

**Israel, Egypt, and
the Palestinians**

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Israel, Egypt, and the Palestinians

From Camp David to *Intifada*

ANN MOSELY LESCH
AND
MARK TESSLER

Foreword by Richard B. Parker

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Foreword

Richard B. Parker

Of all the issues we confront in the field of foreign affairs, few have been as intractable as the Palestine problem. Resolving the conflicting claims of the Israelis and the Palestinians to the same piece of land has so far proven impossible. The Israelis are in possession of the territory today, but events in the West Bank and Gaza since December 1987 have shown the dangers, and the long-term impossibility, of maintaining the status quo permanently. Comfortable Israeli assumptions about the inherent docility of the Palestinians have been rudely shattered, and it is clear that progress toward a viable settlement is essential to Israel's long-term survival as well as to peace in the region. *Viable* means a settlement which will both ensure Israel's security and permit the Palestinians a meaningful exercise in self-determination.

Such an outcome was supposed to result from the Camp David accords. The historic picture of Menachem Begin, Anwar Sadat, and Jimmy Carter shaking hands on the White House lawn in 1979 augured a new era in the Middle East, one in which peace between Israel and its other neighbors would become a reality. What happened to that bright promise? Where did Camp David go wrong? Why have we not progressed further along the road to peace?

This book is designed to answer these questions by taking a retrospective look at some of the writings of Ann Mosely Lesch and Mark Tessler over the period 1980–86. Essentially a group of essays written as Universities Field Staff International reports, edited to make them current, they have the virtue of describing events as seen on the ground at the time. This gives them an immediacy and freshness which is unusual in historical studies. They chronicle the unfolding of the obstacles to peace, and to normalization of Egyptian-Israeli relations, in a way which makes it clear that there is more than enough blame to go around. There are no heroes in these stories. Some people are more patient and more understanding than others, but since Sadat neither Arab nor Israeli nor American has had the will and the strength to take the process beyond the point it had reached that day on the White House lawn. Indeed, the prospects for peace have grown dimmer, not brighter, since then.

It is true that Sinai was evacuated and diplomatic relations were established between Egypt and Israel, but they have not taken on the flesh of normal relations. The reader will learn why in the first four chapters, which take a detailed look at the Camp David agreement and the problems of implementation from both the Egyptian

RICHARD B. PARKER, president of the Association for Diplomatic Studies, served as ambassador to Algeria, Lebanon, and Morocco in the Ford and Carter administrations. A longtime student of the area, he served as editor of the *Middle East Journal* from 1981 to 1987.

and the Israeli perspectives. While the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the dispute over the minute speck of territory called Taba have complicated the issue, as the first chapter indicates it has been the broader issues of Palestinian autonomy and self-determination, of the Israeli push to settle the occupied territories and of Palestinian representation—that is, who speaks for the Palestinians—that have frustrated the aspirations of Camp David and kept Egyptian-Israeli relations from developing more substance.

In discussing the lack of progress on the peace issue it is common to fault the Palestinians for failure to come forward with a political message of conciliation the Israelis can accept. Certainly they have shown a talent for not grasping what few opportunities they have had to do so, and their leadership has been focused too much on narrow political advantage at the expense of the broader national interest of the Palestinian people. The same can also be said of Israel and the United States and their respective peoples, but Palestinian failure to produce such a message becomes understandable on reading this book. Chapters five through twelve look closely at what Meron Benvenisti calls the *danse macabre* which joins the Palestinians and Israelis.

Reading these chapters in the light of current events gives one cause to wonder why the situation took so long to explode. Mark Tessler points out prophetically in chapter five, in reference to the Palestinian Arab population inside the Jewish state, “. . . if Israel regards its partial peace with Egypt as a respite from international pressure and concludes that it therefore has less need to address the grievances of its Arab citizens, or if the peace process breaks down because the opportunity it provides has not been used to find solutions to more fundamental problems, frustration and anger will mount on all sides and external forces will intensify rather than defuse tensions between Arabs and Jews in the state of Israel.” That was written in January 1980.

In chapter six Ann Mosely Lesch provides selections from the writings of an Arab woman from Nazareth which in a quiet way underline the difficulties of life for second-class citizens in Israel. These are fictional stories, but they have the ring of verisimilitude. That such people were unhappy in spite of the modest material advantages of living in Israel and that such unhappiness could have explosive potential were evident to most observers, but their participation in some aspects of the uprising seemed to come as a complete surprise to many Israelis. It inevitably calls to mind American insensitivity to black discontent, and the unpleasant surprise of the Washington, D.C., uprising in 1968.

Succeeding chapters look at the impact of Israeli politics on the peace issue, at Israeli policies in the West Bank and Gaza, at the situation in Gaza, and at the response of Palestinians and other Arabs to the occupation. An epilogue written in 1988 (chapter 13) brings the whole up to date. While it looks for hopeful signs, and accentuates the positive where it can be found, one comes away with the realization that the outlook is quite unpromising.

Although the violence of the 1987–88 uprising has raised fresh doubts about the viability of time-honored positions and has sparked a debate which may eventually bring about some changes, in the short term the net result has been a hardening of

attitudes on both sides. Arab-Israeli dialogue today seems to be even more difficult than it was. These later chapters make it clear that even were the Palestinians, by some miracle, to come forward with a message of peace and understanding, they would have no assurance that anyone would listen. One can hope, nevertheless, that the new Palestinian leadership that will emerge somehow from the violence which began in December 1987 will eventually have the strength, and the legitimacy, to speak sensibly about peace, and that someone will listen when it does. This will not occur any time soon, judging by current attitudes.

What are the implications of all of this for United States policy? The United States has survived forty years of Arab-Israeli hostility and can probably survive forty more, provided the dispute can be contained and localized and not be allowed to spread. From a purely selfish point of view, the total disappearance of all the parties to the dispute tomorrow would not seriously impair the security of the republic. Americans would regret it sincerely and would mourn deeply the passing of friends, but the loss would be more moral and emotional than material. Most Americans would not notice much difference in their lives. The argument that Israel somehow provides protection to American strategic interests in the Middle East would disappear with that state.

Unfortunately, even were containment an acceptable alternative, it cannot be ensured. The quantities of advanced weapons in the area, the fact that Israel is a nuclear power, and the fact that peoples from Morocco to Afghanistan are agitated about the issue mean that the conflict will eventually spread, unless it is somehow defused. Most of the time for the past forty years the United States government has operated on the unspoken assumption that this is a problem to be managed rather than solved, and that with luck it would go away in time. The meaning of the uprising is that it is not going away. If that is so, what can be done about it?

The effort by Secretary George P. Shultz in the spring of 1988 to sell a peace plan of American design appears to have come to naught. It was not taken seriously by either the Palestinians or the Israelis. On the one hand, the Israelis were confident of American support, and felt little need to modify their position. Shultz's efforts to move them were not backed up by the sort of pressures which would have transmitted the message that the United States was serious. Most Israelis were convinced that Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir enjoyed full American support for his policies.

On the other hand, the Palestinians had no parallel reason for confidence. In particular, it is questionable whether any American government can come forward with a proposal which will meet minimal Palestinian desires for statehood. The official position on this issue appears to be that the United States believes in self-determination for the Palestinians, but that doesn't mean they have the right to have their own state. When one asks what exactly self-determination does mean, the answer is usually some vague formulation about a Palestinian entity in association with Jordan. This is the so-called Jordan option, which was moribund when it was first developed some years ago and which has since died rather definitively, at least as far as Palestinians are concerned. The fact that Secretary Shultz seems still to have the Jordan option in mind is a principal reason, together with American un-

willingness to talk to the Palestine Liberation Organization, why his peace effort has not been taken seriously by Palestinians.

The limits of the possibilities, given the domestic political realities in the United States, were demonstrated by the documents on this issue prepared by two distinguished working groups at the Atlantic Council and the Brookings Institution and released early in 1988. Neither group could come forward with a proposal that stood any chance of being acceptable to the Palestinians, because they could not visualize the United States confronting Israel as boldly as it must if that state is to be moved off dead center on the self-determination and Palestinian representation issues. In the absence of such a confrontation, there is no likelihood of the United States being accepted as an honest broker by the Palestinians and of its persuading them to entrust themselves to the limited assurances the United States is prepared to give of its interest in their rights, as defined by Washington. Nor is anyone else going to have any better luck unless and until there are some fundamental changes of attitude among the people on the ground. The real question is how those changes can be brought about.

American diplomats for the past twenty years have concentrated on *process*, arguing that once the parties start negotiating in a climate of peace everything will become possible. That in fact happened in the case of Egypt and Israel, but it was made possible because Israel was willing to withdraw from all of the Sinai, even in the face of vehement internal opposition, and because Egypt had no Palestinian population to speak of. There is not a parallel Israeli willingness to withdraw from the West Bank. Even Israeli doves are talking about giving up at most 60 percent of the territory, not including Jerusalem, and this falls so short of minimal Palestinian demands that bridging the gap seems hopeless. As the epilogue concludes, however, “assuming that Zionism is not by definition expansionist and that a majority of Israelis would deal meaningfully with the Palestinians were they convinced that the survival of their state is not at issue, and assuming also that most Palestinians today would be willing to accept a permanent, secure, and Jewish Israel in return for the establishment of a Palestinian state, then this is the path for which those who would make peace must search.” We must not give up that search, however dim the prospects may seem.

Ann Mosely Lesch and Mark Tessler are both experienced observers of the scene in question. Ann Mosely Lesch, who holds a Ph.D. from Columbia University and is now teaching at Villanova University, has been working in and writing on the Middle East, with special emphasis on the Arab-Israeli issue, for over fifteen years. She served as the associate Middle East representative of the American Friends Service Committee in Jerusalem from 1974 to 1977 and subsequently represented the Ford Foundation and the Universities Field Staff International in Cairo. The most recent of her books, *The Political Perceptions of the Palestinians on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip*, published by the Middle East Institute in 1980, is the clearest and most authoritative account to date of the development of a consensus among Palestinians around the idea of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

Mark Tessler, who teaches at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, has studied at the Hebrew University and the University of Tunis and holds a Ph.D. from Northwestern University. One of the few American scholars to work in both Israel and the Arab world, he has spent more than twenty years teaching about and observing the Middle East and North Africa and has written on the domestic and international politics of the region, including an important comparative study of Arabs in Israel and Jews in Tunisia and Morocco. The large number of books and articles to his credit include his forthcoming *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Origins and Evolution through 1980*. He has been associated with the Universities Field Staff International since 1979 and currently serves on the board of directors of both the Association for Israel Studies and the American Institute of Maghribi Studies.

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Ann Lesch also wishes to express appreciation to her research assistant in Cairo, Shireen Zakhari, for his help in gathering and translating materials concerning Egyptian-Israeli relations. Her essays are dedicated to the late Malcolm Kerr, who will always remain an inspiration as a person and as a thoughtful analyst of the tangled problems of the Middle East.

Mark Tessler also wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the support and counsel provided by faculty members at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and at an-Najah National University in Nablus, institutions with which he was associated while conducting some of the research reported in the volume. His essays are dedicated to his wife and daughter, whose companionship and encouragement enriched many visits to the Middle East and whose thoughtful questions and advice helped to sharpen his investigations.

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Chapter one, from Mark Tessler, "Israeli Politics and the Palestinian Problem in the Wake of Camp David, Part I: The Camp David Accords and the Palestinian Problem," *American Universities Field Staff Reports*, Asia, no. 33 (1980): 1–13; chapter two, from Mark Tessler, "Post-Sinai Pressures in Israel and Egypt," *Universities Field Staff International Reports*, Asia, no. 28 (1982): 1–11; chapter three, from Ann Mosely Lesch, "The Egyptian-Israeli Summit: Protracted Negotiations and Reduced Expectations," *Universities Field Staff International Reports*, Africa/Middle East, no. 33 (1986): 1–10; chapter four, from Ann Mosely Lesch, "Egyptian-Israeli Relations: Normalization or Special Ties?" *Universities Field Staff International Reports*, Africa/Middle East, no. 35 (1986): 1–12; chapter five, from Mark Tessler, "Arabs in Israel," *American Universities Field Staff Reports*, Asia, no. 1 (1980): 1–25; chapter six, from Ann Mosely Lesch, "Closed Borders, Divided Lives: Palestinian Writings," *Universities Field Staff International Reports*, Asia, no. 28 (1985): 1–9; chapter seven, from Mark Tessler, "Israeli Politics and the Palestinian Problem in the Wake of Camp David, Part II: Israeli Party Politics and

the Issue of Palestinian Autonomy," *American Universities Field Staff Reports*, Asia, no. 38 (1980): 1–23; chapter eight, from Mark Tessler, "Secularism and Nationalism in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *Universities Field Staff International Reports*, Asia, no. 9 (1982): 1–12; chapter nine, from Mark Tessler and Ann Lesch, "Israel's Drive into West Bank and Gaza," *Universities Field Staff International Reports*, nos. 8 and 9 (1983): 1–18; chapter 10, from Ann Mosely Lesch, "The Gaza Strip: Heading toward a Dead End, Part I: History and Politics," *Universities Field Staff International Reports*, Africa/Asia, no. 10 (1984): 1–9; chapter eleven, from Ann Mosely Lesch, "The Gaza Strip: Heading toward a Dead End, Part II: Israeli Settlements, Palestinian Social Forces, and Economic Development," *Universities Field Staff International Reports*, Africa/Asia, no. 11 (1984): 1–9; chapter twelve, from Ann Mosely Lesch and Mark Tessler, "The West Bank and Gaza: Political and Ideological Responses to Occupation," *Muslim World* 77 (1987): 229–49; chapter thirteen, from Mark Tessler, "Thinking about Territorial Compromise in Israel," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 11 (Fall 1988): 38–53.

**Israel, Egypt, and
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PART ONE

**Egypt and Israel
since Camp David**

1.

The Camp David Accords and the Palestinian Problem

Mark Tessler

The Camp David accords, which were signed in September 1978 by President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel, with United States President Jimmy Carter as witness, gave many the impression that a new era of peace had begun in the Middle East. To many observers, the Camp David agreements appeared to fulfill the promise of peace that had emerged suddenly and unexpectedly in November 1977 when President Sadat flew to Jerusalem, spoke of compromise and reconciliation to the Israeli Knesset (Parliament), and initiated the first real breakthrough in more than thirty years of Arab-Israeli hostility.

The Camp David accords contained two documents. The first, entitled “A Framework for Peace in the Middle East,” was the more ambitious and also the more controversial of the two. The document set forth, in terms accepted in principle by both Israel and Egypt, the conditions for a broad and comprehensive resolution of the Middle East conflict and, especially, for solving the Palestinian problem that remained at its core. In his Knesset address the year before, Sadat had stated that he did not seek a separate or partial peace, a peace between Egypt and Israel alone, and he had dwelled at length on the need to settle the Palestinian problem in particular. Sadat was here responding to the charge of other Arab leaders that he had betrayed the Palestinian cause; and he specifically stated in Jerusalem that in return for peace with Egypt Israel would be expected to accept the principle of Palestinian self-determination, including the right of the Palestinian people to establish their own state.

Sadat continued to insist on this comprehensive approach to peace at Camp David, and his insistence, coupled with Israel’s opposition to the creation of a Palestinian state, led to disagreements which almost caused the talks to break down on more than one occasion. In the end, however, to enable progress on their bilateral peace-making efforts, the parties agreed on a carefully worded and deliberately imprecise formulation. This “Framework for Peace” set forth guidelines for treaties between Israel and each of its Arab neighbors, but its most important provisions dealt with

the West Bank and Gaza, territories which Israel had occupied and administered since 1967 but which were inhabited by Palestinians and widely regarded as the logical geographic focus for any solution to the Palestinian problem. Specifically, with respect to the West Bank and Gaza, the first framework signed at Camp David, together with accompanying letters from President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin, provided that:

1. There shall be a transitional period, not exceeding five years, during which the future status of these territories shall be determined.

2. A self-governing authority (Administrative Council) shall be elected by the inhabitants of these areas; this authority will have full autonomy during the transition period and shall be guided in its activities both by the principle of self-determination and by the legitimate security needs of the parties involved; and, upon the election of the authority, the Israeli military government and its civilian administration will be withdrawn and Israeli armed forces will be partially withdrawn and partially redeployed into specified security locations.

3. Jordan shall be invited to join Israel and Egypt in negotiating the modalities for the establishment of the self-governing authority, and in these autonomy talks the delegations of Jordan and Egypt may contain Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza or other Palestinians as mutually agreed.

4. The five-year transitional period shall begin upon the inauguration of the self-governing authority; and as soon as possible thereafter, but not later than three years, negotiations shall be conducted among Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and the elected representatives of the West Bank and Gaza in order to determine the final status of the territories and their relationship to their neighbors.

5. These negotiations shall be based on United Nations Resolution 242, and the agreement they produce, which must recognize both the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and the security needs of the parties involved, shall be submitted to a vote by the elected representatives of the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza.

6. After the signing of the framework, and during the negotiations regarding Palestinian autonomy, no new Israeli settlements shall be established in the area.

The second Camp David document, entitled ‘‘Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel,’’ provided for:

1. the negotiation within three months of a peace treaty between the two countries;
2. the return to Egypt of the Sinai Peninsula, which Israel had captured in the June 1967 War and held since that time;
3. military arrangements accompanying the return of Sinai, to assure the security of the parties involved; and
4. the normalization of relations between Israel and Egypt.

Though subject to less disagreement than the first Camp David document, this framework nonetheless left many questions unresolved, such as the nature of the

military forces that would be deployed in Sinai and the conditions under which Egypt would sell to Israel oil from the Alma wells that it was to recover. But these latter issues, troublesome as they were in subsequent negotiations, were clearly secondary. Both the parties appeared committed to peace, to the return of captured territory and the establishment of a full range of normal relations. Thus, when the Egypt-Israel peace treaty was signed in Washington on March 26, 1979, it appeared to many that the promise of a new era of peace in the Middle East was indeed being fulfilled.

Developments through Spring 1980

Speaking to Congress after the Camp David summit, President Carter stated that President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin “exceeded our fondest expectations and have signed two agreements that hold out the possibility of resolving issues that history had taught us could not be resolved.” But this and other expressions of optimism were short-lived. Negotiations for the Egypt-Israel peace treaty called for under the second Camp David agreement were difficult and protracted, with one of the major sticking points being Egypt’s insistence that the normalization of relations envisioned in the treaty be tied to progress in implementing the first Camp David framework. Egypt ultimately relented on this point, and Article VI accordingly stipulates that the treaty shall be implemented independent of any external instrument. On the other hand, agreed-upon minutes appended to the treaty specify that Article VI “shall not be considered in contradiction to the provisions of the Framework for Peace in the Middle East agreed at Camp David”; and in a joint letter to President Carter, also dated March 26, 1979, President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin specifically recalled the first Camp David agreement and pledged themselves to “proceed with the implementation of those provisions relative to the West Bank and Gaza.” With these compromises, or more accurately with this agreement to defer a confrontation over the most difficult issues, Egypt and Israel were able to conclude their treaty and, throughout the course of 1979 and into 1980, initiate Israel’s withdrawal from Sinai and the normalization of bilateral relations between the two countries.

The Egypt-Israel peace treaty was a dramatic achievement. Still, the excitement and optimism of many observers were tempered by a belief that a day of reckoning lay ahead. The first Camp David framework contained phrases subject to varying interpretations, deliberately so since Egypt and Israel were in fact far apart on the fundamentals of Palestinian self-determination and on the future of the West Bank and Gaza. Matters were also complicated when Jordan refused to join in negotiations under the Camp David accords, a position it consistently maintained despite considerable United States urging that it join in the talks.

Egypt and Israel pressed ahead despite these problems, but the depth of their disagreement was evident at numerous junctures and thus, in the view of many, the future of relations between the two countries remained uncertain. Specifically, should progress not be made on the issues of the West Bank and Gaza, Egypt might

have to decide whether it would accept a separate peace with Israel, one opposed by almost all other Arab states, who had insisted from the beginning that Sadat's initiative would not produce a solution to the Palestinian problem, or whether, alternatively, it would continue to insist that it is only interested in a comprehensive settlement and hence place in jeopardy its treaty with Israel. In a similar fashion, Israel might have to decide whether its interests in the West Bank and Gaza, involving both perceived security needs and historically legitimated religious attachments, are so profound that it would forgo peace with Egypt rather than accept Palestinian sovereignty over these areas.

Despite these problems, progress on the implementation of the peace treaty was made throughout 1979. Moreover, it was clear that both parties had at least a short-term interest in preserving the momentum of peace, suggesting that a breakdown in the evolution of Egyptian-Israeli relations was unlikely for the time being. Indeed, with respect to the larger issue of a comprehensive Middle East settlement, Egyptian officials frequently said that they understood Israel's need to move cautiously on the Palestinian problem and even suggested several scenarios according to which discussions on this issue could be continued should the autonomy negotiations called for at Camp David come to naught. Among the "fallback" possibilities they mentioned in summer 1979 were a return to discussions at the United Nations and an international conference co-sponsored by the United States and the Soviet Union.

With respect to bilateral issues per se, the interim Israeli withdrawal from Sinai was completed on schedule. Different sections of the peninsula were evacuated at precise intervals, so that about two-thirds of the territory, including the economically important Alma oil fields, were returned to Egypt by November. Also, Egypt and Israel exchanged ambassadors on schedule early in 1980. Moreover, on a lower but no less important level, numerous contacts between officials and even common citizens of the two countries blossomed during 1979. As early as summer 1979, for example, Egypt was visited by the head of the Israel Broadcast Authority, the head of the Histadrut (Israel's national labor federation), representatives of various Israeli industrial groups, the head of the Israeli Manufacturers Association, a number of independent university professors, the leader of the Israeli political opposition, and the first group of tourists, who were greeted upon their arrival by a welcome sign in Hebrew. Egyptians visiting Israel included an independent tourist official, who was interviewed on Israeli television, a private family that came to see their son perform with a German dance troupe appearing in Israel, a delegation of Egyptian industrialists, Egyptian businessmen who came for an Israeli furniture fair, and numerous senior officials from Cairo. In addition, the two countries coordinated the development of tourist exchanges, laid plans to establish a joint agricultural development company, to be chartered in Luxembourg, agreed in principle to reopen the Cairo-Lod rail link, and initiated talks designed to produce cooperative ventures in many other areas.

While the importance and indeed the revolutionary character of these events should not be underestimated, there were also problems in Egyptian-Israeli relations. In addition, the inability of the countries to make progress on the Palestinian issue became increasingly apparent throughout 1979 and into 1980, leading many to

wonder about the durability of the Egyptian-Israeli reconciliation. To begin, there were many squabbles and complaints regarding the implementation of the peace treaty itself, in other words with respect to issues involving only Israel and Egypt. Jews complained that Cairo frequently failed to deliver promised visas to Israelis seeking to visit Egypt, and Israel was particularly disappointed when Egypt denied entry to a planeload of three hundred American Jewish community leaders, for whom arrangements to visit Egypt had already been made. Israel also asserted that Egyptian ambassadors, except in Washington, continued to be hostile to those of the Jewish state. Egypt, on the other hand, complained of Israeli obstinance in reaching an agreement on military forces to be stationed in Sinai and found it particularly difficult to understand the latter's opposition to a United Nations presence. In short, each country often felt that the other was adhering to the letter rather than the spirit of the treaty, Israel being too difficult on territorial issues and Egypt dragging its feet on the normalization of relations.

More important than these short-term problems was the deep distrust that each country continued to have about the motives of the other, a distrust that was enhanced considerably by their apparently irreconcilable views on Palestinian issues and by their inability to make any significant headway in negotiations over the West Bank and Gaza. Israelis wondered about and debated whether Egypt was sincerely committed to peace or whether Sadat's overture was simply a tactical shift in Arab efforts to destroy the Jewish state. Egypt expressed similar doubts about Israeli sincerity, often questioning whether Israel had any intention of fulfilling its promise to accept Palestinian self-determination.

With respect to Israeli opinion, some argued that trade and cultural ties with Egypt would not cement peace and thus a territorial buffer was needed for security. Others argued that Egypt still did not accept Israel and was simply attacking it by a nonmilitary strategy. Once Israel had been persuaded to return to its 1967 borders, a new campaign would be launched to recover Arab territory lost in 1948; and thereafter the diminished Jewish state would be less viable both militarily and culturally. One cogent and forceful expression of doubt about Egyptian motivations came in an August 1979 article by Chaim Herzog, former chief of military intelligence and subsequently Israel's ambassador to the United Nations (and, later still, Israeli president). Herzog charged that while Egypt was giving lavish hospitality to visiting Israelis, its officials continued to oppose Israel at the United Nations, in the Organization of African Unity, and elsewhere. He also asserted that Egypt had sealed off El-Arish, the Sinai capital which had been returned to it, and that it was firing or arresting those Egyptians who had formerly cooperated with Israeli authorities. Finally, Herzog complained about the tendency of Egyptian officials to insist that continued peace depended on solving the Palestinian problem, a position that was inconsistent with Article VI of the peace treaty.

Other Israelis were more inclined to believe President Sadat's expressions of a desire for peace with Israel and to view as genuine the enthusiastic receptions given to Prime Minister Begin and other visiting Israelis by the Egyptian masses. At the same time, they noted that Sadat's mass support was probably quite shallow and that it could easily disappear if peace did not improve the lot of the average Egyptian,

something that seemed unlikely except over the very long haul. These observers also expressed concern that the Egyptian commitment to peace might diminish when the return of Sinai was complete in three years' time, especially if the price of that peace continued to be isolation from the rest of the Arab world. Thus, even many Israelis who trusted the intentions of Sadat and other Egyptian officials were extremely reluctant to make concessions that might weaken the Jewish state's ability to defend itself.

