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The Geopolitics of the First British Expedition to Egypt – I: The Cabinet Crisis of September 1800
EDWARD INGRAM

Shaykh al-'Aql and the Druze of Mount Lebanon
JUDITH P. HARIK

The Downfall of the Khuri Administration
EYAL ZISSER

The 1941 Invasion of Syria and Lebanon
N.E. BOU-NACKIE

The Process of Democratization in Jordan
KATHRINE RATH

Great Britain and Palestine towards the United Nations, 1947
RICHARD L. JASSE

Israeli Policy on Jerusalem at the United Nations, 1948
SHLOMO SLONIM

The Immigration Policy of the Zionist Institutions, 1882–1914
MARGALIT SHILO

Conflicts among the Revolutionary Elite in Iran
CYRUS YAKILI-ZAD

Saudi Development Plans
MICHEL G. NEHME

Tourism to Israel, 1967–90
YOEL MANESFELD

A Swiss in the Caucasus
MOSHE GAMMER

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Israeli Policy on Jerusalem at the United Nations, 1948

SHLOMO SLONIM

Israel's handling of the Jerusalem question at the United Nations in 1948 can be conveniently divided into four phases: (a) the Internationalization Scheme; (b) Bernadotte Plan No.1; (c) the Demilitarization Proposal; and (d) Bernadotte Plan No.2 and the General Assembly Debate.

THE INTERNATIONALIZATION SCHEME

The 1947 proposal for the internationalization of Jerusalem, as an essential part of the General Assembly's partition plan, was accepted by the Jewish Agency (the representative body of the Jewish community of Palestine) only with extreme reluctance. Jerusalem had had a Jewish majority since 1860, and in 1947 its Jewish population numbered 100,000, as against a combined Muslim-Christian population of 65,000. Fully one-sixth of the population of the proposed Jewish state of 600,000 would thus reside in Jerusalem. Detachment of Jerusalem would diminish severely the Jewish demographic component of the Jewish state. No less critical was the significance of Jerusalem as a symbol of the revival of Jewish sovereignty. Jerusalem had served as the heart and capital of ancient Judea, and the restoration of Jewish statehood without Jerusalem would deprive the new Jewish state of a focal link with its national past. Failure to include Jerusalem would place in question the very meaning of the national future of the state. Little wonder then that representatives of the Jewish Agency in their appearances before UNSCOP (United Nations Special Committee on Palestine) and the various committees of the General Assembly argued vigorously for the retention of Jewish Jerusalem in the proposed Jewish state. If they acquiesced in the scheme for the territorial internationalization of Jerusalem, they did so only because they felt this was an 'inescapable condition for the immediate re-establishment of the Jewish State'. In the words of Ben-Gurion, 'it was the price to be paid for statehood'. The religious-political considerations which dictated this concession were explained by Moshe Sharett, head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency:

It became evident that the requisite majority for the Partition Plan could not be mustered if the internationalization of the Holy City

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was omitted from it... The Vatican regarded the latter measure as
one which would... vest the Catholic Church with predominant
influence... and thus warrant acquiescence in the elevation of the
Jewish People to the level of sovereign statehood.°

None the less, in the immediate aftermath of the General Assembly
vote in favour of partition, Ben-Gurion had this to say on the subject of
Jerusalem:

We must convert Jerusalem into the central focus of the entire
Jewish people. Jerusalem [under the Partition Plan] has not been
designated as the capital of the Jewish state. But Jerusalem ever was
and must continue to remain the heart of the Jewish nation. It must
be, not only a great and expanding centre of Jewish settlement, but
also the centre of all Jewish national and international institutions,
the centre of the Zionist movement, the centre of the Knesset Israel,
which will embrace every Jew in the land of Israel, as well as those
[Jews] residing outside the Jewish state; the centre of world Jewry, a
centre of learning, culture, of the Jewish spirit, of Jewish art, a place
of remembrance for all that is connected with the Jewish people
generally and with vital sections thereof, whether of the living or the
dead. All these must find their focus in Jerusalem.

