garbage collection (Jordan, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1976). Nevertheless, the ATPC was only to report to central authorities in Amman without direct contact with any other local or national bodies. Centralist power was emphasised by the following IBRD report (1965):

"It (ATPC) is responsible only to the government and not to the elected representatives, a fact which undermines the idea of decentralisation and handling local affairs at the local level" (IBRD, 1965:32).

### **3.7 General Development between 1962 and 1967**

Toward the mid-1960s increasing amounts of foreign aid came flowing into Jordan, mainly from the U.S., the U.K. and West Germany, together with significant foreign aid from UNRWA for the Palestinian refugees, and remittances sent back home by Jordanians working abroad, mainly in the Gulf states. This enabled the Government to invest in development projects which resulted in a rapid growth in



civilian consumption - both public and private (Mazur, 1979; Nyrop, 1980). The Jordanian policy of using capital to invest in economic sectors which give a large and relatively fast rate of return enabled the country to enjoy rapid economic growth during the 1960s, with GNP per capita rising by an annual average of 5-7%. By 1966 the Jordanian GNP per capita exceeded that of all other Arab countries except Lebanon and the three richest Arab oil states (Kanovsky, 1976-77; Hugh and Roberts, 1979). This was reflected in rapid urban growth that was, however, concentrated on Amman and the surrounding area, which accommodated about 50% of the country's population (Abu-Lughod, 1984; Kartin 1987). In 1962 the first development plan was introduced by the JDB (1962) to lend direction and coherence. This plan, and its revised version in 1964 (JDB, 1963), continued to emphasise Aqaba's sole function as a 'transit port' designed to serve the Jordanian economy. The main thrust of the plan regarding Aqaba was the improvement and development of land and air communications to the port, and of the port itself;

"Adequate rail facilities will be required ultimately to move Jordan's bulky exports, particularly phosphate, to Aqaba... Roads, linking the potash site at Sapi with the port of Aqaba... Aqaba Airport is given third priority in this plan (after Amman and Jerusalem), because of the expected increase in internal traffic to Aqaba" (JDB, 1963:218-220).

It is important to remember that development plans were devised and implemented within a rigid framework. Hence the number of government initiatives not suggested in the various development plans was virtually nil. This does not mean, however, that any development plan was ever implemented entirely. These plans were another tool to control and determine development in the periphery. To encourage the use of the port, the JDB announced in 1963 reduced tariffs on each ton of phosphate exported to neighbouring countries via the port (APA, 1965). Towards the mid-1960s the APA was in a primary position in the region; apart from determining the pattern of development in Aqaba it dominated many of the services to the town:

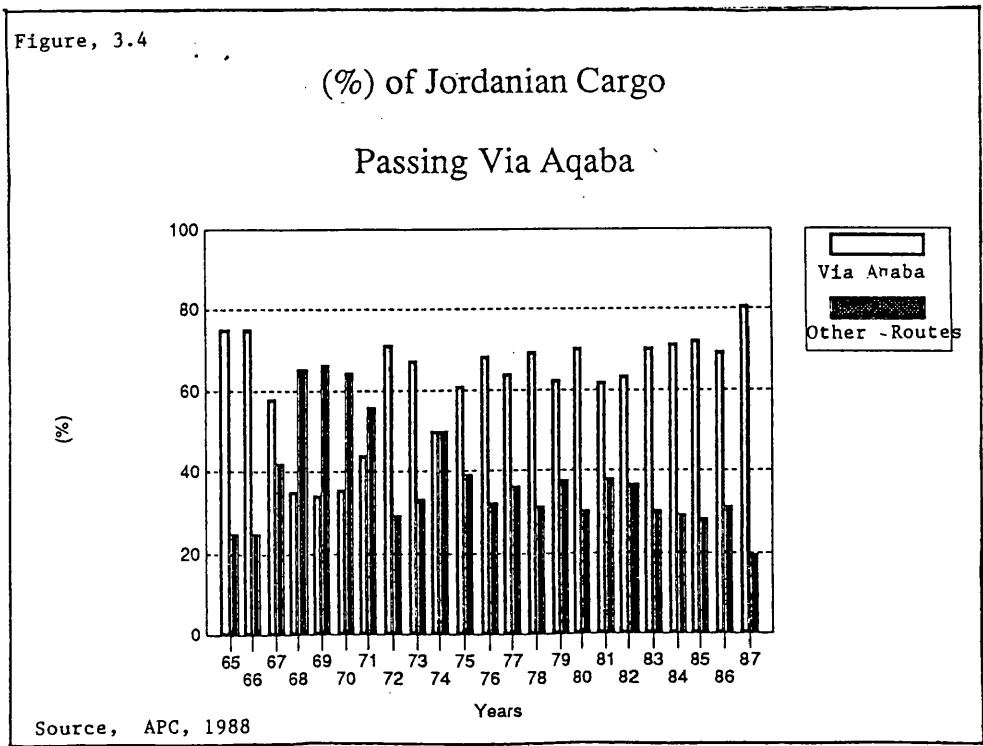
"The port now has a private electrical generation unit which provides Aqaba with electrical supply besides the illumination of the hotel and its annexes... The port is also equipped now with a whole fire unit, which, besides the task of port protection from fires renders service to the town of Aqaba against fire hazards... The Port Authority has lately developed wells and water reservoirs that supply the town itself with water" (APA, 1964:230).

Another notable feature of Aqaba during the 1960s was the complete absence of port industries or plans for them. Raw material imports, such as food, hides and

steel were sent directly to factories in Amman and the surrounding area to be processed. Thus, Aqaba had to depend entirely on Amman for the purchase of foodstuffs and other consumer goods (Hindle, 1966).

The government's establishment of oil refineries at Zarqa (19 km north-west of Amman) and its decision to use oil from a branch of the Trans-Arabian Pipeline, thereby reducing oil imports, together with a fall in world demand for phosphate in these years, resulted in a small reduction in the port's traffic from 731,730 tons in 1961 to 655,130 tons in 1962. However, in the following years the figures rose to 500 ships and 726,880 tons in 1963, and 666 ships and 1.25 million tons in 1966. An increase in exports was largely due to increased phosphate production which made up almost 90% of Jordan's total exports. By 1966 more than two thirds of Jordanian external trade passed through Aqaba, and Beirut lost some of its economic importance (figure 3.4).

Port expansion was limited due to the topography of the area. Immediately south of the new phosphate berth the prominent spur of Jebel-el Bureij extended right to the water's edge. The 7 km stretch of sea-shore between the border with Israel to the north and Saudi Arabia to the south left no space for further expansion. In 1965 Jordan re-established relations with the Saudis and as a consequence received 17 km of sea shore from former Saudi territory in exchange for some land in the south-eastern desert (Middle East Journal, 9.8.1965).



The new stretch of coastline that Jordan received from the Saudis has permitted large scale expansion and industrialisation of the port. It was earmarked by the JDB for the tourist industry and future recreational development. This decision suffered from a lack of proportion and narrow view of reality, especially in the light of the tourist industry in Aqaba in the mid 1960s. The total number of visitors to Aqaba in 1963 was 3,100; less than 1% of the total number of tourists to Jordan in that year. It should be noted that Jordan considered tourism as one of the important sectors in the future development of the state. The JDB expected to increase the total number of tourists visiting Jordan from 323,470 in 1963 to 827,280 in 1970. The IBRD report (1957) mentions Aqaba as a potential winter resort, although a few years later Sparrow (1961) refers to Aqaba only as an alternative cargo route to Beirut in his guide book to Jordan. In 1964 only one hotel in the town was suitable for tourist accommodation; travel between Amman and Aqaba was limited and no recreational facilities existed in the town for the tourist. A visitor to the town wrote:

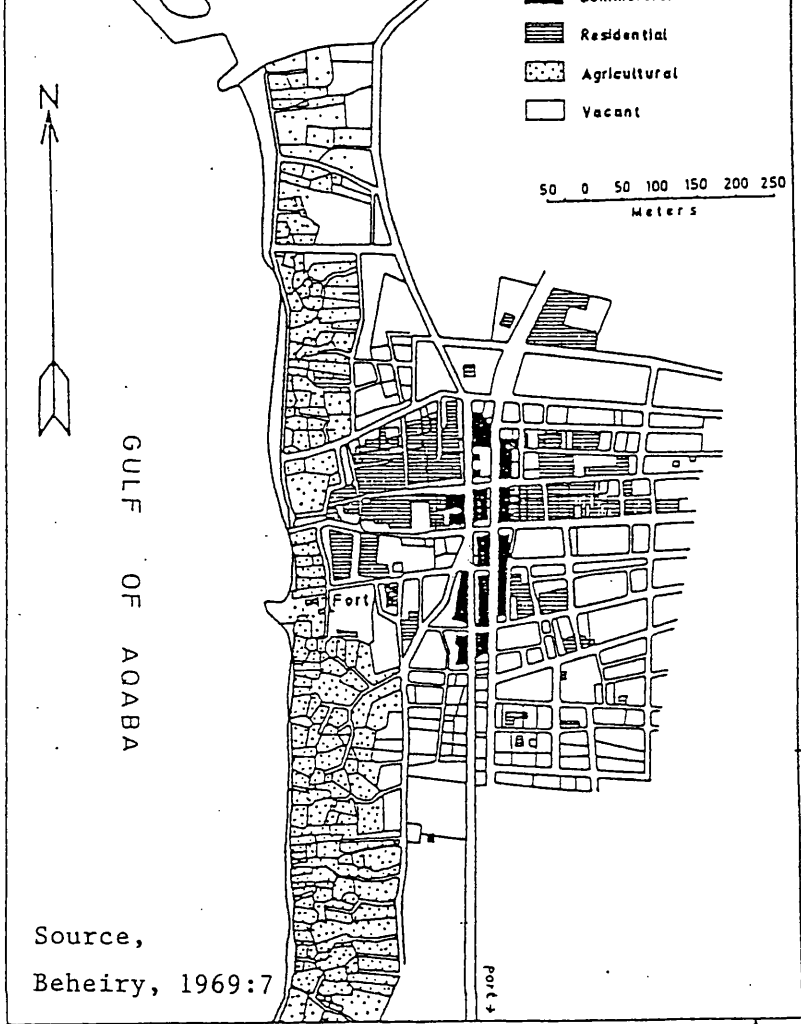
"I don't know what else there is to do in Aqaba except scoot around the new port in very fast motor launch..." (Ethel, 1965:62).

The 1964 Jordanian economic development plan, although suggesting a massive programme to promote and strengthen the tourist industry in Jordan, mainly concentrates on the holy places and other historical and archaeological sites. Aqaba is not even mentioned.

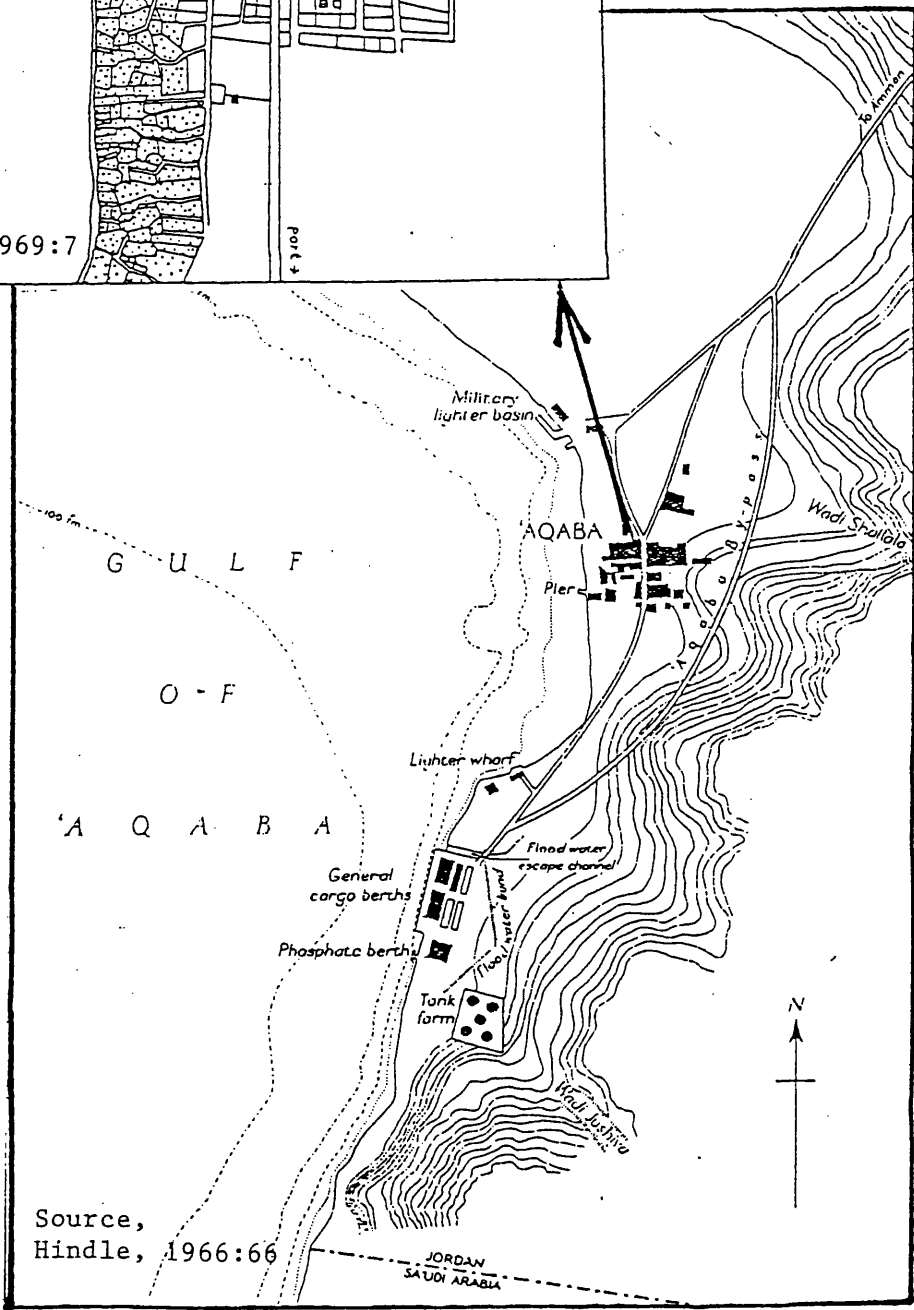
Yet towards the mid-1960s Aqaba began to take on the appearance of a town rather than the large village it had been during the 1950s. A commercial district was developed by Palestinian migrants. Along the road leading to the port they established small shops, businesses and two small hotels, alongside traditional coffee houses. It should be noted that unlike most traditional Jordanian towns, in which a mixture of shops and houses is a common feature, Aqaba displayed a well defined pattern of land use. The coastal strip accommodates the port, agriculture (18) and fishing, whereas commercial and residential districts lie further inland (figure 3.5).

Pre-1967 figures on the economic structure and employment distribution in Aqaba are not available due to a lack of statistical data. However, a former senior port manager estimated that in 1964 about half of the local labour was employed in the

Figure 3.3  
Aqaba, 1960



Source,  
Beheiry, 1969:7



Source,  
Hindle, 1966:66

port. He added:

"At the beginning of the 1960s many of the workers were employed on a temporary basis. When more than three or four ships called at the port people knew that labour would be needed and they came to look for work. Otherwise we would advertise the availability of work among the local fishermen and the men frequenting the local coffee houses" (19).

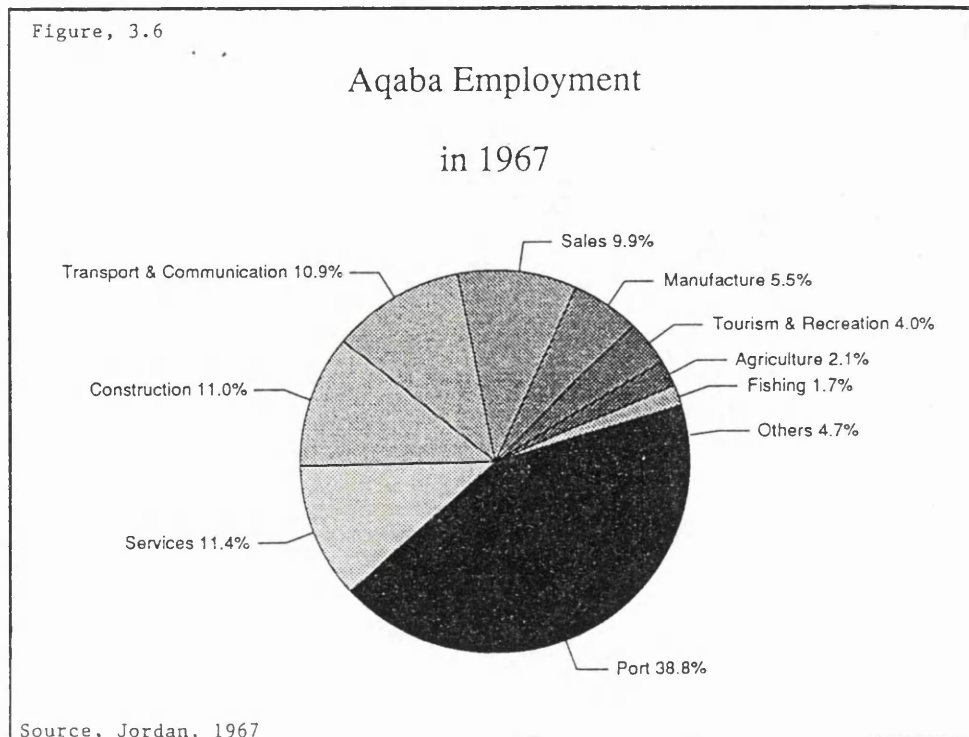
This assessment proved to be fairly accurate when the first employment distribution census in Aqaba was undertaken in April 1967:

Table 3.1 Employment Distribution in Aqaba, 1967  
(Jordan, 1967)

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Employees</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Port	1832	38.8
Services	554	11.4
Construction	533	11.0
Transport & Communication	528	10.9
Sales	480	9.9
Manufacture	264	5.5
Tourism & Recreation	195	4.0
Agriculture	100	2.1
Fishing	84	1.7
<u>Others</u>	<u>230</u>	<u>4.7</u>
Total	4820	100.

(Source: Jordan 1967).

Figure 3.6 Aqaba Employment in 1967



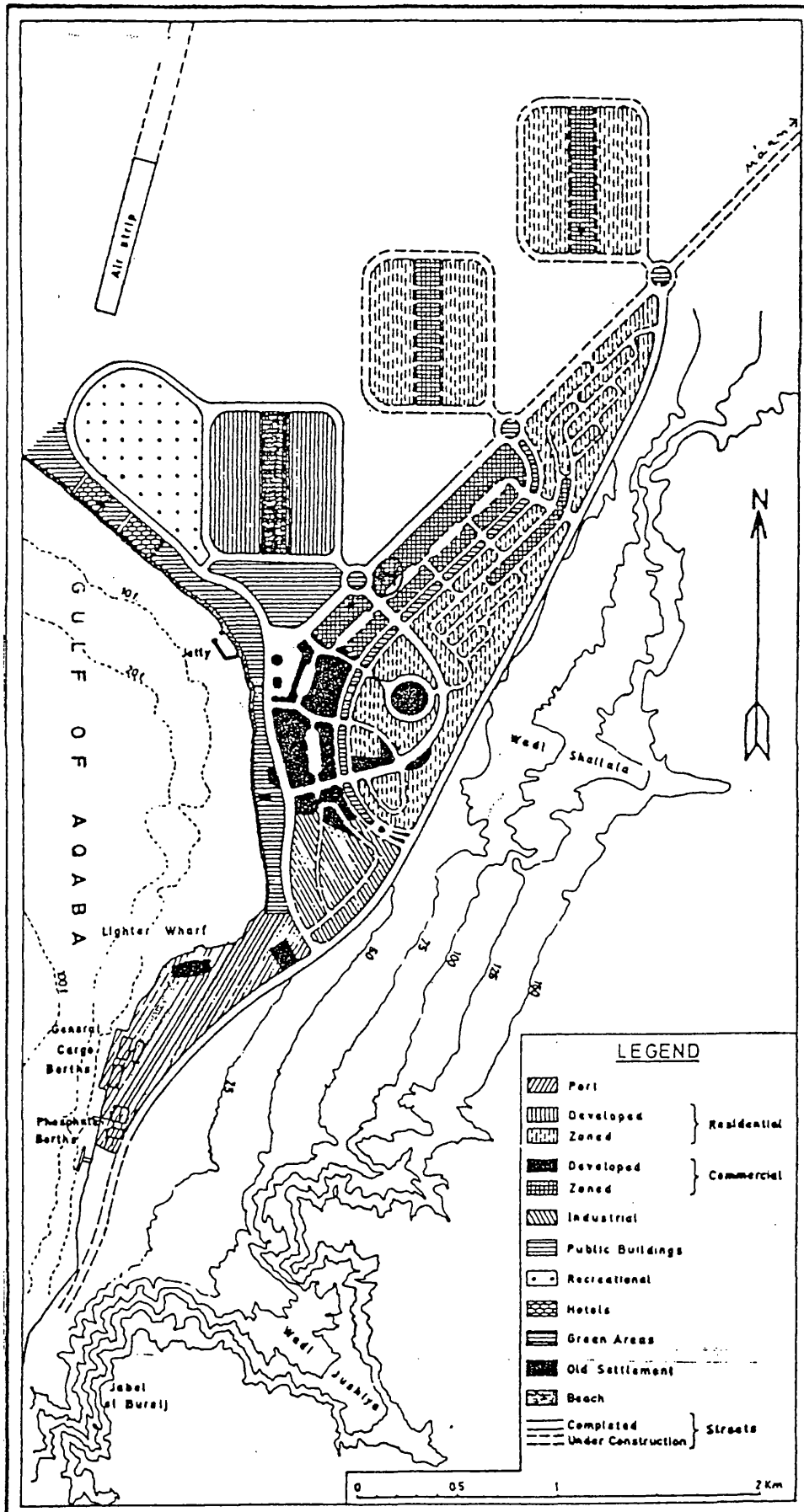
Port activities included freight handling, storage, management and customs. These dominated the economic activities of the town, followed by services which mushroomed in conjunction with the rapid growth of port functions, and more recently the beginning of the tourist industry. The comparatively high percentage of construction workers reflects urban expansion and the need to meet the growing demand for housing. Industry was still a minor field of employment because imports of consumer goods and raw materials were mainly sent direct to Amman and its region. Manufacturing in Aqaba consisted only of light handicrafts and minor processing of foodstuffs, instrument repair and workshops. The traditional fishing and boat shipyard businesses that had earlier constituted the economic base of the village now formed a minor part of the town's economy because they had been overshadowed by the introduction of the new functions.

During years the town's development as the "hinterland" of the port continued apace with the construction of new housing units and their distribution only to the port's employees by a joint committee of the JDB-APA-ATPC. These houses, together with those of the army and other officials, were the only ones to be connected to electricity, sewage systems and running water. About 70% of Aqaba's houses still had no access to these services in 1966 (Jordan, 1966).

In May 1967 the Jordanian Ministry of Interior for Municipal and Rural Affairs (1967A) presented the first development plan for Aqaba (figure 3.7). Compared with the existing situation in Aqaba the new plan seemed very ambitious. It defined clear patterns of land use for different sectors. Urban expansion was to be north of the town in three main neighbourhoods, each with its own commercial centre. The north and north-east were allocated to tourism and recreation. Commercial zones would be situated along the main road crossing the town from north to south. The plan aimed to develop the entire old part of Aqaba into a new commercial and services area which would be the future centre of the town. A by-pass enabling motorists to avoid the town centre was also planned. An industrial zone would be built to the south, between the town and the port. No sign of utilising the strip of southern coast received from Saudi Arabia is shown on the plan.

Figure 3.7

Development Plan for Aqaba (due to be completed 1981)



Source, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Ministry for Municipal and Rural Affairs, 1967A

### 3.8 The Post - Six Day War Period, 1967-1973

"When the June 1967 'aggression' occurred and affected the whole of the western part of Jordan, it caused great harm to the Jordanian economy and hindered the planned progress it had been achieving before the war" (Jordan, 1970:73).

King Hussein made a last-minute decision on May 30, 1967 to put his small army under Egyptian command and enter the June War (Kam, 1968). This resulted in overwhelming defeat by Israel which shook Jordan and the other Arab countries most profoundly. 1967 was the beginning of what was regarded as "the bleakest period in Jordan's economic history" (Gubser, 1983). Economically the country suffered a crushing setback with the loss of the West Bank - the richest agricultural region and a great tourist attraction:

"The loss of the West Bank was a severe blow that only escaped being catastrophic through prompt and large scale budgetary assistance..."(Jordan, 1974A:23).

"Tourism was practically destroyed overnight as a result of the loss of Jordan's sacred and historic sites in the Holy Land, and collapse of the industry was a severe blow to the national economy" (Robinson, 1976:415).

Moreover, the U.S. halted its financial aid because King Hussein accused it of aiding Israel during the war (this was resumed after a year). Over the next five years all development plans were severely disrupted and the 1964-1970 plan was virtually forgotten.

Politically Jordan drifted back into an era of turbulence. The 300.000 Palestinian refugees who had fled to the East Bank after the war, together with those already living in Jordan, once again became convinced that relying on Arab states to regain their homeland had proved to be a bankrupt policy. They worked together to build up their guerrilla organisation, which increased their power to a point where they formed "a state within a state", and eventually emerged as a serious challenge to King Hussein's authority (Shimoni, 1977). Their operations against Israel from Jordan, often carried out as the national army just stood by, resulted in heavy Israeli counter-attacks that destroyed the Ghor Canal - Jordan's vital water project - and virtually depopulated the Jordan Valley until 1971. There was increasing tension between the King and the PLO from 1968 onwards due to the PLO's unwillingness to obey Hussein, who tried to impose his rule and discipline on the organisation. Radical Palestinians called for his overthrow. In September 1970, the



hijacking of three aeroplanes into Jordan by George Habash' Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, completely disregarding the Jordanian government, was the last straw (Abu-Iyad, 1978; Shimoni, 1977; Kam, 1968). Hussein, now finally determined to remove the PLO threat, launched a fully-fledged battle against the guerrillas. Throughout these years most of the Arab countries, especially Syria and Iraq, exhibited considerable hostility toward Jordan. Iraqi units which had been based in Jordan since 1967 gave an ultimatum to the king and threatened to join the PLO in the war (they never did so). Syrian tanks invaded northern Jordan in late September, fearing a deterioration on that front. Only a massive operation by Jordan's air force combatted the threat and caused the Syrians to withdraw. For the next ten months Hussein undertook extensive and harsh mopping-up measures to eliminate the guerrillas, the remainder of whom fled to Lebanon.

The Jordanian defeat of the Palestinians was not without its cost. Kuwait and Libya cut off their aid, while Syria and Iraq closed their borders and airspace to Jordan from July 1971 until December 1972. Egypt broke off diplomatic relations in April 1972 and closed its airspace to Jordan. For a long period the nation was generally shunned by the Arab world. This is reflected in a speech made by Jordan's prime minister:

"All Arabs know that Jordan is a poor and economically weak country; yet they have imposed a land and air siege on it and cut off aid pledged by the Arab governments"(MEED, 2.1982:214).

Relations recovered slowly towards the end of 1972, but it was only at the September 1973 Cairo summit meeting that King Faisal succeeded in reconciling the differences between Syria, Jordan and Egypt. This relationship was further consolidated during the 1973 war when Jordan sent armoured troops to the Syrian front.

### **3.8.1 Port Activity**

As a result of the closure of the Suez Canal in June 1967 ships from Europe had to round the Cape of Good Hope and pass through the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea to reach Aqaba. This extended the 4000 km journey from Gibraltar to Aqaba to 23,340 km Jordan again had to re-route its import and export trade through Syria and Lebanon. Traffic to Aqaba's port declined sharply; in the last six months of 1967 only 52 ships called there (400 ships called in the first six months) and

275 ships in 1968. This mainly affected imports from Europe through Aqaba that fell from 590,300 tons in 1966 to 161,400 tons in 1968. Traffic via Beirut rose rapidly, from 45,000 tons in 1966 to 110,000 tons in 1967 and 157,000 in 1968. Exports through Aqaba were less affected, due to the growing phosphate industry in Jordan and its ability to find new markets in the Far East, mainly China and India. The latter was in 1968 the largest consumer, taking up 40% of Jordan's total phosphate export. Jordanian phosphate also went overland via Syria to Turkey and Yugoslavia. Yet even export of phosphate was not free from political controversy. Hussein's policy of supporting Pakistan during the Islamic conference in 1969 angered India, who banned all phosphate imports from Jordan for more than a year, which further decreased export traffic via Aqaba (the ban was removed in late 1970). (figure 3.1)

Following the war, all development work in the port ceased and until the end of 1968 there was a complete absence of any attempt by any of the responsible authorities to initiate activity. It appears that the shock of defeat paralysed central government and consequently the dependent authorities. Decisions and capital stopped flowing into the periphery, which sank into stagnation. Moreover, the civil war had increased the security burden, and the pressure of the new refugees on the country's limited resources did not raise much hope for fast economic recovery in the near future (Jordan, 1970). The port's activity decreased dramatically during this period, as described by a port official:

"For many days, sometimes a week, ships did not arrive. People wandered around doing nothing like sheep without a shepherd... Building materials were lying everywhere There were no plans or instructions as to what to do, at the beginning of 1968 every ship arriving in the port was a big party" (20).

The phosphate industry was regarded by the government as an important sector that would help Jordan to move forward into a new era of development. Yet communication with the port was inadequate, and in mid-1968 the JDB initiated a high priority programme to improve port communications and facilities in Aqaba:

"Land communication networks must receive greater care from consecutive Jordanian governments and obtain the most generous development allotments... This will include continuing the project of deepening a harbour and the construction of an airport... Continuing the projects of the Hittiya-Aqaba and the Hijaz railway lines... This project will facilitate the transportation of Jordanian exports, especially phosphate, to the harbour of Aqaba" (Jordan, 1968:31).

To achieve greater efficiency in implementing its plan, the NPC established in late 1968 the Maritime Corporation as a professional body to assist the APA in running the port. It was intended that the new body would undertake responsibility for loading and unloading ships and for the lighterage of goods in the port. During the following year these plans materialised, and by the end of 1969 the port could accommodate ships of 100,000 draught weight per ton. In addition, a new phosphate shiploader with a capacity of 1500 tons per hour was erected, together with two new phosphate stores. The decline of phosphate exports during the civil war and the continuation of low economic activity in these years meant that the port could easily handle the expected traffic, which by 1973 was still below the figure of the pre-war years. Thus in the following years no new plans were initiated and only minor development work took place, summarised in the APC report (the APA was renamed as The Aqaba Port Corporation (APC) in 1971):

"This period (1970-73) was limited to supplying the port with some new cargo equipment" (APC, 1983:4).

During the civil war relations with Syria deteriorated to a point where the border was closed. All traffic between the two countries ceased, and Aqaba became Jordan's only point of access to the world. Despite the long route from Jordan's main sources of supply in Europe, cargo unloaded in the port rose from 195,600 tons in 1970 to 518,600 tons in 1972. During this period there was a great shortage of imported goods including agricultural products such as fruit and vegetables, to the extent that in mid-1972 cargo was transferred by sea from Europe to Alexandria, then overland to Suez and again by sea to Aqaba. A relaxing of the political situation and the re-opening of the northern route in December 1972 resulted in a decline in imports through Aqaba to 433,800 tons in 1973 when traffic increased once more via the northern route. A growth in the phosphate industry towards the end of the civil war, combined with the closure of the northern route, which halted phosphate exports to Turkey and Yugoslavia, increased exports through Aqaba which grew steadily from 186,330 tons in 1971 to 811,240 in 1973.

Paradoxically, transit trade via Aqaba increased after the closure of the Suez Canal. Syria and Lebanon, which had used the canal for their trade with some African and Asian countries, began to use Aqaba in order to avoid the long route around Africa. Transit trade through Aqaba more than doubled between 1967 and 1968

(figure 3.1). Before the canal was closed, transit items accounted for approximately 7% of all general cargo handled at Aqaba. By 1970 this category constituted 20% of all cargoes. However, the 1971-72 Syrian border closure resulted in a precipitous decline in this trade to only 3% of all cargoes in 1973.

### 3.8.2 The Post - War Period

The 1967 June War proved to be a temporary and relatively minor setback for the economic life of Aqaba, as distinguished from its effect on the rest of the country. Despite minor clashes between the PLO and the Israeli army in October 1968 (to be discussed further in section 9.2), Aqaba enjoyed a relatively calm atmosphere. The town's post-war development until 1971 is further indication of the centralist, top-down Jordanian policy. The difficult years following the 1967 War had literally paralysed the JDB's activities and consequently frozen all other development activity in the area for more than a year. Even when in late 1968 the JDB decided to complete some pre-war plans, it concentrated solely on the port, mainly to enable Jordan to increase its phosphate exports. No attempt to implement any of the pre-war plans for the town by the central authority or local bodies can be seen until the early 1970s. Stagnation and lack of response in Aqaba, especially considering that it did not suffer greatly, may indicate the fragmented structure of the periphery and the absence of regional administrative and political institutions which prevented an effective response of the periphery to the new situation.

A lack of statistical data regarding the economic structure, unemployment and population movement at this time prevents me from analysing accurately the effect of the crisis on the town. However, the existing data and anecdotal information suggest that the port and its attached services were the main sectors to suffer during late 1967 and 1968. About half of the port's labour was dismissed. Yet demonstrations and riots did not occur. This may be explained by the fact that 15% of the town's households consisted of single males, many of whom had been reluctant to move their families to the town and who left Aqaba following redundancy (Jordan, 1970). Others who lost their jobs worked in various temporary jobs and spent the rest of their time in local coffee houses. One of the coffee house's owners described the end of the 1960s:

"Business was very good... My coffee house was always full; people would sit all day long drinking, smoking, playing backgammon and discussing local rumours regarding various plans and work that might arise in the future" (21).

Aqaba's population decreased from 13,500 inhabitants in 1967 to 13,000 in 1969. The figure of 14,000 inhabitants in 1973 indicates small population changes in the following years, considering that Aqaba's annual natural growth rate average 2% (Jordan, Department of Statistics, 1977).

Between 1971 and 1973 the government tried to resume the pre-1967 development by transforming the JDB into the National Planning Council (NPC) with ostensibly greater responsibility for formulating, executing and monitoring the progress of national development plans (Mazur, 1979) In mid-1971 the JDB/NPC initiated work to improve the road from Aqaba to Amman, and began to construct a new airport 15 km north of the town. This may be regarded as the first attempt to continue the pre-war development in Aqaba. The NPC's introduction of the 1973-1975 development plan (NPC, 1973) was regarded as Jordan's attempt to return to normality (Gubser, 1983). An important aim of the plan was the restoration of the country's tourist industry. In the new geopolitical situation, namely the loss of the Holy Places on the West Bank, Aqaba was to play a major role. The town's natural conditions, the clear blue sea and the warm weather with the immediate vicinity of the spectacular Wadi Rum and the monuments of Petra were regarded as good potential for tourists. Furthermore, the relatively easy period which the town had experienced over the last few years, together with the availability of labour, raised hopes in Amman for successful implementation of these plans.

In the early 1970s Aqaba had the image of a port town rather than a tourist resort. Only the two main streets leading to the port were paved, and there were no recreation facilities. Of the four hotels only two, the 'Coral Beach' and the 'Aqaba', with a total capacity of 216 beds, were considered suitable for tourist accommodation (22). The NPC took responsibility for altering and improving the town's image. This time the town rather than the port was to be the main beneficiary. The JDB invited the Greek company Doxiades Associates to draw up a 'plan for tourism development', and also decided to construct a new road connecting the town with the southern beach and the Saudi border. In January 1972 the NPC initiated major development work in the town. By mid-1972, 90% of Aqaba's houses were connected to the electricity and sewage systems. In June, a new public park and beach were opened.

To implement the various plans most efficiently and mobilise potential investors the JDB established the Committee for Developing the Southern Coast (CDSC). However, until 1973 the only hopeful negotiations were with Club Mediterranean regarding the construction of a holiday village in Aqaba (JDB, 1972). Yet no concrete steps were taken to get this project off the ground. Aqaba's distance from Amman was regarded as a further handicap. To overcome the problem and encourage more foreign tourists and Jordanians to visit Aqaba the government started to operate from May 1972 a daily bus service and three flights a week by 'Alia' from Amman to the new airport, recently opened by the King. Furthermore, tickets for these services were subsidised by the government.

Aqaba's tourist industry in the early 1970s must be kept in perspective, as it was small by any standards. The total number of western visitors (23) to Aqaba in 1971 was 6,500 and in 1973, 10,000 (24). Domestic tourism was also very low. Only 2000 Jordanians per year on average visited Aqaba between 1968 and 1973, which may be regarded as a very low number, especially considering that Aqaba is Jordan's only seaside resort. This was attributed to the fact that:

"This feature, while reflecting the low per capita income of the masses, indicates that the sense of recreation as established in more developed societies has not yet developed among Jordanians. Recreation is limited to the few high income groups and the educated elite" (Beheiry, 1969:14).

Indeed, a JDB report in late 1973 may best summarise Aqaba's tourist industry in these years:

"Aqaba as a tourist resort is only starting to be established" (Jordan, 1973:43).

### Notes for chapter 3

1. PRO/FO371/75293. A report on the British forces in Transjordan. Sent by Kirkbride from Amman to the Foreign Office in London. 19.5.1947.
2. Sir Alec Kirkbride was posted to Palestine and Transjordan in 1921 and served in various capacities. In the early forties he became the British Resident in Transjordan until 1951. See also: Kirkbride, 1956, 1976.
3. This plan was proposed by Kirkbride. See note 1.
4. PRO/FO 371/75293. Part of a report on British activity in Transjordan at that time. From Kirkbride in Amman to the Foreign Office, London. 25.5.1947.
5. PRO/FO 371/75285. Part of a letter from the British Embassy's Political Department in Amman. To: the Foreign Office, London. 30.5.49.
6. PRO/FO 816/107. This may be illustrated by a letter from the Jordanian prime minister, Ibrahim Pasha, to Kirkbride in Amman, demanding the transfer of Aqaba and its port to the control of the Jordanian government. 7.11.1946
7. PRO/FO 371/82766. This was described in a letter sent from the Britain Mediterranean Committee in Cairo to the Ministry of Transport in London. 7.11.1946
8. PRO/FO 816/107. Part of a letter from Kirkbride in Amman, to the Foreign Office in London. 21.3.1947
9. PRO/FO816/107. This was described in a letter from Kirkbride in Amman to the Foreign Office in London. 19.5.1947.
10. PRO/FO 816/107. This view was expressed in a report sent from the British Embassy in Amman to the Foreign Office in London. 21.7.49.
11. PRO/FO371/75296. From a letter, sent by the British Embassy's Political Department in Amman to the Foreign Office in London. 10.8.1949.
12. PRO/FO371/75296. Part from a letter from the British, Middle East Office in Cairo to the Foreign Office in London. 14.10.1949.
13. PRO/FO 371/104945. From a general report on Jordan during this period, sent by the British Embassy in Amman to the Foreign Office in London. 22.1.1953.
14. PRO/FO371/104907. From a letter sent by the Foreign Office in London to the Jordanian prime minister in Amman. 22.1.1953.
15. PRO/FO371/121580. A report from the British Embassy in Amman to the Foreign Office in London. May 1956.
16. PRO/FO371/115693. From a report by the Foreign Office in London to the British Embassy's Middle East Development Division in Beirut. 28.3.1958.
17. Ibid.
18. Agriculture refers only to palm tree cultivation (Jordan, 1967).
19. Mansour Shammout was the Assistant Director General for planning in the Aqaba Port Authority. Interview was conducted in November 1987, Aqaba.
20. Ibid
21. Ibrahim Abu-Mansour is a Palestinian who arrived in Aqaba in 1955. He owns one of the coffee houses in the town. Interview was conducted in November 1987, Aqaba.
22. According to the Jordanian Tourist Guide (1971), there were four registered hotels in Aqaba and a further five places classified as hostels. In this work I am considering only the hotels listed in the "Official Guide to Jordan" (Jordan, 1986).

23. I have found the term 'visitors' to be more appropriate because I could not discover how many were tourists and how many were on business trips.

24. All tourist figures are from the Jordanian Statistical Yearbooks (1973-1986). They consider only visitors that have registered in one of Aqaba's classified hotels.



## **Chapter 4 AQABA DEVELOPMENT BOOM, 1973 TO THE LATE 1980S.**

### **4.1 Middle Eastern Politics and Jordan After 1972**

Since the mid-1970s Aqaba has embarked upon a new period of development in all sectors of its economic life. The town has experienced a dramatic expansion in port activity and the establishment of new industries. This has caused a sharp increase in the town's population, from 17,000 in 1973 to 45,000 in 1987. As in the earlier period, Aqaba has played only a minor role in determining its own development pattern; most of the decisions regarding the town's growth have continued to be made in Amman, and these have largely been determined by internal and external political and economic factors in Jordan and the politically unstable Middle East.

The prosperity that Aqaba has enjoyed over the last fifteen years mirrors to a great extent the recovery of the Jordanian economy in the mid-1970s, following the domestic and international instability of the late fifties and sixties and the civil war of 1971-2. Since 1973 Jordan has witnessed a period of relative political stability and calm in both domestic politics and foreign relations. Furthermore, international political developments have proved to be of benefit to Jordan. Assisted by a resumption of economic planning it has achieved considerable social and economic progress (World Bank, 1983; Abu-Jaber and Shimizu, 1984).

I regard four major international political factors of the 1970s and the 1980s, together with their economic consequences, as having a vital influence on Jordan's political and economic fortunes, and hence on Aqaba's development. These were the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, the Lebanese civil war, the relaxation in Israeli-Egyptian relations and the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980.

Apart from minor aid to Syria on the Golan front, Jordan was not a combatant during the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war. The country hardly suffered from the war. Yet the oil crisis and price boom which followed resulted in rapid economic development in the Arab oil-producing countries, and benefited the Jordanian economy from 1974 onward in three major ways. Firstly, as the income of the oil-producing countries increased, their grants to Jordan also increased. These grants came mainly from Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia (Hammad, 1987). Secondly, the boom in these countries increased their demand for Jordanian exports. Thirdly, an increasing number of Jordanians sought work abroad, mainly in the Gulf states,

resulting in increased remittances to Jordan to the extent that they became a substantial factor in the Jordanian foreign currency balance of payments (Nyrop, 1980). Jordan's 'labour export' was also magnified by the partial crippling of the Lebanon's rich manpower resources due to that country's civil war.

Lebanon's decline into civil war and the destruction of its political and economic structure undermined its role as the economic centre of the Middle East. Many international firms had maintained their Middle East offices in Beirut until the mid 1970s. As fighting began, they sought alternative bases for their activity in the region. Jordan's moderate political leadership and traditionally pro-Western stance, together with its proximity to the oil-producing countries, enabled it to take advantage of the void created by the Lebanese civil war. Many companies have moved to Amman since 1975, placing the country in a prime position within the economic life of the Middle East (MENA, 6.10.1977; Mazor, 1979).

The 1974 Israeli-Egyptian disengagement leading to the reopening of the Suez Canal in June 1975 turned out to be of great benefit for Aqaba's port. Toward mid-1975 the influx of goods to the region increased, turning many ports into a bottle-neck, with ships waiting for berthing 20 days at Beirut, 45 days at Jedda and 60 days at Basra, with a high congestion surcharge imposed on goods passing through these ports (Drysdale, 1987). Furthermore, the closure of the port of Beirut in the late 1970s worsened congestion and lengthened unloading times at the Syrian port of Latakia and Tartus, which gave further impetus to the growth of Aqaba.

#### **4.1.1 Jordan and its Neighbours**

During the 1970s Jordan consolidated its relations within the Arab world. It retained positive relations with Egypt even after the Camp David agreement. The King assiduously cultivated Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states with an exchange of visits. When the Shah of Iran was still on his throne in the 1970s Hussein sought out his patronage and received aid from Iran. His two biggest neighbours, Syria and Iraq, were basically hostile to Jordan throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. After the 1973 War Hussein attempted, with mixed success, to change this negative pattern. With Syria he signed accords to cooperate in some defence, foreign affairs, cultural and economic issues (Alroi, 23.9.1977; MEED, 20.2.1981). Jordanian-Iraqi relations were poor, with an exchange of accusations, but at the same time the

countries were developing a lively economic relationship. Saddam Hussein moderated his attitude toward Jordan entirely as a consequence of political geographical considerations (Drysdale, 1987). He saw Jordan as a potential ally whose port at Aqaba could provide Iraq with an alternative to its vulnerable port at Basra and to the important oil pipeline which crossed Syria en route to the Mediterranean. The new relationship was reflected in Iraqi aid given to develop Aqaba's port whilst Iraq was granted special rights to use the port (Iraqi News Agency (INA), 6.4.1977). At the same time Jordan increased its wider role in the Middle East by hosting meetings of various professional groups in the Arab world, and holding its first Arab summit meeting in November 1980.

#### **4.1.2 Internal Politics**

The relaxation in Jordan's internal political life after the civil war prevailed throughout the 1970s, even when the 1974 Rabat summit resulted in another setback to Jordanian-Palestinian relations (Gubser, 1983). To avoid another crisis, Hussein warned the Palestinians to be "good citizens" or their status might change to that of simply guests in the country, with his security forces keeping a close watch on any incipient serious dissent (Bailey, 1984) Furthermore, in November 1974 Hussein dissolved the parliament which was composed of an equal number of West and East Bankers. Its replacement was dismissed in 1976, and no national body existed for two years until in 1978 Hussein formed a "quasi-parliament" in which only three of the nineteen cabinet members were Palestinian. Indeed, the Palestinians on the East Bank have not tried to challenge the regime in any major way since the civil war. With political parties outlawed throughout the 1970s, there was little national political development, and Jordan's internal political life remained relatively calm into the 1980s.

#### **4.2 Development Planning in Jordan From the 1970s to the Late 1980s**

The relatively calm atmosphere that Jordan enjoyed from 1973 onwards in both domestic politics and foreign relations enabled the government to dedicate most of its resources to the development of the economy. As in the past, central government continued throughout the seventies and eighties to exercise effective control, by means of various ministries, over most of the economic and social life of the country. By drawing up economic plans and providing the necessary infrastructure and services, it played a key role in the establishment and further

development of most of the important manufacturing enterprises (World Bank, 1983). Nyrop (1980) and Mazor (1979) describe the government approach as "paternalistic free enterprise". However, they indicate that the government neither intervened directly in the small-scale manufacturing sector nor competed with the private sector. Nevertheless, by means of a liberal licensing policy and tax exemption it sought to encourage investment and development by the private sector.

Economic planning continued to be the government's main vehicle for determining Jordan's development. The NPC was responsible for drawing up the master plans and then coordinating the government's role in their execution. In 1973 it launched a three-year plan for 1973-75 which aimed to resume those aspects of development which had been cut short by the 1967 war (NPC, 1973). This was followed by the 1976-1980 plan, regarded as an evolution of the three-year plan (NPC, 1976). The goal of the 1981-1985 plan was to maintain development without claiming to solve all the problems in five years, and to increase the annual growth rate of GNP (NPC, 1981). In 1986 the country embarked upon the 1986-1990 development plan (NPC, 1986). There is a divergence of opinions amongst both Jordanian government officials and outside observers regarding the aims, the implementation procedures and the degree of success of the various plans, which cannot be included in the scope of this work. It is important to note that all the plans have been organised into sectoral categories, and considerations regarding domestic political stability play an important role. Plans designed to help eliminate regional inequalities have tended to be considered only if they accord with the economic viability of the region or if they permit undisputed political control by central government (Weiss, 1987).

Towards the mid-1970s it emerged that the Jordanian government was aware of the growing regional disparities between the centre and the periphery, which were largely a result of its centralist policy (Jordan, 1975). This may be illustrated by the following government report:

"Political and administrative linkages (sic) between the central government and the rest of the country are highly dependent... A great part of the political influence is concentrated in the capital, and the government tends to overlook serious problems in remote areas" (Jordan, 1975).

The regime evidently felt it necessary to provide some semblance of economic and political power in the periphery. This was done, however, without really

disseminating power in a substantial way. Decentralisation of the Jordanian economy was put forward in 1976 as an important objective of the five-year plan (NPC, 1976). Yet the government failed to realise that spatial integration is a process of diffusing political power as well as allocating socioeconomic resources. The Prime Minister Mudar Budran, in response to the complaint that all decisions were made in Amman, started in 1976 to hold cabinet meetings throughout the country to elicit regional and local input. The first municipal elections since 1966 were held in late 1976, with a result that gave control over many municipalities to members of banned political parties. For Aqaba, however, these elections were meaningless. To maintain an 'apolitical town' the mayor was appointed by the Minister for Local Government, with only a few council members in powerless positions being elected democratically. Apart from these changes, however, Amman's attempt at decentralisation was mainly cosmetic.

The policy of quasi-decentralisation by which power continued to be concentrated in Amman continued to characterise the government policy into the eighties. Mazor (1979) indicates that the NPC's performance suffered from a seriously over-centralised management style, with most of the final decisions taking place in Amman. Kanovsky (1976-7) and Susser (1977-8) have emphasised the importance of the government's role in economic issues. The Prime Minister described the harsh measures taken:

"...The government regarded controlling the state's economy and cost of living as an important issue for the preservation of internal political stability" (Radio Amman, 19.6.1978).

Susser notes also that regional migration to the cities indicated that regional inequality continued. Nevertheless, suggestions for decentralisation and further participation of the periphery's population in the decision-making process continued to appear in government sources and plans throughout the seventies and into the eighties (Middle East, 1980; NPC, 1976, 1981, 1986). For example, the prime minister stressed the need for:

"...Balanced social sector planning and implementation on the basis of 'decentralisation' ...geared to securing the participation of the people in decisions affecting their own lives" (The Middle East, 2.1980:25).

Nothing was done, however, and the political structure has retained its centralist and paternalistic approach. The following 1982 report supports this thesis:

"Jordan, in terms of its planning institutions still has a rather centralistic

system with heavy emphasis on the national agencies rather than on the regional (Governorate) or local authorities. Furthermore, there exists a lack of integration of, for example, urban and regional development plans into the process of the Five- Year Plan preparation" (NPC, 1982:106).

Aqaba's development into the 1980s is a further illustration of the continuation of the top-down policy and concentration of political power at the centre, while the political organisation of the periphery remains fragmented. With the additional influence of external factors the situation is heading towards a marked polarisation.

#### **4.3 Up to the Reopening of the Suez Canal, 1973 - June 1975**

When the 1973-75 three-year plan was introduced, it suggested only marginal plans for Aqaba. It continued the pre-1967 War policy of concentrating on development in the Amman area, including the Jordan Valley and its principal cities, Zarqa and Irbid (NPC, 1973). The port of Aqaba, which had been the prime reason for development effort before the war, lost its significant role in the Jordanian economy in the early 1970s. Most of the plans regarding Aqaba were considered national projects rather than local; however, by their very nature they also benefited the town. They included the completion of the Al Hittieh-Aqaba railway that was opened in 1975, the construction and repair of roads in the area, and improvements to the new airport. The decision to build an oceanographic station was due to the wish of the University of Amman to develop a new study programme for which the Red Sea area was ideally suited, rather than enthusiasm to develop new enterprises in the town. Yet by 1975 no practical steps had been taken to get this project off the ground.

Even when the NPC carried out a local project and constructed 60 housing units in Aqaba, it emerged that it was to be state employees who would benefit from them. A joint decision by the NPC and the ATPC handed over most of the houses to the Airport Authority and other official employees, many whom had been sent from Amman (Jordan, 1976A; Alroi, 31.12.1975).

Towards the mid-1970s government policy regarded Aqaba as a potential for tourism development. The APC decided to proceed with an implementation of plans prepared by Doxiades Associates for the infrastructure required to serve hotel and other tourist facilities, to be supervised by the Ministry of Tourism and the CDSC. However, the set-back to the tourist industry caused by the 1973 War, together

with budget preference by the NPC, prevented sufficient implementation of the plan. Moreover, research carried out in 1974 by the NPC (1975), anticipated poor prospects for Aqaba's tourist development in the near future. It based its conclusions upon the economic situation in the main potential market for Aqaba in Europe and North America following the oil crisis and especially upon the "negative influence of high prices of fuel on the tourist industry" (NPC, 1975:47) in the mid-seventies. The industrialisation plans for Aqaba were also considered a major obstacle to tourism. The report concludes:

"Aqaba is poorly situated to compete effectively with Mediterranean resorts for the mass European market, because of the greater travel distance involved and higher construction and operating costs in Jordan" (NPC, 1975:47).

Indeed, in 1974 the occupancy rate in the two local hotels was 23.5%, and the total number of visitors was 10,700. This figure was made up of 4,800 westerners (average stay of three nights per person) and 5,900 Jordanians (average stay of two nights per person (NPC, 1975).

With the NPC controlling developments in Jordan, its crucial report (NPC, 1975) did not leave much room for significant developments in Aqaba's tourism. Indeed, the only project that showed rapid progress was a private initiative by "Holiday Inn International" to construct a new hotel which opened in January 1975 and increased the total number of beds in Aqaba from 216 to 500.

The absence of any response to the report by Jordanian private enterprises or any attempt to promote local initiatives in tourism is all the more striking when considered in the light of the liberal policy of the Jordanian government towards private enterprise. It may also further indicate the high dependence of Aqaba on Amman. In the light of what was happening in Eilat's tourist industry at this time, it seems that the NPC failed to appreciate the real potential for developing this sector in Aqaba. (The development of tourism in Eilat will be discussed in part III). The marginal projects suggested for Aqaba in the three-year plan (1973-1975) and their slow implementation may be understood in the light of the decline of Aqaba's role in the Jordanian economy during this period (apart from Jordan's internal problems in implementing the plan). It should be remembered that in late 1972 when the plan was being formulated, and in early 1973 when it was launched, no-one could have predicted the October 1973 War, the oil price boom,

the Lebanon War and the reopening of the Suez Canal. Together with an insignificant number of tourists and a lack of industry, Aqaba lost its position as a target for investment and development. By reducing the investment of capital and innovation in Aqaba, Amman emphasised the town's dependence on the centre. Neither new local creative initiatives nor major local enterprises appeared. Initiatives were minor and limited to small businesses.

The Israeli-Egyptian disengagement agreement in 1974, which included preparations for reopening the Suez Canal, brought new prospects for the Middle East. It would only be a matter of time before Aqaba regained its vital position in the Jordanian economy (Alroi 16.4.1979; Jordan, 1974). In the meantime, however, Aqaba's development was determined by the three-year plan. At a time when new initiatives were required for development of the port, the plan's approach was unsuitable and irrelevant. Rather than attempting to devise new programmes for action, the NPC remained blinkered, failing to appreciate the influence of domestic and international factors. It neither changed the development plan nor initiated a new plan to help the town adapt to changing circumstances. Its poor performance was further illustrated when the Aqaba local authorities anticipated a sharp increase in port traffic, but lack of political power and influence prevented them from taking appropriate steps (1).

#### **4.3.1 The Port of Aqaba 1973 - June 1975**

At first glance it seems as though the NPC decision to reduce government investment in port development and concentrate only on some renovation work in the port (NPC, 1973) was made with an adequate appreciation of the port's needs. Since the 1967 War, traffic was well below the pre-war figures. Compared to 666 ships calling at the port in 1966, only 304 ships called during 1973. For three weeks during the 1973 War commercial traffic to the port stopped. A further slight decline in traffic to 299 ships in 1974 and 98 ships in the first half of 1975 was the result of an increasing use of the northern route following improvements in relations with Syria (figure 3.2). Imports via Aqaba declined from 518,600 tons in 1972 to 367,420 tons in 1974, figures which would appear to justify the approach of the NPC. However, a careful examination of port operation towards the mid-1970s reveals that although imports were handled sufficiently well, queues of ships started to build up so that some had to wait for up to 15 days for berthing. This



occurred after phosphate exports grew from 387,200 tons in 1971 to 1.1 million tons in 1974 (figure 3.1). At this time the port was insufficiently equipped to handle the growing amount of phosphate, and consequently only one ship at a time could be loaded. The NPC once again demonstrated its weakness when it failed to see the changing pattern and quantity of cargo flows, and thought that the port could handle its traffic sufficiently (NPC, 1974). When the government established the Free Zone (FZ) in Aqaba in early 1974 with the aim of increasing port use by neighbouring countries and making it a trading centre for the Middle East (Jordan Times, 2.6.78), it did not initiate any work to improve the port facilities. This is most surprising when we consider that in late 1974 the Suez Canal was due to reopen in less than a year, and increasing congestion in the Eastern Mediterranean ports, together with the escalation in Lebanon towards civil war, had created an urgent need for another port in the region. This placed Aqaba in a prime position to fill the vacuum.

Since early 1974 the APC had been demanding new equipment and plans to forestall the expected traffic. The response, however, was minimal. The government/NPC initiated a few meetings with the APC that resulted in a government decision to launch a new development plan for the port, yet the only practical result led to bringing over Captain Kurt Deutschmann from West Germany in June 1974 to be chief advisor. In July 1974 ships still had to wait 2-3 weeks for berthing. The APC and Captain Deutschmann continued to ask for a budget and new equipment, and to their voice was added that of the Jordanian press, which had harsh criticisms of the port's operation and its ability to cope with the traffic expected after the reopening of the Suez Canal (Alroi, 28.7.74, 16.4.1974; Aldustur 16.7.74: Al-Akbar, 2.10.1975). Captain Deutschmann added:

"The only real thing the NPC approved was a crane-driver's course that I organised in November 1974. Ironically, after I was promised that new equipment would arrive in the summer (1974), in November I was informed that the NPC had engaged American and Jordanian companies to carry out a survey of the port's future needs in order to enable them to draw up a new plan! I thought this was a bit late considering that the Suez Canal was due to reopen in 7 months. I think it was in early 1975 that uncoordinated interaction among the different offices in Amman revealed that while Aqaba could hardly handle its domestic market, the Ministry of Transport was quick to sign a transportation agreement with Syria, and an agreement to import 300,000 tons for Iraq via Aqaba. In fact, nothing was done to make improvements or get new equipment. In May 1975 the port was as when I arrived!" (2).

Indeed, weak co-ordination between ministries and heavy bureaucracy filtered down from Amman to Aqaba. To the two official responsible bodies of the 1960s - the APC and ATPC - another five were added, each trying to promote its own interests. In 1975 this multiplicity of bodies was responsible for the development of the Aqaba region, including port facilities, roads, water supply, free trade zone, development of the southern coast, tourism and the town itself. However, the lack of a single authority to coordinate the development of the region and implement the various projects on an integrated basis placed Aqaba in a poor position to face the next two years.

#### **4.4 Aqaba's Port, June 1975 - Mid-1977**

A new era began in Aqaba in June 1975 after the reopening of the Suez Canal (Drysdale, 1978; World Bank, 1983; APC, 1980). Undoubtedly, the port was the prime beneficiary. Traffic rose sharply; 418 ships called in the Aqaba in second half of 1975 (98 ships in the first half), 1064 ships called in 1976 and 1238 in 1979 (figure 3.2). In 1976, 20% of Jordan's imports passed through Aqaba; by 1978 the port handled almost 60% of Jordan's import and export traffic (figures 3.4). Since then Aqaba has remained the main export and import gateway for Jordan.

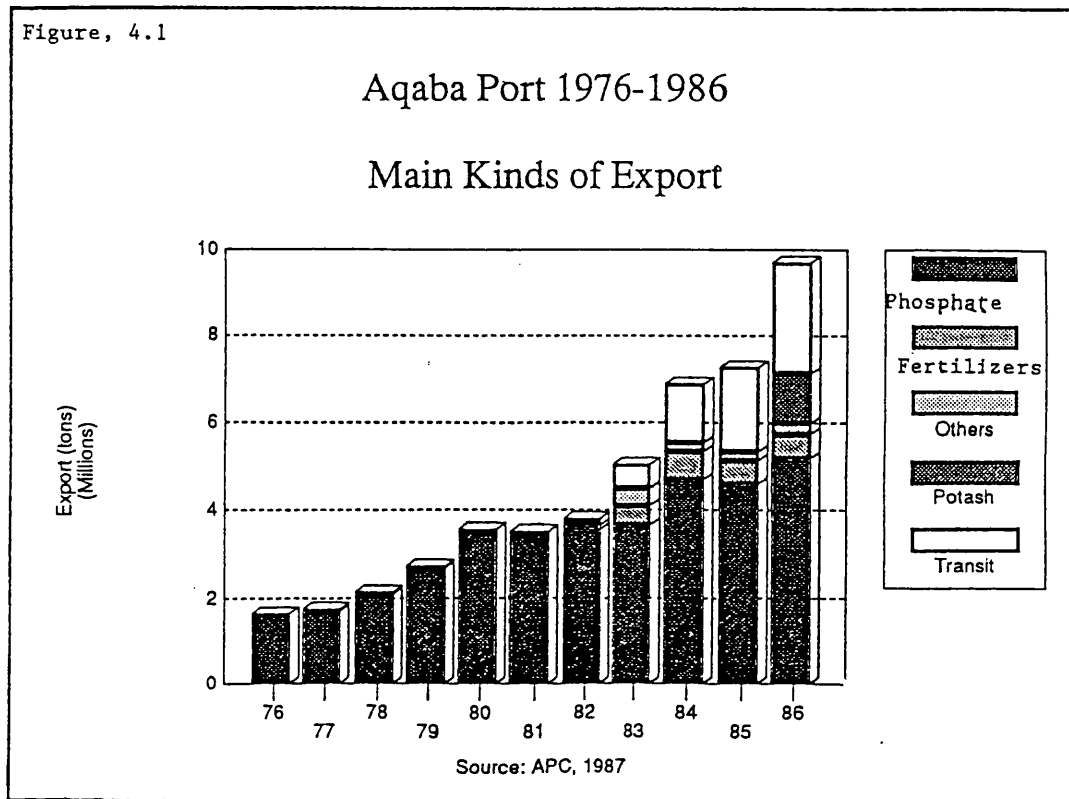
Relying on statistical data, linking them with political factors, and declaring thereby that "a new era has begun" will be insufficient in terms of this work. We have to look behind the facts and figures for the substantial evidence for this argument, together with the vital influence of the different political factors on port growth. The events of the two years following the reopening of the Suez Canal contain vital evidences as well as demonstrating the role of Amman's over-centralised policy in slowing down the port's development.

An examination of the port operation from June 1975 to mid-1977 shows that the slight loading pressure in the port before the reopening of the Suez Canal (that the NPC failed to assist the APC to solve), severely deteriorated after the canal reopened. Towards mid-1977 the acutely congested port reached near-paralysis. The government was slow to respond, and provided largely inadequate solutions. As a consequence, development flagged and port operation became inefficient and clumsy.

It should be remembered that the rapid increase in port traffic was not a surprise. With the growing need for another port in the Middle East and the re-connection of Aqaba to the Mediterranean, together with other political-economic circumstances of the mid-1970s, a sharp rise in port traffic was inevitable. Thrust in this manner into a period of new growth which could have been a gold-mine for the Jordanian economy, Aqaba now required substantial government investment in order to take advantage of the state of affairs. Both the government and the APC had anticipated this, and held a few meetings with various authorities to discuss what steps should be taken to address the situation (Al-Akbar, 2.10.1975). However, the government failed to take adequate measures to tackle the rapid growth. In Aqaba, local authorities had neither the right nor the power to initiate planning activity and so despite increasing congestion in the port and continual requests for aid, steps taken to tackle the problem were minor. Acute congestion hampered port operation. Yet I would describe the crisis in the port at this period as a "positive crisis" because it led to growth and development rather than depression.

A sharp increase in traffic from June 1975 onwards proved to be more than the port could handle. Three months after the reopening of the Suez Canal all the port storage areas were full. The opening of the Al Hittieh - Aqaba railway towards the end of 1975 significantly increased phosphate exports. 850,000 tons of phosphate were exported via Aqaba in 1975 (97% of Jordan's total export), transported by truck. After rail transport was introduced, phosphate exports increased to 1.5 million tons in 1976 and 2.6 million tons in 1979 (figure 4.1). Moreover, in late

Figure, 4.1



1975 ships which had been waiting up to three months to berth in the acutely congested port of Jeddah were rediverted to Aqaba, following a Saudi request to Amman. The closure of Beirut's port at this period resulted in Iraq and the Gulf States transferring part of their traffic to Aqaba. Syria and Lebanon also started to transfer via Aqaba a small part of the goods destined for their eastern trade.

In addition to the mounting traffic in the port, bureaucracy on land was awkward. A lack of local banking facilities meant that people had to travel to Amman to resolve customs and other financial issues. By the end of 1975 congestion had worsened with 30 ships waiting to berth, some for up to six weeks, while cargo continued to accumulate, overflowing behind the port fences. Although the port was in operation 24 hours a day, a shortage of berths and handling equipment with a lack of skilled labour and storage facilities prevented fast and efficient work.

At this time a plan, suggested earlier by Captain Deutschmann and the APC, to construct two floating berths and bring barges out into the open sea to handle ships in order to provide a temporary solution to the mounting congestion, awaited the approval and financial support of the NPC. Yet in Amman, with its 'plan happy' tradition, the NPC was busy contriving its new five-year development plan for 1976-1980, which was also to provide the necessary help for the port. Immediate response was not regarded as an urgent matter for primary consideration. Captain Deutschmann described the situation:

"It was ridiculous! While we struggled to handle ships as fast as possible with the limited facilities we had, the NPC was busy with its "grand design" - preparing a "new development plan". I was told in December 1975 that in 1976 a new plan would be introduced, which would offer significant expansion in port facilities and new equipment that would answer most of the port's problems within five years! Yet no-one in Amman showed too much concern about the present situation and the urgent need to ease the high pressure" (3).

In January 1976 acute congestion threatened to close down the port. Only after a most urgent report from the APC to Amman did the NPC allocate the old airport area to cargo storage. In addition, the government granted limited banking facilities and eased some of the bureaucracy. These measures, despite relieving some of the pressure, were generally an inadequate solution to the port's problems.

When the 1976-1980 plan was introduced, it offered major modernisation

development in the port that would raise its handling capacity to 8 million tons of phosphate (3.2 million tons in 1976) and 1.2 million tons of general cargo (600,000 tons in 1976) per annum in 1980. However, the plan failed to consider or provide an immediate solution to the present congestion. Captain Deutschmann added: "It was a great plan; it was only a pity that the NPC did not introduce it two years earlier!" (4).

During early 1976 the congestion worsened, with ships waiting up to eight weeks for berthing. To avoid long delays shipping companies had to reserve places in advance. Consequently an additional 30% levy tax was imposed on cargo to Aqaba. By April 1976 ships that arrived in Aqaba and could not wait to be unloaded left the port and unloaded their cargo in one of the East African ports instead. Only if another ship heading for Aqaba passed through one of these ports and had space on board was the cargo sent back to Aqaba. Consequently, the prices of many goods in Jordan increased by as much as 40% (Aldustur, 24.4.1976). Now the Jordanian prime minister finally approved the 14 month-old plan to construct floating berths and additional handling equipment (APC, 1976). Work began in mid-1976. Meanwhile more ships continued to arrive at the port. By the end of 1976 50 ships were waiting to be unloaded; some had been there for up to three months. MENA (22.9.1976) reported:

"Aqaba is like one big store. Containers and goods are scattered about the town, especially along the route to the port. Many are mixed up and lie unattended on both sides of the road" (MENA, 22.9.1976).

Only towards the end of 1976 did the government begin to play a greater role in aiding the port. 200 hectares north of the town were allocated by the NPC to storage, which provided immediate relief. Additionally, a government decree expropriated 14 dunams north and east of the port for its expansion. Another decree imposed a 25% penalty on all goods that were not released within three weeks of arrival. In October some more experts in port operation were brought to Aqaba from West Germany to help in clearing the port. Although these plans were designed to ease congestion, their late introduction was to continue the backlog until mid-1977. Mr. Abu Nuwwar, the port manager, concluded:

"We are doing our best to handle ships as fast as possible, but it is impossible to do it with such a lack of equipment. The recent development work should double our handling ability in mid-1977; however, since the government only initiated the work in mid-1976 it might take some time to clear the port..." (APC, 1977:1).

#### 4.4.1 The Port, mid-1977 to 1980

In April 1977 the installation of the two temporary floating berths 5 km south of the port was completed. The Mo'ta and Yarmouk berths were designed to handle container, bulk cargo and "roll-on, roll-off" traffic. Additionally, a phosphate shiploader and four new barges were bought (APC, 1983). This provided immediate relief for the port's congestion and reduced the waiting time to 4-6 weeks. Consequently the 30% levy tax imposed on cargo to Aqaba was reduced to 15%.

The Jordanian government's eagerness to expand and modernise the port and overcome congestion resulted in a considerable concentration of resources on development activity in the area. The NPC as the planning agency had a vital influence on the actual allocation of government expenditure, and was a crucial instrument of Jordan's development policy. Indeed, by coordinating foreign assistance and taking responsibility for budgeting, the NPC inevitably played a significant role in the implementation of the various projects. In early 1978 the government merged the Maritime Establishment with the APC in order to allow greater co-ordination between the parties involved in shipping and cargo traffic activities. By linking it to the Ministry of Transport and determining the port's management (5), Amman continued to maintain control over the APC.