Egyptian analysts argued that it was precisely Israel's unwillingness to make concessions in the West Bank and Gaza that was threatening the peace, translating Israeli fears into a self-fulfilling prophecy. Moreover, they argued that Israel's attachment to the West Bank, the Palestinian heartland, appeared to be motivated not only by perceived security needs but also by the kind of expansionist tendency that the Arabs had long associated with Zionism; and in this connection they noted with particular bitterness that new Israeli settlements were again being established in the area. They rejected Israel's claim that the Camp David agreement called only for a three-month moratorium on new settlements and asserted that, beyond the Camp David framework *per se*, this action could only be interpreted as meaning that Israel was not sincerely committed to solving the Palestinian problem. Thus, in summer 1979, Egyptian Vice President Hosni Mubarak gave a hard-line speech in Cairo, warning of "dire consequences" unless progress were made on the Palestinian issue; Defense Minister Kamal Hassan Ali (who later became deputy prime minister, foreign minister, and head of Egypt's delegation to the talks with Israel) toured Israel and the West Bank and then publicly complained about Israeli settlements, stating that as a military man he was confident they could not be construed as relating to security; and Egyptian labor leaders invited to Israel in the fall reported that they would come only if there were movement on the Palestinian dimension of the conflict.

The vast gap between the Egyptian and Israeli positions became increasingly visible throughout 1979 and into 1980, as negotiations under the first Camp David framework continued to produce no important results. The Egyptian team at the time was headed by Mustapha Khalil, then the country's prime minister, and the Israeli delegation was under the direction of Joseph Burg, the country's minister of the interior and a leader of the National Religious Party, which maintained a parliamentary coalition with the Likud Union of Prime Minister Begin. Also present at the negotiating table was special American envoy Robert Strauss, during the initial months of the talks, and thereafter Ambassador Sol Linowitz. The United States for the most part found itself in agreement with Egyptian positions, but neither in an activist nor in a mediating role was it able to push the parties toward any substantial measure of agreement.

Although the heart of the problem was the apparently unbridgeable gap between Israel and Egypt on substantive issues, a related difficulty was the inability of the negotiations to secure Palestinian or even Jordanian support. As mentioned, Jordan steadfastly refused to take part in the talks, and this was a double loss since Hashemite acceptance of any agreement affecting the West Bank would probably be necessary for its ultimate success and, also, since it had originally been hoped that

Palestinians might themselves participate in the peace process as part of a Jordanian delegation. Even more serious was the opposition of representatives from the West Bank and Gaza. The United States maintained active contact with some of these Palestinians. In summer 1979, for example, the United States consul in East Jerusalem approached West Bank mayors and urged them to join in the peace process, an overture Israel subsequently protested as going beyond normal consular activity. Nevertheless, the mayors and other Palestinians continued to hold themselves apart from the negotiations, stating that their attitude was determined in part by the position of other Arab countries, without whose support the negotiations were doomed to failure, but principally by the policies of Israel. They bitterly denounced Begin's autonomy plan as a sham, arguing that Israeli insincerity about Palestinian self-determination was evident from the Jewish state's continuing efforts to settle the West Bank and Gaza and from the suppression of Palestinian political activity by the military government in the occupied territories.

With Egyptian-Israeli talks failing either to reach substantive agreement or to attract new participants, the occasional summit meetings between President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin became increasingly important. These sessions tended to reduce tensions by producing statements that the parties would not abandon their efforts to reach an accommodation and would, in the meantime, press ahead with the improvement of bilateral relations. They often fostered rumors about secret agreements as well. But even these summits, accompanied as they were by warm welcomes for Sadat in Israel and Begin in Egypt, could not obscure the fact that months of negotiation under the first Camp David framework had produced little more than a clarification of the issues. Thus, following the January 1980 Aswan summit meeting between Begin and Sadat, which was the fifth such session since the signing of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty less than ten months earlier, Butros Ghali, Egyptian minister of state for foreign affairs, complained with bitterness that time was running out for the Egyptian-Israeli talks aimed at solving the Palestinian problem.

By late spring 1980, the balance sheets of the first and second Camp David agreements were quite different. With respect to the latter, bilateral relations between Israel and Egypt had continued to evolve in a positive manner. Joint efforts of the two countries included the signing of eight separate accords, involving trade, agricultural cooperation, tourism, and other matters. Progress in implementing many normalization agreements had been substantial, and in fact developments in most areas were several months ahead of the timetable envisioned by the March 1979 treaty. For example, Israeli ships routinely passed through the Suez Canal; regular flights by both Israeli and Egyptian airlines had been established to link Cairo and Lod Airport outside Tel Aviv, with planes usually operating at two-thirds of capacity or more; postal and telecommunications traffic between the two countries had become commonplace; and Egyptian oil sales to Israel were proceeding smoothly.

In the wake of the peace treaty, the Egyptian economic situation was improving rapidly, with a projected growth rate of 10 percent for 1980 and increased investment and aid from abroad. Revenues from oil, the Suez Canal, and tourism contributed measurably to this boom, and all were due at least in part to the peace with Israel.

A dark spot was that in the midst of an expanding economy the lot of the average Egyptian had changed very little; but, overall, the country was experiencing more economic growth than it had seen in two decades.

The economic situation in Israel was gloomier, with inflation running at approximately 130 percent. Nevertheless, the government was attempting to ease its economic woes by limiting arms purchases abroad and by reducing domestic spending on defense; and it is extremely unlikely that either of these actions would have been conceivable were the country still in a state of belligerency with Egypt. In sum, the second Camp David framework had achieved its principal objectives and its provisions had been implemented with more dispatch and good will than almost anyone would have thought possible a few years before.

The deadline for completing negotiations under the first Camp David framework was May 26, 1980; and, in contrast to the implementation of provisions regarding bilateral relations, progress in these talks was far behind schedule in spring 1980, with virtually all observers agreeing there was little likelihood of their success. Although this situation did not appear to be hindering the normalization of Israeli-Egyptian relations, the Egyptian delegation to the autonomy talks was particularly frustrated by what it regarded as Israel's intransigence and insincerity, and thus on May 8 President Sadat unilaterally suspended the negotiations. Sadat cited as his immediate reason for halting negotiations the introduction in the Israeli Knesset of a motion to legalize further the Jewish state's annexation of East Jerusalem, which had belonged to Jordan prior to 1967. But the inability of Egypt and Israel to reach agreement on any of the substantive issues regarding the West Bank and Gaza, in other words to make any headway toward a comprehensive Middle East peace, was in fact the principal motivation for Sadat's action.

Many analysts believe that President Sadat suspended negotiations in the hope of forcing the United States to put pressure on Israel. This did not happen, however, in part because elections were approaching in the United States. Doubting that the United States had the ability or will to force Israel to modify its opposition to Palestinian self-determination, observers concluded that attempts to implement the first Camp David framework would probably be abandoned in the not-too-distant future; and, against this backdrop, a number of actors began moving to fill the anticipated diplomatic vacuum. Among the political actions taking place as spring turned to summer in 1980 were the presentation of a Middle East peace proposal by leaders of the European community; an announcement by Saudi Arabia that it would support a new peace plan, which called for total Israeli withdrawal from territory captured in 1967; and a trip to Washington by Jordan's King Hussein, who argued in favor of a similar approach.

All this left observers with a number of perplexing questions: (1) would the autonomy talks, if restarted, have any greater likelihood of success than in the past; (2) if negotiations under the first Camp David framework were in fact abandoned, would there be a viable alternative for seeking to resolve Arab-Israeli differences regarding the Palestinian problem; and (3) if no progress were made on the Palestinian issue, would the peace between Egypt and Israel endure?

The Palestinian Issues

Three categories of issues were at the heart of the disagreement between Egypt and Israel regarding the Palestinian problem. Moreover, it was evident that even if the negotiations called for by the first Camp David framework were definitively abandoned, eventually to be replaced by some other format for seeking a solution to the Palestinian problem, these issues would remain at the core of the dispute between Israel and the Arab world so far as the Palestinians were concerned. The first and most important category of issues focused on Palestinian autonomy and self-determination.

The central element in the transitional arrangements for the West Bank and Gaza envisioned at Camp David was the election of a self-governing authority, which was to provide the residents of these areas with self-rule until the final status of their territories could be determined and which was to represent them in negotiations aimed at establishing that status. To implement this provision, delegates to the autonomy negotiations established two working committees, one charged with examining the modalities by which the self-governing authority would be elected and the other being responsible for generating agreement on its powers and duties. Neither group had much success, however.

In the committee on elections, Egyptians expressed the opinion that all Palestinians should be entitled to vote, including refugees living outside the West Bank and Gaza; and they were particularly adamant that voting rights be granted to Arabs living in East Jerusalem. They argued that the latter category of Palestinians could not be considered anything other than an integral part of the population of the West Bank. Israel, on the other hand, opposed participation by external Palestinians and contended that residents of East Jerusalem were not part of the West Bank's Palestinian population, since their place of residence was part of Israel and they already participated in Jerusalem's municipal elections.

The gap in the committee on powers and responsibilities was even more fundamental, reflecting basic disagreement about the very meaning of autonomy. Egypt claimed that Israel had promised to accept the principle of "full" autonomy, and its negotiators accordingly argued that the self-governing authority should have broad powers, such as authority to levy taxes, to control water rights, to admit refugees from the Palestinian diaspora, and so forth. They also argued for the establishment of a Palestinian legislature. If substantial executive and legislative powers were not granted, they contended, the Palestinians would possess no more autonomy than they already had under the Israeli military government. Their responsibilities, some added with cynicism, would be limited to collecting garbage and other similar activities.

The United States tended to agree with the arguments of Egypt in the committee on powers and responsibilities; but Israel resolutely insisted that Camp David called only for the creation of an administrative council, thus precluding the granting of legislative powers. Moreover, Israel opposed granting even executive authority in

many of the areas which Egypt argued should be regulated by Palestinians. It contended that this would enable the Palestinians to act in ways that were detrimental to Jewish interests, and hence that the powers of the authority must be limited. Finally, as the negotiations proceeded, Israel began to insist that it retain full responsibility for the security of the West Bank and Gaza during the five-year transitional period. Egypt, however, rejected the continuation of complete Israeli control as inconsistent with Camp David and the very notion of transitional arrangements.

Beyond these disagreements over transitional arrangements, there were even more fundamental differences about the future status of the West Bank and Gaza, about the ultimate meaning that would be given to autonomy and self-determination. These questions were not taken up in formal negotiations, being scheduled for discussion at a later stage when elected representatives of the West Bank and Gaza were to join in the talks. They were rarely far below the surface, however. Egypt from the beginning had assumed that recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination meant that the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza would receive more than local autonomy at the end of the five-year transitional period. Egyptian negotiators believed that the creation of an independent Palestinian state would be the preferred solution of the people of the West Bank and Gaza, and they therefore insisted that at least the possibility of such a state be admitted, making it a legitimate option available to the Palestinians. Members of the Israeli government had a different conception: they regarded the agreement signed at Camp David as a compromise formula which would leave the Jewish state with permanent rights in the West Bank and Gaza. The Israelis accordingly insisted that autonomy for the Palestinians constituted a political arrangement which applied to the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza but not to the territories themselves and, especially, that it should apply after, as well as during, the transitional period. As one government official stated in summer 1979, when explaining the Israeli position: (1) the heart of the Middle East conflict was not the Palestinian problem but rather the Arab refusal to accept the state of Israel, and (2) Israel rejected the Egyptian view that the Palestinians had a right to self-determination without external interference.

It should be noted that political opinion in Israel was not monolithic. The government argued that autonomy rather than independence should be the ultimate status of the Palestinians in the West Bank; and to make clear its opposition to a Palestinian state it propounded an eighteen-point program following Camp David, the central element of which was a refusal to accept any political boundary between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River that would divide the historic "Land of Israel." But domestic critics of the government on both the left and the right accepted the Egyptian interpretation of Camp David, acknowledging that despite their "constructive ambiguity" the accords do indeed conceive of autonomy as transitional. Those on the right denounced the accords for this reason and criticized Begin for accepting them. They welcomed the prime minister's eighteen-point program but recognized the contradiction between this program and the Camp David framework, which they said Israel never should have signed in the first place. Those on the left also recognized the contradiction, and in 1979 they drew the conclusion that because of it the negotiations would inevitably end in failure. Most did not criticize the

government for signing a document which commits Israel to compromise. Rather, since only a few of them favored complete Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza or the creation of an independent Palestinian state, politicians on the left tended to charge the government with participating in a sterile exercise and with failing to articulate a policy which would respond to Egypt's peace initiative while simultaneously protecting Israel's interests. The result of these differing opinions was a highly charged Israeli political scene. Still, few Israelis were prepared to accept Palestinian independence or a total Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza; and thus, despite internal disagreement, the gap between the Jewish state and Egypt remained great.

Egypt, for its part, suppressed whatever internal disagreement existed and showed considerable tactical if not strategic flexibility. On the one hand, Egyptian officials suggested on several occasions that Gaza rather than the West Bank might be the focus of initial efforts to move toward autonomy. Since Israel had less ideological attachment to Gaza, and since Egypt rather than Jordan was the interested third party, they argued that it was here that the first breakthrough might be achieved. On the other hand, Egypt displayed considerable patience with Israel's continuing insistence that its own interests in the West Bank and Gaza be protected. Although many foreign diplomats felt the Israeli government was intentionally promoting a crisis in the negotiations, perhaps recognizing that it had signed at Camp David an agreement it was in fact unprepared to honor, Egyptian officials frequently professed an understanding of domestic Israeli politics and said that the Palestinian problem was something that needed time to mature. This maturation, they added, was the purpose of the negotiations.

Beyond this tactical flexibility, however, Egypt remained committed to full autonomy in the short run and to Palestinian independence over the long haul, or at least to the possibility of independence should that in fact be the choice of the Palestinian people. It regarded this as consistent with the framework it had signed at Camp David and as a necessary objective if its peace with Israel was to endure and eventually be accepted by the rest of the Arab world. This approach to Palestinian self-determination, opposed as it was by the vast majority of Israelis, defined the first and most important category of issues to emerge during the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations over the West Bank and Gaza in 1979 and the first part of 1980.

The second category of issues that separated Egypt and Israel revolved around Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, especially the West Bank. Although Israel had agreed to a moratorium on new settlements at Camp David, it regarded this moratorium as temporary; and thus, by the middle of 1979, it was building several new Jewish communities in the West Bank and announcing plans for the construction of still others in the future. The official Israeli view on settlements was related to its position on autonomy; and since the government was committed to permanent Jewish involvement in the West Bank, it dedicated itself to establishing so significant a Jewish presence in the area that complete Israeli withdrawal at the end of the five-year transitional period would be inconceivable. This policy was frequently referred to as one of "creating facts." In summer 1979, Interior Minister Joseph

Burg defended the legality of this policy. He stated that since Israel had only accepted a moratorium on new settlements, it should have been clear from the beginning that the country intended to resume construction at a later date.

Officials defended the establishment of settlements on both security and ideological grounds. Many argued that a Jewish presence in the West Bank was necessary to insure that Israel would not be vulnerable to attacks from the area. They said this had been Israel's position since 1967 and it was an obvious necessity given the narrowness of the heavily populated coastal strip that lies between the Mediterranean Sea and the hills of the West Bank. At the same time, most members of the government also spoke about Israel's historic and religious attachment to the West Bank, which they in fact insisted on calling by the Biblical designations of Judea and Samaria, and argued that Jews had the right to establish settlements in this and any other part of Eretz Israel (the Land of Israel), even if some of them were not created so as to maximize considerations of defense.

In July 1979, Ariel Sharon, at the time Israel's minister of agriculture, announced plans for ten new settlements to be erected in the West Bank. Eight were proposed for the hills of Judea and Samaria, and the rest for the Jordan Valley, along the border with the Hashemite Kingdom. Plans were also announced in summer 1979 for the creation of a ring of Jewish settlements surrounding the important Arab center of Nablus. In addition to these prospects, which for the most part remained on the drawing board throughout 1979, a number of smaller Jewish communities were in fact established during this period. Most reflected the initiative of private settlement-oriented groups, but they were nonetheless approved and given logistical support by the Israeli Military Government. One example is Mitzpeh Jericho, where twenty to thirty families were living in fall 1979. The tiny hilltop community consisted primarily of housing units; and although residents claimed that plans were being laid for agricultural and industrial development, most commuted to work in nearby Jerusalem or elsewhere and community leaders said the construction of more residence units was actually their top priority. Finally, work went forward on a number of new settlements that were already under construction and many existing settlements continued to expand. The result of all this activity was the presence of approximately thirteen thousand Jewish settlers in the West Bank by early 1980 and the prospect that more would be arriving in the near future. These settlers resided in some sixty-five different communities, over half of which had been constructed since 1977.

Of special interest to Jews was East Jerusalem, which in 1967 had been joined with West Jerusalem in a unified municipality under Israeli control but which at the time of Camp David still contained a large Palestinian Arab population that considered itself an integral part of the West Bank. Since capturing East Jerusalem, Israel had regarded the city's status as non-negotiable, and it consistently maintained during the negotiations with Egypt that the Arab inhabited areas of the city were external to any and all plans for Palestinian autonomy. To insulate Jerusalem physically from the surrounding West Bank, Israel expanded the legal boundaries of the city almost to Ramallah, some fifteen kilometers to the north, and it established on the periphery of the expanded municipal district Jewish neighborhoods which would

act as a buffer between the city and adjacent Arab communities. Then, in 1979, Israel announced plans to create a ring of Jewish settlements surrounding Jerusalem, intensifying the city's insulation from surrounding Arab areas. Some units in this ring were to be existing Jewish neighborhoods, which were technically a part of the municipality itself; but several new settlements were also to be built, to fill in the spaces between these neighborhoods. In August 1979, Housing Minister David Levy laid the cornerstone for one of these communities, to be erected on land that the previous Israeli government had expropriated from Arab residents in 1975.

Beyond its focus on land and settlements, Israel's attitude toward Jerusalem was reflected in its insistence that the concept of Palestinian autonomy did not apply to Arab residents of Jerusalem. Israel maintained that these Palestinian Arabs should not vote for or be served by the self-governing authority which the autonomy negotiations were charged with creating. Moreover, there were rumors throughout 1979 and the first half of 1980 that the Israeli Military Government was taking steps to promote Arab political activity outside Jerusalem, most notably in Nablus and Ramallah. The goal, according to these reports, was to end East Jerusalem's long-established role as the center of West Bank political life and to lay the foundation for selecting some other city as the political capital of the autonomy areas.

The Arabs argued that East Jerusalem should not be separated from the rest of the West Bank. Sadat specifically mentioned East Jerusalem in his address to the Knesset in November 1977, stating that peace required Israeli withdrawal from this as well as other territories captured in 1967; thus, as mentioned, Egypt argued in the autonomy negotiations that Palestinian residents of Jerusalem should be encompassed by the administrative council that was to be elected. The unity of Jerusalem and other West Bank Arabs was also asserted by the Palestinians themselves.

While Arab sentiments about East Jerusalem were as strong as those of Israelis, the conflict over settlements that emerged in 1979 was focused primarily on the rest of the West Bank. Israel sought to create facts which would assure it a permanent presence in Judea and Samaria, and the Arabs insisted that this was incompatible with the Begin government's promise to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

Egypt protested Israel's settlement policy vigorously, arguing that it contravened both the letter and the spirit of the Camp David accords. The settlement question was also discussed at summit meetings between Sadat and Begin, where, according to newspaper reports, the disagreement was evident and the exchanges heated. In addition, feelings ran particularly high among the Palestinians themselves. A good opportunity to observe Palestinian opposition to Israel's intensifying settlement drive was provided by Palestine Week, a series of public programs held in the East Jerusalem YMCA in July 1979. The program, which had been billed as involving social and cultural activities, quickly turned political as one speaker after another denounced the Israeli occupation and linked the West Bank's major problems to the growing Israeli presence there.

Adding to the anger of both the Egyptians and the Palestinians was the character of the Israeli buildup. Arabs charged that the impact of Jewish settlements could not be measured solely in terms of the number of communities or settlers involved.

They pointed out, for example, that large amounts of land had fallen into Jewish hands, far more than might be imagined given the relatively small number of Jews living in the West Bank; and in this connection they cited the estimates of outside observers that 60 percent or more of the Jordan Valley and 25–30 percent of all of the West Bank was now owned by Jews. Arabs also complained bitterly about the process by which Israel acquired much of this land and pointed to a 1979 United Nations report which criticized what it called “coercive methods.” Among other things, these were said to have included the destruction of homes and the banishment of residents.

A related Arab concern was the decision of the Israeli government in 1979 to authorize Jewish settlers to purchase private Arab land, something it was feared would increase the pressure on West Bank residents to transfer their land. Still another grievance concerned water, specifically the fact that Arab crops were drying out in some areas because deep bore wells had been constructed to serve Jewish settlements. There were also charges that water was being deliberately diverted from Arab farmers in some areas, in order to encourage the sale of land to Israelis. Finally, the litany of Arab grievances had long included charges of harassment of private citizens by militant Jewish settlers. In 1979, West Bankers pointed to a number of incidents in which Arabs had been attacked by Jews or had had their property destroyed. They also complained in particular about the invasion of Hebron, a town which had been completely Arab for over forty years but in which Israeli zealots were now determined to reestablish a Jewish presence. The activities of these Jews produced growing communal violence in 1980, and both Arabs and Jews lost their lives as a result of terrorist activity.

Although there was considerable opposition in Israel to the settlement policies of the Begin government, especially to the activities of militant Jewish settlers in the West Bank, many Israelis regarded Arab charges as either grossly exaggerated or blatantly false. With respect to the previously mentioned United Nations report, for example, Jews pointed out that the United Nations is known for its pro-Arab bias and that the report, in any event, was based on hearsay rather than direct observation, to which Arabs replied that secondhand reports were in fact necessitated by Israel’s refusal to permit the commission of inquiry to tour the West Bank.

Israelis also argued that the vast majority of the land they had taken over was rocky and unfit for cultivation, and they added that many Jewish settlements were actually woefully short of land. With respect to harassment and other abuses, Israelis acknowledged that there had been some regrettable incidents. They pointed out, however, that these did not reflect official government policy but were rather the acts of individuals who had taken the law into their own hands, and the government stated further that it had in fact incurred the wrath of many Jewish settlers in the West Bank because the Military Government had been aggressive in protecting the person and property of Arab inhabitants. Finally, at least some Jews said the government need make no apology for its policies, since the West Bank and Gaza are part of the Jewish homeland, over which Israel has both historical and religious rights. In sum, the charges and countercharges over Israeli settlements in the occupied territories defined the second set of issues that emerged as Egypt and Israel

met to discuss implementation of the first framework they had signed at Camp David.

The third category of issues surrounding the Palestinian question concerned the matter of representation. Specifically, who would be regarded as the *interlocuteur valable* of the Palestinian people, as their legitimate and authoritative spokesman? To an extent, this question was external to negotiations under the Camp David accords. Egypt repeatedly claimed that it was not attempting to speak for the Palestinians but rather to create a context in which they could themselves play a role in determining their future. Further, so far as the Camp David framework was concerned, this was to be accomplished by a free election in the West Bank and Gaza, in which the inhabitants of these territories would choose their own spokespersons. But the question of representation hung over the negotiations nonetheless; the signing of the Camp David accords, and later the Egypt-Israel peace treaty, was accompanied by a great deal of political activity that bore on this issue. The essence of the matter was the status of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the organization that was widely accepted in the Arab world and elsewhere as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people but which Israel had consistently refused to recognize and which had been bypassed by the autonomy negotiations.

The PLO emerged as the dominant force in Palestinian politics in the late 1960s and early 1970s. There were important internal divisions within the movement, which was essentially an umbrella organization embracing a series of comparatively autonomous political groupings. Also, since the PLO regarded the use of violence against civilians as a legitimate political weapon, there was disagreement about its methods, even among some who enthusiastically supported its goals. Nevertheless, the organization and its National Charter were widely accepted as the authoritative expression of the Palestinian people's collective political consciousness. The charter, which had been ratified in 1964 and amended in 1968, called for the "dezionization" of the Middle East, by which was meant the political destruction of Israel and the establishment in its place of a "democratic and secular" state in which Arab and Jewish residents of Palestine would live together.

The PLO had been officially designated the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people by the 1974 Arab summit conference in Rabat, Morocco. Moreover, King Hussein, who had fought with the organization and driven it out of Jordan in 1970, not only accepted the PLO at Rabat but also agreed that it represented Palestinians in the West Bank, a territory which had been an integral part of his kingdom until the 1967 War. The PLO's position was further solidified when its chairman, Yasir Arafat, was invited to address the United Nations in 1974; and most important of all, since it was sometimes charged that recognition seemed to come from everyone but the Palestinians themselves, there was ample and growing evidence that the rank and file of the population of the West Bank and Gaza considered itself represented by the PLO. Most West Bank towns had elected as mayors men who openly identified with the PLO, for example, and pro-PLO sentiments were widely expressed at the previously mentioned Palestine Week ceremonies. Also, popular manifestations of support, such as the demonstrations that

accompanied Arafat's appearance at the United Nations or the public mourning that took place in summer 1979 when a PLO leader was slain in Europe, showed that support for the PLO did not come only from politicians and intellectuals. Indeed, Israel had been hesitant to permit another mayoral election in the West Bank, and many Israelis privately admitted that any campaign would increase PLO strength.

Israel had been adamantly opposed to the PLO, refusing to accept it as the spokesman of the Palestinians in general and insisting at Camp David on language that would exclude it from any role in the autonomy negotiations in particular. Jews sometimes claimed that the PLO was an external organization that did not have the support of the Palestinian masses, but their principal objections were based on the inadmissibility of terror as a political weapon and on the PLO's charter, which placed the organization on record against Israel's existence as a Jewish state under any conditions. To most Israelis, the PLO was a murderous organization, which took credit for having killed unarmed Israelis at home and abroad and which openly embraced a political doctrine that aspired to accomplish by these means the destruction of Israel. There could be no recognition or even negotiation with such an institution, and the vast majority of Israel's citizens were united on this point.

Given its position, Israel hoped that the autonomy arrangements would foster the emergence of "moderate" Palestinian leadership. Prime Minister Begin said that Israel was pledged to free elections under the Camp David agreements, such as those that permitted the election of pro-PLO mayors in the West Bank in 1976. But the government was also on record to the effect that it would never deal with the PLO, and most observers agreed that Israeli authorities would reject any outcome of the autonomy negotiations that gave the PLO even an indirect role in governing the occupied territories. Thus, many of these observers added in 1979 and 1980, if alternative Palestinian leadership acceptable to the Begin government did not emerge, Israel would stall in the talks with Egypt and, if necessary, find a pretext for abandoning the negotiations altogether.