And finally... we know there are no final settlements in history,
there are no eternal boundaries and there are no final political
claims and undoubtedly many changes and revisions will yet occur
in [the map] of the world.°

On the assumption that the internationalization scheme was to be
instituted, the Jewish Agency moved to protect both the political status
and physical safety of the Jewish population of Jerusalem. To this end, it
made representations before two organs of the United Nations – the

Under the Partition Resolution the UN Trusteeship Council was
commissioned to draft a Statute of Jerusalem by the end of April 1948.° The
Statute would prescribe the machinery of government for administering
the city. Amongst the institutions which were to be formed was a Legis-
lative Council ‘elected by adult residents of the city irrespective of
nationality on the basis of universal and secret suffrage and proportional
representation’, which would have powers ‘of legislation and taxation’.°
This provision proved to be a bone of contention between the Jewish
Agency delegates and US representatives on the Trusteeship Council.
Jewish Agency officials initially argued that free democratic elections
based on a system of proportional representation should be instituted.°

Given the demographic make-up of the city this would have ensured that
the Jews would have parity with all other groups, if not a clear majority.
As it was, the area of the city of Jerusalem had been artificially enlarged
to deny the Jews a clear-cut majority over all other denominations com-
bined.° The Americans countered with a proposal of a fixed number of
representatives in the Jerusalem legislative council for each of the three
dominant faiths: the Jews would have 18 delegates, Muslims 18, and all
other residents 4 more.° This would lead to a situation where the Jews
would be in a constant minority status. Despite vigorous objections by
the Jewish Agency, accompanied by warnings of non-cooperation, the
American scheme was reflected in the ultimate draft statute adopted by
the Trusteeship Council on 21 April 1948.° In the meantime, however,
the draft Statute was overtaken by events. On 19 March, US Ambassador
to the United Nations, Warren Austin, announced in the Security Council
that the United States was withdrawing its support for the Partition Plan
in favour of a temporary trusteeship for Palestine.° Since, according to
this US proposal, all of Palestine was now to come under the aegis of the
Trusteeship Council, the idea in the original Partition Plan of a special
UN trusteeship for Jerusalem, fell by the wayside.° In fact, neither
trusteeship arrangement was ever instituted – for Jerusalem or for the
whole of Palestine.

Ever since the General Assembly had adopted the General Assembly
resolution, on 29 November 1947 Jerusalem had been the scene of violent
Arab attacks on the Jewish population.° With the outbreak of fighting in
Jerusalem and Palestine generally, the Jewish Agency turned to the
World Organization to put an end to the fighting and, more specifically,
to establish its control over Jerusalem in accordance with the inter-
nationalization scheme.° In April 1948, after Jerusalem came under Arab
siege, Moshe Sharett delivered a moving appeal to the Security Council in
the following terms: ‘The exclusion from the Jewish State of Jerusalem,
with its unique associations for the Jewish people and with the central
place it occupies in its tradition and modern life, was a most painful sacri-
ifice,’ he said. The Jewish Agency had accepted the internationalization
scheme in deference to an overwhelming consensus of world opinion.
But, in thus subordinating Jewish claims to the fervently expressed
interest of the Christian world, the Jewish Agency expected that the
United Nations would take all the steps necessary to secure the [desired]
objectives. Instead, Jerusalem had been allowed to become the target of
armed violence. ‘For the first time since Roman days, Jewish worshippers
are now forcibly prevented from having access to the Wailing Wall, the
greatest sanctuary of the Jewish faith.’ Sharett called upon the United
Nations to avert catastrophe in Jerusalem ‘by assuming its responsibilities,
first and foremost, the responsibility of ensuring law and order and safeguarding access and supplies to the city'. Otherwise, he warned, the city 'would become a battlefield. It may, indeed, become a shambles'.

Despite this stirring appeal, the Security Council took no direct steps to halt the fighting in Jerusalem or to institute an international regime there. Jewish leaders could not fail to take note of the impotence of the world body to resist Arab aggression and spare the Holy City from the ravages of war and destruction. Apparently, internationalization meant the surrender of Jewish sovereignty in Jerusalem but did not mean a corresponding assumption of responsibility by the international community for the protection and safety of the city and its inhabitants. In the absence of an international regime, Jewish Jerusalem would, of necessity, have to be integrated into the new state if its Jewish population was to be protected. Apart from the factor of military exigency, the process of integrating Jerusalem into Israel was spurred on, albeit unwittingly, by the suggestion put forward by the newly appointed UN Mediator, Count Bernadotte, that the city of Jerusalem come under the exclusive control of Jordan.

BERNADOTTE PLAN NO.1

On 14 May 1948 the state of Israel was proclaimed. On the same date the General Assembly adopted a resolution providing for the appointment of a UN Mediator in Palestine by the five permanent members of the Security Council. His task was 'to promote a peaceful adjustment of the future situation of Palestine'. Count Folke Bernadotte of Sweden was selected to serve as mediator.