The expansion of the port increased its total annual handling capacity to 5 million tons, to such an extent that the NPC put into abeyance plans for a major expansion of port facilities (APC, 1975). Doubts also arose in the Ministry of Transport about the viability of the long-term development scheme (International Dredging and Port Construction (IDPC), 1978). However, after consulting with international engineers about the port's expansion, Amman decided to proceed with the development plans. By the end of the 1970s various facilities had been introduced, including four new cargo docks, additional storage areas and a passenger terminal (APC, 1983). At the same time, construction work began on a new port 17 km south of Aqaba, near the Saudi border. The new port was to serve an industrial park planned for the area. (Industry will be discussed in section 4.5)

Traffic through the port continued to grow. Compared to 944 ships calling in Aqaba in 1977, 1238 ships called in 1979. Cargo volumes during the same period grew from 3.1 million tons to 5 million tons (figures 3.1, 3.2). This was attributed

to a further growth in phosphate exports and the high economic growth that Jordan experienced during these years, leading to a rise in personal wealth and higher levels of consumer spending and imports (World Bank, 1983; Sullivan, 1987).

The various development projects in the port during these years greatly improved port facilities and operation. However, they also revealed the tendency by Amman to "go by the book". A lack of flexibility and imagination emerged; for example, during the implementation of the various plans container traffic grew rapidly around the world, including in Aqaba. Yet only two berths had equipment suitable for handling container ships. In the late 1970s container traffic grew to be 35% of the total cargo flow into the port. Some ships had to be diverted to the main port, where their containers were unloaded with unsuitable equipment, while other ships had to wait up to two months for berthing (APC, 1979). However, until the completion of the development plan in 1980, no initiative was taken to improve container handling capacity. Such developments were considered only within the context of the next development plan, due to be launched in 1981.

By the end of the decade it appeared that the APC had succeeded in reducing to some extent the congestion of the last few years, and by eliminating some of the main causes of delay it enabled the port to improve its operation efficiency. Despite the container distress, waiting time for berthing was reduced to only a few days. Captain Deutschmann sums up the decade:

"When I arrived the port was in a state of anarchy... the introduction of the new floating berths and the various other projects, although later than I expected, inevitably eased port operations and enabled it to overcome the mid-decade congestion. Also, the Jordanian managers gained more experience in port operation. I think that in 1978-9 we achieved quite a satisfactory level of operation, yet much should be done to reach the level that I would expect to see in West Germany..." (6).

The port's growth after the reopening of the Suez Canal caused its labour force of 150 workers in early 1975 to increase to 600 by December 1975, 1200 in 1976 and 2500 in 1979. As a consequence the port was faced with an acute accommodation shortage as well as poor working conditions. The APC emerged as an independent authority in Aqaba when with government finance it constructed 360 houses and provided another 1400 workers with rooms at subsidised prices in the port's residential area (figure 4.2.2) and in the northern suburb of the town. To improve working conditions a dining hall was constructed, and a health service was





established. At the end of the 1970s the APC took further steps to overcome the lack of skilled labour and improve port operations by establishing a maritime training school to train employees to operate ships' cranes and other port machinery (APC, 1980).

Since 1974 Iraq had shown an increasing interest in Aqaba's port. She started to negotiate with the Jordanian government for special rights to use it (MENA, 7.4.1974). This followed bitter antagonism between Iraq and Syria, which made the traditional trade route via-Syria and Lebanon to the Mediterranean unreliable, especially after the closure of the Suez Canal when the border between the two countries was frequently closed. Following the re-opening of the canal the Iraqi ports of Basra and Um-Qasr were congested, mainly as a result of the surge of imports after the boom in oil prices. Thus to relieve some pressure on his own ports without increased dependence on transit through Syria, Saddam Hussein started to tighten up his relations with King Hussein. By 1977, 75% of all transit cargo in Aqaba was bound for Iraq. Baghdad granted Jordan \$20m for new transportation projects and facilities in Aqaba, while Jordan allocated 50 hectares of storage area in the port for Iraqi use.

Lloyds' declaration of the Gulf as a war zone in 1979 regarding insurance tariffs (Lloyds List 3.1979) marked the beginning of an intensive effort by Iraq to gain more rights in its use of Aqaba. This included an agreement for further cooperation between the two countries regarding communication and transportation issues, including the establishment of a joint committee to handle Iraq's use of the port and a joint transport company to haul goods overland from Aqaba to Iraq.

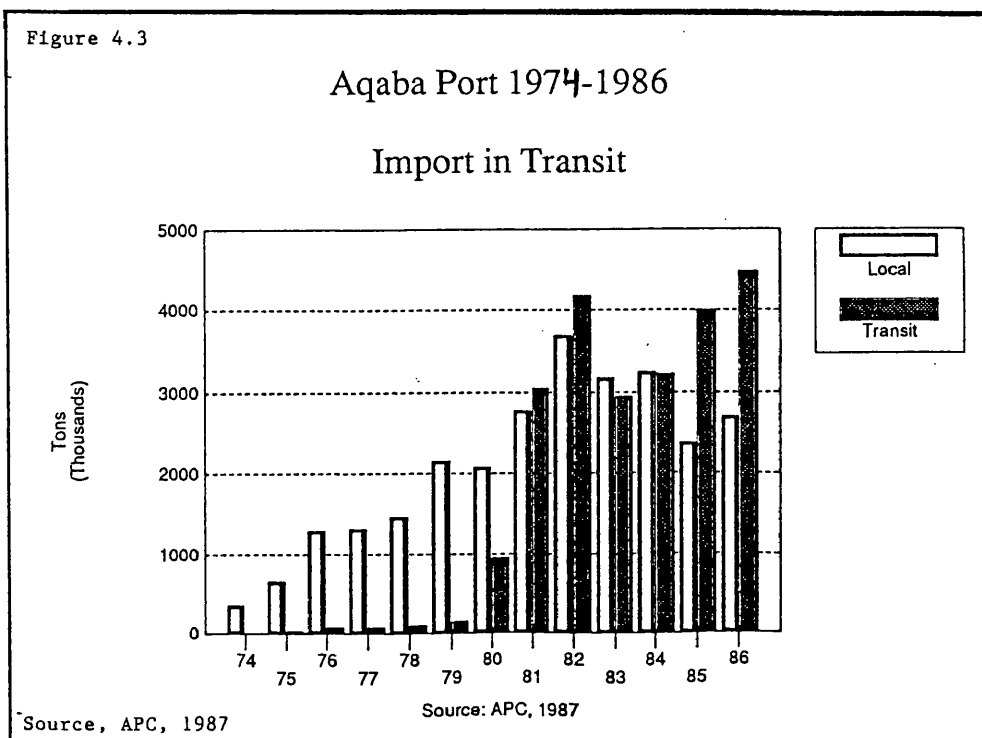
In March 1980 the Iraqi government decided to consider all journeys from Iraq to Aqaba as internal trips and exempted these journeys from custom and tax duties. In addition Baghdad agreed to provide a further package of loans and grants worth \$88.5m for expansion work in the port, for the free zone, for rebuilding the Desert Highway from Aqaba to Amman and for the construction of a new motorway to link up with the Amman-Baghdad road (Middle East, 12.1980; Iraq News Agency (INA), 26.8.1980; Jordan News Agency (JNA), 29.7.1980) However, major Iraqi aid to Aqaba was yet to come.

The development momentum in Aqaba's port continued into the 1980s. The cargo flow grew between 1979 and 1980 from 5 million tons to 6.6 million tons, mainly as a result of an increase in general cargo imports by 68% and phosphate exports by 32%.

#### 4.4.2 The Port, 1980-1987, and the Iran - Iraq War

The outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War in September 1980 and the hostile attacks on cargo and oil vessels in the Persian Gulf were the most influential factors in Aqaba's development during the first half of the 1980s. During the early stages of the war, Iraq did not succeed in its aim to seize control over its maritime access in the Shatt-al-Arab. Furthermore, its ports at Basra and Umm Qaser soon became paralysed. From October 1980 Aqaba was overwhelmed with cargoes destined for Iraq, which soon became the port's biggest user. The efforts which Iraq undertook to ameliorate its relations with Jordan were profitable. King Hussein emerged eager to provide Iraq with logistic and political back-up, and by providing Aqaba port's services to Iraq made Aqaba the most important harbour for Iraq's foreign trade (Jordan Times, 25.10.1980; MEED, 18.12.1981; Schliephade, 1987).

Between 1979 and 1982 the number of ships calling in the port rose from 1238 to 2599, a phenomenon almost entirely due to increases in Iraqi through-freight. The volume of cargo destined for Iraq grew in the same period from 161,200 tons (7% of the total import) to 4.16 million tons (53% of the total import) (figure 4.3). The



Iraqi share of imports in transit grew from 51% in 1979 to over 99% in 1982. Jordan, which continued to experience economic growth, also increased its own imports during these years from 2.1 million tons to 3.6 million tons. Its exports grew from 2.7 million tons to 3.8 million tons, with phosphate remaining the main component (with 93% of the total export). Total cargo flow through the port more than doubled, rising from 5 million tons to 11.7 million tons in 1982.

"We could not have anticipated the outbreak of the Gulf War; neither could we have expected such an influence on Aqaba's port. Therefore we were not ready for such a rapid increase in the volume of traffic. We estimate that the port's total handling capacity in 1980 was about 7 million tons. The new boom just sent us back to the 1976-1977 period" (7).

Indeed, the 1976-1980 development plan aimed to enable the port to handle a total traffic flow of up to 1.2 million tons of general cargo by 1980 (not including phosphate) (NPC, 1976). Even studies carried out by the NPC in 1978 established that Jordan's need for import traffic in the port would not exceed 2.3 million tons by 1982 (APC, 1978). The sudden growth in transit trade as a result of the Gulf War and Jordan's growing import, was 5.5 million tons higher than the port handling capacity. The situation in 1981, therefore, was one of acute congestion with ships waiting up to 3-4 months for berthing.

Serious consideration was given by the NPC to solving the port congestion in the new development plan for 1981-1985. The plan suggested a wide range of projects to extend port facilities and provide new handling equipment. Its goal was to enable the port to meet the growing demand for services (NPC, 1981). However, in contrast to the vigorous plans by the government "to take specific care of its (port's) adequate development" (SRP, 1982:55), and despite the urgent need for fast and innovative development efforts, the implementation of suggested plans started only a year later. This delay was further aggravated by the fact that implementation of plans in Jordan was tied to the overall development plan, launched only in spring 1982.

Late implementation of the plans may be also blamed upon inadequate communication between Aqaba and Amman leading to wrong assessments of port operation by Amman. Nyrop (1980) has indicated the weaknesses in planning and monitoring development in Jordan as a result of inadequate and inaccurate analysis of statistics. It appears that while congestion was as bad as during the 1976-7

period, Amman did not consider it to be a severe problem (SRP, 1982:55).

With major decisions regarding development activity continuing to be made in Amman, and the absence of local independent bodies, the lack of local initiative should not come as a surprise. Nonetheless, the government dismissed any thought of transferring more decision-making power to the port authority (NPC, 1982:18).

Even after work began in late 1982, it was expected to be completed only within a year or more, and could not provide an adequate solution to the port's congestion. A shortage of berths, handling equipment and transportation facilities resulted in long delays, with unloaded cargo being transferred to the various storage areas. This frequently affected cargo in transit that was destined for the free zone, but was held up in the port. Consequently cargo accumulated on the dockside and made ship handling activity more difficult. The distress in port operations and disorder in storage procedures were further exacerbated by heavy bureaucracy that was especially felt in the early eighties. For example, local customs officers were not allowed to evaluate duty on electrical goods. Consequently merchants had to travel to Amman to consult with senior customs officers (Aldustur, 13.12.1981). Difficulties in discharging procedures resulted in complaints by many companies, who lost an average 1.5% of their manifested cargo. (Mideast Markets, 3.5.1982). Other users harshly criticised the "growing inefficiency bordering on anarchy" (8). In January 1982 the industrial port 17 km south of the existing one went into operation. This caused further problems. Only one pilot boat was available and consequently when it had to pilot vessels into the southern port traffic became paralysed in the main port for up to 4 hours.

Intensive development work was in progress during 1982-3 in different parts of the port, with the aim of enabling it to overcome the huge pressure on its operations. Paradoxically, relief came from Iraq. As the high cost of the war began to affect its economy, Baghdad barred all imports but war-essential commodities. Hence its imports through Aqaba were reduced from 4.16 million tons in 1982 to 2.93 million tons in 1983. The number of ships fell from 2599 to 2454 in the same period. An additional reason for this decline was attributed by the APC's Director General to the Turkish port of Mersin, which started to handle an increasing share of Iraqi imports (Drysdale, 1987).

The completion of several projects in the port by 1985 increased its handling capacity and enabled it to handle up to 18 ships at the same time (for the port structure see figure 4.2). Waiting time for berthing fell sharply to less than a month in 1986. During 1984 Iraq, needing to renew its arsenal (Times, 4.4.1984; Swiss review of World Affairs, 8.1984), again increased its imports via Aqaba. In 1986 these surpassed the 1982 figure and reached 4.5 million tons (63% of total imports)(figure 4.3). The port met the growing traffic volume without any particular problems.

A new development scheme launched in 1982 to construct an oil jetty in the industrial port was another direct result of the Gulf War. It was the only major project since 1967 which had not been included in the development plan. The closure of the Syrian border in April 1982 following an Iranian-Syrian agreement cut off Iraq from an important source of revenue, because a large portion of its oil exports normally went by pipeline across Syria to the Mediterranean. Iraq now had to rely mainly on a single pipeline through Turkey, which ran dangerously close to the Iraqi-Iranian border with a potential threat of sabotage or even takeover should Teheran launch a massive northern offensive. Following Iraq's request to Amman, accompanied by \$9m, intensive work began to construct a new oil exporting jetty to provide Iraq with an alternative export route for its oil. The escalation of the war to the so-called 'Tanker War' which by the end of 1986 had claimed 120 lives and damaged 230 ships (Lloyds List, 1987), resulted in Iraq diverting more oil to the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. In 1984, while work was still in progress on the new jetty, Iraq started to truck out an average of 3,000 tons of oil per day via Aqaba. After the new jetty was opened in late 1985 oil exports through Aqaba rose to 10,000 tons per day. Baghdad's new oil export route meant for Aqaba a rise in export transit from less than 1% of total exports in 1982 (33,000 tons) to 26% of total exports in 1986 (2.6 million tons) (figure 4.1). In this case political factors prevented the implementation of a plan to construct an additional oil pipeline from Iraq to Aqaba. This was due to Iraq fear of an Israeli attack on this pipeline. Thus oil was trucked to the port (9).

An additional factor affecting imports from 1983 was the onset of Jordan's economic recession, which continued throughout the eighties and was still worsening in 1986. Due to the decrease in world demand for oil and consequently

a drop in oil prices, the level of capital inflows to Jordan from oil-producing countries declined. Arab aid was cut and remittances decreased (Weiss, 1987; Khader, 1987; Rivier, 1987; Satloff, 1987). Consequently, Jordanian imports declined from 3.7 million tons in 1982 to 2.6 million tons in 1986 (figure 3.1).

In contrast to declining imports, exports through Aqaba continued to grow throughout the mid-eighties. Total exports rose from 3.8 million tons in 1982 to 9.7 million tons in 1987. Although the proportion of phosphate in the total export fell from 93% to 53% at this time, it increased from 3.5 million tons in 1982 to 5.2 million tons in 1987. This was a result of increasing transit export and the growth in potash and fertiliser exports which rose from 82,000 tons to 1.7 million tons in the same period. Despite a total import figure of 7.6 million tons in 1987, which was still below that of the 7.8 million tons of 1982, the increase in Jordanian and Iraqi export caused a rise in cargo flow through the port from 11.6 million tons in 1982 to almost 17 million tons in 1987. Shipping traffic, which had fallen from 2599 ships in 1982 to 2329 in 1984, resumed mainly as passenger traffic rose, and reached 2705 in 1987 (10) (figure 3.2).

Towards the late 1970s, the port witnessed a growing number of passengers travelling through Aqaba. Most of them were Egyptian workers seeking jobs in Jordan. With a weekly service of one ship, operated on the Aqaba-Suez-Jedda line, the number of passengers was insignificant until the end of the seventies. Only 37,700 passengers passed through the port during 1978. Aqaba was never regarded by the Jordanian authorities as a passenger port, and therefore passenger services such as a terminal, police, passport and customs control were absent. Service was improvised and Spartan:

"We used to bring some desks and pick-up trucks and provide the necessary services for the passengers on the dock near the berthing spot of the ship" (11).

The "first passenger station in the port's history" (Aldustur, 1.3.1978), was opened in mid-1978 near the Mo'ta floating berth.

The number of passengers swelled to 523,680 in 1983 and 839,650 in 1987. Passenger ship traffic via Aqaba comprised a third of the total traffic; 980 ships called in the port during this year (figure 3.2). This growth was a result of the introduction of additional ships, and an increase in the number of pilgrims en route

to Mecca. Egyptian efforts to rebuild its relations with the Arab world following the Camp David agreement with Israel may provide further explanation for this growth. In 1983 Egypt opened a new port in Nuweiba and built a new road across Sinai to Cairo, thus creating a new link between Baghdad, Amman and Cairo. A 1984 agreement between president Husni Mubarak and King Hussein was intended to renew diplomatic relations and consolidate commercial and economic relations. A new ferry company was founded jointly in early 1985 by the two governments. It ran a twice-daily ferry service between Aqaba and Nuweiba (in addition to the Jeddah line) which significantly contributed to an increase in traffic. As traffic rose, the existing terminal became too small to accommodate the growing number of passengers. Already in 1983 an APC report indicated:

"Inadequate facilities are causing chaos in passenger services. People are wandering around the port trying to hitch-hike to Egypt. Many of them are camping all around the port area" (Alroi, 12.1.1983:11).

"...A terminal which was designed to accommodate 200 people is handling more than 2000..." (Alroi, 12.11.1984:6).

However, as plans for a new terminal were not part of the 1981-1985 development plan, work to extend and construct a new passenger station were initiated only in 1986 after the new 1986-1990 plan had been launched.

The labour force in the port grew sharply, especially in the early eighties. Compared to 2500 employees in 1980, 4200 were employed in 1983. After the boom of the early eighties came to an end, labour grew more moderately and reached 4710 in 1986 (30% of total employment). Of the total employees, 2900 were regular, while the rest worked on a daily basis, mainly in cargo handling. Of the total number of employees, 3700 (78% were foreign (3400 Egyptian), benefiting from the laissez-faire policy of the Jordanian government toward labour migration (Mazor, 1979; Seccombe, 1987). During the eighties the APC continued to exercise an independent policy regarding all welfare issues. As lack of accommodation forced many workers to live outdoors, the APC constructed 150 flats for employees in the port residential area. Another project aiming to build a new district north of the town with 3000 units for port employees is near completion. Other social services have been improved, and a recreational area for children, a kindergarten and a social club for port employees have been built.

#### 4.5 Industry in Aqaba after 1975

"As internal and external political conditions returned to near normal in 1972 the growth of the industrial sector began to accelerate" (Mazor, 1979:213).

A major concern of the Jordanian Government was to encourage the production of manufactured items from both local and imported material. Aqaba, whose industry comprised only small craft businesses, usually consisting of not more than 3 to 6 people, became the focus of major industrialisation plans. In 1975 the NPC drew up a plan suggesting the establishment of a range of new enterprises, to be set up in a new industrial park in Wadi 2, 17 km south of Aqaba. The plan recommended fertiliser and petrochemical industries, petroleum refining, a water desalination plant, a timber processing factory and a new power station (Jordan, 1975). This was approved by the 1976-1980 development plan and the first steps towards implementation were outlined by the government (NPC, 1976).

Towards the end of the seventies, Wadi 2 became the focus for two developments in this programme; factories run by the Jordan Fertiliser Industry Company (JFIC) and the Jordan Timber Processing Industry (JTPI) were built, going into operation in the early eighties. Most of the other plans, however, have never left the drawing board, mainly due to a lack of financial resources resulting from unfruitful negotiations between the government and potential international investors, many of whom saw only limited chances for the success of these enterprises. A further reason was lack of co-ordination between government offices which failed to convert the plans into a workable scheme (World Bank, 1983)(12).

The case of the timber industry revealed an over-optimistic policy on the part of the government, that failed to see early warning signs of low prospects for the industry. An economic survey in the late seventies suggested that Aqaba would not be a suitable location for the industry (Dar el-Handasah, 1978). However, the NPC decided to go ahead with the \$45m project that was partly sponsored by the Malaysian government (Alroi, 3.2.1976). The JIPI started operations in 1982, converting logs imported from Southeast Asia into a range of products. Since its early stages it suffered from poor performance and by late 1986 production had almost ceased. The first moves in dismantling the corporation have now been made.

More successful than the timber industry is the \$450m Jordan Fertiliser Industry



Company (JFIC), which is regarded as Jordan's most important chemical venture (Sullivan, 1987). It started to operate in late 1982, processing phosphate that had previously been exported as a raw material into a range of finished products for export. These included phosphate-based fertiliser, phosphoric acid and other chemicals. In 1986 the JFIC employed 2700 workers, of whom about 1750 were foreigners, mainly from Egypt, Pakistan, India and Malaysia. The government has maintained control over the JFIC by holding 51% of its shares and nominating government officials to manage the industry. The JFIC exercised an independent policy from the outset. It brought in 1000 workers, mainly from Egypt, to construct the factories. To solve the resulting accommodation problem it built 1600 houses in the town in the early 1980s (MEED, 20.5.1982). The industry is not yet fully utilised and is not showing a profit, but nevertheless it is considered a promising venture and profit is expected in the near future (MEED, 3.8.1984).

Financing problems caused delays in launching the plan to construct the new 130-megawatt thermal power station. Only after the government succeeded in attracting aid from West Germany, the World Bank and Saudi Arabia (An-Nahar, 5.9.1983; MEED, 20.4.1983) did work begin. The first power units went into operation in early 1986. It is expected that the station will shortly be fully operational.

Encouraging the location of other new industries in Wadi 2 was put forward as a major aim of the government's present development plan (NPC, 1986). The only project implemented to date is a joint venture with the Malaysian government to build a storage plant for the distribution of vegetable oil to Jordan and the neighbouring countries. Further government plans for the industrialisation of Aqaba may be seriously questioned in the light of the difficulties which the Jordanian economy has experienced in the last few years. As it is far from overcoming these problems (Chatelus, 1987) it seems that, aside from small local manufacturers, the fertiliser industry will continue to be the sole major industry in Aqaba.

#### **4.6 Tourism in Aqaba after 1975**

"The existence of the potential itself does not guarantee any significant visiting frequency of tourists - and, hence, does not contribute to the economy of the region" (SRP, 1982:163).

The number of Western visitors to Jordan during the mid-seventies did not reach the pre-1967 figure. Whereas 650,000 visited in 1966, of whom 375,000 were Westerners (13), only 126,000 Westerners visited Jordan in 1976 (figure 4.4). Aqaba in the mid-seventies was not yet a self-contained tourist destination and did not possess any particular image as a sea resort (Lang, 1981). Most tours in Jordan have tended to concentrate on the Amman area, Jerash, Azraq, the West Bank and Petra. Those tours that have included Aqaba in their programme have usually allocated it a short visit of a day or two. In 1976 tourism was a minor sector of the town's economic life, overshadowed by the port boom. The hotel occupancy rate for the three hotels was 39.9% (figure 4.5), and the total number of visitors was 22,000 of whom 11,800 were Jordanians and 10,200 Westerners. However, Jordanian officials estimated that 10-20% of the total number of visitors was made up of Western workers and advisers who lived in the town's hotels.

The 1976-1980 development plan made only minor suggestions for the development of Aqaba's tourist industry. Its main proposal was the construction of a skin-diving centre (NPC, 1976). The mounting traffic in the port meant that most development efforts were concentrated on the port and industry, while plans for tourism were pushed aside.

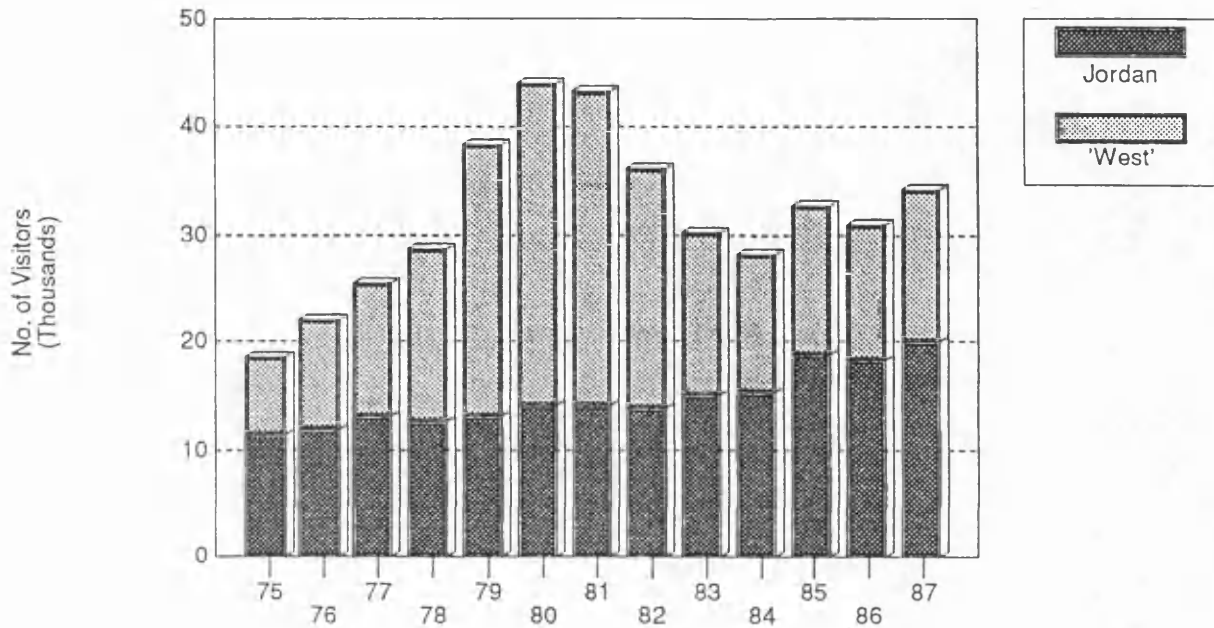
During the second half of the seventies, tourism in Jordan as well as in Aqaba showed a generally upward trend. By 1978 tourism had become Jordan's most valuable source of foreign exchange. Revenue from tourism outstripped earnings from phosphates, the main export - in 1978 tourism receipts totalled \$138m compared with \$65 from phosphate exports (MEED, 6.1980:31). As a result, the NPC decided once again to put forward the neglected skin-diving centre plan. In addition, government and private investors initiated the construction of four new hotels in Aqaba.

An important source of inspiration for Jordan in her attempts to develop tourism in Aqaba was Eilat. Jordanian officials looked enviously at the Israeli town whose tourist industry had flourished since 1975 (SRP; 1982 Mideast Markets, 20.8.1984; The Middle East, 11.1984). Some admitted that "we should have learned from the Israelis how to develop Aqaba to be like Eilat" (14). Moreover, "copy-cat" plans were regarded by the NPC as "essential if Aqaba is to stand the competition with

Figure 4.4

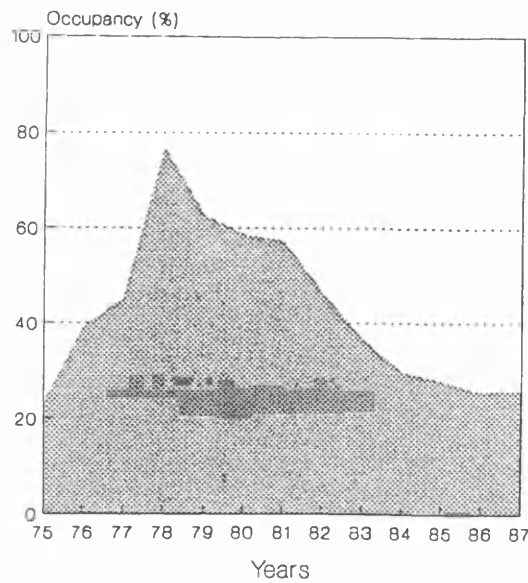
## Aqaba Tourism

1975-1987



Source, (for 1975-1984) ARA, 1985, (for 1985-1987) ARA, 1988

Figure 4.5 Aqaba Hotels  
Occupancy rate (%)



Source. (for 1975-1984) ARA, 1985  
(for 1985-1987) ARA, 1988

Eilat..." (SRP, 1982:164). The high cost of transportation was regarded by Amman as a major obstacle to the flow of tourism to Aqaba. Yet Eilat had enjoyed an increase in tourism after Tjaereborg Scandinavia introduced charter flights and package tours in 1975 that reduced the cost of holidays in the town. Thus the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism approached Tjaereborg, and suggested that they operate package tours to Aqaba at prices competitive with those of Eilat (15). This overture was successful, and from winter 1978/9 between one and two weekly charter flights into Aqaba airport brought Scandinavian sun-seekers for 'sun and sea' package holidays, lasting 7 or 14 days. The initial success of the new holidays led to another "copy-cat" plan, based on Eilat's project to extend the waterfront by digging an artificial lagoon (to be discussed in section 6.5). Competition for use of the limited shoreline from the port and industry was regarded as a major problem that jeopardised tourism. The director of tourism told MEED (1980):

"We feel in all honesty that industry has affected the future of tourism. It is unfortunate that industry is being developed in Aqaba without laws..." (MEED 6.1980:31).

Modelled on Eilat's scheme, a plan for a \$358m artificial lagoon surrounded by hotels that would add 4,000 rooms to the town was drawn up by the Ministry of Tourism (Jordan, Ministry of Tourism, 1980). Final negotiations with the construction company were planned for August 1981 (MEED, 31.7.1981). However, neither the lagoon plan nor the hotel project has ever got further than the drawing board, and even Abu-Nuwwar admits that the plan was "fantastic" (The Middle East, 11.1984:37).

Aqaba's tourist industry had achieved considerable growth by 1980. The completion of four new hotels enlarged the town's capacity to 7 hotels providing 1437 beds. The number of tourists in that year was more than treble that of 1976. In 1980, 44,000 visitors came to Aqaba, 30,000 Western and 14,000 Jordanian, together providing a 58.6% occupancy. However, it should be taken into account that Aqaba enjoyed general economic prosperity and that at least a third of the visitors came on business trips rather than holidays (16). In comparison, Eilat had 30 hotels in 1980 and was visited by more than 300,000 tourists in that year. Moreover, the number of charter flights did not increase. In winter 1980-81 the one or two weekly flights brought 4,000 tourists from Denmark and Sweden. Thus Aqaba's tourist industry should be kept in perspective, as by international standards it was

small, and in spite of the recent prosperity, was far from established.

A number of problems were a severe obstacle to the government's aim to turn Aqaba into a 'sun and sea' resort comparable to Eilat or other Mediterranean holiday destinations. These may be categorised in two main groups: socio-cultural and political. The first group, as well as the general subject of tourism, are not the main issues of this work and therefore my discussion of them will be limited. More emphasis will be given to the political factors which form the general framework of this thesis.

Within the first group a major problem was the conservative attitude of the local Moslem population to certain Western customs regarding entertainment and 'sun and sea' holidays. For example, initial discussions on building a casino were concealed in the early stages. This sort of entertainment was considered unacceptable in the "kingdom of the kinsman of the Prophet Muhammad". (Yediot Achronot, 23.2.1979:45). Likewise, the idea of women wearing bikinis, swimming in the sea or sun-bathing on the beach provoked anger among local inhabitants. The Tjaereborg representative in Aqaba commented:

"There were many complaints about locals pestering women sun-bathing on the beach ...We used to advise the women to try and stay beside the hotel swimming-pool, or to dress modestly when going to town..." (17).

Indeed, one of Abu Nuwwar's aims was to "break down the conservative attitudes of the local people" (Mideast Markets, 20.8.1984:13). However, Jordanian officials suggested that the ARA's idea of "Western-style" sun and sea tourism "may ride roughshod over social sensibility" (The Middle East, 11.1984:37).

A further socio-cultural factor is the absence of Arab tourism, despite the newly-acquired wealth of the Arab world following the oil prices boom. This may be explained in the following NPC report (1984):

"Discussions with hotel owners and travel agents indicate that a centre devoted largely to active water sport is likely to have little appeal for Arab clients in the near future... Past experience has proved that sun and sea holiday are not the type of holiday that the average Arab tourist will choose..." (NPC, 1984:44).

In the same category I would also place the problem of short stays by Jordanian visitors. Those Jordanians that could afford holidays stayed only on weekends or

during major public holiday periods. For longer holidays they preferred the lure of Western Europe and the beaches of Greece and Cyprus to the beaches of Aqaba. Even though the number of Jordanians visiting Aqaba grew by almost 60% between 1975 and 1986, the total figure of 18,200 is insignificant compared to the 900,000 Jordanians travelling abroad (18). Moreover, Western diplomats in Amman estimated that it was unlikely that the "status-conscious Jordanian" would abandon traditional holiday resorts for Aqaba (The Middle East, 11.1984:37). The high cost of holidaying in Aqaba may also be considered a hindering factor when more Jordanians found it cheaper to travel to Cyprus (Mideast Markets, 29.8.1981). Prices were controlled by the Ministry of Tourism, who admitted that "rates are high compared with neighbouring countries", yet did not initiate any action to reduce them, claiming that "services are good" (MEED, 6.1980:31). In the early eighties Aqaba's hotels and services were on average 20-40% more expensive than those of Eilat, and were double or more than those of Greece or Cyprus.

In the second group of factors that have influenced Aqaba's tourism, the government has continued to play a vital role. In spite of plans to develop the town's image and improve tourist facilities (NPC, 1976; ATPC, 1978A), the Aqaba of the late seventies and early eighties was far from being an attractive 'sun and sea' holiday resort. On the contrary, apart from the wide promenade which led to the hotel area, the town was dominated by heavy truck traffic, while the slum-like old town and the Shallalah district provided a very "ugly background to the fascinating natural environment" (Yediot Achronot, 23.2.1979:12). Considering that Aqaba aimed to be an international tourist resort, it had only a few shops that offered some hand-embroidered Bedouin shirts and other souvenirs. Fruit and vegetables could be bought in the small local *souq*. Yet visitors indicated that prices were very high (19) (Yediot Achronot, 23.2.1979; Osborne, 1981: Jeune Afrique, 9.5.1984). Apart from the sun and the sea, Aqaba had very little to offer its visitors. Cultural life and entertainment were meagre and limited to one cinema, a few restaurants and two bars in the hotels:

"Apart from lying on the beach and swimming in the sea there was nothing to do... It seemed as though Aqaba were under a curfew after 8 p.m., the only entertainment being the Holiday Inn bar where most of the tourists used to spend most evenings"(20).

The Tjaereborg representative to Aqaba in 1981 was also unimpressed by Aqaba's tourist facilities and described the town as "the most boring destination I have ever

worked in". The SRP report of 1982 gives further indication of the problem:

"The development of tourist related services is still lagging behind the development in the hotel sector. Comparisons with other places of international tourism show that entertainments etc... Can be considerably enlarged" (SRP, 1982:88).

To further emphasise Aqaba's lack of entertainment and poor environment, and perhaps to counter Amman's view of Aqaba's "good tourist services", a later government report reveals that local facilities and other important elements linked to the Jordanian tourist industry performed poorly and severely jeopardised the attempt to develop tourism in Aqaba:

"It (Aqaba) suffers from very unsatisfactory service and extremely low food quality in the hotels... Poor sport possibilities and other entertainment and cultural life. Overbooking mentality of the Jordanian agents... Transfer problem... Unpunctuality of the air carrier 'Alia'..." (Jordan, Ministry of Tourism, 1983:18).

Indeed, when the "Jeune Afrique" reporter visited Aqaba he noted that the most common form of entertainment was watching television (Jeune Afrique, 9.5.1984:57). However, no significant steps were taken to remedy the situation. It is not surprising, therefore, that by 1982 Tjaereborg had stopped its weekly charter flights to the town while other European tourist agencies phased out Aqaba from their travel programmes.

Aqaba did not yet have its own well-defined image as a holiday resort (Lang, 1981), and its marketing was totally dependent on European tour operators. Moreover, the outbreak of the Lebanon War in 1982 was a further set-back for tourism in the area. In 1983, 30,800 people visited Aqaba, the occupancy rate dropping to 36.6% together with a 33% fall in the number of Western visitors. Jordanian tourists numbered 15,000 (figure 4.4, 4.5).

#### **4.6.1 Tourism as a "Crusader Cause"?**

Following the establishment of the Aqaba Regional Authority (ARA) (this will be discussed later) in 1984, tourism was identified as a "crusader cause" in securing Aqaba's future. The ARA emphasised the tourist industry as a counterbalance to the unrestrained development of heavy industry and the port. It set to work transforming Aqaba into a more attractive tourist destination. Environmental problems were a particularly important issue. The ARA shifted truck parking 40

km to the north, and controlled the disposal of phosphate dust. To prevent marine pollution it imposed up to a \$3000 fine on ships which disposed of their litter into the sea, while to protect the south coast natural marine reserve it banned ships from anchoring there (National Geographic, 2.1984; Aldustur, 11.7.1984, 30.12.1984; Alroi, 5.1.1985; ARA, 1985; Sawt al-Shaab, 5.3.1986). It set to work reducing tourism costs by promoting bulk buying and joint marketing among local hoteliers as well as exempting hotels from certain taxes and customs duties. To improve the town's image and make Aqaba more attractive it drew up a plan to build a marina and an amusement park, and provide the town with a palm tree garden complex (ARA, 1985). However, apart from the latter project, of which the first stage was completed by 1986, none of the plans has yet left the drawing board. Another plan of the ARA to build a 15,000-bungalow holiday village on the south coast met a similar fate. This aroused many sceptical feelings, even among Jordanian officials, who had feared that the scheme would go no further than the lagoon project (Mideast Markets, 20.8.1984). The project was opposed by the consulting company Dar al-Handasah:

"We did not see any economic justification in establishing this size of holiday village... We told the ARA that they would be lucky to fill 500 bungalows... There really were no prospects for such a project in either Aqaba or Jordan as a whole" (21).

To promote Aqaba's marketing abroad, the Ministry of Tourism decided to use Eilat's aggressive marketing strategy (NPC, 1984). It initiated negotiation with European tour operators, which resulted in a muted response. An Aqaba 'Holiday Inn' official was quoted in MEED:

"Some tour operators have refused to include us (Aqaba) in their brochures, saying there is simply no interest in Jordan as a holiday resort" (MEED, 3.8.1984:9).

Negotiations with Thomson Holidays about including Aqaba among their winter sun and sea resorts were also fruitless:

"We (Thomson Holidays) thought that Aqaba was still not suitable to compete with other winter sun and sea holiday resorts. The poor facilities and local arrangements had to be considerably upgraded before we could include Aqaba as part of our worldwide winter sun and sea resorts. Yet the town was selected to be one of the destinations on some of our inclusive Middle East tours..." (22).

A similar response came from other major European tour operators such as TUI,



Nekerman, Krutzer (West Germany), Holland International (Holland), Imholz (Switzerland), Kouni (Austria) and Star Tours (Sweden). (23)

In late 1986 Aqaba's market continued to consist mainly of organised groups that spent between one and four nights in the town as part of an inclusive tour to Jordan or the Middle East, and pilgrimage tours that combined Egypt, Israel and Jordan and mainly emphasised the holy places and the archaeological attraction in the area. Among these tour operators were Ontara Reisen (West Germany) and Speedbird and Kuoni (England). The latter provides further indication of Aqaba's poor image. In spite of the enthusiastic nature of tourist brochures in general, Kuoni's worldwide brochure has described Aqaba as follows:

"There is a variety of small shops and one or two good restaurants but little else. Entertainment is to be found in the hotels, but this can be irregular and depends on the season..." (Kuoni, Worldwide Brochure, 1986-1987:127).

The impression of a tour leader who has regularly visited Aqaba on his company's pilgrim tours to the area is also rather negative:

"The two nights we spent in Aqaba were definitely enough... There is really nothing to do there and my impression over the last two years is that tourism in Aqaba is very quiet..." (24).

Aqaba's tourism continued to decline. In 1984 the occupancy rate fell to 29.7%, with only 12,800 Western tourists visiting Aqaba while Jordanians numbered 15,200. By the end of the year the hotel sector in Aqaba was on the verge of bankruptcy (Sawt al-Shaab, 6.12.1984; Alroi, 14.2.1985). In spite of governmental and ARA plans to revive tourism, the industry continued to experience a difficulties throughout 1985. By 1987 the occupancy rate had fallen to 26% and the total number of tourists was 34,000. Western visitors numbered 14,000 and Jordanians 20,000 (figures 4.4, 4.5).

The 1986-1990 development plan adopted the ARA tourism plans and put forward the following aim:

"Establishment of those tourist projects and auxiliary tourist facilities which can attract the largest possible number of nationalities..." (NPC, 1986:13).

It suggested developing new fields of tourist interest, such as exploring the antiquities of Aqaba, including the Biblical town of Etzion Geber, and continuing the efforts to solve environmental problems and improve the town's facilities.

However, the question of whether these plans will achieve greater success than previous plans may be left open.

My experience of tourism in Aqaba has not made me very optimistic about the future. In November 1987 Aqaba still had little to offer for the average visitor. Out of her 26 hotels, only seven (which offered 700 rooms) were listed as "recommended for tourists" by the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism (1987). Yet only four of these can be classified according to western standards. Inadequate standards may also be illustrated by the sale by the Holiday Inn group of its hotel in Aqaba. In addition to claims of unprofitability, it was indicated that under the local circumstances the company found it hard to maintain its world-wide standard. Apart from lying on the beach during the day and two optional excursions to Petra and Wadi Rum there was little to do. Sports facilities were limited. Only the Aquamarine Hotel provided water skiing and wind-surfing facilities, and these were at inflated prices (for example, 10 minutes of water skiing cost \$35. Diving and snorkelling equipment could be hired in the same hotel or at the Royal Diving Centre on the south beach, which could only be reached by taxi (a very expensive form of transport). Other facilities consisted of two tennis and squash courts, and horse riding. In the town the local Aquarium is dull, and the medieval Islamic castle (the old fort of Aqaba) and the excavation area are far from being exciting attractions. Few restaurants offered good food and only a small number of shops sold tourist souvenirs. Evening entertainment had apparently not changed much since the "Jeune Afrique" reporter visited the town in 1984, and during my stay television continued to be the best entertainment in town. In contrast to the crowded beaches of Eilat, in early December 1987 only a few tourists could be seen on Aqaba's beach or near the hotel's swimming pool. A random survey which I carried out in the various classified hotels (25) indeed proved that generally less than a third of the hotel rooms are occupied. Nearly all the tourists whom I interviewed were on inclusive tours in Jordan or the Middle East and had spent between one and three nights in Aqaba. A West German tourist told me: "The Red Sea is great and Aqaba is O.K., but I guess there are better places to spend a sea holiday...". Aqaba's poor connections with Amman may be one of the reasons why few tourists travel to Aqaba. The two-lane motorway is ill-maintained and crowded with trucks, while the scheduled air service is inconvenient (two flights a day). The few firms that offer package holidays in Aqaba continue to charge relatively high

prices compared to better equipped resorts. For example, they are higher by 50-70% than Eilat.

Further unfavourable signs for Aqaba's tourist development in the near future lie in the growing Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East and Jordan (Satloff, 1986). This does not serve Abu Nuwwar's aim to break down the conservative attitude of the local population. Furthermore, a Lloyds economic report (1986) regarded the growing regional political tension as an unfavourable sign for the future of the tourist industry, anticipating that Aqaba is likely to experience a rough period in the industry for some time to come.

#### **4.7 Urban Development between 1975 and 1986**

Aqaba's urban growth from 1975 onwards was mainly a direct result of port expansion following the reopening of the Suez Canal. The government's industrialisation projects and to a lesser extent the tourist industry further contributed to this growth. The outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War in late 1980 was the vital factor in the further acceleration in the town's growth. During the early 1980s it became a principal focus of regional and urban planning (NPC, 1981; SRP, 1982; Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (MMRA), 1981, 1982, 1983). Its population grew between 1975 and 1987 from 16,500 to 46,800 (26), and its urban structure changed significantly.

An apparent correlation between major political developments and Aqaba's population growth provides an additional indication of the strong links between the town's growth and international politics. Following the reopening of the Suez Canal and the traffic boom, its population rose from 16,500 in late 1975 to 19,800 by the end of 1976. The continuation of port growth and the establishment of industrialisation projects pushed this figure up to 27,000 by 1979. The outbreak of the Gulf War followed by another traffic and economic boom increased the population figure by 30% to 40,000 in 1982. Population growth became more modest towards the mid-eighties, due to a reduction in Iraqi imports and a slowing-down of the Jordanian economy. Between 1983 and 1987 only 2000 people arrived in Aqaba and this, together with natural growth, caused the population to grow to 47,000 (figure 3.3). Aqaba's rapid economic growth turned the town into a focal point for workers from the rest of Jordan. This, concomitant with general problems

of labour availability in Jordan, resulted in an influx of foreign workers to Aqaba and the country as a whole, many of whom came from Egypt (Nyrop, 1980; Seccombe, 1987). Most of the foreign workers were employed in manual jobs in the port, industry, construction and tourism. This also altered the character of the town's labour force. Non-Jordanians constituted approximately 25% of the labour force in 1975. By 1983 this figure had risen to 75%. The decline in activity over the next few years, a reduction in job opportunities, and government calls for giving priority to Jordanian workers over foreign (Aldustur, 23.3.1986), reduced the proportion of foreign labour to 39% in 1986 (6123 employees)(ARA, 1987).

Aqaba's impressive development after 1975, whether reflected in the above figures, or shown by aerial photographs, should not be regarded as the outcome of a successful pre-planned programme by the Jordanian government. It was rather the result of a need to address increasing pressures and distress in the town, especially when they began to jeopardise national development plans regarding the port and industry.

The Aqaba of late 1975 was poorly equipped to absorb and serve a larger population and soaring economic activity. When considering the government's ambitious development plans regarding the port, industry and tourism with their anticipation for dramatic urban growth toward the end of the decade, it was only natural to expect that an appropriate plan would be proposed regarding the town. However, the 1976-1980 plan did not suggest any significant expansion of its infrastructure. Minor plans included the improvement of some local facilities and the construction of a new hospital that was opened in 1977 (NPC, 1976).

Furthermore, the central government kept control over the local municipality by preventing it from having its own budget or raising taxes. The local municipality did not have right to initiate planning activities and consequently was not equipped to perform such. This meant that it was in effect acting as the local branch of the central government.

Indeed, the sharp expansion in the population and economic activity increased the burden on Aqaba's meagre infrastructure and services. This caused severe difficulties and disrupted everyday life in Aqaba. In late 1970s, solving simple

administrative matters required journeys between Aqaba and Amman. Insufficient health services resulted in people travelling 120 km north to the nearest hospital in Maan. Inadequate communication facilities caused long delays, even for domestic telephone calls. The gravest problem was the acute shortage of housing. Government and JFIC initiatives to construct additional houses were inadequate and lagged behind the growing demand. Shacks and tents mushroomed around the old town as many people improvised their accommodation. This expanded Aqaba mainly eastward into Wadi Shallalah. In 1978 this area accommodated 18,000 people out of the total 23,000 inhabitants of Aqaba. This uncontrolled expansion turned Aqaba into an overcrowded slum-like area which was a burden on the infrastructure and in some places became a health hazard with open sewage flowing in the small alleyways (Alroi, 8.5.1976, 20.7.1976; ATPC, 1978).

The poor road network was also a growing problem. The single-lane road from the port through the town centre to the north was insufficient for the heavy truck traffic using it. Compared to 14,690 vehicles leaving the port in 1974 (an average of 40 trucks per day), 54,219 vehicles left in 1976 (148 per day), and 88,695 in 1979 (243 per day). After the Gulf War broke out this figure rose during 1981 and 1982 to 211,812 and 218,695 (599 per day) (APC, 1985). "The endless line of trucks" (27), was regarded by Abu Nuwwar as a major hazard to the life of the town. In 1978 the ATPC built an additional lane onto the old road. It also initiated works for a by-pass road east of the town centre, a plan that was based on the 1968 Master Plan. Yet poor co-ordination between the ATPC and the Ministry of Transportation resulted in slow implementation. In 1988 the road was still under construction and not available for traffic use.

Only in early 1978 was a programme launched by the NPC to develop the town (NPC, 1978). It decided to use the forgotten 1968 Master Plan as a framework for development. Additionally, the plan suggested an "upgrading scheme" for the old town and the Shallalah district. Consequently a range of development work was initiated, including housing, roads, water supply and sewage.

The housing shortage was the main issue to be tackled by the government. A scheme to construct hundreds of flats was launched in 1978, aiming to provide low-cost accommodation for the growing population. However, late initiation of the

scheme, together with further population growth, meant the problem was not solved. This caused a sharp rise in rents and house prices to double those in Amman (which was considered the most expensive town in Jordan). In addition, Amman's involvement in the project through planning and financing (MEED, 21.4.1982) revealed an insensitive approach by the central bureaucracy. Emphasis was put on mass house construction. However, were built in a blank uniform style that may have provided some solution for the new arrivals, but failed to answer local needs. The new flats were regarded by the native residents, who had always lived in small houses with back yards, as inappropriate and unattractive. Many disliked the idea of living in flats and sharing a building with other families, and refused to move:

"No one asked me what I want or need... They gave me this new flat but what was I supposed to do with my dog, and my goat? What shall I do with all this? (pointing to the few personal effects lying in his yard). Who needs this box!" (28).

This hindered the upgrading plan to rebuild the old town and Wadi Shallalah, in spite of government decrees that expropriated houses and land on the west side of the area while offering free housing to the evacuees. The latter, stimulated by the high rents, preferred to let their new houses and build new tents and shacks eastward into Wadi Shallalah. Hence while the ATPC worked to develop the western part of the old town, a new slum was being erected to the east, without an effective response from any of the authorities. This severely frustrated the implementation of this part of the Master Plan. In 1980, a year before the project was due for completion, 1000 old houses were demolished. Yet only 1200 people, mostly foreign, out of the estimated 5.000 people living in these houses, were reported to have moved to the new flats (Al Hadaf, 28.6.1980).

Many questions regarding the efficiency and perhaps the ability of the Jordanian authorities in plan implementation, supervision and reporting procedures may be answered by the following report:

"Administrative procedures are antiquated and have been in force for a long time without updating... The system suffers also from lack of qualified persons... Responsibility for sectoral planning is still not fully defined, and the relationship between the NPC and the various ministries and institutions engaged in the planning process is characterised by overlapping and a lack of clarity... Serious obstacles hinder the regular flow of information through the various stages of implementation. This has a restraining effect on the capacity to update the development plans as the need arises by taking into account the impact of new conditions and variables on development projects

in particular and on the national economy in general" (NPC, 1983:20-21)

The picture painted on the last few pages is rather a gloomy one, and must certainly cast doubts upon the competence of the various Jordanian authorities responsible for Aqaba's development. However, it is important to note that by the end of the seventies there were some signs of improvement. The first residential district was erected north of the town, and the beginnings of a new road network were laid out. The new town centre was begun, while the basic infrastructure was modestly expanded, including public services, schools etc...(photograph 4).

#### **4.7.1 The Iran-Iraq War**

Aqaba experienced a further economic boom following the outbreak of the Gulf War. Between 1980 and 1982 its population grew by a third. Increased port activity was followed by a particularly significant growth in the transportation sector. This included the establishment of the Joint Iraqi-Jordanian Land Transport Company, with Aqaba as the main centre for its huge fleet of trucks, and increasing financial activity illustrated by the generation of surplus funds in Aqaba's banks that doubled deposits from \$36.1m in 1981 to \$72.3m in 1982 (MEED, 19.3.1982, 21.5.1982).

"The recent boom made the 1978 master plan obsolete... We knew that there was no way Aqaba could confront the mounting pressure... This was also a serious threat to the effort to develop the port, industry and tourism..." (29).

In the late 1980s the ATPC and the NPC, together with the West German Agency for Technical Cooperation, drew up a revised master plan based on a projected population of 160,000 by the year 2000. The elaborate plan mainly suggested further expansion of the town's infrastructure, a few projects for the improvement of the town's facilities and the construction of a new residential district north of Aqaba. Indeed, whether the plan was meant to serve national development aims such as the port, industry and tourism, or whether it reflected regional considerations per se, the government was eager to concentrate much effort on developing the town and trying to close the growing gap between demand and development (NPC, 1981).

As the various construction works proceeded, however, between 1981 and 1984 it emerged that despite all hopes previous symptoms had not been eliminated and once again performance was lagging behind growing demand. An insufficient basic infrastructure continued to be revealed in most sectors of life. This included an

acute shortage of housing and educational institutions, with classes carried on in small rented rooms that accommodated 20-30 children. Inadequate facilities and a lack of staff in the recently opened hospital meant that patients had to continue travelling to Maan to seek help. The absence of a jurisdictional infrastructure and of good local administrative services meant people were still compelled to travel to Amman to deal with these affairs (Aldustur, 14.11.81; Alroi, 22.2.1982) (30).

The continuation of poor implementation and the lasting gap between planning and results should not be regarded with surprise. The same multiplicity of official bodies (section 4.3.1) within the same political system continued to manipulate the town's development. Likewise, the same obstacles which hinder the regular flow of information remained. As Aqaba's municipality was virtually powerless, there was a lack of local initiative. Even on occasions when initiatives were taken, it should be remembered that local bodies only had the right to make recommendations and not to actually implement plans. The final decision was always made by the central authority in Amman.

An additional factor that may contribute to the understanding of "control from afar" may be found in the very basic spatial location of Aqaba. It appears that some officials holding senior positions in local bodies did not in fact live in Aqaba (31). Interviews with various local officials and foreign companies working in Jordan reveal that in Amman, Aqaba was regarded as an "exile town". To be posted to the "remote town at the end of the country" was considered a "great punishment" that one should avoid. Moreover, traditional close family links and general inertia among many Jordanian civil servants made Aqaba a very unattractive place. These officials would live in Amman and come to Aqaba during the week (32). Indeed, a committee was established to suggest new ways of generating development in Aqaba and the southern region called for:

"...More local participation in the decision-making and development process since only part of the members of the Town Planning Committee are residents in Aqaba itself" (SRP, 1982: 118).

The SRP (1982) report pointed to a lack of co-ordination between the various bodies, and indicated that the over-centralised Jordanian system was the root of the problem:

"For Aqaba there is an urgent need to put the areas of Aqaba Municipality



and the South Coast under one planning and implementing authority" (SRP, 1982:35).

It recommended:

"Decentralisation of the planning process, including increasing the participation of the local population and their regional and local representatives in the planning process" (SRP, 1982:106).

During the early eighties Amman's policy was unchanged, and decentralisation remained theoretical. Yet international political factors again intervened to cause a new government initiative regarding Aqaba. In 1983 Iraq banned all imports but war-essential commodities and hence reduced transit trade through Aqaba (section 4.4.2). Officials in Amman expressed the fear that when the war ended Jordan would experience a bumpy period for its transit trade. However, the port's director general rejected the idea that the early eighties boom should be regarded as the port's "swan-song" (Mideast Markets, 20.8.1984). The heat of the debate reflected the uncertainty over the port's future and therefore the overall plan for Aqaba. It was clear that Jordan's small national market of 2.3 million people could not alone generate enough traffic to keep the port fully utilised. The economic slowness that Jordan began to experience in 1983 further contributed to the uncertainty and aroused fears regarding the future of Aqaba's development should the "positive crisis" turn into a "negative crisis".

#### **4.8 The Aqaba Regional Authority, or development into the 1980's**

Growing government fears for the future of Aqaba's development, urged on by various plans and reports (SRP, 1982; MMRA, 1983; ATPC, 1983), led to the replacement of the ATPC by the Aqaba Regional Authority (ARA) as the responsible body for the 'Aqaba sub-region' in January 1984 (33). This initiative aimed to achieve greater co-ordination and efficiency in development effort as well as encouraging diversity in Aqaba's future growth. Its director general, Mr Abu Nuwwar (former director of the APC and ATPC), saw the new authority's role as a "development umbrella for almost every activity in the area" (Mideast Markets, 20.8.1984). Indeed, the new body was granted independent financial and judicial status, and was given responsibility for the planning and implementation of all activities in Aqaba and its region (section 4.7). The ARA was directly responsible to the prime minister.

The establishment of the ARA was regarded by the Jordanian government as an important step toward greater decentralisation (NPC, 1984). In fact it only led to a new pattern of central control. The ARA provided Amman with an agency that was authorised to handle all Aqaba's municipal and regional affairs. Members of the authority were nominated by the government and did not reflect local election results. Moreover, its organisational structure was built up from the "old-boy network" of government officials who already held senior positions in the existing authorities. The Aqaba Municipality was represented solely by the local mayor. Additionally, a careful examination of the ARA's "financial independence" revealed that although it could exercise its budget independently, the raising of taxes and the overall budget continued to be determined by the central government. Likewise, the ARA was responsible for planning authorisation but this, as all other plans in Jordan, had to be approved by the prime minister and had to accord with national plans that traditionally tended to emphasise national projects (Mazor, 1979; SRP, 1982; World Bank, 1983A).

In 1984 the ARA introduced a five-year programme for developing Aqaba and its region, which aimed to encourage tourism (section 4.6.1) and boost industrial development (ARA, 1984). The new plan put an end to the proliferation of individual sectoral studies by the various ministries in Amman and introduced a comprehensive system of planning that had been missing in the past. This strategy was pointed out by Jordanian officials as a further step toward decentralisation. However, the new plan was based on previous ones that had been approved by the government in the past, and was in accord with national development aims.

The plan seemed over-optimistic in its aggregate development projection. Some of its aims were unrealistic, to the extent that one would question how far the planners were acquainted with the region. For example, the plan aimed to:

"Emphasise the development of Aqaba in the southern region to enable the town to assume effectively its role as a regional growth centre" (ARA, 1984:35).

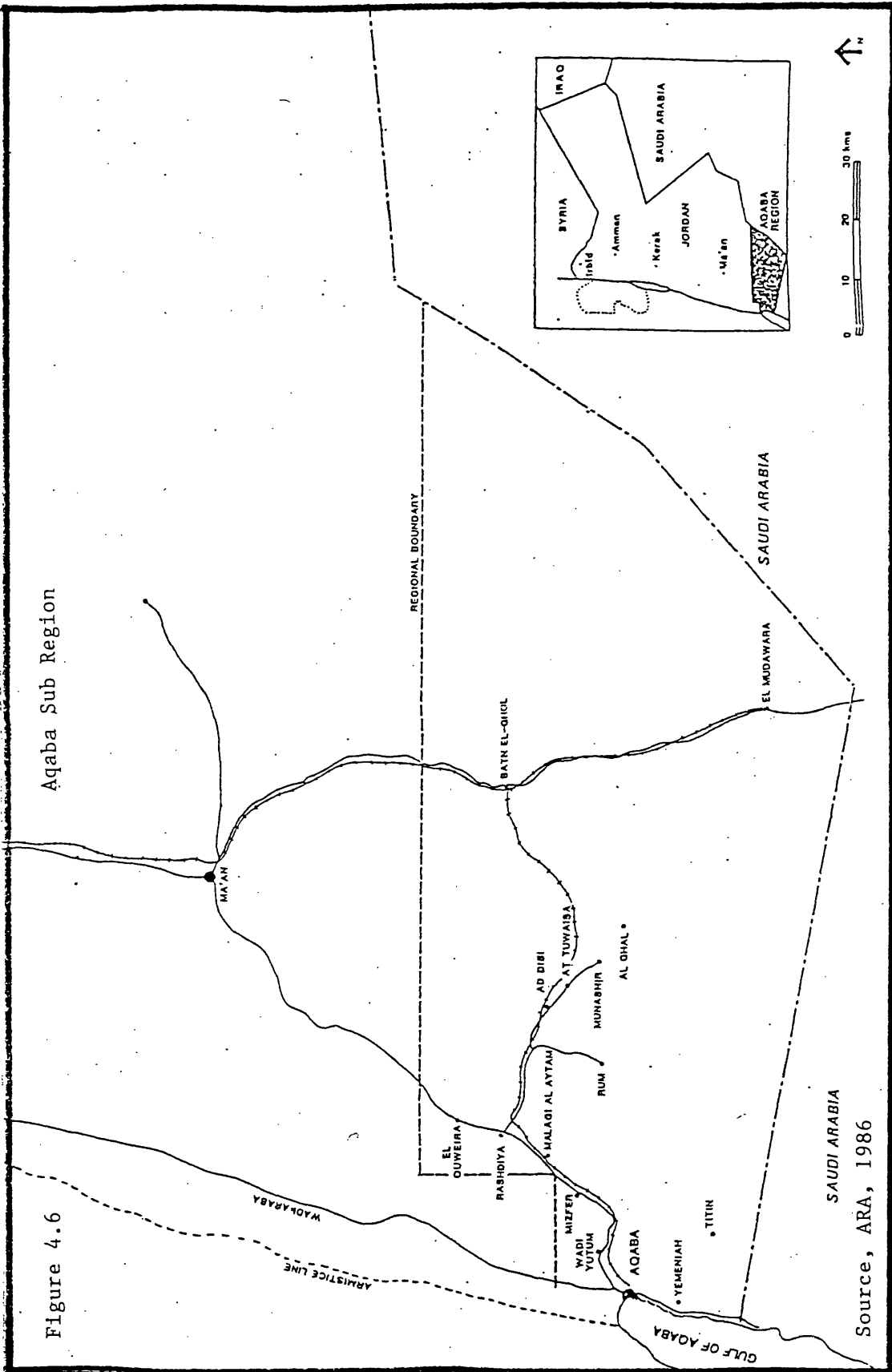
It also aimed to employ Friedmann's theoretical concept (1966) for the future development of Aqaba:

"...That the 'self-sustaining economic power of the single centre (Aqaba) will generate agricultural and rural development, as well as the development of other existing potentials in a large surrounding area, by the so-called 'trickling-down effect'..."(ARA, 1984:40).

However, 86% of the total population and 95% of those employed in the region are concentrated in Aqaba (NPC, 1986). Additionally, the so called "hinterland of Aqaba" consists mainly of around a dozen small desert villages dispersed along the Amman-Aqaba road within 40 to 80 km from Aqaba (figure 4.6). Their population is made up of approximately 10,000 inhabitants, of which 3000 live in Quweirs, the largest. Furthermore, an early study by the SRP (1982) revealed that only a few of these villages regarded Aqaba as their regional centre, while others were linked to Maan, as the map of "purchase orientation of the regional population for goods and private services" illustrates (figure 4.7). Moreover, the differences between the industrialised port town and the little villages that maintained a traditional rural pattern of life were such that it is hard to imagine that within five years they would become a potential for "establishment of decentralised, hierarchical pattern of urban centres in the region" (ARA, 1984:26).

My criticism of the "cosmetic decentralisation" and planning should, however, not be regarded as an attempt to diminish the role of the ARA in Aqaba's development. The new authority, and especially its director general, did not spare their efforts and emerged as very eager to place Aqaba in a new phase of development. In the following years their vigorous policy and greater efficiency proved to give new momentum to the town's development. One major problem the ARA succeeded in solving was housing. It proved that it had learned from past mistakes, and as a consequence gave greater consideration to local needs. For example, many new flats and houses were built larger to address the local residents' needs. It must be pointed out, however, that the beginning of economic recession in Jordan, and therefore the relatively slow growth of the town after 1983, helped in easing the burden on the town and enabling pressure-free development.

In what the NPC (1986) considered "the biggest and the most important project" (NPC, 1986:18), the ARA decided to complete the Shallalah and old town upgrading project. In 1984 the area still housed 10,000 people (Sawt Al Saab, 25.3.1984), and the upgrading plan was behind schedule. The ARA, in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning and World Bank finance, launched an intensive programme. Most of the local people were evacuated and the old houses were



Aqaba Sub Region

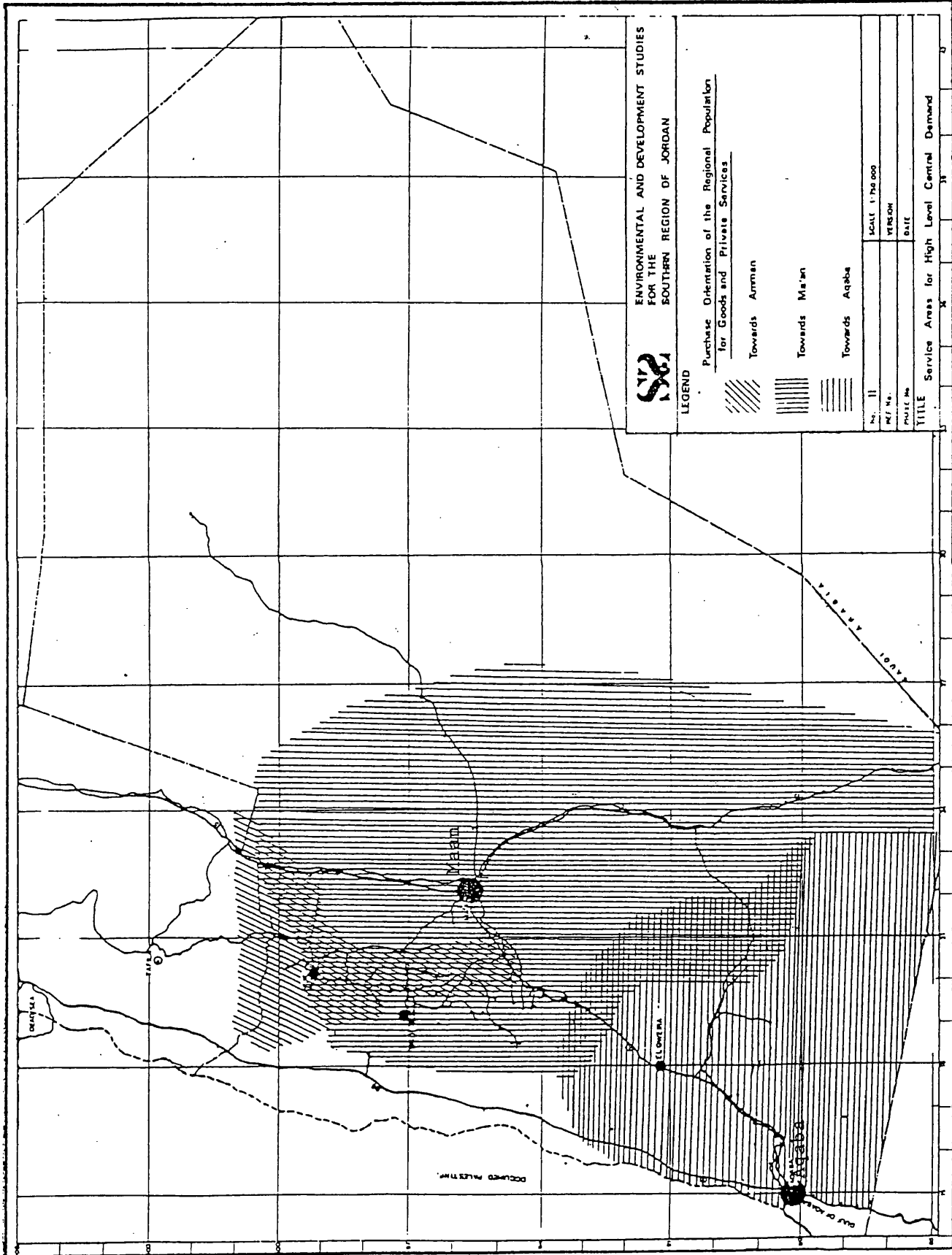
Figure 4.6

SAUDI ARABIA  
Source, ARA, 1986

Figure 4.7

Purchase  
Orientation  
Population  
and Aqaba for  
and Private  
Services

Source, SRP



removed. By late 1986 the plan significantly progressed and after the basic infrastructure was constructed, the new centre began to take shape. Additional new facilities included public and health services, and the first law court. To solve the acute traffic problem, immediate steps were taken to ban trucks from the town centre between 12 noon and 6 p.m. A new plan aiming to build a 38 km back road to the port was drawn up. A plan to build new truck park in Quweira, 50 km from Aqaba, was also launched. By the mid-1980s, four new residential districts had been erected north of Aqaba, each with a small business centre for the provision of local services (photograph 5).

The execution of plans by the ARA showed that the problem of updating development plans according to changing local circumstance (NPC, 1981), or in other words, failure of the centre to adequately examine regional changes, had not yet been solved. When work was already under way to turn the old town and the Shallalah district into mixed developments for small industries, it emerged that this sector composed only a small proportion of the town's economy, while many of the existing businesses were comfortably located and would not move to the area. Similarly, work proceeded to construct the infrastructure for a new residential area north-east of the centre, even though slowness in Aqaba's growth implicitly suggested that the area would not be used. Yet both projects were completed although they have been greatly under-utilised. This may raise further queries as to whether the ARA is a regional authority or rather a new form of centralist body that controls regional development from afar.