The impasse in this situation was evident. There were some so-called moderates who were independent of the PLO, and Israel appeared to be prepared to work with them, doubtful though it was that even these Palestinians defined autonomy in a way that most Israelis would readily accept. But these individuals would have been viewed as quislings had they attempted to speak for the Palestinians generally, and hence they were not a viable alternative to the established leadership of the PLO. It was also doubtful, given the popularity of the PLO and the political pressure it was capable of exerting in the West Bank and Gaza, that so-called moderates would have agreed to come forward in any event. Finally, it needs to be added that Israel's settlement drive and increasing violence in the West Bank had by 1980 greatly reduced whatever willingness to seek an accommodation with Israel existed in the past. Thus, while the Camp David accords were built on the premise that Palestinians would play a part in the autonomy negotiations, the dilemma throughout 1979 and into 1980 was that their participation would be meaningless, if not absent entirely, unless representatives acceptable to the PLO were involved and that, at the same time, representatives derived from or approved by the PLO would be rejected by the Israelis.

Egypt, the other party in the negotiations, recognized this dilemma and wavered

between ignoring it for fear of scuttling the talks entirely and suggesting that Israel would eventually have to deal with the PLO to solve the Palestinian problem. Sadat's 1977 Knesset address referred to the Palestinian problem but studiously avoided mentioning the PLO. Also, the Egyptians did not push the PLO cause at Camp David and, on other occasions, they professed an understanding of Israel's attitude and stated that the PLO must abandon terrorism, all of which increased Palestinian opposition to the Sadat peace initiative. Yet Egypt on still other occasions acknowledged that there could be no resolution of the Palestinian problem without PLO involvement, stating that the organization did indeed represent the Palestinian people and was accordingly the key to the future of the Palestinians.

The issue of Palestinian representation did little to inspire confidence about the outcome of the autonomy negotiations or, after they were suspended, about their resumption. Yet the situation was far from static; there was in 1979 and the first part of 1980 a great deal of movement surrounding this issue. Much of this activity came from the PLO itself, which undertook a significant diplomatic effort and suggested that it was prepared to consider a radical shift in its long-established political platform. Some of the activity also reflected efforts by other governments, most notably the United States, to encourage the PLO to moderate its traditional commitment to the destruction of Israel. Within Israel, too, there were some efforts to revise traditional thinking.

For several years PLO spokesmen had been saying privately that they were willing to amend their charter and accept Israel as a Jewish state, in return for which Israel would have to accept the principle of Palestinian independence in the West Bank and in Gaza. Israel rejected their statements as a propaganda ploy and correctly observed that PLO leaders were usually unwilling to repeat them in public. They also pointed out that while there had been many rumors that the organization would unilaterally amend its charter or give some other dramatic demonstration of its change of heart, no such PLO action had as yet occurred. Indeed, they added, the Palestinian organization still engaged in and defended the use of terror. The PLO responded that Israel had done even less to modify its own traditional opposition to Palestinian independence and stated that it could not go forward until the Jewish state also displayed some willingness to compromise.

Motivated in part by a fear that Egypt and Israel might find a way to move ahead without them, the PLO in 1979 accelerated its diplomatic activity and mounted a campaign to convince others that it was truly interested in compromise. Its efforts struck a responsive chord in several European capitals. Chancellor Bruno Kreisky of Austria and socialist leader Willy Brandt of Germany met with PLO Chairman Arafat in summer 1979, for example, and both later issued statements that the PLO should be trusted, that it was not out to destroy Israel. The seriousness of the PLO's reported "softening" remained a matter of intense debate, especially when the organization followed its Vienna meeting with Kreisky with a press conference in Damascus at which it reiterated its traditional position on the Middle East dispute. Nevertheless, many felt the organization was simply fending off hard-line critics at this press conference and they accordingly cheered the new moderation of the PLO.

The evolution of PLO thinking was watched closely on the West Bank, where

the organization's more conciliatory attitude was generally approved. The mayor of Hebron, Fahd Kawasmeh, and the mayor of Bethlehem, Elias Freij, for example, stated that Arafat's meetings with Kreisky and Brandt were appropriate and would be helpful in achieving a comprehensive Middle East peace. Other West Bank leaders, though reiterating their distrust of the Israeli government's approach to autonomy, similarly stated that they were prepared to accept a Jewish state in return for the establishment of a state of their own, an attitude most observers regarded as typical of West Bank sentiments generally.

It was probably in the United States that the PLO's diplomatic campaign was most intense and had the greatest impact. The organization gave a number of indications that it was interested in establishing a dialogue with the United States and, again, that it was prepared to modify its traditional opposition toward Israel. In particular, it hinted that it might be willing to accept United Nations Resolution 242, which was specifically mentioned in the first Camp David framework and which calls for recognition of Israel in return for the latter's withdrawal from Arab territories captured in 1967. To make 242 acceptable, however, the PLO insisted that its reference to solving the "refugee problem" be amended to state that there should be a "national solution" to the Palestinian problem. The response of the United States to this overture was varied, including both statements and denials that it would support a move to modify 242 and, ultimately, an ill-fated meeting between the United States ambassador to the UN, Andrew Young, and the PLO's UN representative.

Israel also followed these developments closely. On the one hand, it exerted what pressure it could to keep the United States from changing its policy. It reminded its ally, for example, that the United States was pledged not to recognize or even negotiate with the PLO until the latter accepted, with no prior conditions, Israel's existence. On the other hand, while the government continued to denounce the organization, Israel itself experienced something of an internal debate. Some Israelis on the political left expressed approval of the PLO's supposed moderation. They acknowledged that the PLO was the key to solving the Palestinian problem and argued that it was time for Israel to establish a dialogue with it. At the same time, they publicly called upon the Palestinian organization to follow through on its statements about being prepared for peace, and they specifically urged it to revise its charter. Other Israelis, though doubting the sincerity of the PLO, argued that Israel had little to gain by maintaining a hard line and proposed that the country could derive maximum advantage by calling the PLO's bluff, by taking the position that it would deal with a PLO which was truly willing to live in peace beside the Jewish state.

The result of all this activity was a great deal of behind-the-scenes politicking, particularly in the United States, and a spate of rumors about how it would all turn out. As of spring 1980, however, neither the PLO, Israel, nor the United States had taken any direct steps to modify its long-held positions and the question of Palestinian representation in general, and of the relation of the PLO to the peace process in particular, remained a third issue hanging over Egypt and Israel's attempts to reach agreement on the Palestinian problem.

Continuing Tensions

Outbreaks of terrorism and counterterrorism in the West Bank in May and June of 1980 undermined all of these efforts and moved the situation back to one of greater inflexibility and increased confrontation. Following closely on the heels of Sadat's suspension of the autonomy negotiations, these events reduced the prospects that the talks would be successfully restarted and dramatically intensified the hostility between Arabs and Jews. For some time, militant Israeli settlers seeking to reestablish a Jewish presence in Hebron had been threatening and harassing local residents. Arabs for the most part had responded with peaceful protests, but this came to an end, and a new spiral of violence began early in May when unknown assailants shot and killed six religious Jews who were walking through Hebron. In response, Israel greatly tightened military security, stepping up police patrols which, according to West Bank residents, often insulted local Palestinians and treated them harshly. Israel also deported three prominent and pro-PLO West Bank leaders—Mayors Muhammed Milhem of Halhoul and Fahd Kawasmeh of Hebron, and Hebron religious leader Rajab Tamimi. Finally, Israel intensified its policy of "collective punishment," wherein families or communities are held responsible for the acts of their individual members. Under this policy, for example, two Palestinian families were internally deported (although they were later permitted to return to their homes) because a son in each had allegedly thrown stones at Israeli army vehicles.

Exactly one month after the Hebron incident, unidentified Jewish extremists placed bombs in the cars of Mayor Bassam Shaka of Nablus and Mayor Karim Khalef of Ramallah, seriously injuring both. A bomb was also placed in the garage of al-Bireh Mayor Ibrahim Tawil; and an Israeli officer sent to warn Tawil was injured by its explosion when he opened the garage. These events produced temporary resignations in protest by still other mayors, Elias Freij of Bethlehem and Rashad al-Shawwa of Gaza, both of whom are regarded as moderates; and yet additional incidents later in June included the wounding of an Israeli soldier patrolling the old city of Jerusalem, the wounding of a Palestinian student at Bethlehem University by an Israeli policeman, the subsequent shooting of another Israeli soldier near the spot where the Bethlehem student had been injured, and a demonstration by over one thousand Palestinian students in which five were hurt when fired on by Israeli police.

In the wake of these events, attitudes polarized and prospects for resolving any of the Palestinian issues seemed further away than ever. Jews were even more fearful than before of reducing their military and political control of the West Bank and Gaza, and the willingness of the Palestinians in the territories to seek an accommodation with Israel was disappearing, too. Moreover, though not entirely related to developments in the occupied territories, the PLO also appeared to be moving away from its earlier efforts at moderation. Early in June, al-Fatah, Yasir Arafat's own political faction within the PLO, held a congress in Damascus and ratified a hard-line platform proclaiming that its objectives were "to liberate Palestine completely and to liquidate the Zionist political entity." In view of all this,

the cautious optimism that had accompanied the signing of the Camp David accords and the Egypt-Israel peace treaty increasingly was giving way to pessimism and gloom.

After more than a year of negotiations with no substantive results, with the autonomy talks suspended and growing violence and militancy characterizing Arab-Jewish relations in the West Bank, it remained to be seen whether Israel and Egypt would find a way to preserve the first Camp David framework as the basis of their efforts to establish a comprehensive peace or whether, alternatively, they would be forced to devise another format in order to continue their dialogue. It was also possible that an impasse on the Palestinian problem would threaten the Egypt-Israel peace treaty more generally. Whatever the outcome, however, observers in 1979 and 1980 recognized that the Palestinian problem would remain at the center of the Arab-Israeli conflict; and thus, whatever the context within which this problem is eventually addressed, the issues that will continue to be of overriding importance will be the character and meaning of Palestinian self-determination, the matter of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, and the relation of the PLO to the peace-making process and the resolution of the Palestine question.

(June 1980)

2.

Post-Sinai Pressures in Israel and Egypt

Mark Tessler

In April 1982, the remaining Israeli-controlled portions of the Sinai Peninsula were returned to Egypt, enabling the peace between the two countries to pass its most critical test to date and raising hopes that Egyptian-Israeli relations might now move into an era of more complete normalization. Both Egypt and Israel were beset by serious problems on other fronts, however, and these problems were linked in an interactive and almost dialectical relationship to the peace between the two countries. The completion of the withdrawal from Sinai threw these problems into high relief. While it created a climate in which they might be addressed with fewer distractions and greater resolve, peace also meant that the acute dilemmas and bitter divisions reflected in these problems would now emerge with increased intensity. With issues of this sort at the top of each country's agenda for political action, the post-Sinai era was not expected to be characterized by calm and stability in either Israel or Egypt.

It was also likely that the evolution of these problems would have a major impact on the peace itself, hence the dialectical relationship. The benefits of peace would be particularly evident should Egypt and Israel be able to use the opportunity it provides to deal meaningfully with other major challenges in the domestic and foreign policy arena. Should the countries become more tense as these issues move to the center of the political stage, however, or should they prove insoluble and give way to increased public cynicism and discontent, then there could well be doubts about the value of peace, or at least about its priority, and pressure to consider policy departures that would threaten the rapprochement. In April 1982, both Israelis and Egyptians appeared genuinely committed to the peace between their two countries. Yet either could easily engage in acts that would be considered provocative by the other, and heightened internal pressures increased the likelihood that such action might be taken by one or both parties.

The specific problems that were driving this interactive relationship gave rise to a mood of seriousness and concern in both Israel and Egypt in spring 1982. Despite celebrations accompanying the return of the Sinai to Egypt, people in both countries recognized that there would almost certainly be difficult times ahead. An examination of these problems and the concerns they produced lays a foundation for

thinking about the future evolution of Egyptian-Israeli relations, and for assessing the prospects that the reconciliation between the two countries will endure. In addition, since the Jewish state's invasion of Lebanon in June 1982 added an important new dimension to the Arab-Israeli conflict, an understanding of the situation inside Israel and Egypt provides a basis for assessing the impact on each of the fighting between Israeli and Palestinian forces that took place in Lebanon during the summer of 1982.

Inside Israel in Spring 1982

April 28, Israeli Independence Day, was marked by picnics and street dancing, fireworks and torchlight parades, speeches, and diplomatic receptions. These were among the many festivities with which the Jewish state celebrated its thirty-fourth birthday. In the midst of a difficult and tension-ridden spring, Israelis were taking time out to remember the past and think about the future and, perhaps above all, to express collective relief that their country was still at peace with Egypt, its largest and most powerful Arab neighbor.

Only three days before, Israel had completed its withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula, which it captured from Egypt in the June 1967 War. Small segments of the vast Sinai desert had been evacuated as a result of American shuttle diplomacy in 1974 and 1975, and two-thirds of the territory had been handed back during the early stages of the Egypt-Israel peace process, prior to 1980. But the countdown toward the April 26 deadline for final withdrawal had been marked by serious doubts and misgivings, in Cairo and Jerusalem alike. Many in Israel questioned the wisdom of honoring the country's pledge to give up the mineral-rich and strategically important peninsula, a pledge Israel made when it signed the Camp David accords of 1978 and a peace treaty with Egypt in 1979. Further, Jewish militants had in recent months formed the Stop the Withdrawal from Sinai Movement, causing many to fear there would be civil disorder and possibly even violence in Israel if the government honored its commitment. In Egypt, many thought it likely that Israel would find a pretext to postpone, perhaps indefinitely, the implementation of its stated policy, a fear that was exacerbated by tedious negotiations over the modalities of withdrawal. Egyptians were also disturbed by some of Israel's actions on other fronts, notably its acceleration of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, its annexation of the Golan Heights in December 1981, and the massing of Israeli troops for a possible invasion of Lebanon.

In the midst of these and other strains, including those associated with domestic political considerations in both Israel and Egypt, a great sigh of relief greeted the simple ceremony in which the Israeli flag was lowered for the last time in Sinai and Egyptian authority was reinstated. In the picturesque southern Sinai town of Ophira, which would now once again be called by its Arabic name, Sharm-el-Sheikh, Israeli soldiers sang the national anthem and their commander declared that "we are leaving Sinai for our own sake, for the sake of our children, and for

future generations, to try to find a way other than the way of war.” Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin proclaimed that there would be “no more war, no more bloodshed,” and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak joined him in broadcasting remarks simultaneously to television audiences in Egypt and Israel, telling viewers that “tomorrow a new dawn will break and the banner of peace will be hoisted forever.” The broadcast itself, a joint venture by Israeli and Egyptian television networks, seemed to symbolize this new era and gave even hardened skeptics cause to hope that Israeli-Egyptian enmity might indeed be a thing of the past.

This feeling, born of satisfaction that the trials of the present had been weathered successfully and cautious but determined optimism that peace would prove durable, lingered through Israeli Independence Day and contributed to the joyful yet almost reflective mood in many parts of the country. Egypt’s ambassador to Israel, Sa’ad Mortada, attended a reception given by Israeli President Yitzhak Navon. He congratulated the people of Israel and told well-wishers that he looked forward to the next phase of the peace process. His opposite number in Cairo, Israeli Ambassador Moshe Sasson, celebrated Independence Day with a huge reception at his residence in the Egyptian capital, counting numerous senior Egyptian officials among his guests. After thirty-four years of hostility and five wars between the two countries, these events were indeed grounds for celebration; and in view of the ongoing tensions within Israel and Egypt, and between Israelis and Arabs on many fronts, the desire to savor a moment of accomplishment and tranquility was all the more understandable.

The celebrants knew very well, however, that they would soon have to return to the problems that persisted. Most Israelis and Egyptians were thus simply taking a much needed vacation from their anxieties, their felicitous pronouncements more a plea than a conviction that good times lay ahead. Malaise and apprehension had consistently competed with the hope that the peace process had spawned, and nagging fears remained, perhaps even intensified, as the Sinai withdrawal brought the first stage of the peace process to an end.

For Israel, events in the West Bank and Gaza were of particular concern. Negotiations about the disposition of the territories were in theory still being conducted within the framework of the Camp David agreements, but in practice these deliberations had been hopelessly deadlocked for many months and the Begin government was in the process of imposing its own solution upon the area. The essence of this solution was to grant limited autonomy to the 1.2 million Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza, under a new civilian administration working in collaboration with Israeli-sponsored Village Leagues, and to speed up Jewish land acquisition and settlement in order to assure that the territory would remain under permanent Israeli control. Palestinians were aggressively resisting this creeping annexation, however, as well as the concept of autonomy for people but not for land, and violent clashes had become almost routine by the time Independence Day arrived. The daily papers carried numerous accounts of lethal confrontations between Israeli soldiers and Jewish settlers on the one hand and Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza on the other; and the struggle had even caught up many Israeli

Arabs, as they marked their annual March 30 Land Day protest with large demonstrations of support for Palestinian resistance in the occupied territories. All this reminded Israelis that conflict with their Arab neighbors was far from over.

Israelis were divided in their opinions about the West Bank and Gaza, but there was much agreement that the territories would remain a source of difficulty. Those who favored Israeli retention of the area feared that the withdrawal from Sinai might have created an unfortunate precedent, that their government might now accede to the international pressure on it to pull back elsewhere. They noted that the United States and other powers had been reluctant to press Israel in the past, lest it decide not to complete the Sinai withdrawal on schedule, but that this reluctance was now gone and that the United States and Egypt, among others, would soon tell Israel there was an additional price to be paid for continued good relations. Others, on the contrary, feared that the Begin government would indeed stand fast. They argued that it had already emptied the Camp David autonomy agreements of their intended content and that if it now failed to deal meaningfully with the Palestinian problem it would squander Israel's first real opportunity for peace and dangerously isolate the country from its few remaining friends. This was in addition to the charge of some of these "doves" that the state's repressive actions against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza were undermining the democratic and humane character of the Jewish state. Each of these positions subsumed a variety of more specific viewpoints, which Israelis themselves often describe in terms of relative "hawkishness" or "dovishness," but most analysts agree that the country was (and remains) approximately equally divided between the two general orientations, between those who favor Israel's permanent retention of all the West Bank and Gaza and those who advocate territorial compromise in the context of a comprehensive peace settlement.

These concerns came to the surface and broke the calm of Independence Day celebrations in some areas. Marking the centenary of the first organized Jewish immigration to Palestine in modern times, the government chose "One Hundred Years of Jewish Settlement" as the theme of its 1982 fête. It also announced that eleven new military settlements would be formally inaugurated to mark the occasion, eight of which were to be in the West Bank. Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, formerly minister of agriculture and a principal architect of Israel's growing presence in the West Bank, was himself to dedicate Nahal Telem, a new settlement near the Arab town of Hebron, and the government publicized the event widely and even provided tourists with free transportation to the ceremonies. Some buses did not reach Nahal Telem, however, for a roadblock had been set up by supporters of Peace Now, a left-oriented coalition of Israelis opposed to the Begin government's policies. At the site itself, Peace Now activists also succeeded in disrupting the ceremonies, whereupon they were attacked by members of Betar, the youth movement of the Herut wing of Begin and Sharon's ruling Likud Union.

That Israelis were fighting among themselves was disturbing, and in recent weeks Israeli newspapers and television had also shown the nation serious clashes between the army and members of the Stop the Withdrawal from Sinai Movement. The movement had developed early in 1982, drawing active support from Tehiya, a

small political party that criticizes the government from the right side of the political spectrum; from Gush Emunim, a political movement whose ideology blends extreme nationalism and religiosity and which was in the forefront of efforts to establish Jewish settlements in the West Bank; and, in one prominent case, from a leader of the National Religious Party, which belonged to the parliamentary coalition of Prime Minister Begin. Antiwithdrawal forces were active on many fronts, attempting to raise money and support among Jews overseas and to obtain endorsements from political and even military figures in Israel. They also announced plans to put up several new settlements in northern Sinai before the withdrawal and, most important, the movement sent squatters to take over the apartments of Jewish residents who were leaving the communities they had built in Sinai.

The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) had many confrontations with Stop the Withdrawal activists. As early as February, for example, the IDF had used considerable force to subdue militants who tried to block the dismantling of water pipes serving northern Sinai. As the date of the pullback approached, most clashes centered on efforts to limit the infiltration of squatters and to remove those who were already present, especially in Yamit, the town where Stop the Withdrawal diehards had made their headquarters and into which three to four thousand of their number had barricaded themselves by mid-April. Yamit squatters included many women and children and, following the eviction of antiwithdrawal activists from other Sinai settlements, the squatters vowed to resist, by all means at their disposal, the government's efforts to remove them. Among their number were also members of the supernationalist Kach faction, who threatened to commit suicide rather than permit the army to remove them. Both physical and rhetorical violence accompanied this prolonged confrontation, although many demonstrators at the last minute agreed to leave Yamit peacefully and the army showed great restraint in the face of intense provocation as it physically carried out the remaining militants on April 22 and 23. The IDF ended the unhappy saga of Yamit by razing the town with giant bulldozers.

The sight of Jews fighting Jews, and of years of building being pushed into the sand, brought an emotional response even from many who staunchly advocated returning the Sinai to Egypt. What Israelis called "the trauma of Yamit" demonstrated that the Jewish state was not only still at war with the Arabs, but it also was not fully at peace with itself. Moreover, even many who were willing to take what they regarded as a major risk in return for the chance of peace were uneasy about the Sinai withdrawal, wondering whether political developments in Egypt might not lead that country back toward confrontation. Once the Sinai was returned, they noted, Egypt could terminate the peace with the stroke of a pen and Israel could again find itself facing a hostile neighbor to the west, without the benefit of a large territorial buffer.

The situation on the Golan Heights contributed further to the mood of agitation. The Begin government had recently annexed the territory captured from Syria in 1967; but the Labor Party opposed the surprise move, and, by Independence Day, Druze Arab residents of the Golan were in their ninth week of a general strike protesting the extension of Israeli law to the territory. Further, the army had in some cases used force in its attempts to break the strike and to persuade the Druze

to accept Israeli identification cards; and, in mid-May, retired Supreme Court Justice Haim Cohn, who was also chairman of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, issued a powerful statement in which he characterized as “barbarism” these IDF actions on the Golan. Cohn publicly detailed the basis for his charge, which drew expressions of support from many Israelis. But his statement also drew heavy fire from the government and its sympathizers, generating in the end another heated debate among Israelis of varying political persuasions.

The situation in southern Lebanon was yet another source of uncertainty. Accusing Palestine Liberation Organization forces in Lebanon of failing to adhere to a cease-fire agreement negotiated in summer 1981, and specifically of sponsoring terrorist activities across the Jordanian border and elsewhere, Israeli leaders massed troops on the country’s northern frontier and threatened to take whatever actions were necessary to clean out PLO strongholds. The PLO denied the accusations but vowed to “teach Israel a lesson” if attacked, leading Israeli residents of the Upper Galilee region, near the border, to circulate a petition calling on the government not to invade Lebanon. Restraint was also urged by Labor Party politicians and by two former Israeli chiefs of staff, who accused the government of looking for an excuse to go to war. Many thought Israel would nonetheless go forward with its operation, calculating that world criticism would be muted so as not to provide Jerusalem with a pretext for putting off its evacuation of Sinai. Expectations of war in the north intensified as the date of the withdrawal approached, and on April 22 Israeli bombers launched major air strikes against PLO bases and also downed two of the Syrian MIG-23 fighters sent to deter them. No ground assault followed, however, and April 26 came and went with the Lebanese border tense but quiet.

The West Bank and Gaza, Sinai, the Golan Heights, and Lebanon—these areas produced serious tensions and division in Israel but they were by no means the only sources of conflict in the Jewish state on its thirty-fourth birthday. There were also plenty of problems on the domestic scene, although this was not unusual in pressure-packed Israeli society. Bitter ethnic tensions between Jews of European and of Afro-Asian origin had come to the surface during national elections the previous summer, and they reared an ugly head again in April when Labor Party leader Shimon Peres was shouted off the speakers’ platform at the annual Mimounia festival organized by Jews of Moroccan origin. Many Moroccans and other so-called oriental Jews said that Labor, which had dominated the Israeli political scene for almost thirty years, was largely responsible for their disadvantaged economic and social position, and in fact it was the votes of these Jews that had enabled Menachem Begin’s Likud Union to come to power in 1977, after years of opposition to Labor-led governments.

The discontent and bitter resentment of Afro-Asian Jews also emerged during the breach-of-ethics trial of Labor and Social Affairs Minister Aharon Abuhatzaira. Himself of Moroccan origin, Abuhatzaira had in 1981 founded a new political party, Tami, which was aimed at eastern religious Jews who felt that established parties, especially the National Religious Party, had not been responsive to their needs. In April 1982, Abuhatzaira was found guilty of stealing public money from a trust fund he had managed before joining the government, and he thus became the first cabinet minister ever convicted of a felony. Some Afro-Asian Jews acknowledged

that the verdict was warranted. Many others, however, complained that the minister was being punished by Jews of European origin because of his challenge to their political supremacy.

The fragility of the Begin government's parliamentary coalition and conflicts between religious and secular Jews complete this picture of tension and uncertainty. The government operated in early 1982 with a single-vote majority in the Knesset, and late in March the coalition failed to defeat a motion of no confidence in its policies in the West Bank and in Gaza. The government and the opposition each received 58 votes. A tie does not require the prime minister to resign, although when Begin announced that he would remain in power he was in fact breaking with precedent and going back on his own earlier pledge to quit if the motion were not defeated. More important, the vote reflected both the government's weakness and the growing polarization of political views in Israel.

The situation subsequently deteriorated even further. Less than three weeks after the Sinai withdrawal, the Labor Party persuaded two Knesset members to defect from Likud and then introduced another motion of no confidence. The coalition defeated the new motion by one vote, since several MKs decided to abstain rather than vote to bring down the government. Nevertheless, since the government now had only 59 sure votes in the 120-member chamber, it was nearly impossible to conduct business and many expected that new elections would have to be called soon. If the country did go to the polls, however, the betting was that the victorious party would have but a slender plurality and that the political scene would remain as divided as ever.