In accordance with his mandate, Count Bernadotte succeeded in instituting a one-month truce lasting from 11 June to 9 July. In the interval, on 28 June 1948 the mediator presented a series of 'suggestions' to the parties for a peaceful settlement of the Palestine dispute. Besides other radical changes in the Partition Plan (such as detachment of the Negev from Israel and its annexation by Jordan) he recommended that the internationalization of Jerusalem be abandoned and that the city be incorporated into Arab territory, i.e. Transjordan, with the Jewish community in the city being accorded 'municipal autonomy'. The Israeli authorities were both shocked and angered by Bernadotte's 'suggestions'. Illustrative of the immediate reaction of Israeli leaders is the following comment by Abba Eban in a letter written two days after Bernadotte's announcement to a member of the US delegation.

The proposal to hand Jerusalem to Abdullah will almost certainly be regarded by us as an act of contempt for Jewish history and

religion and for the authority of the United Nations which committed itself to the view that Jerusalem belonged to the world. The idea of one hundred thousand Jews of Jerusalem living under King Abdullah is too fantastic for serious discussion.

The official Israeli reply to Bernadotte's suggestions, delivered on 5 July 1948, disputed the mediator's legal right to diverge from the territorial arrangements provided for under the Partition Plan. The 1947 Partition Plan had not been superceded and remained 'the only internationally valid adjudication on the question' of Palestine. 'The territory assigned to the Jewish State' under the Partition Plan represented 'an irreducible minimum', the Israeli reply declared. But in view of 'the perils revealed by Arab aggression for the safety and integrity of Israel . . . the territorial provisions affecting the Jewish State now stand in need of improvement'. In particular, the inclusion of the Arab portion of Palestine into Jordan, as proposed by the mediator, 'would fundamentally change the context of the boundary problem'. Changes, however, cannot come through imposition from outside but only 'as a result of an agreement negotiated between the interested parties as free and sovereign states'. The mediator was not authorized to effect changes in the territorial arrangements and certainly not to impose them. As for Jerusalem, the statement went on to say:

The Provisional Government [of Israel] was deeply wounded by your suggestion concerning the future of the City of Jerusalem, which it regards as disastrous. The idea that the relegation of Jerusalem to Arab rule might form part of a peaceful settlement could be conceived only in utter disregard of history and of the fundamental facts of the problem: the historic associations of Judaism with the Holy City; the unique place occupied by Jerusalem in Jewish history and present-day Jewish life; the Jewish inhabitants' two-thirds majority in the city . . . the fact that the whole of Jerusalem, with only a few minor exceptions, is now in Jewish hands; and not least, the fact that after an exhaustive study of the problem and as a result of an overwhelming consensus of Christian opinion in its midst, the General Assembly resolved that Jerusalem be placed under an international regime . . . the Jewish people, the State of Israel and the Jews of Jerusalem will never acquiesce in the imposition of Arab domination over Jerusalem . . . They will resist any such imposition with all the force at their command.

In his reply dated 6 July 1948 Bernadotte acknowledged that he did not consider himself bound by the provisions of the 29 November resolution
since had he done so 'there would have been no meaning' to his mediation. Moreover, the resolution providing for a mediator had been adopted by the Second Special Session of the General Assembly. On the matter of Jerusalem the mediator declared:

Jerusalem stands in the heart of what must be Arab territory in any partition of Palestine. To attempt to isolate this area politically and otherwise from surrounding territory presents enormous difficulties . . . [W]hile I fully appreciate that the question of Jerusalem is of very great concern for historical and other reasons, to the Jewish community of Palestine, Jerusalem was never intended to be a part of the Jewish State. In this sense, the position of the Jewish State is unaffected and the question of Jerusalem has no relationship to its status. The status of Jerusalem, therefore, is separate from the question of the constitution and boundaries of a Jewish State. The Israeli response reaffirmed that there can be 'no question of the Jews ever agreeing that Jerusalem should come under Arab domination. The State of Israel has come into being to uphold and defend the most vital interests of the Jewish people in Palestine. Among these the fate of Jerusalem is second to none.'