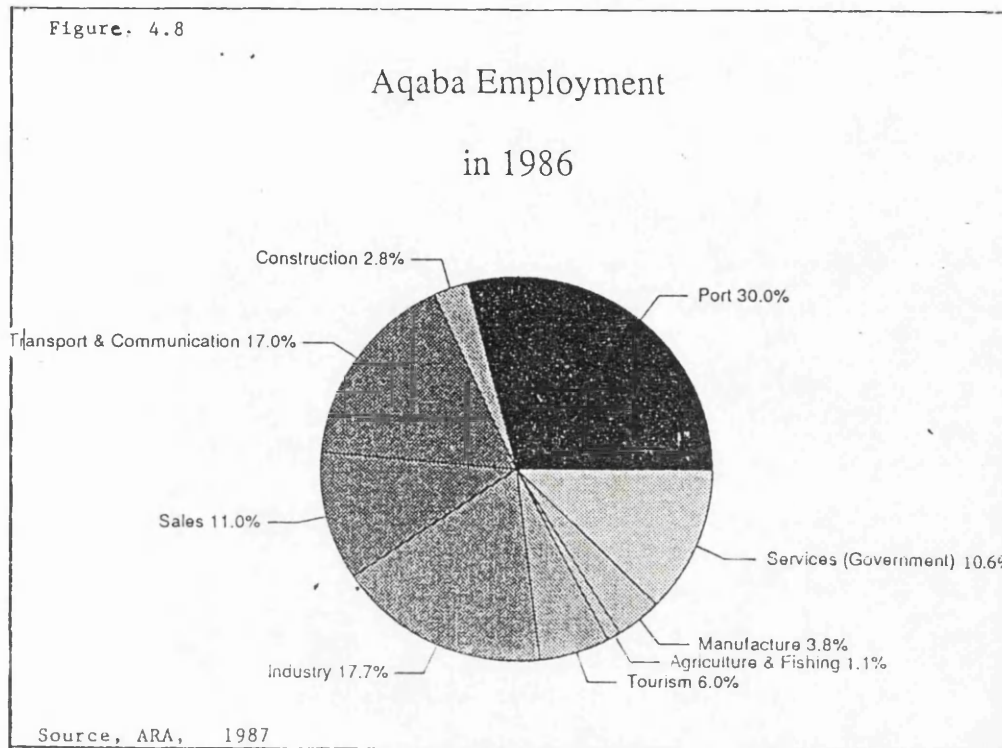
Aqaba's economic structure of 1986 maintained a similar trend to the 1967 census (see section 3.7).

Table 4.1 Employment Distribution in Aqaba, 1986.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Employees</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Port	4710	30.0
Construction	440	2.8
Transport & Communication	2699	17.0
Sales	1724	11.0
Manufacture	595	3.8
Tourism	940	6.0
Agriculture & Fishing	172	1.1
Industry	2850	17.7
<u>Services (Local &amp; Central Government)</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>10.6</u>
Total	16100	100.0

(Source: ARA, 1986).

Figure 4.8 Labour Distribution in Aqaba, 1986



The port continued to be the major economic sector, although proportionally its role was reduced by 8%. Transportation and communication, increased to 17.0%, mainly as a result of the rail link between Aqaba and the north and the establishment of the Iraqi-Jordanian Land Transport Company. Industry that was built up from the JFIC and JTPI and the oil plant employed 17.7% of the population. 12.5% were employed in government services, 11% in retail and 6% in tourism. These are all similar to the 1967 figures. Local manufacturing declined slightly to 3.8%. This was mainly because consumer goods were brought in from elsewhere. In Aqaba the sector mainly consisted of light handicrafts, some processing of foodstuffs, instrument repair, and maintenance works. The construction sector fell to 2.8%, primarily due to the slowness of the Jordanian economy. Agriculture and fishing have hardly developed over the last two decades, and make up 1.1% of the total employment.

#### 4.9 Summary

From the early 1950s until the mid-1980s Aqaba witnessed a period of considerable growth. This was linked to the overall economic growth of Jordan during these years. Among the various elements which played a role in this growth, I have identified political factors as the most influential. These may be grouped under the

four headings of external political factors, foreign relations, internal political strife and political centralisation. As well as exhibiting a vulnerability to certain political elements, Aqaba also displayed a readiness to adopt more positive elements within the political milieu.

Throughout the last four decades the central government in Amman has been the dominant force in determining Aqaba's pattern of growth. Yet by retaining most of the political and decision-making power, it has left the political organisation of Aqaba fragmented and unable to initiate local development. The result has been total dependence of Aqaba on the central government which was reflected in the town's growth, especially recently when Jordan's "roaring" years came to an end. If the aim of the government is to ease the growing stress and avoid a crisis, it should realise that disbursing economic resources and declaring political decentralisation is not enough. Authority and decision-making must be shared. The example of Eilat on the western side of the gulf will reinforce this thesis in the next part of this work.



## Notes for Chapter 4

1. This view was expressed by Captain Kurt Deutschmann. He was brought from the port of Bremen, West Germany, to act as the chief advisor to the APC between 1974 and 1981. Interview was conducted in March 1988, West Germany.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. The appointment of the port's Director General was subject to royal approval, while all other senior appointments required Ministry of Transport approval.
6. Interview with Deutschmann.
7. Report from the APC to Amman, Ministry of Transport, 4.3.1982.
8. Letter to the APC from a customer in Zarqa, 2.3.1981.
9. This plan became an important issue for Iraq after Syria closed Iraq's main pipeline to the Mediterranean port of Baniar in 1984. More details regarding this affair can be found in: MEES, 12.3.1984, 28.5.1984; An-Nhar, an Arab report and memo, 15.4.1984; Times, 5.5.1984; Newsview, 28.11.1984.
10. The huge cargo increase without a significant growth in the number of ships was due to more efficient utilisation of ships and shifting to the use of larger vessels.
11. Eli Elfayez was the APC's director general in 1987. Interview was conducted in November 1987, Aqaba.
12. Interview with several employees of Dar al-Handasah who took part in the company projects in Aqaba was conducted in December 1988, London.
13. Arab visitors during this period should also be regarded as tourists. It should be remembered that before the 1967 War Jordan controlled the holy places in the West Bank that attracted many Moslem visitors. Additionally, the influx of workers to Jordan at this time was insignificant. An unknown percentage of the total number of visitors came on business trips. However, the various sources do not provide information regarding purpose of travel, e.g. for studies, working or holiday.
14. Michael Harmaneh was Aqaba's tourism director general in 1987. Interview was conducted in November 1987, Aqaba.
15. 'Tjaereborg' maintained that the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism approached them in 1978 with a detailed letter about prices and facilities in Eilat compared to what they were willing to offer in Aqaba (by Telephone interview with the company office in Copenhagen, 1987).
16. These estimates came from several hotel managers.
17. Olef Hansen was the 'Tjaereborg' representative in Aqaba during the winters of 1979/80 and 1980/1. In winter 1986/7 he worked as the Star Tours representative in Eilat. Interview was conducted in April 1987, Eilat.
18. The number of Jordanians travelling on holiday is smaller than this figure.
19. Aqaba was considered the most expensive town in Jordan at this time even for Jordanians.
20. Report by 'Tjaereborg' Letter from a Swedish tourist to the Holiday Inn, 3.4.1979. The letter was provided by a senior manager of the Holiday Inn Hotel in Aqaba.
21. Interview with Dar al-Handasah.
22. Telephone interview with Thomson Holidays, November 1988, London.
23. According to these companies, the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism approached them between 1985-1987. Some were even invited to visit Aqaba, yet none thought that Aqaba was yet on a comparable

level with other sun and sea destinations such as the Gambia, Eilat etc... (answers were provided by telephone surveys with these companies).

24. Karen Obermayer works as a tour leader for 'Ontara Reisen' (West Germany). She has visited Aqaba frequently over the last three years. Interview was conducted in March 1988, Israel.

25. During my fieldwork in Aqaba, November 1987.

26. All population figures regarding Aqaba were taken from Jordan Statistical Yearbooks 1961-1986. Officials of the ARA also provided information pers. comm.

27. Abu Nuwwar was in 1986 the Director General of the ARA. Interview was conducted in December 1986, Aqaba.

28. This is only one example, as told by a local resident who was born in Aqaba and has lived there all his life.

29. Interview with Abu Nuwwar.

30. This was also indicated by Deutschmann and Abu Nuwwar.

31. The number of these officials is not clear, although from anecdotal information it appears that whatever this number was, they sometimes failed to turn up for work thus hindering efficient plan implementation and the information flow to Amman.

32. This was also indicated by several employees of Dar al-Handasah.

33. The Aqaba sub-region was created in 1978 after the reorganisation of Jordan into new administrative districts.

**Chapter 5 EILAT, FROM A MILITARY OUTPOST TO A 'TOWN', 1949-1956**

**5.1 Eilat, its Birth**

Eilat only fell into Israeli hands as a result of the War of Independence. On 5th March 1949 the Israeli government decided to launch "Operation *Ovda*" (in Hebrew: deed, fact) to enforce the U.N. partition plan regarding the allocation to Israel of 11 km on the north-eastern shore of the Gulf of Aqaba. On 11th March, after a 200 km journey through the Arava Valley and a few minor clashes with the Jordanian Legion (Levinson, 1961), an IDF unit captured Um Rashrash. That evening Ben-Gurion received the following telex from the southern front command:

"I am happy to inform you that at 20:30 hours tonight our forces completed the conquest of the Israeli Gulf of Eilat. The Israeli flag flies over the Um Rashrash police station" (1).

Um Rashrash, later to become Eilat, comprised at this time a compound of three mud huts (relics of the British police station). An Israeli soldier who arrived with the first IDF unit, and who had visited the site in the early 1940s, described the scene:

"It seemed to me that nothing had changed. There were the same mud huts and the same camel trails. The only difference was that we could no longer visit Aqaba..." (Sherman, 1977:18).

**5.2 The Israeli Political System**

Operation *Ovda* was the last Israeli military operation of the War of Independence, and established Israel's presence on the shores of the Red Sea. A government decision that was primarily motivated by political and strategic considerations may be viewed as setting a pattern for the future role of the government and political factors in determining the growth of Eilat.

Following the establishment of the state of Israel, the new government chose a centralised functional system. The state has become highly centralised, with extensive government control over regional and local affairs (Lissak and Gutman, 1971; Lazin, 1982). Power is organised along cultural, ideological and economic, rather than territorial, lines (Elazar, 1977). Throughout the years most of the political and economic power in Israel accumulated in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, which also accommodated most of the government offices.

The central government is made up of a coalition of parties, and it alone determines the degree of power it will transfer to various local bodies. Policy decisions are made by the centre and implemented using a top-down approach by local authorities that have only marginal discretionary powers. Central government maintains control over development policies at the lower level mainly by budgetary means. It assesses and collects taxes and reallocates them to local authorities. This practice gives the centre considerable leverage in its efforts to dominate local politics. Local and regional institutions are few and virtually powerless. The six regional districts and the fourteen subdistricts exist mainly for census purposes and have minor operational functions; these are functionally dominated by the centre through the Ministry of the Interior (Smith et al, 1970).

Political parties are highly centralised, functionally and spatially, and are controlled by a small number of leaders. The party elites control the periphery by means of large bureaucracies, which communicate directly with local branches without intermediaries at regional level (Aronoff, 1980). Party centralisation is reinforced by electoral machinery. There is a system of proportional representation, in which voters do not elect individual candidates to the Knesset, but rather choose parties which in turn send members to the Knesset according to the percentage of the votes they have received. Party candidates do not represent specific constituencies or geographic entities. Indeed, Waterman (1980) has pointed out that Israel is the only modern democracy in which there is no subdivision of the national territory for electoral purposes.

This arrangement seriously reduces representatives' dependency on local bases and thus their disposition to support local demands. It benefits the institutionalised central parties and blocks the expression of local interests. National problems are emphasised at the expense of regional ones (Zohar, 1974). The external threat to the existence of the state, and its small size, have often been used as justification to legitimise the highly centralised system.

The government exercises strong control over development policies around the country, including plans to build towns and settlements in unpopulated areas and along the borders to establish the state's sovereignty over empty regions (O'Sullivan and Miller, 1983; Efrat, 1984A; Brawer, 1986). This may be seen

particularly with the new towns that were established during the mass immigration period (1951-1955) to absorb new immigrants and fulfil the government policy of population dispersal (Amiran and Shachar, 1969), and in the sphere of economic development and planning directed at shaping public policy (Aharoni, 1976). In addition the government has always controlled all the social services in the country, including the provision of education, health, housing and other public services. It is also the largest employer in the country. The centre tends to view local bodies as administrative arms of the central government in the implementation of national policy at regional level. Local and regional institutions are few and virtually powerless. The municipalities lack independent authority, and the functional branches of the centre can sometimes exert greater influence than mayors and their councils. Consequently most development towns have traditionally been passive and subject to manipulation and control from above -- 'remote control communities' (Aronoff, 1973). Under this centralist approach interaction among various planning activities on the regional level are limited and uncoordinated (Cohen, 1970). Each department sets up its own scale of priorities and allocates its budget and personnel accordingly.

The Israeli case reveals a paternalistic pattern of dependency translated into core-periphery relationships. National political leaders deal mainly with issues such as foreign affairs and national security, often leaving local and regional issues in the insensitive hands of bureaucrats, causing antagonism between the centre and the periphery.

### 5.3 Politics and Eilat

"As the foundation of Eilat was a matter of political decision, without any stimulating local or regional factors, its growth was controlled mainly by political factors" (Karmon, 1976:121).

From the pre-independence political struggle to include Eilat within Israel, during its capture, and throughout its growth, Eilat's development was bound up with politics. External and internal political factors directly influenced the town, as well as shaping government policy toward Eilat. This emerged as a highly centralised top-down policy that particularly determined the town's development during its first three decades.

Unlike Aqaba which was primarily viewed by the Jordanian government as a port,

Eilat was designated by the Israeli government to fulfil several functions. Strategic considerations have always been the vital issue behind the establishment and continued existence of Eilat. Although the role of this factor has appeared to diminish over the years, it is still a crucial and uncompromising element in the government approach toward Eilat as well as to many other towns and settlements in the country. The port, industry and tourism have been regarded by both government and locals as the most natural and thus major economic sectors to fuel the town's development.

Regardless of which of these three sectors the government chose to develop, it usually did so with reference to its own interests and what it saw as national considerations, rather than taking into account Eilat as an independent entity with local needs. In its effort to implement national plans and development policy, the government sought to encourage Eilat's growth by integrating the town into some of these plans. One example was the development town programme of 1951-1955 (Efrat, 1984), that was built upon national needs and did not appreciate Eilat's unique regional character (this issue will be discussed in sections 6.6, 8.5).

It is important to note here that almost all Eilati land has been owned by the central government which was the main land owner in Israel (Efrat, 1979; Newman and Applebaum, 1989). The lack of political decision making power in Eilat, together with the government's sectoral approach to the economy resulted in constant conflicts of interest between central institutions as mainly local problems had to be referred to higher regional and usually central bodies (Cohen, 1970).

Whether Eilat's main pattern of development was based upon strategic considerations, upon the port, industry or tourism, the town's location and physical conditions played a vital role in the degree of success or failure of development plans. Between 1948 and 1975, with the Suez Canal closed to all forms of Israeli traffic, Eilat was vital to Israel for access to East Africa and the East. The journey from Eilat to Singapore was 9,200 km, compared with 18,900 km from Haifa or Ashdod. The significance of Eilat's location, and especially its geographical conditions, is also echoed in government plans for the town (Turner, 1978; Israel, Ministry of Tourism, 1965, 1979; Israel, Ministry of Interior, 1961, 1975) and in most works on the subject in human geography (Karmon, 1963, 1971, 1976;

Spiegel, 1966; Shmueli and Gradus, 1979; Efrat, 1984). Eilat's location and particularly her role as Israel's gateway to the south was also an important cause of certain international political events that in turn affected the life of the town.

Most of the events which directly or indirectly influenced Eilat's growth are rooted in the Arab-Israeli conflict and in superpower interests in the Middle East. These issues, which have been regarded by many scholars as an important key to understanding the history of the Middle East in this century (Vatikiotis, 1971; Shimoni, 1977; Barker, 1980; Yorke, 1988), also have a vital role to play in understanding Eilat's growth and many of the government decisions regarding the town. Yet this will only be mentioned briefly, as it has already been dealt with elsewhere. Israel's total isolation in the Middle East, involving a complete boycott by all her neighbours (until 1979), together with the country's small size, left her with a restricted local market, requiring only small-scale industrial production. Her geopolitical situation entailed heavy expenditure on arms. Moreover, 98% of her foreign trade was moved by sea (Gavriel, 1980). Freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal and the Red Sea (Lapidot, 1975, 1982; Marston, 1984), and especially free access to and from Eilat have always been considered absolutely essential by the Israeli government (Ayalon, 1978; Lucas, 1984). Thus the blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba by Egypt in 1953 and 1967 was an important factor in the outbreak of both the 1956 and 1967 Wars (Bloomfield, 1957; Melamid, 1957; Draper, 1968; Shimoni, 1977). Paradoxically, when Israel finally achieved complete freedom of navigation in both the Canal and the Gulf in the late 1970s, Eilat's port did in fact suffer. East-West relations, the wane of British influence in the Middle East against the rise in superpower influence (Alden, 1980; O'Sullivan and Miller, 1983; Taylor, 1985), the decolonisation process in Africa during the early 1960s and the Iranian revolution have been further factors to influence Eilat. Each of these topics will be further discussed in the relevant part of this work.

In addition, Eilat's development was overshadowed by the government's aim to achieve rapid economic growth and integrate the country into the world economy. During Israel's early years this was accompanied by government efforts to confront problems such as demographic growth that almost quadrupled the population between 1948 and 1978, far exceeding the rate in most underdeveloped countries. Other challenges included poor geographical conditions such as a lack of water and

scarcity of natural resources.

#### **5.4 From Army Post to Civilian Settlement, 1949-1951.**

The Eilat of 1949 was an encampment of military engineers comprising about 200 people alongside three abandoned mud huts (Israel, Ministry of Interior, 1959). There were no facilities for civilians, and permission to visit the area had to be obtained from the army. The single road to Eilat from the nearest town- Beersheba, 200 km to the north - was only a narrow twisting trail, described as a "geographical nightmare of sand, rocks and rubble" (Sherman, 1977:18). Supplies were brought from the north by military vehicle that required a day or two to negotiate the road. An Air Force plane or an occasional government-chartered El-Al flight to a provisional air strip built by the army on the flat area north of the water front (Turner, 1968), formed the only other means of transportation to Eilat. Water was brought in barrels from Beer-Ora, 10 km north of Eilat, but due to its poor quality it had to be desalinated by the army. Eilat's governor during this period described: "In 1949-1950 the idea of a town in Eilat seemed very far from materialisation" (2).

Help from the centre for initial social, economic and urban development of the periphery is inevitable any where (Myrdal, 1957; Friedmann, 1966; Pred, 1973). Eilat was totally dependent on the influx of goods, services, capital and labour from the centre, particularly considering its natural conditions, isolation from the rest of Israel and its lack of almost any sort of basic infrastructure. Promising prospects of massive aid from the centre may be seen in Ben Gurion's speech during a visit to Eilat in early 1950:

"...I am sure that a big international port, with hundreds of thousands of inhabitants, and later perhaps with a million, will exist on the Gulf of Eilat. A port city that will bring the products of big economy... to the end of Asia... is not a dream at all. The legend is not written in a book, but woven in reality" (3).

Indeed, all local needs, including food and transportation links to Eilat were provided by the government. In 1949 Ben Gurion formed the "Negev Committee" in Tel Aviv that was to examine the possibilities of developing the area, including Eilat. In the same year work began by the army on a water pipeline from Beer-Ora; the project was completed in 1951. A temporary jetty was also built for the navy's use. Yet it is hard to speak about concerted government policy toward



developing any form of civilian settlement or indeed to note any initiatives in this direction during 1949-1950. Government help was limited to essential needs for maintaining an Israeli presence on the Gulf of Aqaba. Army reports from Eilat during late 1949 and early 1950 reveal an atmosphere of confusion and uncertainty in the local unit. Morale was low and conditions were poor. There were a few cases of malaria, while a lack of health facilities meant that patients had to be flown to Tel Aviv (4).

It was only the pioneering spirit of Israel's early years that drew the first settlers to Eilat. They were attracted by the challenge of something new and different, of an opportunity for adventure (Arbel, 1974; Williams, 1974). A memorandum submitted by a group of three pioneers to the Negev Committee in March 1950 (Avizohar, 1974) led to a meeting with the Prime Minister. The pioneers suggested a plan for 100 families to settle in Eilat by the end of the year. They required government help to provide them with basic public services and a number of cooperative enterprises:

"We did have a kind of master plan, built on what we then saw as Eilat's development potential: shipping and fishing, tourist services and mining" (Avizohar, 1974:17).

Despite a positive reaction from Ben Gurion, the Ministry of Finance had more pressing issues to deal with, and Eilat's allocation was limited to 20 houses.

"My two partners drew the conclusion that the government was not yet prepared to start the settlement in Eilat. They withdrew from the whole affair... However, we were not willing to stop now! (Avizohar, 1974:17).

The small group succeeded in interesting some private bodies and in September 1949 established a few houses 4 km south of Um Rashrash. Fishing seemed an appropriate occupation:

"By primitive methods we caught a few boxes of fish each week and sent them north, covered with ice, begged from the nearby naval unit" (Avizohar, 1974:17).

In December 1949 a small group of pioneers from Holland joined the local fishermen. They aimed to establish a Kibbutz, but lack of resources changed their plan and they joined the local community (later they established Kibbutz Eilat, which was transferred 3 km northward in 1962). Apart from these people others, such as fishing fanatics and adventurers, considered themselves temporary residents for a few months, eager to take part in a new venture. Yet many found themselves

staying longer than expected, and slowly the group of permanent residents grew. By 1951, in addition to the 260 military personnel, 250 people were reported by the army as living in Eilat. Most of them lived in tents, shacks and huts (5).

The army, in charge of Eilat for the first few years, was also the main employer. Other residents created employment for themselves; for example, the first hotel, 'Red Sea', was opened in the old Um Rashrash police station which had been refurbished. Eilat's first governor summarised Eilat life during the first two years:

"People in Eilat had no permanent way of life; they had to improvise in the face of each new situation" (6).

Ideas and plans for new enterprises came also from private bodies around the country. They regarded Eilat as a port town and suggested developing it as an import centre for a range of commodities from East Africa, for oil from Bahrain, or building a fish processing factory. All these plans indicated, however, that an essential prerequisite for any form of development was the improvement of the poor accessibility of Eilat (7). It was a private initiative that brought the first ship to Eilat. On June 21, 1950 an Italian freighter arrived from Aden. The cargo consisted of items belonging to Yemenite immigrants. The goods were unloaded onto barges and thence to the shore, with many of Eilat's residents participating in this special event.

Calls by both residents and outsiders for increased government support and involvement in the development effort resulted in growing disappointment, especially for the locals; "We did not get any response to our modest demands..." (Avizohar, 1974:17). Government initiatives continued to be limited mainly to basic and military needs. They included the provision of electricity generators, laying water pipes, building a post office, etc. Three shacks were built by the Engineer Corps in 1950 for official use only. By the end of that year the construction of 12 civilian dwellings had begun. In November the Ministry of Agriculture transferred a few fishing boats to Eilat that were also used as navy patrol boats.

Even when the government initiated projects, the over-involvement of government officials in even minor details, together with heavy bureaucracy, hindered development. For example, additional finance for the completion of a small warehouse near the jetty had to be negotiated between the Negev Committee and

the Ministry of Finance (8). The completion of the 12 dwellings in 1952 became the cause of another controversy, as nobody in Eilat was prepared to pay the rent. As a result, government employees occupied the new houses, while Eilati residents continued to live in their tents.

In 1950 Israel's main bus cooperative launched a twice-weekly service to/from Eilat. Due to security problems, however, air transport continued to provide the vital link to the town. This latter service also suffered from government bureaucracy. In February 1950 the government replaced the army-run flights to Eilat by El-Al civilian planes, and a month later established an internal airline, 'Arkia', regarded by the government as responsible "for keeping Eilat alive" (Sherman, 1977:30). However, in spite of government guarantee to subsidise and maintain the vital route, the service suffered from interruption as a result of financial disputes between the treasury and Arkia. This led to a shortage of supplies to Eilat, causing harsh criticism and complaints to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv (9).

The government approach to Eilat did not encourage the local population in its confrontation with the harsh natural conditions. It created bitterness and frustration among the local pioneers, and discouraged people from moving to Eilat. Some even left. One of the pioneers described the situation:

"Not funding an economic development of Eilat did save the state money, but evoked an atmosphere of 'non-existence' and disappointment in Eilat" (Avizohar, 1974:17).

In 1952 the chairman of the Negev Committee resigned. The committee was disbanded and replaced by an 'Arava Division' in the Ministry of Agriculture, a change which did nothing to improve the situation.

Eilat's problems on the one hand and government neglect on the other provided an impetus to community-mindedness. A local committee was 'elected' (10) and functioned unofficially for about a year with no authority other than what it assumed (11). It nevertheless made a mark on Eilat. It made demands regarding urban development, the construction of housing projects, increasing the population, and providing jobs for civilians (12). It also initiated social activities, such as creating a library and bringing the Israeli Cameri Theatre to perform in an improvised outdoor theatre.

Since the chairman and all the members of Eilat's committee were affiliated with the Histadrut (Israel's labour federation), the latter was on the receiving end of their demands as much as the government. Unlike the government, however, the Histadrut responded. The year 1952 witnessed the establishment of several important institutions: a bakery, a consumers' cooperative, first aid clinic, and a building for a fish meal enterprise.

Progress was not rapid enough for those who wanted to make their home in Eilat. The committee asked the Minister of the Interior to approve a local council, and he acquiesced. On December 1952 a Writ of Appointment was issued, appointing nine members of the existing committee to the local council. Its inaugural session was held on January 1953. Eilat was an 'official' settlement in Israel.

### **5.5 Hard Times, 1953-1956**

In the following years, despite the government's official recognition of Eilat as a civilian town, it continued to regard the place primarily as a military outpost and most of its activity concentrated on security issues. For the government, Eilat in the far south and connected to the north only by a dirt road, was regarded as too remote, too vulnerable for civilian settlement and too costly to be included in various national development schemes. During this period of austerity, Israel struggled to absorb waves of immigrants and fought against endless terrorist attacks on its border settlements. Thus the government did not see an urgent need to invest its limited resources in the isolated settlement. As far as Eilat was militarily secure and was provided with essential needs, Jerusalem sought to deal with more burning issues (Arbel, 1974; Avizohar, 1974). Even when the government launched its "population dispersal" plan (Sharon, 1951; Amiran and Shachar, 1969), Eilat was not included.

A few individuals in the government wished to promote development plans in Eilat, but security problems frustrated their efforts and hampered Eilat's growth. A plan for Eilat's development (Israel, Ministry of Interior, 1954) proposed by a few senior officials in the Ministry of the Interior, suggesting several local initiatives, mainly fishing and urban projects, gained no support from colleagues. For both government and military officials the old dirt road to Eilat was very plainly vulnerable. Although there were no incursions into Eilat itself, Arab guerrillas

passed across the Jordanian border almost at will and wreaked havoc whenever possible. The attack on a civilian bus service en route to Eilat on March 17, 1954, in which 11 people were killed, had particularly negative effects. Following this incident, all buses were provided with a military escort. The Minister of Interior decided to shelve the plan for the time being. The incident also deterred new people from joining the community.

Most government activity in and around Eilat dealt with security issues. In 1954 work was initiated by the Ministry of Transport to improve and expand the road network in the Negev in order to ensure safer routes to the south. This included a new asphalt road from Beersheba to Eilat via various new Negev settlements. In Eilat, following a winter flood in 1953/4 which swept a few mines into Eilat's airport area, the government began to pave the runway and the main streets.

Even when local initiatives emerged, government support was limited. This could be seen for example in the poor medical facilities. Apart from first aid, serious cases, including the delivery of babies, had to be sent north. Local demand for better facilities was fruitless. As well as discouraging new settlers, this actually drove people away (13). In another case the mayor was told to find the recruits himself when the municipality wanted to increase the town's population.

Another example may be seen when in 1955 it was decided that air delivery was too costly. Transportation was transferred to trucks, which had to make their way along the dirty, bumpy road "They (the trucks) picked up tomatoes in Tel Aviv and 12 to 16 hours later arrived in Eilat with catsup" (14). Moreover, Eilat became a 'penal colony'. The Israeli police and magistrates began to banish unsavoury characters to Eilat. Though some of them reformed and became respected citizens, some continued to make trouble (15). This did not help to attract people to Eilat and created further anger in the town: "It was like the Wild West - minus the saloon and bar ladies" (Sherman, 1977:48).

The Histadrut was the main external civilian body to initiate development in Eilat. Its construction firm set up a branch and built houses. The first project of 20 houses was completed in 1953. As no systematic town planning existed, the first buildings were constructed near the army camp along a few roads designated by

the army. The first two stores for food and general supplies were also opened by the Histadrut.

Despite the local enthusiasm to develop Eilat, in 1955 Eilat was still almost totally dependent on the government. The army provided most of the jobs for the 450 permanent settlers, as well as electric power, medical care and most other essential services. Other services and goods, ranging from food commodities to cooking fuel, continued to be provided by the government. They were delivered to the local council who in turn distributed them to the population. The government also subsidised the air transportation of fish from Eilat to Tel Aviv. In 1954 it declared Eilat a development town (Efrat, 1987), a description that had little meaning at this time.

### 5.5.1 Eilat's Port

A port in Eilat as Israel's gateway to the south had already been visualised by Ben Gurion in 1934 (Ben Gurion, 1963), and was a bone of contention in the Zionist political struggle for Eilat (section 2.3). Moreover, building a port in Eilat was the main idea of Eilat's first group of pioneers, and had received the Prime Minister's approval in 1949. Yet apart from the small jetty, a few shacks and small warehouse, used by a few fishermen and the navy, nothing else was done in this period to indicate that Eilat was a port city. In fact, only on February 24, 1952 did the government officially declare Eilat to be a harbour (16). This was after 2 ships arrived there during 1950-1951.

Inevitably, building a port required heavy government investment and effort. For Eilat's pioneers, and certain other officials in Tel Aviv, developing a port seemed crucial in order to place Eilat on the path of development. They appealed many times to the government and the Prime Minister to develop the port. But the response was literally nil:

"Government offices were stacked with a vast abundance of negative answers" (Avizohar, 1974:18).

I could not suggest that the government had an official policy of not building a port in Eilat. Nevertheless, none of the government ministries showed a willingness to become involved in such a project at that time. This may be attributed to the view of Eilat held by the Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs until 1956.

They saw Eilat as vulnerable to the sea blockade declared by Egypt in 1949 (Bloomfield, 1957). Government officials maintained that the Israeli army was not yet prepared to break a sea lane out of Eilat, and it was argued that:

"To send a merchant ship in the sure knowledge that Egypt would stop it while we had no prepared military response would mean strengthening the blockade by our own action" (17).

The Eilatis did not accept this view, mainly because although Egypt had declared a blockade on all shipping to and from Eilat in 1949, by 1952 it had not yet materialised. The two ships that arrived in Eilat during these years did not suffer any problems, and were used by the port supporters as a reason for placing further pressure on the government to bring ships and develop a port (18). In 1953, however, the government raised economic considerations which were based upon the inadequate road to Eilat. One ton of goods brought from East Africa to central Israel via Eilat would cost more than transportation around the Cape of Good Hope via Gibraltar to Haifa. Government officials claimed:

"When there will be a budget to pave a road to Eilat, then there will be justification for development of a port in Eilat" (19).

The national shipping line, Zim, shared this pessimism. They said they could not charter a suitable vessel for the East Africa - Eilat line (20).

Again it was the initiative of Eilat's pioneers supported by certain officials that rebelled against the government's decision. Based on the belief that the Egyptians would not risk stopping a ship that sailed under a foreign flag, they chartered a Dutch ship that reached Eilat in June 1952, bringing building materials from Mombasa. Government response to the initiative was unenthusiastic; "In any case, nothing will come of it" (Avizohar, 1974:18).

The success of the local initiative in breaking the blockade echoed on the international level. Egypt, now led by Nasser following his coup against King Farouk (23 July 1952) was pressing for a more radical approach toward Israel. In early 1953 she emplaced guns in Ras Nasrani, placing the international maritime shipping lane under Egyptian control. In the following two years five cases were reported of Egyptian attacks on ships en route to Eilat. In two cases the cargo was confiscated, and once an Italian ship was prevented from entering the Gulf. All ships sailed under non-Israeli flags (Bloomfield, 1957. See also note 12, chapter 2).

Despite these problems, eight ships arrived in Eilat before the 1956 Suez War.

By 1956 the 'port' of Eilat was still far from being a port by any standards. It had no employees and no piers or cranes. It was owned by the government, whose representative in Eilat was also responsible for port operations:

"When a ship came, a customs official would come to Eilat to register the legal documents. A foreman from the port of Jaffa also came to Eilat to organise unloading of the vessel. He would arrive at the administrative shack to recruit labourers, then go unload the ship that was about 500-1000 tons, and needed 2-3 days. The money was paid by the government" (Arbel, 1974).

### 5.5.2 Tourism

Tourism in Eilat was a neglected topic in the various government plans. During Israel's early years tourism was under the responsibility of the Prime Minister's Office. Although its first four-year plan for tourism development (Israel, Prime Minister's Office, 1949) suggested that:

"Tourism development will serve the country as a vehicle for development, employment and a vital source of foreign currency income" (Israel, Prime Minister office, 1949:5).

Despite the plan identifying the country's beaches as one of the main tourist attractions, it did not suggest any concrete steps regarding Eilat, and in fact the Red Sea is only briefly mentioned (in comparison with the Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee). Like Eilat's first hotel, all other tourist initiatives in Eilat were taken by individuals who had come to the place, some as part of the army, some as visitors, liked what they saw and stayed (Arbel, 1974; Gilleck, 1974). Early tourism in Eilat included mainly Jeep tours of the desert and bathing in the sea as part of the package. Government negligence of Eilat's tourism is further noticeable in view of the attempts by some of the tourist's pioneers' to enlist government help in developing tourism in Eilat, which achieved little more than the promise that "the government will actively support the creation of a real tourist centre in Eilat" (21). But until the Suez War nothing was done and Eilat was totally absent from any sort of tourist development activity by the government. According to army figures visitors to Eilat numbered 10.000 to 20.000 per year between 1950 and 1955 (Israel, 1962). They were mainly either Israelis who sought to visit their country's southernmost point, or a few foreign adventurers. They usually camped near the army base or on the beach, a few staying in the single hotel.



## Summary

In 1956 Eilat was an isolated settlement in the southernmost point of Israel. Its hinterland was virtually empty, with the exception of one army settlement of about 40 people, 12 km north of Eilat. The town consisted of a mixture of houses, shacks and tents along fewer than ten streets (photograph 3). Its population reached 520 permanent settlers (200 in 1951), a far cry from Ben Gurion's predictions. Eilat was a fact of life, but the place was "like an undernourished desert plant with only the will to live to keep it going" (Sherman, 1977:53). Indeed, Eilat had a port and an airport, yet flights to Eilat depended more on aircraft availability and demand than on scheduling. The ominous presence of Egyptian guns at Ras Nasrani made the whole concept of a free waterway questionable. The road to the north was hazardous and the presence of armed guards a constant reminder of the dangers of terrorism.

Eilat's growth was also hindered by government policy that mainly concerned itself with maintaining an Israeli presence on the shores of the Gulf of Aqaba. At this time security reasons beyond its control, and internal economic priorities, meant that government assistance to Eilat was insufficient to develop "A big international port, with hundreds of thousands of inhabitants" (22). In fact Tel Aviv/Jerusalem's support was just enough to provide the basic needs required to sustain Eilat's presence in the area. Yet it could not generate any significant developments, and indeed much local development must be attributed to the stubborn determination of Eilat's settlers to bring life to the desert.

In September 1955 Egypt notified the world that prior permission would be required for all forms of foreign shipping to pass through the Straits of Tiran. Egypt also demanded the abandonment of El Al flights down the international waterway, threatening to intercept civilian ships and airliners on their way to and from Eilat. In October 1956 Egypt nationalised the Suez Canal. The implications were clear; Egypt was preparing for war. It was also evident that if Israel did not react the entire Negev would be strangled and Eilat would remain a settlement in name only.



Photograph 3 The Area of Eilat and Aqaba (August 1956)

- Key
- Residential
  - Tourism
  - Port
  - Commercial/Industry



Photograph 3 The Area of Eilat and Aqaba (August 1956)

## Notes for Chapter 5

1. Israel State Archive (ISA)/RG56.B5511.5103. From a telex sent by the IDF southern command to the Prime Minister's Office, Jerusalem, 11.3.1949.
2. Abraham Zakai was the military governor of Eilat from 1949-1951. Interview was conducted in March 1987, Beersheba.
3. From Ben Gurion's speech during a visit to Eilat in early 1950. Eilat Municipal Archive (EMA), F1950, 11.3.1950.
4. Private archive of A. Zakai. A report sent by A. Zakai during his time as Eilat's governor to the Negev Committee, Tel Aviv; Eilat - General Report No. 2.
5. Interview with A. Zakai.
6. Private archive of A. Zakai. A special report from the Negev Committee in Tel Aviv, to Prime Minister, D. Ben Gurion; Review of two years of activity in the Negev, August 1949-August 1951. 15.9.1951.
7. Private archive of A. Zakai. Letter from N. Agmon (private businessman) to the Israeli Foreign Office, Economic Department, Jerusalem; Future development in Eilat. 23.7.1950.
8. ISA/RG43.B5555.F7021, Series of letters between the Negev Committee and the Ministry of Finance from 1952-1954.
9. ISA/RG43.B5439.F1601. This can be seen in a series of letters between the municipality of Eilat and various government offices from 1950-1955.
10. Since no electoral system existed at this time, the people who cared most about the situation simply constituted themselves as a committee (Arbel, 1974).
11. Interview with A. Zakai.
12. ISA/RG43.B5322.F8647. Report from Eilat Council to the Ministry of the Interior, Jerusalem; The essential needs of Eilat, 15.5.1955.
13. Private archive of A. Zakai. Report from A. Zakai to the Prime Minister Office, Jerusalem during his time as Eilat's governor. 15.11.1951.
14. Ze'ev Moskovitz came to Eilat with the Engineer Corps in spring 1949 and has remained to this day. Interview was conducted in March 1987, Eilat.
15. Y. Yakov was a police officer in Eilat during the late 1960s. Interview was conducted in November 1987, Eilat.
16. Reshumot Kovetz Hatakanot (The Israeli Official Gazette), No. 282, 26.6.1952.
17. ISA/RG43.B5233.F7563. Letter from the Prime Minister's office to Mayor of Eilat; Operating Eilat's port, 5.1.1952.
18. ISA/RG43.B5642.F9842. Series of letters from the Municipality of Eilat and the Negev Committee to the Prime Minister's office, Jerusalem, 1952-1953.
19. ISA/RG45.B4374.F3735. Letter from the Ministry of Transport to Mayor of Eilat; Future development of Eilat's port, 20.5.1953.
20. ISA/RG43.B3465.F7582. Report by Zim (Israeli Navigation Corporation), to the Prime Minister's office, Jerusalem; Integrating Eilat's port into Zim international shipping lines, 9.3.1953.
21. M. Melzer is involved in Eilat's tourist industry and a former member of the local municipality. He presently owns a travel agency in the town. Interview was conducted in April 1987, Eilat.
22. See ref. 3.

## **Chapter 6 EILAT - ISRAEL'S GATEWAY TO THE SOUTH; 1956 TO THE LATE 1970s**

The Sinai Campaign had a tangible effect on Eilat. Two months after the war, Eilat's population rose from 520 to 930, and by March 1959 the settlement had 3500 permanent residents. A new road link with the north, the government's establishment of a large-scale mining operation in Timna, the construction of a new port, and a growing number of holiday-makers in Eilat made the town a focus for plans and dreams. Israel fought to keep open the bottleneck at Sharm el-Sheikh, and Eilat was officially proclaimed Israel's gateway to the south. It was the beginning of a new era of significant growth and development for Eilat.

### **6.1 Major Political Trends 1956 and 1973**

The Suez War heralded a new era for Eilat. After 1956 the town was freed from the threat of Egyptian strangulation and could fulfil its role as Israel's gateway to the south. Surpassing even the enthusiasm of Eilat's small community to develop the town, the government emerged with a new policy that encouraged its development and embarked on a new pattern of growth in all sectors of life. One of Eilat's pioneers summarised: "After 1956 the government decided that the port town should not only live but thrive" (1). Yet considering some of the implication of the Suez War and later the 1967 War, as well as political trends in Israel and elsewhere, I would note that some major initiatives in Eilat were due to expediency rather than benevolence, and it is questionable whether Eilat could have experienced its post 1956 development at all had these events not occurred. An examination of the town's growth in the following years will further consolidate this point.

On the international level, the Suez War was a milestone in East-West relations in the Middle East (Ro'i, 1973; Alden, 1980). As Britain's role in the area declined, Russia, which had supported Israel in 1948, intensified its policy in the area, while its allies Rumania and Czechoslovakia provided most of Israel's oil and arms respectively. Russia now presented a new policy of supporting the Arab side with its widespread and bitter feelings toward Israel and Western imperialism in the Middle East. Following a demonstration of political support in the U.N., the new Soviet policy became apparent when Egypt concluded a large military transaction with Czechoslovakia in September 1955. Alden (1980) sums up this period:

"The dramatic events of 1956 completed the 180-degree Soviet policy reversal from the 1947 support of Israel against the Arabs to a pro-Arab policy against Israel" (Alden, 1980:209).

In 1956 Rumania declared an oil embargo on Israel as part of the Soviet anti-Israel policy after the Suez War. Fuel reserves in Israel dropped to an alarming level (Aroch and Kochvah, 1979). During this time Iran was eager to sell her oil. She had difficulty in finding customers following the nationalisation of her oil industry by Muhammad Mossadeq in 1951 (Crosbie, 1974; Beaumont et al, 1988). Israel and Iran made a deal, and Iran became Israel's greatest oil supplier over the next two decades (Reppa, 1974). Eilat's location was to turn the town into Israel's main gateway for oil imports.

During the decolonisation period in South-East Asia and Africa in the 1950s and early 1960s Israel's total regional isolation made her very eager to establish diplomatic and economic relations with the newly established countries. The latter were keen to receive the technological, agricultural and particularly military assistance that Israel offered. By the mid 1960s Israel had direct diplomatic and trade relations with 27 developing countries in Africa and 14 in Asia. Additionally, even countries that had declined to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, such as Indonesia, China, Ceylon and Malaysia, founded trade links with Israel via transit ports. Lively trade relations were also established with Australia and the developed countries in the East. Eilat was destined to play a key role in these new developments.

The third Arab-Israeli war in June 1967 was a further boost to Eilat's position. The Israeli capture of the Sinai Peninsula provided the town with a new hinterland, larger than the state of Israel. The government and especially the army focused much attention and resources on the area, so that the former frontier outpost became an important link in the army's southern command. The closure of the Suez Canal during the war was a further factor in Eilat's new burst of activity. She was to become a major link in the new alternative route to the Suez Canal linking the Red Sea and the Mediterranean.

Apart from the influence of political events, Eilat's growth after 1956 was a result of general economic development in Israel. The country enjoyed the influx of large

amounts of capital, gifts from world Jewry, grants in aid from the U.S. government and reparations from West Germany (Horowitz et al, 1973). A further economic boom was experienced following the 1967 War. Cheap Palestinian labour played a significant role in the expansion of the Israeli economy, particularly in the construction industry. The occupied territories provided new markets for Israel's products and contributed substantially to the expansion of its export trade (Yorke, 1988). In addition a constant stream of immigrants, many of whom brought skills and know-how into country, greatly contributed to the steady annual growth in GNP by an average of some 10% a year during the period 1948-1972 (Israel, 1980).

The main power behind the government initiative to develop Eilat was generated by a sequence of internal and external political factors rather than by any pre-planned programme to develop the town per se. Consequently, much of the development effort was concentrated on projects regarded as high priority by the government and destined to fulfil national goals. With its top-down policy and control from afar (Aronoff, 1973) the government failed to appreciate Eilat's unique character as a development town. Instead of utilising the various projects to achieve maximum benefit and development in Eilat, their contribution to the town was limited. Although conditions in Eilat were harder than in most of Israel's other development towns, Jerusalem regarded Eilat as just another 'link among the other development towns' (Israel, 1957). Failing to appreciate her special needs, Jerusalem in fact slowed down her growth. This also contradicted government aims to achieve balanced regional development (Brodt, 1973). As Eilat's high dependence on the government remained, the latter failed in some cases to respond adequately to local needs. Hence the high aspirations and great efforts put into Eilat gave relatively meagre results which caused disappointment in the town as well as in the centre.

## **6.2 The Port Boom, 1956-1980**

"The port of Eilat is the main *raison d'être* for the existence of the town" (Karmon, 1979:83).

Following the 1956 War the sea route to Eilat was opened up. Yet the town was still subject to a different type of blockade, by the state of Israel herself. While the new road was under construction the existing route, with its vulnerability to terrorist attacks, was unsuitable and did not encourage the development of relations

between the town and the production and consumption centre of Israel. From the end of the Suez War until late 1957 only 27 ships arrived in Eilat, most of their 32,570 tons of cargo consisting of imported wood from East Africa. Only the inauguration of the new road from Beersheba via the Negev in January 1958 provided the vital link required for further development. As Eilat possessed neither hinterland nor industry, the town served only as an intermediary between Israel and the potential markets. Together with the political structure in Israel, this meant that she played little role in determining the development of her own port. Furthermore, under the Israeli centralist system, any developments initiated in the port emerged with relatively little benefit for Eilat.

### 6.2.1 The Oil Port (2)

With the Suez Canal closed to all traffic to Israel, Eilat was the most obvious choice as a destination for oil cargoes from Iran following the oil agreement between Iran and Israel in early 1957. Israel's fear of fuel starvation following the Rumanian embargo made the need to construct oil-handling facilities an urgent priority (3). In January 1957 the Ministry of Finance established a government holding company, "Afikei Neft". Intensive work began, and in less than four months a 320 km eight-inch pipeline was laid between Eilat and Beersheba. Simultaneously, oil storage and pumping facilities and an unloading pier were built 2.5 km south of the existing cargo wharf which created Eilat's port at that time. On April 9, 1957 the first tanker arrived in Eilat (4). The oil was transferred to Beersheba and from there by train to the refineries in Haifa. At the same time "Afikei Neft" began laying a 16 inch pipeline from Beersheba to Haifa. This project was completed on July 21, 1958, with capacity of 450 cubic metres per hour.

In 1959 the government, together with the Rothschild family, established a new company, the "Eilat Pipeline Corporation" to replace "Afikei Neft". The new company replaced the eight-inch oil pipeline from Eilat to Beersheba with a 16-inch line, raising the capacity to 450 cubic metres per hour. In addition, new oil tanks were built in Eilat, each with a capacity of 30,000 cubic metres. Improvement work was also launched on the new oil pier, enabling it to handle tankers of 100,000 tons deadweight and halving the time required for manoeuvring.



The Six Day War brought further changes in the fuel situation. The closure of the Suez Canal caused delays and fuel shortages in Europe, and raised the idea in Jerusalem to create an alternative route to the Suez Canal via the Eilat-Ashkelon pipeline. This idea was strongly supported by Iran, which saw the pipeline as an alternative way to the Suez Canal and a way to reach the European market more directly than round Africa. In addition Israel captured several Egyptian oil fields in the Gulf of Suez, and imported the oil via Eilat to its own market. However the existing line was too narrow for the anticipated oil flow, and so in 1968 the Israeli government decided to lay a new 42-inch pipeline to transfer crude oil from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean. It replaced the "Eilat Pipeline Cooperation" with the "Eilat-Ashkelon Pipeline Company". With Iran providing half of the \$63m investment (Maariv, 22.12.1989), and government and private bodies contributing the remainder, the new line was built between June 1968 and December 1969 from Eilat to Zikkim Beach near Ashkelon. In Eilat a new pier was constructed to handle tankers of up to half a million tons, and storage tanks with a total capacity of a million tons were built.

In the first year of its operation, 11 million tons of oil were transferred via the line. In 1972 oil flow reached 25.5 million tons (Mishali, 1979). The October War of 1973 saw an Egyptian blockade at Bab-el-Mandab of traffic en route to Eilat, resulting in a small decline to 23 million tons, but in 1977 the figure rose to 30 million tons. Israel regarded the project as a great success and despite the preparation for reopening the Suez Canal it envisioned that the expansion of the line would enable it to carry more than 60 million tons per year by the late 1970s.

However, the first signs of problems overclouding the initial success appeared in the early 1970s. The new pipeline, which according to the Israeli government had been built for "purely economic considerations" (Aroch and Kochvah, 1979:743), could not by its very nature and location remain free of political controversy. The line was boycotted by the Arab League (Drysdale and Blake, 1985), with only Iran using it to reach her western markets more directly. The risk of being added to the Arab blacklist made even the U.S.A oppose the use of the pipeline by its oil companies (Adelman, 1972). Moreover, by mid-1974 work was under way towards the reopening of the Suez Canal, causing some uncertainty in Israel regarding the future development of the pipeline. Despite these anxieties Israel regarded the line

as a political success, as it placed the country on the world oil map (Aroch and Kochvah, 1979). Its importance was further highlighted when Egypt copied the project and built a similar line as an alternative to the Suez Canal (5).

In spite of its overall national importance, the oil port contributed little to the economy and development of Eilat. As the government controlled and ran the project, Eilat's municipality had no role in the oil port. The headquarters and most of the administration and company employees were in Tel-Aviv. The construction work was carried out by government companies whose employees usually came to Eilat for a short period and later returned home. Even major maintenance projects were carried out by teams brought specially from the north. Compared to about 700 employees in the Eilat-Ashkelon Pipeline Company, only about 200 local residents were employed in the oil port and related installations around Eilat.

### **6.2.2 The Port Becomes A "Real Port"**

Eilat's role as Israel's gateway to the south was fulfilled immediately following the 1956 War, when the Ministry of Trade and Industry chartered foreign vessels to run a regular service between Eilat and countries on the coast of the Indian Ocean (6). Yet the port, with its 175 metre long wharf and poor equipment created a small anchorage rather than a "sea port". A government report in 1957 described the situation:

"Despite the structural reinforcement work, the port of Eilat consists of a primitive anchorage and a few impromptu structures geared for only the most sporadic type of maritime traffic... Activity is ad hoc... Significant improvement in accordance with plans to increase the port activity are inevitable" (7).

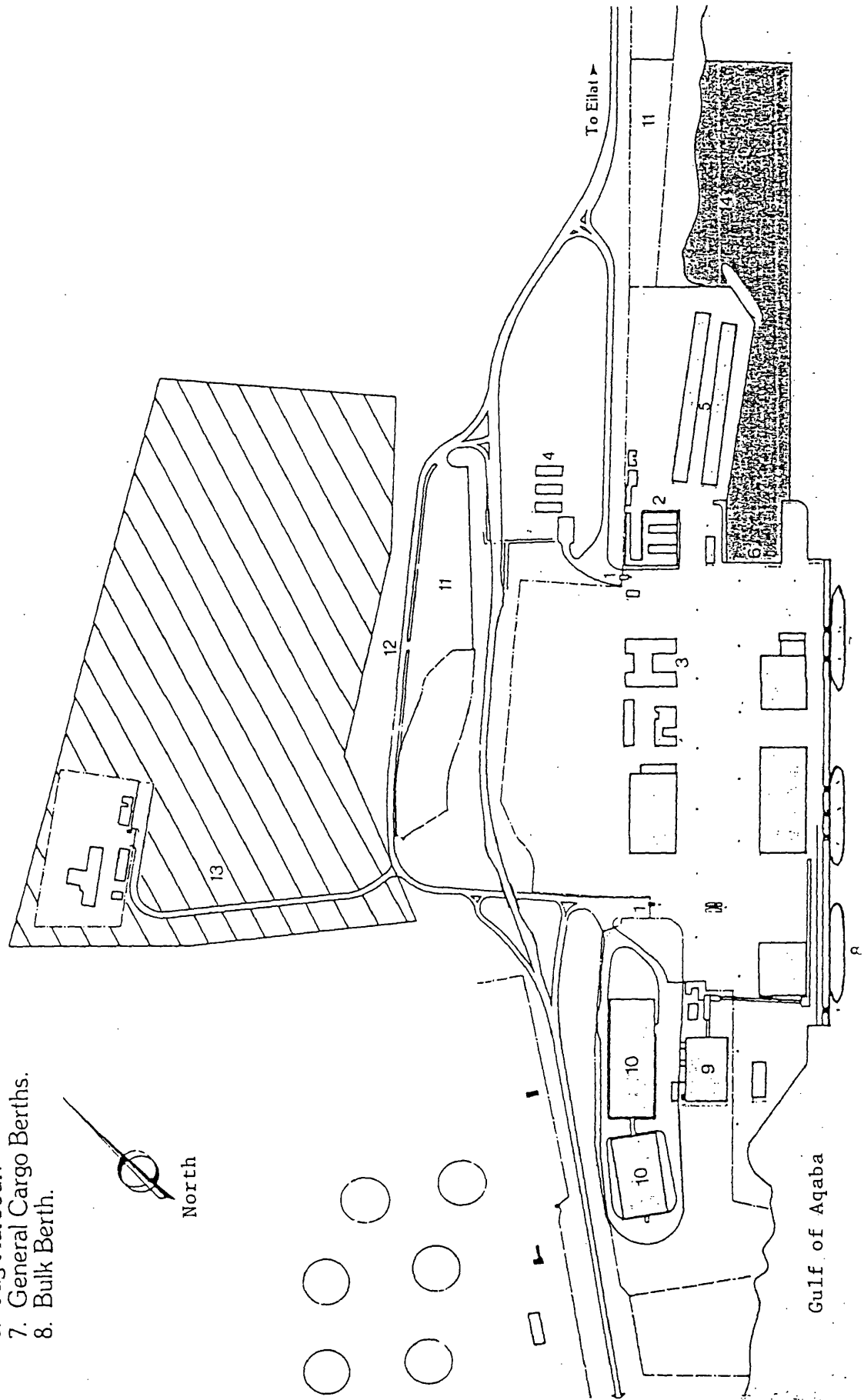
The prospects for an increase in port traffic further grew toward the late 1950s, mainly as Israel developed political and economic relations with a growing number of African and Asian countries (8). Eilat was the natural outlet for these new links, especially while the Suez Canal was closed to all forms of traffic and goods en route to and from Israel. Competition with Israeli Mediterranean ports for foreland focused mainly on two areas: South and West Africa and Japan (Karmon, 1979). The inauguration of the new road from Beersheba to Eilat in 1958 and the plan to construct a new road from the Dead Sea through the Arava to Eilat (opened in 1965) was further encouragement to the development of the port.

# PORT OF EILAT - GENERAL PLAN

Figure 6.1

- 1. Port Gates
- 2. Port Administration Bldg.
- 3. Workshops.
- 4. Customers Offices.
- 5. Container Stacking Area.
- 6. Tug Harbour.
- 7. General Cargo Berths.
- 8. Bulk Berth.
- 9. Phosphate Storage.
- 10. Potash Storage.
- 11. Open Storage.
- 12. New Access Road
- 13. Free Port Zone.
- 14. Container Terminal (planned).

Source, Israel Port Authority, 1986



In 1958 the government drew up a plan to build a new port a kilometre south of the existing jetty. Work was launched in 1962 and it was opened in September 1965, providing a new wharf of 528 metres and new handling facilities, including an automatic loader for potash and phosphate, and a storage area (figure 6.1). At this stage the port could handle up to 4 ships simultaneously. The old site remained in use by the Israeli navy.

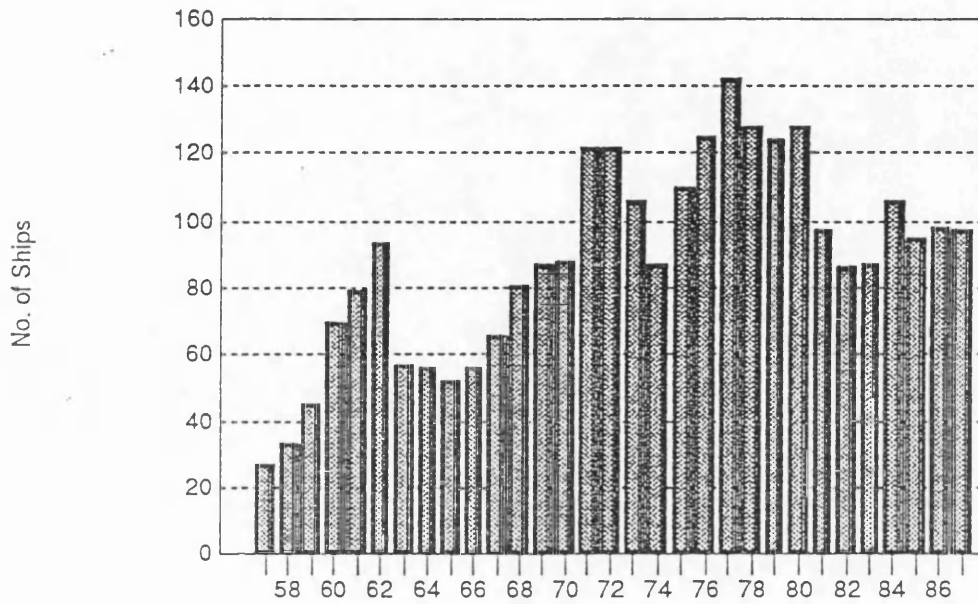
The traffic using Eilat's port grew rapidly. Compared to 33 ships calling in Eilat and 97,000 tons passing through in 1958 (9), 93 ships called in 1962 with 189,000 tons(10). The use of larger ships reduced the figure of ships to 56 in 1966, but total traffic handled reached 260,000 tons in this year (figures 6.2, 6.3). Since the mid-1960s Zim (the national shipping line) had replaced the chartered vessels with a regular service to South Africa, Iran, India, Japan and Australia (Ministry of Transport, 1967). The growing activity in the port mirrored the developing relations between Israel and Africa and Asia. In the early 1960s 33% of Israel's total African import arrived via Eilat, of which South Africa provided a quarter. 75% of all African cargo consisted of metals and tropical woods. The other quarter consisted mainly of various agricultural products. Strengthening relations with South and East Asia and Australia resulted in cargo from this area growing from 11,500 tons in 1960 to 40,000 in 1966. This figure was dominated by Australia and Japan, which together contributed 70% of the total import, consisting mainly of cars, machinery and grain.

Exports via Eilat grew between 1960 and 1966 from 95,000 tons to 207,000 tons. The increasing Israeli involvement in Black Africa raised exports to the continent via Eilat by 50% during this period (Decter, 1977). These exports included bicycles, sewing machines, refrigerators, electrical goods, textiles etc. To Asia exports doubled during the same period, mainly consisting of minerals from the Negev such as phosphates, potash and copper. These formed 75% of the total export passing through Eilat. More symbolic than meaningful to the port's growth, yet further emphasising the role played by politics, around 15% of the total export via Eilat at this time was described as "security equipment". Officials generally refused to discuss the subject; yet one of the port employees told me:

"The well-covered objects were usually loaded by the night shift... We took extra care with the boxes marked in red letters: 'Explosives'" (11).

Figure 6.2

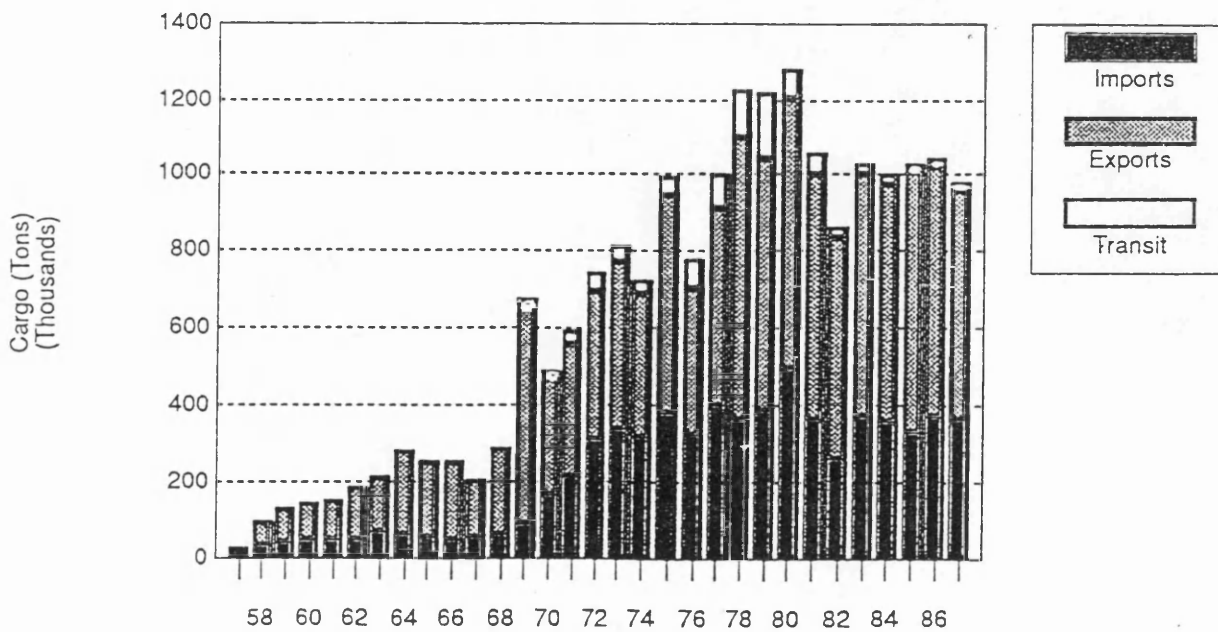
### Eilat Port Traffic (ships) 1957-1987



Source, Israel Port Authority, 1986-7

Figure 6.3

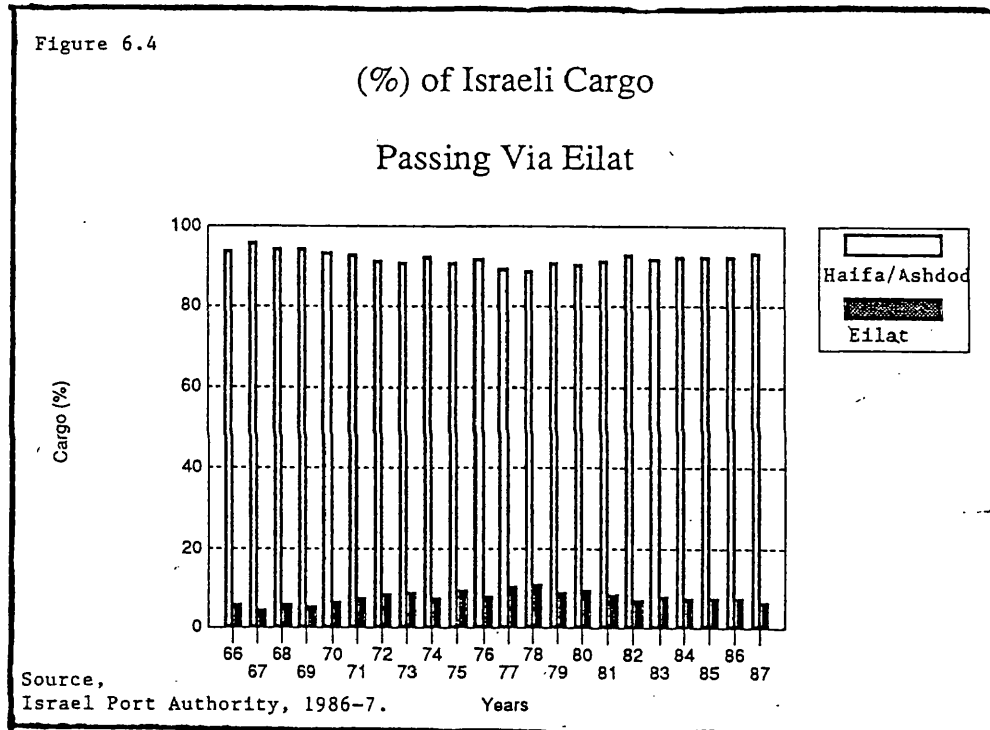
### Eilat Port Traffic (Cargo) 1957-1987



Source, Israel Port Authority, 1986-7

To put Israel's southern port in the right perspective, I would note that no more than 6% of Israel's total seaborne trade (excluded oil) passed through Eilat (figure 6.4). Most trade went via Haifa and Ashdod. Development after the 1956 War was not as trouble-free as one may conclude from the above figures. Government involvement and support played at least an equal role in placing Eilat on a competitive footing with Israel's other ports, and enabling the port's growth during the 1960s:

"After the Suez War there was economic justification to develop the port in Eilat... However, it created many economic problems which made the port a burden on the state budget" (12).



Apart from the long distance to Eilat, the small town was not a production or consumption centre. Most of the freight was brought from the Dead Sea or the north, while copper from Timna formed no more than 15% of the total export (see also section 6.4.1). More than 95% of all imports via Eilat were destined for the area north of Beersheba. The cost of transportation remained high, even after the government assisted in the establishment and operation of a heavy trucks company to carry cargo to and from Eilat.

In his work on the port, Gavriel (1980) concluded that Eilat's port maintained control over the foreland that included the Persian Gulf, Israel's main source of oil, Australasia and the east coast of Africa. In the case of mineral and copper from

the Negev, the port's foreland could extend up to Luderitz in South-West Africa. Nevertheless, he suggested that in many cases it was cheaper to send cargo originating in the centre and north of Israel via Haifa or Ashdod around Africa as far as Mombasa rather than convey it via Eilat. In addition, as exports surpassed imports by up to four times, many trucks had to return empty, causing heavy losses. This also increased shipping costs to Eilat as ships were only partly utilised.

"Despite the fact that the port of Eilat demands heavy government subsidies, and its development above a certain volume of traffic may be seriously questioned... The government consideration must be guided by the aim to consolidate Israel's presence in the Red Sea, and the ambition to develop Eilat. Therefore subsidies should be regarded as part of an inclusive development plan for the area"(13).

To encourage the use of Eilat, the government introduced a subsidy system to compensate the port's users for losses caused by high transportation costs. Furthermore, as all exports and imports to Israel required a licence from the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the government used this system to determine the port of import/export (14).

A major aim in developing the port was to consolidate the economic base of Eilat and create a major source of employment for what was envisioned by Ben-Gurion (1963) as Israel's future largest port. However, in the early 1960s it had already become clear that its growth would not necessarily bring much development to the town. Karmon (1963) warned of solely concentrating on port development. He suggested that in the light of the limited contribution to Eilat of the oil port, there was no reason why matters would be different in the case of the port. Karmon regarded new technological operating methods as a vital factor that would limit the contribution of the port to Eilat's economic life. Indeed, in 1963 Eilat's port employed 270 workers, only 10% of the town's total labour force. Zim, the main shipping company using the port, was operating most of its activity from Tel Aviv, together with other Israeli and foreign shipping companies. Even the state-owned truck company operating between Eilat and the north played only a minor role in Eilat's life. Apart from a small garage in Eilat for emergencies, the company headquarters, administration, workshops and most of the employees were in Beersheba. Likewise, many of the shipping agents and freight forwarders had their offices in Tel-Aviv. Karmon's view was further supported by Spiegel (1966), who indicated:

"The port alone does not offer sufficient compensation. The increase in potash and phosphate exports over the next few years will require additional loading facilities but only a few additional workers. A rise in exports of manufactured goods from the centre of the country will hardly count quantitatively... Even the expansion of the port will therefore create no more than 100 additional jobs" (Spiegel,1966:167).

### **6.3 Between War and Peace, 1967-1980**

The blockade of the Tiran Strait to all traffic to and from Eilat, and President Nasser's declaration on May 24, 1967 that "under no circumstances will I suffer the Israeli flag in the Gulf of Aqaba" (Al-Ahram, 24.5.1967), hardly heralded the beginning of a new era of growth nor provided encouragement for future development. However, from the Israeli victory in the Six-Day War until 1980 the port experienced substantial growth in its activity. The closure of the Suez Canal to all ships had particular implications for the port of Eilat. It provided Israel with the option to create an alternative route for the Suez Canal. Thus between 1961 and 1976 the port became the southern terminal of one of the world's major landbridges (Bird, 1971), and its role in Eilat's economic life grew considerably. Yet this growth continued to be determined to a large extent by changing political circumstances.

Two additional factors contributed to the port's growth. One was the new momentum of the Israeli economy, with GNP growing by 65% between 1967 and 1972, and vigorous efforts by the government to increase exports (Horowitz et al, 1973). The second factor was the expansion of the naval port in Eilat. After the war the Israeli navy had to guard a new shore line that had expanded from 11 km to 475 km in the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gulf of Suez. As Eilat became its main base, the port was enlarged and a shipyard was built (15).

The immediate effect on the port of the Six Day War and the closure of the Suez Canal was minor. Traffic ceased for about a month during May and June, and exports declined in that year by 26% compared to 1966. Yet this was mainly the result of a temporary paralysis of the Israeli economy following general mobilisation during the period of tension. Import figures remained unaffected and in fact grew slightly. The closure of the Suez Canal did not have an immediate effect on Eilat, chiefly because Israeli traffic had been banned from using the Canal since 1948.



As the overall volume of Israel's trade with Africa and Asia developed during the 1970s faster than the total volume of Israel's international trade (Sneorson, 1977), the traffic flow via Eilat grew rapidly. Compared to the total volume of 211,000 tons passing through Eilat in 1967, 698,000 tons passed through in 1972 (figure 6.3). Imports from Africa via Eilat grew fivefold in the same period and exports to Africa by a third. Imports from Asia tripled, with Japan increasing its share to 73% of the total Asian import (44% in 1967). Exports to Asia grew in the same period by a half. Phosphate and related products (potash, bromine etc) formed the bulk of the cargo loaded in Eilat with 65% of the total export via Eilat in 1967 (48% in 1962).