The nearly equal balance between the government and the opposition gave disproportionate power to religious parties in the prime minister's coalition, for without their support the coalition's ability to pass legislation would have ended immediately. These parties, most notable among them the ultra-orthodox Agudat Yisrael, cleverly exploited this advantage and extracted promises of government support for religious legislation in many areas. In spring 1982, the cabinet was preparing to introduce some of this legislation, proposing, for example, to ban flights on sabbath by the Israeli airline, El Al. But these and other actions were widely resented by nonreligious Jews, who are a substantial majority in Israel; and thus, as religious parties pushed the government to honor its commitments, tension between Israelis with strong and radically different convictions about the role that religion should play in the Jewish state intensified in both the political and public arena.

Israel long ago became accustomed to hostility with its neighbors, and domestic social and political conflicts were also nothing new. So one must take care not to exaggerate the anxiety most Israelis felt as they reflected on the health and welfare of their nation in spring 1982. Further, the country had never been more secure militarily and, for better or worse, the Begin government did have the support of at least half the population for most of its domestic and foreign policy initiatives. Nevertheless, although it had given up the Sinai in return for peace, the Jewish state for the most part remained isolated abroad and was increasingly divided at home. The government was also pushing forward with policies that many considered harmful and even dangerous, despite the fact that it had only the most slender of

mandates. Finally, Israel was engaged in violent confrontations on a number of its borders, confrontations in which, for the first time ever, a sizable number of Israelis believed their country was acting without due regard for democratic principles and human rights.

Thus, while most Israelis were relieved that peace between their country and Egypt had survived its many trials and appeared to be going forward, the recent exodus from Sinai, which Israelis regarded as a major sacrifice for peace, had not brought calm and stability. If anything, it had removed an issue which tended to divert attention from other problems, thereby allowing Israelis to see more clearly just how serious these other problems had become.

Inside Egypt in Spring 1982

The mood in Egypt in spring 1982 was quieter than in Israel on the eve of the return of the Sinai. Egyptians were frequently irritated by what they saw as Israeli obstinancy in negotiations, and many appear to have genuinely feared that Israel would find some pretext for postponing its scheduled evacuation. On other fronts, however, the government of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was enjoying a period of grace, a honeymoon during which both domestic and foreign opponents had tacitly agreed to do nothing that would jeopardize the Israeli withdrawal. Also, many Egyptians recognized that Anwar Sadat's successor needed time to fashion his own political style and to make a start at solving Egypt's pressing domestic problems. Yet there was a widespread feeling that the honeymoon would end after April 26; and this not only produced a measure of latent anxiety beneath the surface calm, it also encouraged Egyptians to evaluate events during the first half of 1982 less in terms of their immediate impact and more in relation to the political challenges ahead.

Perhaps the trickiest and most pressing issue facing the Mubarak government was its posture with respect to dissent, as it tried to move away from the repression that Sadat had introduced prior to his assassination without giving an opening to critics who could seriously threaten the regime. On the one hand, Mubarak in January dismissed Nabawi Ismail, the interior minister who had aggressively carried out the arrest of approximately two thousand Islamic fundamentalists and leftist opponents of Sadat in September 1981, about a month before the Egyptian president was assassinated by Muslim extremists. He also released from detention many highly visible critics of the former president, including Mohammed Heikal, former editor of *Al-Ahram*, leaders of the left-wing Socialist Labor Party and National Unionist Progressive Party, well-known Muslim fundamentalists, and several prominent Coptic religious leaders. Finally, Mubarak met with leaders of some opposition parties on the left and permitted the reopening of several newspapers which had been shut down by Sadat.

On the other hand, there were reports that new arrests of communist politicians had taken place early in 1982, and, more important, Mubarak in February rejected a recommendation from the Council of State that he rescind the order of Sadat on

the basis of which the September 1981 round-up of dissidents had taken place. The latter action was a strong indication that release of the more than 1,500 political prisoners still under arrest would not take place any time soon. Further, in early April there were additional detentions of 45 students and others with leftist connections and of 140 Muslim fundamentalists, all of whom were charged with activities intended to bring down the government.

Egyptian intellectuals and professionals were particularly concerned about the issue of democratization. They argued that political freedoms are not only important in their own right, as expressions of political maturity and a respect for basic civil rights, but also as important contributors both to the legitimacy all regimes need if they are to be effective and to the formation of public policies that have the best chance of dealing successfully with complex national problems. Egyptian intellectuals who subscribed to this liberal democratic view were attempting during spring 1982 to use their influence to deepen public appreciation of the need for an open system of government. At the same time, they and others recognized that the Mubarak government would be extremely reluctant to permit the unrestricted expression of dissent, to say nothing of tolerating the organizational activities of its political opponents. The government understandably viewed such freedoms as a threat and claimed, not entirely without reason, that dissidents would use any opening to sow disorder and to undermine the very political system that made their activities possible. Mubarak's difficult challenge was thus to undo the widely condemned repression that had characterized Sadat's regime at the end and to respond to the positive call of Egyptian social democrats, but to do this in a way that would not foster either disorder or *immobilisme* and would not permit influential or well-organized groups to manipulate the political system for their own parochial ends.

Most of the remaining political detainees in 1982 were Islamic militants, and it was expected that many would eventually be put on trial for trying to turn the country into a fundamentalist Muslim state. The mixture of patriotism, piety, and a purging of foreign influences that these militants advocated had also been the philosophy of Sadat's assassins and, much more generally, it was espoused by radical Islamic movements that by 1982 were shaking the political landscape from Morocco to Pakistan. Even among Muslim Arabs in Israel and in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza, the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic-tendency groups were clashing, often violently, with more secular and nationalistic political factions. Ironically, perhaps, the Islamic challenge in Egypt was frightening leftist politicians and pushing some of them toward accommodation with the Mubarak government.

From the viewpoint of the Egyptian political elite, the problem was to forge a national consensus which would contain and isolate Muslim extremists committed to violent revolution. Recent Middle East history suggested that this would be a difficult and costly task, however, and one which might be impossible by democratic means. Like a number of other Arab leaders, Anwar Sadat had thought he could work out a *modus vivendi* with Islamic militants, granting them freedom of expression and stressing his own devotion to Islam in return for their submission to his authority and the voluntary restriction of their political program to activities that

did not threaten the regime. Also, Sadat appeared for a time to have believed that a certain amount of Muslim fundamentalism would be of political value, providing an effective counterweight to challenges from the left. While it is possible that this strategy would have succeeded to a greater degree had Sadat's other policies not emphasized westernization and alliance with the United States in so prominent a fashion, the more general lessons to be learned are, first, that radical Islamic groups were able under these conditions to build an organizational structure which penetrated the police, the military, the universities, and other critical institutions in Egypt and, second, that these militants were prepared to use their organizational strength to confront the government directly, employing violent means if necessary.

Sadat himself had recognized this threat in summer 1981, and it appeared to be understood by the Mubarak government as well. As other regimes have discovered, however, militant Islamic movements are capable of effective resistance to attempts at their suppression and they are also capable of taking the offensive. Many Egyptians thus recognized that conflict between the government and the militants did not simply portend more suppression of discontent, being thereby another obstacle to democratization. It also raised the specter of serious instability and civil disorder as powerful political forces collided.

Egyptians were also very much concerned about economic uncertainties during the first part of 1982. Indeed this was undoubtedly the paramount preoccupation of most Egyptians, leading some analysts to assert that resurgent Islam was much less an ideological and cultural rejection of the political status quo than an expression of the alienation and frustration felt by those whose absolute or relative economic position had been declining. The twin concerns in this area were, of course, the need to raise the deplorable living standard of the Egyptian masses and to end the ostentation and privilege of the national bourgeoisie.

Sadat's economic policy had been characterized by the *infatah*, or "opening," a strategy based on seeking extensive aid and investment from the West and on the promotion of indigenous capitalism. The policy was not a total failure, in that considerable sums of money did flow into Egypt and aggregate measures did reveal substantial economic growth. Yet the circumstances of the average Egyptian improved little, if at all, and mass discontent, slow to emerge but widespread at the time of Sadat's death, was intensified by several concomitant factors. First, Sadat had raised expectations greatly, repeatedly telling Egyptians that peace would usher in an era of prosperity. There would be, as he put it, a "peace dividend." Second, inflation rose substantially as money poured into the Egyptian economy at the top, and this of course eroded the purchasing power of the man in the street. Third, and probably most important, middle- and upper-class Egyptians prospered greatly in an environment that emphasized growth rather than distribution. The highly visible consumption of the rich, and of their increasingly numerous foreign associates, understandably generated great resentment among the poor. The anger of the impoverished masses at the ostentatious consumer society that had grown up in their midst raised the prospect of widespread unrest, and even violence, in the months ahead; and, seen from this perspective, discontent over the economic situation

constituted one of the most serious threats facing the country at the time Mubarak became president.

Mubarak dissociated himself from Sadat's "opening." Early in 1982, he dismissed Abdel Razzaq Abdel Meguid, the deputy prime minister for economic and financial affairs who had been the principal architect of Sadat's economic policies. Mubarak also won popular sympathy by speaking out forcefully against policies that had favored the rich and the privileged, and against the widespread favoritism and corruption that had been associated with a growing gap between rich and poor under Sadat. But while Mubarak took some concrete steps consistent with his pronouncements, many doubted that he had the skill and stamina to root out privilege and corruption. Such assessments were reinforced by occasional rumors of Mubarak's own business connections but were fueled principally by recognition of the degree to which privileged elements can effectively oppose those who seek to limit their influence. Moreover, even if Mubarak were to succeed in bringing about change at the top, realistic observers agreed that it would take decades to reduce poverty in Egypt significantly, not only because of the magnitude of the problem but also because it was rooted in low levels of education, high rates of population growth, and other constraints that could not be removed quickly.

This did not mean that no gains at all could be made on the economic front. A sincere and dedicated attack on existing problems would undoubtedly strike a responsive chord among the masses, and the nation's continuing economic burden would certainly be much more tolerable if shouldered equitably. Nevertheless, as with the issues of democratization and Islamic militancy, the government's honeymoon was likely to end before it succeeded in making much headway on complex and intractable problems, and so there was a strong possibility that more difficult times lay ahead.

Although less significant than these domestic issues, Egyptians were also very much aware that external pressures could increase after April 26. One concern was Egypt's strong desire to reenter the Arab fold, from which it had been largely ostracized since Sadat's overture to Israel, and the government in Cairo was accordingly searching for a formula that would enable it to move in this direction while maintaining peaceful relations with Israel. Mubarak reiterated that peace with Israel was irrevocable and that Egypt would restore relations with the Arab countries only on its own terms. Yet even moderate and pro-Western Arab regimes might refuse to reopen their embassies in Cairo as long as the Israeli flag flew there too; and, more generally, now that the Sinai had been recovered and the new president's honeymoon was coming to an end, there would be renewed condemnation by foreign and domestic critics for Egypt's betrayal of the Arab cause. These attacks would be especially bitter in view of Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights and its actions in the West Bank and Gaza (and, later, in Lebanon). Egypt would be accused of making it possible for Israel to pursue these anti-Arab policies.

It was not certain that other Arab states would insist that Egypt choose between themselves and Israel. The Mubarak government hoped the recovery of Sinai would convince many of the wisdom of Egypt's course, showing that politics and diplo-

macy had been more effective than military action in securing concessions from the Jewish state. Further, recent developments in the Iran-Iraq war had increased the eagerness of some Arab regimes for a rapprochement with Cairo and reduced the likelihood that they would refuse to compromise with President Mubarak about the terms of reconciliation. In the weeks preceding and immediately following the Sinai withdrawal, Iraq suffered major military losses and, putting aside the opposition to Egypt that had characterized its policies in recent years, quietly moved to obtain assistance and support from Cairo. Conservative Arab states in the region, notably Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait, made it clear that they were also very worried about Iran's gains and that they, too, wanted Egypt to come to the aid of Iraq. Indeed, the Gulf Cooperation Council declared that Iran had now become a more serious threat to the Arab cause than Israel.

While these important developments were something to watch, it was by no means assured that Egypt would be relieved of the tension associated with its desire to maintain peace with Israel and simultaneously return to the Arab fold. First, Egypt's potential Arab allies might not accept full normalization of relations with Israel, even if they were more willing to help Cairo find a face-saving formula. Second, Israel was providing military assistance to Iran. Both Iran and Israel acknowledged this publicly, though each country continued to condemn the other, and this would also militate against Arab indifference toward Egypt's relations with Israel. Finally, radical Arab regimes, like that in Syria, were active in trying to prevent any legitimation of an accommodation with the Jewish state. They argued that peace with Egypt had increased Israel's intransigence; rather than becoming more open to compromise, Israel had felt itself free to engage in new aggressions against the Arabs on other fronts.

Exclusion from the Arab world is unnatural for Egypt, despite the fact that its intellectuals have occasionally emphasized the country's Mediterranean rather than Arab personality, and failure to end this exclusion would be painful indeed. It would also be highly unpopular. Yet return to a hostile posture toward the Jewish state would be painful and dangerous, too. It would mean risking the renewed loss of territory; it would bring a need to prepare for possible military confrontation and, once again, to divert resources from pressing domestic problems; and, most risky of all for Mubarak and other senior Egyptian officials, it would require explaining to the Egyptian people that the policies they had supported as Sadat's lieutenants had in fact been in error.

Relations with the United States presented similar dilemmas to Egyptian policy makers. The country was desperately in need of American economic assistance, and projects and contracts initiated under the Sadat regime would be in the pipeline until 1985 or longer. An undoing of the special relationship that had emerged between Egypt and the United States was thus neither desired nor practical. Yet many in Egypt saw Sadat's failure as at least partly the result of his government's overly close involvement with the United States. They believed this involvement had encouraged a brand of westernization that failed to respect Egypt's Arab and Islamic traditions and, above all, that it had reinforced a strategy of economic growth that was largely responsible for the increase in corruption and economic disparities.

Mubarak had already indicated that he would try to balance continued close ties to the United States with improved relations with the Soviet Union, and he had accordingly invited Soviet technicians to return to Egypt. Nevertheless, it remained to be seen whether Cairo could generate a network of international relationships that would satisfy both its practical needs and its desire for greater ideological and political independence.

In contrast to Israel, where there was intense activity on numerous domestic and external fronts, the social and political scene in Egypt remained calm on the eve of the withdrawal from Sinai. The country's problems, serious as they were, loomed in the future. But the ability of Egyptian leaders to put off definitive decisions and to maneuver successfully among competing political currents was expected to decline steadily after April 26, and this expectation produced a certain sobriety along with the rejoicing that Egypt's territorial integrity was being restored. In spring 1982, awareness that the recovery of Sinai would probably usher in an era of greater turbulence was thus creating an undercurrent of caution and anxiety beneath the surface calm of the Mubarak government's honeymoon.

Peace as Precedent?

To report that both Israel and Egypt were self-absorbed, preoccupied with serious domestic and regional problems, is not to suggest that the return of Sinai and the evolution of the peace process were minor accomplishments. After decades of Arab-Israeli conflict, a determination to work toward reconciliation and a resolve to settle differences by peaceful means were of the greatest significance. This determination and resolve, moreover, had been coupled with concrete and important sacrifices by each side, with concessions, compromises, and even risks accepted in the name of peace. Anyone even passingly familiar with the history of the Arab-Israeli dispute will readily appreciate the magnitude of what was accomplished.

On the other hand, now that the Egyptian-Israeli peace had entered a new phase, with relatively few remaining bilateral issues for the countries to resolve, attention was expected to shift to questions about the broader significance of the accomplishments to date. Would either country be able to use the opportunity peace provided to make serious progress toward solving other critical problems? If not, would either pursue policies that threatened the peace and risked its undoing? Finally, would it be possible to use the experience of Israel and Egypt to expand the peace process and to resolve other aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict?

If the reconciliation between Egypt and Israel survived the tense days that appeared to lie ahead, it could inspire greater trust and confidence among the parties, and perhaps among other political actors in the Middle East as well, and this in turn might set a precedent for positive action with respect to unresolved aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It was difficult in spring 1982 to be optimistic on any of these counts, however, given the intractable nature of the many domestic and regional problems that remained to be addressed. Moreover, the evolution of the war in Lebanon over the course of the summer added significantly to the pessimism of

most observers. Temporarily at least, the hope and relief that had attended the return of Sinai were almost forgotten as the Middle East plunged into a new round of violence.

The Invasion of Lebanon

Israel invaded Lebanon on June 6, 1982, demonstrating with a vengeance the fragility of the calm that attended the Sinai withdrawal. Israel initially argued that its invasion was necessary to remove PLO soldiers from southern Lebanon. Calling the intervention Operation Peace for Galilee, Menachem Begin and other government officials stated that their objective was to clear a forty-kilometer strip along the Lebanese border with Israel, pushing PLO artillery out of range of Israel's northern towns and *kibbutzim*. Begin's claims were taken at face value by most Israelis and may have been sincere at the time they were made. Labor Party leader Peres, for example, conferred with the prime minister and then issued a statement that Israel's objectives were indeed limited. Despite Labor's opposition to an invasion the previous April, he also expressed willingness to support the government's action.

Within a few days, however, as Israeli forces continued north, authorities began to defend the invasion in more elaborate terms and to articulate additional goals for the operation, which in turn set off considerable debate in Israel. Opposition elements condemned these "rolling" war aims and some wondered whether Israel was developing a new military doctrine, since it had never before added political objectives during the course of a war. Israelis also debated whether the government's intentions had indeed evolved or whether, alternatively, they had been present from the very beginning, in which case the country had been misled. Some even suggested that the cabinet itself had been manipulated by Defense Minister Ariel Sharon. In any event, after achieving its initial objective in approximately seventy-two hours, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) proceeded north, engaging the Syrians in the Bekaa Valley, capturing all PLO strongholds south of Beirut, and eventually laying siege to the Lebanese capital.

One professed goal of this expanded operation was the restoration of Lebanese independence and stability. Israel called for removal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, meaning the PLO and the Syrians, and for the formation of a new national government in Beirut. Naturally this government would be friendly toward Israel, perhaps even signing a peace treaty with the Jewish state. But Jerusalem insisted that Lebanon as well as Israel would benefit from a new political status quo. There would be an arc of stability stretching from Cairo to Jerusalem and on to Beirut. Most Lebanese were said to welcome this prospect, and in fact Israeli authorities and reporters found a substantial number of Lebanese civilians willing to express support for the invasion.

Israel's other major objective was to crush the PLO. With its fighting forces either captured, killed, or dispersed, the organization would no longer be able to harass the Jewish state. Nor, in the Israeli analysis, would it be able to impose its

will on other Arabs or, most critically, on the Palestinian people. Israeli spokesmen had long maintained that PLO intransigence was the major obstacle to a resolution of the Palestinian problem and an expansion of the peace process, principally because fear of PLO reprisals prevented moderate Palestinian leaders from participating in the Camp David autonomy talks. The Israeli invasion was thus designed to do more than inflict a purely military defeat upon the PLO. The organization would also lose its virtually autonomous political base in Lebanon, and its international credibility would be destroyed by the fact that Arab and other allies had failed to come to its defense.

Some Israeli doves condemned the war from the beginning. They denied any serious danger to northern settlements, observing that the PLO had respected a cease-fire agreement negotiated eleven months earlier and that the border had been quiet on all but the few occasions when Israel had initiated air raids and provoked a PLO response. They also dismissed the claim that action was required because of a recent increase in PLO military strength and cited the ease with which the IDF had overrun Palestinian positions. Finally, critics disputed the contention that the invasion would reduce PLO-sponsored terrorist activities on other fronts. They noted that PLO terrorism had greatly diminished in recent years and that, in any event, the conduct of such operations does not depend on having bases near Israel.

Opponents added that since Begin and Sharon were obviously well aware of these facts, their real reasons for the invasion must lie elsewhere. Strengthening their domestic political position was a motive suggested by some. A desire to undermine moderate elements within the PLO was also proposed as an explanation. In this connection, it was suggested that Israel had in recent years been losing its propaganda battle with the PLO, principally because the Palestinian organization had muzzled its radicals and presented itself as open to compromise. Israel's attack may thus have been designed to force the PLO away from this moderate course or, in the official Israeli view, to show its true colors. Finally, some critics contended that Israel's real goal in southern Lebanon was to gain access to the water of the Litani River.

Though these early criticisms were forcefully articulated in some leftist circles, most Israelis rejected them. Even late in June, when growing casualties and widespread foreign condemnation made it clear the Jewish state would pay a price for its action, polls indicated that 93 percent of the public considered the invasion justified. The polls also showed a substantial rise in the popularity of Begin and Sharon, reversing their decline of the preceding six months; and this galvanizing of support for what in effect was a minority government was an important short-term domestic consequence of the Lebanese campaign. Yet criticism grew as the war expanded, sharpening divisions between hawks and doves and suggesting that the war might further polarize Israel before it was over. Should Israel be unable to translate its military accomplishments into meaningful political gains, which was precisely what many feared, there could be serious damage to Israel's interests and a backlash against the government at home. The June poll showed that such reservations were held by about one-third of the electorate. Though likely to approve the original invasion, over half the Labor Party supporters surveyed judged the

operation to be too big, and even a quarter of the pro-Likud respondents expressed this sentiment. Comparable proportions also thought the war had hurt Israel's international standing.

More militant expressions of dissent appeared during June and July; and the significance of this opposition, and of the uncertainty among the public at large, will be appreciated only if it is kept in mind that Israel had never before experienced mass opposition to the government during a war. Yet many did speak out against Operation Peace for Galilee. Peace Now organized a huge protest rally in Tel Aviv, drawing a crowd that some estimated at 100,000. There were also many smaller demonstrations, along with petition drives and other activities.

Military correspondents reported opposition at the front too. In a forceful article published late in June, Hirsh Goodman of the *Jerusalem Post* described how three Israeli correspondents in Lebanon had been surrounded by officers and men from top fighting units and berated for not reporting the mood at the front. "We were accused by the overwhelming majority of men—including senior officers—of allowing this war to grow all out of proportion" and "of mindlessly repeating official explanations, which we all knew to be false." Goodman concluded that the men "made us promise we would tell the public and the cabinet." Still other expressions of dissent included numerous op-ed articles in the independent Israeli press and statements by various opposition politicians. Former foreign minister Abba Eban, for example, strongly criticized Sharon, accusing the defense minister of not waging the war for which he had received Knesset approval and asserting that the expanded operation was reducing prospects for peace.

Critics voiced two particular concerns, one relating to costs associated with the war and a second about the feasibility of Israel's expanded objectives. With respect to costs, the greatest preoccupation was the growing number of Israeli casualties, over three hundred killed by August 1982. This was an extremely large number in a country as small as Israel and, coupled with the many injured, it produced great consternation about the price the Jewish state was paying. Many were also deeply troubled by the war's toll on Lebanon. Most Israelis insisted that the international media had greatly exaggerated the amount of damage and that IDF soldiers often risked injury themselves to minimize civilian casualties. But while these claims were probably accurate as far as they went, it was clear that thousands of Lebanese and Palestinian civilians had been made homeless, injured, or even killed; and critics of the war deplored the fact that their own country was responsible for so much of this suffering. Some even called it a crime and a national shame. Finally, opponents worried about Israel's deepening international isolation, including badly strained relations with the United States and a sharp slowdown in the normalization of relations with Egypt.

Costs aside, opponents argued that Operation Peace for Galilee would accomplish far less than its architects promised. After the siege of Beirut, it would be necessary to confront the Syrians in the east and more PLO forces in the north, if foreign forces were indeed to be expelled from Lebanon; and for this reason the IDF was preparing to stay through the fall and into the winter of 1983, if necessary. Moreover, even then approximately 400,000 Palestinian civilians would remain in Lebanon,

the overwhelming majority of whom supported the PLO. Most important, tensions among competing Lebanese factions, most with heavily armed private militias, would persist after the departure of foreign forces, as would a feudalistic social and political structure. Israel appeared to be pinning its hopes for a strong central government on the right-wing Maronite Christian Phalange and a few other groups. One analyst sympathetic to the government went so far as to call for a "Jewish-Christian alliance that unites two small Middle Eastern peoples against the imperialistic, centralizing impulse of Arab-Moslem expansionism." This was hardly a prescription for Lebanese stability, however, and critics asserted that even a more reasoned Israeli strategy would have great difficulty bringing about necessary changes in the political economy of Lebanon.

So far as the PLO and the Palestinian problem were concerned, critics argued even more vigorously that Operation Peace for Galilee would not achieve its stated objectives. First, they pointed out that the PLO is an idea as well as an institution and stated that among Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, and elsewhere adherence to this idea would not diminish as a result of the war. Second, as an institution, the PLO would be damaged but not destroyed, these Israeli doves contended. On a political level at least, it would continue its campaign against Israel from other Arab countries and elsewhere. Moreover, events in Lebanon might strengthen its more radical factions, who would argue that moderation and diplomacy had been proved ineffective and call for increased use of terrorism. Third, according to Israelis in the peace camp and even many supporters of the Labor Party, government policies in the occupied territories, as much as or even more than PLO rejectionism, constituted the major obstacle to progress on the Palestinian problem. Without Israeli recognition of Palestinian national rights, resistance in the occupied territories would continue. With such recognition, on the other hand, many Palestinians would accept the principle of reconciliation with Israel, making the war irrelevant in bringing moderate Palestinians to the bargaining table.

Naturally Israeli authorities rejected all these criticisms. They claimed that the cost of the war was either greatly exaggerated or, in the case of Israeli casualties, a price Israel had no choice but to pay. They argued further that their invasion was an essential first step in putting Lebanon on the road to independence and stability, with most Lebanese therefore supporting the operation, and that any defeat inflicted on the PLO could not but advance the cause of Israeli-Palestinian peace. In short, they insisted that while it was unreasonable to expect immediate solutions to long-standing problems, the war had created new opportunities and removed major impediments to peace and stability. At the end of the summer of 1982, Israelis were deeply divided between those who accepted these arguments advanced by the government and those who found the critics of Sharon and Begin more persuasive.

