JERUSALEM: ISRAEL'S POLITICAL DECISIONS, 1947–1977

Michael Brecher

There are some Israelis who would give up the Golan, some Israelis who would give up the Sinai, and some who would give up the West Bank. But I do not think you can find any Israelis who are willing to give up Jerusalem. They cannot and will not.

Mayor Teddy Kollek
Foreign Affairs, July 1977

For three thousand years the Jewish people have looked upon Jerusalem as a national, religious and cultural symbol uniting Jews all over the world. With the revival of the Jewish State in 1948, the City was perceived to be an integral part; indeed, on December 11, 1949, the government of Israel decided to make Jerusalem the seat of government. During the period preceding that crucial decision the Arab states had rejected the UN Partition Resolution and had launched a military assault on the new state. Fighting continued in Jerusalem until the beginning of 1949 when the physical link between Jerusalem and Israel's heartland on the coastal plain was secure. By the time the Armistice Agreement was signed with Jordan in the spring of 1949 the City had been split in two, with Israeli forces controlling the entire western part and the Jordanians occupying the Old City and sections to the east.

During the last phase of the struggle for independence the Yishuv (Palestine Jewry) made a seemingly intolerable concession, namely, acceptance of the UN proposal for the territorial internationalization of Jerusalem. In the Israeli view, that commitment was nullified by the events that followed it and by the impotence of the universal organization in the Holy City's hour of need. The decision to make Jerusalem the capital of Israel occurred almost a year after the military struggle had ended. There was a series of implementing decisions in December 1949 and January 1950. Three years later the Foreign Office was transferred to Jerusalem. And on June 14, 1967, a much more controversial decision was made: the government of Israel decided to annex East Jerusalem and surrounding areas.

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Decision Makers and Their Images

Mapai, Israel's Labor Party, held a decisive majority in the Coalition Cabinet (eight of twelve ministers) which made the decision to proclaim Jerusalem the seat of government. Throughout the early period of Israel's statehood the persons who carried the greatest influence on decisions concerning Jerusalem were: Prime Minister and Defense Minister David Ben Gurion, Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett; Dov Joseph, an articulate spokesman of the Jerusalem Jewish community, and Rabbi Leib Yehuda Maimon, the senior minister from the Religious Front.

In terms of Israeli thought and action the profound attachment of world Jewry to Jerusalem was poignantly expressed by Ben Gurion on the eve of a crucial UN General Assembly debate on December 5, 1949. While reaffirming that "Jewish Jerusalem is an organic part, and cannot be separated from, the State of Israel," he laid bare the prismatic core of his image:

... it is an integral part of Israeli history, in her faith and in the depths of her soul. Jerusalem is the "heart of hearts" of Israel ... A Nation which over 2,500 years has always maintained the pledge vowed by the banished people on the rivers of Babylon, not to forget Jerusalem—this nation will never sanction its separation. [Moreover], Jewish Jerusalem will never accept foreign rule after thousands of her sons and daughters have freed, for the third time, their historic homeland and delivered Jerusalem from destruction ... Israelis are ready to sacrifice themselves for Jerusalem no less than the English for London, the Russians for Moscow, and the Americans for Washington.1

The Executive of the Jewish Agency, by agreeing to the Partition Plan of November 29, 1947, had given the Yishuv's sanction to the proposal of a corpus separatum, which placed Jerusalem's 100,000 Jews under an international administration, at least for a period of ten years. Why was Jerusalem "sacrificed?" Reflections of Israeli decision makers after the event illuminate their perceptions and the ensuing decision.

Ben Gurion recalled, a few years after leaving the prime ministership for the last time: "It was the price to be paid for statehood. We accepted the UN decision, everything. If the Arabs had accepted it fully, we would have carried it out fully."2 And Sharett, who conducted the Jewish case at the UN, together with the American Zionist leader Abba Hillel Silver, recorded soon after the diplomatic battle his explanation for the acceptance of internationalization: "As regards Jerusalem ... It became evident that the requisite majority for the Partition Plan could not be mustered if the internationalization of the Holy City was omitted from it ... The

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2. Ben Gurion interview, June 1966. Five years later he elaborated on this without hesitation, emphasizing the same rationale—"the price of statehood": "In November 1947 I was of the belief that we have the right to the entire land of Israel. But if the UN passed the Resolution, by a large majority, and if the Arabs would concede [Israel's independence], the issue would be settled totally, and it shall be so."
Vatican regarded the latter measure as one which would... vest the Catholic Church with predominant influence... and thus warranting acquiescence in the elevation of the Jewish People to the level of sovereign statehood..."3

According to Ze'ev Sharef, then Secretary to the Government (Cabinet), the idea of Jerusalem as a corpus separatum began to fade among Yishuv leaders as early as January-February 1948.4 This was certainly true of Ben Gurion at the dawn of independence, as is evident in his reply to the tense debate on Jerusalem in the Provisional State Council on June 24. Indeed, there is no more illuminating expression of the Prime Minister's pragmatic image: the issue, for him, was not whether to include Jerusalem in the state but how to achieve that goal in the light of military and economic obstacles and conditions.

The basic question now for our existence and future is our military strength. On it depends the entire fate of Jerusalem... With regard to the question whether or not Jerusalem is within the country... Until peace is proclaimed and boundaries are decided upon by international authority, with the agreement of all sides, we speak of Jerusalem as within the boundaries of the Jewish State... (as of now, to my regret, without the Old City) exactly as Tel Aviv. And there is no difference between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, Haifa, Hanita. They are all part of the Jewish State.5 [emphasis added]

All subsequent actions of Ben Gurion on the Jerusalem issue were derived from the unshakeable image of Jerusalem as an integral part of Israel: it was enunciated with his typical admixture of realism, logic and vision. What made Jerusalem vital to him (and to Israelis as a nation) was the historic, national and emotional links between Jewry and Jerusalem.