Following the growth in traffic after 1967, the port experienced occasional congestion in the early 1970s, with ships waiting up to 5 weeks for berthing. As a result the Ministry of Transport initiated work in 1972 to expand the port facilities. By 1976 an additional 202-metre berth had been built and new automatic handling equipment installed. An area to the west was allocated for a free trade zone (figure 6.1). During this period the port also increased its role in Eilat's economic life. Compared to 330 workers employed in the port in 1968 (10% of the total employment in Eilat), by 1978 it was providing employment for 1250 people (20% of the total).

The initial effect of the 1973 October War on the port was also minor and reflected mainly in a decline of 11.5% in traffic during 1974. However, in 1975 traffic grew by 38%, surpassing the 1973 figure and reaching 949,000 tons (figure 6.3). But the war had other implications for Eilat. It led to growing solidarity in Africa with Egypt and the Arab world. This, together with the hope of gaining financial aid from the Arab oil-producing states, resulted in 28 African countries severing relations with Israel during 1972-1973 (Oded, 1987). This decreased the port's foreland from 40 ports in 1972 to 23 in 1974.

### **6.3.1 The Negev Continental Bridge (NCB)**

Further impetus to the port's growth was the exploitation by the Israeli government of its position as the southern terminal of a continental landbridge between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, and hence as a potential replacement route for the Suez

Canal (Gradus and Stern 1977; Mishali, 1979). After initial planning (Israel, Ministry of Transport, 1969) the NCB commenced operation in mid-1969. In its first two years, the landbridge mainly served ports that had suffered from the closure of the Canal. These included Massawa, Djibouti and Mombasa. By 1971 the service had expanded to include the ports of Bombay and Khorramshahr (Gavriel, 1980). During the first two years cargo was transferred by truck along the entire 315 km landbridge route between Eilat and Ashdod. In 1970 the Ministry of Transport initiated work to extend the railway from Beersheba to Wadi Zim in the Negev (180 km north of Eilat). This meant that part of the cargo could be carried via a combined truck-rail service, thus improving the service and reducing running costs by up to 15% (Israel, Ministry of Transport 1973). Despite the importance placed on the NCB by the Israeli government, only a small quantity of cargo used it. In its first year 10,000 tons (2.7% of Eilat's total traffic) passed through, and 45,000 tons (4.7% of the total traffic) in 1975 (figure 6.3). Moreover the NCB's contribution to Eilat was minor. The management company 'Kedem', a subsidiary of Zim, was based in and operated mainly from Tel Aviv and Haifa.

Two main factors hindered any significant growth in the use of the NCB. The first was an Arab boycott on all companies using the Israeli landbridge, which succeeded in discouraging many companies (Muzar and Strauss, 1977; see also the oil port, 6.2.1). The second was the reorganisation of the world shipping system into long-range lines based upon larger ships (this topic was discussed by Couper, 1972). This was a direct result of the Suez blockade. This issue was further investigated by the Israeli Ministry of Transport (1976) which concluded that when using ships over 50,000 tons the profitability of the landbridge declined sharply. Even on routes considered within the optimum range for the landbridge, such as Trieste to Mombasa, it was cheaper to round Africa than using the landbridge. The report concluded that:

"Only for a limited range of goods, mainly in small quantities, and only when the cargo originates from or is destined for the area between the Black Sea, Cyprus, East Africa and the Red Sea ports, is the use of the NCB beneficial. Nevertheless it should be noted that with most countries within this region Israel has no diplomatic relations, and trade relations are very limited... Previous experience has proved that the use of the NCB is usually limited to small private enterprises" (Israel, Ministry of Transport, 1976).

Moreover, most countries within this area had a long-standing anti-Israeli position in the Middle East conflict. Another deterrent factor against greater use of the NCB

was the inadequate and expensive truck and railway route between Eilat and Ashdod that lagged behind the improvements in the world shipping system (Gavriel, 1980).

### **6.3.2 Following the Reopening of the Suez Canal**

A new challenge for the future activity of Eilat's port and the NCB emerged with the permission granted to Israel to send its cargo via the Suez Canal, in accordance with the 1974 Israeli-Egyptian disengagement agreement in Sinai. Transportation studies established that the Canal would have economic superiority over Eilat's port and the NCB for all cargo to or from much of the port's hinterland. Thus diverting traffic from Eilat to Ashdod and Haifa would be inevitable (Vidra, 1969; Zim, 1975). This was confirmed later by Gavriel (1980):

"When the Suez Canal is open to Israeli traffic the cost of transferring cargo via the Canal to the centre of Israel is between \$3.5-\$7 per ton, compared to \$12-\$16 per ton via Eilat. This may illustrate the clear advantage of using the Suez Canal over Eilat or the NCB" (Gavriel, 1980:79).

Following the reopening of the Canal, there was a decline in port traffic from 949,000 tons in 1975 to 689,000 tons in 1976. This was explained by the Israeli Port Authorities (1977) as a result of the recession in Israel's economy and a general decline in world shipping trade, rather than of the influence of reopening the Suez Canal. Indeed, by 1978 the total traffic in Eilat had risen to 1.1 million tons, and to 1.2 million tons by 1980. Cargo flow in the NCB grew during this period from 73,000 tons (10% of Eilat's total traffic), to 172,000 tons (16.6% of Eilat's total traffic)(figure 6.3).

Three explanations for what may be regarded as an economic paradox may be found at the international level. Firstly, according to the Israeli-Egyptian disengagement agreement in 1975, Israeli cargo could be sent via the Canal but only on non-Israeli ships (Israeli ships have only been permitted to use the Canal since 1979). During this period the Arab League emphasised that all ships carrying Israeli cargo through the Canal would be boycotted and this deterred many non-Israeli ships from carrying cargo for Israel (Muzar and Strauss, 1977). Secondly, between 1975 and mid 1977 the Canal was considered to be a war zone for maritime insurance purposes. This raised shipping costs on this route and reduced profitability compared to Eilat (Karmon, 1980). Thirdly, due to improvement and widening work on the Canal during 1975-1977, it has been suggested that the

effect on the port and the NCB would be delayed until the work was completed (Zim, 1975; Muzar and Strauss, 1977).

Japan and South Africa continued to play a prominent role in traffic flow during the late 1970s. Close relations between Israel and South Africa were mirrored by the substantial increase in the latter's share of imports and exports via Eilat. Between 1970 and 1978 South Africa's share of imports via Eilat grew from 20% to 68% of total African imports. South Africa's share of export grew from 10% to 44% of overall export to Africa in the same period. Japan dominated imports from Asia with 72% of the total cargo arriving from the continent in 1978 (45% in 1970). Its share of exports, however, declined from 70% in 1970 to 30% by 1978. During this year, phosphate and related products continued to be the main component of exports, accounting for 68% of outgoing cargo via Eilat.

South African-Israeli relations led to a further initiative that was also intended to increase the port's activity. Against a background of increasing waves of world protest against the apartheid regime and calls for the boycott of South African products, the Israeli government thought of using the port of Eilat as a base for duty-free light industry which would finish goods imported from South Africa and re-export them to other states under Israeli labels (Newsview, 24.1.1984). For obvious reasons no one in Israel would confirm this. However, the editor of "Israel Foreign Affairs" suggested that an unknown amount of goods from South Africa do carry Israeli labels, particularly those sold in North America (16) (She failed to provide me with a clear answer as to whether the goods are labelled in South Africa or if they actually pass through Eilat or Israel). I am unable, therefore, to assess the contribution of this factor to the increasing traffic in the port. In addition, towards the late 1970s, relations with many African countries were "quietly renewed" (Newsview, 24.1.1984:18). The expansion of these relations was articulated by resuming operation of the shipping lines from Eilat to Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania, and by the growing value of trade with Black Africa from \$54.9m in 1973 to \$127.8m in 1980 (Oded, 1987).

Following the reopening of the Suez Canal, the Israeli government sought to encourage the increasing use of the port and the NCB, mainly by increasing subsidies and improving transportation between Eilat and the hinterland. This policy

was mainly based upon political considerations, as was further emphasised by a Ministry of Transport official:

"After 1975 the port benefited from an odd sequence of political events. Its development was to a large extent artificial and lacked any economic logic... Government policy was important, but as it was generated by political reasons and benefited from certain external political factors, it could only delay the final result..." (17).

Indeed, despite traffic growth in the late 1970s the port experienced its most stormy period since its establishment during this time (this will be discussed in section 7.4).

## **6.4 Eilat's Industry: The Timna Copper Mine**

A sea of tall chimneys billowing smoke over heavy industrial plants was part of Ben Gurion's vision for Eilat in 1934 (Ben Gurion, 1963). The establishment of the copper mine at Timna, 25 km north of Eilat, and construction of the oil pipeline in the fifties, inspired the hope that Eilat was on the right path to realising this vision (Levinson, 1961; Ben Gurion, 1963). However, for many years the copper mine at Timna was the only industry in the Eilat area.

### **6.4.1 Timna**

As with many other major enterprises in Israel's early years, the planning, constructing, operating and ownership of the Timna mines was in the hands of the Israeli government. A preliminary geological survey in the Southern Negev launched by the government in the early 1950s established that various minerals could be extracted from the area. Apart from copper, however, they existed in such small quantities that the deposits were not worth working. Even the copper was not in a high-grade deposit, and considering transportation costs it was only high world prices that convinced the government that investment would be economical (Pri-Gal, 1974).

The project headquarters were set up in Tel Aviv in early 1955, and were responsible for planning, recruitment, etc. In June a work camp was erected in Timna and construction began. Yet progress was slow, mainly because the prospect of exporting the copper was slim as long as the Gulf of Aqaba remained closed to Israeli traffic. The nearest port was Tel Aviv, 315 km away, with little more than a track between Eilat and Beersheba. Like many other Negev projects it took the

Sinai Campaign to provide the proper impetus for the erection of facilities, roadways and smelting plants.

By 1957 the workers camp in Timna had become a larger and more dynamic community than Eilat, and in Tel Aviv the prospect for a permanent settlement in Timna was debated. However, in what became an important contribution to Eilat's future growth, in 1958 Ben Gurion decided to abandon the camp and settle the mine's employees and their facilities in Eilat (18). In January 1958 Timna started to produce copper, in the same year that the U.S. decided to dump its huge copper stockpiles from World War II on the world market, causing a sharp decrease in prices. Losses were recorded at Timna during the first two years, and government subsidies had to support the mine's initial steps. Nevertheless in the following 15 years Timna became an important and profitable enterprise for the Israeli economy. During its peak year in 1974 Timna's export was valued at \$16m, while its total profit since the operation began was estimated at \$145m (Erev Erev, 17.10.1974:3).

Timna emerged as a prime contributor to the development of Eilat. By the mid-1970s the mine was providing work for approximately 1200 employees who comprised 20% of the town's labour force. The urban impact of Timna on Eilat was even greater. Its employees included about 150 scientists and technicians who formed a substantial part of the town's intellectual elite. Many workers received the highest wages in the town and therefore created a large portion of the purchasing power in Eilat. Wives of staff were employed in Eilat as teachers and nurses, reducing the deficiency in these skilled professions (Karmon, 1976). Out of Eilat's 11 municipality members, 3 were Timna employees.

#### **6.4.2 Other Activities**

Since the early 1960s it gradually became clear that any hope of Timna being the first stage in the establishment of heavy industry was fruitless. Eilat's isolation, its restricted market, the high transportation costs in reaching the main markets and the lack of hinterland were severe obstacles for potential investors (Karmon, 1963, 1971, 1979; Spiegel, 1966; Efrat, 1987). Even the government policy of dispersing industry in peripheral regions (Gradus and Krakover, 1977; Gradus and Einy, 1981), as a means of closing interregional gaps, omitted Eilat.

There are differences of opinion among officials in Jerusalem and Eilat as to whether the failure of the government and municipality to attract industry to the town was a result of the government's inability to commit itself to such a risky investment, or of a gap between planning and implementation, or simply of negligence. It is clear, however, that there was full awareness in Jerusalem of the need to set up industrial enterprises in Eilat on the one hand, and of the lasting deficiency of this sector in Eilat on the other. In addition to endless correspondence between the local municipality and several government bodies (19), Karmon (1963) strongly recommended to Israel's leaders, including Ben Gurion, the urgent need to establish industry in Eilat in 1962. Plans for substantial investment in industry in Eilat were drawn up in an Industrial Development Plan for Eilat (Israel, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 1964), while a new master plan (Israel, Ministry of Interior, 1968) emphasised that a prerequisite for the town's development was enlargement of the industrial sector in Eilat: "...Otherwise there could be no possibility of Eilat's population reaching 50,000" (Israel, Ministry of Interior, 1968:24).

A letter from the Ministry of the Interior to Eilat's Mayor a year later further expressed the urgent need to build up local industry:

"We have accepted that Eilat must be given as comprehensive an economic base as possible, and the naturally disproportionate increase in the tourist industry should be counterbalanced by the encouragement and support of developing heavy and light industry for the stability and economic security of the town" (20).

However, nothing was done. By the mid 1970s Eilat's industry apart from Timna consisted only of some small local industries and workshops, all of which possessed strong locational factors. They included a factory for prefabricated building parts with 40 workers, and a fish canning factory with 15 workers. Even auxiliary services to industry were not set up in the town because of the limited market, and the need to bring each of these services from the north raised the cost of production. The absence of industry may be further illustrated by the fact that apart from Timna, Eilat industry in 1972 provided work for only 3% of the town's labour force (Eilat, 1975)

Moreover, poor coordination between government offices led to what Karmon (1976) described as a vicious circle; due to high transportation costs, and as

commodities were more expensive in Eilat than in the rest of Israel, living expenses increased. Local inhabitants were compensated by a reduction in income tax, and workers were granted a special allowance which was paid by the employer. But higher wages - in addition to higher general costs - deterred any potential investors from setting up industrial plants in Eilat.

## 6.5 Tourism in Eilat, 1956-1973

"After the Sinai Campaign, the highway to Eilat opened up and a green light flashed for tourism..." (Arbel, 1974;96).

Eilat's growing popularity among Israelis became apparent in Passover 1958. According to an Eilat police report an estimated 50,000 visitors(21) poured into the town (this number is not related to any of the other figure regarding tourism in Eilat). Eilat, then numbering 3000 inhabitants, was totally unequipped to accommodate such a wave of visitors. There were food shortages and the town ran out of water(22).

During the following years, Eilat's tourist industry developed mainly as a result of individual effort and private enterprise. Unlike Jerusalem's substantial assistance to the port and Timna, government support for tourism was insignificant. Despite the government's recognition of tourism as one of Eilat's major options for development, and its efforts to promote the industry throughout Israel, in Eilat itself it continued the pre-1956 unsupportive policy (sector 5.5.2). It failed to provide an adequate infrastructure for developing tourism, which in turn resulted in poor services and a lack of professionalism. This policy was largely a reflection of Ben Gurion's attitude. During his long tenure as Prime Minister, Ben Gurion never considered tourism to be an appropriate tool for the development of the Negev. He strongly advocated industry and port development rather than tourism, while ignoring Eilat's growing popularity among Israelis and the local efforts to develop the tourist trade. This was expressed by a former member of the local municipality:

"Tourism frankly did not enamour him (Ben Gurion)... Once we had a municipality meeting with Ben Gurion, and when I raised some issues about our plans for tourism, he got upset and shouted at me: 'you are not going to make Eilat a town of waiters and servants...'" (23).

Lack of government support, however, did not stop locals from putting great effort and enthusiasm into expanding and promoting tourism in Eilat. The area's natural



beauty, the weather and the tropical Red Sea with its spectacular marine life (Cohen, 1975), provided an excellent basis for their endeavours. Thus between 1956 and 1966 Eilat witnessed a variety of local initiatives that created the kernel of the industry's future growth. The Eilat Hotel, with 20 rooms, was opened by the Histadrut in early 1958 near the old huts of Um Rashrash. During this period local people organised package tours from the rest of Israel to Eilat in cooperation with Arkia airlines and the national bus company. They offered sight-seeing in the desert, visits to Solomon's Pillars and a glass-bottomed boat trip over the Red Sea's corals.

Some Eilatis showed enterprise by opening small hotels. In 1961 there was a total of 12 hotels which together offered 84 rooms. As the number of visitors grew constantly, reaching 11,000 (24) in 1963, the hotel sector responded accordingly. Eilat's first luxury hotel, the Queen of Sheba, with 87 rooms, was opened by private investors on the north beach in 1963 (Harry Nailand, a new immigrant to Israel, had visited Eilat and decided to stay and invest in tourism). Later that year, the Caravan Hotel was opened by an Italian investor 5 km south of Eilat, in what became known as Coral Beach. Its 60 rooms aimed to create the base for a diving centre to exploit the Red Sea's splendid underwater world. In this case the government once again demonstrated its lack of support for tourism in Eilat by failing to provide the required infrastructure for the isolated hotel. It was mainly army pressure that eventually pushed the government into providing an asphalt road and electricity, declaring that these were essential security elements in a building so close to the Egyptian border. The number of hotels continued to grow and, compared to 258 rooms in 1963, 412 rooms were available in 15 hotels of various categories in 1966.

Marketing was another area where the government failed to support Eilat's tourist industry. Unlike other sites in Israel, such as Jaffa and Nazareth, Eilat was not promoted by the Israeli tourist offices around the world. The Eilatis, nonetheless, revealed great improvisation and imagination in trying to sell their town:

"I thought that the surrounding landscape could provide an excellent environment for the growing movie industry of the 1960s, particularly for the spaghetti westerns'. So after establishing contact with several foreign film producers, we managed to bring a few teams that produced about 50 films around Eilat. Some included world stars such as David Niven, Gregory Peck, Ursula Andress, etc. As well as generating a new source of income, this

international atmosphere attracted more Israelis to the town"(25).

The composition of Eilat's tourist market, which was built up of around 35% foreign tourists against 65% Israelis, with the latter's tendency to visit Eilat between May and September, resulted in a strong fluctuation in hotel occupancy (80% in the summer, 20% in the winter). In an attempt to address the problem, local hoteliers and travel agents approached foreign companies, especially Scandinavian ones, and signed the first contracts to bring tourists during the winter. These initiatives produced promising results; compared to the 23,600 visitors in 1963, of whom 7000 were foreign tourists and 16,600 Israelis, 90,000 visitors of whom 39,000 were foreign tourists and 51,000 Israelis came in 1966 (figure 6.5). The occupancy rate grew from 48.2% (258 rooms in 14 hotels) to 58.6% (412 rooms in 16 hotels) in the same period. This rate was higher than the Israel average of 51.9% in 1966 (figure 6.6).

All the local efforts to promote tourism, however, were insufficient to turn Eilat into a world-renowned international resort. Marketing initiatives came from individuals and were not coordinated. A lack of infrastructure and services gave Eilat's tourist industry a very local character:

"Eilat's beaches are far from being organised for a massive influx of visitors... Lack of basic services such as dustbins, public showers and toilets may create health hazards on overcrowded days... It is obvious that a substantial face-lift is required, particularly on the north beach, if the town wants to reach an international tourist standard" (Israel, Ministry of Tourism, 1965).

In certain cases local problems penetrated the tourist industry. For example, Eilat's high rate of population turnover sometimes resulted in an acute shortage of professional labour in her hotels. This may be illustrated by the Queen of Sheba's manager in 1965:

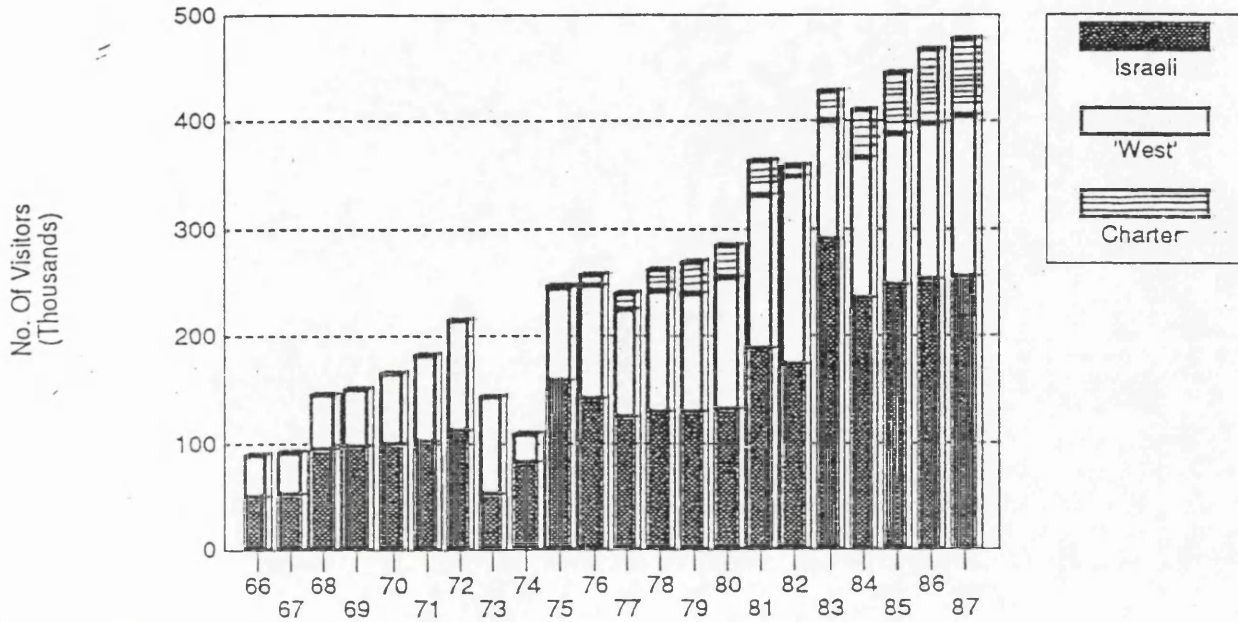
"The waiters didn't know how to wait on tables; the bus boys were forever tripping and breaking dishes; workers would simply disappear in the middle of a job" (Sherman, 1977:83).

A further problem which hindered substantial tourist growth was the general belief that Eilat could not become an independent destination able to attract visitors for long stays. Thus most holiday deals in Eilat offered 2-3 days in one of the local hotels. Other efforts were made to integrate 1 or 2 days in Eilat into inclusive tours to Israel. In addition, the security issue remained a deterrent factor, although to a lesser extent than in the past. Some tour operators still regarded the town's

Figure 6.5

# Eilat Tourism

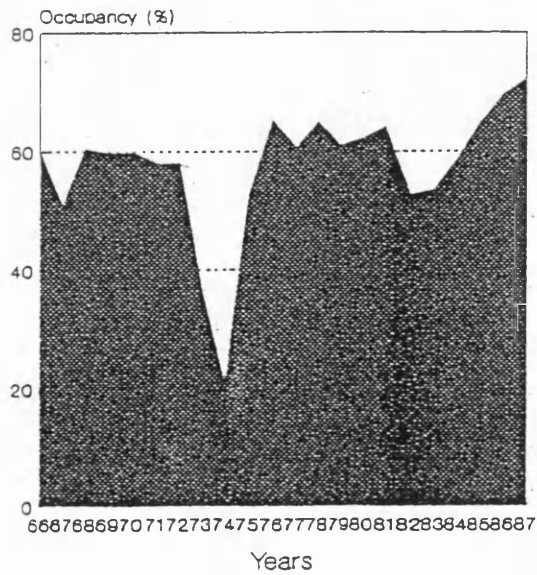
## 1966-1987



Israel, Ministry of Tourism, 1966-1987

Figure 6.6

# Eilat Hotels Occupancy rate (%)



Israel, Ministry of Tourism, 1966-1987

location and approach roads as highly exposed to the borders, and thus to the hazard of terrorist infiltration (26).

As tourism in Eilat expanded in the early 1960s without planning or central guidance, there was an increasing number of complaints to Jerusalem from Eilatis and tourists regarding inadequate services and facilities. This meant that Jerusalem could no longer continue to overlook the expanding industry. Thus in 1963 the government established the Eilat Foreshore Development Company (EFDC) as a subsidiary of the Ministry of Tourism. The EFDC was granted control over all the development plans in the area that had been allocated to tourism in the north beach and Coral Beach. Although a government body, the EFDC differed from other central organisations by integrating successfully into the life of Eilat. It kept an office in the town, and most of its planning decisions were made jointly with the local municipality. However, as its budget was allocated by the Ministry of Tourism, its activity was limited, particularly between 1963 and 1966. Under the influence of Ben Gurion, EFDC activity was limited mainly to initial steps towards constructing a promenade along the north beach. In view of the uncontrolled establishment of small hotels in the town, many of which had very low standards and evoked complaints from both local residents and visitors, the EFDC issued a decree in 1965 confining the establishment of new hotels to the tourist areas (Erev Erev, 11.2.1965:9, see also figure 6.9).

The first significant initiative by the EFDC appeared in mid-1965. After enlisting the support of several Knesset members following their visit to Eilat, it organised a team of experts to prepare a tourist development programme (EFDC, 1965). At its heart was a plan to extend Eilat's shoreline by excavating an artificial lake east of the town centre. Along the lagoon it was planned to build new seaside hotels and create the infrastructure for a new range of tourist facilities. The plan aimed also to address the potential conflict over land use between tourism, port activity and industry. Yet considering the government's general approach to tourism in Eilat, and despite the fact that it owned the land and had the resources, it took a year of debates and argument in the various related ministries before the EFDC gained the required resources. Work was launched in early 1966, and the new lagoon was opened in March 1967 on an area of 80,000 sq.m. (Photograph 4). This opened the way for a whole skyline of hotels for the next decade.

Eilat

Gulf of Aqaba

Israel

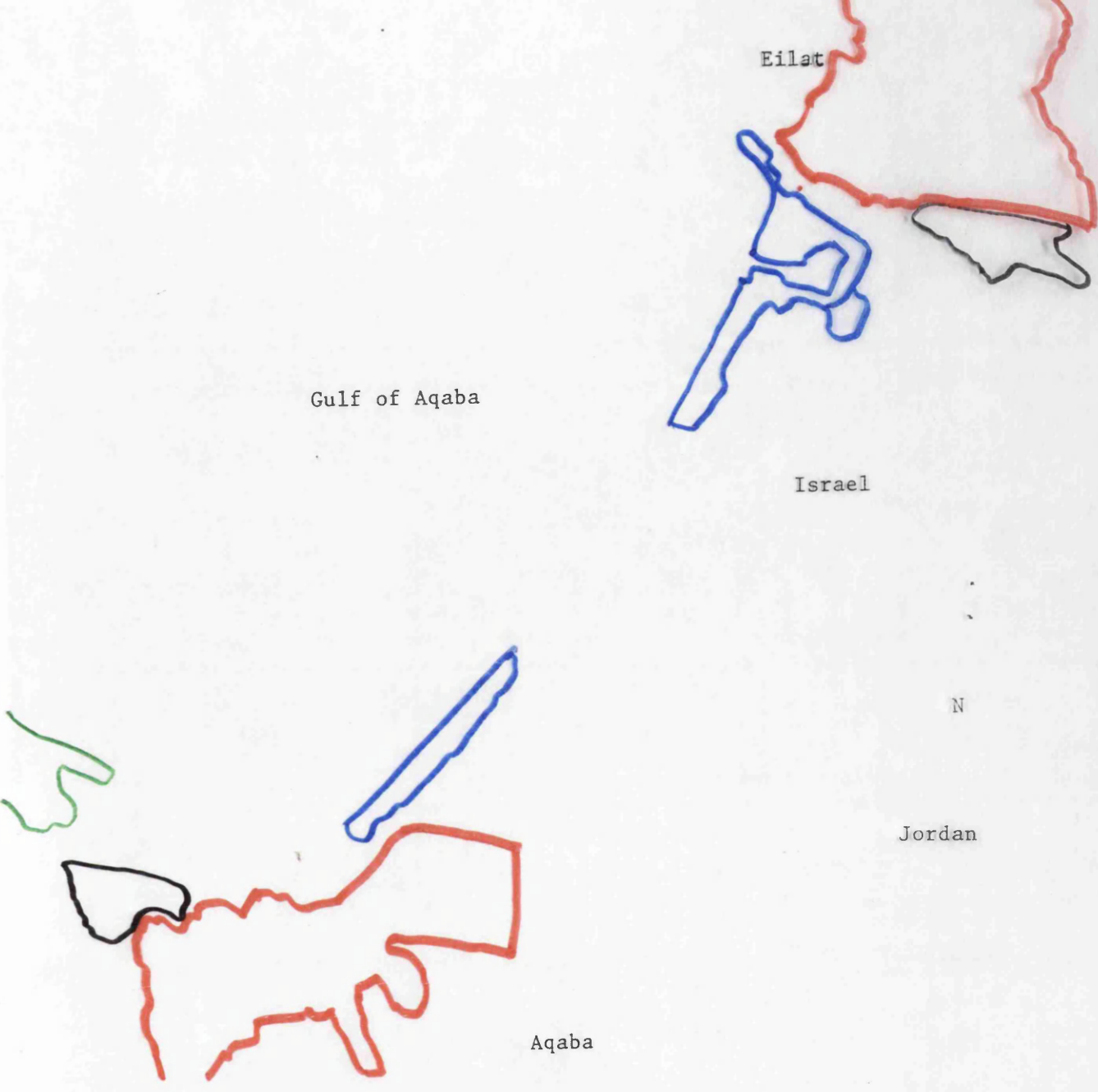
N

Jordan

Aqaba

Key

- Residential
- Tourism
- Port
- Industry/Commercial





Photograph 4 Eilat and Aqaba (April 1978)

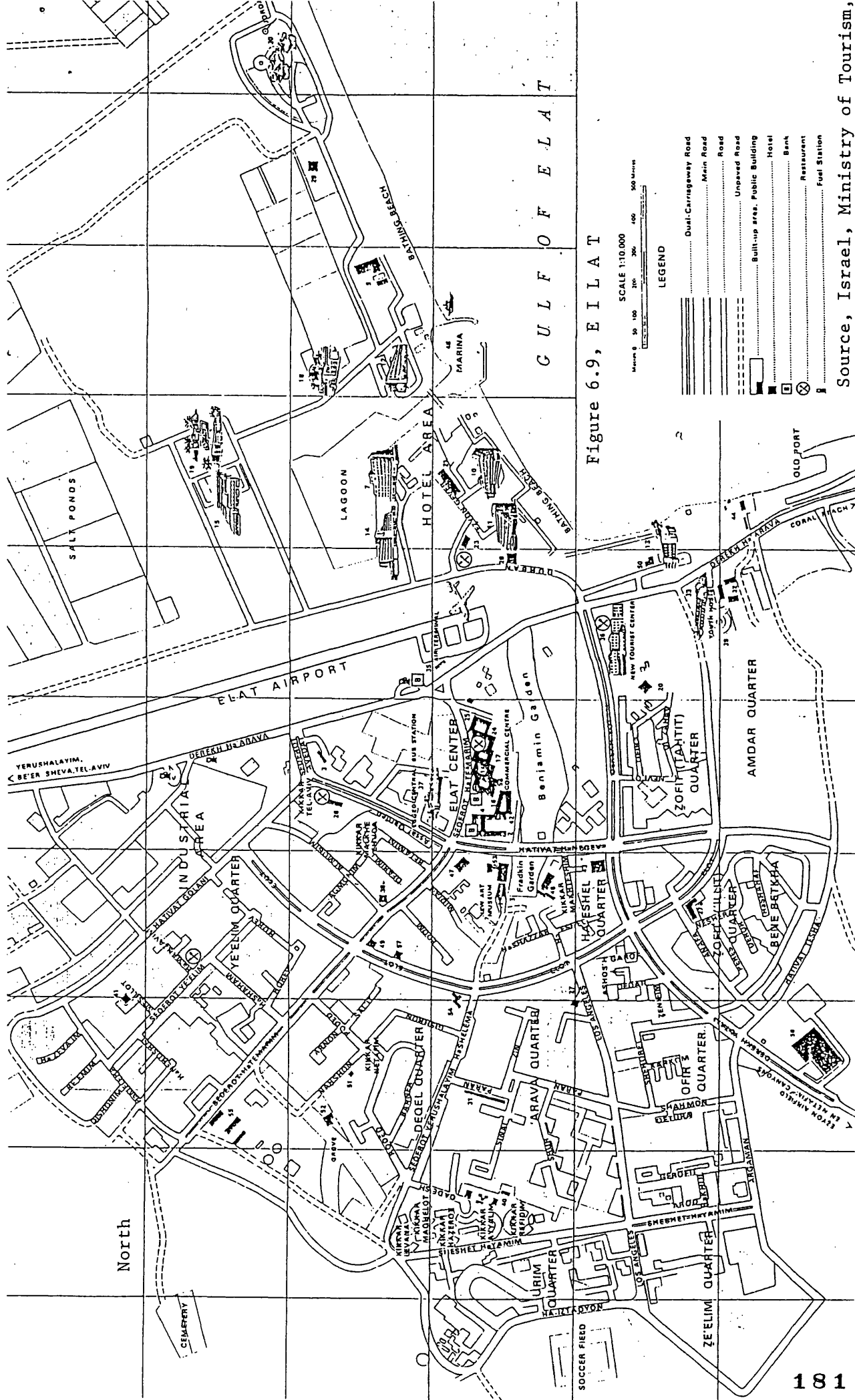


Figure 6.9, EILAT

Source, Israel, Ministry of Tourism,

### 6.5.1 New Government Approach, 1967-1973

Increasing tensions in the Middle East in May 1967 resulted in the cancellation of about 70% of holidays in Eilat. The only "tourists" in Eilat were journalists who had come to report on the blockade of the town. Following the war, however, Eilat became the gateway to the Sinai and the magnificent beaches of the Red Sea, while Arkia introduced new air routes to Jerusalem, Santa Katerina and Sharm el-Sheikh. In 1968 Club Mediterranean opened a tent club near the Coral Beach (it moved in 1974 to a new hotel on the north beach, and in 1981 it bought the Laromme Hotel at Coral Beach). More encouraging for the Eilatis was the tourist boom that Israel experienced after it took control of the holy places and especially Jerusalem (Ministry of Tourism, 1968/9; Robinson, 1976). The number of foreign tourists in Israel soared from 209,000 in 1966 to 310,000 in 1968 and 437,000 in 1970.

The new approach by Jerusalem toward Eilat's tourist industry was one of the most significant results of the post-1967 tourist boom. Eilat was included in El Al's international marketing drive. New improvements and hotel construction plans were authorised and given priority. Financial aid through grants and interest-free loans attracted entrepreneurs from central Israel who introduced two new luxury hotels in 1969, and a marine museum with an underwater observatory at the Coral Beach. Yet this period also highlighted the many years of government negligence. Eilat had little to offer visitors in the way of services, entertainment and recreational facilities, which were poor compared to other places in Israel. For Israelis Eilat became a day or even a few hours' stop on the way to Sinai, while the marketing strategy aimed at foreign tourists continued to regard Eilat as a relaxation resort for short periods only. The average duration of a foreign tourist's stay in Eilat in 1972 was 1.4 nights compared with 3 nights in the rest of Israel. Many of the tourists were American Jews from Florida or California, and so sun and sea holidays in Eilat held little appeal for them. They usually preferred to see the Holy Land's historical attractions (Israel, Ministry of Tourism, 1976). Thus the high expectations were not fulfilled. Despite the fact that the number of foreign tourists in Eilat grew by 70% between 1966 and 1970, its percentage of the total number of tourists visiting Israel fell from 25% in 1966 to 15% in 1970. With 1000 rooms in 3 hotels under construction, the new trend was regarded by the Eilatis with increasing



concern.

The boom in charter flights and packages in the western world offering a variety of sun and sea holidays in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Robinson, 1976; Matley, 1976; De Kadt, 1979), was regarded in Eilat as potential for future growth. Local entrepreneurs aimed to attract mainly the European market:

"There is definitely a place for new winter sun and sea holiday resorts for the European market. Eilat's distance from most European countries is 3-5 hours by plane which is equal to the flying time from these countries to traditional winter sun and sea resorts such as the Canary Islands. Together with the Western image of Israel, this places Eilat in an excellent position to gain from this growing market. But a precondition to integrating into the market is permitting the arrival of charter flights in order to reduce the cost of holidays"(27).

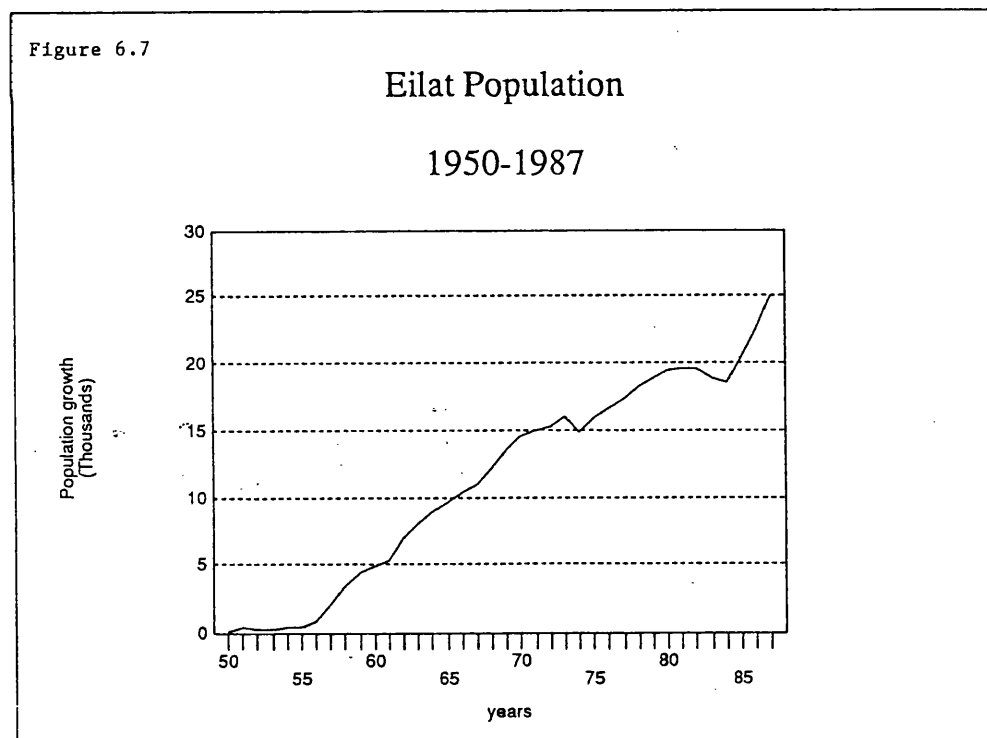
Although there was general support in Jerusalem for the new idea, the Eilatis' demand to permit charter flights to land in Israel placed them on a collision course with the government. Charter flights to Israel were generally prohibited as they were regarded by the state-owned airline El Al as a severe threat to its strong domination of incoming flights (28). The Eilatis even gained foreign support for their demands. For example, the Danish Minister of Tourism asked the government during a visit to Israel to permit direct flights from Copenhagen to Eilat. Yet he was refused by Golda Meir, then Israel's Foreign Minister. The growing number of tourists in Israel was also used by Jerusalem to justify its objection, claiming that there was no need to introduce new methods which may harm the already successful system and create competition for El Al. This further indicates the government's tendency to overlook Eilat's interests in preference for central ones, as well as blocking regional initiatives by means of its legislative powers. Thus, despite the growth in tourism, as more hotels were built the prospect of filling them without dramatic change appeared slim.

## **6.6 Eilat: A Town on the Ascendant; 1956 to late 1970s**

Eilat's urban development following the Suez War was characterised by the expansion of its economy in the fields of industry, port and tourism. Another boost came in the wake of the 1967 Six Day War, the capture of Egypt's Sinai Peninsula providing the town with a friendly southern hinterland for the next 14 years. Since the late 1950s Eilat had been the focus for many development plans by various government bodies aiming to facilitate speedy growth of the town and to exploit its

unique qualities (Israel, Ministry of Interior, 1956; 1958; 1960; 1963; 1968; 1971; Israel, Ministry of Commerce, 1965; Niemeyer, 1963; Tahal, 1964; Israel, Ministry of Development, 1964; etc.). This turned Eilat into one of Israel's most highly planned towns. Its population grew between 1956 and 1978 from 520 to 18,200 inhabitants (figure 6.7).

Considering Eilat's isolation, the cost of inter-urban transportation and its harsh natural conditions, strong government involvement may be regarded as essential and unavoidable for her first stages of development. Indeed through planning and finance the government greatly contributed to the town's development, for example; launching plans for new housing and schools, and for a project to solve the water problem (regarding the latter see appendix 2). However, these means became the main tool to maintain control over all economic and urban activity in Eilat.



Source, for 1949-57 - Israel, Ministry of Interior, 1959.

For 1958-87 - Eilat, 1988.

In order to enable a clearer understanding of the political and economic relations between Eilat and the centre of power in Israel (whether in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv), I shall briefly describe the constitutional structure of Eilat's municipality. The municipality (as in other Israeli towns, mirrors the Israeli political system. It is made up of 15 members who are elected by the local residents in elections which take place every four year. Although every Israeli citizen is entitled to run in the elections, local candidates are usually associated with Israel's various political parties, which provide financial and moral support (protests in many of Israel's peripheral towns led to the emergence of local independent parties. See: Lissak, 1969). The elected mayor, chosen from the winning party, governs the town. Several committees, built up from members of the ruling party and opposition, are responsible for particular fields (education, health, etc). Professional people such as architects and engineers are employed for particular needs. Major issues or initiatives are brought to the municipality to be decided.

Eilat's municipal boundary stretches from approximately 2 km north of the town to the egyptian border. Officially all public services cleaning, construction, etc. In this area are within its sphere of responsibility. Yet its power to initiate any type of activity is questionable. Many aspects of the area are externally controlled, including the port, district the oil port and the airport which are owned and controlled from Tel Aviv by the Israeli Port/Airport Authorities (under the Ministry of Transport), and the Eilat-Ashkelon Pipeline Company (under the Ministry of Energy). Most of the tourist area on the north and Coral Beach are under the responsibility of the EFDC (95% Ministry of Tourism, 5% Eilat's municipal ownership). Eilat's central bus station and adjacent shopping complex in the town centre are owned by 'Egged' (the national bus cooperative), also based in Tel Aviv. Even local initiatives such as the installation of new traffic lights or signposts demand the approval of the Ministry of Transport's Negev headquarters in Beersheba. The picture in the town is not much different. As 95% of the local land are owned by the government all construction initiatives require government approval.

Economically, Eilat is mainly tied to Jerusalem as all tax matters (rates and collection) regarding residents, businesses and hotels are determined there. As Eilat

has been classified as a "Development Town A+" local taxes are lower than in non-development towns. This demands greater finance allocation by the government, that until the mid-1980s had provided about 70%-80% of the local budget. It made Eilat highly dependent on Jerusalem, and became the main tool whereby Eilat's activity and development was dominated. Consequently, the municipality's ability to take decisions regarding local economic, urban and social issues is restricted by the need for government approval and finance for their execution. A sectoral approach by central bodies, motivated by varying interests, together with no integration at local level (Cohen, 1970), determines most local development initiatives and leaves the local municipality with no room for manoeuvre. For example, a budget allocated by the Ministry of Education to open a new school cannot be used to improve a hospital which is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health. Even to use this money within the education sector for other purposes demands the approval of the relevant Ministry, and generally show little flexibility. To sum up this centralistic picture, it should be noted that Eilat's ability to exercise independent policy is mainly confined to the social services, some cultural activity, small local environment initiatives and garbage disposal. Additionally it is accountable for licensing local shops and businesses. Eilat's dependence on the government can be seen also from the fact that 97% of all construction work in the town was financed and carried out by government agencies (29). All this indeed turned Eilat into part of Israel's 'remote control community' (Aronoff, 1973).

Two waves of population growth after the 1956 and the 1967 Wars are a further indication of the strong links between Eilat's urban growth and the wider political situation (figure 6.7). Following the Suez War Eilat became a target for government efforts to increase its population, spurred on the opening of the new road, the prospects for economic growth in the area, and the influx of new immigrants to Israel. By launching various development schemes, mainly involving construction, by sending new immigrants to the area, by deciding to resettle Timna employees in Eilat and declaring it a 'development town A+' which meant providing settlers with special benefits, tax-free income, a monthly desert allowance, low rent, cheap flights and free maternity care in the north, the government sought to attract people to Eilat. Moreover, in view of the harsh conditions, government agencies sometimes took "special" steps:

"In Marseilles, after the Jewish Agency people had persuaded us to go to

Eilat, they isolated us from the other immigrants so we wouldn't change our mind. When our ship docked in Haifa, we were whisked off by truck to the Haifa airfield, and thence by military Dakota to Eilat..." (Arbel, 1974;131).

The success of such measures may be seen in the population figures. Compared to 520 inhabitants in early 1956, Eilat's population rose to 3200 in 1958 and 7000 in 1962. In the following years this growth slowed down and in 1967 the town totalled 11,000 inhabitants. During the Six Day War the IDF devoted considerable attention and resources to the area, such as building a new airport and enlarging the port. Expectations of rapid economic growth were followed by a new wave of migration to Eilat. In two years its population grew by 10% to 12,100 people in 1968, and 14,500 in 1970. However, in the following years growth slowed down again, and by 1973 the population totalled 16,500.

Despite Eilat's growth during these years, local residents and officials alike expressed disappointment at its slow pace, especially in comparison to other newly-established towns in Israel (30). This may largely be explained by the severe difficulties (isolation, weather etc) that settlers in Eilat had to overcome, which often proved much tougher than initially anticipated. The failure to settle more people in Eilat was particularly serious considering the influx of new immigrants who were the main source of population growth in other development towns. In spite of careful selection on the part of settlement agencies, who chose mainly young couples under forty, up to 50% of the new arrivals left after a short time, finding themselves unable to cope with the local conditions.

Internal migration to Eilat was the main source of the town's growth. Eilat became a magnet for mainly young people as well as for professionals seeking a diversion from their routine lifestyle in the north. Eilat provided the relatively unfettered life of an outpost - while the economic benefits enabled them to save money for a home in Tel Aviv or elsewhere. Together with tourists and other adventurers, they gave the town a singularly cosmopolitan, unconventional and far from provincial character (Arbel, 1974 Spiegel, 1966). However, as hardly anyone considered settling permanently in Eilat, population fluctuation was very high. Karmon (1979) indicated that between 1960 and 1978 an average of 2,700 persons moved to Eilat and about 2000 left every year. The age structure differed distinctly from other new towns in Israel and provides an additional explanation for its unique character. In

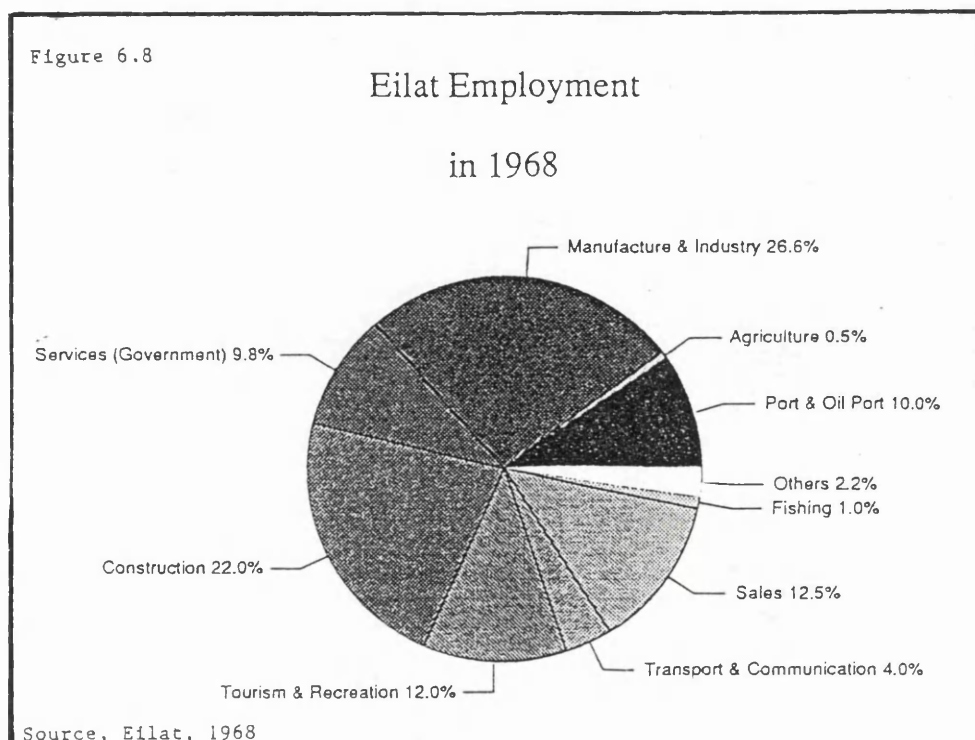
1972 most of Eilat's population were young people, with fewer than 1% over 65 years old. Males comprised 60% of the population (50% in the rest of Israel), mainly because some workers had left their families in the north. This explains the local natural population growth which in 1968 was estimated at 2.8% compar to 1.6% in Israel (Eilat, 1968). As most people came to Eilat to work, unemployment was virtually nil, and in fact there was a general shortage of manpower. A population census held in 1968 (Eilat, 1968) reflected the town's economic base (figure 6.8). The low share of the port and transportation services on the one hand, and the high proportion of manufacturing, construction and industry on the other, all clearly indicated:

Table 6.1 Labour Distribution in Eilat, 1968

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Employees</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Port & Oil Port	460	10.00
Construction	1012	22.0
Transport & Communication	184	4.0
Sales	575	12.5
Manufacture & Industry	1196	26.0
Tourism & Recreation	550	12.0
Agriculture	23	0.5
Fishing	46	1.0
<u>Services (Local &amp; Central Government)</u>	<u>554</u>	<u>12.0</u>
Total	4600	100

(Source: Eilat, 1968)

Figure 6.8 Eilat Employment in 1968



Eilat's first stage of development was a result of the need to accommodate Timna's employees, their families and new immigrants, rather than of a pre-planned programme. Consequently there was no town planning. Construction followed the existing pattern of streets, sprawling mainly to the west. Following the government's declaration of Eilat as a 'town' in 1959, the first development plan was drawn up by the Ministry of the Interior (1960). The plan followed the general concept used in Israel's other development towns, which generally divided the town into neighbourhood units, each surrounded by a traffic artery and containing a small shopping centre (Berler, 1970). However, it was poor on details (Turner, 1968). The result was inadequate housing, built from materials unsuitable for desert heat. Later the houses became slums or were converted to workshops.

The plan also failed to address other urgent needs. For example, medical care was carried out in an improvised structure that provided mainly first aid. This resulted in the need to send all serious cases and nearly all pregnant women to the north for treatment. Local disappointment and lack of power to change the plan was illustrated by Eilat's mayor in the early 1960s:

"We knew we had a pearl here... But perhaps the central authorities were not sufficiently interested to allocate larger budgets for a better built Eilat. I think they didn't give it enough thought. But it was up to them, as we had no means" (Arbel, 1974:132).

It took angry demonstrations in Eilat and Jerusalem by irate citizens in summer 1960 to push forward the establishment of a new hospital in Eilat. But it took more than local protests to change the town plan. There was harsh criticism by Israeli architects, some government officials and even the State Comptroller (1962), who indicated that initial development had been mainly guided by economic considerations. The planners had failed to appreciate Eilat's special character as a desert town, and had created unnecessarily long distances instead of a compact structure with short walking distances between the various functions (Turner, 1968).

The Ministry of the Interior (1963) responded by launching an elaborate development plan that gave greater consideration to Eilat's natural conditions. New 2-4 storey houses were built from insulating materials, larger accommodation was provided, and dwellings were concentrated in large blocks. A network of passages and arcades was built to protect the pedestrian from the sun, while wider roads

were constructed to enable the free flow of large volumes of traffic. At the same time more effort was put into future planning. In 1965 the government brought some of the best Israeli and foreign architects to draw up new plans for Eilat. Some came up with rather extravagant ideas: Oscar Niemeyer (1965) (a leading architect of Brasilia) advised not to build neighbourhoods at all, but simply to construct three air-conditioned towers - each 50 storeys high on the water's edge. An Israeli plan (Eilat, 1965), suggested building the residential area 20 km north west of Eilat in Moon Valley, which due to its relative height enjoyed a more moderate climate. The present Eilat was to become the business centre.

The general euphoria in Israel following the 1967 War did not pass by Eilat. The IDF turned its attention and resources to the area at the same time as the population and economic activity grew. Luxury hotels sprang up along the beach, work was launched to construct a new road along the Gulf of Aqaba to Sharm el Sheikh that was opened in 1970, and plans for new settlement in Sinai provided Eilat with what it had always lacked - a hinterland. Aspirations for future growth heightened. In August 1967 the government decided to annex 20 km of shore south into the captured Sinai Peninsula to Eilat's municipality. From Eilat's point of view, this was a meaningless act in that every enterprise in the area required army approval with no role for the local municipality (later during the negotiations over Taba, the municipality was totally ignored by the government and was not allowed to participate even as an observer).

In 1968 a new "Development plan for Eilat's expansion to 50,000 by the mid-1980s" was drawn up (Israel, Ministry of the Interior, 1968). In the light of the euphoric atmosphere, and perhaps to counter any claims that the plan was overambitious, a senior author noted:

"Naturally the plan (Israel, Ministry of Interior, 1968) depends on so many considerations beyond our control, mainly political factors, that no prediction could be made other than to give certain upper and lower limits for the Eilat demographic projection into the 1980s" (Turner, 1968:19).

This, however, did not deter government officials from continuing to announce new plans for the town. Many have never materialised - a railway and a new airport, for example (this will be further discussed in section 7.5), some were baseless - though only 12,100 people lived in Eilat in early 1969, the Minister of Housing declared that "Eilat will reach 20,000 inhabitants in 1970" (Erev Erev, 16.1.1969:5).



Some were simply grandiose - Shimon Peres announced a plan to construct a pneumatic pipeline from Eilat to Ashdod as an alternative to the landbridge (Erev Erev, 19.3.1968:14). But all this was overshadowed by a modified version of the 1968 plan which was drawn up in 1971 for "Eilat's expansion to 100,000 by the year 2,000" (Israel, Ministry of Interior, 1971).

The 1971 plan emerged as the main framework for Eilat's development into the 1970s. The general pattern of land use in the town, which reflected Eilat's economic development into three major economic sectors, was retained. New light industry was built north of the town, and the northern shore witnessed new endeavours in recreational and tourist facilities. The town centre was expanded, with the building of additional commercial facilities and a cinema. The residential area increased its density with construction expanding southward. The plan's chief significance was in its attempt to retain a balance between urban development, industry, tourism and environment. It attempted to carefully integrate all expansion within the landscape. Special emphasis was laid on minimising the conflict of interests between industry and tourism (photograph 3, see also figure 6.9).

## Notes for Chapter 6

1. Interview with Moskovitz.
2. Although both the oil port and Eilat's port are owned by the Israeli government, they are run by different authorities.
3. ISA/RG73.D9473.F2148 - A report from the Prime Minister's office in Jerusalem to several bodies indicating the importance of the project and its high priority for Israel. December 1956, Jerusalem.
4. In February 1970 an Israeli law was passed prohibiting the publishing of any information on the movement of oil tankers to and from Israel. Consequently the only information I was able to gather was taken from Mishali (1979) and Gavriel (1980). They do not reflect the total number of tankers or volume of oil flow to Israel, or its consumption quantities.
5. The 320 km Egyptian pipeline from Suez to Port Said was laid by "SUMED" with a total investment of \$550m. It went into operation in March 1977.
6. Israeli Ministry of Transport, (1967) Transportation in Israel: Report for 1961-1965. January 1967, Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
7. ISA/RG63.D56.988 - Report. The Port of Eilat 1950-1957, Ministry of Transport, November 1957.
8. Israel had established full diplomatic relations with all African states except the six Arab countries on the continent plus Somalia and Mauritania, who both joined the Arab League in 1974. See also: Hershlag, 1970; Gavriel, 1980.
9. All the figures regarding Eilat's port traffic were taken from the Israel Port Authority, Yearbook of Port Statistics, Nos. 1-22, 1960-1988, Tel Aviv.
10. All traffic figure exclude any movement of oil in the port.
11. During my fieldwork in Eilat, January 1988 (pers. comm.).
12. Gavriel, C. N. is a senior economic advisor in the Israeli Ministry of Transport. Interview was carried out in March 1988, Jerusalem. See also Gavriel, 1980.
13. Ministry of Transport (1966), The Port of Eilat, internal report, January 1966, Jerusalem (Hebrew).
14. This system was used mainly for imports. Yet the government had also to compensate the various importers due to losses caused by high transportation costs.
15. Information as to how many people settled in Eilat due to enlargement of the naval port was unavailable due to security reasons. Yet considering that Israel built a new naval base at Sharm el-Sheikh, which Eilat served as the Israeli headquarters in the Red Sea, it is clear that this contributed to the town's growth. See also: Newsview, 24.1.1984:19.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ "The Israeli and South African Connection" . Lecture at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, February 1989.
17. Interview with Gavriel.
18. Private archive of A. Zakai. Report: "Transferring Timna's workers camp to Eilat". From: Prime Minister's Office, Jerusalem. To: Timna's manager and Eilat's mayor, June 1957.
19. There is a vast amount of letters and reports discussing the necessity of establishing industry in Eilat. These were found in Eilat's municipal files dealing with the town's development between 1958 - 1967.
20. From a letter by the Minister of Interior, Jerusalem. To: Municipality of Eilat 4.2.1970. Eilat's municipal archive.
21. Report by Eilat police, 30.4.1958. Eilat's municipal archive, Tourism.
22. Mr. Moshe Panteromeli has lived in Eilat since 1956. He managed several hotels in the town between 1965 and 1978. Today he is the secretary of Eilat's Hotel Association. Interview was conducted in February 1987, Eilat. 'The Passover rush' was also described by M. Melzer and A. Zakai. See also:

Sherman (1977).

23. Interview with M. Melzer.

24. All the figures regarding tourism in Eilat and Israel were taken from: Ministry of Tourism, Central Bureau of Statistics, annual reports, (1961 to 1988), Tourism and Hotel Services Statistics, Jerusalem. According to the Ministry of Tourism figures of visitors to Eilat refer to all persons (including children accompanied by an Israeli or non-Israeli who in this work are referred to as foreign tourists), booking into a hotel and spending at least one night at the hotel.

25. Interview with M. Melzer. See also Arbel, 1974.

26. This issue is mentioned in a letter from the municipality of Eilat to the Ministry of Tourism, Jerusalem, 4.6.1965. In addition M. Panteromeli and M. Melzer describe of several cases in which foreign tour operators raised the security issue as a deterrent factor for not booking holidays in Eilat.

27. A letter from the Eilat Hotel Association to the Minister of Tourism, Jerusalem, 12.5.1971. Eilat's archive, Tourism. (Hebrew)

28. During this period only a few charter flights were allowed to land in Israel, mainly from countries that were not on El Al's route.

29. Ministry of Housing, (1976), Development Towns in Israel, Jerusalem. (Hebrew)

30. In addition Karmon (1976, 1979) indicates that during this period other new development towns in Israel developed much faster than Eilat. For example, in 1975 Ashdod grew to 50,000 and Dimona in the northern Negev to 27,000. See also: Efrat, 1987.

## Chapter 7 THE CRISIS

### 7.1 Introduction

"The 1973 October War hit Eilat harder, economically, than any other Israeli town... It took her more time to recover than the rest of the country" (Katz, 1974:43).

As Eilat geared herself for maximum activity in all economic and urban sectors, the 1973 War broke out with far reaching implications for the town. The Egyptian-Syrian attack on Israel, followed by rapid mobilisation of its reserves and harsh battles in the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights, excluded Eilat from the arena of war (regarding the 1973 October War see for example: Herzog, 1982; Cordesman, 1987). This was primarily due to King Hussein's decision to keep his western border quiet. He demonstrated only symbolic participation in the war by sending a few troops to aid the Syrians. The war's immediate effect was felt only in the tourist industry, yet its later consequences at a national and international level presented Eilat with a grave crisis whose later impact was felt into the early 1980s.

The crisis was not a phenomenon that appeared one day and ceased the next. Eilat's crisis was made up of several components that were linked to the outcome of the 1973 October War. They hit Eilat's three main economic sectors (tourism, industry, port) in a sequence that followed their appearance on the local, international and national level. After tourism started to recover, economic repercussion led to the closure of the Timna copper mines. Then came the disengagement agreement between Israel and Egypt, followed by the peace agreement which gave Israel the right to use the Suez Canal and consequently harmed the port.

During the crisis period Eilat suffered a net outflow of population as the growth from 16,000 inhabitants in 1973 to 18,500 in 1984 was less than its 3% natural rate of growth. Its economic structure was totally altered and urban growth was brought to a standstill. The crisis was further accelerated by the centralist policy of the Israeli government which failed to appreciate local needs. Lack of integration and occasionally conflicting objectives among government agencies at regional level revealed an inadequate response to local problems. This caused frustration and bitterness, and led to growing protests, strikes and demonstrations in Eilat and

Jerusalem.

Despite its victory, Israel was a sombre nation when the fighting finally ceased. Its self-confidence and sense of identity were at an all-time low. The resignation of a number of top army figures, including the Chief of Staff, and the harsh criticism of the government by the Israeli public and the Knesset severely undermined the Labour-led government. The country drifted into a period of political struggle and instability (Herzog, 1982). The government's role in the war also used by the opposition party - the Likud - as a weapon to increase attacks on the old establishment. In the following years Israel witnessed an increasing polarisation between the Likud's hardline approach and Labour's more moderate philosophy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. Labour's poor performance, the corruption and antagonisms in its ranks, together with increasing inter-ethnic tension between those of European origin (Ashkenazim), who mainly identified with Labour, and the non-European orientals (Sepharadim) who mainly identified with Likud, placed the latter in the ascendant. The May 1977 Knesset election marked a watershed in Israeli politics. For the first time in Israel's history the right-wing nationalist Likud headed the government, inaugurating a new era in the life of the country. Its policy departed from the old establishment socialist policy in that it encouraged free enterprise in the economic field, and espoused hawkish nationalist policies in foreign affairs (Yorke, 1988).

On the international level the war led to a new reality in the Middle East. Israel's dependence on economic as well as military assistance massively increased while the US view of the alleged shared interests, which had hitherto underpinned the relationship, began to change. The joint Egyptian-Syrian military action in 1973, the Arab use of the oil weapon and Israel's growing international isolation persuaded the US Administration that the West's need for oil and its improved relations with the moderate Arab states now required a more balanced approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The new US diplomacy culminated in the two Sinai Disengagement Agreements in 1974 and 1975, the reopening of the Suez Canal, and the US sponsorship of the Camp David process. This led to the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in 1979, and to the Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai peninsula by 1982 (Yorke, 1988). Further change in the Middle Eastern political map occurred after the Islamic revolution in Iran led to a new radical anti Israeli regime in Teheran.

All these factors had a substantial effect on Eilat.

## 7.2 The First Blow - Tourism

"The October 1973 War strikes Eilat's tourist industry as it does the whole of Israel... Leaving Eilat a human wilderness. Hotels and nightclubs are empty and closed and the beaches are deserted" (Williams, 1974:28).

Between October and December 1973 Eilat's hotels were virtually empty. The number of visitors dropped that year by 19% (the relatively small decline is because tourism continued its rapid growth until the war). A further decline in the number of visitors to Eilat by 38% during 1974 marked the gravest crisis for tourism in the town so far. This was particularly marked in the overseas tourist figures. Their number dropped from 103,400 in 1972 to 27,040 in 1974 (figure 6.5). Less sharp was the decline in the number of Israelis visiting Eilat which fell from 112,000 to 81,120 in the same period. Yet as Israelis came mainly in summer, and stayed for shorter periods (average stay of 2.1 nights per person), this was insufficient to fuel an industry that had experienced massive expansion before the war.

Frustration in Eilat grew particularly in view of the anticipation that 1973 would be the best tourist year yet as Eilat geared itself for celebrations of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Israel's independence. Two new luxury hotels were opened, the Laromme (owned by El Al) at the Coral Beach, and the Neptune (owned by a group of private Israeli investors from the Tel Aviv area) on the North Beach. This increased the total number of rooms from 1300 in 1972 to 1800 in 1974. As facilities expanded, the occupancy rate dropped from 58% to 21% between 1972 and 1974 (figure 6.6).

The situation was seen as desperate by the Eilatis. In 1974 tourism accounted for around a third of its labour force:

"More than ever Eilat's tourist industry requires a new approach from the government... Charter flights must be allowed to land in Eilat... They will significantly reduce the cost of holidays and permit us to integrate into the growing European tourist market... In fact, charter flights are the only solution to save many hotels and other businesses from total collapse" (1).

Strong pressures were exerted on the government to reconsider the charter issue. Nevertheless, their efforts were in vain. A declaration by El Al's president in a news conference in early 1975: "Regular charter flights to Israel - over my dead

body" (Erev Erev, 11.7.1976:10), provided little hope for Eilat.

At the same time local hoteliers and travel agents approached European tour operators trying to renew contacts and restore the flow of tourists that had ceased when the war broke out. The cessation of hostilities and the growing demand for sun and sea holidays led a number of tour operators to respond positively. A prerequisite, however was the use of charter flights. In summer 1975 the Ministry of Tourism joined the Eilatis in their battle to persuade the government, and in particular the Ministry of Transport, to accept the idea. As the end of the summer season approached and gloomy prospects for winter tourism loomed, the first redundancy notices were sent out by hotel managers in Eilat.

Political events thousands of miles away provided new hope for Eilat. Spain executed three members of the Basque separatist movement ETA, and as part of the world-wide protest, a number of large trade unions in Scandinavia called for a boycott of holidays in all Spanish resorts in winter 1975-6. Consequently, Tjaereborg Scandinavia was left with thousands of paid holidays on its hands. In October 1975 the 'Yealat' travel agency in Eilat received a telex with a request to send 500 tourists every week during the coming winter, commencing on November 9, 1975 (2).

In early October a group of hoteliers and municipal officials travelled to Jerusalem for an emergency meeting with the Ministries of Transport and the Interior. The background to this meeting was a growing crisis in Timna as heavy losses were recorded at the mine:

"We knew that this was probably our last chance to save the winter season, so we presented the ministers with a firm ultimatum: unless charter flights would be granted landing permission, we would close our hotels and leave a quarter of Eilat's population in the streets... It was absurd to think that on the one hand the Ministry of Tourism encouraged new hotel construction and more investment in tourism (in 1972, 27% of all foreign investment in Israel were in tourism), while on the other the Ministry of Transport placed obstacles in our way and deterred tourists from coming to Israel"(3)

### **7.3 The Second Blow - Timna in Crisis**

The use of the oil weapon by the Arabs following the 1973 war resulted in a world economic crisis. As oil prices soared, copper prices plummeted from about £1,000 to £500 per ton. At the same time sulphuric acid (an important component

in copper ore processing), of which about 30,000 tons were imported annually by Israel, tripled in price. As the production of copper cost about £900 per ton, the profitable copper mine steadily became a losing concern. For a time the government subsidised production, but when prices showed no sign of recovery by mid-1975, with every ton being subsidised by about £400, the government insisted on cutting labour and reducing production (4). In July, 200 workers were laid off.

Prices remained low throughout the year and by the end of 1975 the mine recorded a loss of \$38m, which was paid by the government as subsidies. Meanwhile a government committee established that the prospect for price recovery was virtually nil, and that closure of the mine should be considered. In January 1976 the government decided to close down the mine and leave only a small maintenance team in case of a price recovery (5).

The intention to make around 20% of Eilat's population unemployed, with little hope of finding alternative jobs, was greeted in Eilat with great hostility:

"There was a terrible grudge among the Eilatis against the government... After two decades of exploitation, with considerable profit, it took only one bad year to decide to close down the mine... Failure to provide alternative employment further aggravated the population, who felt that, despite monetary compensation, the government had once again "dumped" them in the remote south" (6).

During January 1976 Eilat witnessed harsh demonstrations by Timna's employees. Blocking the Arava road with burning tyres resulted in clashes with the police, while a solidarity strike by other bodies in Eilat paralysed the town. A delegation from Timna and the municipality travelled to Jerusalem to express their disappointment to the government and try to alter its decision. Despite these efforts, however, the mine was closed down on 31st March 1976. Only a maintenance team of about 100 employees remained.

Of the 1,000 people made redundant by the closure of the mine about 400, mainly heavy equipment operators, found new jobs in construction and government development projects in the area, while about 200 used their compensation to set up small businesses. Some 400 families left Eilat for the north, many whom created the high level of the local social structure (Karmon, 1979; Eilat, 1985). As many of these migrants were scientists and technicians who took their families,



Eilat was drained of many educated residents who had filled key positions in Eilat (section 6.4.1).

#### **7.4 The Third Blow - The Port**

Unlike the crisis in the tourist industry or the Timna copper mines, the crisis in the port was not the result of a decline in its activity nor a threat to its existence. It was rather the abolition by the government of all planned expansion initiatives of the port and the devastation of the NCB as an alternative route to the Suez Canal, thereby shattering the hope of the port workers as well as many Eilatis that the substantial development of the port which had begun in 1970 would be sustained. The key to understanding the occurrences in the port dates back to the Israeli-Egyptian disengagement agreement in 1974, followed by the reopening the Suez Canal in 1975, and Israel's use of the canal since 1979. These events constantly undermined and eventually terminated the port's role as Israel's only gateway to the south. This was further aggravated by the growing frustration and bitterness among port employees and Eilati inhabitants, who felt helpless in the face of the Israeli Port Authority, which exercised absolute control over all major issues regarding the port's operation. The mid-1970s crisis in the tourist industry and Timna inevitably caused more gloom in Eilat. Increasing anti-government protests and severe unrest in labour relations erupted in occasional strikes which in turn led to a reduction in port productivity to 20% of its normal capacity.