Operation Peace for Galilee thus set off competing political trends in Israel. On the one hand, by galvanizing opinion on the right side of the political spectrum, it strengthened the government's hand and reduced difficulties associated with its weakened parliamentary position. In July, for example, the government coalition was joined by the ultra-nationalist Tehiya Party, a movement formed in 1979 by Likud hard-liners who had left the ruling party after the signing of the peace treaty

with Egypt. On the other hand, the invasion of Lebanon deepened the division and tension that characterized the domestic scene during the first half of 1982, with opponents of government policy becoming more numerous and more determined.

In the summer of 1982, it appeared that the eventual resolution of these competing trends would depend largely on how the balance sheet of costs and benefits added up as the war went forward and more facts became known. Should gains prove significant and costs tolerable from the Israeli point of view, Likud and the right would solidify their preeminent position in Israeli politics. Labor and the left would become more marginal, accelerating a political drift that had been under way since 1977. If the ultimate outcome were seriously at variance with government propaganda, however, there could well be a backlash against the hawks of the Jewish state, producing a call for the primacy of different political values. Finally, as appeared most likely in summer 1982, if the balance sheet were sufficiently ambiguous to permit Israelis with differing political instincts to retain dissimilar convictions about the consequences of the war, then already fundamental disagreements about the most basic issues of war and peace would intensify, possibly to the point of doing serious damage to the nation's social and political fabric.

In Egypt, the Mubarak government responded to the Lebanese war with harsh condemnations and energetic diplomacy. Officials expressed the same criticisms of the war as Israeli doves. Egypt also declared that it would not participate in peace talks while Israeli troops were in Lebanon, put a freeze on normalizing relations with the Jewish state, and repeated that it would not compromise in a dispute about the location of its border with Israel, at a point near Taba, south of Eilat. Cairo's broader diplomatic effort was oriented toward the West and aimed in particular at France and the United States. The former was made a partner in early attempts to formulate a peace initiative. The latter was urged to oppose Israel's invasion and to recognize the Palestinians' right to self-determination. Mubarak spelled out some of his thinking in a *Washington Post* article in August. His message was that without a much more positive Israeli and American approach to the Palestinian problem, it would be extremely difficult to revive the peace process.

Despite militant denunciations of Israel, Egyptian officials made it clear that peace with Jerusalem would not be reevaluated. Egypt's opposition, however vigorous, would be political and diplomatic; when Cairo's ambassador in Tel Aviv went home for consultations in August, for example, Foreign Minister Kamal Hassan Ali used the occasion to tell reporters that "peace still exists and relations still exist" between Cairo and Jerusalem. In the midst of the destruction in Lebanon, this was one of the few seriously hopeful signs coming out of the Middle East, leading some Israeli doves to assert that if Operation Peace for Galilee were to make any positive contribution to the peace process, it would only be by demonstrating the durability of Egypt's commitment to reconciliation.

Not unlike the situation in Israel, the war, and Mubarak's response to it, intensified competing political currents in Egypt. On the one hand, events gave new ammunition to the Egyptian president's domestic critics and, more generally, increased public antipathy toward Israel and the United States. As elsewhere in the Arab world, many Egyptians believed the United States bore considerable responsibility for

Israel's actions and argued that Washington appeared to be supporting the Jewish state even when the latter's policies were irresponsible and adventuristic.

But Egypt was not criticized only for its close association with the United States. Many of Mubarak's critics asserted that Sadat's heirs were themselves encouraging Israeli aggression. Some rather simplistically claimed that peace with Egypt had given the Jewish state a free hand to pursue its expansionist inclinations. Others argued that while different Egyptian policies probably would not have deterred Israel, Cairo had nonetheless given the Begin government and its actions a measure of legitimacy, including greater respectability in the eyes of the Israeli electorate. In June, following the invasion, opposition parties and other organizations formed the Egyptian National Committee in Solidarity with the Palestinian and Lebanese Peoples and declared their opposition to the Zionist and American presence in Egypt.

To critics of the government, the Israeli invasion was of course but another plank in an already well-developed platform of opposition. Nevertheless, many observers believed that the war had increased public receptivity to the critics' message; and, not unexpectedly, this in turn reinforced the uncertainties of the regime's posture toward dissent. The government continued to tolerate a reasonable measure of public opposition and, in June, an additional 450 of the fundamentalists and others arrested in September 1981 were released. Yet the regime still denied liberty to approximately 1,000 of the men detained by Sadat, including Shenuda III, the Coptic pope. Moreover, a month before, the police had arrested 50 religious extremists of the al-Takfir wal-Hijra movement, and early in August members of still another Islamic group were arrested. In addition, Cairo police in August broke up a pro-PLO rally organized by three opposition parties. Conflict between the government and its opponents was not principally about relations with Israel. Yet the Lebanese war had acutely embarrassed the Mubarak regime and probably made the logic of its detractors more convincing to the public. Thus, with the government's assumption that peace would increase Israeli moderation badly shaken, there was heightened anxiety in Egypt and a new stirring of discontent at both the elite and the mass level.

There was another part of the story, however. The war also created new opportunities for Egyptian leaders. Virtually every Arab regime had failed to come to the PLO's aid, and their inaction was bitterly denounced in Palestinian circles. Cairo's behavior thus appeared no more damnable than that of any other Arab government, and these governments were themselves reluctant to condemn Mubarak since they, too, were highly vulnerable to criticism. Moreover, Egypt's forceful statements and diplomatic efforts, while self-serving and inadequate in the eyes of critics, were regarded by others, including some Palestinians, as at least more fitting than the hypocrisy displayed by other Arab regimes. For all these reasons, Egypt's stock in the Arab world may actually have risen by the end of the summer of 1982.

Movement in this direction was also being encouraged by other events, suggesting that any improvement in Egypt's international position was attributable only secondarily to the war in Lebanon and that new trends in inter-Arab politics had their own underlying dynamics. Especially notable in this connection were the evolution of the Gulf War and, in particular, Iran's crossing into Iraq and attacking the port

city of Basra in July. Another significant event was the passing of King Khalid of Saudi Arabia in June. Mubarak flew to Riyadh to present his condolences and returned amid speculation that the new Saudi monarch, Fahd, would seek warmer relations between his country and Cairo.

Though serious obstacles remained, the prospects for Egypt's reconciliation with the rest of the Arab world improved during the summer of 1982 and this held out the prospect of increased popularity at home for the regime of Hosni Mubarak. More generally, however, most of the challenges facing the government in Cairo remained as serious as ever and it seemed only a matter of time before Mubarak's honeymoon would draw to a close.

(August 1982)

3.

Egyptian-Israeli Boundary Disputes: The Problem of Taba

Ann Mosely Lesch

The summit meeting held in Alexandria on September 11 and 12, 1986, was the anticlimax of a long and tedious period of negotiations between Egypt and Israel that had sought to find a formula to resolve their dispute over Taba. The Egyptian cabinet approved the Taba arbitration formula just after midnight on September 11, the negotiating teams signed the accord at 1:30 A.M., and Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres arrived in Egypt exactly fourteen hours later. Flown to Ras al-Tin Palace in Alexandria by helicopter from a military airport, Peres had less than twenty-four hours in which to meet with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and his cabinet. He departed in the early afternoon on the twelfth, in time to reach Israel before sundown marked the beginning of the Jewish sabbath.

The summit was an important—albeit last-minute—achievement for Peres, who was due to relinquish his post to Yitzhak Shamir in October and to take a back seat as foreign minister for the next two years. The summit enabled Peres to leave office after several personal triumphs, notably the meeting July 22–23 with King Hassan in Morocco, and the late-August trip to Cameroon, during which diplomatic relations were restored after a thirteen-year break. The meeting with Egypt's president was the first Egyptian-Israeli summit since Mubarak came to office in October 1981, the last such encounter having been an ill-starred session between the late President Anwar Sadat and the former Prime Minister Menachem Begin in Alexandria in August 1981. The willingness of Egypt to host the current summit indicated, Peres hoped, that the icy relationship was beginning to thaw. At least, Egypt would return its ambassador to Tel Aviv, from which he had been withdrawn in September 1982 in the aftermath of the massacre of Palestinians at Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps near Beirut.

For Mubarak, holding the summit was a more ambiguous move. He had worked hard to reestablish Cairo's credibility in the Arab world, which had been badly damaged by its formal ties with Israel. Jordan had returned its ambassador in September 1984. Iraq, drained by its long war with Iran, had formed relatively

close ties that included the purchase of military equipment from Egypt and permission for more than a million Egyptians to work in Iraq. Most other Arab countries—with the exceptions of Libya and Syria—had resumed normal trade and tourism with Egypt. The presence of the Israeli embassy on the Nile was quietly ignored, if not condoned. But Peres' visit would highlight that presence. If the visit did not lead to some substantive diplomatic moves to resolve the Palestine problem, it could again place Egypt in an awkward situation in the Arab world. Egypt would be perceived as solving its bilateral problem—this time over Taba rather than the occupation of all Sinai—at the expense of broader Arab interests.

To underline its insistence that Egypt was only agreeing to the summit in order to promote moves toward a comprehensive peace plan in the Middle East, the government stressed that the future of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip was the key item on the agenda. The editor of *al-Musawwar* weekly magazine, who was close to Mubarak, wrote on August 29 that Palestine must be the sole subject and that the summit should not be held if Peres planned to reiterate the three negatives that he had stated to King Hassan: no talks with the Palestine Liberation Organization, no withdrawal from all the occupied territories, and no establishment of a Palestinian state. (To this Peres responded that he would come to Egypt with a different set of negatives: “no to war, no to terrorism, and no to those who refuse to negotiate.”)¹

The government also sought to wring concessions from the PLO. In editorials in the press as well as a personal message from Mubarak to Yasir Arafat, chairman of the executive committee of the PLO, Egypt tried to persuade the Palestinians to issue a statement recognizing United Nations Resolution 242. Such a statement would, Mubarak believed, open the door to a dialogue with the United States and facilitate renewal of the PLO accord with Jordan that King Hussein had annulled six months earlier. To this the PLO responded ambiguously. On September 5, at the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, Arafat stated that he accepted Resolution 242 as *one* of the bases of discussion at eventual peace talks,² but three key groups within the PLO—including Arafat's Fatah—issued a statement in which they denounced Resolution 242 and froze the accord with Jordan.

In the end, Mubarak went ahead with the summit even though Peres had not modified his stance on the Palestinian issue and even though the Palestinian and Jordanian positions remained unclear. In part, Mubarak convened the summit because he had pledged to Israel that it would be held as soon as the agreement on arbitration of the Taba dispute was signed. Moreover, the Cairo government wanted to please Washington, which had just announced a new \$630 million economic aid package and was considering proposals to modify the repayment of Egypt's military debt. Congressional support for improved terms would be more likely—although not guaranteed—if Egypt held the summit and returned its ambassador to Israel. The latter was a long-standing congressional demand.

A final reason was that the Egyptian government wanted to bolster the prestige of Peres, whose stance on comprehensive negotiations appeared marginally better than Shamir's. A summit would enhance the credibility of the peace camp in Israel

and, in the future, might enable Peres' Labor Party to return to power with a greater capacity to act diplomatically.

The joint statement issued by Mubarak and Peres at the end of the summit stressed that the meeting marked the beginning of a new era in bilateral relations and in the "search for a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East."³ Mohammed Bassiouni, who already served as the Egyptian chargé d'affaires in Tel Aviv, was designated ambassador. The statement underlined the "shared commitment to proceed jointly to reinforce the structure of peace and achieve a comprehensive peace" which would resolve "the Palestinian question in all its aspects." The two leaders declared that "1987 is the year of negotiations for peace." Thus, as Egypt had sought, emphasis was placed on forward momentum toward a wider peace accord, not merely on bilateral gains.

Nevertheless, the joint communiqué was vague in its formulation and masked serious substantive differences. In his press conference and subsequent interviews, Mubarak stated that they had agreed to establish immediately a preparatory committee that would plan an international peace conference. But the two sides apparently had not agreed on what parties would participate in the committee and subsequent conference. As usual, the issue of Palestinian representation was the key stumbling block. Israeli sensitivity to the Soviet Union's participation in an international conference, as a permanent member of the Security Council with whom it had no diplomatic relations, was also a point of difference. Egypt hoped that PLO acceptance of UNSC 242 would enable it to participate in the conference through a joint delegation with Jordan, but Peres was unwilling to state this and even rejected Palestinian participation in the preparatory committee. Even less acceptable was the concept of Palestinian right of national self-determination. Moreover, Peres viewed the international conference as an umbrella under which Israel would conduct direct, bilateral talks with its neighbors. In an interview with *al-Musawwar*, published on September 12, Peres stated bluntly that he only accepted the idea of an international conference because King Hussein wanted it and that Palestinian members of a joint delegation with Jordan must not be members of the PLO.

Thus, despite Peres' statement to the press at the end of the talks that he and Mubarak agreed on the importance of resolving the Palestine question, the gap between the two sides was evidently not bridged. They attributed the remaining differences to the brevity of the summit, but the reasons were clearly more basic.

The Taba Issue

The occasion for holding the summit conference was the completion and signing of an accord on the terms of arbitration over Taba. This issue had irritated Egyptian-Israeli relations ever since Israel withdrew from the final third of the Sinai peninsula in April 1982.

Taba had never been raised as a problem by Israel in the past. Israel did not

claim Taba in the armistice accord with Egypt, signed on February 24, 1949.⁴ Nor did it claim Taba two weeks later, when two Israeli brigades seized an abandoned police station at the Palestinian village of Umm Rashrash on the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba. This seizure faced the Jordanian army with a *fait accompli* and provided Israel with direct access to the Red Sea. The town and resort of Eilat later were built on the land of Umm Rashrash. In addition, Israel did not claim Taba when it withdrew from Sinai after the Suez War of 1956. The government raised Taba as an issue only in December 1981, just as the withdrawal was being finalized.

Taba is a 250-acre triangle of land which juts into the Gulf of Aqaba twelve miles southwest of Eilat. The hill called Ras Naqb on its north side commands a clear view north over Eilat and south into the Sinai. The *wadi* (valley) of Taba contains sweet-water wells, pleasant beaches, and a natural harbor. As an extension of Eilat, Taba adds three-quarters of a mile to Israel's five-mile-wide coastal strip, marginally improving its shipping and naval activities in the Gulf. Taba also extends the resort area available to Israel and commands the coastal road into Sinai. Possession of Taba would thus enhance Israel's strategic and economic position.

Nevertheless, Israel abandoned far more significant assets in Sinai by virtue of the peace treaty signed with Egypt in 1979. These included profitable oil wells, manganese mines, agricultural settlements, tourist installations, and military bases. Most of the settlements were demolished, the mines were blown up, and the bases were dismantled. But the oil wells and most tourist resorts were handed over intact to Egypt. Despite the government's willingness to relinquish these holdings and return behind the international border for the sake of the peace treaty, it suddenly insisted on keeping the tiny plot of land at Taba.

Soon after Israel raised the issue, the two governments signed twelve agreements concerning Israel's final withdrawal during a visit by then Defense Minister Ariel Sharon to Cairo. This accord, dated January 19, 1982, left unresolved the exact demarcation of border points at several locations, the most important of which were Rafah, the large town at the northern edge of Sinai bordering the Gaza Strip, and Taba. An accord on Rafah's status was signed seven weeks later, but only a temporary agreement was reached on Taba, just as the April 25 deadline for withdrawal expired.

According to the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the agreement had five provisions.⁵ First, Israel would withdraw its forces behind the line of the international border as defined by Egypt, and Egypt would not establish a presence north of the border claimed by Israel. Second, troops of the Multinational Forces and Observers (MFO) would be stationed in the disputed area. Third, Israel would not build any new installations in the disputed area, pending a final settlement. Fourth, meetings would be held to consider how to resolve the issue, based on Article VII of the peace treaty, which called for conciliation or arbitration if negotiations failed to resolve a dispute. Finally, United States government representatives could participate in such meetings if the two parties so requested.

Israel based its legal claim to Taba on alleged ambiguities in the description of Taba in the accord that demarcated the administrative border between Palestine (then under Ottoman rule) and Egypt (under British control but legally still part of

the Ottoman Empire) in October 1906.⁶ Israel claimed that the border was supposed to pass along the southern side of wadi Taba, not across Ras Naqb hill to the north, thus placing nearly all of Taba within Palestine. It asserted that the 1906 map was drawn poorly and the boundary pillars were not sited properly. Even though the 1906 line was codified in the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, by which Turkey relinquished its claim over Palestine and Sinai to Britain (as the mandatory power) and Egypt, respectively, and even though the error had not been caught in 1949 and 1956–57, Israel argued that the mistake should be rectified now.

The Israeli government has not always been consistent in its position. At times, it argued that the marker was moved by the British during World War II. At other times, it claimed either that a granite rock in the wadi is really the marker referred to in 1906 or that the marker should be at an astronomical station near Bir Taba that existed on the site at that time.⁷

The Egyptian government responded to these claims by maintaining that, first, the line drawn in 1906 was quite clear and specifically included all of wadi Taba with Sinai.⁸ Second, the Egypt-Israel treaty referred to “the international boundary between Egypt and mandated Palestine” which was accepted by Israel in the armistice of 1949.⁹ Thus, arguments referring to possible mistakes in 1906 or relocation of the marker in the early 1940s would be irrelevant. Third, the fact that Israel did not claim Taba in 1949 or 1956 and that Israeli maps from that period place Taba within Egypt undermines any Israeli claim. Finally, a piece of the boundary pillar was found on Ras Naqb, which corresponds to the proper location according to the 1906 settlement and subsequent British mandate maps, thereby reinforcing the argument that the marker was properly sited in 1906 and never removed.

Behind these legal arguments, Egyptian officials believed that Israel’s real intention was political. Some American officials assert that the political claim came first and the legal rationale was created afterward. A high-ranking diplomat commented to me that the issue was raised two months after Sadat’s assassination, at a time when Israel was not certain of Mubarak’s behavior and wanted leverage in its dealings with Egypt. Moreover, he noted, Sharon—who had opposed the treaty in 1979—may have wanted to prevent the final withdrawal from Sinai and may have hoped that an argument over Taba would scuttle the entire evacuation in April 1982. Other diplomats, as well as journalists, argued that Israel wanted Taba to “remain a thorn in the side of Egyptian-Israeli relations,”¹⁰ that would continuously irritate Egypt, prevent it from enjoying its diplomatic victory in regaining Sinai, and serve as a warning that Israel could reconquer the peninsula if Egypt did not behave in a manner acceptable to Israel.

More fundamentally, many Egyptians believed that retaining Taba signaled that Israel rejected the concept of total withdrawal in return for peace. By insisting on even a minor border change with Egypt, Israel could justify more significant alterations of the borders with Jordan and Syria. Thus, withdrawal from Egyptian soil would not serve as a precedent for withdrawal from other occupied lands.

Taba soon became a national issue in Egypt, assuming a significance far beyond its size. Taba was the one piece of Egyptian soil that remained alienated, and so

attention became focused on it. The government and opposition forces both demanded its return.

In the meantime, Israel consolidated its hold by constructing two hotels within the disputed zone. Rafi Nelson's tourist village—a cluster of thatched-roof huts—was opened after the signing of the peace treaty in 1979 but prior to the 1982 withdrawal. Nelson obtained a 98-year lease from the Israel Lands Administration. The second hotel, the five-star Aviya Sonesta, was only at the early stages of construction when the 1982 evacuation took place. Eli Paposhado, an Egyptian Jew who had moved to Israel in 1949 and owned a hotel in Eilat, had obtained the land in 1977 but had not begun construction because of disagreements with the government over the design of the hotel. An agreement on the architectural plan was hastily signed in early 1982, and a 12-story, 312-room building was erected that summer. Costing \$30 million, the Sonesta opened on November 1, 1982, with much publicity and high-profile visits by ministers from the Likud Party. Since then, the hotel complex has been expanded further: by 1984 it had two piers for yachts, a scuba diving center, two large restaurants, a nightclub, a pub, a ballroom, and five tennis courts. In mid-1986, Paposhado was even planning a major overhaul of the facilities.¹¹ Apparently, the Israeli government believed that by consolidating its hold on Taba through these investments its presence would become difficult to dislodge.

Attempted Negotiations

Article VII of the peace treaty stated that, in the event of a dispute over implementing the treaty, the two sides should first negotiate and then turn to either conciliation or arbitration. Those methods were defined as alternatives, rather than consecutive stages.¹² Conciliation would lead to a recommended solution that would not be binding upon the parties and might take into account historical events, contemporary economic realities, and other nonlegal aspects of the two parties' claims. Arbitration would be binding and would be based solely on considerations of international law.

Israel preferred conciliation, recognizing that this would compensate for its weak legal case by taking into account the existence of the hotels in the area. Nonlegal factors such as "acquired rights" and equity would thereby become relevant considerations. The Egyptian government tended to favor arbitration on the grounds that the issue was purely technical, involving a disagreement over the location of border markers on Egyptian sovereign territory. Moreover, it believed that non-binding conciliation would merely waste time and that the parties would need to turn to arbitration in the end anyway.

Israel and Egypt started with negotiations, based on the above-mentioned five-point agreement of April 1982. Their first bilateral meeting on implementing that temporary accord was held in Eilat on May 3, 1982, with the Egyptian team headed by map expert Rear Admiral Mohsen Hamdy. This session failed to reach agreement on any substantive issues.

Although Israeli forces had withdrawn north of the line claimed by Egypt, and Egyptian security police remained south of the Israeli-claimed line, they could not agree on the role that the MFO should play in the disputed zone. Israel argued that the MFO's role in maintaining security meant keeping foreign forces out and insisted that Israeli border and regular police could remain inside the enclave. Thus, *de facto* Israeli jurisdiction was continued over Taba rather than, as Egypt had expected, the area's being placed temporarily outside the jurisdiction of either state.

Moreover, the two parties failed to agree on the issue of Israeli properties in Taba. Egypt objected to continued Israeli construction there and rejected suggestions that it agree in advance to operate the hotels as joint ventures. One Egyptian diplomat noted that Israel even suggested that Taba be an open area with a free zone and an international hospital to which Arabs could come for treatment by Israeli doctors. Egypt was not willing to make any commitment vis-à-vis the Israeli property prior to settling the legal dispute and maintained that it had no legal obligation to compensate Israel for that property.

A few days after the May 3 meeting, Egyptian Foreign Minister Kamal Hasan Ali wrote to his counterpart, Yitzhak Shamir, suggesting that they move directly to arbitration since negotiations evidently would be fruitless. Shamir responded the same month that conciliation was preferable to arbitration, since it would promote an amiable atmosphere. He also hoped to link conciliation to the normalization process.

In any event, talks never materialized. Negotiations concerning autonomy for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza were stymied that month by Menachem Begin's insistence that they be conducted in Jerusalem, which the Knesset had declared to be Israel's "eternal capital" in the summer of 1980. Thus, the mood was already sour when Israel invaded Lebanon in June 1982, and Egypt responded by freezing the implementation of economic and cultural agreements that would normalize relations. The recall of the Egyptian ambassador in September put the final touch on the freeze.

When the Aviya Sonesta hotel opened on November 1, however, the Egyptian government began to fear that Israel was consolidating its hold on Taba and profiting from the absence of talks. Egypt demanded, in a memorandum to Israel's ambassador in Cairo, that Israel cancel the opening of the hotel. The U.S. State Department echoed Egypt's concern in a statement issued on November 3 that termed the opening of the hotel "unhelpful" and added, "we understand that Egypt and Israel agreed that the hotel would not open absent mutual agreement." Egypt apparently requested that talks on Taba be resumed, but balked at linking them to normalization or to the return of the Egyptian ambassador to Tel Aviv.¹³

Technical-level talks resumed on March 2, 1983, in Ismailiyya and dragged on in desultory fashion for a year and a half. A high-level Egyptian delegation visited Taba in March 1984 and the Egyptian government debated what steps to take next. The then Prime Minister Fuad Mohieddin reportedly hesitated to turn to arbitration, lest Egypt's sovereignty be questioned, but he was willing to consider taking the issue to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.¹⁴ Egypt proposed taking

that route but Israel refused to allow the court to make a binding judgment. After Mohieddin's death in early June, the government unified its stance behind arbitration.

Meanwhile, the Israeli parliamentary elections on July 23, 1984, led to the formation of a National Unity government in September, with equal representation for Labor and Likud. Shimon Peres would be prime minister for the first twenty-five months, after which Shamir would assume the post. Peres was anxious to hold a summit meeting with Mubarak, to signal his differences with the previous Likud-dominated government and to end the freeze in relations with Egypt. By then, however, the Egyptian government had made clear its insistence that no summit be held and the ambassador not be returned to Tel Aviv until Taba returned to Egyptian control and Israeli forces withdrew completely from Lebanon.¹⁵ On October 4, 1984, Mubarak publicly rejected Peres' proposal that they hold a summit at Rafah on the Egypt-Israel border.

Nevertheless, Peres' efforts resulted in the reconvening of Taba talks in Beersheba in January 1985. The negotiators reviewed the issues of the role of the MFO, the disputed border markers, and sovereignty, but failed to reach agreement. In private, Peres reportedly conceded that Israel lacked legal justification for holding Taba, but he had to cope with hard-line political forces inside the country. Outside the conference hall, right-wing Israeli demonstrators raised placards stating: "Taba! The last grain of sand from the vast Sinai! Not to be returned!"¹⁶ The Egyptian consul in Eilat, Hassan Issa, countered: "Egypt has had its borders for 7,000 to 8,000 years, so we know where the border runs. Sure it is a teeny-weeny piece of land. But I don't care if it's a meter, a hundred meters, or a hundred miles. If it's mine, it's my dignity and I want it back."¹⁷

In March 1985, as Israel prepared to withdraw from Lebanon, the Egyptian government began to signal its support for that move and its willingness to moderate its stance on the return of the ambassador to Israel. Instead of insisting that the Taba issue be fully resolved before the ambassador would return, Mubarak indicated that Israel had only to accept a timetable for arbitration for the thaw to begin. This was a significant concession, for it meant that Egypt would renormalize relations before the outcome of arbitration was known. Peres welcomed this shift, but failed to win the backing of the Likud ministers for taking the issue to arbitration instead of conciliation.