The difficulty of isolating Jerusalem from the surrounding territory, which you consider to be enormous, is to our mind rather slight as compared with the enormity of the proposal that the Holy City, with its hundred thousand Jews and its imperishable Jewish associations, should be placed under Arab rule - that the free life of its institutions, public bodies, social and political organisations, and the future of Jewish culture and civilisation so vitally linked up with that city's fate, should be sacrificed to Arab interests. Neither the UNSCOP nor the Assembly, which between them spent eight months in the study of the Palestine problem, could be unaware of the difficulties of 'isolation'; yet they decided that Jerusalem be internationalised. Since then significant events have taken place. An Arab army, equipped and financed by Great Britain and commanded by British Officers, made a determined attempt to regain Jerusalem for Islam. The Christian world abandoned the Holy City to its fate, and lifted not a finger in its defence. The Jews alone stood in the breach; they are now in control of practically the whole of Jerusalem, with the exception of the walled city, and of a firm land bridge between it and Israel. Henceforth, no constructive examination of the future of Jerusalem can be undertaken in disregard of these cardinal facts.
At a meeting with Bernadotte on 26 July 1948 Shertok told him that 'the Mediator’s suggestions’ were ‘fantastic. They meant making life in Jerusalem impossible . . . Dealing with specific points in the Mediator’s project for the demilitarization of Jerusalem, Mr Shertok insisted upon the right of every Jew to live in Jerusalem freely, and to come in and go out as he pleased.'

The future of Jerusalem was an open question . . . There was strong and increasing public feeling here that Jerusalem should be included in the State of Israel, and the Government was determined to keep all possible avenues open. The Government hoped that it might yet persuade the international world to accept its point of view regarding Jerusalem’s future.  

In a formal letter to Bernadotte dated 28 July rejecting the demilitarization proposal, Foreign Minister Shertok spelled out an additional factor for Israel’s refusal to accept the mediator’s proposal.  

The attitude of the Provisional Government [of Israel] to any plan of demilitarization emanating from the Mediator cannot but be influenced by the fact that the Mediator has proposed to place Jerusalem ultimately under Arab rule and that he has not withdrawn that proposal.

Bernadotte’s efforts with regard to demilitarization were, in any case, doomed to failure as a result of America’s refusal to supply the mediator with even the minimal number of troops needed to help police the city. The United States was determined not to become directly responsible for the affairs of Jerusalem and, moreover, would not contribute substantial forces to an international peacekeeping operation in Jerusalem lest this serve as an excuse for Eastern Bloc representation in such an international force. At the height of the cold war in 1948 the United States was not interested in furnishing the Soviet Union with opportunities to make inroads into the area under the guise of promoting international peace and security. American policy was summed up in a general memorandum subsequently submitted by Secretary of Defense James Forrestal to the National Security Council. In its conclusion the memorandum stated: ‘It is the opinion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that it would be incompatible with the security interests of the United States to have either United States or Soviet or Soviet satellite forces introduced into Palestine’.  

Even when Bernadotte requested a particular US Marine unit on board ship in the Mediterranean to patrol the Mount Scopus area and ensure its neutralization, his request was turned down. Even a threat to resign by the mediator did not move Washington policy-makers. It was ultimately recognized that Bernadotte’s efforts to demilitarize Jerusalem should be abandoned as pointless. He had neither the confidence of the parties (Israel and Jordan) nor the active support of the United States, and without these key elements his efforts along these lines were futile.

But in the meantime, Bernadotte’s suggestions on the demilitarization of Jerusalem coming on the heels of his earlier ‘suggestion’ to award Jerusalem to King Abdullah, spurred the Israeli government on to consolidating its legal position with regard to Jerusalem. On the same day that Bernadotte submitted his demilitarization proposals to the parties (22 July), Dr Leo Kohn, Israeli liaison official with the United Nations, submitted a memorandum to Shertok which also dealt with the issue of Jerusalem.

Our position on the Jerusalem question is at the present moment very unclear. We accepted last November the international city proposal of the UNSCOP majority report as endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly as a pis aller. It was put to us as part of the general scheme, and our rejection of their Jerusalem proposal might have resulted in the whole partition scheme falling through. Since then, however, a lot of things have happened.

In light of ‘the actual military position’, declared Kohn, Bernadotte could not press for the realization of his earlier ‘suggestions’. Kohn went on to say:

Nor do I think we should continue to make ourselves the advocates – in fact practically the sole advocates – of the international city idea. It was not our suggestion: it was forced upon us, and many of us disliked it intensely. I am convinced that it will for all time exclude Jerusalem from the Jewish State. I think Jerusalem under such a regime will [be] governed by a combination of anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist forces: the Anglican Bishop, the Papal Nuncio, Rabbi Dushinsky and Dr Magnes. It will result in Jerusalem being consciously or sub-consciously abandoned by many Jews in the Jewish State . . . Economically the regime will be untenable. The best of our people will not want to live under such a Vatican City.