The suggestion that the crisis in the port occurred in the late 1970s, at a time when it in fact was experiencing its highest volume of traffic (see figures 6.2, 6.3) may appear to be a contradiction. Indeed, Karmon (1979) indicated no adverse effects of reopening the Suez Canal on traffic in Eilat by the late 1970s. Figures indicating a decline in traffic via the port can be seen only between 1980 and 1981 when traffic declined from 1.2 million to 1 million tons, and 835,000 tons in 1982. Yet as I have indicated, it was not a substantial change in traffic flow that created the crisis. A careful inspection of port statistics in Israel will reveal that despite a growth in the total volume of traffic during the late 1970s, since 1978 the port's role in Israel's total maritime trade had started to decline. Compared to 11.2% of the country's total maritime trade in 1978 only 8.5% of Israel's total maritime trade passed through Eilat in 1981 (figure 6.4).

There is unanimous agreement among government and local officials and Israeli scholars that opening the Suez Canal to Israeli navigation was the prime factor leading to the decline of the port's role in the Israeli economy (see especially: Gavriel, 1980; Stern and Hayute, 1984)(7). Fears regarding the effect of opening the Suez Canal to Israeli cargo were expressed in Eilat as early as June 1975, when Eilat's mayor said:

"It was clear that without government support an increasing number of ships would prefer Ashdod or Haifa... More than ever there was an urgent need for substantial steps to consolidate the port base e.g. building the railway, establishing industry etc... However, apart from writing, telephoning and even begging Jerusalem, we had neither the power nor the resources for such an initiative" (8).

Yet nothing was done. Assisted by the Arab boycott on ships carrying cargo via the Canal to and from Israel, the high insurance tariffs on all ships sailing through during this period, and improvement work on the Canal, the subsidy system of the government proved sufficient to keep the port on a development pattern for time being.

"The real challenge for Eilat's port emerged after the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt and the opening of the Suez Canal to Israeli navigation. This led to a revision of the Israeli shipping system with significant implications for port utilisation in Israel..." (Gavriel, 1980:42).

Although in 1977 Israeli ships were not yet able to pass through the canal (this was set to occur in 1979 in the second stage of the Israeli-Egyptian agreement), Israeli companies chartered foreign ships which carried 90,000 tons of general cargo from Asia via the canal to Ashdod. "The fear of 1975 had begun to materialise in 1977" wrote Eilat's local newspaper (Erev Erev, 17.5.1977:12). Despite government promises to maintain all Eilat's foreland (9) and implement an updated subsidies system to compensate port users for transportation losses, an increasing number of ships was diverted from Eilat to Israel's Mediterranean ports. This process was further hastened by a gradual reduction in the maritime insurance tariff on traffic via the canal (Lloyd's List, 1980). By the end of this year the Iscor Corporation, a leading Israeli metal industry, decided to divert all its imported cargo from Eilat to Ashdod. It claimed that this would reduce transportation costs by almost 50%.

The new capitalistic approach of the Likud government started to affect Eilat during 1978. Many officials claimed that supporting the growth of Eilat's port would cause artificial development and demand larger subsidies. They maintained that the government should aim to make the port self-sufficient rather than place further burdens on the country's budget (10).

During this year the Ministry of Transport decided to launch a port modernisation programme that included the installation of new equipment as well as a reduction in the labour force. Thus in Eilat the fear for the future of the port was aggravated by the plan to dismiss hundreds of workers with little prospect of alternative employment. Strikes and demonstrations in Eilat paralysed the port on several occasions during 1978, a year in which it was preferred to ship 130,000 tons of cargo to Ashdod and Haifa rather than Eilat (11). A group of protesters travelled to Jerusalem to meet government officials, but their journey was in vain.

Eilat's residents were not appeased by the Ministry of Transport's declaration in early April 1979 that it would guarantee 1 million tons of traffic via the port by updating subsidies, cancelling docking charges and improving overland transportation to Eilat. Thus when on April 30, 1979, the Israeli vessel 'Ashdod' sailing from Durban to Ashdod via the Suez Canal inaugurated a new era for Israel shipping, feelings in Eilat were mixed:

"We were happy that this was a further step toward the peace; yet we knew that this was the end of further development for the port"(12).

An additional blow was the Iranian revolution of 1979 and the complete severance of relations with Israel. In addition to a further cut in Eilat's foreland, the oil port was devastated. Compared to the estimated 30 million tons of oil per year unloaded in the port before the revolution, only about a million tons a year were unloaded afterwards (Gavriel, 1980). This figure declined further after Israel returned to Egypt the oil field in the Gulf of Suez as part of the peace agreement. In the period between 1982 and 1987 only one tanker has been calling twice a month in the oil port, unloading crude oil bought from Egypt (Israel's main source of oil shifted to Mexico and Venezuela). Consequently the labour force was drastically reduced from 200 in mid 1979 to 15 in 1982.

As well as continuing to support the port the government proceeded with its

modernisation scheme. Increasing efficiency included a growing number of manpower cuts. Between 1978 and 1981 the port's labour force was reduced from 1200 employees (20% of Eilat's total labour force) to 370 employees (5% of the total). The local municipality's efforts to promote the free zone scheme gained no support from Jerusalem or elsewhere in view of the project's poor economic prospects (13). This was illustrated by Gavriel (1980), who summarised the port's prime deficiencies:

"Eilat's location is pivotal with regard to the international shipping routes, and requires one extra day in the sea (up and down the Gulf of Aqaba)".

"Severe competition from the Suez Canal and particularly the development of a free port in Port Said".

"Lack of international hinterland".

Hostile foreland, and lack of an immediate foreland up to 3000 km into the Indian Ocean. (Gavriel, 1980:71)".

To sum up briefly the crisis period in the port, I would suggest that what was described as Eilat's struggle to maintain annual traffic flow (Stern and Hayute, 1984), was in fact a government struggle, expressed primarily through increasing subsidies and creating "artificial" growth of the port. This also delayed the full impact on Eilat of the opening of the Suez Canal to Israeli traffic. One may find ironic the government's claim that its new policy towards the port in the late 1970s was generated by economic rather than political considerations. In fact it was based upon the same political factors (i.e freedom of navigation in the Red Sea and the Suez Canal) that hindered further development of the port.

## 7.5 Crisis From Above

The crisis in Eilat was further accelerated by the government's minor response to the growing distress. Under the existing approach of development from above, interaction among the various planning activities at regional level was limited and uncoordinated. Since decision makers viewed the situation from afar, their decisions often appeared quite unrealistic. The arrogant attitudes of some government officials whose promises were largely empty further antagonised local people. This may be illustrated by the lack of government action in initiating any significant scheme to provide the locals with alternative employment between the mid- 1970s to early 1980s when urban expansion had been almost totally stagnant for a decade. Other examples were the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai and the abortive plans for the

railway and airport.

The lack of decision making power in Eilat prevented an effective response by local agencies. Eilat's dependence on government help to overcome its crisis was echoed by many letters, reports and attempts to raise help for the town by local officials (14). This may also be illustrated in Karmon (1976, 1979):

"It is clear today that Eilat cannot exist without massive aid from the government. The town has reached the brink of collapse. If Eilat is vital to Israel, it should be regarded as part of Israel's security budget" (Karmon, 1979:570).

The 1979 Israeli withdrawal from Sinai in accord with the Camp David Agreement was sought by the government to be used as a vehicle for the resumption of development in Eilat, raising local hopes for intensified activity. Government and local officials indicated that the planned redeployment of the IDF in the Negev in 1980-1982 would accommodate thousands of military personnel in the newly-built bases. It was expected that hundreds of regular army servicemen would resettle their families in the various Negev towns close to their bases, and therefore generate new activity and create new sources of employment. Several military camps including an air force base (in Ovda) were built in the early 1980s within 30 to 60 km from Eilat. However from the early stages it was apparent that the redeployment operation had only a small contribution to make to Eilat and the Negev, mainly due to the government's inability to effectively use the withdrawal from Sinai to revitalise Eilat and the Negev. This may be attributed partly to government failure to provide houses in Eilat for the soldiers' families (in the early 1980s tourism growth resulted in an acute shortage of accommodation; see also section 8.5.1), to promote new economic activity and create new jobs. At the same time the Ministry of Defence constructed family neighbourhoods in several new bases. In addition free daily flights from Ovda to Tel Aviv were provided by the army for servicemen, and the fact that regular army personnel changed bases every 2-3 years meant that many left their families in the north and travelled home once or twice a week. On the political level Gradus (1983) attributed much of this failure primarily to the absence of regional administrative and political institutions, resulting from Israel's long-standing centralist policy. He pointed out that the Israeli State Comptroller's report (1981) indicated that very few attempts were made to involve Negev residents or their representatives in planning their towns and

recommended the provision of more information and interaction between the military functional authorities and the leaders and residents of the region concerning future plans for the region. Eilat's mayor was very precise regarding the government's role:

"The government is carrying direct responsibility for Eilat not being integrated into the redeployment operation. Its failure to provide adequate infrastructure and initiate substantial development activity and therefore attract more people to the town has virtually left Eilat out of the huge operation..."(15)

A railway to Eilat was always regarded as a project that would reduce transportation costs and greatly assist the development of Eilat and the Arava (Levinzon, 1961; Karmon, 1963; Gavriel, 1980). The first plan for a railway was submitted to the government in 1963 (Regling and Vass, 1963), but was shelved mainly on the grounds that the project would be uneconomical due to the small quantities of cargo passing through Eilat (16). Following the 1967 War and the plan to establish a landbridge, the idea was put forward again. "By January 1971 the first train will arrive in Eilat" (Erev Erev, 6.3.1969:11), declared the mayor on Eilat's 30th anniversary, following a discussion with the Minister of Transport. However, nothing was done. The 1973 War added a new dimension to the issue:

"The war (1973) made many of us see the railway not merely as an economic plus, but as an existence issue - the same as having a strong IDF" (Katz, 1974:43).

With regard to the threat to the future of the port and the NCB following the reopening the Suez Canal, a railway was considered essential to expand the port's hinterland northward (Gavriel, 1980). Indeed, experts from the Ministry of Transport established that the project would be feasible when cargo turnover reached 1 million tons (Katz, 1974) (in 1975 it reached 950,000 tons). Yet in the late 1970s the Ministry of Transport maintained that only an annual turnover of 4 million tons could justify such a project (17). Even a local plan to involve foreign investors in the project was rejected by the government, who maintained that the slim chance of sufficient cargo turnover in Eilat would demand heavy government subsidies in the future. The plan was shelved, with virtually no prospect for its implementation in the foreseeable future.

Less essential to the town's growth, yet with implications similar to those of the

railway affair, is the plan to build a new airport in Eilat. The present airport was built on the army airfield of 1948, on a flat area not far from the town centre. It was considered a temporary site (Turner, 1968). The airport was always regarded as a public nuisance because it became a source of pollution and noise, as well as separating the town from the hotel district and creating a bottleneck at the only junction that connected the town, the hotels, the port, and the route to the north. Although a plan to build a new airport and relocate it 11 km north of Eilat in the Arava was drawn up by the Ministry of Transport in 1963, the existing airport became 'permanent' over the years, and in the mid 1960s a new terminal was built.

The first announcement that "work on the new airport will start within a year" (Erev Erev, 21.1.1965:5), was made by the Minister of Transport during a visit to Eilat in 1965. Two years later, the same empty promise was declared by the same minister (Erev Erev, 12.4.1967:6). After the 1967 War Eilat became a major centre for transportation to and from Sinai. The number of air passengers grew from 110,000 in 1966 to 230,000 in 1968. Hopes for a new airport rose again, yet apart from extending the runway in 1970 to enable medium-size jets to land nothing else was done. The charter era (to be discussed in the next chapter) brought new declarations by state officials: "In July 1978 I expect that the first flight will arrive at Eilat's new international airport" (18). The scheme continued to be debated throughout the 1980s and is now part of Eilat's new masterplan (Eilat, 1988, to be discussed later). Yet by 1988 no concrete steps had been taken to get the project off the ground.

Another factor which may have contributed to the neglect of development plans concerning the Negev in general and Eilat in particular may be attributed to the Likud policy of increasing Jewish settlement in the West Bank and Gaza. The huge financial resources required to maintain this policy greatly depleted state funds which could have been used for the development of the Negev and Galilee regions (Efrat, 1987). Paradoxically, government initiatives to modernise Eilat's electricity system by connecting it to the national grid, and closing down the local power station meant a deepening of the crisis by adding a further 40 unemployed to the town. To sum up the role of the government in Eilat's crisis, I would note that its policy was something of a contradiction. On the one hand it still emphasised the vital importance of the existence of Eilat to the Israeli economy, which naturally

required greater national efforts to help Eilat over its crisis, while on the other it measured every stage of development on economic merit.

## 7.6 Summary

By the early 1980s Eilat had reached a turning point in her development. The crisis she had experienced throughout the previous decade had caused a dramatic change in the town's economic base. Heavy industry had entirely disappeared. Cargo passing through the oil port and the NCB formed only a fraction of previous flow. The port had lost its significant position as Israel's only gateway to the south, and consequently its role within Israeli maritime trade as well as within Eilat's economic life was considerably diminished. As unemployment reached 15%, the number of people leaving the town surpassed those who came. Moreover, new political realities in the Middle East, including the peace with Egypt, Israel's right of passage in the Suez Canal, and the hostile attitude of Teheran, together with the new political atmosphere in Israel, reduced the prospect of revitalising these sectors to virtually nil in the foreseeable future. A further consequence of the crisis effectively came to a head in 1984. The town's population fell from 19,500 in 1982 to 18,500 in 1984 (figure 6.7), while during the same period the level of employment fell by 33% (from 10,000 to 6,700).

With only a minor response from Jerusalem, Eilat had to learn how to rely on her own resources and become less dependent on government help. She also had to adjust herself to the new geopolitical reality in the area. During the crisis period the instigators of protest created the preconditions for a future mobilisation of the town towards a new era of development. Thus tourism, that since the mid 1970s had gradually been recovering, had become Eilat's main economic sector by the early 1980s.



## Notes for Chapter 7

1. Part of a letter from the Eilat Hotel Association to the Ministry of Transport, 4.3.1975, Eilat's municipal archive, Tourism, 1975. (Hebrew)
2. Regarding this event see for example: New York Times, 28.9.1975:1; The Sunday Telegraph, 28.9.1975:1; The Times, 29.9.1975:1. The world-wide protest is reflected in the remarks of the Swedish Prime Minister, as quoted in the Guardian: "...To help to put an end to the rule of satanic murderers who have killed people for 40 years" (The Guardian, 29.9.1975:1-2). M. Melzer has kept the telex from Tjaereborg asking if it could send tourists to Eilat following the incident.
3. Interview with M. Melzer.
4. Report from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in Jerusalem to Timna's manager: Essential Steps towards Improving the Efficiency of Timna's Copper Mines, Eilat's municipal archive, Timna, 1.6.1975. (Hebrew)
5. Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Jerusalem. Internal report, Closing down Timna's Mine, Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
6. Gad Katz was Eilat's mayor between 1972 and 1983. Interview was conducted in March 1988, Tel Aviv.
7. This view was expressed also by the Israeli Port and Railway Authority spokesman, by Eilat's mayor at the time (Gad Katz) and the port's pilot Captain Philip Eeron.
8. Interview with Gad Katz.
9. According to an interview with the Minister of Transport as quoted in Erev Erev, 17.5.1977:12.
10. According to interviews with Gavriel and the Israeli Port and Railway Authority spokesman.
11. Israel Port Authority (1978), Statistical Yearbook, Tel Aviv.
12. Interview with Gad Katz.
13. Israeli Port Authority, Internal report, (1981), Tax-Free Zones in Israel. Tel Aviv (Hebrew). This was also the view of Eilat Port Manager M. Zaltzman, in an interview held in February 1987, Eilat.
14. Many letters and reports from local officials directed to the local municipality and various government ministries in Jerusalem urging government support in initiating development activity are located in Eilat's Municipal archive in various files dated 1976-1979.
15. Rafi Hochman has been mayor of Eilat since 1983. Interview was conducted in July 1989, Eilat.
16. ISA/RR51.E3354, Internal report. By: Ministry of Transport, Railway to Eilat. December, 1963. (Hebrew)
17. Interview with the Israeli Port and Railway Authority spokesman.
18. The general manager of the Israeli Airport Authority in a news conference in Eilat, as quoted by Erev Erev, 26.1.1978:5.

## **Chapter 8 EILAT, THE SUN AND THE SEA**

### **8.1 Eilat: A Red Sea Paradise ?**

Eilat's tourist industry, starting to recover in the late 1970s from its earlier crisis, gained further encouragement from the peace process between Israel and Egypt. During the 1980s tourism emerged as the main vehicle for Eilat's new phase of growth and development. This was concomitant with the awakening of Eilat's population and its local municipality, which since the early 1980s has been oriented toward greater independence in local affairs, and much more concerned with participation in the decision-making process and development from below. Greater government responsiveness to local demands, together with the growing involvement of multinational corporations, has ushered in a new era of prosperity for Eilat.

Since the mid-1980s Eilat has been Israel's prime tourist resort, outranking traditional destinations such as Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv. After years of urban stagnation Eilat is witnessing a new phase of development in its urban and economic base. Its population grew from 18,500 to 25,000 between 1982 and 1987 (figure 6.7).

#### **8.1.1 Israel in the 1980s: Political and Economic Constraints**

In the early 1980s Israel stumbled into an unprecedented political and economic crisis. This, however, had only a minor effect on Eilat. Its remoteness and isolation from the rest of Israel, which for many years had hindered the development of the town, now proved to be a beneficial factor. The peace with Egypt (1979) and Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon (1984) further contributed to its development. Yet I still find it necessary to outline the main events as they emphasise the contrast between the growth which took place in Eilat and the crisis in Israel's political and economic life. They may illustrate how the concepts of 'remoteness' and 'isolation' took on a fresh meaning during the 1980s, and highlight the new political mood in Eilat which gained her greater political and decision-making power, increased local activity and reduced dependence on Jerusalem. However, as much has been written elsewhere on each of the following issues, my discussion will be brief and aims to illustrate the political and economic background to Eilat's growth over the last decade.

The Likud's 1981 election victory led to the emergence of an even more hawkish cabinet. Their increasingly nationalist right-wing policy on the Palestinian issue, inspired by Revisionist doctrines which aimed to achieve a 'Greater Eretz Israel' (Seliktor, 1983), led to the Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation between November 1981 and Spring 1982 and a deepening split in Israeli society over the government's settlement policy. In addition, Jerusalem's heavy investment in these settlements was at the expense of new initiatives in Israeli development towns, many of which were in the Negev (Efrat, 1984).

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the entry into Beirut, the Sabra and Chatila affair and the high toll of dead and injured suffered by Israel during the invasion and subsequent occupation, in a war that was seen by many Israelis as unnecessary (Shlaim, 1984), swept the country into a political crisis. This effectively came to a head in August 1983 when Prime Minister Begin resigned. His successor's inability to retain his fragile majority led to new elections in summer 1984 (Viorst, 1989; Wright, 1989).

These political events had severe consequences for the Israeli economy. Military expenditure had formed around one third of GNP since the 1970s. Labour, and later Likud, assisted by massive American aid, fought with partial success to control spiralling inflation. However, against a background of growing political divisions in Israel, the new Finance Minister introduced policies which drew charges of election politics. These were designed to appeal to the lower levels of society, and contributed to the Likud's electoral victory, but ultimately accentuated Israel's economic problems. In addition to the grave effect on tourism to Israel, the economic burden of the war, stimulated inflation which grew rapidly from an average of 15%-20% in the late 1970s to 13% in 1982 and 445% in 1984. Two changes in the Israeli currency and its rapid devaluation were further factors in increasing the pressure for a new election (Yorke, 1988). For the first time in Israel's history the 1984 election failed to produce a clear mandate for a ruling party, forcing Likud and Labour to establish a National Unity Government (NUG). The NUG pushed aside political issues and successfully tackled inflation, reducing it from 445% to 19.5% between 1984 and 1986.

Israel's fortieth anniversary year of independence and her twentieth of occupation of the West Bank and Gaza was marked by the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising (*Intifada*) in December 1987 (Peretz, 1988). The onset of a period of uninterrupted Palestinian rebellion and Israeli repression in the occupied territories led to an increased polarisation of attitudes within Israeli society to the Palestinian dilemma. Further economic problems appeared as a result of the *Intifada*. There were strikes and curfews in the occupied territories, boycotts on working in Israel and on buying Israeli produce (Palestinians provide much of Israel's semi-skilled labour and a market for up to 20% of its goods). This resulted in a slowing down of the economy, growing unemployment and some signs of austerity (Aronson, 1989). The 1988 election once again failed to provide strong leadership in Israel. Thus, differences of opinion in the new NUG and the lack of a unified policy towards the Palestinian problem still characterise Israeli political life at the end of the 1980s. A clear solution has not yet emerged as the country continues to struggle politically and economically for a better future.

Against a background of political and economic turbulence in Israel throughout the 1980s, with government efforts directed toward more burning issues than promoting new initiatives in the struggling development towns (Gradus, 1983; Efrat, 1984), Eilat's recovery from its crisis and new period of growth and prosperity is all the more conspicuous. It provides further indication of the new political trend in Eilat whereby local bodies have, since the early 1980s, showed greater ability to promote development from below. In addition this may further illustrate Eilat's unique character as an independent entity within Israel's spatial urban system.

## **8.2 The Port, 1981-1987; Adjusting to Reality**

Eilat ceased to be Israel's only gateway to the south after the Camp David agreement. With Israeli ships freely and safely using both the Suez Canal and the Red Sea, Jerusalem saw no need to continue the high level subsidy system required to maintain traffic flow via Eilat. At the same time, in view of the constant financial losses suffered by the port, the Israeli Port Authority launched a new modernisation plan that included a reduction in the port's labour force from 350 in 1981 to 270 in 1985, aiming to increase efficiency and turn it into a profitable port.

As its policy was motivated by economic rather than ideological considerations, the government decided to reduce subsidies on traffic via Eilat as part of its effort to ease the burden on the state budget. Henceforth, with the economic advantage in using the Suez Canal rather than Eilat's port, an increasing amount of cargo that would previously have gone through Eilat found its way to Ashdod and Haifa. Compared to 11% of the total Israeli seaborne cargo passing through the port in 1978, 6.4% passed through Eilat in 1987 (figure 6.4). Yet the average cargo flow remained at around 1 million tons per year, mainly because the total seaborne traffic to and from Israel during the same period grew from 9.85 million tons to 15 million tons. By 1987 the 97 ships calling at the port unloaded 369,000 tons, of which 62% were containerised cargo and 38% were general cargo, mainly cars from Japan. The 596,000 tons exported via Eilat included 52% of dry bulk cargo, mainly phosphate, and 48% of containerised cargo (figure 6.2, 6.3).

Ideological considerations found new expression during the 1980s. The growing number of ships carrying the Israeli flag passing through the Canal was regarded in Jerusalem as another step toward normalisation of relations with Egypt. Even when excuses such as "strategic importance" or "security" were raised by Eilat's municipality in an attempt to enlist greater government support for the port, Jerusalem did not change its policy:

"This was neither 1956 nor 1967; the existence of Eilat's port was indisputable. There was no fear for its existence. Government studies have established that about 1 million tons of cargo per year are destined to pass via Eilat in any case, and will provide a sufficient volume of traffic to fuel its activity. Thus the magic word "security", a vital reason for developing the port in the past, was used in a totally unjustified manner during the 1980s, and indeed, caused no change in government policy toward the port"(1).

A further attempt to revitalise the port and to widen the town's economic base was made by the municipality when it tried to convince the government to construct an inland port, 10 km north of Eilat, that would be connected to the Gulf of Aqaba by a canal along the Jordanian border (Israel, 1979). This plan was regarded as an initial step toward boosting the development of the town and the south of the Arava by building an industrial park north of Eilat. In addition it was proposed to build a coal terminal, that in conjunction with the planned railway to Eilat would serve as a gateway for Israel's growing coal stock, of which 50% was imported from South Africa and Australia to generate the recently built power stations (in Ashkelon and Caesarea). Yet the estimated cost of \$200m for the initial stages

meant that the need for government finance was inevitable. However, with the hostile attitude of the tourist sector that regarded the plan as a "severe hazard for the tourist industry" (Israel, 1979), or "a catastrophic plan for tourism in Eilat"(2), even the mayor was pessimistic regarding the possibility of implementing it:

"Unfortunately the plan is unrealistic at present. The strong opposition of the tourist industry and the lack of interest of the Port Authority, together with the absolute dependence of the project on the government, while we (Eilat's municipality) have no impact, has shelved the plan for the foreseeable future..."(3).

An obvious victim of reopening the Suez Canal was the NCB, the Israeli alternative to Suez:

"The difference in between passing through the Suez Canal (\$5.5-\$10 per ton) compared with the NCB (\$18-\$25per ton) leaves no doubt as to which route one should use..." (Gavriel, 1980:81).

NCB (transit) traffic fell rapidly from 172,000 tons in 1980 to 100,000 tons in 1981. Yet throughout the 1980s an average of 100,000 tons per year continued to pass via the NCB. According to a report by Zim (1985) this was due to internal considerations that continued to use the NCB for the Zim international network.

The report concluded:

"The NCB has continued to be an important asset to the Israeli economy. It is in no way trying to create a challenge to the Suez Canal which transfers more than 70 million tons of dry cargo on average every year" (Zim, 1985:91).

By 1987 the port that had for many years been Eilat's second most important economic sector had only a minor role. It employed less than 3% of the town's total labour force (20% in 1978), while the movement of foreign ships had ceased. Only 4 non-Israeli ships called in Eilat in 1984, and 2 in 1986, compared to more than 30 ships per year on average during the 1970s. However, Government efforts to make the port efficient and profitable were successful. The establishment of the 'Eilat Service' by Zim in 1980 integrated Eilat into the international shipping lines and increased the effectiveness of the company's operations. Three new lines were operated from Eilat to South and East Asia, to East and South Africa, and a line from Trieste via the Canal to Eilat, and thence to Asia and Australia. These proved so successful that throughout the 1980s they became Zim's most profitable lines. This also marked a new era for the port: its adjustment to the new geopolitical reality was reflected in 1987 when it showed its first profitable year.

### 8.3 Industry during the 1980s

Industry ceased to be the main economic sector of Eilat after the closure of the Timna copper mine in 1975. This was part of what was regarded as an increasing gap between the industrial structure of the centre and that of the periphery in Israel during this period (Gradus and Einy, 1981; Gradus, 1983). Jerusalem's attempts to set up new industries resulted in the establishment of a copper telephone cable factory employing 65 workers in 1978, and a salt factory employing 60 workers in 1979. Both factories possessed a very local character, and were built primarily due to proximity to the port and because their products were destined for the domestic and African markets. All other endeavours by local and foreign investors to develop other industries have failed.

Fresh hopes arose in Eilat that the Timna mine would be reopened after a government committee established in April 1979 that limited operation of the mine would be profitable (4). In August 1979 the government decided to re-operate the mine and rehired 300 workers, most of whom had worked in Timna before 1967. Yet production was small and the mine never returned to its pre-1975 operational level. Profits were scarcely sufficient to cover overheads (5). Thus when copper prices declined again in 1984 the government decided to close down the mine for good. Although few employment opportunities faced the laid-off workers there was little protest, perhaps due to the handsome compensation that enabled them to set up new businesses, mainly in the booming tourist industry. It was ironic that Timna, which had been regarded as the counterbalance to tourism, became part of the tourist industry as it was placed under the auspices of the Timna Valley National Park(6) (this attraction has shown considerable success; 210,000 people visited the park between 1985 and 1988).

Apart from the Timna affair, Jerusalem saw little prospect of new heavy industry in Eilat (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 1983), and there was no further planning in this direction. Indeed until 1988 not a single heavy industrial enterprise was set up in Eilat. Even government support by means of public loans and a considerable reduction in taxation was unable to attract potential investors, who were deterred by the long distance, the high transportation costs, the lack of hinterland and the small local market. The port's Free Zone illustrates the inability

of Eilat to attract industry. In the light of local difficulties and the fact that most cargo handled in the port is only passing through, the Free Zone has remained literally empty. Other light industry in Eilat consists of small manufacturing and service enterprises. These include garages and small craft workshops producing leather goods, textiles, jewellery, souvenirs etc. In 1987 they employed 800 people (7.3% of Eilat's labour force).

It appears that for the foreseeable future heavy industry will not have a role to play in Eilat. Greater emphasis has been placed by the government and the municipality on the promotion of light industry, which is to be located in an industrial park north of Eilat (Ministry of Trade and Commerce, 1980). By creating the required infrastructure it aimed to attract mainly high technology which would not incur high transportation costs. Yet a government commitment to provide the required infrastructure by 1985 proved to be baseless. Eilat's mayor attributed the lack of new industry in Eilat to this lack of commitment (7). Establishing the Tax-Free Zone in 1985 provided the needed impetus. Assisted by government finance, work was initiated in 1986 to create the planned infrastructure (the project was still under way in late 1988). Despite the mayor's enthusiasm and his vision of Eilat as an important centre for science-based industry (Jerusalem Post, 4.12.1986:6) (8), it is still questionable whether industry will return to play a major part in Eilat's economic life, as no concrete steps have yet being taken to build this up.

#### **8.4 Tourism - 1975 to the Lebanon War, 1982.**

The gloomy prospect for tourism in Eilat in 1975, and the firm pressure from Eilat and the Ministry of Tourism (section 7.2) persuaded the Ministry of Transport to grant a permit for charter flights in October 1975. On November 9, Tjaereborg's first charter flight from Copenhagen touched down in Eilat, opening up a new era for the town's tourist industry, although the new policy was introduced too late to include Eilat in the various European tour operators' brochures for the winter season of 1975/76 (9). 3000 Scandinavian tourists chose Eilat rather than Spain for their holiday that year. Throughout the second half of the 1970s and the early 1980s Eilat witnessed a rapid growth in its tourist industry. This was greatly assisted by the general recovery of Israel's tourist industry, which was due to relative political calm in the Middle East and the 1979 Peace Agreement between Israel and Egypt (Ministry of Tourism, 1984A). Compared with 257,000 visitors to



Eilat in 1976, of whom 142,000 were Israeli and 115,100 foreign tourists (figure 6.5), the total number in 1981 was 362,900, of whom 188,300 were Israeli and 174,600 foreign tourists. The latter mainly arrived during the winter, providing an occupancy rate of 75%-85% (figure 6.6). Israelis tended to come in the summer and spend 3-4 days, providing an occupancy rate of around 50%-55%. (Annual occupancy rate was between 61%-64% until 1982). Eilat's growing popularity was reflected in heavy overbooking during major holidays such as Christmas and Easter, and the influx of large numbers of Israelis during other local holidays, many of whom camped on the beach or rented rooms in local houses (there are no exact details regarding these figures). The total number of rooms grew from 2035 in 1975 to 2600 in 1981, with a further 1000 rooms under construction.

The number of tourists arriving in Eilat on charter flights grew from 9000 from four countries in winter 1976-7 to 32,000 from six countries in winter 1981-2. Despite representing a relatively small percentage of the total number of foreign tourists visiting Eilat (11.4% in 1976-7 and 19.3% in 1981-2), they provided 40%-50% of the total foreign tourist bed occupancy as they usually stayed for a minimum of one week. The contribution of charters to Eilat was described by a local hotelier: "The tourists coming on charter flights simply made the crucial difference between profit and loss" (10). For other tourists Eilat continued to provide a couple of days' relaxation in their inclusive tour of Israel, or a short stop en route to Sinai.

Jerusalem's decision to admit charters to Israel was like removing a valve that had blocked the potential flow of tourists from the growing European tourist market of the 1970s. Using charters enabled tour operators to reduce the price of package holidays to Eilat, making her more competitive price-wise with similar destinations such as the Canary Islands or West Africa. A report from the Israeli government tourist office in Copenhagen based upon local studies indicated:

"There is an increasing demand in northern Europe for sun and sea holidays, particularly in the winter. In addition, people are growing weary of traditional winter resorts in the Canary Islands or Morocco (Agadir), as many of them have already spent 5 or even more of their recent holidays in these places... In view of Eilat's location, her weather, Israel's image in the west and the possibility of using charters, Eilat undoubtedly provided an excellent sun and sea resort for the thirsty Scandinavian market" (11).

Further support for this view was provided by the Middle East manager of

'Kreuzer' (West Germany):

"Eilat could fulfil only a small part of the huge demand for winter sun holidays that we and other European tour operators experienced at that time. Thus removing the charter barrier meant thrusting Eilat into the market..."(12).

However, in spite of the growth of tourism in Eilat, further inspection of her tourist industry reveals that services in Eilat between 1976 and 1981 were not of a high standard, and the new developments should be attributed to the European demand for winter sun holidays rather than to the existence of an impressive well- equipped resort. Many of the problems were due to Jerusalem's paternalistic control from afar which throughout the 1970s revealed a growing gap between its aspirations and those of Eilat. While the locals saw Eilat primarily as a sun and sea resort that should be marketed on its own merits, Jerusalem continued to regard it as part of an inclusive tour of Israel. Thus government strategy and development plans were directed towards addressing the needs of short-term visits of 3-4 days (Ministry of Tourism, 1978). This was contrary to the locals' idea of establishing recreational facilities to serve holidays of around a week or more. As Jerusalem pushed for its strategy, and the Eilatis advocated a different way, tourism expanded during the late 1970s without a central guiding hand. This was described by a local hotelier as a "...jungle of tourism with everybody doing whatever they think fit" (13). Examples may be cited which illustrate the lack of coordination between the various organisations operating in the area. In November 1976 a group of travel agents and journalists were sent by the Israeli government tourist office in London on a promotional tour to Eilat. When the specially chartered airplane arrived, it appeared that no one in Eilat knew about the tour, and nothing had been prepared. After wandering around the airport for two hours, the group was flown back to London without visiting the town (Erev Erev, 11.11.1976:10). In other cases the uncoordinated hotel reservation system resulted in extensive overbooking during the winter season, and as a consequence tourists were sent to Tel Aviv as an alternative to their holiday in Eilat (14). A further example of the poor development policy was the lagoon project (section 6.5), which had remained virtually unused. Even the two hotels that had been constructed on the eastern shore faced the town and made no use of the extended waterfront. A later government report stated:

"There was a conflict of interests and poor coordination between the various bodies responsible for the development of the lagoon... Though it was built

to extend the waterfront the lagoon does not fulfil this function. The new waterfront has not been used and remains as mere scenery..." (Roso, 1985:37).

The European desire for more sun and sea holidays, together with the prospect of easy profits and the lack of clear policies and administrative control, led to the ugly exploitation of tourists by providing inferior services and charging disproportionately high prices. This could be seen in wide range of sectors connected with tourism. The Israeli Airport Authority charged landing fees which were unjustifiably 20% higher than those at Ben Gurion International Airport near Tel Aviv (Maariv, 28.1.1979:3). In local restaurants and shops prices were high, tourists having to pay up to \$3-4 for a soft drink in some cases. This provoked arguments by angry holiday-makers (Yediot Achronot, 12.2.1979). Moreover, nothing was done to improve cultural activities and entertainment facilities. The 'Autinkomatkat' (Finland) representative to Eilat at this time described the situation:

"Eilat was really a third class-resort, no better then Benidorm... many officials and locals thought only how to get the tourists' money - fast and easy. They simply ignored the basic fact that first they should provide a service" (15).

A critical letter from Tjaereborg to the Ministry of Tourism may further illustrate Eilat's "jungle of tourism" in the late 1970s:

"We are concerned about Eilat's beaches, which with a little effort could be so much better... Many people have been complaining that Eilat's night life is rather dead while prices are one of the most negative features of the town..." (16).

While for Europeans Eilat was still a relatively new resort whose 2500 rooms formed only a fraction of the total demand for winter sun holidays, for Israelis it had become very expensive (Ministry of Tourism, 1980). Many Israelis preferred to go abroad, resulting in a 18.5% drop in the number of Israelis visiting Eilat between 1975 and 1980 (figure 6.5). Thus when Tjaereborg revealed its plans to commence package tours to Aqaba which would be cheaper than a holiday in Eilat by \$100 per person per week, fears for a new tourist crisis grew in Eilat. Israel had only a vague knowledge of Aqaba's tourist facilities and in fact had little idea of whether it was able to compete with Eilat. This was echoed in the Israeli media and by local calls to allocate more resources to Eilat, while others suggested seeking an alternative economic option to tourism (Erev Erev, 29.6.1978:4; Maariv,

These factors, together with the port crisis of the late 1970s, the inability of the local municipality to initiate any significant change, and a difference of opinion between Eilat and Jerusalem regarding Eilat's tourist industry, led to growing frustration that provoked bitter accusations against Jerusalem by the mayor, such as:

"By sitting in Jerusalem and taking armchair decisions regarding our future, the government showed a poor knowledge and appreciation of the reality of Eilat's situation. By failing to address real needs and problems, Eilat's tourist industry is suffering from confusion and a lack of confidence regarding its future..." (Erev Erev, 24.10.1977:6).

In turn, the Ministry of Tourism attacked the local municipality:

"Eilat's dirty beaches are just one illustration of the municipality's poor standards and lack of awareness of elementary tourist needs... It is concerned only about exploiting the tourist for its own benefit..." (Erev Erev, 12.5.1978:16).

The signing of the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt added to the feeling of uncertainty among some locals who, despite the peace, saw the return of Sinai to Egypt as giving up an opportunity to expand Eilat's tourism. They also felt that moving the Israel-Egyptian border to Eilat was a damaging factor for the future of tourism in general. These feelings were further aggravated by the conflict over who had sovereignty over Taba, particularly as Israel tried to use the tourist industry to gain territorial advantage. Although the exact location of the Israeli-Egyptian border at Taba was not clear and was to be decided in international arbitration, and despite Egyptian requests to freeze all initiatives in the disputed area, Jerusalem encouraged a private Israeli investor to go ahead with the construction of five-star hotel of 326 rooms. It was hoped in Jerusalem that this would establish a de facto right to sovereignty over the area. The Egyptian protest came into effect after the Avia-Sonesta hotel was opened in March 1982. They launched an advertising campaign among European travel agents to boycott the hotel, stressing that it was on occupied land (this was not effective and was hardly felt in the hotel, which integrated successfully into the booming industry). David Lewis, a British businessman who saw Eilat's potential and decided to invest in tourism by establishing the 'Isrotel' hotel chain in Eilat (17) (in 1981 was engaged in constructing a new hotel in Eilat), commented:

"Tourism in Eilat showed the clear lack of a guiding hand. In Jerusalem no one was really sure in which direction it should go... In Eilat at the same time, some local entrepreneurs tried to promote sun and sea holidays but

they lacked international experience. The different perspectives of the Eilat and the government, the latter's poor support, and the inability of the local municipality to help due to lack of resources, meant that the locals' efforts suffered from lack of professionalism and were bound to have limited success" (18).

Thus, despite the growth of tourism, the news that Aqaba posed no serious threat to Eilat, (Tjaereborg had stopped its charter flights to Aqaba in 1981, see also section 4.6), and the fact that El Al had started to operate charters to Eilat from Zurich and Frankfurt in October 1980, the lack of a cohesive and unified policy resulted in more uncertainty and confusion among local hoteliers and entrepreneurs.

A hotelier explained:

"We felt that we should eat today because maybe tomorrow we would die. There was no long-range planning... Instead of promoting innovation and development, government officials were busy quarrelling among themselves and with the local municipality about who should do what. The irony was that most of these people knew very little about tourism..." (19).

Despite fears among several local businessmen in the tourist industry that the peace agreement would have a negative influence on tourism in Eilat, it has in fact emerged as an important positive factor. An Egyptian consulate was opened in Eilat to enable easy visa procedures for visitors to Sinai, the dispute over Taba remained an issue for debate only at higher political levels with no effect on daily life in Eilat, and as the peace became part of daily life in Eilat and Israel several Israeli and foreign hotel chains such as Hilton, Sheraton and Ladbroke expressed an interest in constructing hotels in Eilat (20). Additionally the Ministry of Tourism drew up a new tourist development plan for Eilat (Ministry of Tourism, 1980), which suggested a range of improvements and modernisation work along the beaches and in other tourist areas. This included the construction of a variety of hotels and tourist facilities, and of a new lagoon east of the existing one. More encouraging than the plan was the government's success in enlisting several Israeli and foreign companies which in 1981 started to construct 5 new hotels on the north beach and a holiday village at Coral Beach.

#### **8.4.1 New Vistas, 1982-1987**

The initial effect on Eilat of Israel's invasion of Lebanon in June 1982 was minor, because it started after the winter season of 1981-2. Due to the limited nature of the war, only part of the population was mobilised, and therefore the number of Israeli visitors fell by only 7% in the latter half of 1982. However, in September

1982 it appeared that reservations by European tour operators for the coming winter (1982-3) had dropped by 65%. Compared to 32,000 tourists arriving by charter in 1981-2, only 10,000 arrived in winter 1982-3. The decline in the total number of tourists visiting Israel also affected Eilat; their number fell from 174,000 in 1981 to 138,000 in 1983. The effect of the war was felt between June 1982 and March 1983. Thus annually compiled statistics do not reflect the full effect of the war on tourism. In the period mentioned the occupancy rate was relatively low; around 30%-40% in the various hotels (figure 6.6). However, far more significant was the war's indirect effect on Eilat's tourist industry. In view of the economic burden of the war, the government decided in early 1983 to impose a travel tax of \$300 on every Israeli travelling abroad (21). Though the initiative was not primarily meant to promote tourism in Eilat, the new tax reduced the number of Israelis travelling abroad from 725,000 in 1983 to 505,800 in 1985. Consequently, the number spending their holiday in Eilat grew from 174,200 in 1982 to 248,000 in 1985. Although the tax has been reduced to \$150 since 1987, it is still serving Eilat as it creates a burden for many Israeli families planning holidays abroad (figure 6.5).

Most significant was the effect of the Lebanon War as it appeared through the dramatic change in the Ministry of Tourism's policy toward Eilat. After 1982 it departed from its old approach of considering Eilat mainly as a stop on a tour of Israel. It has adopted the idea (long fought for by Eilatis) that seeks to present Eilat as a sun and sea resort existing as an independent entity. Since 1983 the municipality, together with foreign and local tourist interests, has increasingly taken decisions and devised plans regarding tourism in Eilat. More meetings between local officials, hoteliers and the government led to mutual decisions and plans for the town, while the EFDC became the main coordinating body for the new initiatives. These activities included altering the 1980 plan for tourist development (Ministry of Tourism, 1980) and initiating improvements and development work.

Jerusalem's new policy should be regarded as due to force of circumstances rather than a change of heart. I regard three major factors as the most influential in changing government policy. The first was the unanimous view of Eilat as a sun and sea resort by all the Israeli and foreign companies which negotiated for the opportunity of constructing new hotels in Eilat (22). Moreover, investors who were already engaged in construction demanded government support in creating the

appropriate infrastructure and facilities to develop such a resort. This was expressed by Lewis:

"I saw Eilat primarily as a sun and sea resort that should compete with such places as the Canary Islands, Agadir, etc. That was the way it should have been presented, marketed and developed..."(23).

The second factor was rooted in the decision by the Ministry of Finance to reduce financial benefit to the various investors in Eilat as part of the government effort to overcome the deepening economic crisis in Israel following the Lebanon War (Ministry of Tourism, 1985). Consequently four out of the six companies involved went into financial difficulties and in summer 1982 froze the construction of four hotels. Sheraton, about to initiate work, withdrew completely from the scheme. Thirdly, when it appeared that the Lebanon War heralded a new crisis for the tourist industry (which in late 1982 was regarded as Eilat's saviour), fear for Eilat's future grew rapidly in Jerusalem:

"We (Ministry of Tourism) knew that a new crisis in Eilat's tourist industry would create unprecedented economic and social disasters. For a town that in 1982 had not yet recovered from its 1970s crisis, this meant undermining its very basic existence" (24).

Although there appears to be no documentary evidence indicating that the Ministry of Tourism took an official decision to change its policy, officials in Jerusalem and Eilat clearly indicated that new winds had been blowing from Jerusalem since autumn 1982 (25). They attributed this largely to the effect of the Lebanon War on tourism and to pressure by various investors. This was expressed by a senior official in the Ministry of Tourism:

"In 1982 tourism was the only solution to Eilat's problems, and probably the only visible economic endeavour... reassessment of the situation revealed that we should try a new approach, perhaps other strategies and consider other options, particularly from people with wide experience in the tourist industry such as David Lewis" (26).

Lewis's view of Eilat, and undoubtedly his wish to support his own hotel, soon due to open, came into effect when he enlisted a wide range of European tour operators to promote Eilat. His activity was welcomed in Eilat, where after long years of confrontation and disagreement with Jerusalem, a powerful body had at last joined their campaign and provided it with great impetus. Jerusalem's response was very supportive and enthusiastic. A new plan by the Ministry of Tourism (1984) suggested fresh steps to promote Eilat in the spirit of the locals' viewpoint.

Among its main recommendations were:

"-To consolidate the links between Eilat and Europe by more direct flights to Eilat."

"-To minimise the impression of security hazards, Eilat should be presented as "Eilat on the Red Sea", without mentioning Israel, Jerusalem or anything else that may evoke a gloomy image of the Middle East."

"-To launch a new advertising scheme aimed at travel agents and tour operators, mainly emphasising the sun and the Red Sea's spectacular beauty."

"-To initiate new measures to reduce prices in Eilat, thereby making it more attractive to Europeans and Israelis" (Ministry of Tourism, 1984).

Indeed, since 1984 the Ministry of Tourism has launched an advertising campaign in the western European media. The strategy of 'cutting off' Eilat from Israel was carried into effect when many European tour operator brochures called for people in 9 European countries to replace chilly Europe with a week or more of "Eilat on the Red Sea" or "Eilat, the Red Sea paradise". The name Israel was mentioned either briefly or not at all(27). I would note that 'cutting off' part of Israel, even for advertising purposes, may be regarded as an extreme step for the Likud party with its right-wing nationalistic views, and further illustrates the sharp change of policy in Jerusalem. In addition an annual promotion campaign has been organised since 1984, financed by El Al, the Ministry of Tourism and local tourist bodies. European and American tour operators and leading travel agents are invited each year (since 1984) to a 3-4 day promotion conference in Eilat.

An improved domestic transportation service to Eilat contributed its part to tourism. The national bus company started to operate new air-conditioned buses between Haifa, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Beersheba and Eilat (government subsidies of all public transport in Israel meant that prices were around \$15 for a one-way trip from Tel Aviv to Eilat). The main route between Tel Aviv and Eilat enjoyed an hourly service between 05.00 and 18.00, with buses departing in each direction. An additional service was operated at midnight (during holidays the service was reinforced with anything up to 10 buses per hour in each direction). The domestic airline increased its service with aeroplanes leaving Tel Aviv and Eilat in both directions (some flights also called at Jerusalem and Haifa). although prices were high compared to buses (\$80 one-way), the 50-minute flight compared to a five-hour bus ride (from Tel Aviv) became very popular among Israelis and tourists,



with passenger figures on the Eilat route ranging from 280,000 in 1984 to 400,000 in 1988 (figures showing how many were Israelis and how many non-Israelis on this route were not available).

In 1984 Lewis's management in Israel - 'Isrotel' (28)(main marketing office in Tel Aviv) - opened its first luxury four star hotel on the eastern shore of the lagoon; the King Solomon Palace with 460 rooms. Later that year and during 1985 Isrotel acquired two more hotels and completed a fourth. This gave the company control over 1100 rooms, 25% of Eilat's total rooms. The British Ladbroke group opened a holiday village at Coral Beach in 1984, based on self-catering accommodation. By 1985 Eilat offered 4400 rooms in a variety of hotels ranging from one to five stars. In 1985 the EFDC opened a new camp site at Coral Beach which offered space for about 1500 people. In addition the Ministry of Tourism (1988) estimated that 1000 beds were available in private hostels and around 300 rooms were being let in private houses. Another initiative which characterises this type of holiday resort (Robinson, 1976) is the construction of blocks of holiday flats by private contractors (mainly from central Israel). The flats in the new development area south of the town were mainly intended for wealthy Israelis and foreigners.

An important contribution of 'Isrotel' to the consolidation of Eilat's position on the European tourist map was its effort to reduce the high prices in the town. The municipality's efforts since the early 1980s to persuade local businesses to cut prices had achieved only limited success. In an interview in early 1984 Eilat's newly-elected mayor revealed his commitment to lowering prices in restaurants and shops, yet admitted that so far he had only succeeded in reducing the price of beer (Newsview, 24.1.1984:19). Isrotel provided the required momentum by drastically cutting bed and breakfast rates. Their prices were so fiercely competitive that other hotels had no choice but to follow suit (see also: Jerusalem Post, 4.12.1986:6). A further impetus came from Jerusalem. Its decision in summer 1985 to regulate all prices in Israel as part of the government campaign to tackle inflation provided Eilat's municipality with an effective weapon with which to maintain low prices. Declaring Eilat a free trade zone, and removing the 15% VAT on all locally sold products, further helped to reduce prices.

Since 1983 all tourist areas in Eilat have witnessed substantial innovations and improvement work. A joint plan by the EFDC and the local municipality, financed by the Ministry of Tourism, created new gardens, palm trees, promenades along the north beach and the lagoon, while the marina was modernised and new shopping centres were built. Government finance by grants and low-interest loans assisted many of Eilat's old hotels (mostly privately owned) to undergo substantial face-lifts, enabling them to provide services of a similar standard to the new hotels. Isrotel's ambition to encourage people to return to Eilat and promote the town's name as a prominent tourist destination was reflected in its efforts to provide tourists with top-quality facilities. These included entertainment and recreational amenities and a new country club on the north beach that offered tennis courts, swimming pools, sauna, health club, etc.

The great effort expended in developing Eilat produced impressive results. Annual occupancy rates rose from 53.5% in 1983 to 71.3% in 1987. Eilat's luxury hotels reported an average 80%-95% occupancy throughout nine months of the year (It should be remembered that statistics take into account all listed hotels and hostels in Eilat. Hostels and one-and two- star hotels recorded an average 40%-50% occupancy in the low season). During the same period the total number of visitors grew from 428,000 of whom 290,000 were Israelis and 138,000 were tourists, to 476,000, of whom 253,500 were Israelis and 223,000 tourists. The number of tourists arriving by charter grew to 71,000 in 1987 (32% of the total number of tourists arriving in Eilat). They arrived in 1300 flights from nine European countries, some landing in Eilat while the larger planes landed at the Air Force base at Ovda, 60 km north of Eilat. These 'charter tourists' provided 55% of the total tourist bed occupancy. Eilat's success and its growing popularity was also echoed in the European media:

"Eilat on the Red Sea is a celebrated centre for scuba diving or leisurely snorkelling..." (Cosmopolitan, August.1987:101).

"Clear sea and beautifully desolate mountains of Israel's Red Sea jewel Eilat..." (Jewish Chronicle, 5.9.1986:17).

"There are the diving stations, the hotels, the night clubs, the restaurants, the camel parks from which on the previous day we had taken a wonderful safari into the desert... The current atmosphere is strikingly confident. Investment appears to be booming..." (The Times, 4.3.1989:41).

The tourism boom has coincided with a substantial growth in related industries which provide alternative employment for those who were made redundant from the port and Timna. Other Israeli who saw the potential for new investment became involved mainly with shops, food businesses, and other entertainment facilities. These have mushroomed around the tourist area and in the commercial centre of Eilat. Along the beaches new clubs owned by local residents and the hotel chains, such as Isrotel's Red Sea Sport Club, offer water sport facilities including windsurfing, water skiing, sailing boats and scuba diving, while professional diving courses are organised by specialist clubs. Eilat has become a focus for investment by most of Israel's major tourist companies, offering a large variety of excursions (I have counted at least 25) such as camel tours in the neighbouring desert, visits to the Timna National Park or a day trip to the Dead Sea and Jerusalem. International firms have opened branches in Eilat. These include the major car rental companies such as Avis, Budget and Hertz. Several kibbutzim in the Arava Valley have opened hostels for those who like to explore the desert. These include Kibbutz Ketura and Yahel (50-70 km north of Eilat). Kibbutz Yotvata, 42 km north of Eilat, has established a "Hai-Bar", a Biblical wildlife reserve that has become an attraction for short visits from Eilat. Joint efforts by local tourist interests, the municipality and the Ministry of Tourism to expand the scope of tourism took advantage of Israel's growing popularity as a conventions centre (Gidron, 1973) and have succeeded in attracting professional conventions in such fields as medicine and accountancy. Other initiatives by these bodies have included a plan to exploit Eilat's location on a major bird migration route by organising an annual gathering of bird-watchers from around the world who come to Eilat every spring, and special events such as an annual international jazz festival, which succeeds in attracting up to 50,000 visitors (mainly Israeli) every year.

The political relaxation in Israel towards the mid-1980s made an important contribution to Eilat's tourist industry. Lewis attributed much of the tourist boom to the peace agreement with Egypt and Israel and the withdrawal from Lebanon, an opinion that gained unanimous agreement by tour operators in Europe, and by locals and government officials (29). Lebanon is relatively distant from Eilat, but the peace with Egypt has affected daily life in Eilat, and particularly tourism. A daily bus service has been operating since 1982 from Eilat's border point at Taba to Cairo and Sharm el Sheikh. Local excursions from Eilat operate to Santa

Katerina and Mount Sinai, while private entrepreneurs have been running regular leisure cruises to Coral Island, 20 km south of Eilat. Diving safaris depart regularly from Eilat by land and sea to Sinai along the Gulf of Aqaba as far as Ras Muhammad (almost 300 km south of Eilat). In 1987, 150,000 visitors, of whom 96,000 were Israeli and the rest foreign tourists, passed through Eilat en route to Egypt. An estimated 35,000 tourists used this route to travel via Nuweiba to Aqaba in the same year. Most of these visitors spent a night or two in Eilat.

The period since the Palestinian uprising may provide an additional indication as to the success of the new policy on Eilat. While tourism to Israel declined by around 12% between 1987 and 1988, the number of tourists in Eilat grew by 26%. The total number of nights spent in Eilat by tourists and Israelis grew from 1.9 million in 1986 to 2.4 million in 1987. Eilat's \$150m income from tourism in 1987 even overshadowed tourist incomes in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and made Eilat Israel's number one tourist resort.

Eilat's prospects for the near future seem bright. Growing demand for more beds by many European tour operators for winter 1989/90 have been rejected due to lack of rooms. The Eilat Hotel Association maintained that lack of rooms is the only reason preventing a substantial increase in the number of tourists. A plan (EFDC, 1987) to double Eilat's room capacity by constructing 4500 new rooms by the year 2000 has succeeded in attracting a few leading international groups such as the 'Royal Beach' and 'Novotel', together with the biggest Israeli hotel chains 'Dan' and 'Isrotel' (Development Systems, 1988). Presently 1500 rooms are under construction in 6 hotels which are due to open by the mid-1990s.

In addition to the substantial growth in tourism, I would note the new political trends behind this growth, which affect other areas of life in Eilat. Apart from the peace with Egypt, a fact that inevitably is a vital condition for the prosperity of the industry, forces other than Jerusalem have emerged during the 1980s as leaders in the development of tourism. Foreign and local bodies have played a greater role in planning and initiating development, this time with the support of the Ministry of Tourism. It showed a growing willingness to participate and listen to local and external bodies. In fact its financial support enabled many of these plans to materialise. Much of this change should be attributed to the long struggle of the

Eilat's to gain greater power in controlling local affairs. Lewis and 'Isrotel' greatly assisted the changes, but it is important to remember that Lewis did not bring new industry to Eilat. His contribution was mainly modern ideas and new methods regarding sun and sea holidays. These, together with the new spirit, enthusiasm and capital provided the required impetus to make tourism the leading economic and social power in Eilat.

### **8.5 Urban Development into the 1980s**

Eilat's urban development during the 1980s was a direct result of the growth of its tourist industry. The influx of government, local and foreign capital into the industry was of prime benefit to Eilat, and greatly assisted the town after its decade of crisis. A further vital contribution to this growth was the growing role of the local municipality in the decision-making process, and its increasing concern with development from below, together with greater participation of non-government bodies in local development.

Inspired by the success of tourism, the self-confidence of local bodies has increased. Their wish for greater autonomy and access to political and decision-making power in local affairs has filtered through from tourism to other fields. The government's disproportionately low investment in Eilat (in its urban sector), and the emergence of regionalism and the general mood of protest among other development towns in Israel (Lehman-Wilzig, 1982; Gradus, 1984), inevitably gave further impetus to the Eilati argument and stimulated local feeling. Thus since the mid-1980s Eilat's municipality showed greater determination regarding control over local affairs. Now, in contrast to the past, there was more awareness and responsiveness from Jerusalem.

To explain clearly Eilat's urban growth during the 1980s, I will divide the decade into two parts; the years before and after 1984. The first period was characterised by a growing gap between Eilat's tourist and residential districts. While east of the airport massive investment and development activity led to the erection of splendid new hotels and recreation facilities, no development activity could be seen in the residential area to the west. This area remained neglected and stagnant. This growing division may also be attributed to Jerusalem's top-down control from afar, which failed to appreciate adequately the local situation and further accelerated the

division by directing most attention and capital resources to tourism, with little consideration of the residential area.

In order to clarify the above points I will describe some of the demographic trends in Eilat during the early 1980s. The expanding tourist industry absorbed about 60% of the people made redundant from the port and Timna. At the same time about 40% of the unemployed families left the town. This may be illustrated by the decline in the local population from 19,500 in 1981 to 18,500 in 1984 (figure 6.7) (30). The most conspicuous result of this trend was that about 20% of Eilat's houses stood empty, and real-estate prices fell by up to 35%. This phenomenon was regarded with growing concern in Eilat. In Jerusalem, however, these trends seemed natural in the light of the recent wave of redundancies. In fact government officials expressed satisfaction that the growing tourist industry would help to prevent a total collapse of Eilat which inevitably would have demanded heavy government involvement and finance (Ministry of Interior, 1984). Moreover, the port modernisation programme and the neighbourhoods renewal scheme launched in the mid-1970s (31), together with a much quieter atmosphere in which the noisy demonstrations of the 1970s had been left behind, improved Eilat's image in the eyes of outsiders. this was explained by Gavriel:

"Since the early 1980s it has been clear that tourism is the most natural endeavour for Eilat. The new trends are quite promising... In the light of past experience, and particularly in the geopolitical situation of the early 1980s, neither the government nor anyone else was likely to try and invest in any other sector in Eilat" (32).

The lack of any significant government initiative but tourism at this time may provide the best evidence of this view.

This situation was viewed in Eilat with mixed feelings. While people were generally sympathetic towards tourism as a source of employment, they also regarded it as a detrimental factor which had concentrated most of the capital and resources invested in Eilat, and led to the neglect of other areas. Furthermore, it was feared that narrowing the town's economic base in this way carried a great deal of risk, particularly in view of the vulnerable character of tourism. The temporary decline in the industry following the Lebanon War may be cited as an example. The recent bitter experiences with the port and Timna further aggravated this feeling, and led to an increasing number of letters, reports and complaints from

local officials and residents to various government bodies accusing Jerusalem of exploiting Eilat and investing in tourism while neglecting other aspects of the town. They demanded greater government support in expanding the town's economic base and initiating development (33). This may further illustrate Jerusalem's narrow-based policy, which mainly considered economic factors and neglected social ones. At the same time Eilat's financial dependence on Jerusalem left the locals unable to initiate any significant development designed to close the growing division in the town.

Israel's municipal elections in October 1983 provided the Eilatis with the opportunity to express their anger and dissatisfaction with the central authority. Out of 13 seats in the local municipality, eight were won by local independent lists, one of which formed a leading coalition. This, however, did not free Eilat from its financial dependence on Jerusalem, which remained in total control of all tax issues and budget allocation. Local ability to push development further was, therefore, limited. Eilat's mayor described the situation in an interview in 1984:

"We (Eilat) still require substantial government help in creating an urban infrastructure, communication network, development, education and wealth... Eilat's 6000 taxpayers, even with the growing amount that we receive from the tourist industry, are totally unable to defray even a fraction of the large outlay required for our services" (Maariv, 5.4.1984:6).

(According to the municipal treasurer, in 1984 approximately 65% of the local budget was provided by the government)

Yet the locals gained greater confidence in their political power and mounted pressure for further government help in achieving a more balanced development programme in Eilat. The mayor travelled to Jerusalem and met members of the Knesset, trying to build a supportive lobby for Eilat. These efforts resulted in the economic committee of the Knesset commissioning a research paper by the Institute of Productivity at the Ministry of Labour (1984), detailing what individual projects would be feasible in Eilat. In addition, plans to turn Eilat into a duty-free zone were drawn up. However, during 1984 there were no significant initiatives, and most development efforts continued to concentrate on the tourist industry.

The 'build your own house' programme (34) was the most visible government initiative in Eilat. However, it was part of a national scheme, with government involvement limited to preparation of the infrastructure on the level mountainous

area south of the town. A committee made up of municipal and government officials was responsible for allocating the 270 plots of land to local residents. It should be noted that the project's contribution to the solution of Eilat's problems in the mid-1980s is questionable. The area was mainly given over to luxury houses which only a fortunate few could afford, while the remainder was allocated to blocks of holiday flats. By 1985 the polarisation of the urban and tourist areas continued to grow and became a source for concern even for the tourist industry. David Lewis commented:

"The two faces of Eilat, and the growing gap between them, was a potential threat to the further development of tourism... The worst thing for Eilat is that a tourist will walk out of his five-star hotel into a one-star town" (35).

### **8.5.1 From a Town of Emigration to a Town of Immigration**

Since 1984 it has appeared that the pressure of Eilat's municipality to increase its role in the decision-making process and the management of local affairs has gradually yielded the expected results. Having 'graduated' from the crisis period and realised the town's ability to attract foreign investors, the municipality became more confident and less willing to accept automatically all plans from Jerusalem:

"Although around half of our budget is still provided by Jerusalem, this should not deprive us of taking a vital part in all decisions regarding local planning and the future of Eilat. In view of the bitter experiences of the past, we insisted on greater development of fields other than tourism. Additionally we reject plans that we regard as unsuitable for Eilat..." (36).

Undoubtedly the tourist boom, and the successful cooperation between private, local and government bodies, together with the growing interest by Israeli and foreign investors, contributed greatly to the growing awareness in Jerusalem, especially in the Ministry for Tourism, for the promising opportunities offered by Eilat as a successful international tourist resort. Thus from late 1984 the Ministry of Tourism mounted pressure within the government to divert more resources to Eilat:

"Tourism in Eilat has embarked during the last year (1984) upon a new phase of development, different from the past, which demands a fresh consideration of the industry and the town's development into the 1990s. Special emphasis should be placed upon improving the town's image to eliminate the growing gap between 'tourism' and 'urban' growth, which could severely hinder future development and deter people from settling in the town" (Ministry of Tourism, 1985).

This concern was expressed through the establishment of the first stage of the tax-free zone in 1985. Removing the 15% VAT on all goods sold in Eilat reduced the



cost of living by 15%-20%. Various financial concessions aimed to attract new businesses.

Other governmental bodies became aware of the need for local organisations to participate in Eilat's development. One example of this concern was a five-year environmental improvement plan that was drawn up in cooperation with local architects and officials together with the Ministry of the Interior (Ministry of Interior/Eilat, 1986). Although the \$7m for the project were provided by the government, the local municipality has taken the main responsibility for implementing the plan. This has brought to Eilat new parks, playgrounds and better street lighting, and has further renewed the town's growth. New arrivals swelled the population to 25,000 in 1987 (Eilat, 1988; see also figure 6.7). In addition municipal officials have estimated that about 2000 temporary workers live in the town, mainly employed in the tourist industry. This group comprises mainly of young Israelis following military service and young foreign tourists seeking temporary jobs. Additionally since the late 1970s around 500 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza were employed in tourism and construction (37).

Eilat's passage to greater independence has suffered from the sectoral approach of the government. While some ministries have shown willingness to share power (e.g. Ministry of Tourism), others have been less cooperative. For example, although the Ministry of the Interior involved Eilat in the environmental improvement plan (Ministry of the Interior/Eilat, 1986), it showed little willingness to do so in the case of a new business centre. The ministry agreed to provide the required finance for the new centre on condition that it be built according to the 1968 development plan. Yet the plan was considered out of date by the municipality, which offered an alternative. It took three years of argument before the Ministry finally agreed in 1987 to finance the new plan, which in 1989 was still under construction (38).

Other ministries have shown even greater obstinacy. Only strong determination by the Eilati municipality eventually achieved greater recognition of local needs. This could be seen with the need to accommodate the growing population and increasing number of employees which turned the surplus of housing into an acute shortage during 1986. Real-estate prices doubled within 2-3 years, and rental prices reached the level of Tel Aviv. The problem grew to such a extent that 'Isrotel' decided to

convert a two-star hotel into a labour accommodation complex. Yet by the end of 1986 no concrete steps had been taken to resume large-scale housing construction. Despite warnings of a future housing problem in Eilat by its mayor as early as 1983, the Ministry of Housing showed a lack of foresight in that all its activity was limited to the 'build your own house' project, while the issue of larger-scale construction was totally neglected. As 99% of the local land is owned by the government, with all initiatives requiring the approval of the accountable ministry, this attitude meant that nothing was done. This was echoed by the local newspaper:

"Eilat's deteriorating housing problem is a direct reflection of the Ministry of Housing's attitude toward the town, as expressed by our mayor's fruitless efforts since 1983 to bring the Minister of Housing to Eilat and present our growing housing problem..." (Erev Erev, 15.12.1986;14).

Even when the first steps towards a new construction programme were taken in early 1987, the Ministry of Housing insisted on a plan to construct 1200 flats based on the 1968 master plan (Ministry of Interior, 1968), to be built in a new neighbourhood north-west of Eilat. This, however, was regarded by the local municipality as inappropriate for the Eilat of the 1980s:

"It took a year of strong objections and arguments with the Ministry of Housing to replace the old plan with our plan" (39).

Thus after 10 years in which no dwelling blocks were built in Eilat, work was launched in 1987 in the western part of town by several private companies from Beersheba and Tel Aviv to construct new 7-12 storey apartment buildings. These were mainly bought by residents new to Eilat.

In the late 1980s the general shape of Eilat is similar to what it was in the 1970s. The main differences are the expansion of the urban area southward, while light industry and craft workshops have expanded northward towards the Arava Valley (in the area where initial preparations have been made for the infrastructure of the planned industrial zone (photograph 5). In the town, many neighbourhoods have been undergoing development and renovation. Under the liberal economic approach, however, most new development has not followed the municipality's wish to expand the town's economic base, but has been oriented toward tourism. This may be seen in the new restaurants, shops and entertainment enterprises that have mushroomed in the hotel area, in the new malls and along the main commercial thoroughfare in the town centre (see appendix 3A). It may also be clearly seen

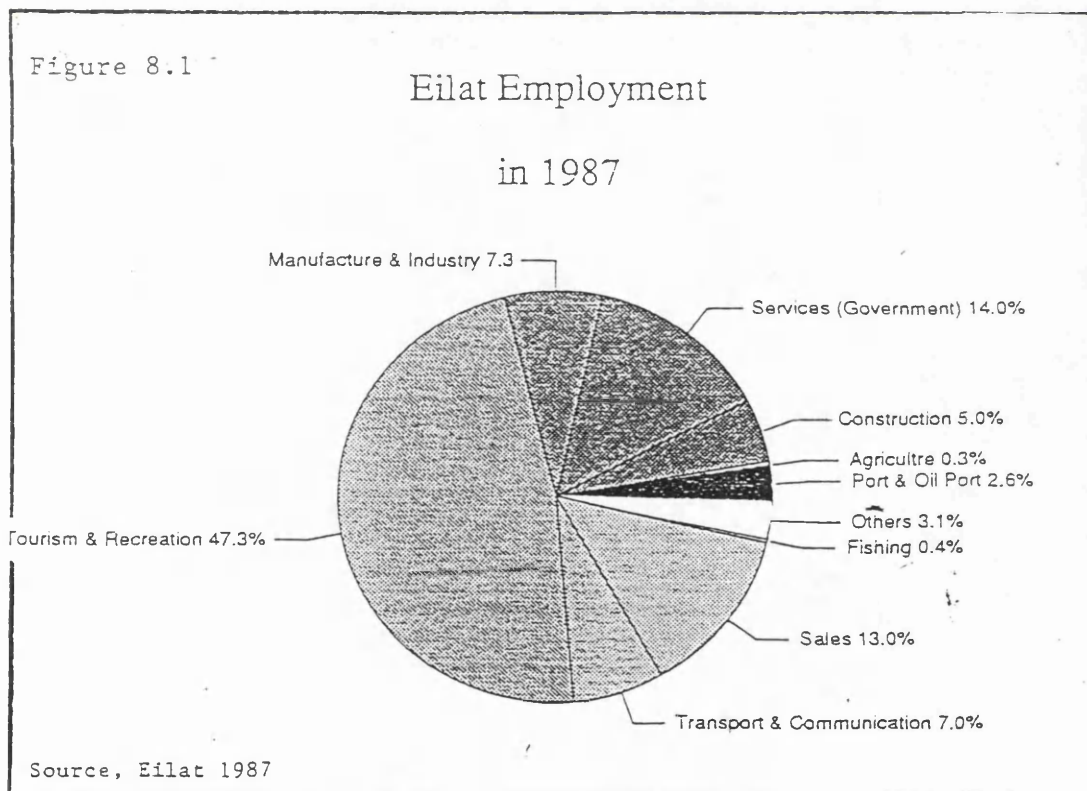
from the recent labour force survey (Eilat, 1987):

Table 8.1 Labour Distribution in Eilat, 1987

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Employees</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Port & Oil Port	286	2.6
Construction	550	5.0
Transport & Communication	770	7.0
Sales	1430	13.0
Manufacture & Industry	803	7.3
Tourism & Recreation	5203	47.3
Agriculture	33	0.3
Fishing	44	0.4
Services (Local & Central Government)	1540	14.0
<u>Others</u>	<u>341</u>	<u>3.1</u>
Total	11,000	100

(Source: Eilat, 1987)

Figure 8.1 Eilat Employment in 1987



In addition to the 47.3% employed in tourism and recreation, a major portion of the sales sector and part of transport and communication, manufacturing and light industry, such as crafts and souvenirs, are part of the spin-off effect of tourism (Eilat, 1987. see also: Russo, 1985).