Peres had hoped for a resolution of the issue by June, so that it would coincide with Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon. At bilateral talks held on May 15, Peres' representatives pressed for a summit to be held the next month. In fact, Egyptian editors who were close to Mubarak wrote that such a summit was possible in two months, provided they agreed on arbitration.¹⁸ Thus, Shamir's rejection of arbitration appeared linked to his concern that Peres and the Labor Party would get the credit for improving relations with Egypt. Shamir appeared to prefer to maintain the "cold peace" rather than enhance Peres' prestige and reopen negotiations on the future of the occupied territories.¹⁹ Nevertheless, when Peres threatened to bring down the government and call new elections, Shamir conceded. Fearful that he would lose the opportunity to become prime minister a year hence, he agreed in

September that the Israeli delegation could at least discuss the idea of arbitration. Peres' aide, Avraham Tamir, hastened to Cairo, and new talks were scheduled for October 1.

These negotiations never convened, since Israel raided the PLO headquarters in Tunis the same day. Angry student demonstrators in Cairo demanded the recall of the Israeli ambassador, and the Egyptian government issued a sharply worded protest against the Israeli attack. There was further acrimony between the two governments over the death of seven Israeli tourists in Sinai, shot by an Egyptian soldier on October 5. Shamir, in particular, insisted that Taba talks not reconvene until Egypt concluded its inquiry into the killings. Israeli officials were also annoyed at Mubarak for hosting Arafat in early November, in the wake of the *Achille Lauro* hijacking, and, for continuing to insist that the PLO be included in negotiations on the West Bank and Gaza.

Nevertheless, two rounds of talks on Taba that were held in December in Cairo and Herzliya did make some progress. They set up two committees that would work simultaneously for four to six weeks: the first to prepare the agreement on arbitration and the second to investigate other routes by which the issue could be resolved. Establishing the latter committee was designed to mollify Shamir and to indicate that arbitration was not the only possible route. Israeli journalists reported that some substantive issues were also agreed upon, such as the general terms of reference for the arbitrators, and accords that citizens of Egypt and Israel would not need passports in order to visit Taba and that ownership of the two hotels would remain in their current hands, regardless of the outcome of arbitration. Egypt, however, refused to divulge whether these promises had actually been made.

Israel Accepts Arbitration

At an all-night meeting of the Israeli inner cabinet on January 12–13, 1986, Peres finally compelled Likud to accept the principle of arbitration.²⁰ For Peres, time was running out. He was determined to reorient the relationship with Egypt before his term expired, but Likud demanded a high price. The cabinet agreement stated that the arbitrators must spend eight months attempting conciliation before they could shift to arbitration. Moreover, Egypt would have to comply with thirteen demands, as part of a comprehensive package. These demands included normalizing relations, returning the ambassador, preventing any hostile propaganda to be issued in Egypt, and opposing terrorism. Israelis tended to view these conditions as merely a restatement of the terms of the peace treaty, which they felt Egypt had failed to implement properly.

The Egyptian foreign minister immediately welcomed Israel's acceptance of arbitration as "positive and constructive."²¹ But the government rejected Israel's conditions. It refused to link Taba to normalizing bilateral relations, but rather linked progress on Taba to progress on the Palestine issue and achievement of a comprehensive peace by holding an international conference. Government-oriented newspapers as well as the opposition press denounced the conditions imposed by

Israel. A columnist in *al-Ahali*, the progressive Tagammu Party newspaper, for example, maintained that Israel's conditions were even worse than those set forth at Camp David: Camp David provided for Egypt to regain all of Sinai, whereas now it would only get arbitration over Taba. Israel, he asserted, wanted to control all of Egypt's domestic and foreign policy.²² Even the regime-dominated advisory house of parliament, al-Majlis al-Shura, ruled on February 3 that the conditions were totally unacceptable since they interfered in Egypt's internal affairs and infringed upon its national sovereignty.

The accord on utilizing arbitration to resolve the dispute also opened a debate within Egypt. The Tagammu and Socialist Labor parties opposed arbitration on the grounds that Egypt's sovereignty over Taba was unchallengeable and should not be subject to an external ruling. Egypt, they asserted, should simply demand its return. Foreign ministry spokesmen responded that arbitration would not jeopardize sovereignty and, in this case, it could serve as an important precedent for settling regional disputes according to the rulings of international law. The head of the international law department at Cairo University supported the government's case by citing other border disputes that had been handled by arbitration.²³

Negotiations resumed in Cairo in February 1986, with the head of the Egyptian delegation, Nabil el-Arabi, stressing that Israel's conditions could not be forced upon Egypt. To circumvent this touchy subject, two separate working groups were formed: one to deal with Taba and the other to discuss normalization. In this way, Egypt could claim that there was no linkage between Taba and the other bilateral issues while Israel could claim that its cabinet-mandated conditions were under review.

Talks continued at an increasingly intense pace during the spring, facilitated by a month of mediation by United States special envoy Richard Murphy. Efforts were focused on two key issues in the formulation of the question that would be asked of the arbitration panel.

First, Israel insisted that there be a phase of conciliation prior to binding arbitration. Egypt finally agreed that a chamber consisting of the Egyptian and Israeli arbitrators and one non-national arbitrator would meet during the period of written pleadings. The chamber could make a confidential, unanimous recommendation to the parties concerning a settlement of the dispute. If the parties jointly accepted the recommendation, the arbitration process would cease. Otherwise, proceedings would continue. As an Egyptian diplomat commented, this was a watertight arrangement which precluded any recommendation being made that would run counter to Egyptian interests.

Second, Egypt wanted the question to refer to the "exact" location of the boundary pillar, whereas Israel preferred the phrase "correct" location: the former would emphasize the technical nature of the issue; the latter would enable the arbitrators to examine the accuracy of the historical record. Finally, the two parties agreed to omit any adjective as the modifier of the word "location."²⁴ Their agreement was announced August 10, and the Israeli inner cabinet approved the text on August 13.²⁵

The United States had hoped that the agreement would be finalized during Vice President George Bush's visit to the region in late July and early August. But the Egyptian team was not willing to be rushed into repeating the mistakes made at Camp David, where Sadat's willingness to respond to Jimmy Carter's suggestions—accompanied by hasty legal drafting—had weakened Egypt's position. Moreover, the Egyptian negotiators may have realized that the more they delayed, the more pressure they could put on Peres to make concessions, since he needed badly to wrap up the talks before leaving office.

In any event, agreement was reached more quickly on certain other issues. In late July, the parties agreed to let the MFO enter Taba during the arbitration period and reached an accord on its functions.²⁶ They also announced the names of the national members of the arbitration panel: Ruth Lapidot of Hebrew University and Hamid Sultan of Cairo University. On July 31, the negotiating teams visited Taba, during which they inspected each other's claims. In August, they traveled to Geneva to select the conference site.

By mid-August, with the questions agreed upon, Peres claimed that the issue was 95 percent resolved. He sent Avraham Tamir to Alexandria on August 19 to discuss with Mubarak the arrangements for the summit conference. When Tamir came home, he announced that the meeting was set for September 10–11.

This premature announcement was both beneficial and harmful to Egypt. On the one hand, Egyptian negotiators enhanced their leverage: with Peres so anxious to hold the summit, Egypt could stall on the remaining issues until Israel conceded on these points. On the other hand, Egypt was worried about popular opposition to the summit and criticism by other Arab governments, and wanted to downplay both the possibility and the importance of the meeting. Neither the Presidency nor the Foreign Ministry issued any statement confirming or denying Tamir's statements.

Negotiations remained stymied on two points: first, the selection of the three international arbitrators and, second, the technical team's mapping of the location of the boundary pillars.

According to outside observers, each side automatically rejected the names of possible arbitrators that were suggested by the other, apparently suspecting each other of bias.²⁷ The American team then proposed thirty names, from which each party would select six without knowing which persons the other party had selected. On the first attempt, neither side picked the same set of names, but finally a roster of six remained under discussion. Each party reviewed intensively the backgrounds and affiliations of these persons. By September 9, they had both accepted two names: Dietrich Schindler, a Swiss professor of international law at the University of Zurich, and Pierre Bellet, a former president of the Supreme Court of Appeals in France. However, they could not agree on a third name. In a last-minute compromise, they agreed that Schindler and Bellet would select the third member.

The issue of the location of the boundary pillars was also difficult to resolve, in large part because Israel had no precise marker in mind. As mentioned earlier, the government proposed at different times that the granite rock just south of the two hotels was pillar number 91 or that *bir* Taba (Taba well), further south, was the

correct location. To avoid exposing the weakness of its position, the Israeli team suggested on August 26 that the map indicate a large area covering 1,600 square meters. Egypt rejected the concept of a polygon, stating that this distorted the meaning of the term "location," and insisted that Israel select one precise site. Israel finally gave up the idea of a polygon, but insisted on naming two possible sites for the pillar. The Egyptian team hesitated to let Israel submit two locations, fearing that the arbitration panel might find it easiest to compromise and choose the middle site, which would still leave most of Taba in Israeli hands. The foreign minister convened a committee of Egyptian legal experts, headed by Wahid Ra'fat, to decide whether or not to accept the Israeli position. The committee decided the next day that Israel's claim of two different places did not jeopardize the Egyptian position. Instead, they argued, it proved that Israel was not sure of its claim.²⁸ When the foreign minister informed Mubarak of the committee's determination, the president approved the decision. The last stumbling block to submitting the case to arbitration was removed.

The decisions to announce an agreement with only two of the three arbitrators agreed upon and to let Israel claim two sites for marker 91 were made at the eleventh hour. On the morning of September 9, Israeli radio announced that its delegation was packing to return home. Peres planned to make a televised statement that night. Nonetheless, intensive sessions on September 10 with the Egyptian foreign minister and separate meetings between Murphy and the Israeli delegation resulted in the final breakthrough.²⁹

Even though the last-minute concessions were made by Egypt, its government viewed the arbitration document as a whole as clearly in its favor.³⁰ Foreign Minister Abd al-Meguid maintained that, first, the stature of the arbitrators was such that no political influence could be brought to bear on them. Second, a fixed timetable was set for the presentation of evidence to the court and the completion of its operations, so that neither side could willfully delay the proceedings. Third, the wording of the question restricted the arbitrators to "deciding" on the "location" of the boundary pillars at the time of the Palestine Mandate and specifically referred to the armistice of 1949. This meant that arguments concerning 1906 would be irrelevant. Moreover, the annex specified that the court did not have the power to decide on a location for the marker other than those presented by Egypt and Israel, and it could not observe the location of any markers other than those mentioned in the accord. Fourth, article 3 stated that each side could request from the other any document or proof in its possession. This, one Egyptian journalist noted, would enable Egypt to request Israel to present an official map published in 1964 that places Taba within Sinai. Fifth, a tangible change on the ground would be introduced during the arbitration period since the MFO would enter the disputed area, without this influencing or prejudicing the arbitration itself. Finally, in article 14 both parties accepted the ruling of the court as "final and binding" and promised to implement it as soon as possible after it was issued. Within twenty-one days of the award, agreement on a date by which implementation would be completed would have to be reached. Thus, Egypt believed that the terms of arbitration were defined as tightly as feasible and with strong guarantees of neutrality.

Evaluation

Efforts to resolve the question of Taba fall into two distinct phases between December 1981 and September 1986. The first, lasting from 1981 until September 1984, overlapped with the period of Likud rule and ended with the formation of the National Unity government in Israel. During those two and one-half years, Israel appeared to have the upper hand: it controlled Taba, continued constructing tourist facilities, and prevented the MFO from functioning there. Moreover, in its overall policies, the Likud government invaded Lebanon in order to disperse the PLO and to influence Lebanese internal politics; it removed elected municipal councils on the West Bank and expelled several mayors, undercutting talk of Palestinian self-rule; and it accelerated the establishment of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, thereby preempting talk of returning them to Arab rule. Egypt responded by freezing normalization, withdrawing its ambassador from Tel Aviv, and reopening lines of communication with the PLO and other Arab governments. It denounced Israeli policies in Lebanon and the occupied territories, and insisted that Taba was national sovereign land. Israeli and Egyptian goals were diametrically opposed during that period. With Israel apparently having the upper hand—and gaining American support through a strategic accord—Egypt had little to gain by pressing the Taba issue. The Israeli government, having no clear interest in smoothing relations with Egypt or in reviving the broader peace process, would have demanded a high price for any concessions on Taba.

The second phase, lasting from September 1984 to September 1986, coincided with the prime ministership of Shimon Peres. Seeking to project an image different from that of the Likud, and cutting Israeli losses by largely pulling out of Lebanon in spring 1985, Peres made cosmetic improvements on the West Bank, and agreed to arbitrate the Taba dispute. He hoped to leverage these concessions into warm bilateral relations with Egypt, negotiations with Jordan, and enhanced prestige internationally. Nevertheless, he was constantly undermined by Likud's foot-dragging on Taba arbitration and its opposition to negotiations with Jordan and the Palestinians. Fear that the leadership rotation agreement might be jeopardized and concern about the negative image being projected domestically and internationally led Shamir to yield to Labor on Taba but not on broad negotiations. Thus, Israeli policy was hesitant and inconsistent.

Egypt gained considerable leverage as a result, but also remained apprehensive about the basic thrust of Israeli policy and was unwilling to commit itself to a general improvement in relations. Moreover, Egypt's efforts to end its isolation in the Arab world bore fruit during those two years, led by renewed relations with Jordan and well-publicized contacts with Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the PLO. Egypt had to balance its moves carefully, reopening lines of communication in the Arab world while not alienating the United States or unduly antagonizing Israel. Thus, the gains to national prestige made by its skillful negotiating of the Taba issue were balanced by concessions to Israel on the return of the ambassador, the convening of a summit conference, and the resuming of normalization.

Egypt used the leverage that it held over Peres very effectively in obtaining the terms that it sought for Taba arbitration. In the end, it granted Peres the symbolic concessions that he sought, in part because it recognized that failure to hold the summit would be criticized in the United States, where Congress was involved in delicate negotiations on economic and military aid to Egypt; in part because a public setback to Peres would probably weaken the credibility of the peace camp in Israel and reduce the already slim prospects for negotiations concerning the occupied territories; and in part because failure to reach a resolution over Taba at this juncture would undoubtedly result in Egypt's having to face a tougher Israeli stance once Shamir became prime minister in October.

The negative fall-out for Egypt in the Arab world was far less than anticipated. Within a month of the Mubarak-Peres summit, Djibouti reestablished diplomatic relations with Egypt, the speaker of the Iraqi parliament visited Cairo, and Kuwait invited Mubarak to attend the meetings of the Islamic Conference Organization in January 1987 for the first time since 1979. King Hussein flew to Cairo in late November, in the wake of revelations about American arms sales to Iran via Israel. Only the PLO leadership, disappointed that the summit had been held and concerned about pressure from Egypt to recognize UNSC 242, pulled back from contact with Cairo and began to cultivate alternative ties via the Soviet Union. Overall, the Arab states' need for Egyptian support in their increasingly intense conflict with Iran appeared to outweigh their criticism of Mubarak's convening the summit and returning the ambassador to Tel Aviv.

Domestic criticism was sharp, particularly in the opposition press.³¹ The Egyptian Socialist Labor Party newspaper editorialized that it wished that Peres' visit had not happened and hoped that it would not occur again, as it opened the road of "shame and humiliation" for Egypt. The Liberal Party editorialized that these concessions to Israel meant that Egypt had abandoned its only cards by which to pressure Israel and the United States on the Palestine issue. *Tagammu* columnists noted that, while Peres was meeting with Mubarak, Israeli planes were bombing Lebanon and land was being confiscated on the West Bank. Members of the Wafd were more muted in their comments. At the Peoples Assembly, some praised the patience and skills of the Egyptian negotiators, while others criticized the implicit linkage between resolution of Taba and normalization. Mumtaz Nassar, head of the Wafd parliamentary bloc, especially objected to the Egyptian ambassador's having returned to Tel Aviv on the same plane as Peres, calling that an insult to Egypt.

In joint meetings, the opposition parties denounced the Camp David accords, criticized the resort to arbitration, stated their concern that the summit would damage the effort to break Egypt's isolation in the Arab world, decried the omission of the PLO from the joint communiqué, and argued that the proposal for an international peace conference had no credibility since both Shamir and Reagan continued to oppose it. Nevertheless, the government managed to minimize the damage by keeping the summit carefully circumscribed, emphasizing the positive gains concerning Taba, and keeping silent over the kinds of bilateral economic or cultural relations that could be expected to emerge as a result. Public preoccupation with economic

issues and the muted commentary from the Arab world also played into the government's hands.

The main vulnerability of the government appeared to lie in its pledge that 1987 would be the year of negotiations. Egyptians remembered that Sadat had called 1981 the year of decision—and lost credibility when there had been neither war nor peace by the end of that year.

Numerous stumbling blocks to peace remained evident. First, there was no agreement on the format of an international conference. Egypt and Jordan continued to seek a multilateral forum in which the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council could bring their weight to bear on the regional actors in favor of a comprehensive settlement. In contrast, Peres would accept an international conference only if it were an umbrella for direct bilateral talks and if the conference as a whole could not make decisions. Shamir opposed holding any such conference and was expected to obstruct all attempts to get it off the ground. Second, the parties did not agree on the form of Palestinian representation. Egypt and Jordan favored representation by Palestinians who had been selected—or at least approved—by the PLO, within a joint delegation with Jordan. Neither Peres nor Shamir would agree to pro-PLO delegates participating in the conference. They also rejected the concept of self-determination for the Palestinians and spoke instead of limited self-rule within the framework of Camp David. Third, Israel objected to including the Soviet Union in negotiations. Peres insisted that Moscow would have to resume diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv before it could participate in an international conference. This, in turn, would require an accord on the emigration of Soviet Jews. Israel continued to count on American dislike for the idea of Soviet involvement in Middle East negotiations to add weight to its stance. In contrast, Egypt and Jordan sought Soviet involvement as a means to balance the American-Israeli axis and to bring Syria and the PLO to the negotiating table.

These three sets of disagreements would almost certainly be sufficient to prevent an international peace conference from convening in the foreseeable future. This could prove embarrassing to Mubarak's government. Yet it might manage to deflect criticism by placing the blame on Shamir who, in his first month in office, made clear that his top priority would be to consolidate Israel's control over the West Bank and Gaza, not to negotiate for peace. Certainly, if Israel were to establish more settlements and block an international conference, the Egyptian government would feel justified in keeping the lid on normalization. And it would receive broad public support for such steps.

At least the issue of Taba had been disentangled from these complex political maneuvers. The steps toward convening the arbitration tribunal proceeded. The third neutral arbitrator, Swedish judge Gunnar Lagergren, was selected in October 1985 and became the president of the tribunal. The first session of hearings opened December 10 in Geneva. Preliminary findings were to be completed by late spring 1987, and the process was expected to conclude in mid-1988.

If the court rules in favor of Egypt, Israel could still try to delay implementation of the decision. The parties would still need to agree on access to the zone, transfer of the hotels, and reparations for the facilities.³² Such talks could prove as complex

as the original negotiations. Nevertheless, after years of wrangling and preoccupation, Taba is the one important issue which appears headed for a resolution.

(December 1986)

NOTES

1. *Jerusalem Post*, international edition (*JPI*), September 6, 1986. Peres was accompanied to Alexandria by Abba Eban (a leading figure in the Labor Party and chairman of the foreign affairs committee in the Knesset), Ezer Weizmann (minister without portfolio), Moshe Sasson (Israeli ambassador to Egypt), Dan Meridor (Likud member of the Knesset), and the delegation negotiating concerning Taba.

2. *Le Progres Egyptien*, September 6, 1986.

3. *Egyptian Mail*, September 13, 1986.

4. On the 1949 accord, see Yigal Allon, *The Making of Israel's Army* (New York: Bantam, 1971), pp. 47–49; Sami Hadawi, *Bitter Harvest* (Delmar, N.Y.: Caravan, rev. ed., 1979), p. 93; and Tom Segev, *1949: The First Israelis* (New York: Free Press, 1986), p. 15.

5. *Egyptian Gazette*, April 27, 1982.

6. Israeli analyses include Ruth Lapidot, "The Taba Controversy," *Jerusalem Quarterly*, no. 37 (1986), pp. 37–38; and Gabriel R. Warburg, *Egypt and the Sudan* (London: Frank Cass, 1985), pp. 89–95 on the 1906 accord and pp. 95–101 on the British Mandate period.

7. Interview with Egyptian chief negotiator, Nabil el-Arabi, *October* magazine (Cairo), September 21, 1986. According to Ran Edelist in the Israeli monthly *Monitin* (January 1986), some members of the Israeli mapping unit believed the border passed between the Sonesta hotel and Nelson's village. Edelist also asserted that aides to Sharon and Housing Minister David Levy tried to destroy the marker on Ras Naqb, but they made a mistake and threw, instead, the nearby triangulation point into the wadi. Thus, when the Egyptian surveyors came as part of the joint delegation, they easily found the pillar on Ras Naqb north of Sonesta and the remnants of the triangulation point in the wadi. See also the analysis of this issue by Hasan Nafaa, *al-Ahram*, August 29, 1986.

8. According to Izzeddin Foda, professor of international law, who published a series of articles on Taba in April and May 1986 in *al-Ahram al-Iqtisadi*, the wording of Article I of the 1906 agreement was: "The dividing administrative line, as explained in the map, begins from the point of Ras Taba on the western coast of the Gulf of Aqaba and passes through the eastern edge of the head (*ras*) of the mountain which overlooks the wadi Taba on the top of the mountain fortress (Jabal Fort) and then the line continues straight from Jabal Fort to a point at most 200 meters from the meeting point of the continuation of this line with a vertical line drawn from a point 200 meters from the top of Fathi Pasha's mountain . . ." etc. (May 5, 1986).

9. In Article I, paragraph 2; Article II also states: "The permanent boundary between Egypt and the former mandated territory of Palestine is shown on the map at Annex II. . . . The parties recognize this boundary as inviolable."

10. Makram Mohammed Ahmed, *al-Musawwar*, December 14, 1984; also Mohammed Sid Ahmed, *al-Ahram al-Iqtisadi*, April 26, 1982.

11. *JPI*, December 29, 1984, and September 20, 1986; *International Herald Tribune* (*IHT*), January 27, 1985.

12. This was stated by Israeli negotiator Lapidot, p. 34. Article VII reads: "1. Disputes arising out of the application or interpretation of this treaty shall be resolved by negotiations. 2. Any such disputes which cannot be settled by negotiations shall be resolved by conciliation or submitted to arbitration."

13. *Washington Post*, October 28 and November 3, 1982.

14. The Egyptian delegation consisted of Shafei Abd al-Hamid (assistant secretary for foreign affairs), Nabil el-Arabi (head of the legal section, Foreign Ministry), the governor of South Sinai, and General Mohsen Hamdi (aide to the chief-of-staff and map expert). Comments by Ali al-Din Hilal Dessouki, August 26, 1986.

15. These conditions were set by mid-summer 1983. The government sometimes added a third condition, relating to the Palestinians. At times this was phrased as Israel ceasing to build Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, at other times as improving the political and economic conditions of the Palestinians living under occupation, and also as making progress on resolving the Palestine question. See, for example, statement by presidential advisor Osama al-Baz in *JPI*, November 24, 1984.

16. *JPI*, January 28, 1985. See also *ibid.*, February 9, 1985; and *IHT*, January 28 and 30, 1985. The heads of the delegations were Zvi Kedar (Israel) and Abd al-Halim Badawi (Egypt).

17. *IHT*, January 27, 1985.

18. *JPI*, May 25, 1985. Editorials by Ibrahim Nafaa, *al-Ahram*, May 10, 1985, and Makram Mohammed Ahmed, *al-Musawwar*, May 3, 1985.

19. Editorial, *JPI*, September 24, 1985.

20. The inner cabinet, created in May 1985, consisted of five ministers from Labor and five from Likud.

21. *Journal d'Egypte*, January 15, 1986; *IHT*, January 15, 1986; testimony by Foreign Minister Esmat Abd al-Meguid before the Peoples Assembly, *al-Ahram*, January 20, 1986; editorial, *Egyptian Gazette*, January 14, 1986.

22. Philip Gallab, *al-Ahali*, January 22, 1986.

23. Mufid Shihab, *al-Ahram*, February 6, 1986. For opposing views, see Fathi Radwan in *al-Sha'ab*, January 21, 1986; and Izzeddin Foda's series in *al-Ahram al-Iqtisadi*, April-May 1986.

24. The question was phrased: "The court is required to decide on the location of the markers of the recognized international borders between Egypt and Mandatory Palestine according to the peace treaty, the agreement of 25 April 1982, and the annex." (Translated from *October*, September 21, 1986.) U.S. State Department legal advisor Abraham Sofaer conducted a mini-shuttle between Egypt and Israel in late May and late June, during which he suggested (1) the arbitration panel itself should formulate the question, or (2) the panel should decide whose case is correct. These alternative ideas were apparently accepted by the Israeli negotiators but were rejected by Egypt, whose negotiators did not trust Sofaer's intentions and neutrality. This suspicion contrasted with their appreciation of Murphy's mediation efforts.

25. Ariel Sharon and Moshe Arens voted against the agreement, making the vote eight to two.

26. The MFO was mentioned in Article XI of the Taba compromise. An Egyptian negotiator told me that the MFO would enter Taba within one month of the exchange of instruments of ratification. In July, Israel and Egypt agreed on the site of the observer post, which would have ten soldiers plus officers who would report violations. No Israeli military vehicles would be allowed into the area and Egypt would not recognize the validity of any Israeli police presence there. In fact, however, Israeli police would remain in the zone and the MFO's post would be primarily symbolic. By late August, Egyptian and Israeli liaison officers were conducting joint daily inspection tours at Taba to ensure Israeli compliance with the April 1982 accord, particularly in relation to the ban on new or additional construction (*JPI*, August 23, 1986).

27. The Egyptian negotiators stated that the names proposed by Egypt were all non-Arab, non-Muslim, non-Jewish, and not identified with Palestinian issues. They insisted that the arbitrators come from neutral countries, such as Sweden and Switzerland, and be jurists, either experienced on the bench or holding senior academic positions. Israel, they claimed, proposed persons such as Eugene Rostow, who were not merely Jewish but strongly Zionist.