Sharett's image did not encompass the passionate commitment to Jewish sovereignty over Jerusalem so conspicuous in Ben Gurion's pronouncements. Even in his lengthy survey to the Knesset after the hostile UN vote of December 9, 1949, his reaction was restrained. The solitary exception was his remark that "the Assembly Resolution amazed and shocked our public. It was as though an arrow had been shot into our heart from the very fortress to which we had looked for protection and support."6 That restraint was to be reflected in his subsequent behavior.

**Decision Process**

Israel's decisions relating to Jerusalem may be grouped into four clusters or phases:


(1) from November 15, 1949, (Ben Gurion's advice to the Cabinet to act quickly in the matter of Jerusalem as Israel's capital) to December 11, 1949, (the decision to make Jerusalem the seat of government);
(2) from December 11, 1949, to January 23, 1950, (the implementation of that strategic decision);
(3) from May 4, 1952, (a formal announcement that the Foreign Office would move to Jerusalem) to July 12, 1953, (the actual transfer of the Ministry); and, after a lengthy lapse of time,
(4) from June 7 to June 28, 1967, (the integration of West and East Jerusalem).

The process began with the UN Partition Resolution of November 29, 1947. Under the terms of Resolution 181 (II) the City of Jerusalem was to become a corpus separatum, administered by the Trusteeship Council, acting on behalf of the United Nations as the Administering Authority. An appointed Governor would serve as the chief administrative official, with the assistance of an administrative staff, principally of Palestinians,* a police force composed of non-Palestinian nationals and an elected Legislative Council. Jerusalem was to be demilitarized and neutralized. It was to form part of the Economic Union of Palestine, including the independent Jewish and Arab states, and was designated the Headquarters of its Economic Board. Representatives of the two states were to be accredited to the Governor of Jerusalem and were to be responsible for the protection of the interests of their states and nationals in the City. There were also provisions concerning the administration of justice, citizenship, local autonomy, freedom of transit, the acceptance of two official languages, Arabic and Hebrew, though other “working languages” could be adopted, and the special powers of the Governor for the protection of the Holy Places. The Trusteeship Council (TC) was directed to prepare and approve a detailed Statute within five months. It was to take effect no later than October 1, 1948, and was to remain in force initially for ten years. Thereafter the Statute was to be subject to reexamination by the TC. Residents of Jerusalem were to be “free to express by means of a referendum their wishes as to possible modifications of the regime of the City.”

The Yishuv acquiesced in the proposal for territorial internationalization on purely pragmatic grounds: it was, as noted, the perceived sine qua non of independence. Among many, too, there was the conviction that the unfolding of events would prove a corpus separatum unworkable. Dov Joseph summed up the decision makers' mood: "We hoped that Jerusalem would be part of the [Jewish] state eventually. We thought that because we had a

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7. The text of the Partition Resolution is in UN General Assembly Document (henceforth UN.A/), UN.A/519 (November 29, 1947).
clear majority this would take place. But we didn't think about what would happen ten years later. We were then in the midst of a struggle over *corpus separatum*. The outcome was far from certain. It could have turned out better than it seemed. 8 And, as the appointed day for the termination of the Mandate approached, the battle for, over, and in Jerusalem rendered the plan abortive—at least until the first Arab-Israeli War came to an end. 9

Within hours of Israel's Proclamation of Independence on May 14 Arab armies invaded the new state, and Jewish Jerusalem came under siege. The UN Mediator, Count Bernadotte, startled and angered Israel's leaders on June 29, by proposing the transfer of Jerusalem—as a whole—to Jordan. It was dismissed out of hand and formally rejected by the Provisional Council of State on July 5.

In mid-July the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) made an ill-fated attempt to liberate the Old City: Operation Kedem failed, and East Jerusalem remained under Jordan's control for the next 19 years. 10 Nevertheless, the New City was under effective Israeli authority. It had held fast against the attacks of Jordan's Arab Legion during the "four-week war" (May 14–June 11) and again, after the first truce, during the "ten-day war" (July 9–19). The prolonged second truce (July 19–October 22) witnessed limited hostilities on every front. 11 But on September 16, just a day before his assassination by an Israeli paramilitary underground group, the UN Mediator reverted to the

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8. Joseph interview, June 1971. A Jewish majority of 50 per cent dates back at least to 1884. In the period 1898–1912, the Jewish majority in Jerusalem ranged from 64.3 to 67.4 per cent. The official census thereafter indicated the following figures:

**Jerusalem: Distribution of Population 1922–46**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Jews</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
<th>Christians</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>33,971</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>13,413</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>14,699</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>62,578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>51,222</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>19,894</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>19,335</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>90,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>97,000</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>30,630</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>29,350</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>.1</td>
<td>157,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>99,320</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>33,680</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>31,330</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>.1</td>
<td>164,410</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


idea of internationalization. He also recommended two major territorial modifications of the 1947 Partition Plan: to give the Negev to Egypt; and, as compensation, Western Galilee would go to Israel. The General Assembly responded by instructing the newly-created Palestine Conciliation Commission (PCC) on December 11, 1948, to "present detailed proposals for a permanent international regime for the Jerusalem area . . . ." There was no immediate official Israeli reaction "because we weren't sufficiently strong and we wished to enlarge our presence in Jerusalem. We knew that the population division was clearly in our favor. And we wanted, if possible, to avoid an open conflict with the UN," especially when Israel was about to seek admission to the world organization.

The first step toward a State of Israel presence in the New City had already been taken, namely, the appointment of Dov Joseph as Military Governor, on August 2, 1948. In mid-September Israel's Supreme Court was established in Jerusalem. Later that month Ben Gurion suffered a setback when three Mapai ministers (Sharett, Kaplan and Remez) aligned themselves with lesser Coalition party members to reject his proposal for a military operation against Latrun—in order to ensure a Jewish Jerusalem.

On October 6 the Cabinet, by a vote of seven to four with two abstentions, decided that, if Israeli control over all of Jerusalem could not be achieved, and partition became necessary, the Israeli UN Delegation would agree to it. And on December 20 the Israeli Cabinet decided to transfer "government institutions" to Jerusalem. But the most conspicuous acts to create an irrevocable state presence occurred in mid-February 1949: the first Knesset convened in Jerusalem on the 14th; and three days later Dr. Chaim Weizmann took the oath of office as Israel's first President.