Kohn urged that Israel take the initiative and work out ‘a new scheme for the partition of Jerusalem [with Jordan] in the light of the new circumstances now created’. This would be Israel’s response to both Bernadotte’s ‘suggestions’ and the demilitarization proposals.

I propose that we renew the suggestion which we made to the Woodhead Commission in 1938 that the New City of Jerusalem be
included in the Jewish State and connected with it by a tenable and defensible corridor. The Old City plus some Arab Quarters outside the Walls, but minus the Jewish Quarter in the Old City, should go to the Arab State. The corridor should be based on the new road to Tel Aviv but should provide space for the establishment of a dozen new Jewish agricultural settlements to fill the gap between Kiriath Anavim and Hulda and beyond that. If we can achieve this, Jewish Jerusalem may become the capital of the Jewish State, and the State of Israel secure that historical background which it badly needs both for itself and to impress the whole Jewish people and the world at large, as historical successor of the ancient Jewish State. This may also be the economic saving of Jerusalem.

At its regular meeting on 25 July the Israeli cabinet adopted various operative decisions with regard to Jerusalem. Besides deciding to reject the demilitarization proposals completely, the cabinet resolved to extend Israeli authority to Jerusalem, to make its laws applicable there, and to appoint a military governor for the city.

The Israeli position was summed up by Shertok in a cable he despatched to the Israeli representative in Paris on 30 July 1948. Fisher had inquired whether Israel's position on Jerusalem had changed and whether Israel was intent on annexing its part of the city.

Our present attitude regarding Jerusalem as follows:

1. Part Resolution 29 November regarding international regime Jerusalem unimplemented for no fault of ours. We pressed Trusteeship Council approve Statute, submit it Assembly for ratification, but Council refused.

2. Entire Christian world defaulted in its responsibility for Jerusalem by not lifting finger its defence when city was continually shelled by Arab Legion under British command and its fall seemed imminent.

3. Jewish arms alone and stoicism Jerusalem Jews saved Jerusalem from relapse to rule Islam, and placed entire area New Jerusalem and corridor from it to Israel firmly in our hands.

4. In flagrant contradiction to international verdict, and despite patent dangers involved for Jewish community, Mediator acting behalf U.N. Assembly proposed transfer Jerusalem to Arab rule.

5. This astounding proposal evoked no protest on part any Christian power concerned, and passed over in silence by Truce Commission.

6. This week Trusteeship Council again refused move regarding International Statute, its majority having voted for indefinite post-

ponement, only Soviet Union voting against, Australia and Costa Rica abstaining.

7. In all these circumstances, we no longer consider ourselves morally bound by our acquiescence in Assembly's decision internationalise Jerusalem, which U.N. itself consistently refused implement and U.N. Mediator openly repudiated.

8. Our responsibility for protection lives, property, Jewish community Jerusalem, Jewish institutions of world wide importance which city contains, and supreme spiritual, cultural, association Jewish people with Holy City impells us refrain anything which might prejudice possibility our renewing claim for inclusion Jewish Jerusalem in Israel at proper stage, if we see no other way safeguard our vital interests.

9. Proclamation extending authority Provisional Government and application laws Israel to parts Jerusalem under our control intended regularise position, enable us place various vital financial transactions and administrative arrangements on proper legal basis and turn our virtual responsibility for maintenance law [and] order and enforcement internal discipline into formal one.

10. This does not in itself prejudice future Jerusalem or our ultimate attitude to question international regime. Otherhand, our approach to question demilitarisation mooted by Mediator is fur-reachingly influenced by above considerations, which lead us reject anything liable prejudice issue conversely.

In effect, Shertok was making it clear that Israel's stand had changed, in no small measure, due to the proposals emanating from the mediator and the passivity, or silent acquiescence, of the international community in the face of these proposals. From a reluctant acceptance of the internationalization scheme, Israeli policy was slowly but surely edging toward the inclusion of Jerusalem into Israel proper, on a formal basis. If in 1947 international realities had precluded the inclusion of Jerusalem in the proposed Jewish state, by the summer of 1948 new international realities were dictating that Israel cast its mantle over Jewish Jerusalem.