Israel stated as a condition, which Egypt apparently accepted, that the arbitrators must come from countries with which Israel has diplomatic relations.

28. Wahid Ra'fat (deputy head of Wafd party), *al-Ahram*, September 27, 1986, and Salah Muntassir, *October*, September 21, 1986. American diplomats agreed, in private, that Israel weakened its case by failing to specify clearly one boundary pillar. Moreover, both American and Egyptian diplomats noted that if Israel gave up its claim to the southernmost marker prior to arbitration, it would have no justification for remaining in that zone even during the period of arbitration.

29. *Al-Ahram*, September 10, 1986; *Egyptian Gazette*, September 10, 1986.

30. *Al-Ahram*, September 11, 1986; *Journal d'Egypte*, September 16, 1986; Muntassir and el-Arabi in *October*, September 21, 1986. Each party's memorial must be submitted within 150 days of the December 10, 1986, session. The counter-memorial is due within the following 150 days and any rejoinder must be filed within 59 days. The Tribunal will try to complete oral hearings and visits in the next 60 days and render its award within the following 90 days.

31. *Al-Ahram* (Liberal), September 15, 1986; *al-Sha'ab* (Labor), September 16, 1986; *al-Ahali* (Tagammu), September 17, 1986; *al-Wafd*, September 18, 1986.

32. *Al-Wafd*, November 6, 1986.

4.

Egyptian-Israeli Relations: Normalization or Special Ties?

Ann Mosely Lesch

The nature of the relationship between Egypt and Israel has remained under contention ever since the peace treaty was signed in 1979. Israel calls for “normalization” of relations. What does that mean? The traditional definition of normalization is to make relations natural. But what are the natural relations between two peoples and states that have fought bitter wars and that still differ over fundamental aspects of the conflict, notably the rights of the Palestinians?

From the start, Israel sought a special relationship with Egypt. Israelis wanted more than a formal peace—they aspired to be accepted totally by the Egyptians on the basis of the bilateral peace. In contrast, Egyptians might grudgingly have accepted the reality of Israel’s existence, but they still questioned its right to exist, rejected its Zionist political philosophy, and sought to support the Palestinian struggle to attain statehood.

Thus, as Israelis pressed for friendship, Egyptians reacted warily. Officials in Cairo maintained correct relations, but refused to accord Israel a privileged position vis-à-vis other countries. Tour agents and merchants dealt with Israeli tourists, but the intellectual community refused overwhelmingly to meet with Israelis, much less to visit Israel itself. Some rejected the very existence of Israel, and others objected to the bilateral peace treaty which resulted in isolation of Egypt from the rest of the Arab world and failed to solve the Palestine problem.

The Egyptian government’s policy has undergone several major changes, partly as a result of internal political considerations but largely because of Israel’s actions. The first change occurred after the assassination of President Anwar Sadat on October 6, 1981, under his successor Hosni Mubarak. But the change was more in tone than in substance.

Sadat had pressed actively for trade and tourism protocols to be signed, for oil to be sold to Israel, for high-level Israelis to visit Egypt, and for academics to establish contacts with their Israeli counterparts. The treaty provided for negotiations on trade, cultural, and civil aviation accords to begin within six months of Israel’s

interim withdrawal from Sinai, which took place in January 1980. Under Sadat's prodding, bilateral agreements in each of these areas were completed and signed within only three months of the withdrawal. Sadat also encouraged Israelis to visit even before the accords were formalized. He hosted Israeli President Yitzhak Navon and a group of Labor Party leaders, both in November 1980.

Sadat's enthusiasm was welcomed by Israelis, but they were worried by counter-indications, notably the growing hostility of Egyptian politicians, intellectuals, and the public toward Sadat and his policies. When Navon came to Cairo, for example, his address to the Peoples Assembly had to be canceled because of criticism by the Socialist Labor Party, and his visit to the Helwan iron and steel factory complex had to be called off because workers threatened to demonstrate in protest.¹ The major professional unions—law, medicine, journalism, and academic—all voted to boycott Israelis, despite strong pressure from Sadat. A widespread fear grew that Israel would try to dominate Egypt economically and penetrate it intellectually, and committees to defend Egyptian culture were established to counter Israeli influence.

Sadat himself became disillusioned with Israel's policies in his final months. Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin persisted in arguing that the bilateral relationship was completely distinct from Israel's policies toward the occupied territories and other Arab states. He embarrassed Sadat by endorsing the vote of the Knesset in August 1980 to make unified Jerusalem the eternal capital of Israel and by bombing the Iraqi nuclear reactor in June 1981, barely a day after he and Sadat met in Sinai. Their final meeting in Alexandria in August was bitter, with Begin unwilling to make any moves on the Palestinian issue and Sadat confronted with protests in the streets. Caught in his commitments to Israel, Sadat reacted by lashing out at his internal critics. More than fifteen hundred were arrested in early September, exactly a month before he was assassinated.

When Mubarak assumed the presidency, he faced contradictory demands. On the one hand, Israel wanted him to prove that he would not change Egypt's existing policy toward the peace treaty. On the other hand, he had to mollify Sadat's internal opponents and prove that he would not treat Egyptian political forces in the cavalier manner of his predecessor. Mubarak responded by finalizing several bilateral accords during the winter of 1981–82. He allowed Israel to participate in international fairs that spring and let it open the Israel Academic Center in May. By then, Israel had withdrawn from the remaining sector of occupied Sinai, although disagreements persisted over Taba and Canada Camp. Nevertheless, he refused to accede to Israeli requests that he visit Jerusalem: he was willing to go to Israel itself, but not to Jerusalem, following the Knesset-mandated annexation.² As a result, he never made the trip, but Israel proceeded to implement the return of Sinai in late April in accordance with the treaty.

At home, Mubarak released politicians and intellectuals from detention, reinstated professors and journalists to their posts, and ended pressure on them to cooperate with Israelis. By opening the political process slightly and allowing the parties to resume publishing their newspapers, he gained considerable public support. Egyptians perceived him as following the legally correct path vis-à-vis Israel without displaying the effusiveness of Sadat. Nor was he responsible for his predecessor's

errors. The tone, if not the substance, of the relationship with Israel began to alter in 1981–82.

The dramatic change occurred in June 1982 when Israel invaded Lebanon to break up the military and political infrastructure of the Palestine Liberation Organization, to link up with Lebanese allies to control that war-torn country, and to enhance the security of Israel's borders. The invasion took place exactly six weeks after Israel withdrew from Sinai. Egyptians universally perceived the invasion as a slap in their face. The few who had been willing to have contact with Israelis felt totally undermined: their hopes that human relations would lead to a broader peace process and less militant Israeli policies were dashed.

The Egyptian government immediately decreed a freeze on the normalization process. Planned visits by Israeli ministers were canceled, no new accords were signed, and no new business contracts were undertaken. All existing agreements, however, were honored. Egyptian oil continued to flow to Israel throughout the summer, and the government did not recall its ambassador from Tel Aviv until the massacre of Palestinians at Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps near Beirut in mid-September. The public outrage at the mass killings by Lebanese Phalangist militiamen, under the eye of Israeli troops, compelled the Cairo government to respond. Withdrawing the ambassador was the least that it could do under the circumstances.

For the next two years, the Egyptian-Israeli relationship was popularly termed the "cold peace." Although Israeli tourists went to Egypt in substantial numbers, Israeli participation in other activities was officially discouraged. The government sharply criticized Israeli practices in the occupied territories, its continued military presence in Lebanon, and its insistence that the West Bank and Gaza Strip should ultimately come under Israeli sovereignty.

Only in the spring of 1984, as Israel prepared for parliamentary elections in July, did the Cairo government's attitude begin to shift. In the hope that the hard-line Likud would lose control over the government to the Labor Party, Egypt allowed a delegation from Peace Now and Labor to visit Cairo in the spring and expressed in somewhat veiled terms its willingness to improve relations if the political climate in Israel should change.

The Israeli elections, however, were disappointing to Egypt, for they demonstrated the polarization of the electorate rather than the ascendancy of centrist or peace-oriented groups. Labor and Likud were evenly matched and in September formed the National Unity Government, in which Labor's Shimon Peres became prime minister for the initial twenty-five months, with Likud's Yitzhak Shamir to succeed him for the remaining twenty-five months. As a result, Peres did not come to power with a clear mandate to improve relations with Egypt and to renew the peace process. Rather, his hands were tied by his Likud partners. Peres managed to persuade the cabinet to withdraw most of the troops from Lebanon by June 1985 and, in January 1986, to agree to arbitration over Taba. But he maintained a tough stance on the occupied territories and did not respond positively to the PLO-Jordanian agreement of February 1985, which Mubarak helped to foster and endorsed strongly.

Nevertheless, in response to Israel's moves in Lebanon and to encourage Peres

over Taba and the Palestine issue, Egypt allowed ministerial exchanges to take place in the spring and summer of 1985 and even talked of encouraging Egyptian tourism to Israel and the opening of an academic center in Tel Aviv. These gestures came to naught. Israel's response to continued Palestinian terrorism with the long-range bombing of the PLO headquarters in Tunis, the killing of Israeli tourists by an Egyptian soldier in Sinai, and the uproar over the *Achille Lauro* hijacking and Egypt's refusal to detain the hijackers led to renewed tension between the two countries.

Despite ministerial visits in late 1985 and early 1986—Boutros Boutros-Ghali, minister of state for foreign affairs, headed a delegation from the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) to the convention of the Israeli Labor Party in April 1986—talk of enhanced popular-level contact was dropped.³ The machine-gun attack on Israeli diplomats outside the international fair grounds in Cairo in March 1986 and continued popular resistance to normalization may have convinced the government that it should maintain a low profile on that front.

Thus, the Peres-Mubarak summit in September was an entirely official affair, viewed by the citizens on television but not involving their participation. Even the decision to arbitrate the Taba dispute and the return of the Egyptian ambassador to Tel Aviv did not lead to highly publicized contacts. The Israeli oil and transport ministers' visits in late 1986 received minimal press coverage in Egypt, as did the visit of a delegation from the Labor Party in late September. Trade and research contacts increased, particularly in the agricultural field, but persons involved remained at pains not to talk publicly about them. The Cairo government spoke not of "normalization" but of adherence to the terms of the treaty. A restrained relationship could be expected for the near future.

The substantive components of the Egyptian-Israeli relationship can be broken down, somewhat arbitrarily, into tourism, trade, culture, and scientific cooperation. Although not an exhaustive list, these four components will be the focus of this chapter.

Tourism

From the start, tourism has been a visible—and contentious—arena for normalization. Israelis, isolated since 1948 from the neighboring Arab countries, were eager to break out of their claustrophobic confines. Images of the Pyramids, the temples of Luxor and Karnak, and the Valley of the Kings caught their imagination. The right of Israelis to travel freely to Egypt was viewed as a prime indication of the latter's intention to establish an open relationship.

The Memorandum of Understanding on Tourism was signed on December 17, 1981, by which time Israeli tourists had already begun arriving in Egypt. The memorandum arranged for such practical matters as deposits that would be required by tour agencies, provision for charter flights, and the joint promotion of tourism markets. It stated that a plan for implementation would be finalized by late June

1982. Moreover, the Nile Hilton Hotel would host an Israeli tourism week in Cairo in March 1982, and the Tel Aviv Hilton would sponsor an Egyptian tourism week in June.

Direct travel by bus and air had begun in 1980. In November 1980, El Al Israel Airlines opened an office in Cairo to handle arrangements for its flights three times a week. Both governments were nervous about these flights: Israeli security agents supplemented Egyptian guards at the airport, no notice was posted of the departure times, and El Al planes did not remain overnight on the tarmac.

The Egyptian government established a new airline, Nefertiti, to handle flights to Israel three times a week. This maneuver was designed to avoid having the national airline, Egyptair, subjected to boycott by the other Arab states. Nefertiti planes were unmarked and all white. Despite the pretense of separation from Egyptair, the same planes were used for internal Egyptair flights to Luxor and Aswan when they were not needed for the Tel Aviv run. After all of Sinai was returned to Egypt in 1982, Nefertiti Airline was dissolved and Air Sinai created. It also handled flights to resorts in Sinai and on the Red Sea coast.

Tourist bus transportation to Israel was arranged through Isratours, with offices in downtown Cairo and in Giza.⁴ Buses departed early in the morning for El Arish; at the crossing point, travelers would transfer to an Israeli bus. After April 1982, the same bus could travel all the way from Cairo to Tel Aviv, passing through the Rafah checkpoint. The East Delta Bus Company also operates buses in cooperation with United Tours in Israel.

Travelers could also travel by group taxi to Rafah, departing from a loading zone near Ramses Square, and then change to a Palestinian taxi on the Gaza side of the border. This has been the preferred mode of transport for Palestinians entering Egypt from the occupied territories.

With the opening of the Egyptian embassy in Tel Aviv, Israelis could obtain visas relatively easily. In addition, the consulate in Eilat was authorized to issue special permits so that Israelis could visit Sinai for up to one week. Figures for visitors to Sinai are not available, but the Israeli embassy in Cairo provided statistics on visitors to Cairo. In 1980, the first year of open borders, 14,000 Israelis traveled to Egypt. This nearly tripled to 38,000 in 1981 and increased to 45,000 in 1982. In 1983 and 1984, despite the freeze on normalization since mid-1982, about 63,000 Israelis visited Egypt during each of those years. The killing of seven Israeli tourists in Sinai in October 1985 and the wave of anti-Israeli demonstrations in Cairo that autumn caused a sharp drop in the already declining visits by Israelis to Egypt. Following the Peres-Mubarak summit, a slight increase was evident, but a substantial enlargement was not expected until spring 1987.

Many provisions in the Memorandum of Understanding were never implemented once Egypt froze relations in the wake of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The Egyptian tourism week was never held in Tel Aviv, charter flights were not arranged, and there was no joint promotion of tourism. Some American and European companies advertised tours that included Israel, Egypt, and sometimes Jordan. In fact, the Tel Aviv–Cairo flights were largely booked by non-nationals: 33,000 foreigners flew in each direction in 1980, 90,000 in 1982, and 157,000 in 1984.

In contrast to the substantial numbers of Israelis who visited Egypt and the even larger number of foreigners who took advantage of the direct flights to visit both countries, the number of Egyptian tourists to Israel remained low. These visitors mainly included official missions and accompanying journalists, travel agents, businessmen, and a few Egyptian Jews. In the first year, for example, 32 representatives of private tourist agencies visited Israel, largely to facilitate arrangements for tour groups from the United States or Europe. Another source indicated that more than 90 percent of the travelers from Egypt are really Palestinians who carry Egyptian travel documents and are visiting relatives in the Gaza Strip.⁵ In any case, tourism from Egypt is virtually nonexistent.

The Israeli Government Tourist Bureau, which opened an office in Cairo on Qasr al-Nil Street in June 1982, closed within a year for lack of business. A small office to promote tourism has functioned in the embassy since then. A spokesman for the Israeli tourism ministry expressed his disappointment with this situation: "We wanted Egyptians to come here, to see we don't have horns."⁶

The absence of tourism from Egypt to Israel has both popular and official roots. On the popular level, most Egyptians have no desire to visit Israel. While they might tolerate—or ignore—Israeli tourists in Egypt, most support the boycott of Israel that professional and trade unions have upheld since the peace treaty.

Egyptians who are devout Muslims or Christians also do not want to visit their holy places while these lie under military occupation. Muslims object to the presence of Israeli guards at the gates of al-Haram al-Sharif, the attempts by Israeli politicians and religious fanatics to take control over that area, and the partial transformation of Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron into a synagogue. Christians object to the failure of the Israeli government to enforce the court order to return Deir al-Sultan, a Coptic sanctuary adjoining the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, to the control of Egyptian monks.

On a practical basis, few Egyptians are apt to visit Israel because it is relatively expensive. Egyptians who have enough money for such a vacation would prefer to relax in London or Paris. Another practical concern is that if governments in other Arab countries discover that an Egyptian has traveled to Israel, they will refuse him or her entry. This is of major concern to Egyptians who wish to work abroad or to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca.

In addition to the popular inhibitions to travel to Israel, the Cairo government has established strict criteria for travel there.⁷ Any Egyptian who wants to visit Israel must obtain a second passport (which costs nearly \$40) and a special exit permit, known as the "yellow paper." Moreover, no Christian can go to Jerusalem on pilgrimage. The government states that it is enforcing the ban decreed by the Coptic Pope Shenudah, who has forbidden pilgrimage so long as Deir al-Sultan remains alienated from the Egyptian church.

As part of the process, officials in the Egyptian travel-permit office and internal security require potential travelers to fill out detailed forms and to undergo interviews. They want to know exactly why they are going, who they know in Israel, and what places they will visit. Egyptian officials argue that such interviews are necessary, partly to help enforce the Pope's ban on Coptic pilgrimage and partly

on security grounds, to prevent potential saboteurs or drug smugglers from entering Israel. This elaborate system deters all but the most committed from carrying out their travel plans.

The careful screening process was originally established with Israel's concurrence. It was agreed that Egypt should run a preliminary check to make sure that no security risks obtained visas and to prevent a flood of Egyptians from entering Israel to seek work in agriculture and construction. Once Egypt froze relations in 1982, however, it became a convenient means to restrict movement. In spring 1984, the head of the application office conceded: "In principle, there is no permission for Egyptian tourism (to Israel)."⁸

Only in summer 1985, after Israel largely withdrew its forces from Lebanon, did Egypt ease the restrictions slightly. Lucky Tours reported that two busloads of Egyptian tourists went to Israel in July 1985,⁹ and Egyptian Minister of Tourism Wagih Shendi spent two days in Israel in August.

Shendi's Israeli counterpart did not come to Cairo until March 1986, presumably as a result of the controversy over the killing of Israeli tourists in Sinai the previous fall. The minister, Avraham Sharir, visited the Israeli pavillion at the Cairo International Trade Fair, which included pamphlets promoting tourism to Israel.¹⁰ His visit coincided with the attack on Israeli diplomats outside the fairgrounds. In part as a result of that attack, but also as a result of diplomatic movement on the Taba issue, Egypt made certain symbolic concessions. It agreed, for example, to speed up the issuance of visas to Israelis and to lower the charges at the border.

The new Egyptian tourism minister, Fuad Sultan, visited Israel in August 1986, taking some Egyptian travel agents with him on the trip.¹¹ The visit resulted in a joint communiqué, which stated that each country's tourism ministry would hold a one-week tourist exhibit on the other country; they would try to convene a meeting of tourism ministers from eastern Mediterranean countries, including Greece and Italy, to promote regional tourism; regular bilateral meetings of their tourism ministers would be held, beginning with one in Egypt; charter flights would be encouraged; and they would work to prevent pollution in the Gulf of Aqaba.

Israeli officials were skeptical about the impact of this communiqué: one noted that it simply reiterated provisions in the original protocol, that it did not lift Egypt's ban on Coptic pilgrims, and that charter flights would undoubtedly not be allowed by Egypt until the Taba issue was resolved. Moreover, Egyptian officials indicated that joint tours were not yet feasible, although American tour agencies would be encouraged to organize trips to both countries. In particular, they denied reports that a joint tourist office was going to be set up in New York.

In fact, in both private and public, Egyptian officials expressed skepticism that there would be a significant increase in touristic contact. In interviews during summer 1986, they linked tourist exchanges not so much to the Taba talks as to a fundamental change in Israeli policy toward the Palestinians and the comprehensive peace process. *Al-Musawwar* magazine, which often reflects government views, commented on August 29 that both Shendi and Sultan were not keen on visiting Israel, kept postponing their trips, and finally made brief visits only. Even in autumn 1986, following the submission of the Taba dispute to arbitration and the convening

of the summit meeting in Alexandria, Egypt's official attitude toward tourism remained ambiguous.

One major area of tourist contact remains to be resolved.¹² Although agreement has been reached and implemented on Israelis' obtaining visas for one-week stays in Sinai, which restrict them to the east side of the Suez Canal but exempt them from the usual requirement to exchange \$150 into Egyptian currency, no agreement has been finalized on yachts sailing from Eilat into Egyptian waters off Sinai.

When the peninsula was under Israeli control, boats motored down the coast freely. After the coast and nearby islands in the Gulf of Aqaba were returned to Egypt, there were numerous incidents when Israeli-operated yachts landed on islands or even on beaches on the coast without first obtaining Egyptian visas for the tourists on board. Egyptian diplomats asserted that the yacht operators still viewed the area as part of Israel or no-man's-waters and felt that they had a right to unrestricted access to any harbor. Egypt charged that Israelis cut coral, fished, and swam in prohibited areas. The Egyptian consul in Eilat complained in August 1984 that Israeli officials in Eilat refused to intervene to stop the yachts, even though the government had agreed that Egyptian territorial waters must be respected.

By early 1985, tension reached the point at which Israel protested that Egyptian security guards shot at Israeli yachts when they tried to land at Coral Island. In some cases, Egypt detained the boats, interrogated the passengers, and fined the owners before releasing them late the same day. Egypt argued that its national sovereignty was being violated by these boats and that it had to make sure that these were legitimate tourists, not drug smugglers, gunrunners, or political subversives.

An agreement in principle was reached in August 1985, as part of the thawing in relations, that the yacht owner or tour operator must obtain a permit from the Egyptian consul in Eilat: a list of passengers with their passports and a \$6 fee per person must be brought to the consul, who would process the permit on the spot. The yacht could then sail directly to the island, where the passengers' identity would be checked against the list. Moreover, six beaches along the coast were approved for yachts sailing from Eilat.

The agreement, however, was never implemented because the Eilat mayor objected—on behalf of the tour agents—that processing such permits each morning would delay the yachts unduly and make it impossible for them to allow last-minute passengers on board. As a result, no agreement has yet come into effect; Eilat-based yachts sail only in the harbor or remain in international waters without landing on Coral Island or the coast. American diplomats, along with Egyptians, note that Israelis feel they should have special visiting rights in Sinai. This convinces Egyptians that Israel still does not accept Egypt's sovereignty over the peninsula.

Trade Relations

Israelis were initially optimistic about establishing extensive commercial ties with Egypt, but Egyptians generally responded by voicing fears of Israeli penetration and domination. Over time, Israelis realized that opportunities were more limited

than they had anticipated, and the Egyptian public became less anxious that Israeli goods and entrepreneurs would overwhelm them. Contacts remained low-keyed, with trade often laundered by third-party firms and banks.

The first trade contacts were made soon after the treaty came into force. Egypt began supplying oil to Israel on November 26, 1979, even before ambassadors were exchanged between the two countries. Sadat agreed to sell Sinai oil to Israel, at a level of 2 million tons per year, after the Shah of Iran fell in early 1979 and the revolutionary regime in Tehran banned oil sales to Israel. Some private-sector agreements were also signed in 1979 and early 1980, but the only deal that was actually consummated prior to the trade protocol involved the sale to Egypt of 170,000 baby chicks per month.¹³ The chicks were flown directly from Tel Aviv to the Cairo airport, where they were picked up by the owners of private poultry farms. Other deals were delayed by problems of credit exchange and complicated overland or sea transport. Aside from a few arrangements through third parties, initial agreements worth \$1.5 million were signed by mid-1980, ranging from food products and livestock to building materials, electronic appliances, and paper products. All involved trade from Israel to Egypt.

The bilateral trade protocol was signed during Israeli trade minister Gideon Patt's visit to Cairo in April 1980, and was ratified by the Peoples Assembly on April 1, 1981. Subsequently, public-sector companies could deal legally with Israel. Moreover, after Israel's final evacuation from Sinai in April 1982, Israeli trucks were permitted to drive all the way to Cairo. Drivers were issued multiple-entry visas allowing them to make five crossings in a two-month period. Previously, Israeli trucks had to reload onto Egyptian vehicles at the El Arish crossing point. The Israeli maritime carrier Zim also established a weekly service between the ports of Ashdod and Alexandria. Certain banks were authorized to open letters of credit for trade with Israel: a few western banks, such as Barclays, took advantage of this, but the Suez Canal Bank, under the administration of Sadat's confidant Osman Ahmad Osman, was the only Egyptian bank willing to handle Israeli accounts.

The Israeli government was anxious to participate in Cairo's annual international trade fair, as a means to advertise products and to assert Israel's presence. Its participation in the spring fairs in 1981 and 1982 triggered boycotts by many Arab firms. Several Israeli firms also opened offices in Cairo, notably the conglomerate Koor Industries and the leading agricultural marketing cooperative, Agrexco.

As a result of these efforts, a variety of Israeli products began to be exported to Egypt. These included fruits, soybeans, eggs, butter, chocolate, and some consumer goods such as toys, T-shirts, and sports shoes. Nevertheless, the volume of trade remained limited.¹⁴ In 1980, \$10 million worth of goods was sold to Egypt; in 1981, \$13.7 million; and in 1982, about \$22 million.

Because of Israel's purchase of Egyptian oil, which averaged \$500 million yearly, the trade balance was heavily in Egypt's favor. All other goods sold to Israel totaled an estimated \$700,000 in 1982. This low figure may be attributed both to Egyptian firms' unwillingness to trade with Israel and to Israel's lack of interest in Egyptian products, some of which (such as agricultural produce and textiles) were competitive with its own.

Even before the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Egyptians resisted trade

with Israel. Political and economic considerations coincided. Private businesses which imported from Europe or America might be willing to sample Israeli products, but the firms that dealt with the Arab market would not risk being subject to Arab boycott. In any case, most textiles could be obtained more cheaply from Asia or internally, and high-fashion clothes were bought from Europe. The only trade advantages with Israel involved luxury fruits, some high-technology products, and certain poultry produce such as chicks, where speed and low cost of delivery were key. Egyptian businesses had well-established ties with Japanese, American, and European firms in electronics and technical fields, so that Israel's comparative advantage lay almost exclusively in such specialized items as drip-irrigation systems and plastic-greenhouse equipment and solar heaters. These have a limited market in Egypt, but one that could be expected to grow.

Egyptian public-sector factories particularly opposed dealing with Israel, even after the trade protocol was formalized. Nationalist feeling was most strongly embedded in this sector, ties with Arab countries were long-established, and most of their products, in any case, were designed for internal consumption.