As the General Assembly convened for its annual autumn session, pressures for internationalization mounted once more. One was the Vatican-launched massive press campaign which urged Catholic states around the world, notably the influential Latin American group, then constituting 40 per cent of the UN membership, to support a corpus separatum. A second source of pressure, largely influenced by the first, was Latin America itself.

12. UN GAOR, III, Suppl. II, A/648, esp. pp. 7ff. 17–19. See also F. E. Bernadotte, To Jerusalem (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951) passim; and Bovis, op. cit.
15. Ben Gurion and Pinhas Rosen interviews, May and February 1971, respectively. The vote was seven to five against the proposal, with one apparent abstention. For detailed extracts from the Minutes of the government meeting on 26 September 1948, when the decision was taken, see S. Nakdimon, "Behia Ledorot" (A Tragedy for Generations), Yedioth Aharonot (Tel Aviv), October 16, 1970.
Another substantial pressure group at the UN was the Arab states. And finally, the Soviet Union and her clients were still committed to an internationalized Jerusalem.

The first phase in Israel's decision process on Jerusalem began in mid-November 1949. On the 15th, following Sharett's report to the Cabinet about the imminent Assembly discussion on Jerusalem, the Prime Minister urged his colleagues to act quickly and transfer the seat of government to Israel's historic capital. There was no decision. A week later, Ben Gurion persuaded Opposition Leader Begin not to press to a vote his motion to make Jerusalem the capital but, rather, to transfer it to the Legislative Committee of the Knesset: the principal reason was secret negotiations with Jordan then in motion for an overall settlement which would have included a division of Jerusalem between the two states.17

On the 25th Sharett tried to dissuade the Assembly's Ad Hoc Political Committee from the surge to territorial internationalization. On December 5 Sharett telephoned to convey the alarming news that the hard-line Australian draft resolution was assured of a large majority. Ben Gurion urged an immediate session of the Knesset to hear a Government Statement. He also advised the Cabinet to transfer the government to Jerusalem immediately after the Assembly session.18

The Prime Minister's statement to the Knesset on December 5 was a conscious, unequivocal act of defiance. His words were blunt and firm:

... we declare that Israel will never willingly give up Jerusalem, as she has never surrendered her faith in the thousands of years of peoplehood, her national unity, or her right to Jerusalem, to Zion—in spite of the persecution of which there has been no likeness in history ... And we cannot look upon the decision of November 29 [1947] as binding, since the UN did not succeed in carrying out its decision. In our opinion, the decision of 29 November on Jerusalem is null and void.19

Ben Gurion's objective was to persuade the Assembly's Ad Hoc Political Committee to reverse course on the Australian draft resolution. In fact, his speech was dysfunctional and was perceived by many UN members as provocative. The next day the Committee voted overwhelmingly in favor of territorial internationalization. And three days later, on December 9, 1949, the General Assembly reaffirmed the plan for a corpus separatum by a vote of 38 to 14, with seven abstentions: it was even more decisive than

19. Diurei Ha-knesset, iii, p. 221. Almost all speakers who followed took a similar hard line.
the vote for the Partition Plan itself. The Trusteeship Council was directed to revive and revise its Statute for Jerusalem, suspended in April 1948, and, further, to implement it immediately. It was also specifically instructed not to “allow any actions taken by any interested Government or Governments to divert it from adopting and implementing the Statute . . .”. No coercive sanctions were provided.

It was that UN act which served as the decisive input into Israel’s strategic decision on Jerusalem. News of the Assembly vote reached the government of Israel in the early hours of Saturday morning, December 10. The next day, the Cabinet decided to make Jerusalem the seat of government, that is, the capital of Israel. It was an historic decision, 19 months after proclamation of independence. Ironically, it was in response to a perceived threat from the world organization which, at the outset, had provided international sanction to the new Jewish state.

There is no doubt as to the date of the core decision—December 11. Nor is there any dissent on the basic question as to what induced the Israeli government to make the decision on Jerusalem at that time. All persons pointed without hesitation to the Assembly resolution of December 9. Perhaps the most impressive evidence of a direct input-output relationship is the fact that the idea of Jerusalem as the capital was not discussed by the Cabinet until a few weeks before the strategic decision was made.

As for the decision, Ben Gurion took the final initiative. He was actively encouraged, and on earlier occasions prodded, by two other ministers—Rabbi Maimon (Religious Affairs) and Dov Joseph (Supply and Rationing). Most of the other ministers supported the decision. A few were hesitant

20. UN GAOR, IV, Rev. 303, approved at the 275th Plenary Meeting. For the Assembly’s deliberations see Bovis, *op. cit.*, pp. 74–80, 137. The General Assembly’s voting record on proposals recommending territorial internationalization was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>For</th>
<th>Against</th>
<th>Abstentions</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947 (Nov. 29)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Res. 181 (II)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948 (Dec. 11)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Res. 194 (III)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949 (Dec. 9)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Res. 303 (IV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(no resolution: less than two-third majority)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(no discussion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(no resolution: less than two-third majority)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953–67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(no discussion)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. There were various proposals during the months preceding independence about a seat of government. The National Administration finally decided, on May 13, in favor of Sarona, because of its proximity to Tel Aviv and, relatively, to Jerusalem, and because of the availability of housing space for a government in the making. Sharef, *op. cit.*, pp. 158–162.
(Kaplan, Remez). And one dissented—Sharett. The Foreign Minister cabled his resignation from New York immediately after the Cabinet decision: he felt responsible for Israel's setback at the Assembly which, he acknowledged, he did not anticipate; and his view that Israel should not act directly against an Assembly resolution had been rejected. "I never showed the cable to my colleagues," recalled Ben Gurion. Instead he wrote to Sharett that the Assembly vote was not his responsibility and that the Cabinet had voted against him too. It remained to operationalize Israel's basic decision on Jerusalem.