In accordance with the decision of the cabinet, Ben-Gurion, as minister of defence, issued a proclamation on 2 August 1948 (made retroactive to 15 May declaring Jerusalem and its environs, including the stretch of territory connecting the city with the coastal plain, an 'administered area' subject to Israeli law. Dr Dov Joseph was appointed Military Governor of the City. The Israeli attitude was summed up in a press conference held by Foreign Minister Sharett on the day the Israeli proclamation was issued. 'Israel [was] originally impressed by [the] emphatic expression [of
the Christian world that Jerusalem be internationalized but when [the] Mediator proposed turning over Jerusalem to Arab rule not one Christian nation raised [the] slightest objection. Very simply, in the eyes of the Israeli government the internationalization scheme was already moribund. Once the United Nations had demonstrated that it was incapable of exercising authority over any part of Jerusalem, the Israeli administration felt obliged to move in quickly and fill the vacuum by legalizing the de facto situation of Israeli control.

The trend of Israeli thinking at that time was also revealed in a despatch to the State Department by US Consul-General John J. Macdonald, reporting a conversation he had held with Golda Meyerson (afterwards Meir) on 11 August. According to Macdonald, Meyerson had ruled out internationalization as something which the Jews would never agree to accept. Jerusalem, she reportedly said, would either become an all-Jewish city or would be partitioned in such a manner as to give the Arabs some small area outside of the Old City, while the Old City itself would be 'considered a museum' and accorded an international status under the United Nations.

BERNADOTTE PLAN NO. 2 AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE

On 16 September 1948 Count Bernadotte published his second set of proposals for a solution to the Palestinian problem. He abandoned his earlier views on the subject of Jerusalem and now proposed a form of internationalization, as follows:

The City of Jerusalem, which should be understood as covering the area defined in the resolution of the General Assembly of 29 November, should be treated separately and should be placed under effective United Nations control with maximum feasible local autonomy for its Arab and Jewish communities, with full safeguards for the protection of the Holy Places and sites and free access to them, and for religious freedom.

Bernadotte's suggestion diverged considerably from the original internationalization scheme of the 1947 Partition Resolution. For one thing, unlike the original partition scheme, Bernadotte's plan failed to provide for consulting the population of Jerusalem after ten years concerning modifications in the regime of the city. However, no less significant was the fact that his proposal omitted any reference to Jerusalem as a corpus separatum; it provided for maximum local autonomy for the Arab and Jewish communities; and it made no mention of the Trusteeship Council in any administrative role. Thus, the territorial nature of internationalization was considerably attenuated. Key emphasis seems to have been placed rather on affording UN protection for the Holy Places and on ensuring freedom of access for the adherents of all faiths. A more modest role for the international organization seemed at that point more consonant with the realities of the situation. For in September 1948, when Bernadotte issued his report, Jerusalem was already a city divided between two sovereign states, and the United Nations had not been, and was not then, capable of modifying this fact and of extending its control over the city.

Several days after publication of his proposals Count Bernadotte was assassinated. His recommendations assumed the nature of a testament for the United Nations, which his successor, Ralph Bunche, and the British and American governments felt committed to carry out. (There is strong evidence that the Bernadotte plan had from the beginning been formulated in accordance with British policy objectives in Palestine.) It was in this spirit that the British delegate submitted a draft resolution to the General Assembly on 18 November 1948 which also incorporated a paragraph on the subject of Jerusalem. The draft resolution provided that the Jerusalem area should 'be accorded special and separate treatment from the rest of Palestine and should be placed under effective United Nations control with the maximum feasible local autonomy for the Arab and Jewish communities'. In the meantime, in an appearance before the First Committee of the General Assembly on 15 November, the Israeli foreign minister, Moshe Shertok, rejected the mediator's report even as a basis for discussion. Israeli, he declared, insisted on 'the permanent inclusion in Israel of modern Jewish Jerusalem and of the stretch of territory uniting Jerusalem with the coast, both of which were now under Israeli control'; at the same time, it 'wholeheartedly acclaimed the principle of international authority over the Holy Places'. Conceding that the principle must have 'territorial expression', Israel maintained that this 'could be upheld by internationalizing the Old City... within the ancient wall and any nearby Holy Places'. Indeed, the international authority could be given jurisdiction over all the Holy Places in Palestine. 'Such an international regime would be manageable from the point of view of both finance and defence.'

If Israel, for its part, took exception to the Bernadotte plan, the Arab states, for their own reasons, also objected to this plan. The essential reason was that the plan accorded Israel a measure of international recognition. Arab opposition, coupled with that of the Soviet bloc, led to the defeat of the British draft resolution reflecting the essentials of the Bernadotte proposals. Only on the question of Jerusalem did the
General Assembly adhere, more or less faithfully, to the Bernadotte scheme.