Although the subject of many plans and dreams, and despite growing efforts to improve the town's image, the Eilat of the late 1980s is still a development town. It is clearly divided on either side of the airport between an impressive flourishing hotel area, and a town which lags behind:

"The impression that the city (Eilat) is comprised of hotel guests and has not much in the way of residents is true to some extent" (The Jerusalem Post, 4.12.1986;6)

"...There is clearly a long way to go before the town (Eilat) shares the prosperity of the hotel area; until the new airport is built, the runway cuts the one decisively from the other" (The Times, 4.3.1989;41).

In the most significant step so far toward closing the gap between the two parts of Eilat, the local municipality succeeded in enlisting financial help from the American 'Scheuer Foundation' to draw up a new Landscape Master Plan for Eilat (1988). The independent initiative of the municipality is also a further step of the Eilatis toward greater participation in planning the town's development and managing local affairs, particularly as the plan was approved by the government. Prime preference is given to relocating the local airport and hence removing the barrier between the two parts of Eilat. Since the airport area is planned to become a big shopping centre and a site for two new hotels there is no lack of interest in the proposed plan. Initial negotiations are already taking place with potential foreign investors. However, as substantial finance is required for the implementation of the other parts of the plan, it is clear that Jerusalem still holds the key to its implementation.

## **8.6 Summary**

Throughout the last decade, tourism has become the mainstay of Eilat's economy, with most development activity revolving around the industry. The tourist boom has been all the more conspicuous in view of the diminishing role of the port and the demise of Timna in Eilat's social and economic life. As in the past, political factors have played a vital part in Eilat's pattern of development during the 1980s. These have chiefly included the lasting peace with Egypt, the ensuing calm and

secure atmosphere in the area, and the opening of the Suez Canal to Israeli navigation.

Tourism was the main vehicle by which Eilat experienced urban and economic development following the crisis period. Attempts to promote additional opportunities for development met with few results. Even though Eilat was declared a free trade zone in an attempt to attract new industry and other enterprises, most initiatives still revolved around the tourist industry. As a consequence, officials in Eilat and Jerusalem have expressed their concern that just as politics in the last decade happen to have benefited Eilat, negative changes in the political environment may have serious consequences for the industry.

The 1980s also marked a more positive response by Jerusalem to demands from Eilat for greater participation in the decision-making process. Initial signs of political decentralisation emerged as the government showed more willingness to provide Eilat with greater access to political power and to include local bodies in planning and decisions regarding local affairs. However, the level of decentralisation has been limited to tourism and some aspects of urban growth, and has not yet satisfied all the Eilatis' wishes, nor addressed calls on a national level for a greater dispersal of political power (Gradus, 1983). Furthermore, this process has to go a long way before fitting into Friedmann's fourth-stage model of the ultimate centre-periphery equilibrium (1966, 1972). However, despite the fact that this pattern was to a large extent imposed on Jerusalem due to recent political trends and growing pressure from Eilat, rather than a result of the government's wish to share its power with the periphery, Eilat's ascendancy in the late 1980s and the host of plans and new investments surrounding it are indicative of the success and vitality of this process and the need to continue it.

## Notes for Chapter 8

1. Interview with Gavriel.
2. Gershon Shamir is the head of the Research and Development Department at the Ministry of Tourism, Jerusalem. Interview was conducted in February 1987, Jerusalem.
3. Interview with Eilat's mayor R. Hochman.
4. Ministry of Trade and Commerce, internal report (April, 1979), Re-operating Timna, Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
5. Ministry of Trade and Commerce, internal report (1983), Timna, Jerusalem.
6. Timna Park is located some 25 km north of Eilat over an area of 60 sq. km. Timna was probably the first place in the world where copper was mined, as early as 6000 years ago (Glueck, 1963). Today, the valley's magnificent geological beauty, its unique desert flora and its many gazelles and goats can be appreciated by all visitors to the area. Roads have been built leading to the various archaeological sites and points of interest.
7. Interview with Eilat's Mayor, R. Hochman.
8. Ibid.
9. According to the Israeli Minister of Tourism, the winter season is from October to April, also known in Eilat as "the charter season". The summer season is from May to September.
10. Rafi Sadeh was the first manager of the Laromme Hotel in 1974. Today he is the general manager of Isrotel in Israel. Interview was conducted in October 1986, Tel Aviv.
11. Report from A. Baruch, the director of the Israeli Government Tourist Office in Copenhagen, to the Israeli Minister of Tourism, Jerusalem, 10.10.1978. Ministry of Tourism archive, Eilat file, Jerusalem. See also Maariv, 28.1.1979.
12. H. Muller was the 'Kreuzer' (West Germany) employee responsible for the Middle East in the mid-1970s. Interview was conducted in March 1987, Eilat.
13. Gadi Ben Zeev has been involved in Eilat's tourist industry since the late 1960s. Today he is the manager of the Caesar Hotel. Interview was conducted in April 1987, Eilat. See also Erev Erev, 29.3.1979:9.
14. Most of the information regarding these affairs was provided by M. Melzer and M. Pantaromeli. Such cases are also cited in Erev Erev, 29.3.1979:9.
15. A. Jaminem was the 'Autinkomatkat' (Finland) representative in Eilat during the winter seasons of 1976-1979. Interview was conducted in October 1986, Eilat.
16. Letter from Tjaereborg's manager in Stockholm, 29.6.1977, to the Ministry of Tourism, Jerusalem. Ministry of Tourism, Eilat file, Jerusalem.
17. David Lewis is the owner of 'Isrotel', which presently owns four hotels in Eilat and one in Natania. Lewis brought much experience to Eilat from his Spanish hotel chain 'Ibrotel' which specialises in sun and sea holidays. His world-wide businesses include shipping, insurance and textiles. Interview was conducted in September 1986, London.
18. Interview with Lewis.
19. Interview with Ben Zeev.
20. This information was provided by G. Shamir. Lewis also emphasised this point when I asked him why he had decided to invest in Eilat.
21. This tax excluded Israelis travelling to Egypt. See also: The Times, 21.3.1983:6.
22. This point was emphasised by Lewis, as well as by G. Shamir.

23. Interview with Lewis.
24. Interview with G. Shamir.
25. Officials in Jerusalem who expressed this view are: Gavriel and Shamir. In Eilat this was corroborated by Panteromeli and Melzer.
26. Dr. Bar-On holds a senior position in the Ministry of Tourism, Jerusalem. Interview was conducted February 1987, Jerusalem.
27. These titles were taken from "Speedwing" brochure 1987-1988 and "Twickenham" brochure 1985-1986. They are only two examples of the many brochures from the U.K and other European countries advertising Eilat which emphasise the town rather than Israel.
28. The company's marketing centre is in Tel Aviv, yet most of its activity is concentrated in Eilat.
29. All the people in Israel interviewed for this thesis held this opinion.
30. All these figures were taken from Eilat's Municipal Employment Office. According to an internal survey conducted by M. Hermon, the Employment Office manager, there are no clear figures showing the turnover of local population, and therefore up to 15% divergence from the mentioned figures is possible. This may be further emphasised by the fact that out of the 17,500 registered voters only 4,500 voted in the Israeli municipal elections of October 1983. This is a very low figure compared to the average Israeli turnout which stands at about 50%. See also: Newsview, 24.1.1984:20
31. The government's Neighbourhood Renewal Plan (Ministry of the Interior, 1974) was implemented in many of Israel's old and new towns, aiming to upgrade neighbourhoods in distress. For more detail see: Technion, 1982.
32. Interview with Gavriel.
33. Letters and reports regarding the issue may be found in the Ministry of the Interior, or in Eilat's municipal archive in several files dealing with the town's development between 1980 and 1984.
34. This scheme aimed to promote development in Israel's development towns and the West Bank settlements. The plan provided people with free land on condition that they build a house on it within 5 years. This enabled many families to improve their standard of living. See also: Efrat, 1987.
35. Interview with Lewis.
36. Interview with Eilat's mayor, R. Hochman.
37. Ibid
38. A. Rosa has been Eilat's chief architect since 1985. Interview was conducted in April 1986, Eilat.
39. Ibid

### 9.1 Introduction

"The Royal Jordanian airliner flies over the parched valley of the Arava heading south. Suddenly, far below, the deep blue of the sea interrupts the monotony of the red-brown desert mountains. Two runways appear very close together and our aircraft seems to hesitate before beginning its approach to one of them. At night the light of two cities seem to melt into one another. But on closer inspection a black seam may be seen to separate the two carpets of man - made light - the border. Situated on the Red Sea, Eilat and Aqaba are like Siamese twins who have had a falling out" (Ritterband, 1984:21).

The closeness of Eilat and Aqaba is one of the most noticeable features in the area, as each town can be clearly seen from wherever one stands. Officially no contacts or relationships are existing between Israel and Jordan and consequently between Eilat and Aqaba. A visit to the border between the two countries in this area may at first sight illustrate the conflict between the two countries. As along the rest of the Israeli-Jordanian border, in the Eilat and Aqaba area the border consists of a barbed wire fence, marked with warning signs written in three languages, and regular army patrols along both side of the border. Not far from the coast a moored Israeli Navy patrol boat guards the maritime border between the two countries. In contrast, however, along the end of this fence near the water front on the Israeli side, crowds of holiday-makers sunbathe on the beach and swim in the sea, the barbed wire becoming a useful tool on which to dry some wet towels! Although on the Jordanian side, access to the border is prohibited, this is not so much due to proximity of the border. Ironically it is King Hussein's royal palace which occupies the few hundred metres on the doorstep of its "enemy".

Throughout their development, Eilat and Aqaba have developed within their immediate region almost what may be described as a 'microcosm of understanding, tolerance, peaceful co-existence and co-operation'. The unique character of this area with regard to the rest of the Israeli-Jordanian frontier area can perhaps be made clear if I make an artificial division of the Israeli-Jordanian border for the purposes of this work:

1. The southernmost 10 km of the Israeli-Jordanian border in the area of Eilat and Aqaba, and their maritime boundary in the Red Sea.



2. The rest of the Israeli-Jordanian border northwards up to where it ends at the Yarmuc River.

Greater understanding of the uniqueness of this 'microcosm of peace' can be achieved when considering some of the main features in the evolution of the northern part of the Israeli-Jordanian border in the last four decades, particularly until the early 1970s. This illustrates a major part of the story of bloody violence which makes up the dispute between Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians. "Frontier of hate" (Lunt, 1984:176) was the way that Glubb Pasha described this border in the early 1950s, and little changed in the following years when the Israeli-Jordanian border continued to be subject to harsh hostility. Rocket attacks and terrorist infiltration by Palestinian terrorist groups against Israeli military and civilian targets brought severe retaliation by the Israeli army against Palestinian camps, although most incidents were between the PLO (and its various streams) and Israel, in response to the IDF. Moreover, this border witnessed two major wars in 1948 and 1967. Israeli officials have estimated that since the 1948 cease fire agreement with Jordan, at least 2600 firing incidents have occurred along the border (excluding the 1967 War), in which more than 10,000 people, both soldiers and civilians have lost their lives and at least 35,000 have been wounded (1). The antagonistic nature of the border led to the development of a no man land, a 3-5 km wide strip along each side of the border where most of the hostile activity took place (Brawer, 1986). Despite the relaxation along the border after the Jordanian civil war in 1970-1, the limited rapprochement between Israel and Jordan (Zak, 1985), or even the so called "de-facto peace" between these countries (Satloff, 1987), the fear that hostilities would resume should Hussein's control weaken has not declined. Indeed, several incidents which occurred along the Israeli-Jordanian border during the last few months, and growing economic and political instability in Jordan (Satloff, 1986; *The Economist*, 6.8.1988. 18.11.1989; *The Independent*, 16.8.1988, 26.3.1990; *The Guardian*, 6.1.1989; Yorke, 1988), have shown that we cannot assume or anticipate significant changes along this border in the near future.

The rest of this chapter concerns the apparent paradox of the seemingly peaceful nature of the Eilat-Aqaba border in comparison with the rest of the Israeli-Jordanian border, and the unique character which this area has developed. In spite

of the limited access to information regarding this issue, I will try to identify the main component of the Eilat and Aqaba special world, the way it has influenced the area and the main reason for this phenomenon which can serve as an important basis for future cooperation in the area.

## 9.2 The Rule of Fear

The susceptibility of Eilat and Aqaba to political factors has been described throughout this work. Their vulnerability in several cases to factors beyond their reach has proved to both Israel and Jordan how harsh the consequences can be even when troubles are far from home, such as in the case of tourism in Aqaba after the 1967 War or in Eilat after the 1973 War, of Eilat's port following the reopening of the Suez Canal or the failure of the implementation of the oil pipeline from Iraq to Aqaba (see section 4.4.2). Therefore it may be assumed that it is in the mutual interests of Jordan and Aqaba or Israel and Eilat to keep their access to the Red Sea free of trouble. Indeed, whether Hussein could or could not control the Palestinian attacks against Israel before 1968, no hostile incident occurred in the vicinity of Eilat and Aqaba. Even when Jordan joined Egypt and Syria in 1967 in their war against Israel, Hussein took care to keep this region out of the military engagement. Moreover, when Saudi forces entered Jordan via Aqaba to join in the war against Israel, Hussein demanded that the Saudis should not stay in Aqaba, but should continue northwards in order to avoid any increase in tension in the Aqaba region.

Despite Hussein's efforts to keep the Aqaba-Eilat region out of the range of terrorism, growing terrorist activity along the Israeli-Jordanian border from late 1967 onwards (Shimoni, 1977) meant that Eilat and Aqaba did not totally escape the bitter reality of the Middle East conflict. On November 14, 1968, 30 rockets were fired from Aqaba by a PLO unit. They hit the residential area of Eilat, the port, and an oil tank near the port, causing 15 casualties (Voice of Israel, 14.11.1968). Israeli sensitivity regarding Eilat emerged when within a few minutes of the PLO attack, an Israeli air force squadron retaliated by attacking the assumed rocket bases in Aqaba. Two people were killed and 20 wounded (Radio Amman, 14.11.1968). The great importance of the area for both counties was highlighted as a result of this incident. An Israeli government spokesman stated:

"This attack has put an end to 20 years of peace in the area... Israel will

blockade Aqaba if any kind of attack is repeated in this region... " (Voice of Israel, 24.11.1968).

More drastic were the steps taken by King Hussein, who regarded this attack as a crucial change in the fragile status quo between the PLO and Jordan, and a severe threat to the kingdom's only access to the sea. For the first time Jordan imposed an agreement on the PLO, obliging it to avoid any kind of activity in the Aqaba-Eilat region (Radio Tunis, 8.4.1969). Tension between Hussein and the Palestinians heightened after the king ordered the arrest of the PLO unit involved in the attack on Eilat. It was the first such action taken by the Jordanian government (MENA, Cairo, 14.4.1969). Additional steps taken by Jordan to assure tranquillity in the area included the establishment of a special anti-terrorist squad to avoid any more attacks on Israel from Jordanian territory. The operational base of this unit was in Aqaba and in fact it operated only in this region (Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA), 1.7.1969). A coast guard unit was also established with the primary aim of intercepting any PLO attempts to cross the gulf to Eilat (Ritterband, 1984). In 1968, when an Egyptian commando unit hit two Israeli naval vessels in the port of Eilat, Jordan was the first country to announce that it had no role either in supplying a base for such an operation or as a participant in the attack (Radio Amman, 16.11.1968). But perhaps the best example of Jordan's desire to keep its southern part out of any Middle East dispute and to maintain calm around Aqaba was provided by Hussein himself in the incident which occurred on 7 June 1981. Nacdimon (1985) indicated in his book on the Israeli attack on the nuclear reactor in Baghdad that Hussein's failure to warn Iraq (at that time a close ally of Jordan) of the impending attack was most peculiar. Although he saw the Israeli planes flying over while he was cruising off the coast of Aqaba and apparently knew their aim, it is possible that he assumed that endangering an Israeli activity originating in this area could be interpreted by Israel as breaking the balance of power in the region, a balance that was of paramount importance to maintain. In summary, it should be noted that the various steps taken by Jordan have proved to be successful and no more incidents have been recorded in this area since 1968.

The difference between the Eilat and Aqaba region and the rest of the Israeli-Jordanian border, together with the particular sensitivity of both governments and local citizens to any hostile activity in this area should be regarded within the general framework of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It should be remembered that much of the development pattern of both towns has been shaped by the political conflicts

of the Middle East. Given their isolated position both towns share a very real vulnerability, which has materialised in mutual fear. The experience of military action in the region in 1968 brought this feeling closer to home. People on both sides of the border are fully aware that a single spark of terror could ignite a blaze of warfare in the region, which would be suicide for both towns (2). They are therefore eager to take precautions to prevent any local escalation of hostility. The peaceful balance of power has been bought at the price of fear.

### **9.3 Mirror Development**

The peaceful situation in the Eilat and Aqaba region has created a comfortable environment for the local inhabitants to observe each other openly rather than through a rifle sight or from behind a shelter, unlike many of the settlements along other parts of the Israeli-Jordanian border. This situation has proved to be a source of inspiration for a range of ideas and initiatives copied by each town from its neighbour. This sort of mirror development has taken place mainly in those sectors in which one town lagged behind the other. In Eilat it was the port that followed Jordan's example, while Aqaba tried to emulate Eilat's tourist industry. It should be remembered, however, that some of the mirror image development in both towns such as the parallel location of the ports, the tourist areas the residential areas and the airports (until 1972) should be attributed to the constraints of the physical environment as described earlier (part 2.5).

Presumably both countries watch and monitor each other for military purposes. Yet despite whatever information each country has been able to gather, I could not trace any diffusion of such material or related analysis into the civil sector in either place. From a civilian point of view, local and government officials in Eilat and Aqaba have stated that there is no official policy of following local initiatives and development on the other side of the border. However, when one considers the proximity of these towns, the relaxed and trouble-free atmosphere and the absence of other towns in the surrounding area, it is only natural that people are curious to know what is happening on the other side of the border. The fact that they are unable to cross over probably strengthens this curiosity, as Eilat's mayor indicated:

"Since I was a boy in Eilat, wherever I walked in town, or whenever I lay on the beach, Aqaba was always in the background. It was a place that we could see but couldn't visit... For Eilatis, to visit another town meant travelling north for a few hours. Therefore it was only natural that one was curious about what was happening on the other side... Even today, my first

reaction when picking up a pair of binoculars is to observe Aqaba" (3).

Perhaps the fact that the plans of Jordanian government officials regarding tourist development suggested that a development and marketing strategy for Aqaba should follow that of Eilat (SRP, 1982; ARA, 1986), provides the best indication of Jordanian awareness and observation of Eilat. As was the case in Eilat, not one of the interviewees in Aqaba advised me of any official strategy to monitor events in Eilat, though most of them added that it is very difficult to ignore Eilat if one lives in Aqaba. As Harmeneh (Aqaba's tourist director) said:

"One would be blind not to see the erection of all these new hotels... Less than 10 years ago we could clearly see the lagoon but now all the new hotels hide it... (4).

Perhaps it is only natural that the employees of Eilat's port became jealous of the growing port across the Gulf particularly with regard to their own gloomy prospects following the reopening of the Suez Canal. It is not clear whose idea it was, but in the early 1970s a file under the name Aqaba was opened in the port administration office, and any material from mainly international professional magazines (Lloyd's List, Terminals, International Dredging & Port Construction etc.), and Jordanian newspapers (5) was put in, together with several working papers written by various port employees (6). These papers have mainly tried to analyse the capacity and operational ability of Aqaba's port, and the possibility of integrating the Israeli port into the Jordanian port operation should peace come about. For example, in 1977 such a paper suggested:

"Presently (1977), waiting time for berthing in Aqaba is more than a month. In view of the fact that Eilat's port is underutilised cooperation may be possible..." (7).

An additional essay from 1980 indicated:

"Since most of the export via Aqaba is phosphate, we (Eilat's port) are out of the picture because our loading equipment and capacity is far less than in Aqaba" (8).

During my visit to the port (1987), the head of its finance department told me that since 1980 he had been responsible for maintaining and updating the Aqaba file. He noted that the various working papers and essays in the file are purely the result of private initiatives by several employees who take on interest in the subject (9). The port's manager added:

"Aqaba's file does not reflect an official policy of the port nor of the Israel Port Authority. However, it is useful to know what is happening around us,

and personally I find it interesting to look in the file every now and then" (10).

I cannot account for much mirror development that took place in Eilat, largely due to the decline of the port since 1975. Nevertheless the establishment of a free trade zone in the port in 1975 after such a zone had opened in Aqaba in 1974 was to a large extent a copied initiative. Following Jordan's lead, Israel declared that her main aim was to promote industry and trade in the area (this initiative has not yet brought the expected results). Although I could not find any document that could confirm that the Israeli initiative was "officially" copied from Aqaba, officials in Eilat's port suggested that despite the fact that such an idea was not new in Israel, the new zone in Aqaba greatly contributed to its implementation in Eilat (11).

Eilat's flourishing tourist industry provided a rich source of inspiration to the Jordanians in their attempts to promote tourism in Aqaba. Following the launching of charter flights to Eilat, the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism approached Tjaereborg Holidays (section 4.6), and suggested they send tourists to Aqaba at competitive prices to those of Eilat. Moreover, government plans clearly indicated that Jordan must adopt Israeli strategies of developing and marketing Eilat "...if Aqaba is to stand the competition with Eilat" (SRP, 1982:164). Mirror development in Aqaba's tourist industry became apparent in several cases; following the development of part of Eilat's southern beach as a nature reserve (the Coral Beach), the Aqaba Town Planning Committee allocated part of Aqaba's southern beach to serve as a nature reserve. Likewise, a plan was devised to construct a lagoon in Aqaba in a similar location to that in Eilat. In this case the Jordanian plan proved to be over-ambitious for Aqaba's modest tourist industry and did not come to fruition.

In 1984, two years after Israel established an Oceanographic and Limnological Research Institution in this area, Jordan opened a similar institute on Aqaba's southern beach (Al Dustur, 27.10.1985). In Eilat the idea of building a new international airport 9 km north of the town was suggested in 1963 (section 7.5). The Israeli authorities are still debating the issue, but a new international airport was opened in Aqaba in May 1972 just on the other side of the border near the site that was originally suggested for an airport by Israel. Other "copy-cat" ideas remain on the planner's drawing board on both sides. For example, in the late 1970s Israel considered the construction of a Mediterranean - Dead Sea Canal. One

aim of the canal was the use of water power to solve Israel's energy problem. In 1980, Jordan also started to consider a similar canal from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea which also never took any concrete shape (Mideast Markets, 8.1980). The same is true of the Israeli idea to build a railway from Eilat to the north along the Arava: this idea was followed by a Jordanian plan to connect Aqaba's port by rail with the phosphate plant of the Dead Sea.

In general, during the various interviews in Aqaba, local and government officials and hoteliers have not hidden their jealousy of the booming tourist industry in Eilat. In fact, I would add my personal view that it would be quite hard to do so when one can clearly see the white shining hotel area of Eilat, and the stream of aircraft taking off and landing from Eilat's airport, while local hotels are barely occupied. A prominent feature of Aqaba's tourist manager's office are the various European brochures on Eilat which lie on his desk. He plainly suggested:

"We do have much to learn from Eilat with regard to tourism. If peace will come, we will be more than happy to co-operate with Eilat, and possibly even to attract Mr. Lewis to participate in developing Aqaba's tourist industry" (12).

Apart from a few plans (SRP, 1982; ARA 1985), as in the case of Eilat's port, I could not trace any documents which pointed to an official Jordanian government policy to monitor the development of Eilat's tourist industry. Nevertheless, considering that the Jordanian government is an important factor in tourism development, its aim to develop and promote this sector, the identical natural conditions in both towns and their proximity, together with the huge gap in tourist activity between Eilat and Aqaba, it is only natural that Jordanian officials will try to learn from and possibly copy the success of the industry in Eilat. I would further note that individual Jordanians openly copy successful initiatives from Eilat and the town was even cited in government plans. Mentioning 'Eilat' or 'Israel' may be considered significant in itself since these names are usually absent from most Jordanian maps, tourist brochures and other publication, such as Aqaba's tourist map (see appendix 3. If a name appears in such cases it is "Palestine" or "The Holy Land").

#### **9.4 Peaceful Co-existence**

The aim of Israel and Jordan to keep the Eilat and Aqaba area out of the tensions of the Middle East has led to a tolerant approach by both governments regarding

crossing incidents in the region. This differs completely from the intolerance they have shown toward such cases along the rest of the border. Most of these incidents are terrorist infiltrations by various Palestinian groups or attacks by Israeli military forces on Palestinian bases (apart from the two official crossing-places at the Jordan bridges). Naturally this has resulted in high sensitivity and a light trigger finger on both sides of the border. Many mistakes by Israelis or Jordanians who wandered onto their neighbour's territory have resulted in arrest, interrogation and in some cases shooting the offenders, particularly before 1967 when a large portion of the Israeli-Jordanian border was vaguely marked along the "green line" between the West Bank and Israel and along the Arava valley.

In sharp contrast to the above, when people made similar mistakes in the vicinity of Eilat and Aqaba they were merely allowed to return to their own countries within a few hours and were not submitted to any interrogation. The cases involved citizens of both towns, tourists visiting Eilat and fishermen who had drifted off course (13). As with the other section of the Israeli-Jordanian border, such cases mainly occurred before 1967 when the border in this area was only a one-metre high black post on top of a small sand hill blocking the east-west coastal road (14).

The mutual tolerance between Israel and Jordan in this region was also applicable along the maritime border and in the air space of both countries. In January 1977 a speedboat was stolen by an escaped criminal from Eilat and taken to Aqaba. The Jordanian authorities returned the boat and the thief one day later (15). In 1978 an Israeli police boat went to Aqaba port to tow back a small dinghy that had drifted from Eilat to Aqaba. According to the policemen's report on the affair, they received a friendly welcome in Aqaba (16).

The proximity of the towns' airports to one another has caused some problems when pilots have been unable to identify which runway belonged to which town. In July 1976, a Swiss light aircraft flying from Tel Aviv to Eilat landed in Aqaba. After brief inquiries, the Jordanian authorities permitted the plane to continue on its way to Eilat (Israel Airport Authority, 29.7.1976). In January 1987 a French charter airplane carrying 180 holiday-makers from Paris to Eilat mistakenly landed at Aqaba airport. Again, it was allowed to correct the error within one hour.



## 9.5 Eilat and Aqaba: Local Cooperation

More significant than the mutual tolerance by Israel and Jordan in the Eilat and Aqaba region regarding mistaken border crossings, or the attempt to copy various initiatives by both towns, is the hidden cooperation between the two countries in this area. Inevitably, the de facto peace in the area, the fact that in some cases both countries had to confront identical problems, their isolation from the rest of their respective countries and the realisation by both sides that such an atmosphere would benefit both towns, were crucial factors for this cooperation. I would stress, however, that many of these affairs have been given a low profile, mainly due to the desire not to attract media attention. In addition to the fear of many Arab leaders to openly negotiate or cooperate with Israel, it should be remembered that cooperation with Israel was an important factor in the assassination of King Abdullah in Jerusalem in 1951, and President Sadat in Cairo in 1982 (17). In the past similar cooperation between Israel and Jordan has been aborted after arousing media publicity and hence criticism from radical Arab states and right-wing Israeli political parties. This may also explain the little information which I could gather regarding these affairs. Yet this may illustrate that the first steps toward an alternative to war have already been made, and that future cooperation will only benefit both sides.

It appeared that cooperation in the area began in the late 1940s. Then, a shortage of building materials in Eilat led to the idea of trying to build mud huts, such as the three that made up Um Rashrash's police station. At that time British soldiers were based in Aqaba and used to come to Eilat to drink beer and chat with the locals (18). They told Eilat's pioneers that a suitable type of mud could be found in Aqaba. With the assistance of British soldiers, Eilat's settlers went to the Jordanian side to dig out mud bricks to build their houses. According to a report by Eilat's governor the local Bedouin assisted the unexpected visitors by showing them where and how to dig the bricks (19). In another case, in 1951, after a storm at sea, an Israeli boat drifted to the southern Jordanian beach. A group of Israelis searched for the boat and, having found it, towed it back to Eilat. Although there was no contact with the local on this occasion, they did not try to impede the Israeli visit to the Hashemite Kingdom (20). Eilat's first cooling system should also be attributed to this cooperation. According to Arbel (1974) cooling systems were

in use by the British army in Aqaba, and were first brought to Eilat by a British soldier who wanted to drink his beer in a cooler atmosphere. These cases were all based on local initiatives, and did not involve Jerusalem or Amman. But one should remember that in the early 1950s it is hard to speak of an organised system in either country which could have coordinated such initiatives. The contact between this remote periphery and the respective centres was weak and many local initiatives were spontaneous.

Further cases of cooperation between Eilat and Aqaba occurred during the 1970s and over the last decade. The ports and the maritime arena were the scene of some of these cases. Officially both Israel and Jordan have maintained that there is no link between the two ports, and ships are banned from travelling between them. Yet because of the short distance between Eilat and Aqaba, it makes economic sense for some foreign companies to use both ports, one after the other. Not surprisingly, Eilat's port log book did not reveal any ships whose 'last port of call' or 'destination' was stated as Aqaba. Port officials in Eilat and Aqaba also denied any such links (21). However, Eilat's local newspaper (Erev Erev, 5.5.1977), reported that in early May 1977 a Caribbean ship carrying general cargo arrived in Eilat from Aqaba. An additional instance of this 'unofficial route' emerged when 31 Palestinian dock workers in Aqaba's port were dismissed following their refusal to handle a British ship, the "Herald Juck", after discovering that part of her cargo was destined for Israel and Eilat was the ship's next destination (Sawt-Palestine, Syria, 22.10.1977). In any case the port pilot suggested that:

"If ships travel from Eilat or Aqaba 20 km south into the international waters, and then turn around and return to Eilat, or Aqaba, one should not regard it as a direct route between the two ports... The ship's duty to report her 'last port of call' may be a flexible issue" (22).

But perhaps more significant is the aid given by Eilat's port to its larger neighbour. In winter 1974 there was a fire on board a Chinese phosphate ship moored in Aqaba's port. The ship began to flood and was under threat of sinking. An Israeli tugboat went to Aqaba and towed the ship to Eilat's dry dock where it was repaired. The Israeli crew were well received in the Jordanian port: "the local people had a very friendly attitude towards us" said the tugboat's captain (23). He further indicated that although the fire was visible from Eilat, and the Jordanian distress was clearly heard over the radio, the decision and instruction to aid Aqaba came from Jerusalem. It should be also noted that the control rooms in both ports

monitor each other's activity, and occasionally they exchange information regarding maritime traffic in the area.

Maintaining the beauty of the natural environment, a major feature of Eilat and Aqaba's tourist industry, is undoubtedly in the mutual interest of both towns. Oil spillage into the sea is the main fear, the risk of which has grown in the last few years with the construction of Aqaba's new oil terminal and the unsophisticated method of loading oil (24). Indeed, a municipal official from Eilat stated in an interview with the Jerusalem Post:

"If an oil storage tank in Aqaba bursts, our anti marine pollution team would be over there in half an hour to help control the spill. Our fire brigade boats are ready to help any kind of accident in the neighbouring port" (Jerusalem Post, 17.7.1987:3).

Ecological issues in the Eilat and Aqaba region have been the main theme on which negotiations and cooperation between Israel and Jordan have taken place. In 1966 direct talks were initiated after Jordan began work to build a sewage works near the border, 5 km north of the Gulf of Aqaba. There were fears in Eilat that the generally north-eastern wind in the area would waft unpleasant smells towards Eilat's hotel area. Consequently the sewage works was relocated further to the east (Erev Erev, 1.1.1966). No official documentation regarding this case was available, though Melzer (then a member of Eilat's municipality) has suggested that when Jordan began the initial work which could clearly be seen from Eilat, the issue was referred to Jerusalem. According to Melzer, talks then took place between Israeli and Jordanian senior army officers, several scientists and the mayor of Eilat.

Another environmental problem provided grounds for further cooperation between the two towns. The threat of a mosquito plague was averted as a result of cooperation in the mid- 1980s. According to the Jerusalem Post (17.7.1988) spraying planes flew simultaneously on both sides of the border to ensure that the mosquitoes could not find refuge. Despite the failure of several Israeli officials to comment on this affair, an Israeli airline dealing with crop-spraying revealed that in summer 1985 a few of her crop-spraying aircraft were leased by the Israeli government for "classified work in the south" (25).

Direct cooperation has also been taking place between Eilat and Aqaba airports over the last few years. After Aqaba opened its new airport to large jet planes, the

risk of collision between planes using the two airports has arisen. To avoid any disasters direct talks took place between Israel and Jordanian officials in the International Air Travel Association (IATA). Furthermore, the two control towers monitor each other and maintain radio contact in order to guarantee local air safety.

Perhaps one of the most interesting examples of unpublished Israeli-Jordanian cooperation in the area involves King Hussein himself. His royal palace in Aqaba was the arena for a secret dialogue between Israel and Jordan for many years. Zak (1985) has indicated that such talks took place in Aqaba on several occasions. Haolam Haze (6.1982) stated that in 1982 Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres met here with Jordanian officials and the King. Such meetings were also described by the Jewish Chronicle (13.11.1987:28), while Ritterband (1984) suggested that:

"It is an open secret that in the past this villa (royal palace) has served several times as a meeting place between Israeli politicians and the Jordanian monarch" (Ritterband, 1984).

At a meeting of the Eilat municipality, a proposal to open a gate for tourists to travel between Eilat and Aqaba was raised (26). It was rejected by Jerusalem due to the strained relations between Israel and Jordan. However, tourists can easily journey from Eilat to Aqaba by travelling 60 km south to the Egyptian port of Nuweiba and from there taking the ferry to Aqaba (an estimated 35,000 did so in 1987, see section 3.4.1), or travel across the River Jordan bridges. In 1987 the Israeli newspaper 'Maariv' suggested that Jordanian tourist officials from the Royal Jordanian Airlines have visited Israel, including Eilat, to coordinate the promotion of package tours to both Jordan and Israel. This was further supported by Tal and Fishelson (1988) in their work on future cooperation in tourism between Eilat and Aqaba (inclusive tours to both countries have been operating in the last 3-4 years from the United Kingdom, West Germany and the U.S.A. They cross the border over the Jordan bridges or via Eilat to Nuweiba and than to Aqaba).

It is only natural to assume that the cases of cooperation between Israel and Jordan in the Eilat and Aqaba region during the last two decades have been a result of decisions on a national level in both countries, unlike the few cases of cooperation in the early 1950s that occurred due to local initiatives at local level. Although one may question the adequacy of substantial evidence for this conclusion it should be remembered that, in view of the centralist control in both countries, of the

particular sensitivity of Jerusalem and Amman regarding this region and all issues that concern national security, it is very unlikely that such events could have occurred without the approval and involvement of both governments. Moreover, the special steps taken by Israel and Jordan to prevent any hostile activity in the area illustrate the mutual recognition of both governments of the vulnerability of Eilat and Aqaba, and create the right ground for future cooperation. It is also natural that both countries have understood that apart from the need to maintain peace in the area, environmental hazards on one side of the border pose a similar threat to the other side, and therefore any attempt to eliminate them should include both Israel and Jordan. For example, an oil spill or mosquito plague will not be kept at bay by a border. Thus whether a matter involves the ports, or the environment, or tolerance of border crossing incidents and whether there is a fear of a possible consequences or a real desire for peace, both Jerusalem and Amman have a mutual interest in joining forces to tackle environmental problems. This may create a strong basis for future cooperation.

#### **9.6 Prospects for Change**

The hidden world of peace and coexistence and the few cases of cooperation in the Eilat and Aqaba region illustrate that an alternative to hostility and war already existed before the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. However, it should be realised that larger-scale cooperation, with more effective results, will undoubtedly be possible only within the framework of an inclusive peace between Israel and Jordan. The prospect for such an agreement has been debated by a few scholars who reflect the various opinions on this sensitive issue (Zak, 1985; Satloff, 1986; Neumann, 1986; Yorke, 1988).

There are indications that over a number of years negotiations took place between an Israeli team headed by Prime Minister Golda Meir and a Jordanian team led by King Hussein in which Israel raised a seven-point proposal regarding a possible settlement between Israel and Jordan. One point suggested that Israel and Jordan jointly build a railway from the Aqaba-Eilat area to the Dead Sea. During the 1984 election campaign in Israel a similar proposal to Hussein was made openly by Yitzhak Shamir during a visit to Eilat. The Likud prime minister offered the King joint use of a railway line which Israel is planning to build from Eilat to the Red Sea (Erev Erev, 3.4.1984). Perhaps part of the reason for neither side constructing

this railway so far may be the wish of Israel and Jordan to build it jointly one day.

At a local level, several officials in Eilat have expressed their wish for open cooperation with Aqaba. Sherman (1977) quoted Eilat's mayor:

"Aqaba needs us and we need Aqaba... We (Israel) already have open bridge policies elsewhere in the country... If it works for humanitarian reasons, it will work for commercial considerations as well. Once the two cities finally establish an open tourist policy, the southern Negev will become one of the world's major tourist attractions" (Sherman, 1977:135).

Melzer has further suggested that since Israel is already involved with Jordanian tourism through East Jerusalem Arab travel agents, which operate tours in Israel and Jordan, opening such a route between Eilat and Aqaba will be inevitable if peace eventually comes (27). David Lewis has suggested that rather than endless discussions regarding the construction of a new airport in Eilat, Aqaba's airport, which presently is very much underutilised, could provide an excellent solution:

"For Aqaba and Jordan, this will be a good source of new income, and a promotional factor for the town. For Eilat, this will save millions of dollars (constructing a new airport), and provide the long-desired solution" (28).

Eilat's present mayor simply commented that this area (Eilat and Aqaba) would be potential gold mine when peace comes (29).

Whatever the level of such talks (between Israel and Jordan), and whether a peace agreement between Israel and Jordan is likely in the near future, in Israel at least two bodies, The Armand Hammer Fund for Economic Cooperation in the Middle East (30), and a team headed by Professor Yehuda Gradus from the Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Beersheba (31), have drawn up several plans proposing future cooperation between Israel and her neighbours (Merhav, 1986, 1986A, 1987; Tal et al, 1988; Tal and Fishelson, 1988; Gradus, 1988). A common feature of all these plans is the importance placed upon the Arava and the Eilat and Aqaba region in any future cooperation. Gradus (1988) and Tal et al (1988) proposed the same railway project from the Gulf of Aqaba to the Dead Sea. The latter further suggested the construction of a railway line from Eilat and Aqaba to Suez, thus linking the area to Egypt's rail network. Cooperation in tourism has been given a prominent place in all plans regarding the Eilat and Aqaba area. Tal and Fishelson (1988) have outlined an inclusive development plan for establishing a 'Red Sea Riviera' in the northern area of the Gulf of Aqaba. This project would involve a

joint effort by Jordan, Israel and Egypt (see appendix 4).

Perhaps the fact that Jordanian government plans have suggested that much can be learnt from Eilat's tourist industry provides an indication that there is greater willingness for cooperation on the Jordanian side. A Jordanian (Erheil, 1985) has also recommended such cooperation in his PhD on patterns in Jordan's tourist industry. Although he did not refer particularly to Eilat and Aqaba, he indicated that Jordan should work together with her neighbour (Israel) to attract and boost her tourist industry (Erheil, 1985:104). In Israel, I could not trace any plans which propose future cooperation in the area. Yet the previously mentioned Jordanian plans (SRP, 1982; ARA, 1985) and some declarations by Jordanian officials, although cautious, could be regarded as providing the right basis for greater future cooperation. For example, a local hotelier stated:

"We all know what the peace with Egypt did for Eilat. Can you imagine what are the prospects for tourism and for new investments in this area should Jordan and Israel also achieve a peace!"(32).

Although I am not trying to speculate if and when peace will occur between Israel and Jordan, it must be noted that the prospect for such an agreement or at least for further rapprochement should not necessarily be seen in a gloomy light. Crown Prince Hassan said recently:

"Jordan has continued in its search for peace and remains committed to a just, comprehensive and durable settlement of the Palestine question" (Hassan, Crown Prince, 1987).

Maybe something will result from the accidental meeting of King Hussein on his yacht and an Israeli yacht off Aqaba at which the king replied to an invitation to visit Eilat: "One day I will come, *Inshallah!*" (God Willing) (Maariv, 2.6.1987). It can only be hoped that soon such incidents occur more regularly and cease to be just "incidents".

## Notes for Chapter 9

1. According to information provided by the IDF archive, Givatayim. For more information regarding the history of the Israeli-Jordanian conflict see also: Khovri, 1976; Shimoni, 1977; Rabinovich, 1978; Barker, 1980; Wright, 1989.
2. There was unanimous agreement by all the interviewees regarding this point. These included in Israel: Rafi Hochman (Eilat's mayor), Mendi Zaltzman (Eilat's port manager), Captain Philip, Gavriel. In Jordan: Abu Nuwwar (ARA chairman), Michael Harmeneh (Aqaba's tourist director general).
3. Interview with Rafi Hochman.
4. Interview with Michael Harmeneh.
5. Jordanian newspapers are brought into Israel via the bridges across the Jordan River. Among these are The Jordan Times and Al Dustur. All newspapers consulted for this work were found in the Shiloah institute for Middle East and African Studies, Tel Aviv University.
6. It is not clear exactly who wrote what, as many of these working papers carry no signature. Yet Captain Philip has indicated that people at management level who had an interest in the subject would sometimes discuss the possibility of cooperation between the ports, and probably these working papers are a sample of their views.
7. -- "The Port of Aqaba" (1978). A working paper from Aqaba's port file, Eilat's port.
8. -- "Eilat's port potential to handle some of Aqaba cargo" (1984). A working paper from Aqaba's port file, Eilat's port.
9. Moshe Kapner is the head of Eilat's port finance department. Interview was conducted in February 1988, Eilat.
10. Interview with Mendi Zaltzman.
11. This view was expressed by Mendi Zaltzman and Captain Philip.
12. Interview with Michael Harmeneh.
13. These border crossing incidents included: In June 1964, an Eilati man crossed the border into Aqaba, where he was taken to the local police station. He was well treated and allowed to return to Eilat within one hour (Erev Erev, 6.1964). Six American tourists made a similar mistake during their Christmas holiday in Eilat in 1964. Two hours later they were back in their hotel in Eilat, very impressed by the warm Jordanian welcome! (Erev Erev, 12.1964). Only 9 days before the start of the 1967 War, when all of the Middle East was a tinderbox of emotion, two Israelis mistakenly crossed the border from Eilat to Aqaba. They also returned safely (Erev Erev, 25.5.1967). Two Jordanian fishermen who swam to Eilat after their boat sank in a storm during winter 1964 received dry clothes and warm hospitality and later returned to Aqaba (according to report by Eilat's police station, 23.1.1977). Two Jordanian boys found on the Israeli side of the border were returned to Jordan after two hours in Eilat (Erev Erev, 25.5.1967).
14. The description of the border appears in a report from Zakai in his private archive (see also note to for Chapter 5).
15. According to a report by Eilat's police station dated 23.1.1977.
16. According to a report by Eilat's police station dated 4.5.1978.
17. Zak (1985) has suggested that Gamal Abdul Nasser told Robert Anderson, President Eisenhower's special envoy, that since Israel and Jordan initiated a five-year nonaggression pact in March 1950, a rumour had spread throughout the Arab world that any Arab ruler conducting negotiations with Israel would be killed.
18. Interviews with Zakai and Moskovitz have indicated the friendly relations between the British soldiers and the first pioneers in Eilat. See also Arbel, 1974.
19. This was suggested by Zakai. In addition, in a report dated 3.12.1949, Zakai (then the local governor) complained about the shortage of building materials which forced him to seek help from the Jordanians.
20. Interview with Zakai.



21. The ports of both Eilat and Aqaba required this information from all incoming shipping.
22. Interview with Captain Philip.
23. Ibid.
24. It should be remembered that during the first year in which Aqaba's oil terminal was operational, loading was done by storing oil brought in barrels in a ship that served as a floating tanker, and from there the oil was pumped to the various tankers. A fear of such a spill was expressed by Newsview 28.11.1984.
25. 'Marom' is a crop-spraying airline company in Israel (based in Hertzeliyah). The information was provided by A. Levy, a company pilot.
26. From a protocol drawn up by Eilat's municipality, 24.8.1977.
27. Interview with Melzer.
28. Interview with David Lewis.
29. Interview with Rafi Hochman.
30. "The objective of the Armand Hammer Fund for Economic Cooperation in the Middle East is to foster economic cooperation between Israel and her neighbours" (Tal et, al, 1988). The Armand Hammer Fund for Economic Cooperation in the Middle East was conceived and formulated in a series of meetings held during 1980 between Dr. Armand Hammer, Chairman of the Occidental Petroleum Corporation, and Professor Haim Ben-Shahar, then President of Tel Aviv University.
31. Professor Yehuda Gradus, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, has formulated the idea of a mutual effort of exploitation of the Rift Valley by Israel and Jordan.
32. Interview with the manager of the Coral Beach Hotel in Aqaba.

### **10.1 Eilat and Aqaba Ports**

The high dependence of the development of the ports of Eilat and Aqaba on national and international political factors is their most prominent shared characteristic:

"Geopolitics, among the key factors behind the establishment of each port, is also primarily responsible for the sharp and sudden fluctuation of cargo flows through these two ports (Eilat and Aqaba)" (Stern and Hayuth, 1984:247).

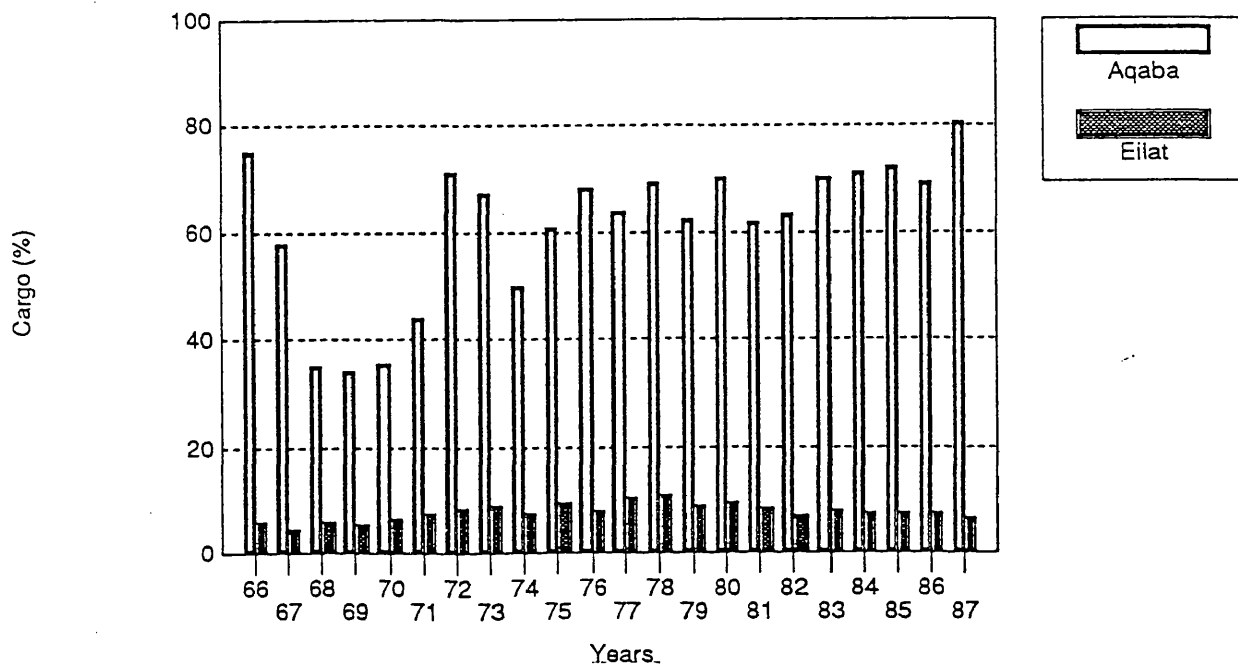
At various periods the ports' dependence on politics was greater than on a solid economic base, although the same event often had a very different impact on each port. Relations between the ports and the centre of political and economic power in their respective countries have been very similar. They have been controlled by their governments, through the accountable authorities in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Amman, since their establishment. This included all planning, finance and management activity. Apart from routine daily operations local bodies in Eilat and Aqaba have virtually no role in determining or carrying out any decision regarding the ports. The towns' role is confined to providing the labour force and a small number of marginal services such as garbage disposal. In other respects the ports have shown little similarity; for example, in their activities and functional role within the state. Aqaba has always been Jordan's only access to the sea with around 70% of the country's total imports and exports passing through the port during the last two decades. Eilat on the other hand has been one of three Israeli ports, although until the reopening of the Suez Canal it was Israel's only access to the south. Even during the port's heyday, no more than 12% of Israeli sea-bound trade passed through it (figure 10.1). Differences also exist in the type of cargo passing through the ports. In Eilat, exports comprise 52% bulk cargo, mainly phosphate, and 48% containerised cargo. In Aqaba export cargo is mainly made up of phosphate (53%), potash and fertiliser (17%) and cargo in transit, mostly from Iraq (26%). Imported cargo in Eilat is made up of 62% containerised cargo and 38% general cargo. In Aqaba, cargo in transit comprises about 60% of total imports, with general cargo (12%) and grain (13%) being the main imported commodities. As both ports lack an immediate hinterland, they have been heavily dependent throughout the period of their growth on more distant hinterlands in the heart of their countries. Each port has also extended its services to areas beyond its national boundaries as a result of wars, border closures and blocked waterways. In

this respect, the Jordanian port was more fortunate. Aqaba had the opportunity to exploit the geopolitical circumstances of Jordan in the Middle East. Thus in addition to Jordan, it served Syria and Lebanon for their trade with the Far East. Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have also been part of Aqaba's hinterland. As Jordan's only port, its foreland has included virtually every country in the world with which Jordan has maritime trading links. Eilat's foreland has never exceeded more than 45 ports in Africa, Asia and Australia. Israel's borders, on the other hand were blocked for the movement of goods, thus confining Eilat's hinterland to Israel (the peace with Egypt is meaningless in this respect for the port, as Egypt has its own ports in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea).

To a large extent it would be correct to say that developing a port in Aqaba and establishing the port in Eilat became a necessity for the Jordanian and Israeli governments. Aqaba's port was only developed after the 1948 War when Jordan could no longer use her 'traditional' ports in Jaffa and Haifa and it became Jordan's only access to the sea. In fact before 1948 Aqaba had been regarded as the potential southern gateway for the future Jewish state (Ben Gurion, 1963). Eilat

Figure 10.1

% Of Total National Import & Export (Excluding Oil)  
Passing Through Aqaba/Eilat\*



\* For Eilat, figures represent only sea traffic to/from Israel

Source, APC, 1988

Israel Port Authority, 1986-1987

and its port were established chiefly because Israel needed an exit to the Red Sea. This was due to Britain's decision to place Aqaba on the Transjordanian side of the divided territory of Palestine and Transjordan, and to the fear that Egypt would not allow the planned Jewish state to use the Suez Canal. The initial development of both ports as a result of decisions from afar set a pattern for their dependence on their respective centres of political and economic power, relations that have seen no change until the present day.

The relationship between local and international politics and the ports' growth could be seen from the early days. During the 1950s, as long as the overland road to Beirut via Syria was reasonably usable (despite the disturbances) for Jordanian sea - bound traffic, Amman preferred to use it for most of its overseas trade, rather than investing in the required facilities in Aqaba. Even when the APT launched its first development plan for the port in 1953 (APT, 1953) implementation was poor. A serious effort was launched to develop Aqaba's port only when Jordan became isolated and suffered from a shortage of essential goods because Syria closed its border during the late 1950s 'cold war' in the Arab world. These goods had to be reloaded onto ships in Beirut and sent on to Aqaba. At the same time (despite Ben Gurion's vision) Eilat's port was to a large extent neglected by the Israeli government. As long as Jerusalem could not secure free navigation to and from Eilat and as long as other matters were regarded as more urgent, it saw no pressing need to develop the port. As in Jordan, only when it became essential to use this gateway, initially for oil and later to gain a foothold in Africa and develop economic and political relations with the Far East, was substantial work launched to develop the port.

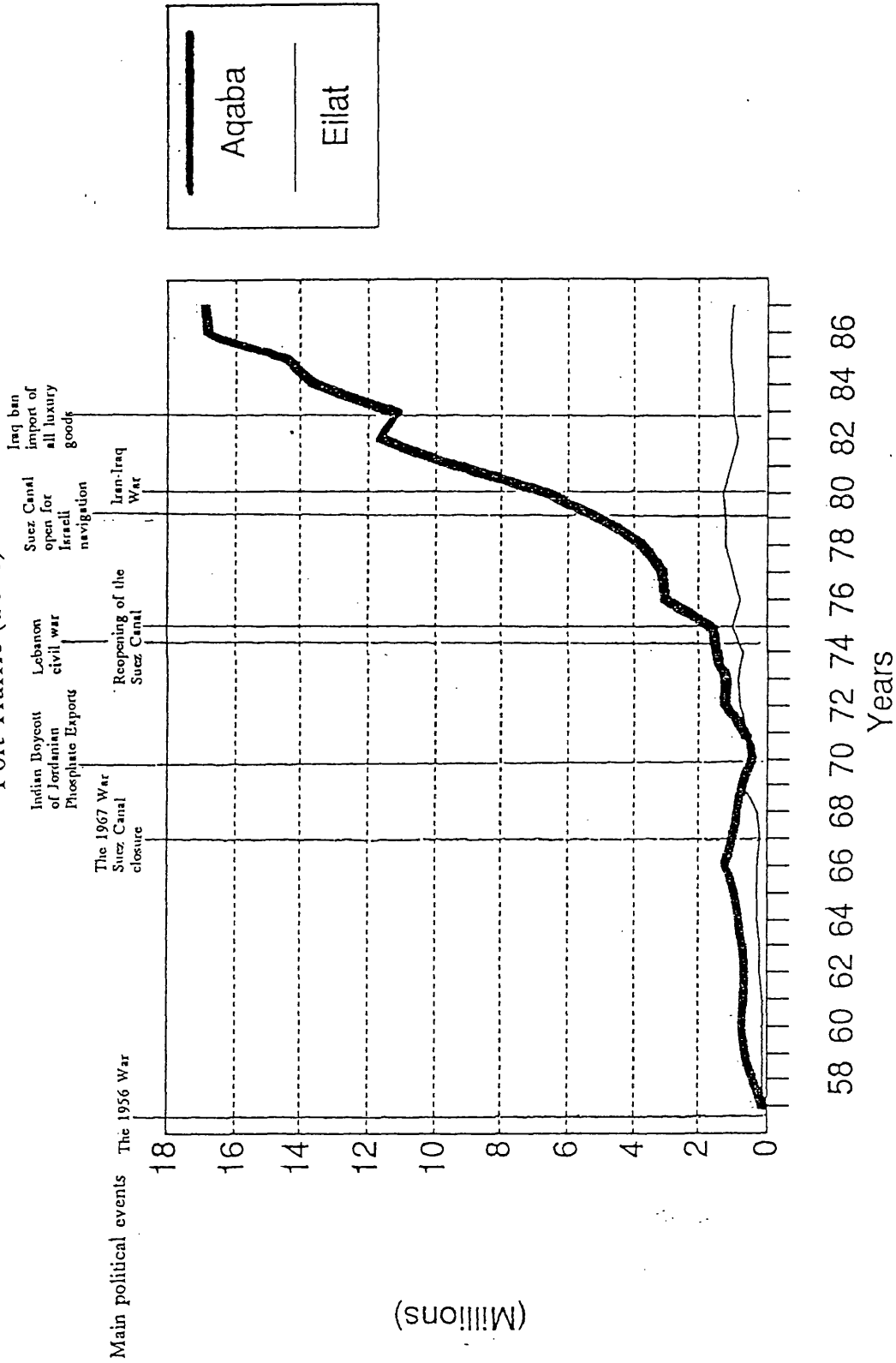
Traffic development in the ports of Aqaba and Eilat has been mainly due to the advantage of their geopolitical location in conjunction with political events, rather than the growth of the Jordanian or the Israeli economy. The paralysis of Beirut's port following the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war and the reopening of the Suez Canal turned Aqaba into a 'Mediterranean' port for Jordan, and later for Iraq and Kuwait. Eilat, which did not enjoy such a wide international hinterland, took advantage of its location by serving Iran's oil industry. After the establishment of the National Planning Council it served several other countries during the period in which the Suez Canal was closed.

The Suez Canal has emerged as a major influential factor throughout the development of the ports. Any change in the status of the Canal has had a drastic effect on both, although the impact was different in each case (figure 10.2). The ban by Egypt on the use of the Canal by all vessels serving Israel's trade was among the decisive factors behind Jerusalem's decision to establish a port in Eilat. This blockade meant that Eilat was Israel's natural gateway to the east until 1975. The closure of the Canal to all navigation from the 1967 June War until 1975 had a particularly significant effect on Eilat. It provided Israel with the opportunity to open the NCB, which assumed the geographical advantages of the Canal route to attract cargo that previously used the Suez Canal. On the other hand the closure of the Canal in 1956 and particularly in 1967 had an adverse effect on Aqaba's port, causing an immediate reduction in its traffic (figure 3.2). During these closures, trade between Aqaba and the Mediterranean, Europe and America had to round Africa, causing Aqaba's geographical location to become a heavy burden with regard to transportation costs. Shippers and shipping companies abandoned the port of Aqaba for alternative routes, particularly via Lebanon and Syria. The fact that Aqaba served as a gateway for Syrian and Lebanese trade with Africa and the Far East provided little comfort.

The reopening of the Suez Canal in 1975, and the permission granted to Israeli vessels to use the Canal after the peace agreement with Egypt in 1979, had no less an impact on the two ports than did its closure. Eilat ceased to be Israel's sole gateway to the south, and the port had to face competition for transit cargo. Its pivotal location now became a disadvantage. Moreover, the new route via the Suez Canal was regarded by Jerusalem as a political achievement whose use should be encouraged, therefore further undermining the port's status. On the other hand, the reopening of the Canal caused a sudden boom in traffic to Aqaba that was now easily accessible to the Mediterranean and European countries. Furthermore, heavy congestion in Saudi Arabia's port at Jeddah, and at Iraq's ports in Basra and Umm Qasr (due to a huge import of goods following their massive profits from oil), led to more cargo in transit to these countries being diverted to Aqaba. When the Iran-Iraq war shut down the ports of Basra and Umm Qasr in late 1980, Aqaba was overwhelmed with cargoes destined for Iraq, which soon became the port's biggest user. When Iraq decided in 1983 to temporarily ban all imports but arms and

Figure 10.2

### Aqaba & Eilat Port Traffic (Tons)



Source, APC, 1988; Israel Port Authority, 1986-1987

essential commodities, traffic in Aqaba declined.

The dependence of both ports on political factors may also be seen from the effect of less important matters. In Aqaba there was a temporary decline in traffic in 1969-70 when India boycotted phosphate imports from Jordan because the latter supported the Islamic conference in Pakistan. Eilat recorded a decline in traffic after it lost a substantial portion of its foreland following the severance of relations by many African countries as an act of solidarity with Egypt after the 1973 War.

'Planned' political initiative has also played an important role in the ports' development. One example is when the Jordanian and Israeli governments provided special inducements to increase the use of the Red Sea ports. Jordan, in order to reduce its dependence on imports transhipped through Syria and Lebanon, provided economic incentives for the use of its port in Aqaba. In another case Amman ordered that all import containers use Aqaba as their port of entry, while a special levy was imposed on all overland cargo not entering Jordan via Aqaba. Israel subsidised the land transportation cost of cargo via Eilat. A common aim for both governments was to strengthen and consolidate use of their Red Sea ports. Perhaps for Jordan this was more crucial in view of its vulnerable overland route via Syria and Lebanon, and the fact that Aqaba was the country's sole port. For Israel it meant securing its southern gateway.

Apart from the fact that political events have been the main reason behind the ports' activities, there is little comparison between them when considering absolute figures of traffic volume, their spatial structure and the number of employees. Yet these elements too are a direct result of politics. Eilat's port is the junior member among Israel's three ports. Its maximum annual cargo movement was 1.2 million tons in 1980 (10% of Israel's total seabound traffic); since then its role among Israel's ports has declined. In the same year Aqaba's port handled a total of 5 million tons which reached 17 million tons in 1987. These differences may also be clearly seen from the ports' spatial structure (see figures 6.1 and 4.2). Both ports are similarly situated in relation to their respective towns. Yet Aqaba's port is divided into three main components. It is capable of handling simultaneously 19 ships (cargo, oil, and passengers) and its total storage area is 830,000 sq.m. Eilat's port can accommodate 3 ships (an additional 2 tankers can be handled in the oil

port) and its total storage area is 170,000 sq.m. (see also appendix 5). The total labour force in Aqaba's port is 4,710 workers, while in Eilat this figure is 285. Further differences between the ports may be seen by their role in relation to their towns' labour structure (30% in Aqaba and 2.6% in Eilat). Aqaba is connected by rail to Amman, Syria and Lebanon, and to network of roads which include Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. Additionally there is a regular ferry service to Nuweiba in Sinai and thence a new road to Cairo. Eilat is only connected by road to the centre of Israel (figure 10.3). Perhaps an additional indication of the superiority of the port in Aqaba over that of Eilat may be seen by the fact that the Israeli side follows all developments in its neighbour's port, and would be eager to incorporate itself into Aqaba's activities in the hope of benefiting from the port's international market should peace eventually come.

### **10.1.1 Oil and the Ports' Development**

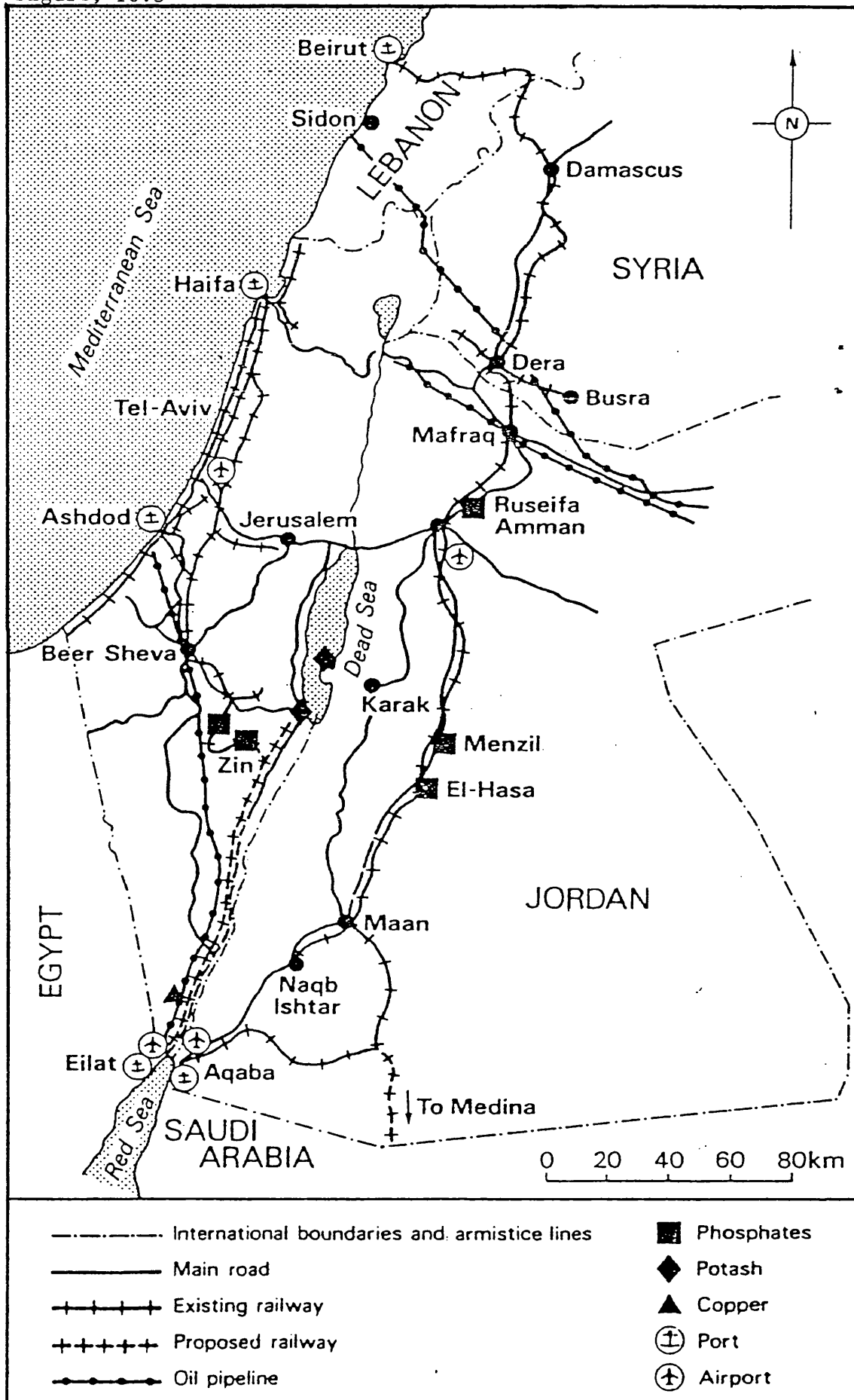
The development of oil ports in Eilat and Aqaba was a direct result of political events in the Middle East; namely the 1956 War and the Iran-Iraq War. The oil ports were not a pre-planned initiative by either Israel or Jordan, but were rather forced on both governments by the changing political reality.

For Israel it was progressive oil starvation after the 1956 War as a consequence of an oil embargo by Rumania, then Israel's main source of oil. This was a direct result of Russia's new anti-Israeli policy following the war. Israel succeeded in signing an agreement to buy oil from Iran, meaning that Eilat became the obvious gateway for this oil. An oil port and pipeline were quickly built in Eilat. The 1967 War followed by the closure of the Suez Canal served as a catalyst for the oil port. This was assisted by generous aid from Iran, who aimed to create an alternative route for her oil instead of the long way around Africa. A larger pipeline with the capacity to transfer 60 million tons per year was constructed from Eilat to Ashkelon. In Jordan's case, after the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war, it was Iraq that wanted to secure its oil export routes after Syria shut down the Iraqi pipeline passing through her territory in solidarity with Iran. This left Iraq with a single pipeline to Turkey and a vulnerable shipping route in the Persian Gulf. Iraq persuaded Hussein to let her finance the construction of an oil port in Aqaba. In this case political factors prevented the implementation of a plan to construct an additional oil pipeline to Aqaba (see also section 4.4.2), with oil being trucked to



The Situation and Hinterland of Eilat and Aqaba

Figure, 10.3



Source, Stern and Hayuth, 1984:239

the port.

The anti-Israel regime in Teheran following the Iranian revolution ceased the oil supply to Israel. This virtually dried up the oil port, and made most of its labour redundant. The termination of the Gulf War is likely to stop oil exports via Aqaba. Tankers, and the two pipelines (to Turkey and Yanbo in Saudi Arabia that were built during the war), are undoubtedly more efficient and economic than an endless line of trucks to Aqaba. Thus its prospects are not bright, although I have not yet been able to obtain information regarding a change of activity in the oil port.

As seen above in the case of the general ports, the oil ports hold little in common when examining total figures. Eilat has the benefit of a pipeline to the Mediterranean with an estimated capacity of 60 million tons per year. It can also handle simultaneously two tankers. In the port's heyday, the volume of oil flow was estimated at around 30 million tons per year (Aroch and Kochvah, 1979). Aqaba's oil port is smaller. In 1987, 2.4 million tons of oil passed through the port whose annual oil capacity is 3.6 million tons. It can handle one tanker at a time. In addition, while oil traffic in Aqaba is outward, in Eilat oil movement has been inward.

### **10.1.2 The Ports and Development in Eilat and Aqaba**

When examining the relationship between the ports and development on local, regional, and national spatial levels, similar features emerge on the local level. Both ports have so far failed their governments' and local residents' high expectations of boosting the towns' economies as might otherwise be expected from the turnover of their activities. Both ports lack the wide range of shipping services, port-related industries and commercial activities that characterise most port cities. For example, most of the shipping agents and freight forwarders have their offices in Amman or Tel Aviv. At best they maintain small branches in the respective port towns. It should be noted, however, that over the last decade Aqaba's port has started to show encouraging signs regarding its contribution to local development. This can be seen when considering the ports' ability to attract industry. In Aqaba, considerable industrial development has taken place. Eilat's industry is small and insignificant (industry will be discussed in the next part). A further difference in this respect is the establishment of a free trade zone in both ports in the mid-1970s. In Aqaba the

free zone succeeded in attracting a vegetable oil plant, a cold storage warehouse and a handful of plans for the future (SRP, 1982; MMRA, 1983; ARA, 1986, 1987). In Eilat the designated free zone is empty. A mutual feature in this connection is the fact that both towns' attempts to attract private industry have shown little success. (In Aqaba, all the local enterprises were established and owned by the Jordanian government.)