**Implementation**

The Prime Minister served notice of Israel's defiance immediately after the Cabinet meeting on the 11th. To journalists he remarked: "Jerusalem is an inseparable part of Israel and her eternal capital. No United Nations vote can alter that historic fact." In his statement to the Knesset two days later Ben Gurion elaborated on this theme, conveyed the government's decisions, and left no doubt as to Israel's resolve:

This [UN] decision is incapable of implementation if only because of the determined, unalterable opposition of her [Jerusalem's] inhabitants . . . the State of Israel has always had, and it will always have, one capital—Eternal Jerusalem.

The Knesset responded to the Prime Minister's urging by approving a motion on December 15 favoring a return to Jerusalem as quickly as possible. On the 17th it was announced that certain ministries would be transferred shortly. The first to go were Supply and Rationing (Joseph) and Religious Affairs (Maimon); others, recalled Joseph, "had excuses to delay their move." The Cabinet approved on January 17, 1950, a one-sentence draft of a motion to be presented by the Prime Minister to the Legislative and Foreign Affairs and Security Committee of Parliament. It was passed by them on the 19th: "With the creation of a Jewish State, Jerusalem again became its capital." Always conscious of continuity and of Israel's history-rooted claim, Ben Gurion observed that no legislative act was required because Jerusalem had been made Israel's capital by King David.

The permanent home of the Knesset was not inaugurated until August 1968—in the New City. More important, Parliament has met continuously in Jerusalem since December 1949; and all ministries but two had moved to the capital by 1951. One stayed by choice—Defense: it was universally agreed in Israel that the conditions of prolonged war and Jerusalem's isolation required that the IDF be directed from a relatively secure head-

quarters in the Tel Aviv area. The other was the Foreign Office, which remained there until July 1953.

There is a direct correlation between declining UN pressure and declining Israeli hesitation to transfer the Foreign Ministry. On April 17, 1950, the Secretary General was informed that the Soviet Union withdrew her support of territorial internationalization. At the Fifth Session of the General Assembly in the autumn, the debate on Jerusalem was inconclusive: neither a Belgian draft, which in essence reaffirmed the Catholic preference for *corpus separatum*, nor a Swedish draft, incorporating Eban’s formula of “functional internationalization,” commanded the necessary majority.25 Jerusalem was not discussed at the Sixth General Assembly session in 1951. Thus the government of Israel took its first cautious step—by announcing on May 4, 1952, that the Foreign Office would move as soon as the “necessary technical arrangements” had been completed. This was a signal to the world body that Israel had decided to wait another year. The US and the UK protested. However, once more the UN failed to act: Jerusalem was not on the agenda of the Seventh General Assembly session in 1952.26 Finally, on July 13, 1953, the Foreign Office was transferred to Israel’s capital. It was the last implementing act deriving from the core decision of December 11, 1949, on Jerusalem.

The domestic response was enthusiasm, but reaction abroad was undisguised anger. A boycott of the Foreign Ministry was declared by the US and the UK. Other states followed their lead: diplomats from many missions were not permitted to conduct business or to attend official functions in Jerusalem; and all communications continued to be sent to the Ministry’s Liaison Office in Tel Aviv. The boycott was gradually relaxed, with the turning point in 1955, when US Ambassador Lawson conveyed the State Department’s willingness to deal with the Ministry in Jerusalem. From 1956 onward all new diplomatic missions—with the notable exception of West Germany in 1965—were established in Jerusalem. Certain anomalies remained, especially with regard to the Consular Corps in Jerusalem.27 By 1972, 23 of the 47 diplomatic missions in Israel were located in Jerusalem, most of them from Latin America and Africa. The Jerusalem issue lay dormant for 15 years: there was no discussion in the General Assembly after

25. The term “functional internationalization” was elaborated in Eban’s Memorandum to the Trusteeship Council on May 26, 1950. The object, he explained later, was to retain the idea and the substance of internationalization, about which many states felt strongly, but applied to the Holy Places only. Eban interview, December 1965.


27. Most governments did not recognize Israel’s—or Jordan’s—sovereignty over Jerusalem and did not permit their consuls to present their commissions to either government. They continue to be accredited to the District Commissioner of Jerusalem.
1952; and *de facto* partition of the City remained unchallenged from within. It erupted once more in global politics in the context of the 1967 War.

The crucial input for Israel's decision to occupy the Old City is known. On the morning of June 5 Jordan launched a full-scale military attack along the entire demarcation line separating West from East Jerusalem—despite an explicit Israeli pledge conveyed to King Husayn via UNTSO Chief General Odd Bull at 9:30 a.m. that Jordan would not be attacked if she stayed out of the Egypt-Israel hostilities. The message read: "We shall not initiate any action whatsoever against Jordan. However, should Jordan open hostilities, we shall react with all our might, and the King will have to bear the full responsibility of the consequences." It was a self-defeating Jordanian act, for all of East Jerusalem came under Israeli military control on the 7th.

The decision to occupy the Old City was not taken at once or without dissent, despite Jordan's provocation. Of seven Israeli Cabinet—or Ministerial Committee on Defense—meetings during the 1967 War three were devoted, in whole or in part, to that issue. As the fighting on the Jordanian front spread, Labor Minister Allon and newly-appointed Minister without Portfolio Begin began to press the Prime Minister to use that "historic opportunity" to "free Jerusalem and to unite it." Eshkol agreed to Begin's demand to call an immediate Cabinet meeting—which was divided between activists and moderates. This is revealed by the text of the tense dialogue:

Eshkol: We shall have to consult tonight on what to do about Jordan, if they keep on with their attack. The Jordanians opened fire and we have warned them two-three times, through the proper go-betweens. They did not respond.

H.M. Shapira (Interior): They shelled Jerusalem several times!

Allon: From the military point of view this is cause enough to attack the Old City.

Begin: This is the reason for my request to hold this meeting. This is a special hour. I propose that the Government decide right now to liberate the Old City.


Aranne (Education): This decision has to be left to the Army. The Defense Minister is not present and it would be best to abstain from a decision.