The General Assembly was quite uninterested in limiting internationalization to the Holy Places, as suggested by Israel, and on 11 December 1948 it adopted the British draft proposal which called for territorial internationalization for all of Jerusalem, albeit in a modified form, as noted above. The Palestine Conciliation Commission, established under the same resolution, was to draw up a plan to implement this scheme and present it to the next Assembly session in 1949.]*

Both on the eve and in the aftermath of the UN vote, Israel actively demonstrated its resolve not to relinquish its part of Jerusalem in favour of any international regime. On 1 December, Chaim Weizmann, President of Israel's Provisional State Council, visited Jerusalem and delivered an address to the city's Advisory Council. His remarks on Jerusalem were penetrating and poignant.

Jerusalem is to us the quintessence of the Palestine idea. Its restoration symbolizes the redemption of Israel. . . . It is the centre of our ancient national glory. . . . It embodies all that is noblest in our hopes for the future. . . . In addition to our historical unbroken chain of Jewish settlement in this city, [and] the fact of our numerical preponderance among its inhabitants, a new link has been forged — your heroic defence of Jerusalem in this past year. It gives us the right to claim that Jerusalem is and should remain ours.

Where were all those who indulged in such fine phrases about the spiritual associations of Jerusalem for the whole civilized world? Did they lift a finger to protect Jerusalem, its men, women and children, its homes and houses of prayer, against the Arab shrapnel which rained death day and night on your homes for months on end? . . . When I say that Jerusalem is ours, I am fully conscious of the sacred associations which Jerusalem has for others than ourselves. We respect these associations. . . . We are agreeable that special arrangements be made for the Old City with its Holy Places. . . . There would, however, appear to be no reason why such special arrangements . . . should extend also to the New City. . . . It seems utterly inconceivable that this Jewish city should be placed under foreign rule. It seems inconceivable that the establishment of a Jewish state . . . should be accompanied by the detachment from it of its spiritual centre and historical capital.]*

On 20 December 1948, barely a week after adoption of the Assembly resolution, the Israeli cabinet decided to transfer 'government institutions' to Jerusalem.)* On 2 February 1949 Ben-Gurion, as minister of defence, announced the abolition of military government in Jerusalem.* The city was henceforth to be subject to civilian administration in common with all other parts of Israel.

Elections to the First Knesset, the Israeli parliament, were held in January 1949, and residents of Israeli-administered Jerusalem went to the polls together with Israeli citizens throughout the country.* The opening session of the Knesset, to which the diplomatic corps had been invited, convened in Jerusalem on 14 February 1949.* One of the Knesset's first acts was the election of Dr Weizmann as the first President of the State of Israel, who thereupon took the oath of office in Jerusalem.* All of these acts tended to confirm that Israel would not be lightly dislodged from Jerusalem. By the end of 1948 the modern part of Jerusalem constituted an integral part of the state of Israel. It was only a short step to reaffirming Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish state. This step was taken just a year later when on 23 January 1950 the Knesset adopted a resolution which declared: 'With the creation of a Jewish State Jerusalem again became its capital.**

To conclude then, Israeli policy on the question of Jerusalem in 1947–48 passed through four stages. Initially, the Jewish Agency strove to have Jerusalem included in the Jewish state, but recognizing that statehood could only be achieved with the internationalization of Jerusalem, it relented. Thus, Jerusalem became hostage for Israel's independence under the 1947 UN Partition Plan. In the second stage, Israel pressed the United Nations to implement partition and with it, UN control of Jerusalem, in the hope that this would spare the city's Jewish population from the scourge of war. Failure of the United Nations to act, Israel subsequently claimed, meant that the world body had forfeited its right to exercise any authority over Jerusalem. In the third phase, Israel rejected a proposal by Count Bernadotte, the UN mediator, for the demilitarization of the city, on the grounds that only Israeli military intervention had saved Jerusalem from succumbing to the Arab seige. In the fourth stage, Israel drew the moral of its battle on behalf of Jewish Jerusalem to what it deemed was its logical conclusion, by incorporating that part of the city into the state of Israel. Jerusalem was no longer hostage to the emergence of the Jewish state; it was part of it. In short order it was to be affirmed as its everlasting capital.