Development on a regional level occurred in both countries within the context of wider development, whose effects trickled down from the national level, especially from the national economic core, to and through the regional level, down to the local level. The growing need for a better transit infrastructure between each isolated port and its national economic core created economic opportunities to exploit resources, particularly minerals, in the periphery. Israel opened a new phosphate mine in the central Negev and established a truck company to transfer the minerals and general cargo to and from Eilat. A substantial contribution to regional development may be anticipated if a railway project to connect Eilat with the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean is implemented. Jordan expanded its existing phosphate fields in al-Hasa, Rusaifa and Al-Abyad, as well as opening a new mine in al-Shidyah. It also constructed a potash plant on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea during the late 1970s.

On a national level, the national economy of each country has been the prime beneficiary of the remote gateways. Most of the cargo, raw materials and mechanical equipment imported through Aqaba and Eilat has been directly toward the central economic core of both Israel and Jordan. The national economic interest also benefits from the flow of in-transit cargo and crude oil. In Israel, this could be seen in the case of the oil pipeline and the NCB between Eilat and the Mediterranean. In Jordan, the development of the port was the main reason for improving roads and expanding the railway network to Aqaba. The particular effect of in-transit cargo flow could be seen when Iraq strengthened her relations with Jordan in the late 1970s. This led to the establishment of new trucking companies, a growing demand for freight forwarders, road services, mechanics and additional banking and insurance services. All this has contributed to the national economy (government regulations have guaranteed that the majority of trucks and drivers in the transit of cargo to Iraq will be Jordanian). Additionally, a \$300m 300 km road

which bypasses Amman was built from Aqaba to Iraq; (it opened in 1988). This road will certainly serve the national Jordanian interest while exploiting the transshipment function of Aqaba (Jordan, 1988). Other proposals followed the Israeli idea and suggested the construction of a new railway to connect the potash plant near the Dead Sea to Aqaba (ARA, 1985), although so far no concrete steps have been taken to implement this idea.

## **10.2 Industrial Development**

Even the industrial development of Eilat and Aqaba owes less to the growth of the Israeli and Jordanian economies than to political events. This is in fact the only common feature of the industry in both towns. Most conspicuous in the two centralistic national systems is the deep involvement of both governments in all stages of development of major industrial enterprises, from planning and financing to establishment and management. I would note, however, that considering the natural difficulties and isolation of both towns, it is questionable whether industry would have developed at all were it not for this involvement.

Although Aqaba and Eilat have two factories each, presently there is little comparison between the industry in both towns. It forms an important sector of Aqaba's economy. The fertiliser complex industry (JFIC) and the oil vegetable factory employ 2700 people (17.7% of Aqaba's labour force). Eilat has lacked heavy industry since the closure of the Timna mine. The existing salt and cable factories comprise a minor part of the local economy, employing 125 people out of a total of 800 working in the manufacturing and industry categories (about 1% of the town's labour force). Differences can also be seen in the nature of the local industry. In Eilat not a single enterprise has been set up to date that does not possess a strong locational factor. In Aqaba, industry is in fact part of the 'spin-off' effect of the port, taking advantage of the town's location and its function as a gateway into and out of Jordan. The main aim is to process raw material that has previously been exported into a range of finished products. This has been achieved with the fertiliser and timber industries (the latter was unsuccessful due to economic miscalculation; see section 4.5), and the recently established vegetable oil plant.

The most crucial difference between industrial development in Eilat and Aqaba is linked to the potential of each town to take advantage of its pivotal location regarding the core of economic activity in its country. Aqaba is the gateway for around 70% of all imports and exports to and from Jordan, as well as a transit port for Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Thus it has greater opportunities to exploit its location, and its remoteness is not necessarily a deterrent. Eilat, on the other hand, does not enjoy a similar status to Aqaba, as only between 7% to 12% of Israel's sea-bound trade passes through this port. Additionally Eilat is far from the core of economic activity in Israel and out of the way for almost all the major trade routes moving through Haifa and Ashdod.

An additional difference is the growth pattern of industry in each town. While industry, namely Timna, was a prime contributor to Eilat's initial development, and a main pillar of its economy until 1976. it played no role in Aqaba until the late 1970s. Since then industry in Eilat has declined sharply, losing its importance in the town's economic life, while in Aqaba industry has been in the ascendant since its establishment. The explanation for this is mainly rooted in political factors. As mentioned earlier (section 6.4.1), Timna employees originally established their own settlement near the mine, 20 km north of Eilat. It was only Ben Gurion's decision to abandon this camp and settle all the workers and their families in Eilat which brought industry into the town's economy. Later, the closure of Timna was also related to politics, mainly due to the dramatic slump in copper prices after 1974, itself partly a result of the economic crisis following the 1973 War. The disadvantage of the town's location could be seen when even Jerusalem's efforts to bring industry to the Negev (Gradus and Krakover, 1976; Gradus and Einy, 1981) showed little success in Eilat. The two local government owned factories are small, and their contribution to Eilat is minor. Despite the aim to attract new industries to the town, none have been established to date, and there are only limited prospects for substantial growth in the near future, particularly in view of the port's diminishing status and the threat to the tourist industry.

The late development of industry in Aqaba is to be attributed mainly to political factors. Until 1967 the Jordanian government intentionally neglected peripheral development. It aimed to consolidate the centre and consequently most of its industrial development effort was directed toward the Amman area (IBRD, 1965;

Kartin, 1987). In addition Beirut was reasonably accessible to Jordanian cargo until the 1975 civil war in Lebanon, despite disturbances and border closures between Jordan and Syria. The road link from Amman to Beirut was better than to Aqaba, thus placing Aqaba in a similar pivotal disadvantage to Eilat. Moreover until 1965 the 7 km stretch of shore along the north-eastern side of the Gulf of Aqaba was mainly occupied by the town and the port, leaving little space for industrial development. In 1965 Jordan received an additional 12 km along the shore of the Gulf after the land exchange with Saudi Arabia, but the Jordanian defeat in the 1967 War paralysed most of its development plans over the next few years.

Plans regarding industrial development in Aqaba only began to appear in the early 1970s, with Amman's new policy to decentralise the economy (NPC, 1973, 1976, 1981). Most initiatives took advantage of the town's location (see also part 4.5). Apart from government-owned enterprises, no other industrial enterprises have been set up to date. Abu Nuwwar, the Aqaba Regional Authority chairman, has attributed this to the severe difficulties of Jordan's economy which are still far from being overcome (1).

### **10.2.1 Industry and Development in Eilat and Aqaba**

The relationship between industry and development in Eilat and Aqaba reflects the nature and structure of the industry in each town. In Eilat the contribution of the Timna mine in consolidating the young town's economic and social structure was invaluable (part 6.4.1):

"The urban impact of the copper mines on Eilat is greater than its numerical ratio of employees" (Karmon, 1979:565).

Timna's importance could be seen later during the crisis period when around 400 families left the town, many from the more educated sector of Eilati society (Karmon, 1979; Eilat, 1985). This also narrowed the economic base of Eilat. In Aqaba, industry's role in the town's economic life grew gradually. It inevitably contributed to the expansion of the economic base as well as creating new job opportunities and attracting more people. This directly led to the construction of new neighbourhoods and additional social facilities for use by employees. However, as in the port, this contribution was smaller than one may expect when considering the number of employees. This was primarily because most of them were

foreigners who came without their families for a limited period, and tended not to integrate into local life (ARA, 1986). The recent difficulties in Jordan's economy and growing unemployment among Jordanians has led to tougher regulations and controls over foreign labour, regarded by Jordanians officials as a factor that may attract more Jordanians to work in Aqaba in the future (2).

The relationship between industry and development on the regional level has corresponded to the nature and structure of each town's industry. The local character of Eilat's industry has meant that impact on regional development has been virtually nil. Even the developing agricultural industry in several kibbutzim and moshavim in the Arava Valley is very small (3), and apart from small quantities intended for local consumption, all products are transported directly to the north. Even the Timna mines were initially established as an independent unit with little connection with Eilat. However, after Ben Gurion's decision to move Timna employees to Eilat they became a contributory factor in improving the road and establishing a truck company to transport copper to the ports of Haifa and Ashdod. The relationship between industry and development should also be viewed in this case from an ideological point of view. The establishment of Timna in Eilat's vicinity was another step in regional development and created an Israeli presence in an area that until today is in desperate need of more inhabitants. This meant consolidation of regional and national security.

As Aqaba's industry is part of the port's 'spin-off' effect, development on a regional level followed that of the port. This was reflected in the construction of the new road to the Dead Sea and the establishment of a truck company to transport the minerals from the various mines to Aqaba.

So far, the national economy has benefited in the case of Eilat. As her two industrial enterprises have been owned by the Israeli government, profit or loss affected the national budget. In spite of the years when Timna was subsidised (during the first few years, and between 1974 and the closure in 1976), it was estimated that net profit throughout the mine's years of operation totalled \$145m (Erev Erev, 17.10.1974:3). Presently the local factories are self-sufficient with small profits (4). In addition, Timna in the late 1950s was an important factor in assisting Jerusalem's population dispersal policy. Attracting people to Eilat

contributed to her development and assisted the national aim of consolidating Israel's presence and security in the empty south. To a very small extent the present enterprises also support this goal, as well as the aim to bring more industry to the periphery. In Aqaba, as in Eilat, the new industries have helped to fulfil the government's plan (NPC, 1976, 1981) to decentralise Jordan's industry to the periphery and attract more people to the south. Although the timber industry has been run at a loss, and the fertiliser industry has not yet (1987) recouped the heavy investment, it is expected that it will show profit from the early 1990s and increase the presently modest role of the chemical and petrochemical industries in the Jordanian economy (MEED, 3.8.1984; Sullivan, 1987). On a smaller scale, industry in each town contributed its part to the national GNP, reducing the deficit in the national balance of payments, and expanding state industry and exports. Although this industry may only make up a very small share of the GNP, national deficit or export figures in each case, it should be remembered that all such statistics are made up of many components, none of which should be underestimated.

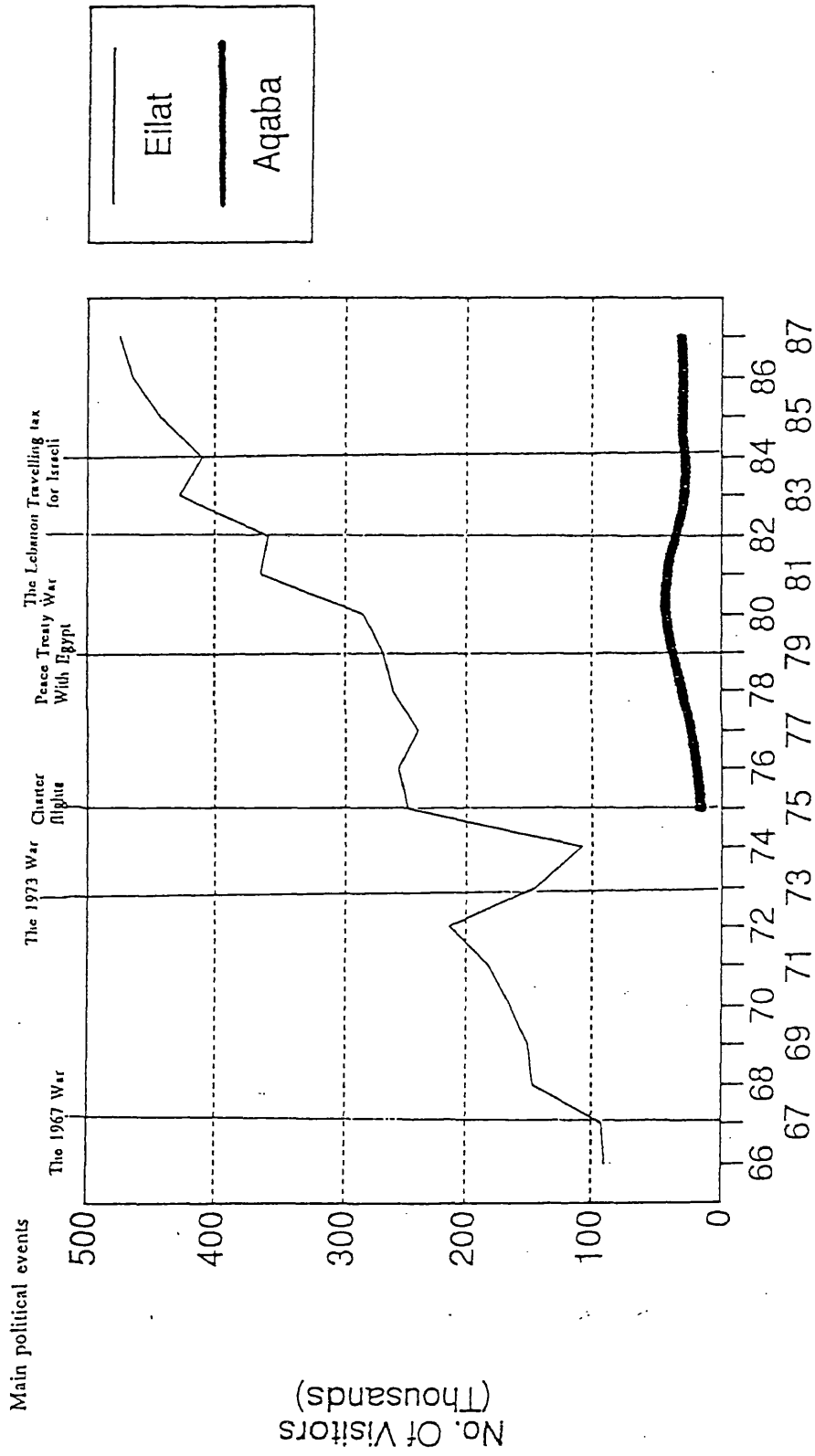
### **10.3 Tourism in Eilat and Aqaba**

The development of the tourist industry in Eilat and Aqaba should be examined on two levels: the conceptual and ideological motives behind tourism development, and from the point of view of quality and quantity. With respect to the latter issue, the similarity between Eilat and Aqaba is virtually nil. A simple examination of the various statistical data regarding the development of tourism will undoubtedly confirm this. For example, recent figures reveal that compared to 34,000 visitors to Aqaba in 1987, 476,500 visitors arrived in Eilat in the same year (figure 10.4). Aqaba offers 800 rooms in 8 hotels, only two of which are categorised as four-star, whereas Eilat has 4,200 rooms in a variety of 28 hotels, two of which are five-star and five of which are four-star. A similar picture emerges when considering other recreational and entertainment facilities in both towns. Media reports, interviews with tourists and tour operators in both towns, an examination of the tourist map provided by each town for visitors (Appendix 3), will further support this fact. An additional indication of the superiority of tourism in Eilat may be illustrated by Jordanian attempts to copy the major tourist initiatives in Eilat (charter flights, lagoon project, marketing strategy, etc.).



Figure, 10.4

### Eilat/Aqaba Tourism 1966-1987\*



\* Accurate information regarding Aqaba was available only from 1975

Source, ARA, 1985, 1988; Israel, Ministry of Tourism, 1966-1987.

A different picture emerges when examining the tourist industry in Eilat and Aqaba from a conceptual and ideological point of view. As a background to this I find it important to indicate that both towns enjoy identical environmental conditions and location with regard to their potential market in Europe. This has resulted in similar land use for tourism in both towns, and the development of a primarily sun and sea tourist industry.

An additional factor is the great importance which both governments have placed upon tourism. From the early days they saw it as a crucial vehicle for development and an important source of employment and foreign currency income. Despite these similar features, however, there is a great gap between tourism in Eilat and in Aqaba, which naturally raises a question as to the reason for this gap.

Part of the reason may be found when examining the political mechanisms behind the development of the industry in each town. This will also provide further indication of the vital role played by politics in the towns' development. But before discussing political factors, I find it necessary to indicate that perhaps no less important than politics, socio-cultural factors should also be considered as playing a key role in the differences in tourism development between Eilat and Aqaba. As these factors are not within the scope of this work they will be discussed only briefly, relying mainly on Jordanian and Israeli sources, and on other sources cited in this work (see also section 1.5).

A key to understanding the many differences in tourism development between Eilat and Aqaba is the basic social and cultural difference between the two countries. In the case of tourism, this fact is related to the question of how the mainly Moslem conservative society in Jordan and Aqaba, and the predominately liberal-western oriented society (5) in Israel and Eilat have viewed tourism, particularly of the sun and sea variety.

Perhaps the very basic difference in this sense is that sun and sea holidays hold little appeal for most Jordanian or even the average Moslem in the Middle East. This was indicated by Jordanian officials and reports (SRP, 1982; NPC, 1984) that suggested that tourism development in Aqaba could not rely upon the domestic or Middle Eastern market. On the other hand, sun and sea holidays are popular among

Israelis. Beaches crowded with Israelis during weekends and public holidays along the Mediterranean coast, the Dead Sea, the Sea of Galilee and the Red Sea may be the best indication of this enthusiasm. Moreover, many Israelis travel to the Greek Islands or Turkey to add a different dimension to their sun and sea holiday. This difference in Israeli and Jordanian attitudes has led to three main differences affecting tourism in Eilat and Aqaba; the first is the attachment of Israelis and Jordanians to holidays in Eilat and Aqaba. Eilat has been the most popular sea resort among all Israel's sea resorts. 253,000 Israelis spent their holiday in Eilat during 1987 (Development Systems, 1988). Aqaba, Jordan's only sea resort (the Dead Sea was totally neglected from a tourism point of view until the late 1980s), was visited by only 18,200 Jordanians in 1987. Thus for Eilat the Israeli market has been a major source of income, while the Israeli tendency to arrive in summer has enabled the town to eliminate strong fluctuations in tourist arrivals and avoid a long low season (about 70% to 80% of the Israelis arrive to Eilat between May and September, while 70%-80% of the foreign tourist arrive between September and April). In Aqaba, the local market could not be taken into account as a substantial component in tourism, leaving the town dependent only on foreign tourists which mainly arrive between September and April, with a long low season throughout the summer.

The second point is the attitude of local inhabitants in Eilat and Aqaba toward the tourists. One example is that in Eilat, as in the rest of Israel, the sight of tourists and locals, male and female, enjoying a swim or a sunbathe in a liberal atmosphere is a common phenomenon. In Aqaba, it is questionable to what extent conservative Moslem attitudes can tolerate behaviour of this type. In the past several unpleasant incidents have occurred as a result of Western women lying on the beach in bathing suits or of contact between local women and foreign men (see section 4.6.1).

The third point is concerned with the participation of the local community in tourist initiative and activity. This ties in with the previous two factors. Eilatis have been much more imaginative and have actively participated and invested in tourism more than the residents of Aqaba. Since Eilat's early days the local pioneers have regarded tourism as a natural endeavour and a pillar of the town's economy. Local tourist enthusiasts and other residents greatly contributed to the development of the

industry in Eilat. Later, after the collapse of Timna and a reduction of labour in the port many locals went to work in the tourist industry. A variety of small local enterprises linked to tourism sprang up. In Aqaba, perhaps in line with the minor appeal of sun and sea holidays, local participation and initiative has been relatively low. The first two hotels were opened in the mid-1960s (Eilat then had 15 hotels). Later local interest in tourism remained low, as may be illustrated by the limited selection of restaurants and other entertainment facilities (see also appendix 3 and 5 regarding facilities in each town).

Political factors have been an important incentive for tourism development in both Eilat and Aqaba. As in the case of the port and industry, wars and the changing geopolitical situation may be identified as crucial factors behind many of the decisions taken by both governments regarding tourism in Eilat and Aqaba. However, there are differences in the way these factors have affected the development of tourism in both towns. The most conspicuous difference is the existence in Eilat of a determined lobby that has supported tourism throughout the years. Its success in gaining political power since the early 1980s has turned this lobby into a strong local political factor, which is taking an increasing part in the decision-making process and management of local tourist affairs. Aqaba has not enjoyed such a lobby, and no significant local group that effectively promotes tourism exists. Thus while tourism development in Eilat has been controlled and determined by both local and central bodies, in Aqaba it has been controlled and determined by Amman. The consequences of this may be seen in the development of tourism in each town throughout the years and particularly since the early 1980s.

The final similarity is the manner in which each government viewed tourism in Eilat and Aqaba. They regarded it as a component within the general framework of tourism development in their respective countries. Both governments failed to appreciate the potential in developing the towns as sun and sea resorts with their own independent identity. The towns were generally considered to be a stop for a day or two in inclusive tours to Israel or Jordan. Thus development and marketing strategy did not differ from that directed to other resorts such as Ashkelon or Jaffa in Israel, or Petra or Jarash in Jordan. Yet even this point should be regarded in the right perspective. Apart from this general perception of tourism in Eilat and Aqaba by both governments, the differences between their attempts to develop

tourism overshadow the similarities. Jerusalem's efforts in developing tourism in Eilat were far more intensive and effective than those of Amman in Aqaba. Jerusalem was engaged in tourism initiatives in Eilat from the late 1950s (the lagoon project and general infrastructure for tourism on the north and south beaches). Amman did not initiate any serious efforts to develop tourism in Aqaba before 1967. Later the differences between Jerusalem and Amman could be seen by the great gap in tourism development in Eilat and Aqaba throughout the years, as also reflected by the various figures regarding the industry in both towns. Amman's poor policy and failure to appreciate international trends in tourism and apply them to Aqaba could also be seen in the mid-1970s. While tourism in Eilat began to increase, the NPC in Amman thought that Aqaba did not stand a chance of being developed as a tourist resort;

Aqaba is poorly situated to compete effectively with Mediterranean resorts for the mass European market, because of the greater travel distance involved and higher construction and operating costs in Jordan" (NPC, 1975:47).

Even the 1976-1980 development plan (NPC, 1976) made only minor suggestions for tourism development in Aqaba.

This highlights additional differences between tourism in Eilat and Aqaba. While tourism in Eilat succeeded in attracting a substantial amount of investment by private bodies, some local and some foreign (the latter owned 45% of the local hotel rooms), Aqaba had little success in attracting foreign investors. In fact the sale of the Holiday Inn Hotel in 1989 to a Jordanian firm (discussed later) means that all Aqaba hotels are now owned by Jordanian firms. This may also further contribute to an understanding of why political protests and the ambition to participate more in local planning and decision-making is more prevalent in Eilat than in Aqaba. It is very unlikely that private bodies, both local and foreign, will invest substantial capital without being granted the right to participate in decisions regarding their investment. On the other hand it is also natural to assume that as the Israeli government aims to encourage these investors, it will be willing to share some of its power. Thus the fact that Aqaba has lacked this sort of investment may partly explain the absence of local pressure for greater power.

Additional reasons for the great gap in tourism development between Eilat and Aqaba may be found in an examination of government policy toward tourism in

these towns. For Amman developing the port and industry, which by their very nature created a deterrent factor for tourism, was a prime priority in development effort in Aqaba. Moreover, until 1967, Amman's efforts to develop tourism concentrated mainly around the holy places in the West Bank. In 1967, 82% of all the hotels in Jordan were in the West Bank, with only two hotels in Aqaba. On the other hand Eilat's tourist industry was one of the ways to develop the town, despite the clear priority given to develop the port and Timna; (it should be remembered that the port and industry in Eilat never reached the scale of these sectors in Aqaba). Thus efforts to develop tourism usually formed part of the general plan to develop Eilat. Pressure by the local tourist lobby to provide greater resources undoubtedly contributed to this policy.

From a different perspective, wars have been another key factor in the development of tourism in Eilat and Aqaba, though they affected each town differently. Hardly any tourists arrived in Israel or Jordan during the wars. However, their effect on the political and geopolitical environment had a great influence. Despite the fact that it is hard to point to a direct link between the 1956 War and tourism development in Eilat, the general positive effect of the war on Eilat's growth also encouraged tourism to Eilat (no evidence for tourist activity was found regarding Aqaba at this time).

The 1967 War had an even greater impact on tourism in Eilat. The tourist boom that Israel experienced following the war meant that more tourists also arrived in Eilat. Its location on the way to Sinai was another factor which brought more visitors. This increase in the number of visitors led to more government and private investment in hotels and tourist facilities. A totally different picture emerged in Jordan and Aqaba following the 1967 War. Its devastating impact on tourism to Jordan also harshly affected the small tourist industry in Aqaba. This picture emerges from anecdotal information (statistics figures regarding tourism in Aqaba for this period are poor). Yet the later effects of the war emerged as a factor in Aqaba's favour. With the loss of most of its tourist attractions in the war, the effort to rebuild Jordan's tourist industry from the early 1970s was concentrated in the East Bank, with Aqaba being one of the potential resorts.

The 1973 War literally paralysed Eilat's tourist industry and brought it to the brink of collapse (figure 10.4). But the later effects of the war, namely the crisis, was an incentive which persuaded Jerusalem to allow charter flights to land in Eilat, and therefore provided tourism with new momentum. Tourism in Aqaba and Jordan only started to recover in 1973-4 from the effect of the 1967 War and the 1970-1 civil war. The general setback for tourism in the Middle East delayed this recovery. The general political relaxation in the Middle East in the second half of the 1970s inevitably contributed to the prospects for tourism for both towns, particularly in view of the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. Yet while Eilat took advantage of the peace that became an important factor in attracting foreign investment, the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War meant for Aqaba greater concentration on port development and less effort to develop tourism.

I would regard the early 1980s as a turning point for the tourist industry in both towns. While in Aqaba tourism was pushed to one side under the influence of the Iran-Iraq War, the new impetus to tourism in Eilat following the peace with Egypt and the growing involvement of international bodies (Lewis and Isrotel and Ladbroke) turned Eilat from a remote little-known holiday resort into a prominent sun and sea destination for many of the leading European tour operators. No less important were the new political relations between Eilat and Jerusalem. Since the mid-1980s, local tourist interests have played a greater role in the planning and decision-making process regarding tourist issues in Eilat, with a greater response from Jerusalem. This may be partly illustrated by the Ministry of Tourism, which has marketed Eilat as an independent resort whose natural advantages should be appreciated for themselves and not necessarily within the traditional tourist framework of Israel. It has also showed greater willingness to share power with local bodies, allowing them to carry out local activity.

Presently many of the decisions regarding tourism development, policy, strategy and plans for the future are being made in Eilat. The EFDC together with the local municipality and local tourist interests are taking a prime role in Eilat's new tourist development, with financial assistance from Jerusalem. In contrast, tourism in Aqaba has shown only little development since the late 1970s. Under the total control of the central government in Amman over all major tourist affairs, the industry still has a parochial character which could not be compared with that of

Eilat. Even the establishment of the Aqaba Regional Authority and its attempts to emulate some of Eilat's major ideas have not achieved the expected results.

### **10.3.1 Tourism and Development**

The relationship between tourism in Eilat and Aqaba and development at local, regional and national level reflected the size and pattern of tourism growth in each town. For Eilat and Israel, tourism has been an important and invaluable factor for development. For Aqaba, the contribution of tourism to development has been far less significant. However, common features emerge when we examine the relationship between tourism and development from a conceptual point of view.

At local level, tourism has been a beneficial factor in the development of both towns, despite immense discrepancies between the two with regard to its economic value. As a pillar of Eilat's economy since its early days, tourism was an important source of employment. Additionally the job opportunities that the industry offered women was an important factor in the aim to maintain a balanced social structure during the period that the port and Timna demanded heavy physical, mainly male, labour. Tourism saved Eilat during the crisis of the 1970s, and since then it has become the mainstay of the town's economy. It presently employs 70% of Eilat's labour market (including support services), and has been the prime cause for the immense investment in the town and the flourishing support industries (restaurants, crafts, souvenir shops, international car rental agencies, tour operators, etc.) that have emerged over the last decade. New job opportunities are the sole reason for Eilat's recent population growth and for the recent plans for new development. Little remains to be said regarding the great contribution of tourism to local development.

From a political perspective, tourism has been a prime factor in the emergence of local political awareness. Always a natural endeavour for Eilat, it led to the involvement of a large proportion of private bodies (compared to the minor involvement of such bodies in the port and industry). Their protests against poor government performance and challenge to government decisions echoed in the Israeli media and gained sympathy from the public. The effectiveness of such protest became particularly clear when tourism succeeded in attracting foreign investors who uncompromisingly stood up for the right to participate in decision-



making regarding their investments. Thus tourism became the main tool whereby locals could gain greater political power and take a growing part in the development and management of Eilat's affairs.

Although to a far less extent than Eilat, Aqaba has also benefitted from tourism. The industry provides work for about 6% of Aqaba's labour force, and supports a few local restaurants, craft and souvenir shops and a few local car rental agencies. In general all these tourist initiatives are on a much smaller scale than those of Eilat, and are therefore of minor benefit to local development. This can partly be illustrated by the inability of tourism to attract the type of international bodies usually associated with tourism such as international tour operators and car rental agencies. Even the only international hotel chain operating locally, Holiday Inn, sold their hotel in Aqaba in 1989 claiming heavy losses and difficulties in maintaining their world-wide standard.

An additional contribution of tourism to local development in Eilat and to a minor extent in Aqaba could be seen in the growing awareness of the towns' images. This was reflected in the greater effort to renovate Eilat's old neighbourhoods, the environmental improvement plan (Israel, Ministry of Tourism/Eilat, 1986), and the recent master plan (Eilat, 1988) that emphasises the town's image. In Aqaba this could be seen in recent plans to improve the town's image as a tourist resort rather than a port industrial town (ARA, 1985). Tourism was also the priming reason behind Eilat's special international atmosphere compared to Israel's other sea resorts. This was described already in the mid 1960s as:

"A singularly cosmopolitan, unconventional and far from provincial character" (Spiegel, 1966:165).

There is hardly anything to say regarding similar features in the relationship between tourism and development at regional level. In Eilat, tourism has succeeded where the port and industry have failed. The growing number of foreign tourists and Israelis arriving in the town, many driving down from the north, provided the opportunity to open new services along the roads to Eilat. The establishment of hostels, guest houses and tourist attractions in several kibbutzim and moshavim in the Arava, as well as the establishment of national parks in the south of the Arava including the site of the Timna mine, were a direct result of the tourist boom and

the increasing number of excursions from Eilat to the surrounding area.

Apart from a small coffee and souvenir shop in Wadi Ram, no other tourism-related development has taken place in the Aqaba region. No attempt has been made by any of the villages along the road to the north, nor by the ARA, to promote such development. In view of Aqaba's small tourist market, however, this should not be regarded as a surprise, and it is doubtful that any regional development related to tourism will take place unless tourist activity increases substantially.

The national economy in both Israel and Jordan has benefited from the tourist industry in Eilat and Aqaba. Tourism has brought in hard currency, increased GNP and reduced both countries' national deficit, although the size of this contribution in either case differs greatly. Unlike Aqaba, Eilat's tourist industry has served as an important factor in assisting Israel to save hard currency, caused by Eilat's ability to attract many Israelis who would probably otherwise have travelled abroad. Additionally, Eilat's success in attracting private local and foreign investors was a major reason to resume development in this area and attract more people to Eilat and the southern Arava, thereby assisting the national policy of population dispersal.

Eilat's tourist industry and its relationship with development may also be examined at an international level. The success of Eilat as a sun and sea resort and the regular excursions from the town to Sinai were a major reason for maintaining and expanding tourist facilities along the Gulf of Aqaba that had been established by the three Israeli settlements in this area (6) during the occupation of Sinai between 1967 and 1982. Eilat is also an important source of inspiration for Egypt in its efforts to develop new sun and sea resorts along the Gulf of Aqaba (7).

#### **10.4 Urban Growth and the Political Dimension in Eilat and Aqaba**

The urban growth of Eilat and Aqaba was mainly a result of the development of their ports, industry and tourism. It would therefore be true to say that the same political and economic factors that influenced the growth of these sectors have also played a key role in urban development, as has been shown throughout this work, alongside other factors such as environmental constraints on spatial growth and land

use. In the following comparison, I will first identify the obvious similarities and dissimilarities between the two towns (see also photograph 5), and then analyse the political mechanism behind their growth. Eilat and Aqaba displayed a similar pattern of population growth until the mid-1970s. Apart from the development of the various economic sectors in each town (ports, mine, etc.), a variety of additional political factors contributed to this growth. In Aqaba it was the influx of Palestinian refugees to Jordan following the 1948 and 1967 Wars and Hussein's aim to settle permanently the Bedouin tribes in the south of his kingdom. In Eilat it was the mass influx of immigrants to Israel, the government population dispersal plan, and the prospect for development following Israel's victory in the 1956 and 1967 Wars. In 1973 Eilat had 16,000 inhabitants and Aqaba 14,000, but from the mid-1970s a growing gap began to emerge between the two towns. Aqaba embarked upon a new phase of rapid growth that caused the number of inhabitants to increase to 48,000 in 1987 (figure 10.5). This was a direct result of development in the town following the reopening of the Suez Canal, the establishment of heavy industry and the Iran-Iraq War. On the other hand, population growth in Eilat stagnated until the end of the decade when the town sank into a deep crisis following the 1973 War, the collapse of Timna and the consequences of reopening the Suez Canal. However, the Camp David accord and the subsequent peace with Egypt and Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon heralded the tourist boom of the 1980s. Jerusalem adopted the long-fought for policy by the Eilatis to market Eilat as an individual resort, succeeding so far (1987) as to avoid the gloomy effect of the *Intifada* on tourism in Israel. The growth pattern that Eilat embarked upon in the early 1980s increased its population to 25,000 in 1987.

Although presently Aqaba is almost double Eilat's size, it must be remembered that the character of her population is substantially different. About half (approximately 7,000) of the labour force in Aqaba is foreign, mostly Egyptian workers without their families. In Eilat the amount of foreign labour is insignificant. Even the estimated 20% of non-Eilatis employed in tourism are mainly Israelis seeking a temporary job for around 3-6 months. The implications of this for local industrial relations was apparent when many workers lost their jobs in the case of Timna and port, leading to bitter demonstrations in the town. Although Aqaba has not yet experienced such problems, Jordanian officials have anticipated that should a substantial fall in the workforce take place in the port or in industry, many of the



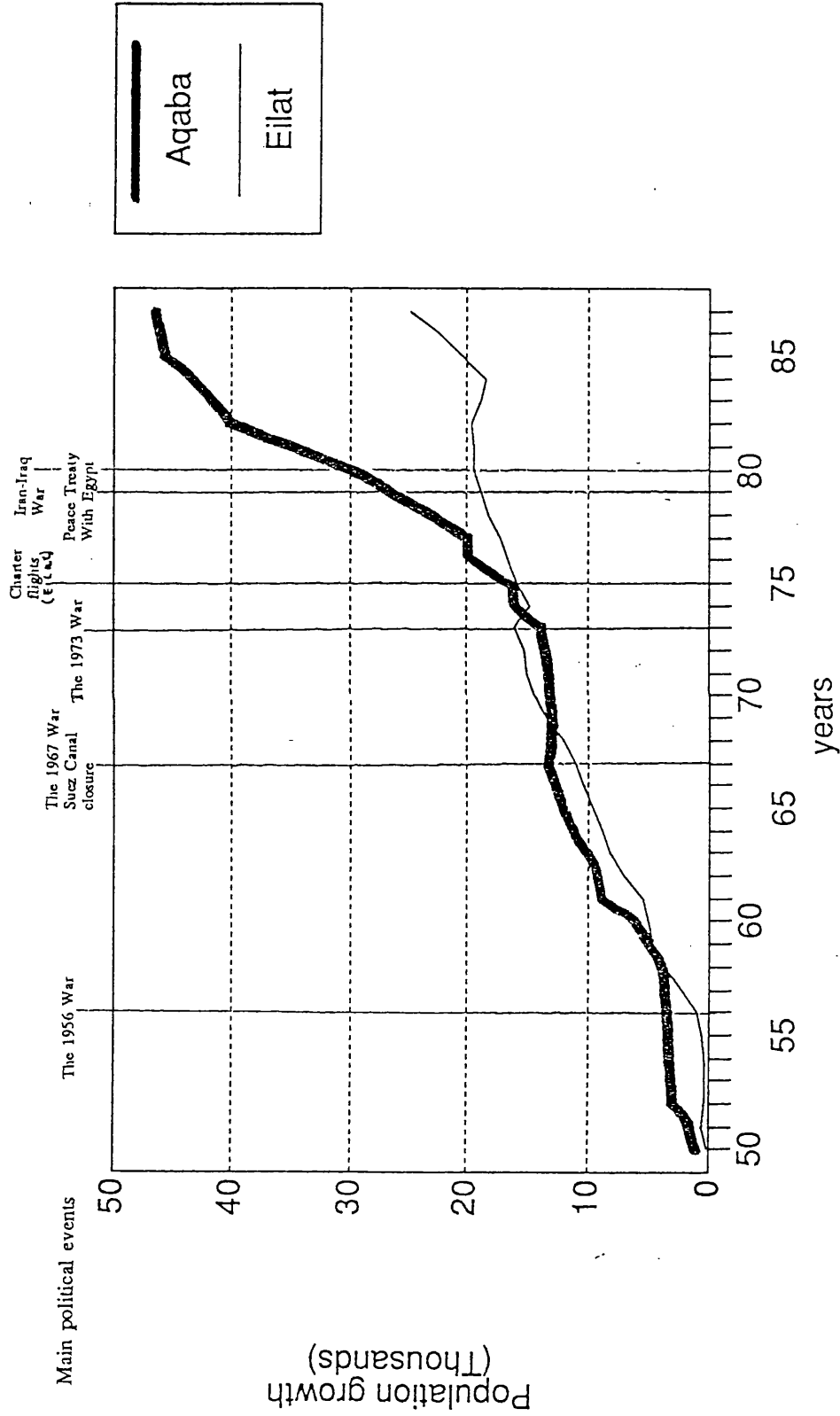
Photograph 5 Eilat and Aqaba (May 1988)



Photograph 5 Eilat and Aqaba (May 1988)

Figure, 10.5

### Aqaba and Eilat Population 1950-1987



Source, for 1950-51 Estimation by local population (pers. comm.)

1952 UNRWA, 1951-1969

(Aqaba) 1953-60 Estimation by Aqaba municipal officials (pers. comm.)

1967-87 Jordan, Department of Statistics, various years.

(Eilat) for 1949-57 - Israel, Ministry of Interior, 1959.

(Eilat) For 1958-87 - Eilat, 1988.

foreign workers will simply leave the town and return to their families elsewhere.

The general character of Eilat and Aqaba's urban growth throughout the years has reflected the pattern and character of each town's main economic activity. In the early days, Aqaba was a small port town (Hindle, 1966; Beheiry, 1969) while Eilat was a small pioneer settlement comprising a port, a mine and some tourism (Karmon, 1963; Spiegel, 1966). Aqaba became a port/industrial town, characterised mainly by the constant stream of heavy trucks passing through its centre (MEED, 3.8.1984). Eilat on the other hand, lost any association as a mining town, and even its port image has been largely overshadowed by the booming tourist industry. The Eilat of the late 1980s is an highly developed sun and sea tourist resort, characterised by smart new hotels, restaurants, shops and other entertainment and recreation facilities. The atmosphere is international, and probably little different from many such resorts elsewhere in the world (see for example: Matley, 1976; De Kadt, 1979).

In general terms, spatial development and land use in Eilat and Aqaba have followed a similar pattern in that they reveal a similar strategy and ideology by the Israeli and Jordanian governments. Although to some extent this similarity may be understood in view of the mutual need to overcome difficult climatic and topographic conditions, and of the environmental constraints of the area, urban planning in both towns has created a clear separation in land use. Port activity and industry was located to the south and away from the residential area in both towns. In this case Aqaba benefited from greater space along the Gulf of Aqaba which was used also to accommodate heavy industry. Yet while in Aqaba light industry, workshops and craft shops were located to the south of the town central business district (CBD), in Eilat these functions are situated to the north and north-east of the residential area, with further expansion planned to the north. Each town's main tourist area is located on the north beach, with only the international border and King Hussein's palace separating them. Smaller tourist areas also exist on the southern shores. The spatial development of the ports, industry or tourism have reflected the relative importance of each sector. Thus port and industry occupy a far larger area in Aqaba than in Eilat, while tourism occupies a much larger area in Eilat than in Aqaba.

Regardless of basic differences in housing and planning between Israel and Jordan (see sections 1.1, 1.5), similarities may be seen in the general strategy applied to planning and constructing residential areas in Eilat and Aqaba. Both towns are divided into neighbourhood units each one surrounded by a road and containing a small shopping centre for primary services. The CBD is also located in a similar geographical position. In Eilat it is in the north-west corner of the Gulf, while in Aqaba the CBD is located in the north-east corner. An additional identical feature in the planning and construction of both towns is the aim to achieve maximum efficiency in the utilisation of the various local public facilities and services by both local residents and tourists (Turner, 1968; NPC, 1981A). This was the reason for locating the CBD between the residential area and the main tourist area on the north beach. In Eilat, however, where tourism has grown most significantly, and such contact between the tourist and residential areas and the CBD would be of most use, the airport creates a barrier and so far has hindered the expected integration. In Aqaba tourism is only a minor economic activity, and therefore this contact has not yet been fully realised.

The main differences in the spatial growth of Eilat and Aqaba's residential areas should be attributed mainly to environmental constraints. Aqaba has sprawled northwards in well-defined rectangular districts into the flat area of the Arava Valley. Eilat, meanwhile, is expanding onto the slopes of the surrounding mountains, steeply climbing at a 5%-7% gradient in a semi-circle to the west, south-west and south (future expansion are also designated to the north).

#### **10.4.1 The Political Mechanism**

A greater understanding of Eilat's and Aqaba's general pattern of urban growth may be achieved by examining the political mechanism behind their development. Despite the basic differences in the Israeli and Jordanian political systems, there are great similarities in the ways in which the systems in both countries have affected the development of the two towns, particularly up till the late 1970s. Both Israel and Jordan have exhibited a centralist political system since their early days. Amman, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv have been the decision-making centres for almost all development initiatives in Eilat and Aqaba. Policy decisions are made by the centre and implemented using a top-down remote control approach through government and local authorities that have only marginal discretionary powers.



By budgetary means and licensing regulations both governments control most local initiatives, leaving the local municipality virtually powerless. Because of the system of centralised budgetary control, the municipalities lack independent authority, and the functional branches of the centre exert greater influence in most cases than the mayors and their councils.

Although the role of both governments in the initial development of Eilat and Aqaba was invaluable and in fact the main cause of the growth of the towns, many of their decisions, investment and initiatives gave clear priority to foreign, national and security interests rather than to local needs. Hardly any enterprise could have been expected to prosper in Eilat or Aqaba without the active support of government approval, which could only be obtained from Amman, Jerusalem or Tel Aviv.

In many cases, central institutions' knowledge of local needs was rather abstract and superficial. Control from afar often showed lack of coordination at local level, with virtually any local conflict of interest being referred to higher regional and mostly central levels. Local issues were relegated to the insensitive hand of bureaucracy, which in many cases failed to appreciate local needs or was too slow to respond to pressing problems. Perhaps the best example in both towns is the case of housing. Eilat, regardless of its harsh environmental conditions and isolation from the rest of Israel, was designated as merely another link in the development town programme in Israel. It witnessed a massive construction programme of uniform houses which lacked imagination and provided inadequate accommodation. These later became slums, requiring heavy investment as part of the "Neighbourhoods Renewal Programme" (Technion, 1982). Similar trends appeared in Aqaba; following Amman's late reaction to the necessity of constructing new houses following the growth of the port and industry in the late 1970s, Aqaba also witnessed the mass construction of uniform housing. In both towns, social and health services also lagged behind the development of these services in more central areas of the country. To sum up this part, I would note that both towns were subject to excessive control by their respective centres in a system which clearly favours the institutionalised central parties and inhibits the expression of local interests.

This state of affairs remained largely unchanged until the late 1970s. But following the crisis period in Eilat the similarity was gradually reduced. The emergence of regionalism and protest elsewhere in Israel (Lehman and Wilzig, 1982; Gradus, 1983) was reflected in Eilat. The consolidation of tourism strengthened the local municipality that had since the late 1970s been mounting pressure for greater autonomy and access to political power. Local protests were reported in the Israeli media and delegations travelled to Jerusalem to petition Knesset members. There were fierce demonstrations and local independent political parties gained a powerful majority in the municipal election. At the same time Jerusalem was unable to provide an adequate solution to the growing economic crisis in Eilat, short of heavily subsidising non-profitable economic activity (Timna, more traffic via the port) or risking mass migration from the town. This meant that it could no longer ignore local demands for greater access to political power. Thus did Eilat's municipality gradually begin to acquire control over the institutional set-up. It has managed to become the main integrative force in the town, and started to play a greater role in decision-making and the management of local affairs. In a few cases it has altered government plans and implemented them according to local needs. On the other hand, few changes have occurred in the political relationship between Aqaba and Amman. Although the ARA was established as a regional authority, with the aim of increasing political decentralisation, it has proved to be just a different method for Amman to implement national policy at regional level. It does not reflect greater participation of the local municipality in the decision-making process and its policy is mainly decided in Amman. Yet it should be said that the ARA did provide new momentum to Aqaba's urban growth and showed greater concern for local problems.

## **10.5 Conclusions**

This study of the urban development of Eilat and Aqaba contains two major elements. First it has provided a comparative political-geographical analysis of the establishment and development of two small urban centres at the southernmost point of Israel and Jordan from the early days of national independence to the late 1980s. The subject of small towns in Israel, Jordan and the Middle East as a whole, particularly with reference to the role of politics in their growth and current development, has been largely neglected in contemporary academic studies

and official planning documents. The relationship between international politics and the urbanisation process of small towns is virtually absent from such studies anywhere in the world. The largely empirical element in this work on two urban centres at a detailed level of enquiry has provided the basis for a critical discussion of one aspect of urban development in the Middle East while the provision of a detailed study of the towns' development was an important objective in itself.

The second major element of the work is its use of a variety of techniques to furnish comparative and critical analyses of specific aspects of Israeli and Jordanian policy regarding urban development in their peripheral regions. Many of the theoretical points considered in the introduction are developed within the context of this second element which provides explanatory insights into two essential aspects of Middle Eastern urban development: the role of politics in urban development, and the spatial location of decision-making power with regard to urban development in Israel and Jordan.

This study shows that national and international political factors have played a vital role in the development of Eilat and Aqaba. From the early Zionist struggle to include Eilat within the future Jewish state, which in itself was generated by political considerations, throughout the development of the two towns, most of the key decisions and initiatives regarding the urban and economic development of Eilat and Aqaba were motivated more by political events than by economic reasons. In some cases development initiatives were imposed on the towns in order to address national needs, rather than reflecting any pre-planned programme designed to meet local needs. Therefore the growth of these towns should be viewed within the context of local, regional, national and international political development in Israel, Jordan and beyond.

Two examples taken from the main body of this work will illustrate this conclusion, one being the case of the oil ports. No plan to construct an oil port in Eilat existed before 1956. However, after Iran became Israel's only source of oil, the establishment of such a port was seen as an urgent national necessity. Eilat provided the only reasonable location (the other option was to round Africa to reach Israel's Mediterranean ports). Relations between the oil port and town were limited to essential requests relating to port operation with most of the

administrative control located in Tel Aviv. Likewise, it is doubtful whether an oil port would have been constructed in Aqaba should Iraq not have desperately needed an alternative route for its oil export during its war with Iran.

A similar picture emerges in the case of the general cargo ports. For Jordan, developing its port in Aqaba was the country's only guarantee of an independent outlet to the sea after losing its access via Haifa and Jaffa following the 1948 war with Israel and experiencing a vulnerable dependence for its international trade on roads and ports via Syria and Lebanon. The two booms that the ports experienced due to the reopening of the Suez Canal and the Iran-Iraq War further consolidate my conclusion. For Israel, establishing a port in Eilat meant by-passing the Egyptian ban on use of the Suez Canal and taking the opportunity to develop trade links with Asia, East Africa and Australia. In addition, the development of the port and consequently of Eilat meant also the development of key settlements in the Negev as part of the national effort to secure sovereignty over the south. However, the reopening of the Suez Canal to all non-Israeli shipping in 1975 (including cargo bound to/from Israel), and to Israeli navigation in 1979, together with new national priorities in Israel following the peace accord with Egypt, led to a decline in the port's role in the Israeli economy as volumes of cargo that would previously have gone via Eilat were now transferred via the Suez Canal to Ashdod and Haifa. The contribution of each port to its town (regardless of quantitative differences resulting from size) and the political factors behind their development further supports the conclusion that in several cases local development was largely a result of national priorities and when these declined so did the port's development.

The importance of considering political factors, especially those on an international level, when studying the urban development of small towns in the Middle East may be further substantiated in view of their critical role in the case of two neighbouring towns with a similar geographical setting, but within different political, cultural and economic systems.

This work has shown that political factors, particularly international ones, have also had an important influence on decisions regarding the two towns. Amman, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, the centres of economic and political power in Jordan and Israel, have been at the core of decision-making and planning and development

initiatives in Aqaba and Eilat. By means of a centralised and unitary top-down political system, devoid of a territorial dimension, and by control from afar, mainly by using budgetary means and a licensing system, both governments maintained control over local planning and development.

In view of the political influence on development in Eilat and Aqaba, it will be inadequate in this case to remain within the framework of the nation state and confine my discussion as to whether decisions were made at the centre or the periphery. This could lead to a distorted conclusion regarding the spatial base of decision-making and an inadequate appreciation for the main reason behind the decision-making process. In a number of cases, I would question whether Jerusalem and Amman were really responsible for the initiatives, or whether external forces "made the decision" for them. In some cases the exact location of these "deterministic external forces" could not be identified in a particular spatial location, as it was a combination of a sequence of events in the international arena, together with events at national level, that led to such decisions. For example, the Israeli government's decision to allow charter flights to land in Eilat should be explained in view of the crisis in tourism following the 1973 War, the fall in world copper prices leading to the closure of the Timna mine, and the gloomy prospects for the port following the reopening of the Suez Canal, all of which endangered the government by threatening Eilat with total collapse. In addition this would have been a severe blow to the Labour-led government's policy regarding Israel's development towns, which in the late 1970s was under growing criticism (Karmon, 1979; Gradus, 1983; Efrat, 1984, 1987). At the same time growing demand in Europe for sun and sea holidays, especially during the winter, made Eilat a desirable destination for European tour operators. Therefore Jerusalem's decision to allow the arrival of charter flights in Eilat was in fact the most reasonable option under the circumstances.

In other cases, the origin and location of such decisions may be more clearly identified. For example, should the Israeli or the Jordanian government be regarded as the main power behind the decision to build an oil port in Eilat or Aqaba, or were they only a "link" in a decision that filtered down from above, namely from the international level? Although undoubtedly the actual decision to construct these ports came from Jerusalem and Amman, their role was that of an intermediary

which was merely responding to unavoidable pressures. The oil ports may be considered in this category. It was Moscow's anti-Israeli policy that pushed Rumania into cutting off its oil supply to Israel and Teheran's decision to sell oil to Israel that left the Israeli government with little option but to make the decision to construct an oil port in Eilat. The construction of the oil port in Aqaba should be mainly attributed to a decision which was made in Baghdad due to its war with Iran, and trickled down via Amman to Aqaba.

This work has also demonstrated that since the early 1980s, following the crisis in Eilat, Jerusalem's centralist control over most local affairs has weakened, with more political power being given to Eilat. In this case too I would suggest that the trend towards political decentralisation is related to the third stage of Friedmann's theory (1966), which advises that any move towards a balanced relationship between the periphery and the centre should be regarded as a consequence of political factors. In this case I would suggest that the realisation in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv for the need to disperse authority and decision-making power to Eilat was to a large extent forced upon the centre. In view of Eilat's growing distress during the late 1970s, and the failure of central government to provide Eilat with an adequate solution, the credibility of the government and the central political institutions in Israel as a whole were at a very low ebb. This may be partly illustrated by the strong majority won by local independent parties in the municipal election. Furthermore, political events of the 1970s left tourism as the only economic sector that could revive development, especially in view of the success of charter package holidays. Jerusalem's failure to create a substantial improvement in tourism was offset by the growing involvement and investment by foreign companies in Eilat, which by providing their rich international experience in the industry further emphasised the government's poor policy toward tourism. Moreover, investors such as David Lewis or Ladbroke were very unenthusiastic about accepting top-down control from Jerusalem and the unavoidable struggle with the Israeli bureaucratic system. This left Jerusalem with little choice but to enable local bodies to take greater responsibility and assume decision-making powers. Thus the trend towards political decentralisation should be regarded as practically inescapable should Jerusalem/Tel Aviv wish to attract more investment and new initiatives to Eilat. The fact that tourism has proved to be the vital factor in resuming local development and has become the mainstay of the town's economy has led to greater demands for

political and decision-making power in other aspects of local life.

This work has shown that, despite the limitations of the core-periphery concept, the model can serve as a viable and convenient framework for a general and comparative study of urban development in the case of small towns in isolated areas, and of their interaction with political factors. In this case I have added a number of external factors and variables, including international perspectives and a study of the spatial base of decision-making. The fact that it has served as a useful framework in the case of Eilat and Aqaba which represent two different political, social and cultural systems further supports this conclusion. From a different perspective, the core-periphery notion has emerged as a useful tool in conducting comparative studies in cases which may initially appear to offer little basis for comparison.

In fact, it emerges that despite the evident differences between the Israeli and Jordanian political systems, and the very basic differences between a democracy and an absolute monarchy with an extremely limited democratic structure, both governments' policies and means of control regarding the development of Eilat and Aqaba reveal many similarities from a theoretical point of view. Despite my criticism of both governments' excessive control over these towns, which points to the necessity of granting greater political and decision-making power to local bodies, I would note that the centralist, top-down system in Jordan and Israel has played an invaluable role in Aqaba and Eilat's early development and subsequent growth.

To conclude this work I will refer to Chapter 9, which reveals the relatively greater degree of rapprochement and cooperation between Israel and Jordan which has taken place in the Eilat and Aqaba area. This may have occurred due to the rule of fear or a sincere desire for peace, in view of the similar natural conditions in both towns, the mutual environmental problems that had to be tackled together, or the recognition by both towns of their shared vulnerability to hostile activity in the area. If further steps toward peace are possible, the Eilat and Aqaba area is an ideal region for a small but constructive and significant step towards peace in the Middle East; the process that began at Camp David may continue in the relationship between these two towns, with such cooperation being of benefit to

both. Today perhaps more than ever, if there is to be any resolution, or further step toward peace, the region of Eilat and Aqaba seems to be a most appropriate area for future cooperation between the two towns which can bring economic and cultural benefits to both towns and both states. Against the backdrop of the uprising in the occupied territories, this work highlights the possibilities of a different way and shows that there is an alternative to violence in the Middle East.



## Notes for Chapter 10

1. Interview with Abu Nuwwar and Shammout. This was also expressed by senior managers in Dar Al-Handasah during an interview in London (December, 1988).
2. Interviews with Abu Nuwwar and Qutatseh.
3. There are eight Kibbutzim and Moshavim in an area of between 40 to 70 km north of Eilat. Many cultivate vegetables and fruit (mainly melons) for export to Europe. They all have little contact with Eilat.
4. According to information provided by the Zion cable factory and the salt factory in Eilat. Exact figures were not available.
5. Despite the differences within Israeli society between 'Ashkenazim' and 'Sefharadim' with regard to tourism, both communities can be included within the category of "liberal western-oriented society".
6. The three settlements: Nevi'ot in Nuweiba, Di-Zahav in Dahab and Ofira in Sharm el-Sheikh were established in the late 1960s and later evacuated when Israel withdrew from Sinai.
7. It should be noted that excursions to Sinai and the Coral Island, based on similar tours from Eilat, have recently been offered to tourists in Aqaba, yet are operated only by special request.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### SECTION A

- AAREBROT, F. H. (1982) 'Norway': Centre and Periphery in a Peripheral State. In: Rokkan, S. Urwin, D. A. (eds) The Politics of Territorial Identity: Study of Development in the European Peripheries. Saga, London.
- ABRAHANIAN, E. (1982) Iran Between Two Revolutions. Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- ABU-IYAD. (1978) My Home, My Land. Yessod, Tel-Aviv. (Hebrew)
- ABU JABER, K. (1980) The Jordanian and the People of Jordan. Royal Scientific Society Press, Amman.
- ABU-JABER, K. SHIMIZU, M. (1984) Economic Potentialities of Jordan. Institute of Developing Economies, Tokyo.
- ABU-LUGHOD, J. (1984) Culture, Mode of Production and the Changing Nature of Cities in the Arab World. In: Agnew, D. et. al. (eds) The city in culture context. London.
- ABUNAFEESA, A. Y. E. (1984) The Post-1970 Political Geography of the Red Sea Region with Special Reference to United States Interests. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Department of Geography, University of Durham.
- ADELMAN, A. (1972) The World Petroleum Market. John Hopkins University.
- ADMIRALTY, ENGLAND. (1944) Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden Pilot. Hydrographic department, London.
- AGNEW, J. A. (1981) Structural and Dialectical Theories of Political Regionalism. In: Burnett, A. D. and Taylor, P. J. (eds) Political Studies From Spatial Perspectives. John Wiley, Chichester, Sussex.
- AHARONI, Y. (1963) Eilat and the Negev Roads in the Biblical Period. In: Eilat. The Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- AHRONI, Y. (1976) Structure and Performance in the Israeli Economy. Chirecover, Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- ALDEN, H. V. (1980) Moscow Abandons Israel for the Arabs: Ten Crucial Years in the Middle East. University Press of America, New York.
- ALIBONI, R. (1985) The Red Sea Region. Croom Helm, London.
- AMIRAN, A. SHACHAR, A. (1969) Development towns in Israel. The Hebrew University, Jerusalem.
- ARBEL, N. (1974) Eilat, Roots on the Red Sea. Peli Press, Tel Aviv.

- AROCH, S. KOCHVAH, A (1979) The Eilat-Ashkelon Oil Pipeline. In: Shmueli, A. Gradus, Y. (eds) The Land of the Negev, Man and Desert. Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- ARONOFF, M. J. (1973) Development Towns in Israel. In: Curtis, M. Chertoff, M. (eds) Social Structure and Change. New Brunswick, New Jersey.
- ARONOFF, M. J. (1980) Centre-Periphery Relationships in the Israeli Labour Party. In: Marx, E (ed) A Composite Portrait of Israel. Academic Press, London.
- ASHBEL, D. (1963) The Climate of Eilat. In: Eilat, The Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- ARONSON, G. (1989) Israel, Palestinians and the Intifada. Kegan Paul International, London.
- ARURI, N. H. (1973) Jordan: A Study in Political Development. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- AVI-YONAH, M. (1963) Eilat as the Gate to the Indian Ocean. In: Eilat, The Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- AVIZOHAR, M. (1974) Rebirth. In: Israel Magazine, Vol. 6, Tel Aviv.
- AYALON, A. (1975) The Bab El Mandeb Straits. Unpublished M.A. thesis. Department of Middle East, Tel Aviv University. (Hebrew)
- AZAR, A. A. MCLAURIN, R. D. (1978) Demographic Changes and Political Changes: Population Pressures and Territorial Control. In: International Interactions 5. Nos 2 and 3.
- BAILEY, C. (1984) Jordan's Palestinian Challenge 1948-1983. Westview Press, Colorado.
- BARKER, A. J. (1980) Arab Israeli Wars. Accan Ian, London.
- BEAUMONT, P. BLAKE, G. WAGSTAFF, M. J. (1988) The Middle East. David Fulton Publishers, London.
- BEHIRY, S. A. (1969) The Port Town of Aqaba, Jordan. In: Quarterly Journal of the Natural Resources Authority. Vol. 1. Amman.
- BEIN, A. (1934) Herzl Negotiation with the Government of Great Britain on the El-Arish Question. In: Bein, A. (ed) Teodor Herzl. Vienna.
- BEN-GURION, D. (1963) The Vision of Eilat. In: Eilat. The Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem, Israel. (Hebrew)
- BEN-TOR, J. K. (1963) Notes on the Geological History of the Eilat Region. In: Eilat. The Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem, Israel. (Hebrew)
- BERLER, A. (1970) New Towns in Israel. Jerusalem.

- BIRD, J. (1971) Seaports and Seaport Terminals. Hutchinson University Library, London.
- BLAKE, G. (1980) The Small Town. In: Blake, G. Lawless, R. I. (eds) The Changing Middle Eastern City. Harper & Row Publishers Inc. London.
- BLAKE, G. LAWLESS, R. I. (1980) The Urban Future. In: Blake, G. Lawless, R. I. (eds) The Changing Middle Eastern City. Harper & Row Publishers Inc. London.
- BLOOMFIELD, L. M. (1957) Egypt Israel and the Gulf of Aqaba. The Carswell Company Limited, Toronto.
- BLUM, Y. Z. (1965) Historical Titles in International Law. The Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, The Hague.
- BLUM, Y. Z. (1971) Secured Boundaries and Middle East Peace. Faculty of Law, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
- BRASLAVY, J. (1963) The Tarshish Ships, Etzion Geber and the Ophir Sailing. In: Eilat. The Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem 1963, Israel. (Hebrew)
- BRAWER, M. (1986) Dissimilarities in the Evolution of Frontier Characteristics Along Boundaries of Differing Political and Cultural Regions. In: Waterman, S. Kliot, N. (eds) Pluralism and Political Geography. London.
- BRITISH ADMIRALTY. (1944) Handbook for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aqaba. London.
- BRODT, D. (1973) Economic Planning. In: Brodt, D. (ed) Israel Economy. Keter Books, Jerusalem.
- CASTELLS, E. (1977) The Urban Question. London: Edward Arnold.
- CHATELUS, M. (1987) Reinter or Producer Economy in the Middle East? The Jordanian Response. In: Khader, B. Badran, A. (eds). The Economic Development of Jordan. Croom Helm, London.
- CLAVEL, P. (1980) Centre/Periphery and Space, Models in Political Geography. In: Gottmann, J. Centre and Periphery. Saga, London.
- CLEMENT, A. (1974) Eilat the Southern Gateway. In: Israel Magazine, Vol. 6, March, Tel Aviv.
- COATS, B. E. JOHNSTON, R. J. KNOX, P. L. (1977). Geography and Inequality. Oxford University Press.
- COHEN, B. S. (1964) Geography and Politics in a Divided World. Methuen, London.

- COHEN, E. (1970) Development Towns - The Social Dynamics of "Planted" Urban Community in Israel. In: Eisenstadt, S. N. et al Integration and Development in Israel. Tel Aviv.
- COHEN, S. (1975) Red Sea Diver's Guide. Tel Aviv.
- COOPER, C. SIDNEY, A. (1971) Economic Development and Population Growth in the Middle East. New-York, American Elsevier Publishers.
- COSTELLO, V. F. (1977) Urbanisation in the Middle East. Cambridge University Press.
- COUPER, A. L. (1972) The Geography of Sea Transport. London.
- CROSBIE, S. K. (1974) A Tacit Alliance. Princeton, New Jersey.
- CURTIS, M. (1978) Comparative Government and Politics. Harper & Row, Publishers, San Francisco, London.
- DAJANI, A. (1981) The Port of Aqaba. In: Middle East Forum, No. 55-6, December 1981.
- DAN, U. (1976) Arab Terrorist Acts Against Israel. Massada, Ramat Gan. (Hebrew)
- DAR EL-HANDASAH. (1978) Industrial and Tourism Development in Aqaba. Report to the Jordanian Government. (unpublished)
- DEAR, M. (1981) A Theory of the Local State. In: Burnett, A. D. Taylor, P. J. (eds) Political Studies from spatial Perspectives. Wiley, Chichester.
- DEARDEN, A. (1958) Jordan. Robert Hall Limited, London.
- DECTER, M. (1977) To Serve, To Teach, To Leave, The Story of Israel's Development Assistance Programme in Black Africa. New York.
- DE KADT, E. (1979) Tourism Passport to Development. Oxford University Press.
- DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS. (1988) Twelve Flags Kingdom - A Biblical Voyage. (Project plan), Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- DRAPER, T. (1968) Israel and World Politics: Roots of the Third Arab - Israeli War. Viking Press, New York.
- DRYSDALE, A. (1987) Political conflict and Jordanian Access to the Sea. In: The Geographical Review, Vol. 77. No. 1. January 1987.
- DRYSDALE, A. BLAKE, G. (1985) The Middle East and North Africa, A Political Geography. Oxford University Press, New York.

- DUNCAN, J. LEY, D. (1982) Structural Marxism and Human Geography: A Critical Assessment. In: Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 72:30-59.
- EFRAT, E. (1979) Elements of Urban Geography. Achiasaf, Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- EFRAT, E. (1984) Geography and Politics in Israel. Achiasaf, Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- EFRAT, E. (1984A) Urbanisation in Israel. Croom Helm, London.
- EFRAT, E. (1987) Development Towns in Israel, Past or Future? Aciasaf, Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- EISENSTADT, S. N. et al (1970) The Process of Absorption of New Immigrants in Israel. In: Eisenstadt, S. N. et al Integration and Development in Israel. Tel Aviv.
- ELATH, E. (1967) Israel and Eilat: the Political struggle for the Inclusion of Eilat in the Jewish State. Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London.
- ELATH, E. (1971) Israel and Eilat. Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- ELAZAR, D. J. (1977) The Compound Structure of Public Service Delivery Systems in Israel. In: Ostrum, V. Pennel Bish, F. (eds) Structure and Performance. Sage, Beverly Hills.
- EL-BADRI, H. (1984) Local Conflicts in the Red Sea and their Implications Over the Last Two Decades. In: Farid, M. A. (ed) The Red Sea. Croom Helm, London.
- EL-EDROOS, B. S. A. (1980) The Hashemite Arab Army 1908-1979: An Appreciation and Analysis of Military Operations. Amman: The Publishing Committee.
- ENDED, E. SOFFER, A. (1986) A Model of New Neighbourhoods in Arab Villages in Northern Israel. Department of Geography, University of Haifa. (Hebrew)
- ERHEIL, S. H. (1985) Trend and Patterns in International Tourism in Jordan. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Department of Geography, University of Cincinnati, U.S.A.
- ESHETT, H. (1986) Power and Authority. Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- ETHEL, M. (1965) The Lovely Land. Hutchinson of London.
- FARID, M. A. (1984) The Red Sea: Prospect for Stability. In: Farid, M. A. (ed) The Red Sea. Croom Helm, London.
- FEIN, L. (1970) The Centres of Power. In: Eisenstadt, S. N. et al Integration and Development in Israel. Tel Aviv.

- FIELDEN, D. G. (1978) The Political Geography of the Red Sea. Occasional Publications (New Series) No. 13, Department of Geography, University of Durham.
- FINDLAY, A. M. (1980) Migration in Space: Immobility in Society. In: Blake, G. Lawless, R. I. (eds) The Changing Middle Eastern City. Harper & Row Publishers Inc. London.
- FRANK, A. G. (1978) Dependent Accumulation and Underdevelopment. MacMillan, New-York.
- FREEDMAN. O. R. (1982) Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Since 1970. Praeger, New York.
- FRIEDMANN, J. (1966) Regional Development Policy: A Case study of Venezuela. M.I.T. Press.
- FRIEDMANN, J. (1972) A Generalized Theory of Polarized Development. In: Hansen, N. M. (ed) Growth Centres in regional economic development. The Free Press, New York.
- FRIEDMANN, J. (1973) Urbanization, Planning, and National Development. Sage Publication, London.
- FRIEDMANN, J. WEAVER, C. (1979) Territory and Function: the Evolution of Regional Planning. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- FRISCH, W. R. (1955) Frontiers of a Nation. London.
- FUNNELL, D. C. (1976) The Role of Small Service Centres in Regional Rural Development: With Special reference to Eastern Africa. In: Gilbert, A. (ed) Development Planning and Spatial Structure. John Wiley & Sons, London.
- GAVRIEL, K. N. (1980) The Role of Eilat Port in the Israeli trade with Asian and African Countries. Unpublished M.A. thesis. Department of Geography, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- GIDRON, E. (1973) Big Increase in Tourist Revenue, Special Report: Israel. Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- GIHON, M. (1963) The "Limes Palaestinae" in the Time of Diocletianus. In: Eilat. The Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem (1963), Israel. (Hebrew)
- GILLICK, A. (1974) Oscar Friedman. In: Israel Magazine, Vol. 6, Tel Aviv.
- GLUECK, N. (1959) River on the Desert. New York.
- GLUECK, N. (1963) Eilat and Etzion Geber. In: Eilat. The Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem (1963), Israel. (Hebrew)
- GRADUS, Y. (1983) Politics and Regional Inequality in Israeli. In: Ofakim B'Geography. Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)

- GRADUS, Y. (1988) The Israel-Jordan Rift Valley Initiative: A Proposal. Beersheba.
- GRADUS, Y. EINY, Y. (1981) Trends in Core-Periphery Industrialization Gaps in Israel. In: Geographical Research Forum, No. 3:25-37.
- GRADUS, Y. KRAKOVER, S. (1977) The Effect of government Policy on the Spatial Structure of Manufacturing in Israel. In: Journal of Developing Areas, 11:393-409.
- GRADUS, Y. STERN, E. (1980) Changing Strategies of Development: Toward a Regiopolis in the Negev Desert. In: Journal of the American Planning Association, 46:410-23.
- GUBSER, P. (1973) Politics and Change in Al-Karak, Jordan. Oxford University Press, London.
- GUBSER, P. (1983) Jordan, Crossroad of Middle East Events. Croom Helm, London.
- GURR, T. R. KING, D. D. (1987) The State and the City. Macmillan, London.
- GUTTMANN, J. (1980) Confronting Centre and Periphery. In: Guttman, J. (ed) Centre and Periphery. Saga, London.
- HAMMAD, K. (1987) The Role of Foreign Aid in the Jordanian Economy. In: Khader B. and Badran A. (eds) (1987) The Economic Development of Jordan. Croom Helm, England.
- HANSEN, N. M. (1981) Development From Above: the Centre-Down Development Paradigm. In: Stohr, W. B. Taylor, R. F. (eds) Development From Above or Below. Wiley, New York.
- HAR-EL, M. (1970) The Gulf of Eilat and its Treasures. Am-Oved, Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- HARRIS, G. L. (1958) Jordan, its Peoples, its Society, its Culture. John Calder LTD. London.
- HASSAN, His Royal Highness. (1987) Introductory Address. In: Khader B. and Badran A. (eds) (1987) The Economic Development of Jordan. Croom Helm, England.
- HECHTER, M. (1975) Internal Colonialism. Routledge and Kegan Paul, Oxon.
- HERSHLAG, Z. H. (1970) Israel Africa Cooperation. Tel Aviv University.
- HERZOG, C. (1982) The Arab Israeli Wars. Random House, New York.
- HELLER, M. A. et al (1985) The Middle East Military Balance. (eds) Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University.