Y.S. Shapiro (Justice): One has to distinguish between the political and the military aspect. Here we have to decide only on the political aspects.

Eshkol: This may be an opportunity to enter the Old City.

H.M. Shapira: To hold the Old City will be a political problem. When she will be in our hands, they will approach us to turn her into an international city. If this will happen—I shall support it.

Eban (Foreign Affairs): Can the fighting cause damage to the Holy Places?

Y.S. Shapiro: I think not.

Eban: If the military situation makes it mandatory to occupy the Old City, it should be done without declaring what will happen afterwards. Her holiness has to be assured.

Allon: The argument falls into several parts. First, the liberation of the Holy Places. Second, the elimination of a military obstacle. Third, the fate of Mount Scopus. The liberation of the Holy Places will be achieved without damaging them. The elimination of the military obstacle of the Jordanian attack from the Old City solves the political problem. Regarding Mount Scopus, there is a real danger of its occupation. Therefore, positive decisions on these three points can be justified in political terms. The Holy Places are within the walls. To avoid damaging them the Old City has to be surrounded from the direction of Nebi Samuel, the French Hill and Mount Scopus. This will also take care of an Arab attack on the Mount.

Eban: Military discussion has to precede the political one.

Aranne: If the Old City is occupied—when and to whom does one return it? I support internationalization.

Eshkol: Nonetheless, there has to be a counter-attack, against the shelling from Jordan. Let’s leave the military aspect to the Army. We shall notify the COS and the Defence Minister of the Government’s will.

The Cabinet decided to defer the decision until the next day when Defense Minister Dayan would be present to report on the military aspects.

The meeting on the afternoon of the 6th, too, was inconclusive, following criticism by Allon and Begin of “hesitation” at the “political-security level” to act at once: Dayan’s proposal to surround but not to enter the Old City—yet—was approved. At 02.00 that morning the main Israeli attack began in the Jerusalem area. By morning units of armor and parachutists had encircled part of the Old City; by noon they linked up with the isolated garrison on Mount Scopus. In the morning, too, Dayan gave orders to advance and occupy part of the West Bank until the line of the hills dominating the descent to the Jordan Valley. But he kept to his original plans as regards the Old City: encircle it, so that it should fall without having to fight a house-to-house battle.

News of the UN cease-fire resolution reached Israel in the first hours of June 7. Begin, with Dayan’s approval, woke Eshkol at 06.30 and demanded
immediate action, in fear that the cease-fire would come into force before the Old City was taken. Eshkol concurred. Around 10.00 in the morning Dayan informed a group of Cabinet colleagues that orders had been issued to take the Old City. The assembled ministers added their support, and instructions to this effect were issued once more. The task was accomplished by the afternoon of the 7th. And Dayan declared before the Western (Wailing) Wall:

The Israel Defence Forces have liberated Jerusalem. We have reunited the torn city, the capital of Israel. We have returned to this most sacred shrine, never to part from it again. . . . And to the followers of other religions, the Christians and the Muslims, I solemnly promise that their freedom of worship and all their religious rights will be safeguarded.31

During the next three weeks Israeli authorities acted swiftly to integrate the two zones of Jerusalem. The Master Plan was expanded to include East Jerusalem. The water, sanitation, telephone and electrical systems were united. The municipal bus service extended its routes. New trilingual street signs were installed. And, most important, the physical barriers which had separated East and West Jerusalem for 19 years were removed, permitting free movement between Jews and Arabs throughout the City.

The political process was no less swift. Administrative unification was first discussed formally by the government on June 11. On the 14th the Cabinet decided to integrate East Jerusalem and surrounding areas. It was a significant decision, no less so than the 1949 decision to make Jerusalem the seat of Israel's government. The 1967 decision was made by the second largest coalition in Israel's history, the National Unity Government of 21 persons, representing five parliamentary parties or blocs: the Alignment (Mapai/Abdul Ha'avoda), Gahal (General Zionists and Herut), Independent Liberals, Mapam, and National Religious Party (Mafdal).

Within that wall-to-wall coalition there was no open dissent from the decision “to fuse” East and West Jerusalem. Yet there was a wide spectrum of attitudes, derived from diverse images of: the Arabs; Israel's just claims; Israel's standing at the UN; the conditions of peace, and probable US reaction. The decision makers may be classified into five groups: Nationalist Hawks (5); Religious Hawks (2); Pragmatic Hawks (8); Pragmatic Doves (4); and Ideological Doves (2). Yet all favored the permanent end to a tortured, physical partition of Jerusalem; none favored a return to the status quo ante or to any variant of territorial internationalization.

The implementation of that decision was delayed slightly. Enabling laws to integrate East and West Jerusalem were to be introduced into the Knesset on June 18, but pressures intervened. An important policy speech on the Arab-Israeli conflict by President Johnson was awaited on the 19th. At the

same time Foreign Minister Eban was sending urgent cables from the UN, strongly advising caution—as Sharett did in December 1949.**

Pressure notwithstanding, three enabling laws were placed before the Knesset on June 27 and were approved the same day. The basic enactment was the Law and Administration Ordinance (Amendment No. 11) Law 1967. The others were the Municipal Corporations Ordinance (Amendment) Law 1967, which empowered the Minister of Interior to enlarge the area of any municipality by the inclusion of an area designated under the first Ordinance; and the Protection of the Holy Places Law 1967.32 Acting under the authority of the first two ordinances, the Interior Minister, on June 28, extended Israeli law and administration to an enlarged Jerusalem, including the Old City, Kalandia Airport, Sheikh Jarrah, Sur Bahir, etc. The 1949 decision had now been fully consummated.