NOTES

1. See the statement of Dr Abba Hillel Silver during General Assembly deliberations on the question of Jerusalem. General Assembly Official Records (hereafter GAOR), Ad Hoc. Political Committee, 4th Meeting, 2 Oct. 1947, pp.16–17. See also Hebrew
MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES


**SETTLEMENT IN JERUSALEM IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Christians</th>
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<td>10,500</td>
<td>16,750</td>
<td>75,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>33,971</td>
<td>13,413</td>
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<td>62,053</td>
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<td>1933</td>
<td>51,222</td>
<td>19,894</td>
<td>19,335</td>
<td>90,453</td>
<td>56.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>165,000</td>
<td>60.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>195,000</td>
<td>54,963</td>
<td>12,646</td>
<td>263,309</td>
<td>74.3</td>
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**JEWISH POPULATION OF JERUSALEM AND THE REST OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Jerusalem</th>
<th>The Land of Israel</th>
<th>Jerusalem Jews in Total Jewish Population (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>5,700</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>28,000</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>33,970</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>51,222</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>64,500</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>80,800</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>100,200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>200,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


8. Ibid., p.1378.


11. Ibid., p.142.


20. Ibid., p.994, n.2.


22. Ibid., p.243.

23. Ibid., pp.262-4.

24. Ibid., p.264.

25. Ibid., p.288.

26. Ibid., p.290.


30. See ibid., p.1727.


33. Ibid., pp.1257-8.

34. Ibid., p.1257.


36. Ibid., p.411.

37. Ibid., pp.424-5.

38. FRUS 1948, pp.1250-1, 1260, 1264 and 1265.

39. Ibid., p.1324.

40. See Bernadotte's appeal to Secretary of State Marshall, 20 July 1948, ibid., p.1231 and Marshall's reply, 28 July 1948, ibid., pp.1251-2. Marshall's position was unequivocal: 'We regret that we are unable to accept a military commitment of this nature in Jerusalem.' Ibid., p.1251.

41. See cable by Consul-General of United States in Jerusalem, John G. MacDonald (to be distinguished from Special US Representative to Israel, and ultimately Ambassador to Israel, James G. McDonald), 1 Aug. 1948, p.1265 and reply by Secretary Marshall, 3 Aug. 1948, ibid., pp.1275-6.


43. Ibid., p.378 n.2.

44. Ibid., pp.434-5.

45. For text of proclamation, see Medzini, *Israel's Foreign Relations, Vol.1*, pp.219-20;
also summarized in FRUS 1948, pp. 1273–4.
40. Reported in FRUS 1948, p. 1286, n. 2.
41. Ibid., p. 1307.
43. This divergence from the Partition scheme was subsequently sharply attacked in the General Assembly debates by the Soviet delegate. See GAOR, 3rd Session, 1st Committee, 225th Meeting, 3 Dec. 1948, pp. 894, 896. See also the remarks of the Byelorussian delegate, ibid., 21st Meeting, 24 Nov. 1948, p. 743; and of the Polish delegate, ibid., 213th Meeting, 25 Nov. 1948, p. 774.
44. See the statement by Secretary of State Marshall, 21 Sept. 1948, FRUS 1948, pp. 1415–16 and the comment on the assassination by Robert Mcintosh, ibid., p. 1413 n. 1.
46. UN Doc. A/C.3/1394.
49. See the sharply critical comment by Foreign Office official Bernard Burrows about the failure of the Arab states to support the British draft resolution. It was, he said, ‘highly irresponsible and as seriously prejudicing best interest of Arabs’, 7 Dec. 1948, FRUS 1948, p. 1650. See also the message from the First Secretary in the US Embassy in London, G. Lewis Jones, 8 Dec. 1948, ibid., pp. 1650–1, and the analysis of Foster Dulles, Acting Chairman of the US Delegation to the United Nations, 9 Dec. 1948, ibid., pp. 1656–7.
50. GA Resolution 194(III), 11 Dec. 1948.
52. See Brecher, Jerusalem: Israel’s Political Decision’, p. 18.
55. See FRUS 1949, p. 739.
56. See Medzini, Israel’s Foreign Relations, Vol. 1, p. 222.
57. Divrei HaKnesset, 2nd Session, No. 11 (1950), p. 603. See also Michael Brecher, Jerusalem: Israel’s Political Decisions’, p. 21; and Gabriel Padon, ‘The Divided City: 1948–1967’, in Oesterreicher and Sinai (eds.), Jerusalem, p. 92. It might be noted that the opposition in the Knesset had proposed legislation declaring Jerusalem the capital of Israel. Ben-Gurion maintained that a law having prospective effect was unnecessary and might have deleterious consequences. He persuaded the Knesset to endorse his draft resolution which confirmed that Jerusalem had been the capital of Israel since time immemorial. See H. Eugene Bovis, The Jerusalem Question (Stanford, CA: Hoover Inst. Press, 1971), p. 82 and Brecher, Jerusalem: Israel’s Political Decisions’, p. 21.