- HEWIDI, A. (1984) Egyptian Policy in the Red Sea. In: Farid, A.M. (ed) The Red Sea: Prospects for Stability. Croom Helm, London.
- HEYD, U. (1963) The Gulf of Eilat Crisis of 1906. In: Eilat. The Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- HINDLE, P. (1966) Aqaba: An Old Port Revived. In: The Geographical Journal, Vol. 132:64-68.
- HIRSCHMAN, A. O. (1958) The Strategy of Economic Development. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- HOADE, E. (1954) East of the Jordan. Franciscan Printing Press.
- HOROWITZ, D. et al (1973) Economic Development. In: Horowitz, D. et al Israel, Economy. Keter Books, Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- HUGH, P. ROBERTS, P. (1979) An Urban Profile of the Middle East. Croom Helm, London.
- IBRD. (1957) The Economic Development of Jordan. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore.
- IBRD. (1965) Jordan, Special Report. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, New-York.
- IBRD. (1983) Azraq Water Supply Project. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, New York.
- JAWAD, A. (1983) Jordan Development; Challenge and Response. Amman. (Arabic)
- JOHNSTON, R. J. (1982) Geography and State, An Assay in Political Geography. Mecomillan, London.
- JUREDINI, P. MCLOURIN, R. (1984) Jordan. The Washington Paper/108, New York.
- JUREIDINI, P. WILLIAM, E. H. (1971) Six Clashes: An Analysis of the Relationship Between the Palestinian Guerrilla Movement and the Government of Jordan and Lebanon. American Institute for Research, Kensington, Maryland.
- DETLEF, K. H. SWAN, J. P. (eds) (1984) Equity with Growth ? Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand.
- KAM, A. (1968) My War with Israel. Ministry of Defence, Tel-Aviv. (Hebrew)
- KANOVSKY, E. (1976-77) Major Trends in Middle East Economic Development. In: Legum, C. (ed) Middle East Contemporary Survey, Vol. 1. The Shiloah Institute for Middle Eastern and African Studies. Tel Aviv University, Holmes and Meier Publishers, London/New York.

- KARMON, Y. (1963) The Geographical Conditions of Eilat as factors in its Development. In: Eilat. The Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- KARMON, Y. (1971) Israel: A Regional Geography. Croom Helm, London.
- KARMON, Y. (1976) Eilat, Problems of a Port on a Desert Coast. In: Geography in Israel. A Collection of Papers offered to the 23th International Geographical Congress U.S.S.R. July-August (special publication). Jerusalem.
- KARMON, Y. (1979) Eilat. In: Shmueli, A. Gradus, Y. (eds) The Land of the Negev, Man and Desert. Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- KARMON, Y. (1980) Ports Around the World. Crown Publishers Inc. New York.
- KARTIN, A. (1987) Changes in Settlement Pattern in Jordan in View of Palestinian Migration, 1948-1967. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Department of Geography, Tel-Aviv University. (Hebrew)
- KATZ, G. (1974) Me and Eilat. In: Israel Magazine, Vol. 6, March, Tel Aviv.
- KEDOURIE, E. (1969) Pan Arabism and British Policy. In: The Political Quarterly, Vol. 28 No. 2. The Chatham House Version.
- KENAAN, H. (1958) Bezet Hbritim. Sifre Gadish, Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- KIRKBRIDE, A. (1956) A Crackle of Thorns. John-Murray, London.
- KIRKBRIDE, A. (1976) From the Wings. Frank Cass, London.
- KHADER, B. (1987) Targets and Achievements of Jordan's Last Five Year Plans, 1976-1980 and 1981-1985: A Summary. In: Khader B. and Badran A. (eds) The Economic Development of Jordan. Croom Helm, London.
- KHADER, B. BADRAN, A. (eds) (1987) The Economic Development of Jordan. Croom Helm, London.
- KHOVRI, F. J. (1977) The Arab Israeli Dilemma. N.Y. University Press. New York.
- KNIGHT, D. (1982) Identity and Territory: Geographical Perspectives on Nationalism and Regionalism. In: Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol 72.
- KORINMAN, M. (1987) International Geopolitical Analysis. In: Girot, P. Kofman, E. (eds) International Geopolitical Analysis. Croom Helm, London.
- KRAKOVER, S. (1984) The Effect of Government Policy on the Spatial Structure of Manufacturing in Israel. In: City and Region. Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- LANG, H. (1981) The Tourist Potential of Aqaba as a Winter Resort. Mimeo. (German)

- LAPIDOTH, E. R. (1975) Freedom of Navigation with Special Reference to International Waterways in the Middle East. In: Jerusalem Papers on Peace Problems. The Hebrew University, The Jerusalem Post Press, Jerusalem.
- LAPIDOTH, E. R. (1982) The Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, The Hague.
- LAWRENCE, T. E. (1935) Seven Pillars of Wisdom. Penguin Books, London.
- LAZIN, F. (1982) Problems of Implementing Social Welfare Policy. In: Social science review, 56:292-310.
- LEHMAN-WILZIG, S. N. (1982) Public Protests Against Central and Local Government in Israel, 1950-1979. In: The Jewish Journal of Sociology, 24:99-115.
- LEVINSON, Y. (1961) Eilat. Mharachot, Tel Aviv.
- LISSAK, M. (1969) Social Mobility in Israeli Society. Israel University Press, Jerusalem.
- LISSAK, M. (1970) Centralisation Trend in the Israeli Political System. In: Eisenstadt, S. N. et al (ed) Integration and Development in Israel. Tel Aviv.
- LISSAK, M. GUTMAN, E. (1971) Political Institutions and Processes in Israel. The Hebrew University, Jerusalem.
- LLOYDS BANK PLC. (1986) Jordan, Economic Report 1986. Lloyds Bank PLC, London.
- LUCAS, N. (1984) Israeli Policy in the Red Sea. In: Farid, A. M. (ed) The Red Sea. Croom Helm, London.
- LUNT, J. (1984) Glub Pasha, A Biography. Harvill Press, London.
- MAC DONALD, J. C. (1951) My Mission in Israel 1948-1951. Simon and Schaster, New York.
- MARSTON, G. (1984) Potential Legal Problems in the Red Sea. In: Farid, M. A. (ed) The Red Sea. Croom Helm, London.
- MASSEY, D. (1979) In What Sense A Regional Problem ? In: Regional Studies, 13:233-243.
- MATLEY, M. I. (1976) The Geography of International Tourism. Washington.
- MAZOR, P. M. (1979) Economic Growth and Development in Jordan. Croom Helm, London.
- McCLULLIN, D. (1983) Beirut: A City in Crisis. Sevenoaks, New English Library.
- MELAMID A. (1957) The Political Geography of the Gulf of Aqaba. In: Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol. 37:231-240.

- MERHAV, M. (ed) (1986) Middle east Regional Cooperation in the Use of Energy Resources Under Peace. The Armand Hammer Fund for Economic Cooperation in the Middle East. Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv.
- MERHAV, M. (ed) (1986A) The Research Project for Economic cooperation in the Middle East: An Overview. The Armand Hammer Fund for Economic Cooperation in the Middle East. Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv.
- MERHAV, M. (ed) (1987) Cooperation in the Tourist Industry in the Middle East. The Armand Hammer Fund for Economic Cooperation in the Middle East. Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv.
- MISHAL, S. (1974) The Conflict Between the East and the West Bank Under the Jordanian Rule (1949-1967) and its Implication on the Political System in Jordan. Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- MISHALI, D. (1979) The Negev as a Continental Bridge - Past, Present and Future. In: Shmueli, A. Gradus, Y. (eds) (1979) The Land of the Negev. Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- MOSTYN, T. (1983) Jordan, A MEED Practical Guide. MEED Ltd., London.
- MURTI B. S. N. (1967) The Legal Status of the Gulf of Aqaba. In: Indian Journal of International Law, 7, 204.
- MUZAR, M. B. STRAUSS, S. (1977) The Suez Canal - Historical, Economical and Legal Review in the Light of its Reopening. Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv.
- MYRDAL, G. M. (1957) Economic Theory and Underdeveloped Regions. Gerald Duckworth, London.
- NACDIMON, S. (1985) Tamus in Flames. Maariv, Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- NAHAMAN, H. (1942) Abdullah - Transjordan Emir. Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- NAVAL INTELLIGENCE DIVISION REPORT. (1943) Palestine and Transjordan. British Naval, Admiralty, London.
- NEUMANN, G. R. (1986) Foreword, in: SATLOFF. R. B. (1986) Troubles on the East Bank. Prueger, New York.
- NEWMAN, D. and APPLEBAUM, L. (1989) Defining the Rurban Settlement: Planning Models and Functional Realities in Israel. In: Urban Geography, (1989), 10, 3:281-295.
- NIEMEYER, O. (1963) Report on Eilat. Eilat. (unpublished)
- NUTTING, A. (1961) Lawrence of Arabia, The Man and the Motive. Hollis & Carter, London.
- NYROP, R. (1980) Jordan, A Country Study. Washington D.C. Foreign Area Studies Division. The American University. Washington.

- OBUDHO, R. A. (1984) Planning From Below: The Role of Small Urban Centres in Spatial Development in East Africa. In: KAMMEIER, H. D. and SWAN, J. P. (eds) (1984) Equity with Growth ? Asian institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand.
- ODED, A. (1987) Africa and the Middle East Conflict. London.
- OSBORNE, C. (1981) An Insight and Guide to Jordan. Longman, England.
- O'SULLIVAN, P. MILLER, W. J. (1983) The Geography of Warfare. England.
- PATAI, R. (1958) The Kingdom of Jordan. Princeton, New Jersey.
- PATINKIN, D. (1960) Israel Economy in the First Decade. Jerusalem.
- PERETZ, C. (1988) The Palestinian Uprising. In: Kissinger, H. Vance, C. (eds) Foreign Affairs, Summer 1988, New York.
- PHILLIPS, P. G. (1954) The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan: Prolegomena to a Technical Assistance Program. Research Paper No. 34. Department of Geography, University of Chicago, Illinois.
- PLASCOV, A. (1981) The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957. London.
- POPULATION REFERENCE BUREAU. (1989) World Population Data Sheet. The World Bank, Washington D.C.
- POUNDS, N. (1959) A Free and Secure Access to the Sea. In: Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol. IL:256-268.
- POUNDS, N. (1963) Political Geography. McGraw-Hill, New York.
- PRAWER, Y. (1963) Sinai and the Red Sea in Crusader Policy. In: Elath. The Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem.
- PRED, A. R. (1973) Urban Growth and the Circulation of Information: The United States System of Cities, 1840-1973. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.
- PRIDGUT, C. (1968) Transit Cargoes Through Israel in Containers. Haifa. (Hebrew)
- PRI-GAL, Y. (1974) Timna. In: Israel Magazine, Vol. 6, March, Tel Aviv.
- RABINOVITCH, I. et. al. (1978) From June to October: The Middle East Between 1967-1973. New Jersey.
- RANDALL, R. (1968) Jordan and the Holy Land. Fredrick Muller, London.
- REECE, J. (1979) Internal Colonialism the Case of Brittany. In: Ethnic Race Studies, 2:275-292.

- REGLING, D. VOSS, R. (1963) The Railway to the Dead Sea. Kyklos Verlag Basel. Israel, Ministry of Transport. (Hebrew)
- REICHMAN, S. (1973) The Validity of the Plan for Geographical Distribution of Population in Israel. In: City and Region, 13:26-43. (Hebrew)
- REITSMA, H. J. A. (1982) Development Geography, Dependency Relation and the Capitalist Scapegoat. In: The Professional Geographer, 34:125-130.
- REPPA, R. B. (1974) Israel and Iran. Praeger Publishers, New York.
- RITTERBAND, E. C. (1984) Israel and Jordan: Peaceful Coexistence. In: Swiss Review of World Affairs, August, pp. 20-21.
- RIVIER, F. (1987) Jordan: A Disturbing dependence on a Deteriorating Regional Situation. In: Khader B. and Badran A. (eds) (1987) The Economic Development of Jordan. Croom Helm, England.
- ROBINSON, H. (1976) Geography of Tourism. London.
- RO'I, Y. (1973) The Soviet Union, Israel and the Arab Israeli Conflict. In: Confino, M. Shamir, S. (eds) The USSR and the Middle East. Israel University Press, Jerusalem.
- ROKKAN, S. (1980) Territories, Centres, and Peripheries: Toward A Geoethnic - Geoeconomic - Geopolitical Model of Differentiation Within Western Europe. In: Gottmann, J. (ed) Centre and Periphery Spatial Variation in Politics. Sage. Beverly Hills.
- ROSO, N. (1985) Economic Development Plan for Eilat. Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- SATLOFF, R. B. (1986) Troubles on the East Bank. Prueger, New York.
- SCHATTNER, I. (1963) The Morphology of the Eilat Mountains. In: Eilat. The Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- SCHLIEPHAKE, K. (1987) Jordan, The Geographic and Economic Potential. In: Khader B. and Badran A. (eds) The Economic Development of Jordan. Croom Helm, England.
- SECCOMBE, J. IAN. (1987) Labour Emigration and Economic Development in Jordan: From Unemployment to Labour Shortage. In: Khader B. and Badran A. (eds) The Economic Development of Jordan. Croom Helm, England.
- SEERS, D. (1979) The Periphery of Europe. In: Seers, D. Schaffer, B. and Kiljunen, M. (eds) Underdevelopment Europe: Studies in Core-Periphery Relations. The Harvester Press, Sussex.
- SELIKTOR, O. (1983) The New Zionism. In: Foreign Policy, No. 51:118-138.
- SHIMONI, Y. (1977) The Arab States: The Contemporary History and Politics. Am-Oved, Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)

- SHARON, A. (1951) Physical Planning in Israel. Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- SHARPE, L. J. (ed) (1979) Decentralist Trends in Western Democracies. Sage, Beverly Hills.
- SHACHAR, A. LIPSHITZ, G. (1981) Regional Inequalities in Israel. In: Environment and Planning, A 13:463-473.
- SHERMAN, A. (1977) Blue Skies Red Sea. Eden Books, Jerusalem. (Hebrew).
- SHERWOOD, F. P. (1969) Devolution as a problem of organisation strategy. In: Dalond, R. T. (ed) Comparative urban research. Sage, Beverly Hills.
- SHILS, E. (1961) Centre and Periphery. In: The Logic of Personal Knowledge: Essays in Honour of Michael Polanyi. The Free Press, New York.
- SHLAIM, A. (1984) The Unnecessary War, Israel Invasion to Lebanon 1982. Am Oved, Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- SHIMSHONI, D. (1982) Israeli Democracy. The Free Press, New York.
- SHMUELI, A. et al (1985) The 'Little Triangle' - Evolution of the Area. Department of Geography, University of Haifa. (Hebrew)
- SHMUELI, A. GRADUS, Y. (eds) The Land of the Negev, Man and Desert. Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- SHNEORSON, D. et al (1977) Trend in Israel Maritime Trade. The Israeli Research Institute for Maritime Transportation, Haifa.
- SHWARDRAN, B. (1959) Jordan, A State of Tension. Council for Middle Eastern Affairs Press, New York.
- SMITH, H. H. et al (1970) Area Handbook for Israel. Washington D.C.
- SNOW, P. (1972) Hussein A Biography. Barrie & Jenkins, London.
- SPARROW, G. J. (1961) Modern Jordan. George Allen and Urwin Ltd, London.
- SPENDER, J. A. (1923) The Life of the Hon. Sir Henry-Bannerman, G.C.B. II, Hodder and Stoughton, London.
- SPIEGEL, E. (1966) New towns in Israel. Karl Draemer Verlag, Stuttgart/Bern.
- STERN, E. HAYUTH, Y. (1984) Developmental Effect of Geopolitically Located Ports. In: Hoyle, B. S. Hilling, D. Seaport Systems and Spatial Change. John Wiley & Sons, New York.
- STOHR. W. B. TAYLOR, D. R. (1981) Development from Above or Below? The Dialectics of Regional Planning in Developing Countries. John Willey, New York.

- STUDENSKI, P. MART, P. R. (1941) Centralised vs Decentralized Government in Relation to Democracy. Columbia University Press New - York.
- SULLIVAN, B. M. (1987) Industrial Development in Jordan. In: Khader B. Badran A. (eds) The Economic Development of Jordan. Croom Helm, England.
- SUSSER, A. (1976-7) Jordan. In: Middle East Contemporary Survey, Vol. 1. The Shiloah Institute for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University.
- SUSSER, A. (1977-8) Jordan. In: Middle East Contemporary Survey, Vol. 2. The Shiloah Institute for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University.
- TAL, A. et al (1988) Regional Cooperation in the Development of Transportation Infrastructure in the Middle East. The Armand Hammer Fund for Economic Cooperation in the Middle East. Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv.
- TAL, A. FISHELSON, G. (1988) Cooperation in Tourism Between Eilat and Aqaba. The Armand Hammer Fund for Economic Cooperation in the Middle East. Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv.
- TARROW, S. (1977) Between centre and periphery. Yale University Press, New Haven.
- TAYLOR, P. (1985) Political Geography. Longman, England.
- TECHNION. (1982) Integrated Evaluation Study of Renewal Neighbourhoods. First Interim Report, Technion, Haifa.
- THAL. (1964) Eilat Shore Plan for Flood Prevention. Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- TURNER, M. (1968) Eilat--Preliminary Study for the Town Expansion to 50,000. Ministry of the Interior, Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- TURNER, M. (1973) Eilat - Toward 50,000 Inhabitants. In: Shachar, A. et al (eds) Towns in Israel. Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- TAYYAN, A. (1977) The Port of Aqaba. In: Quarterly Journal of the Natural Resources Authority. Vol. 3. Amman.
- UNRWA. (1951-1969) Report to the Director of the UNRWA Palestine Refugees in the Near East. U.N. General Assembly, Official Records, 1951-1969.
- VATIKIOTIS, P. J. (1967) Politics and the Military in Jordan. Frank Cass, London.
- VATIKIOTIS, P. J. (1971) Conflict in the Middle East. The Aldine Press, London.
- VIDRA, N. (1969) Organising Transportation Service Between East Europe and East Africa and Iran via Israel. El-Zion, Haifa. (Hebrew)
- VIORST, M. (1989) Sand of Sorrow. I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. London.



- WATERMAN, S. Kliot, N. (eds) (1986) Pluralism and Political Geography. London.
- WEAVER, C. (1979) Regionalism Theory and Regionalism: Toward Rethinking the Regional Question. In: Geoforum 9:397-413.
- WEISS, D. (1987) Development Planning in a Turbulent International Environment: Some Reflections on the Jordanian Case. In: Khader B. Badran A. (eds) The Economic Development of Jordan. Croom Helm, England.
- WHITLESEY, D. (1935) The Impress of Effective Central Authority upon the Landscape. In: Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol XXV, 1935.
- WILLIAMS, L. (1974) Twenty-Five Years. In: Israel Magazine, Vol. 6, March, Tel Aviv.
- WILLIAMS, W. W. (1977) Internal Colonialism, Core-Periphery Contrasts Contrasts and Development: An Integrative Comment. In: Area 9:272-278.
- WORLD BANK. (1980) Water Sector Study, Jordan. Washington D.C.
- WORLD BANK. (1983) World Development Report, Jordan. New York.
- WORLD BANK. (1983A) Special Economic Report, The Middle East. New York.
- WRIGHT, A. C. (1989) Facts and Fables, The Arab-Israeli Conflict. Kegan Paul International, London.
- YORKE, V. (1988) Domestic Politics and Regional Security. Gower, England.
- ZAK, M. (1985) Israeli-Jordanian Negotiations. In: The Washington Quarterly, Vol. 8, No. 1:167-176.
- ZELNIKER, S. (1982) The Superpowers and the Horn of Africa. Paper No. 18, The Shiloah Centre for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv.
- ZIM. (1975) The NCB after the reopening of the Suez Canal for Israeli Navigation. Internal Report, Haifa. (Hebrew, unpublished)
- ZIM. (1985) Eilat Lines, Annual report. Tel Aviv.
- ZIRING, L. (1984) The Middle East Political Dictionary. Western Michigan University.
- ZOHAR, D. M. (1974) Political Parties in Israel: The Evolution of Israeli Democracy. Praeger, New York.

## **SECTION B**

### **Periodicals**

Cosmopolitan  
Eight Days  
Foreign Report  
IDPC - International Dredging and Port Construction  
Israel Magazine  
Jeune Afrique  
Lloyd's List  
MEED - Middle East Economic Digest  
MEES - Middle East Economic Survey  
Middle East  
Mideast Markets  
National Geographic  
Newsview  
Swiss Review of World Affairs  
Terminal  
The Economist  
The Middle East Year Book  
The Time

### **Newspapers**

Jordan Times  
Jerusalem Post  
Jewish Chronicle  
Sunday Telegraph  
The Independent  
The Guardian  
Times

### **(Arabic)**

Al-Hadaf  
Al Chark Al Awsat  
Al-Aharam  
Aldustur  
Al-Akhbar  
Alroi  
An-Nhar

### **(Hebrew)**

Erev Erev  
Haaretz  
Haolam Haza  
Maariv  
Yediot Achronot

## Radio and News Agencies

AP - Associated Press  
BBC - British Broadcasting Corporation  
DPA - Deutsche Press Agentur  
INA - Iraqi News Agency  
JNA - Jordan News Agencies  
MENA - Middle East News Agency  
Radio Monte-Carlo  
Radio Tunis  
Radio Amman  
Reuters  
Sawt Al-Saab  
Sawt Al-Arab  
Sawt Palestine, Syria  
SNA - Syria News Agencies  
Voice of Israel

## SECTION C

### Israel Government and Eilat Municipality Documents And Publications

- EFDC. (1965) Tourist Masterplan for Eilat. Eilat Foreshore Development Company  
Jerusalem. (Hebrew, unpublished)
- EFDC. (1983) Eilat, The North Beach. Eilat Foreshore Development Company,  
Eilat. (Hebrew, unpublished)
- Eilat. (1965) Interim Masterplan for Eilat. Eilat Municipality. (Hebrew, unpublished)
- Eilat. (1968) Economic Survey of Eilat. Eilat Municipality. (Hebrew, unpublished)
- Eilat. (1975) Closing Down Timna. Internal Report, Eilat Municipality. (Hebrew,  
unpublished)
- Eilat. (1985) Eilat - General Information. Eilat Municipality. (Hebrew)
- Eilat Employment Office. (1987) Labour Distribution - 1987. Eilat. (Hebrew,  
unpublished)
- Eilat (1988) Eilat Landscape Masterplan. Eilat Municipality - The Scheuer  
Foundation. Marcus, Jerusalem.
- Israel. (1985) Canal Port in Eilat. Ministry of Transport, Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- Israel Airport Authority (1976) Annual Report - 1976. Tel Aviv.
- Israel, Central Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Tourism. (1960-1988) Tourism and  
Hotel Services Statistics Annual Reports. Jerusalem (Hebrew)
- Israel. (1980) Economic Development in Israel. Internal Report, Jerusalem (Hebrew,  
unpublished)

- Israel, Ministry of Commerce. (1965) Industrial Development Plan for Eilat. Jerusalem (Hebrew)
- Israel, Ministry of Development. (1964) Eilat, General Sewerage Plan. Jerusalem (Hebrew, unpublished)
- Israel, Ministry of Development. (1974) Development Towns in Israel. December, 1974, Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- Israel, Ministry of Housing. (1976) Israel's Development Towns. Jerusalem. (Hebrew, unpublished)
- Israel, Ministry of Labour. (1984) Eilat, Economic Prospect for the end of the 1980s. Jerusalem (Hebrew, unpublished)
- Israel, Ministry of the Interior. (1956) Development Programm for Eilat. Jerusalem. (Hebrew, unpublished)
- Israel, Ministry of the Interior. (1958) Development Programm for Eilat. Jerusalem. (Hebrew, unpublished)
- Israel, Ministry of the Interior. (1959) The Negev Urban Development in Israel First Decade. Jerusalem. (Hebrew, unpublished)
- Israel, Ministry of the Interior. (1960) Urban Plan for Eilat. Jerusalem (Hebrew, unpublished)
- Israel, Ministry of the Interior. (1963) Eilat - An Abstract Masterplan for Development. Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- Israel, Ministry of the Interior. (1968) Preliminary Study for the Town Expansion to 50,000. Jerusalem.
- Israel, Ministry of the Interior. (1975) Eilat, General Report of the Town Growth. November, Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- Israel, Ministry of the Interior. (1976) New Towns Population Projection. Jerusalem. (Hebrew, unpublished)
- Israel, Ministry of the Interior. (1984) Eilat - Toward A Tax Free Zone. Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- Israel, Ministry of Tourism. (1965) Public Beaches in Israel. Interim Report, Jerusalem (Hebrew, unpublished)
- Israel, Ministry of Tourism. (1977) Letter from Tjaereborg's manager in Stockholm, 29.6.1977, to the Ministry of Tourism, Jerusalem. Ministry of Tourism, Eilat file, Jerusalem. (unpublished)
- Israel, Ministry of Tourism. (1978) Tourism Development in Eilat - General Report. Jerusalem (Hebrew, unpublished)

- Israel, Ministry of Tourism. (1980) Development Plan for Tourism in Eilat Tourism. Jerusalem. (Hebrew, unpublished)
- Israel, Ministry of Tourism. (1984) Tourism in Israel, Annual Report. Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- Israel, Ministry of Tourism. (1984A) Tourism in Eilat, After the Lebanon War. Jerusalem (Hebrew, unpublished)
- Israel, Ministry of Tourism. (1985) Plan for Tourism Development in Eilat. Ministry of Tourism, The Government Tourist Office and Eilat Foreshore Development Company, Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- Israel, Ministry of Tourism/Eilat Municipality. (1986) Environmental Improvement Plan for Eilat. Jerusalem. (Hebrew, unpublished)
- Israel, Ministry of Tourism. (1988) Eilat - Israel No. One Tourist Resort. Ministry of Tourism, Information Centre, Jerusalem.
- Israel, Ministry of Trade and Commerce. (1979) Timna, General Report. Jerusalem. (Hebrew, unpublished)
- Israel, Ministry of Trade and Commerce. (1980) Development Plan for Industrial Park in Eilat. Jerusalem (Hebrew)
- Israel, Ministry of Trade and Commerce. (1983) The Negev - General Report. Jerusalem. (Hebrew, unpublished)
- Israel, Ministry of Transport. (1957) Eilat's Port - General Report. Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- Israel, Ministry of Transport. (1959) Masterplan for Eilat's Port. Jerusalem (Hebrew)
- Israel, Ministry of Transport. (1963) Eilat Airport, Interim Plan. Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- Israel, Ministry of Transport. (1967) Transportation in Israel. Jerusalem. (Hebrew)
- Israel, Ministry of Transport. (1969) The Negev Continental Bridge, Profitability Prospect and Operation. Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)
- Israel, Ministry of Transport. (1973) The Negev Continental Bridge. Jerusalem. (Hebrew, unpublished)
- Israel, Ministry of Transport. (1976) Profitability in Using the NCB. Tel Aviv (Hebrew, unpublished)
- Israel Port Authority. (1959-1988) Yearbook of Ports Statistics. Numbers 1-22, Tel Aviv.
- Israel Port Authority. (1977) Eilat's Port, Annual Report.

Israel Port Authority. (1978) Eilat's Port. General Report,  
(Hebrew, unpublished)

Israel, Prime Minister Office. (1949) Four Years Plan for Israel Tourist Trade.  
Jerusalem (Hebrew, unpublished)

Israel. (1962) Statistical Abstract of Israel. No-13, Jerusalem.

Israel, State Comptroller. (1962) Annual Report. Jerusalem.  
(Hebrew)

### **Jordanian Government and Aqaba's Local Authorities Documents and Publications**

APA (Aqaba Port Authority). (1964) Aqaba's Port, Annual Report for 1964. Aqaba  
Port Authority, Aqaba.

APA. (1965) Aqaba's Port, Annual Report for 1965. Aqaba Port Authority, Aqaba.

APA. (1969) Aqaba Port, Annual Yearbook for 1969. Aqaba Port Authority, Aqaba.

APC (Aqaba Port Corporation). (1975) Study for Future Development of Aqaba's  
Port. Amman. (Arabic)

APC. (1976) New Facilities for Aqaba's Port. Report from the Ministry of  
Transport in Amman to Aqaba's port manager and to Captain Deutschmann.  
Amman. (unpublished)

APC. (1976-1987) Annual Yearbooks. Aqaba Port Corporation, Aqaba.

APC. (1977) Aqaba Port After the Reopening of the Suez Canal. Aqaba Port  
Corporation, Aqaba.

APC. (1978) Aqaba's Port. June, 1978. Amman. (Arabic, unpublished)

APC. (1979) Transit Traffic in Aqaba's Port. Internal Report, Aqaba. (Arabic)

APC. (1980) Aqaba's Port After the Reopening of the Suez Canal. Internal Report  
to the Ministry of Transport in Amman. (Arabic, unpublished)

APC. (1983) Aqaba Port. Ministry of Transport, Amman. (Arabic, unpublished)

APC. (1985) Transportation Links between Aqaba's Port and Iraq. Aqaba.

APT. (Aqaba Port Trust). (1953) Development Plan for Aqaba Port. Amman.

ARA. (Aqaba Regional Authority). (1984) Development Plan for Aqaba Toward the  
1990s. Amman. (Arabic)

ARA. (1985) Aqaba, Economic Development Plan. Aqaba. (Arabic)

ARA. (1986) Aqaba Economic Structure. Amman. (Arabic)

- ARA. (1987) Industry in Aqaba. Amman. (Arabic, unpublished)
- ARA. (1988) Tourism Development in Aqaba. Annual Report, Aqaba.
- ATPC. (Aqaba Town Planning Committee). (1978) Aqaba - The Shallalah district and the Old town. Internal report. Aqaba. (Arabic, unpublished)
- ATPC. (1978A) New Tourist Facilities, Report No. 1. Aqaba. (Arabic, unpublished)
- ATPC. (1983) New Options for Aqaba Economic Development. Internal Report, Aqaba. (Arabic, unpublished)
- JDB. (Jordan Development Board). (1962) Three Years Development Plan, 1963-1965. Jordan Development Board, Amman.
- JDB. (1963) Seven Years Development Plan 1964-1970. Jordan Development Board, Amman.
- JDB. (1966) Development Progress in Aqaba's Port. Internal report, October, Aqaba. (Arabic, unpublished)
- JDB. (1972) Aqaba, Prospect for New Economic Development. Aqaba. (Arabic)
- Jordan. (1952) Statistical Yearbook. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Amman.
- Jordan. (1960-1987) Jordan Statistical Yearbooks. Department of Statistics, Amman.
- Jordan. (1960) The Aqaba Town Planning Committee. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Amman.
- Jordan. (1961) First Census of Population and Housing. Department of Statistics, Amman.
- Jordan. (1966) Review of the Implementation of the 1963-1970 Development Plan. Amman.
- Jordan. (1967) Aqaba, General Report. Ministry of National Economy, Amman. (Arabic, unpublished)
- Jordan. (1968) Urban and Planning in Jordan. Ministry of Interior. Amman. (Arabic)
- Jordan. (1970) Facts and Figure. Ministry of Culture and Information, December, 1970, Amman.
- Jordan. (1973) Tourism In Jordan, 1970-1972. Ministry of Tourism. (Arabic)
- Jordan. (1974) Studies toward the Reopening of the Suez Canal. Ministry of Transport, Amman. (Arabic)
- Jordan. (1974A) Jordan Economic Development in 1970-1973. Ministry of Culture and Information, Amman.

- Jordan. (1975) Maan and Aqaba, Prospect for future Development (Interim Report). Ministry of Municipal Affair, Amman.
- Jordan. (1976A) Achievements of the Three Years Plans 1973-1975. Housing Corporation, Amman.
- Jordan. (1976B) Business and Investment Guide to Jordan. Ministry of Industry and Trade, Amman.
- Jordan. (1988) Jordan Economy Toward into the 1990s. June 1988, Amman. (Arabic)
- Jordan, Department of Statistics. (1977) Report on Population Growth in the Maan Region. Amman.
- Jordan, Ministry of Municipal Affair. (1967A) Aqaba Master plan. Amman.
- Jordan, Ministry of Municipal Affair. (1976) Report on the ATPC Activity, 1960-1975. Amman. (Arabic)
- Jordan, Ministry of Tourism. (1971) The Official Tourist Guide to Jordan. Amman.
- Jordan, Ministry of Tourism. (1980) Tourism Projects for Aqaba. Amman.
- Jordan, Ministry of Tourism. (1983) Studies for General Development of Tourism in Aqaba. Action Report N. 1. Amman.
- Jordan, Ministry of Tourism. (1987) The Official Tourist Guide to Jordan. Amman.
- Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (MMRA). (1981) Master Plan for Aqaba and the South Coast. Amman. (Arabic)
- MMRA. (1982) Master Plan for Aqaba and the South Coast: Final Report. Amman.
- MMRA. (1983) Regional Development Plan for the Southern Region. Amman.
- NPC (National Planning Council). (1973) Three Years Plan for 1973-1975. National Planning Council, Amman.
- NPC. (1974) Aqaba Port Toward the Reopening of the Suez Canal. Internal Report, Amman. (Arabic)
- NPC. (1975) Aqaba Development and Tourism, Studies for General Development. Action Report No. 2. March 1975, National Planning Council, Amman.
- NPC. (1976) Five Year Development Plan 1976-1980. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, National Planning Council, Amman.
- NPC. (1978) Economic and Urban Development Plan for Aqaba. Amman.
- NPC. (1981) Five year Development Plan 1981-1985. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan National Planning Council, Amman.



- NPC. (1981A) Draft Regional Development for the Southern Region. National Planning Council, Amman.
- NPC. (1982) Development Strategy Policy of the NPC. National Planning Council, Amman.
- NPC. (1983) Development Plan Implementation in Jordan. National Planning Council, Amman. (Arabic)
- NPC. (1984) Studies For General Development of the Southern Region. Action report no. 2, 1984 National Planning Council, Amman. (Arabic)
- NPC. (1986) Five year Development Plan 1986-1990. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, National Planning Council, Amman.
- NPC. (1987) Industry in Aqaba. Amman. (Arabic)
- SRP. (Southern Regional Project). (1982) Draft Regional Development for the Southern Region. Ministry of Municipal Affair, Southern Regional Project, Amman.

## **APPENDICES**

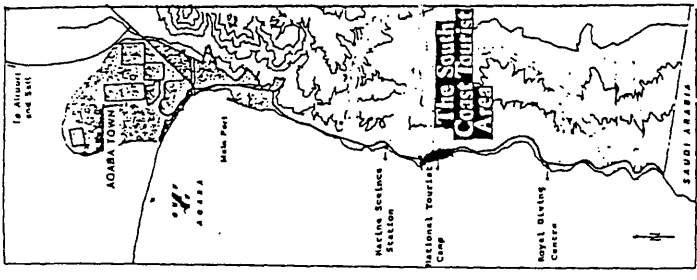
Appendix 1 Major Political Events Related to Eilat and Aqaba's Growth

Israel - Eilat	International		Jordan - Aqaba
	1946	Jordan's Independence	U.K. use of Aqaba
	47		
Eilat's Establishment	48	Israel's Independence	
	49		
Eilat: from military to civilian settlement	1950		Jordan Annexes the West Bank
	51		King Abdullah's Assassination
	52	Nasser becomes President	The port: 1st development plan
	53		
	54		
	1955		
Romanian oil embargo on Israel	56	Suez War	
Oil from Iran	57	Eisenhower Doctrine	
	58	Iraqi Revolution (Egypt/Syria -unity)	Crisis with Syria & Egypt
Eilat become a town	59		U.K. withdrawal
	1960		
	61		
	62	Decolonisation in Africa	
Relations with Africa and Asia	63		
	64		
	1965		Jordan-S. Arabia border agreement
	66		
	67	June War, Suez Closures	
Eilat - Med. Sea landbridge	68		
	69		
	1970		Jordan-PLO War
	71	PLO move to Lebanon	
	72		
	73	October War, Oil boom	
	74	Israel-Egypt disengagement	
Charter flights to Eilat	1975	Suez Canal reopening	Arab world, improving relations
	76	Lebanese civil war	
	77		
Government change	78		
Camp David peace treaty	79	Iran, revolution	
Iranian ban on oil to Israel	1980	Iran-Iraq War	Syria-Jordan, crisis
Israel withdrawal from Sinai	81		
Lebanon War	82	Iraq-Syria, crisis	
	83		
	84		Improving relations with Egypt
	1985		
	86		
	87		
	88		
	89		

## Appendix 2

### Water in Eilat

Water requirements became the growing town's gravest problem as consumption rose between 1958 and 1960 from 5000 to 10,000 cubic metres a day, with local sources providing approximately 75% of this quantity. 'Mekorot' (the national water company) extended the water pipeline further north to new underground water supplies, although these provided only a temporary solution as Eilat's continued growth meant increasing demand. The problem deteriorated in summer 1964, resulting in Mekorot's decision to cut off the water supply during the night. At the same time the government initiated a scheme to construct a thermal distillation plant that would convert Red Sea water into drinkable fluid and in addition provide Eilat with much of its energy requirements. Since the plant opened in 1965 it has had the capacity to provide Eilat with 72,000 cubic metres of water and 6,000 kilowatts of electricity daily. Transferring to more advanced techniques enabled the cost of the process to be reduced by the early 1970s, which nonetheless was subsidised by Jerusalem as part of its policy of state-unified prices for all public services.



Welcome to



**AQABA**

ONE OF THE BEAUTIES OF THE RED SEA

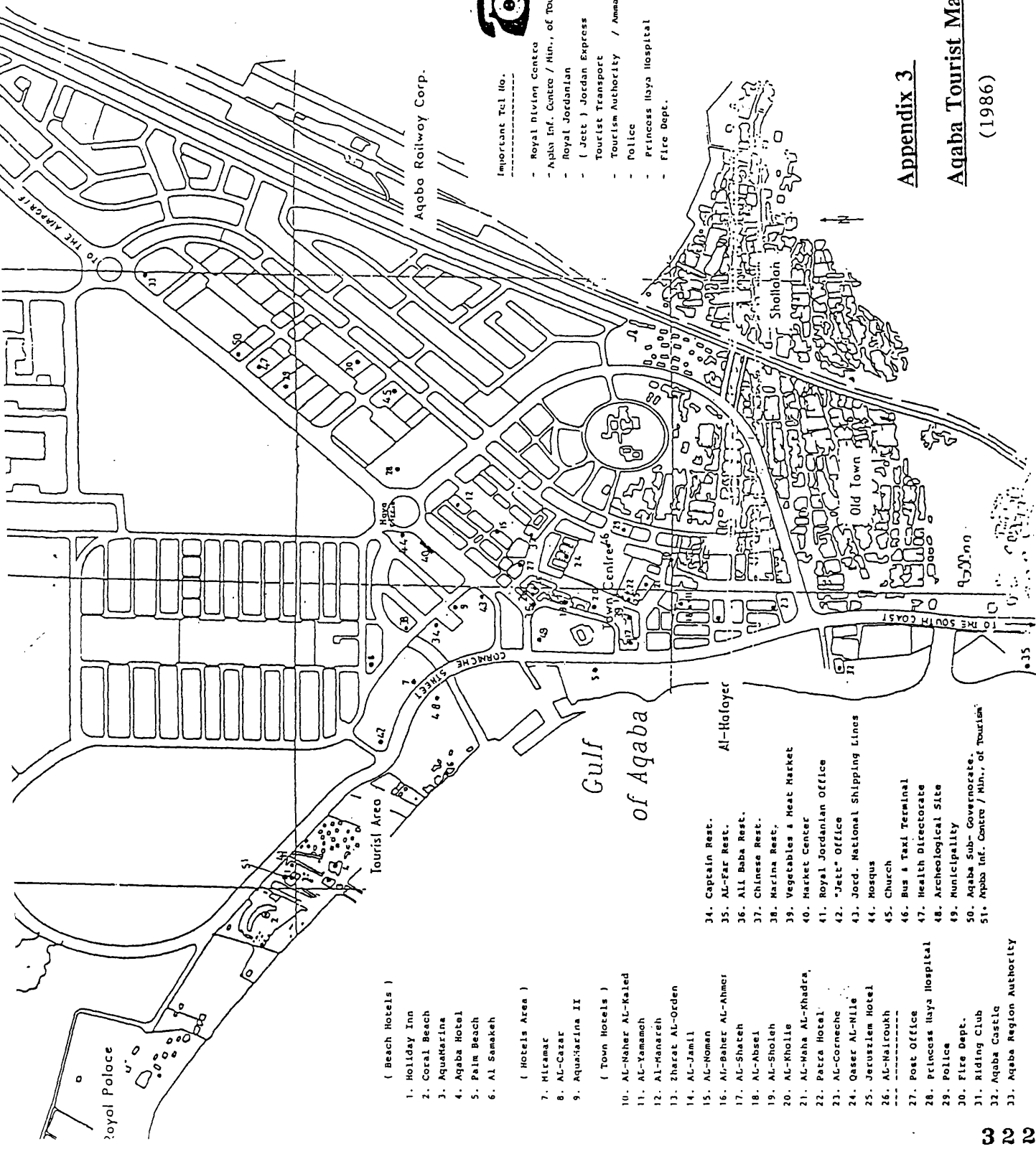
Aqaba Region Authority  
P.O. Box 21 Tel. 4200/  
62316 Jordan



- Important Tel. No.
- Royal Diving Centre 317035
  - Aqaba Inf. Centre / Min., of Tourism 313363
  - Royal Jordanian 314477
  - ( Jett ) Jordan Express 315222
  - Tourist Transport 642311
  - Tourism Authority / Amman 312411
  - Police 314111 / 4
  - Princess Inaya Hospital 314222
  - Fire Dept.

Appendix 3

Aqaba Tourist Map  
(1986)



( Beach Hotels )

1. Holiday Inn
2. Coral Beach
3. Aquamarina
4. Agaba Hotel
5. Palm Beach
6. Al Samakah

( Hotels Area )

7. Miranac
8. Al-Cazar
9. Aquamarina II

( Town Hotels )

10. Al-Naher AL-Kaled
11. AL-Yamamah
12. AL-Manarrah
13. Zharat AL-Orden
14. AL-Jamil
15. AL-Noman
16. Al-Baher AL-Ahmer
17. AL-Shateh
18. AL-Absei
19. AL-Sholeh
20. AL-Kholie
21. AL-Waha AL-Khadra,
22. Patca Hotel
23. AL-Corneche
24. Qasar AL-Nile
25. Jerusalem Hotel
26. AL-Nairoukh

( Other )

27. Post Office
28. Princess Inaya Hospital
29. Police
30. Fire Dept.
31. Riding Club
32. Aqaba Castle
33. Aqaba Region Authority

( Beach Rest. )

34. Captain Rest.
35. AL-Far Rest.
36. All Baba Rest.
37. Chinese Rest.
38. Macina Rest.
39. Vegetables & Meat Market
40. Market Center
41. Royal Jordanian Office
42. "Jett" Office
43. Jord. National Shipping Lines
44. Mosqu
45. Church
46. Bus & Taxi Terminal
47. Health Directorate
48. Archeological Site
49. Municipality
50. Aqaba Sub- Governorate.
51. Aqaba Inf. Centre / Min., of Tourism

## Appendix 4

### Cooperation in Tourism Between Eilat and Aqaba

(Tal and Fishelson, 1988, pp. 25-33))

#### The Proposed Red Sea Riviera

A glance at Map 10 shows why these two towns could well become the centre for Middle East tourism. On top of the beauty of the immediate surroundings, their distance from European capitals is reasonable and their distance by air from other major attractions is almost negligible. Peaceful cooperation between Eilat and Aqaba with Egyptian participation could open up an era of economic prosperity to all parties involved.

Cooperation could start at the municipal level and could be exercised in areas such as sewage and garbage, energy services, water and electricity supply, health and emergency services etc. However, the main cooperation efforts should be aimed at the sea and along the shores where both development and conservation should be jointly and carefully planned.

The first stage of the idea we are developing is that of an Israeli/Jordanian/Egyptian "Red Sea Riviera", extending from the "Fjord" in Sinai (see map 11) along the coast to Eilat and Aqaba, and continuing along the east coast of the Gulf south to the Saudi border.

The total length of this Riviera would be some 45 km, of which some 9 km are in Egypt, some 12 km in Israel and some 24 km in Jordan. From these figures one must subtract those areas occupied by port installations in Eilat and Aqaba, which would still leave some 35 km of shoreline for recreation. The section between Eilat and the "Fjord" includes 6 scuba-diving sites in coral reef areas and several kilometres of beaches (map 6).

The present day situation is such that Eilat may have about 20,000 bathers per day along its 10 km of beaches. Of course, the northern beaches are usually much more crowded, being in front of the main hotels, while those further away are less so. 20 km of beach - which would include Eilat, the northern part of the gulf at Aqaba and the beaches along the Egyptian part of the Riviera, would enable much more spacious occupation, even by some 40,000 bathers at any given time. This would also provide an answer to a scenario for 1995 where some 30,000 inhabitants of Eilat, 50-60,000 residents of Aqaba and around 30,000 tourists and Israeli holiday makers would be in the area at the same time. During peak periods, this length of beaches could enable crowded yet acceptable occupancy, roughly estimated at 100,000.

The six scuba-diving locations on the Egyptian and Israeli side of the Gulf reinforced by those south of the port of Aqaba, would provide underwater and glass-bottomed boat attractions, sufficient to satisfy the needs of several thousand per day. Eilat's present tourism development forecast requires about 10,000 hotel rooms by 1995. Aqaba may increase its capacity fourfold to about 2000 rooms. As a result, the Eilat/Aqaba area could expect some 8,000,000 foreign, middle and high class tourists per year.

## Elements of Cooperation

As mentioned, both Eilat and Aqaba operate ports - with Aqaba having much larger facilities than Eilat. Aqaba port is also a loading point for Jordan's fertiliser exports and plans were under way for an Iraqi oil pipeline terminal (the possible settlement of the Iran-Iraq War may eliminate this extremely dangerous environmental threat). Fertiliser dust and oil spills are the main pollution dangers of the Gulf at present. Coral reefs are extremely sensitive to pollution and damage is practically irreversible. Furthermore, sea or air pollution certainly do not encourage tourism. Sewage and garbage pose another problem for both towns as do water and electric power supplies, shortages of emergency equipment, trained personnel, medical facilities, pest control, etc.

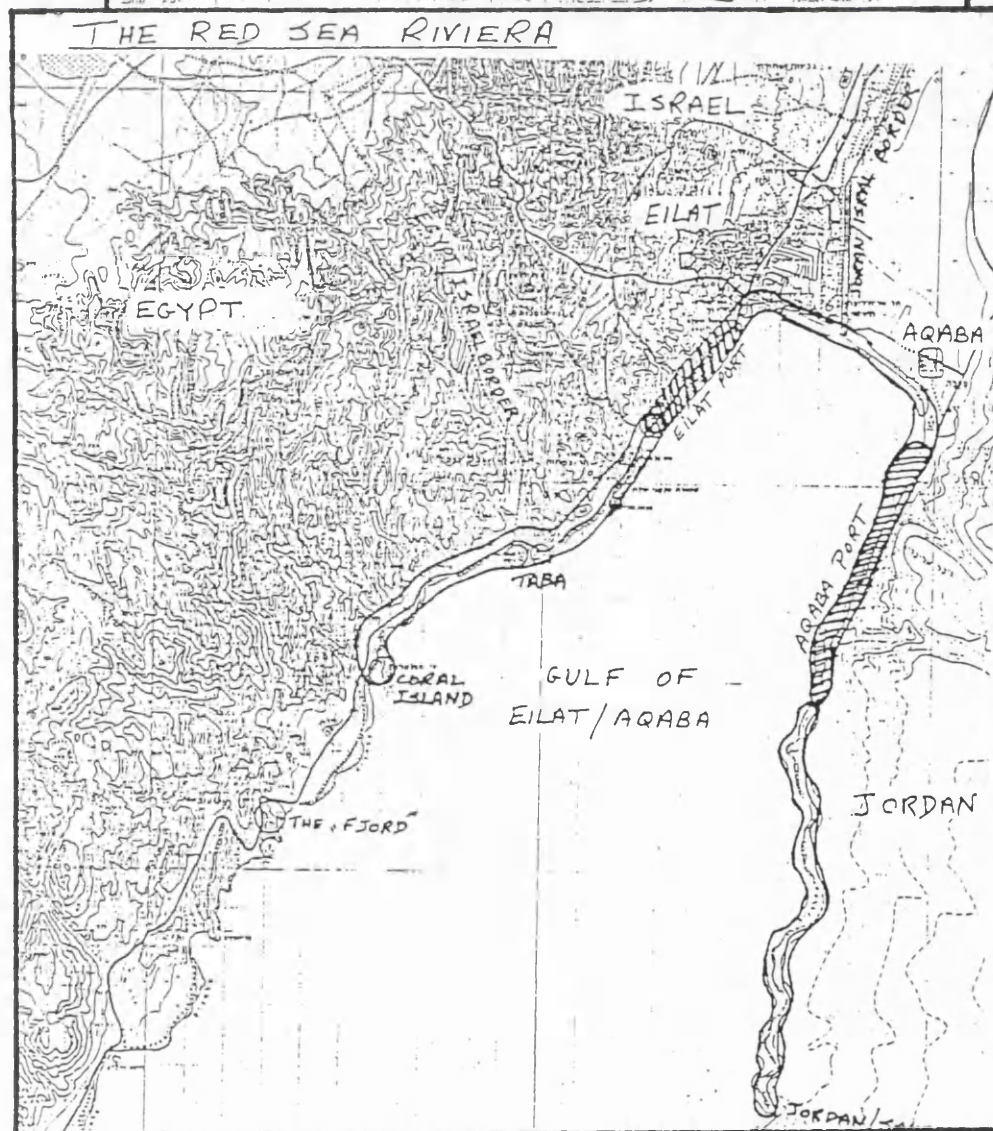
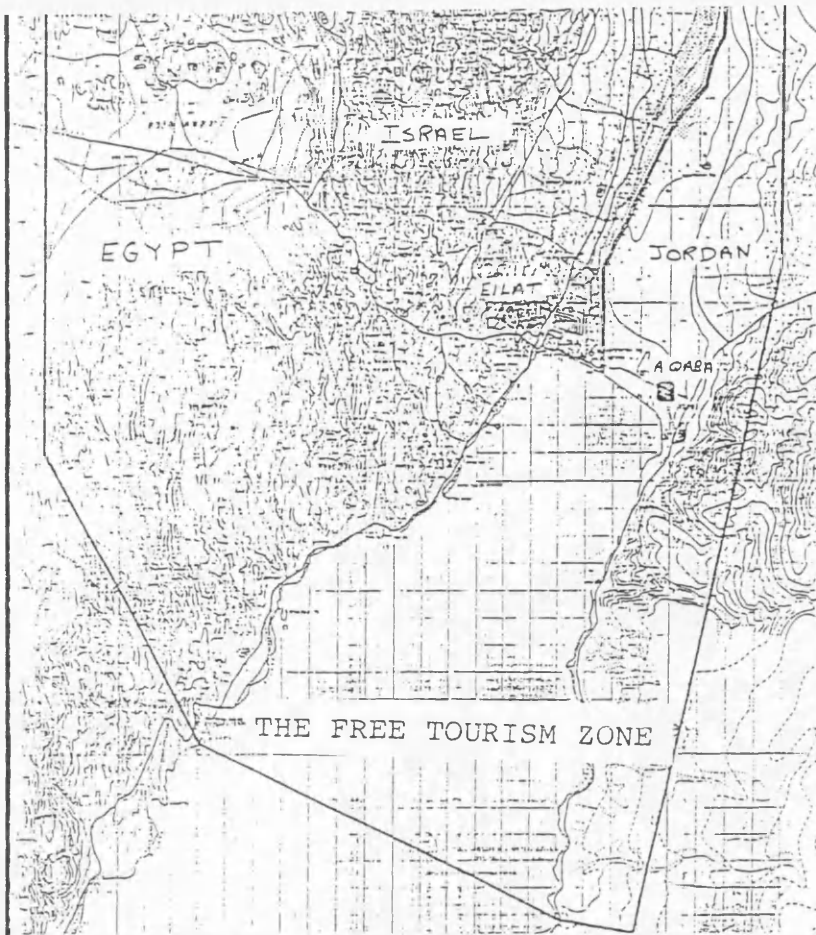
One of the possible solutions to the problems posed by both ports is to reconstruct them at an area some 10 km to the north connected to the sea by a 200m' wide canal along the international boundary. This solution, although requiring heavy investment, would:

- Free the areas currently occupied by the ports for tourist related development, enabling an uninterrupted recreation shoreline.
- Contain potential pollution.
- Enable development of various joint commercial and industrial activities around it, e.g. a free trade zone, assembly industry, a joint power plant, dry storage of Asian products for European markets and others.
- Enable development of recreational facilities along the canal.
- Enable development of saline aqua-culture projects e.g. shrimp farm, algae production etc.

This is of course a large, long-term project, which would require cooperation at the highest level. However, in the present situation preliminary investigations could be carried out by both sides, at the municipal level, coordinated by international organisations.

Other coordinated activities could be fully implemented at the municipal level, bypassing the political problems of cooperation at government level. These could include:-

- Development of beaches to the west of Aqaba, creating a contiguous stretch along the north shore of the Gulf. These could be opened to foreign tourists in the present political situation, and to Israeli and Jordanians citizens when the peace process advances further.
- Coordinated investigations could be made to identify all existing and possible sources of pollution (e.g. fertiliser dust, oil spills) and the preventive measures to be taken by either side, or in cooperation by both.
- The possibilities of beach development and scuba-diving along the coast from Aqaba port to the Saudi border.
- Water and electric power supply and possible connections between the systems of both, particularly for peak hour or emergency supply.
- Cooperation, especially in emergencies, between Aqaba and Eilat airports.
- Joint tourist packages. These could include:
  - Direct flights from Europe to the Eilat, Aqaba or Etzion airport's.
  - Vacation on the Red Sea Riviera - bathing, sea sports, scuba-diving or glass bottomed boat sailing, yacht trips along the Gulf to Nuweiba, Ras-Muhammad or other South Sinai coastal attractions.
  - Visits to Petra, King Solomon's Pillars, desert tours.





- Flights to Santa Catherine.
- Flights to Holy Land attractions e.g. Jerusalem, Tiberias, etc.
- Flights to Amman, Cairo, Luxor, etc.

### The Red Sea Riviera "Free Tourism Zone"

The ultimate goal of our plan is to achieve a much higher level of cooperation. Our concept is to create in the Eilat-Aqaba-Taba area a "Free Tourism Zone" (FTZ) (a concept parallel to that of a "Free Trade Zone"). Although within this area sovereignty of each country over its territory will remain untouched, certain elements of its execution will not be practised. Thus any person in the FTZ will have freedom of movement within it with no need to present personal documents at the border crossings. Regular entry/exit and customs regulations will be exercised at locations on the boundaries of the FTZ. These locations would be at the airport and along the road. Within the FTZ the three national currencies would be legal tender. The three parties would have to decide on joint policing of land, on law enforcement and crime prevention; joint emergency jointly services; coordinated development, etc.

The establishment of the FTZ in this area does not necessarily have to follow a peace settlement between Israel and Jordan; it may well precede it. Aqaba is the southernmost tip of Jordan; Eilat is at the southernmost tip of Israel and Taba is at a remote corner of Sinai. Therefore for each of the three countries involved, it may be regarded as a special separate area. Planning could be coordinated at the municipal level through the aid of international agencies.

The propose concept of the Armand Hammer Fund research project has been to identify economic cooperation projects which are of benefit to all the sides involved, which do not endanger the interests of either side and which have an economic value high enough to be of bearing political decisions. The FTZ project is one example where the benefits could be far beyond those which may be achieved by separate or even coordinated tourist packages.

### Regional Cooperation in the Development of Transportation Infrastructure in Middle East

(Tal et al 1988)

(Page 10)

1. The Suez-Eilat-Aqaba Route: This route would run parallel to the "Southern Route" of road transport. It would start at Suez, crossing the canal at the tunnel. It would cross the Mitla pass and continue through Etzion to Eilat and Aqaba. The total length of this route would be some 255 km at an estimated total cost of \$185 million. It could be used for the transportation of goods and passengers to central Israel only if the Israeli Oron-Eilat railroad is constructed. The distances to central Israel, central Jordan and via Israel to Lebanon and beyond, would be greater than in either of the other two routes.

(Page 12)

2. The Safi-Sedom Potash link: This Link would connect Jordan's potash production plant with Israel's planned Sedom-Eilat railroad and would involve the construction of only some 20 km of track from the El-Safi plant to Sedom, at a

cost of about \$2 million.

3. Economic Consideration: Assuming an investment of about \$200 million (the average cost of construction of the three rail lines) at a capital cost of 10 percent a year, annual maintenance and operating costs might be about \$25 million.

With a freight charge of 3 US cents per ton/km and possible 250,000 tons of freight which Jordan might import through Israel, income would be only a fraction of costs (roughly \$3 million). Even if Jordan's fertilizer exports to Europe of some 1.5 million tons a year were added, revenues would only increase to about \$12 million, which is still only about 50 percent of annual costs. The addition of passenger traffic might improve this outlook only to a small extent. On the whole, the Israel-Jordan railroad connection does not seem to be profitable. The outlook might change if the Egypt-Israel railroad connection materialised and Egyptian and Jordanian trade using this network were to the order of 2 million tons a year.

The potash line, with its \$120 investment, and annual maintenance and operating costs of \$1.5 million, would be profitable because it would permit the transport of up to one million tons of potash from the Jordanian Dead Sea works to Eilat (and from there to destinations in East Africa and the Far East) via Sedom and Israel's proposed southern railway. Revenues for the El-Safi-Sedom section might be roughly \$600,000. However, use of the Sedom-Eilat section would generate a gross revenue of \$5-6 million a year for Israel, and considerable savings in transport costs for Jordan's potash exports, if Israel's southern railroad were built. In addition, it could enable Jordan to use Israel's railroad to export its potash via Ashdod to western destinations. If the Eilat line does not materialise, a 70 km connection could be constructed from El-Safi to the existing Oron line. However, Israel would need to investigate this option thoroughly, since opening an Israeli Mediterranean port to Jordan's potash exports might compete with Israel's own potash exports.

Since Jordan's rail system is narrow-gauge, a line from Israel would require transshipment. The distances between Jordanian and Israeli ports are short. Therefore if Jordan does not convert to standard gauge in the near future, trade with Egypt via Israel might be facilitated by a combination of rail and road transport.

Although the rail link between Israel and Jordan does not seem to be commercially profitable, the line might generate secondary welfare and development benefits. The "fertiliser line" could be profitable for both Jordan and Israel, if potential competition in exports of potash and phosphates between the two countries is limited, and Israel's Eilat railroad is built.

## APPENDIX 5

### Tourist Facilities in Eilat

(According to Development Systems, 1988.)

- 4 Km of public beaches
- 25 Swimming Pools
- Coral Beach Nature Reserve
- 100 Food Businesses (Restaurants, Pubs, etc)
- 15 Night Clubs and Discotheques
- 5 Conference and Festival Organisers.
- 4 Duty-Free Shops
- 4 Camping Areas
- 5 Diving Clubs
- 6 Car Rental Agencies
- 5 Travel Agencies
- 3 Horse Riding Clubs
- Marina for Private Yachts
- 20-25 Yachts available for Hire.
- 15 Glass-Bottomed Boats
- 8 Agencies for Boat, Windsurfer, and Diving Equipment Hire
- 8 Water Ski Clubs
- Fairground
- Mini-Golf
- Museum for Marine Life and the Underwater Observatory
- 1 Cinema (Most four- and five-star hotels operate their own cinema)
- 2 Theatres
- Bird Watching Centre
- Sports Centre
- 3 Health Clubs

## APPENDIX 5

### Tourist Facilities in Eilat

(According to Development Systems, 1988.)

- 4 Km of public beaches
- 25 Swimming Pools
- Coral Beach Nature Reserve
- 100 Food Businesses (Restaurants, Pubs, etc)
- 15 Night Clubs and Discotheques
- 5 Conference and Festival Organisers.
- 4 Duty-Free Shops
- 4 Camping Areas
- 5 Diving Clubs
- 6 Car Rental Agencies
- 5 Travel Agencies
- 3 Horse Riding Clubs
- Marina for Private Yachts
- 20-25 Yachts available for Hire.
- 15 Glass-Bottomed Boats
- 8 Agencies for Boat, Windsurfer, and Diving Equipment Hire
- 8 Water Ski Clubs
- Fairground
- Mini-Golf
- Museum for Marine Life and the Underwater Observatory
- 1 Cinema (Most four- and five-star hotels operate their own cinema)
- 2 Theatres
- Bird Watching Centre
- Sports Centre
- 3 Health Clubs



# Aqaba

# Port



## Facilities & Services

THE PORTS CORPORATION  
P.O. BOX 115  
AQABA - JORDAN

PHONE 314024/38 , TLX : 62262 &  
62352 PORT JO. Mailing Addressee:  
Eid Alfayez , Director General.

**A. Location :**

The commercial seaport of Aqaba is the only sea outlet to the H.K. of Jordan and is situated at the north end of the Gulf of Aqaba at latitude 29 31 N & longitude 35 01 E.

**B. The Port Facilities :**

1. The Main - Port Berths : Include 12 berths with a total length of 2050m. for handling general cargo, grains, phosphate, and discharging lighters as following :

Berth No.	Length of Berth in Meters	Draft in Meters
1, (2) {ships up to 20,000 d.w.t.}	160, (180)	11, (10)
(3,4), 5, 6 { " " to 40,000 d.w.t.}	180	(12.5), 10
7	150	7.8
9, 10	150	5.8
Lighters Discharging Berth	150	4
Phosphate Berth No. (A) (With conveyor belts and shiploader of 1000 t/h)	210	11
Phosphate Berth No. (B) (with conveyor belts and two shiploaders of 2200 t/h each) to 100,000 d.w.t.)	100	15

2. Container Berth: With a total length of 540m. & a draft of 15m. which can receive three vessels at a time up to 100,000 d.w.t. each. It is equipped with two 40 - ton gantry cranes. Attached to this berth and with 10m. draft is RO-RO Berth with 40m. in length.

3. Passengers Terminal and Yarmouk Floating Berth: With a length of 150m. and a draft of 15 meters. Although it is specialized now in Passengers traffic with their vehicles, it receives as well RO-RO & container ships.

4. Mo'ta Floating Berth : It was re- fixed on mid-1986 to the north of container berths with a length of 150m. & a draft of 15m. It is used for bagged cement exports & RO-RO ships.

5. The Moshterak Berth: Consisting of two Dolphins and 120m. apart from each other, with a draft of 11m., It is probably will be modified to be used for dry bulk cargo and bagged grains.

6. The New Oil Exporting Jetty: Started its services early 1986, with a draft of 25m. and a monthly oil exporting capacity of 300,000 tons.

7. The Industrial Port : Consists of three berths with a total length of 345m. It receives ships up to 50,000 d.w.t. It is used for RO-RO ships, and import and export of chemical fertilizers and potash. It is equipped with two shiploaders of 2000 t/h each, and an evacuator of 500 t/h.

8. Maritime Slipway : for maintaining maritime equipments.

9. The Grain Silos : Erected by Ministry of Supply on berth No.1, with a storage capacity of 150,000 tons.

**10. Storage Facilities :**

Total Sheded Area	41,500 sqm.
Closed Hangers Area	34,500 sqm.
Paved Open Storage Area	450,000 sqm.
Closed Cold Store	500 tons
Container Terminal Area	309,000 sqm.

**11. Marine Equipments :**

- a) Three tug boats (one 1300 hp., and two 1500 hp.,)
- b) Eight mooring and towing boats (80- 380 hp., )
- c) Three pilot boats.
- d) 33 Barges with a capacity of 250-500 tons each.

**12.**

- a) 62 Mobile cranes with a capacity of 2-90 Tons.
- b) About 100 forklifts with a capacity of 1.5 - 35t.
- c) 12 top lifts of 5-30.5T. d) 50 Towing tractors.
- e) Nine Straddle carriers for handling containers.
- f) 19 Tug masters. g) 120 Trailers.
- h) Two "Gantry" with a capacity of 40 Tons each.

**C. Port Services :**

1. Pilotage: Is Compulsory for all ships above 150 N.R.T. Ships entering or making any movement must have a pilot on board. Ships have to supply the following information to the pilot station:

- a) Name of ship. b) Cargo for Aqaba.
- c) Maximum draft. d) Nationality.
- e) Agent's name.
- g) Overall length.
- h) Any special characteristics of the vessel.

2. Stevedores: The port provides its own stevedoring services which are available 24 hours, 7 days a week.

3. Towing :The use of tug boats is compulsory for all berthing operations.

4. Bunkering: Bunker fuel is available in Aqaba.

5. Water and Provisions: Fresh water and provisions are available in Aqaba.

6. Waste Matter and Pollution: No rubbish or oil may be thrown over board either at the anchorage or alongside the berths.

7. Health Services :The Health section of Aqaba port provides all medical services.

8. Radio : The station call sign is JYO.

**D. Employees at ( TPC ) :**

Total number of employees of the Ports Corporation is about 4700, of which 2900 are regular, the rest work by daily wages, mainly on cargo handling.

**E. Aqaba Port Traffic Comparision 1974, 1980, 1986, 1987**

Year	No. of ships	Cargo Traffic ( in thousand Tons )		No of Passengers
		Imports	Exports	
1974	299	367	1116	7
1980	1466	3024	3618	47460
1986	2677	7153	9697	839655
*1987	2750	7600	10200	1100000

\* 1987= Partly estimates .

## Appendix 7

### Climatic Elements in the Eilat and Aqaba Region (in 1985)\*

#### Temperature °C

Mean: maximum 31.4, minimum 18.0, daily 24.7.

Extreme: maximum 44.0, minimum 4.2.

Number of days with: 30 and over: 200, with 5 and less: 2.

#### Precipitation (Sept. 1984 - Aug. 1985)

Number of Rain-Days: 4

Total precipitation (mm) 17.

Number of days with: 1 mm. precipitation and more 4

Thunder 1

Hail --

Gales --

Fog --

Sand storms 1

#### Monthly Mean of Daily Maximum and Minimum Temperature °C

Month:

$\frac{1}{10.7}$	$\frac{2}{9.4}$	$\frac{3}{13.0}$	$\frac{4}{16.4}$	$\frac{5}{21.9}$	$\frac{6}{23.2}$	$\frac{7}{24.0}$	$\frac{8}{26.5}$	$\frac{9}{23.1}$	$\frac{10}{18.9}$	$\frac{11}{17.1}$	$\frac{12}{12.0}$
------------------	-----------------	------------------	------------------	------------------	------------------	------------------	------------------	------------------	-------------------	-------------------	-------------------

#### Mean relative Humidity % (1964-1985)

Month:

$\frac{1}{46}$	$\frac{2}{42}$	$\frac{3}{35}$	$\frac{4}{31}$	$\frac{5}{26}$	$\frac{6}{24}$	$\frac{7}{27}$	$\frac{8}{30}$	$\frac{9}{35}$	$\frac{10}{38}$	$\frac{11}{42}$	$\frac{12}{47}$
----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	-----------------	-----------------	-----------------

#### Sea water Temperature °C (annual average 22.9)

Month:

$\frac{1}{21.1}$	$\frac{2}{20.9}$	$\frac{3}{21.1}$	$\frac{4}{22.3}$	$\frac{5}{22.9}$	$\frac{6}{24.2}$	$\frac{7}{24.5}$	$\frac{8}{25.2}$	$\frac{9}{24.0}$	$\frac{10}{23.1}$	$\frac{11}{22.7}$	$\frac{12}{22.1}$
------------------	------------------	------------------	------------------	------------------	------------------	------------------	------------------	------------------	-------------------	-------------------	-------------------

\* All figures from: Israel, Central Bureau of Statistics. (1986) Statistical Abstract of Israel 1986 No. 37, Jerusalem.