External reaction to Israel's integration of Jerusalem was open anger. Non-Arab Muslim states took the lead before a highly-receptive Emergency Session of the General Assembly, convened in late June 1967 to consider the consequences of the Six Day War. The outburst of condemnation acquired Assembly sanction in the form of two Pakistani-sponsored resolutions. The first declared Israel's action invalid, called upon her "to rescind all measures already taken and to desist forthwith from taking any action which would alter the status of Jerusalem," and instructed the Secretary General to report back within a week on the implementation of this resolution. It was approved on July 4 by 99 to 0, with 20 abstentions; Israel did not participate.33

Eban attempted to blunt the assault by replying to U Thant: "That term 'annexation' used by supporters of the resolution is out of place. The measures adopted relate to the integration of Jerusalem in the administrative and municipal spheres . . ."34 Israel's critics were not persuaded. On July 14 the Assembly passed another resolution, which "deplores the failure of Israel to implement" its earlier admonition, reiterated the call "to rescind" and "to desist" and again asked the Secretary General to report back; no time was specified. The vote was 99 to 0, with 18 abstentions; Israel remained aloof.35

The Jerusalem issue continued to be the object of attention. In 1968 the Security Council approved, by a vote of 13 to 0 with two abstentions, three resolutions on Jerusalem in stronger language. One "deeply deplores
the holding by Israel of the military parade in Jerusalem." Another, referring back to the 1967 resolution, "urgently calls upon Israel to rescind . . . and to desist forthwith . . ." The scenario was repeated in 1969 with even stronger language—"censures in the strongest terms all measures taken . . ."; it was adopted unanimously by the Security Council. And in 1971 the Council once more called upon Israel, by a vote of 14 to 0 with one abstention, "to rescind . . . and to take no further steps in the occupied section of Jerusalem . . ." Israeli's Cabinet responded within hours by deciding unanimously on September 26 not to enter into discussion with any "political factor" on the basis of the Council's resolutions. US approval of the 1971 resolution caused dismay in Jerusalem, but the storm passed quickly. Two months later Eban conveyed Israel's formal rejection to the Secretary General, who acknowledged to the Security Council his inability to fulfill its mandate to dispatch a mission of inquiry to the City.

Israel held a military parade in 1968 through the heart of East Jerusalem, as a symbol of the political transformation wrought by the Six Day War. There was no military presence in the capital during the next four Independence Day celebrations. In April 1973 the President of the Security Council, acting on Jordan's protest, conveyed to Israel's UN delegate the displeasure of Council members over Israel's decision to hold a military parade in Jerusalem on May 7 to mark the state's twenty-fifth anniversary of independence. No military parade has since been held in Jerusalem, although a Cabinet decision to that effect was taken on July 30, 1977. Following a wave of public and press opposition, the Cabinet decided, on September 18, 1977, to hold a "veteran's parade" on the 30th anniversary of the State, instead of a full scale military one.

On October 28, 1977, the General Assembly passed an Egyptian-initiated resolution (Res. 32/5) calling upon the government of Israel " . . . to desist from taking measures changing the demographic composition of the areas, including Jerusalem." However, since the autumn of 1971, there have not been any formal debates or approved resolutions—not even draft resolutions—on the Jerusalem issue, either in the General Assembly or the

37. S/RES/267, July 3, 1969. There was also a Council Resolution expressing regret over a fire in Al-Aqsa Mosque, one of Islam's holiest shrines. S/RES/271, September 15, 1969. The Muslim world was outraged and it condemned Israel at several conferences. But that issue subsided with the confession of a mentally-ill Australian tourist that he alone had committed the act of arson.
39. The Cabinet decision is discussed in Jerusalem Post, September 27, 1971. The text of Eban's firm reply on non-compliance and U Thant's reaction are in ibid., November 23 and 26, 1971. A month earlier Israel rejected a resolution by the Executive Board of UNESCO calling for a UNESCO "presence" in East Jerusalem to protect the City's cultural and historical sites. Ibid., October 24, 1971.
Security Council. From time to time, however, the protagonists sent communications to the Council. But UNESCO became increasingly involved in the Jerusalem question from 1971 onward, expressing blunt criticism of Israel's behavior. In December 1971 its Executive Board passed a resolution which "urgently calls upon Israel" to take necessary measures for "the scrupulous preservation of religious sites and cultural properties, especially in the Old City." This was repeated in August 1972. In December of that year the Board decided to submit the matter to the General Conference.

Soon thereafter, at its 17th session, the General Conference of UNESCO adopted a highly critical resolution:

1. Disapproves of the continuation by Israel of archaeological excavations in Jerusalem;
2. Urgently calls again upon Israel:
   (a) to take the necessary measures for the scrupulous preservation of all sites, buildings and other cultural properties, especially in the Old City of Jerusalem;
   (b) to desist from any alteration of the features of the City of Jerusalem;
   (c) to desist from any archaeological excavations, the transfer of cultural properties and any alteration of their features or their cultural and historical character, particularly with regard to Christian and Islamic religious sites;
   (d) to adhere scrupulously to the provisions of the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague, 1954) and of the above-mentioned resolutions . . .

Israel continued to ignore the pressure from UNESCO, as she had the demands of the Security Council and the General Assembly. In June 1973 the Executive Board called upon its Director General to instruct his (non-existent) representative to Jerusalem "to study and report to him on changes to the features of the Holy City since . . . 1968 and, through the UNESCO presence in Jerusalem, to make possible the effective implementation of the resolutions and decisions . . ." Then came the autumn assault, first on Israel's policy toward Jerusalem and then, using that as a pretext, on Israel herself. On October 28, 1974, at its 18th session, the General Conference passed a resolution, by 64 to 27, with 26 abstentions, which: "1) Reaffirms all the [earlier UNESCO] resolutions . . . and insists on their implementation; 2) Condemns Israel for its attitude . . . ; [and] 3) Invites the Director-General to withhold assistance from Israel in the fields of education, science and culture until such time as it scrupulously respects the aforementioned resolutions and decisions."

More ominous was the seemingly unrelated General Conference decision of November 22 to exclude Israel from the European region of UNESCO, thereby barring Israel from all regional activities of the organization.

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42. Ibid., 89 Ex/SR 25, 26, 27, paras. 5–7.
43. Ibid., 90 Ex/SR 14, 15, 17, para. 6.
44. Ibid., Res. 3.422.
45. Ibid., 92 Ex/SR 13, 15, 16, para. 7.
46. UNESCO Res. 3.427, October 28, 1974.
vote was 48 to 33, with 31 abstentions. There was a sustained protest from intellectuals all over the Western world. Notable was a declaration of non-cooperation by 39 prominent Frenchmen, which exclaimed: "... this means that she belongs nowhere: namely, Israel does not exist... This spiritual abolition of Israel justifies in advance her physical annihilation. It is the extermination process perfected by the totalitarian systems of the twentieth century..."

At its November 1976 meeting, the General Conference of UNESCO adopted, without a formal vote, the President's proposal "that each member state that has applied to join a specific regional group for the purpose of participation in the regional activities in the framework of UNESCO programmes is hereby included in it." This step toward reversing Israel's exclusion from UNESCO was followed by Israel's rejoining the European group on November 27, 1976. Immediately after that concession, however, a UNESCO commission passed an Arab-initiated resolution, by 61 to five, with 28 abstentions, condemning Israel's excavations and building projects in Jerusalem for allegedly altering the historic character of the City. On the Jerusalem issue proper a consensus in the Security Council called upon Israel "once more to rescind all such measures already taken and to desist forthwith from taking any further action which tends to change the status of Jerusalem." In the meantime pressure had mounted, especially in the Muslim world, for a restoration of Arab control of the Old City: it was reaffirmed at the Islamic and Arab Summit Conferences in Lahore and Rabat respectively, in 1974; the Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conferences in Jiddah, 1975, and Istanbul, 1976; the Ministerial Meeting of the Bureau of Non-Aligned Countries in June 1976; and the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries meeting in Colombo in August 1976. But that rhetoric had no tangible effect on the continuing struggle for Jerusalem.

Within Israel, several proposals were floated in the quest for a viable Jerusalem settlement. The earliest, in the form of a working paper invited by the Foreign Ministry, was drafted in 1968 by Meron Benvenisti, an aide to Mayor Teddy Kollek, who served as the Administrator of the Old City. In essence, it called for a two-tier administration "with dual sovereignty [which] would be similar to that of the Greater London Council; that is, there would be a division into boroughs or sub-municipalities with an overall, federal or 'roof' municipality which would have defined areas of responsibility and authority." United Jerusalem would remain the capital of Israel.

48. From the speech of the President of the UNESCO General Conference, held in Nairobi on November 22, 1976.
50. From the Minutes of the Security Council session held November 11, 1976.
When the proposal surfaced in July 1968 there was a vociferous outcry from Gahal and the National Religious Party. Official sanction for the "plan" was denied, and it was ignominiously shelved. At the end of December 1975 Mayor Teddy Kollek told the Jerusalem Committee, a prestigious body of scholars, architects, clergymen and civic leaders from four countries: "Practical arrangements can be made to last for a long time. We have in fact achieved these technical arrangements to a great extent. The Arabs today have absolute and practical possession of the Temple Mount."

On the eve before 1976 Mapam leader Ya'acov Hazan outlined a plan to make Jerusalem "the city heralding peace and brotherhood in the world" by means of a religious and ethnic borough structure. The City would remain united and the capital of Israel, but the municipal government would delegate responsibility to subsidiary townships with a Jewish or Arab majority—as did the Benvenisti plan. The Old City would become a "peace capital" managed by a Council representing the three religions. The Holy Places would receive extraterritorial status. The right of all Muslims to make pilgrimages to the Temple Mount would be guaranteed by Israel. And, if the Jewish religious establishment permitted Jews to enter the Temple Mount, a special section would be set aside for Jewish worship. "If and when a confederation is established with an Arab state to Israel's east, the City of Jerusalem," in Hazan's plan, "would arrange for the construction within its precincts of a Capital of the Confederation." There was some evidence that Kollek approved of the Hazan plan.

Further reference to the Jerusalem question was made in Egypt's President Anwar Sadat's now famous address to the Knesset on November 20, 1977. He called for Jerusalem to be "... a free and open city for all believers." Prime Minister Menahem Begin, in his answer to Egypt's President said:

... we can assure... both the Islamic and the Christian worlds... that forever and ever access will be free without hindrance to the holy places sanctified to each faith.

Alternative ideas to resolve the conflict over Jerusalem have been succinctly summarized by Benvenisti. His point of departure is the assumed agreement of all parties that the City remain physically united. An essential willingness to compromise is still lacking, however, on the three critical elements of the problem: sovereignty; municipal government, and the Holy Places.

53. Ibid., January 1, 1976.
As for sovereignty, Benvenisti notes several possible solutions and their degree of acceptance.

(1) **Israel's sovereignty within the 1967 annexation borders.** This is unacceptable to all Arab states and entities. Restrictions on her sovereignty, such as an autonomous municipal government and non-Israel jurisdiction over Christian and Muslim Holy Places, may be acceptable to Israel, but even this would not appear to satisfy Arab nationalist demands.

(2) **Jordan's sovereignty over that part of Jerusalem which had been under Amman's rule before the 1967 War;** this is not acceptable to Israel.

(3) **A restored Arab sovereignty over the Temple Mount and the Arab neighborhoods of East Jerusalem.** This would exclude suburbs in East Jerusalem built by Israel since 1967, as well as the Jewish Quarter and the Western Wall in the Old City and the Mount of Olives. The majority of Arabs object, and most Israelis regard this as a "redivision of Jerusalem." It would also be extremely difficult to implement.

(4) **Israel's sovereignty within the 1967 annexation borders, but with a sovereign Arab corridor to the Temple Mount.** This is not acceptable to Jerusalem's Arab residents.

(5) **An exchange of territory—outside the annexation borders in favor of Israel, within the 1967 borders in favor of the Arabs.** This is unacceptable to either side.

(6) **An Arab-Israel condominium.** This is unacceptable to both parties and is difficult to implement.

(7) **Territorial internationalization of Jerusalem.** This is unacceptable and impractical to both Israel and Jordan.

(8) **Blurred sovereignty, by means of the creation of a super-municipal unit.** While this is feasible at the municipal level, it is very difficult to implement at the inter-state level.

Several suggestions to solve the problem of the Muslim Holy Places were also delineated by Benvenisti.

(1) **Continuation of the post-1967 status quo or its institutionalization through Israeli legislation.** Either of these would have to include payment of compensation for expropriated Arab land and coordination with Muslim religious bodies on archaeological excavations. These solutions lack long term political viability.

(2) **Termination of the status quo by imposing Israeli supervision over Muslim Holy Places.** This would not solve the problem and would lead to unnecessary tension.

(3) **Cession by Israel of the Temple Mount,** either by itself or together with East Jerusalem, with a corridor to an Arab state. This is unacceptable to most Jews and Arabs and is difficult to implement.
(4) Removal of the Temple Mount from the sovereignty of any state, that is, "Vaticanization." An international agreement between Israel and one or more Arab state(s) would define the responsibilities of a Muslim Council with respect to administration of the Temple Mount. Israeli law would apply to all other matters, including custom duties. This is not feasible because Israel would oppose her reduced control and reject the total immunity granted to a Muslim body. Nor would Arab nationalist demands be satisfied.

(5) Symbolic Arab sovereignty, that is, the flying of a flag, the presence of uniformed guards, the right to mention Muslim leaders in religious sermons, the use of Muslim currency, etc. The same objections noted in point 4 apply.

Many proposals concerning the Christian Holy Places have also been mooted.

(1) Preservation of the status quo of 1852. This would not accord Israel the desired formal recognition of her control and would create fear among the Christian sects of possible Israeli discrimination.

(2) Transfer of the Christian Holy Places to Arab sovereignty. This is unacceptable to Israel and is perceived by the Christian world to be of no advantage.

(3) Territorial internationalization of the Old City and its surrounding area. This is rejected by all parties and entails economic, administrative and political obstacles.

(4) Internationalization of the Holy Places. All the disadvantages noted with respect to the preceding proposal apply, along with the problem of safeguarding law and order.

(5) Transfer of the Holy Places (with extraterritorial status) to an international committee appointed by the United Nations. A UN presence and the problem of law and order are stumbling blocks.

(6) Transfer of the Holy Places to a Christian Council of members from all the communities represented in Jerusalem, with extraterritorial status for the buildings. This would be difficult to implement because of deep-rooted distrust and the complications involved in administration.

(7) Formalization of the present status quo by Israel, with the tacit assent of the Christian communities. If this were given international sanction by "interested parties," it would be a partial answer to Vatican pressure but it would decrease Israel's freedom of action. Furthermore, the Arabs would object vigorously.

All plans for Jerusalem will remain moribund until an Arab-Israel accommodation is reached: the struggle for Jerusalem is inextricably linked to an overall settlement. It remains to note that Israel's decision makers have
recognized a near-universal external opposition to their decisions and actions on Jerusalem. At the same time, criticism has been correctly discerned by them:

(a) as vocal but not operational, *i.e.* not accompanied by sanctions of any kind;
(b) as spasmodic, but persistent (1949–50, 1952, 1967ff.), and
(c) as not vital to Israel's relations with most international actors.

That perception, too, was accompanied throughout by an Israeli image of Jerusalem as an indispensable part of a revived Jewish state, a view rooted in the pervasive Jewishness of Israel's political culture, the historical legacy and, more generally, her attitudinal prism.

Those contrasting perceptions—of marginal negative consequences for Israel's foreign policy and security interests, and of Jerusalem's centrality for Israel as a political society—created clear policy predispositions:

(1) to withstand all external pressures, at first for internationalization (1947–52), and later for the revocation of measures to unify Jerusalem (1967–76), and

(2) to assert an unshakeable claim to sovereignty over all of Jerusalem, using every opportunity in the changing environment to transform that claim into reality, such as a common interest with Jordan in *de facto* partition (1948–67), and a military windfall due to Jordan's actions in June 1967.

That dual policy predisposition found expression in several Israeli courses of action:

(a) in prudent silence regarding the General Assembly's 1948 resolution on internationalization, on the eve of the debate over Israel's admission to the UN;
(b) in the defiant riposte to the 1949 Assembly reaffirmation of internationalization, through the decision to make Jerusalem the seat of government;
(c) in the successful special effort to turn back the Vatican-led campaign for a *corpus separatum* at the UN General Assembly in 1950;
(d) in the display of patience over the transfer of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem in 1953, by which time the issue had become moribund;
(e) in surmounting the diplomatic boycott of Israel's capital (1953–55);
(f) in persuading all states but one (West Germany), which established diplomatic relations with Israel from 1956 to 1976, to locate their missions in Jerusalem;
(g) in unifying West and East Jerusalem immediately after the June 1967 War, when unique circumstances obtained, and
(h) in withstanding the frequent condemnation of that act by a near unanimous UN General Assembly vote.

Those policy acts, and especially the decisions of 1949 and 1967, flowed directly from a dual Israeli perception—of Jerusalem's external marginality and her internal centrality. The latter image was immensely strengthened by a visible and articulate national consensus on Jerusalem. This was poignantly phrased in the summer of 1977, by Teddy Kollek:

This beautiful golden city is the heart and the soul of the Jewish people. You cannot live without a heart and soul. If you want one simple word to symbolize all of Jewish history, that word would be Jerusalem.56


* At that time the term "Palestinians" designated all persons (Jews and Arabs) living in the territory of Palestine, of which the UK was the Mandatory Power.

** As in 1949, too, international pressure was the crucial stimulus to Israel's behavior. Eban recalled: "In a telephone conversation with me [at the UN] from the Cabinet meeting on June 27, Eshkol explained that there would have been no difficulty in holding the matter up for a week or two, but that George Brown's speech [to the UN on June 21] had raised the specter of preventative international action . . . against giving full effect to Jerusalem's union. . . . George Brown has had more to do with the Israeli unification of Jerusalem than he might have wished." See: Abba Eban, An Autobiography (New York: Random House, 1977), p. 438.