With the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and an official freeze on normalization, trade agreements that had already been signed were honored, but no new accords were made and old agreements were not renewed. For example, an Israeli firm reported in September 1982 that it had sold \$500,000 worth of drip-irrigation systems to Egyptians in the previous six months. No orders were canceled, but no new orders were placed.¹⁵ Israeli sales to Egypt dropped from \$22 million in 1982 to only \$5.5 million in 1983. Egypt continued to sell Sinai oil to Israel, and its exports remained at about \$700,000. Thus, just as the inexpensive overland route opened, most trade ended. Zim even canceled its weekly interport service because of light traffic. Egyptian diplomats noted that the Suez Canal Bank no longer wished to handle Israeli accounts, both for reasons of conscience and for financial reasons, and Egypt refused to allow Israel to participate in trade fairs in 1982 and 1983.¹⁶

A slight thaw became evident the next year. Israel participated in the March 1984 trade fair, which was attended by the Israeli minister of trade. The volume of trade picked up slightly: Israel sold some \$13 million worth of products to Egypt that year. But both the government and the private sector remained circumspect in their dealings with Israel. Most business was disguised through third-country deals.

When Shimon Peres became prime minister in autumn 1984, and when some movement was evident on Taba and Lebanon in spring 1985, trade picked up a bit. In April 1985, for example, a new company, Egyptian Reefers and General Cargo Company of Alexandria, was the first Egyptian firm to open a shipping line to Israel, using the refrigerated vessel *MS Amana*: it docked in Haifa in early April with 45,000 tons of frozen fruit juice concentrates from South Africa, and loaded 150,000 cans of citrus for Scandinavia.¹⁷ Since cargo traffic between Israel and Egypt remained infrequent, most such cargos involved shipment to other countries.

The Israeli minister of energy visited Egypt in February 1985, and his Egyptian counterpart, oil minister Abd al-Hadi Qandil, spent three days in Israel in June 1985.¹⁸ There he spoke of continued oil sales but was cautious about the prospects for other commercial relations. Qandil's second visit to Israel was in December 1985, and a second agricultural cooperation accord was concluded the same month

in Cairo. Agricultural minister Yusif Wali had been pressing for the introduction of plastic greenhouses in Egypt and had established pilot projects on Dahab Island in the Nile and on reclaimed land on the edge of the Delta. When an Egyptian agricultural delegation toured Israel in August 1986 (even visiting the occupied Golan Heights), it focused on studying high-yield plastic greenhouses and drip irrigation.

As a result of the upturn in trade, Israel placed an economic attaché in its Cairo embassy for the first time in June 1986.¹⁹ More firms began to inquire about trading prospects, in addition to Koor and Agrexco, which had retained their representatives in Egypt. A company that supplies plastic greenhouses and equipment for drip irrigation, for example, opened an office in downtown Cairo.

In mid-1986, most deals were still made through third parties, to reduce the risks for Egypt of an Arab boycott and of internal criticism, even though costs increased as a result of the middleman fee and added transport expenses. For example, the Egyptian Petroleum Authority bought \$250 million worth of petrochemical products from Israel via a third party in Europe, a method that cost them \$6 more per ton in commissions than it would have cost to buy directly from Israel. Neutral bank accounts in Cyprus, Greece, or Turkey also were often used.

Only one joint venture is known to have been approved between an Israeli company and private Egyptian investors. Agreement was reached in mid-1986 to produce household electrical appliances in Egypt using Israeli technology. Two Israeli companies would be responsible for marketing the appliances in Europe, and their Egyptian partner would market them in the Arab countries. This company would probably be located in an Egyptian duty-free zone.

Israeli trade ties remain a highly sensitive topic in Egypt. Demonstrators protested Israel's participation in the March 1986 international trade fair, and a member of the Israeli embassy was assassinated in an ambush outside the fairgrounds. Demonstrators at the Israeli pavillion urged visitors to boycott Israel. The Youth Union of the Socialist Labor Party criticized the Egyptian government for letting Israel participate in the fair.²⁰

Within the Egyptian diplomatic corps, many remained cool toward normalization. The institution of severe restrictions on imports at the end of August 1986 was greeted by some as a welcome excuse to limit Israeli goods. One diplomat noted that few trade deals were now likely and that preference would be given to countries with which Egypt had bilateral barter accords (such as those of Eastern Europe) rather than countries with which trade must be in hard currency (such as Israel). Thus, if an Egyptian merchant wanted to import an Israeli commodity, the government would scrutinize the request carefully and not grant it if the commodity was available elsewhere on better terms for Egypt.

Following the Alexandria summit in September, two Israeli ministers visited Egypt: oil minister Moshe Shahal in late November and transport minister Amnon Rubinstein in mid-December. They discussed technical issues relating to oil and communications, and Shahal apparently discussed the possibility of bilateral co-operation in solar energy.²¹ These visits were hardly mentioned in the Egyptian media, in contrast to the usual practice of headlining visits by foreign dignitaries.

Overall, as of 1986, trade relations between Egypt and Israel were limited and

seemed likely to remain that way. The competitiveness of their products, administrative and financial restrictions on foreign trade, and politically based constraints combined to inhibit contacts. Agricultural equipment and petrochemical products continued to be the most likely Israeli exports to Egypt. Few Egyptian public-sector firms would do business directly with Israel, and private businesses continued to be wary of making deals that would damage their ability to function in the Arab world.

Cultural Accords

A bilateral cultural agreement was signed between Egypt and Israel on May 8, 1980. It spoke in sweeping terms of promoting understanding and friendship. The executive protocol was signed on October 29, 1981, and specific subaccords followed in early 1982. These covered a wide variety of subjects: radio and television, youth, sports, education, and scientific research. These accords were detailed and specific. For example, the radio and television protocol, signed on February 16, 1982, had provisions for bilateral assistance to visiting correspondents and for exchange programs and films, including joint productions. Exchanges of students and sports teams were envisioned in those accords, and exhibits of contemporary art and performances by folklore groups were specified. Israel would be able to participate in the annual international book fair in Cairo, and each side could open an academic center in the other country.

Israelis considered these cultural accords extremely important as means to influence Egyptian attitudes toward Israel. They hoped that increased contact would alter Egyptians' negative images of Israel and that interactions among young people would foster more positive feelings that would serve to deepen the peace process in the long term. Some Egyptians agreed that psychological barriers and negative stereotyping were an important component of the conflict: human contact, they felt, would reduce Israelis' feelings of isolation and make them realize that peace was possible, not only with Egypt, but, under the right conditions, with the Palestinians, too. Nevertheless, most Egyptians criticized cultural ties established under the rubric of Camp David.

Little was achieved before Israel's invasion of Lebanon. In terms of the media, Israeli newspapers were available in Cairo by February 1980 and the Egyptian press was available in Israel.²² Some Israeli journalists visited Egypt, but no newspapers set up permanent offices there. Only one joint production took place: coverage of the Israeli evacuation of Sinai on April 25, 1982. The Israeli Academic Center (IAC) opened at 92 Nile Street in Giza in May 1982, headed by Shimon Shamir, a specialist in Egyptian politics from Tel Aviv University who had been deeply involved in the bilateral negotiations.

Few Egyptians visited Israel, although some were willing to meet discreetly with Israelis in Cairo. A partial list of Egyptian visitors included:²³

an art exhibit by Abd al-Wahab Mursi, art counsellor to the Egyptian government, in Jerusalem in January 1979;

a trip by a senior professor of urology at Cairo University to Tel Aviv in autumn 1979;

the participation of Hussein Fawzi, former dean of the Faculty of Science, Alexandria University, and former undersecretary in the Ministry of Culture, in a colloquium at Tel Aviv University in April 1980;

the visit by Muhammad Sha'alan, professor of neuropsychiatry at al-Azhar University, to several Israeli academic institutions in October 1980;

the official trip by the minister of culture in February 1982;

a delegation of sixty university students and professors, also in early 1982.

Sha'alan's observations on his trip are particularly noteworthy (and poignant in retrospect). He wrote in the *Jerusalem Post* that he had come on a goodwill visit: "I was purifying my soul of prejudice, of bitterness and hate. . . . I was actualizing the meeting of opposites." But contact must not be one-way, he stressed: Egypt made the gesture of recognizing Israel and now Israel must make a parallel gesture by accepting the Palestinians "as a people seeking nationhood just like they themselves did only thirty years ago." Without that gesture, he wrote, the bilateral agreement would not be transformed into a comprehensive peace and Israel would never "break its isolation." Rather, it would include "Egypt in its walls of isolation—a combined Egyptian-Israeli ghetto." Sha'alan was vociferously condemned by fellow academics in Egypt for visiting Israel. Some Israeli intellectuals heeded his plea, but the government was bent on a diametrically opposed policy.

Formal meetings with Israelis in Egypt were limited, due to the strong boycott by intellectuals. Four such gatherings were:

a seminar in May 1979 at the Center for Political and Strategic Studies, *al-Ahram* newspaper, with four dovish Israeli intellectuals and a leader of Peace Now.²⁴ At the urging of the Egyptian Foreign Ministry and with the participation of two diplomats, the Egyptian political scientists present used the occasion to press the Israelis to put the Palestinian issue at the center of their political activities. Afterward they expressed disappointment that even those dovish Israelis would not endorse independent statehood for the Palestinians. The center resisted all further pressures to hold formal meetings with Israeli Jews;

also hosted by the center, a meeting the next winter with leading Palestinians from Israel, led by Muhammad Watad, a member of the Knesset under the Mapam Party. The director argued that they were Palestinians suffering from Israeli rule and thus the Egyptian boycott of Israelis should not apply to them;

a meeting arranged by and held on the premises of *October* magazine, the mouth-piece of the NDP edited by Anis Mansour, with the five senior officials of the Israeli Labor Party in November 1980.²⁵ Although Labor was in opposition at that time, this gathering had a semiofficial orientation and, at its close, Sadat met alone with Peres. The delegation also held a seminar with the politbureau of the NDP;

a conference held in Alexandria in May 1982 under the auspices of the Washington-based Political Psychiatry Institute.²⁶ The first had been held in Washington in January 1980, and the second, in Lucerne, Switzerland. These meetings analyzed psychological barriers to negotiations and to the resolution of the Arab-Israeli con-

flict. Egyptian participants included Sha'alan, Abd al-Azim Ramadan (a senior historian from Menufiyya University), Mahmud Mahfouz (former minister of health), Essam Gallab (a medical doctor), and Ambassador Tahsin Bashir, then on leave from the diplomatic service.

Despite these conferences, which were either encouraged or approved by the Egyptian government, officials were ambiguous about contact between Egyptian and Israeli intellectuals. Sadat pressed for cultural ties and supported Israel's participation in the Cairo International Film Festival and the annual book fair in 1981. Nevertheless, there was considerable resistance to these acts. There were no press reports on the Israelis at the film festival, and the organizers of the book fair objected to having an Israeli booth.²⁷ In response, they placed a stand with Palestinian books right next to Israel's. Many young Egyptians showed up carrying emblems supporting the PLO. Moreover, when Cairo University held a reception for the Israeli archaeologist Yigael Yadin, while he was deputy premier, many professors boycotted.

The mainstream press became increasingly critical of Israel. Immediately after the Knesset declared all of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, *al-Gumhuriya* published a cartoon that showed Hitler pinning a swastika on Begin's chest and congratulating him for his policy toward the Palestinians on the West Bank.²⁸ The same week *Rose al-Yusif* magazine depicted Begin as a snake whose tail rested on the negotiating table while his head devoured Jerusalem. The Israeli embassy protested such cartoons and similar articles as violating the pledge in the treaty to end hostile propaganda. But the editors refused to apologize, and appeared to receive only occasional reprimands.

After Sadat's death, the government stopped any pressure on citizens to meet with Israelis. In fact, it is said that written messages were sent to the university faculties that they need not host or meet with Israelis. The government also quietly discouraged contact between Israeli and Egyptian youths. When a Jewish-Palestinian organization working in Arab villages near Haifa proposed holding a workcamp in Ismailiyya to build a "peace park," to be followed by one in Galilee, Egyptian diplomats rejected the idea of a bilateral camp (even though it would include Palestinians) and suggested that the first workcamp be held abroad, perhaps in Kenya.²⁹

Once Israel invaded Lebanon, all pretense of cultural cooperation ended. Newspapers continued to be exchanged and the Israel Academic Center remained open, but the national media joined the opposition press in its uninhibited criticism of Israeli policies. The visit of the Israeli education minister, scheduled for June 14, 1982, was postponed indefinitely. Planned trips by an Egyptian folklore group and an art exhibit were canceled. Israel was not permitted to exhibit at the Cairo book fairs in 1983 and 1984 and at the trade fair in 1983, although it did have a booth in 1984.

One exception was the conference at St. Catherine's Monastery that Sha'alan organized in March 1984 on the theme of promoting religious understanding. He brought together Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, and Jews, some of whom came from Israel.³⁰ The opposition press attacked the conference, leveling a variety of

charges: first, that by promoting the idea of a common prayer, Sha'alan was seeking to undermine Islam; second, that this was a cover for reviving Sadat's idea of building a synagogue in Sinai; third, that it enabled Jewish women to seduce Muslim men; and fourth, that the Jewish Israeli psychiatrists participating were spying on the Egyptians. (The reader can judge the relative seriousness of these charges.)

The Israeli Academic Center (IAC) appears to have provided the main locale for intellectual contact during the period of freeze. In the first four months (June to September 1982), five Israeli research projects were conducted under its auspices. These involved:³¹

- a study of excavation sites in the East Delta by Raphael Givon, Egyptologist at Tel Aviv University. Givon was the first Israeli to lecture at the IAC;
- collection of data on Egyptian economic growth and demography;
- a study by a librarian of the fifty thousand printed books of Cairo synagogues and Jewish community offices;
- data collected on relations between Egypt and West Africa from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries;
- an examination of Greek inscriptions from the first century B.C. by a Hellenistic scholar.

IAC director Shimon Shamir organized seminars at the center, helped Israeli scholars obtain research permits, provided Egyptians with information on Israeli research and references on Judaism, Hebrew literature, and the social sciences, and assisted Hebrew language and literature classes at Ain Shams University. He even arranged the itinerary and contacts for two Egyptian doctoral candidates who went to Israel for research in 1982.

Nevertheless, Shamir was unable to lecture at any Egyptian university: no institutional contacts were possible, he conceded, only informal individual relations. In fact, only a very small number of Egyptian intellectuals were willing to contact the center or attend seminars. Upon his departure in mid-1984, Shamir wrote: "Against all odds, [the center] has managed to generate the beginning of a genuine cultural dialogue between Israeli and Egyptian intellectuals." He concluded: "In the long run, I sincerely believe that the nature of this peace will be determined by the kind of cultural dialogue that the two countries can develop." His comment might be juxtaposed against the statement of an Egyptian diplomat that year: "How can we talk about sending musical bands and artists to Israel when they are massacring people?"

Since the partial thaw in 1985, contacts have remained minimal. No Egyptian intellectuals—aside from the participants in certain scientific research projects, which will be mentioned later—visited Israel, and the boycott remained strong in Cairo. Only a few persons, such as Sha'alan, Ramadan, and Ambassador Bashir, who had strong personal commitments to dialogue, maintained some relations with visiting Israelis and the IAC.

A few Egyptian athletes participated in competitions in Israel, but these persons

were not resident in Egypt. For example, two England-based squash players won championships at competitions in Herzliya in 1985 and 1986.³²

The government allowed Israel to participate in the book and trade fairs in 1985 and 1986. As a result, many Arab participants boycotted or pulled out of the exhibitions. Israeli participation also caused public protest. In January 1985, for example, two hundred Egyptian and Palestinian demonstrators burned the Israeli flag at the book fair and raised banners that proclaimed "Palestine Is Arab . . . Long Live Our Struggle against the Zionist Enemy."³³ They handed out leaflets that denounced the peace treaty, demanded the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador, and charged that "Israel is the Enemy of God."

Israelis were not invited to Egyptian conferences, but the government could not exclude them from international meetings held in Egypt, since this right was specified in bilateral accords. In at least one instance, conference organizers decided to cancel the gathering rather than cope with unwanted Israeli participants.

The IAC continued an active seminar program under the new director, Gabriel Warburg, a former rector of Haifa University and a historian specializing in the Sudan and Islamic political currents. He adopted a more low-keyed approach than his predecessor and stopped trying to press other cultural centers in Cairo to cooperate with the IAC.³⁴ By mid-1986, Warburg claimed that one thousand students were studying Hebrew at the three major universities in Cairo and that professors brought their students to the center to examine its resources. Warburg ordered Hebrew books and manuscripts from Israeli libraries for Egyptian graduate students. Subjects of interest ranged from Biblical studies to contemporary Hebrew literature and current agricultural practices. No additional Egyptian researchers had visited Israel, but he believed that at least twenty professors whom he knew would travel there if the Egyptian government eased its restrictions.

Meanwhile, Egypt delayed establishing a counterpart academic center in Tel Aviv.³⁵ The Israeli government approved the idea and Mubarak even mentioned it publicly in 1985, giving his formal stamp of approval in July 1986. But the government continued to drag its feet, using the argument that such a center was a luxury at a time of severe budget cuts. In any case, no credible scholar has emerged who would be willing to direct the center. The government would probably have to assign someone from the diplomatic service.

Overall, the quantity and quality of cultural interaction remain limited. The IAC touches a narrow range of intellectuals, and most others are mobilized to oppose any Israeli cultural presence. The general public has no contact with the Israeli media or culture. At both the official and the popular level, these inhibitions are likely to continue. Only in the area of scientific cooperation has there been any substantive, long-term interaction.

Scientific Cooperation

Egyptian and Israeli scientists have long been curious about each other's scientific research. Before the peace treaty made direct contact feasible, scientists met in-

formally at international conferences and sometimes arranged to exchange papers through the good offices of third parties. Egyptian marine biologists and environmentalists, for example, sought information on Israeli research concerning fisheries and pollution, respectively, and Israelis were interested in Egyptian studies on tropical diseases.

Within a month of Sadat's trip to Jerusalem, the Research Project on Peace was set up at Tel Aviv University under the directorship of a prominent physicist, Avivi Yavin, in order to look into possibilities for scientific cooperation.³⁶ The Project hosted a conference in June 1979 entitled "Towards Peace in the Middle East," and Yavin visited Cairo in September 1979 and February 1980. After meetings at the Egyptian Academy of Science and Cairo University, he concluded that joint scientific research was feasible so long as it took place in fields remote from ideology, involved third-party institutions, and stayed clear of Sinai. Sinai was particularly sensitive for Egypt, since Israeli researchers had used it as a laboratory for a dozen years and Egypt wanted to emphasize that Israelis no longer had the right to work there, even under Egyptian supervision. Yavin's guidelines proved to be basically correct.

Specific research programs were established under two related rubrics. The first was the bilateral Memorandum of Understanding between the two ministries of agriculture, initialed March 24, 1980. The second was the USAID Regional Cooperation Project set up in 1979 to fund bilateral and trilateral research projects in the natural and social sciences.

The Memorandum of Understanding provided for joint project identification and preparation, common activities in operational projects, collaborative applied research programs, shared extension programs for farmers, and exchange programs and training fellowships. It set up a joint commission to elaborate plans and outlined the fields which would be accorded priority. These included research on farming in arid and semiarid zones; breeding of certain field, vegetable, and medicinal plants; epidemiology and control of various crop diseases; care for high-producing poultry under climatic-stress conditions; and management of aquaculture.

One immediate result was the Gemiza Project, approved in 1980 by then Agriculture Minister Muhammad Da'ud and funded by a \$57 million USAID grant.³⁷ This five-year grant supported research on improving grain crops, conducted at the governmental agricultural research center in the Delta, thirty kilometers north of Cairo. The Gemiza Center, which became operational in 1983, also experimented in improving animal stock and dairy output. Apparently, the Israeli component consisted—and this remained the case as late as 1986—of one expert in drip and sprinkle irrigation who supervises development of experimental vegetables.

A second agreement, Gemiza II, was concluded in December 1985 and approved by the current minister, Yusif Wali. Under Gemiza II, Israel supplies expert assistance for arid-zone agriculture at a site in the Western Desert. This meshes with two other research programs, discussed below. The oases in the west had long interested Israelis: Ariel Sharon had flown to field sites there in 1980 and 1981, when he was still minister of agriculture, and Tahal water company had looked into land reclamation projects at Farafir and Meidun.

The second program, the USAID Regional Cooperation Project, partly overlapped with the Agriculture Ministry efforts, since two of the six projects that it has funded are in the field of agriculture: Patterns of Agricultural Technological Exchange and Cooperation (PATEC) and Cooperative Arid Lands Agricultural Research Program (CALAR).

PATEC was identified as high priority by the trilateral agricultural steering committee of June 4, 1982, and \$3.49 million funding over four years was approved by USAID in September 1984.³⁸ PATEC was intended to promote innovative techniques in developing field crops, medicinal uses of desert flora, and solar heating of soils in order to control disease, pests, and weeds. Egypt and Israel would conduct parallel field trials of wheat, maize, and sorghum, evaluate the socioeconomic factors affecting the adoption of innovative techniques, and formulate recommendations for the exchange of drip-irrigation equipment and small-scale machinery.

The Egyptian scientists were particularly interested in solar heating of soils, a technique first developed in Israel. Minister Da'ud discussed the method during his visit to Israel, which led to follow-up discussions by researchers. An Israeli plant pathologist from the Hebrew University went to Egypt in March 1981, and the director and two members of Egypt's Plant Pathology Institute went to Israel soon after. Preliminary experiments were set up in July 1981, in cooperation with Israeli scientists, whose initial results reduced the white rot in onions and controlled broomrape in broadbeans.

PATEC provided funds to expand these experiments at field sites: Giza for broadbeans, Fayyum and Qalyubiyya for onions, and Ismailiyya for strawberries. Egypt would also test a continuous mulching machine for strawberries developed in Israel. PATEC experiments have had a tangible value for Egyptian farming and promoted the interaction between Egyptian and Israeli scientists and agricultural administrators.

CALAR was first funded in 1982 as a \$5 million, five-year USAID grant, administered by San Diego State University.³⁹ Supplemental support was obtained from USAID in 1985, and the Hansen Foundation for Peace also provided additional financial assistance.

The first phase of research involved independent studies in each country in three fields: growing crops in brackish water; developing drought-resistant shrubs that sheep and goats would eat; and breeding industrial plants that grow in brackish water. The supplement added research on the genetic improvement of sheep and goats that are tended by *bedouin* of the Western Desert. The Egyptian components of the research included studies and field trials for salt-tolerant plants (especially tomatoes and melons) along the sand-dune coast east and west of Alexandria and at the relatively saline aquifer at Siwa Oasis. Egypt began trials on desert fodder in 1986, based on seedlings grown at nurseries at Fouka and al-Qasr near Marsa Matruh, and tested various potential industrial crops at Fouka and Baheira Oasis. The latter included guayule, jojoba, and buffalo gourd (for starch), and extended to experimental crops such as wax-producing candelilla and medicinal plants. Genetic improvement of milk-producing Barki goats and woolly Barki sheep was

stressed at al-Dab'a near Marsa Matruh, and was tied into the research on improving edible shrubs.

Although the Egyptian and Israeli research was conducted separately, contact between the scientists and administrators grew steadily. The initial ministerial-level Memorandum of Understanding of March 1980 led to a trilateral meeting of experts in San Diego in June 1981. The project's steering committee, which consists of two representatives from each of the three countries, has met at least yearly and there have been several gatherings of the cooperating scientists. The first was held in San Diego in June 1984, the second at Marsa Matruh in December 1984, and the third in Israel in March 1985. The latter meeting was held in Beersheba and included field visits to experimental stations in Rehovot and the Negev desert. It was attended by twelve Egyptians, including two members of the embassy in Tel Aviv, two senior officials in the Ministry of Agriculture, the director of agriculture for Matruh governate, and seven scientists drawn from Ain Shams University and research stations in Giza and Nubariyya. This was the first visit by the Egyptian scientists to Israel, although two Egyptian graduate students from the Egyptian Salinity Laboratory had already gone to Ben Gurion University in Beersheba in March 1984 to attend a one-year course in brackish-water irrigation. Subsequently, fifteen Israeli scientists went to the first major workshop, held in Alexandria in January 1986, which also was attended by sixty Egyptian scientists from five universities and several governmental institutes.

In addition to making exchange visits, the scientists shared information on techniques and materials. Ben Gurion University sent seeds for fodder plants to the Nubariyya Research Station near Alexandria, which, in turn, sent cuttings of certain salt bushes to Israel. The Egyptians invited Israeli animal experts to help them develop a computer program for animal breeding in the Western Desert. Agricultural Ministry Undersecretary Muhammad Dasouqi acknowledged: "Egypt receives much Israeli know-how within the framework of our joint project for the study of arid zones."⁴⁰

Thus, despite the diplomatic tensions between the two countries, which limited the ability of the Egyptians to travel to Israel and made them cautious about publicizing the program, considerable cooperation was established. One outside evaluator noted that, despite this, the Israelis were always impatient for more contact: sending two students to Israel "is considered a great step forward by the Egyptians. In contrast, Israelis consider it a small step and ask 'when will a professor be transferred to study in Israel?'" Another evaluator concluded: "Considering the grave level of Middle East political tension in the period since project approval, the achieved level of contact and cooperation is highly satisfactory and commendable." At joint meetings, participants found both their personal feelings and their national political sensitivities involved; the project leaders conceded that "a good part of their energies and emotions are at times sapped by . . . political jostling" rather than by scientific discussion. Nevertheless, the benefits of the research took precedence over political considerations and kept the project functioning for several years.

In addition to the PATEC and CALAR agricultural programs, the USAID Regional Cooperation Project funded four other studies.⁴¹ One involved training young people on environmental issues, and the second focused on marine sciences. The latter stressed efforts to counter erosion of the Mediterranean coast and brought together the Egyptian Academy for Scientific Research, the Israeli Oceanographic Research Institute, and a marine-sciences consortium based in New Jersey. The third was a sociopsychological analysis of "images in conflict," and the fourth was a research program on infectious diseases. The latter two are discussed here.

"Images in Conflict" was funded in 1981 by a USAID grant of \$770,000 to the Middle East Center at the Graduate Center, City University of New York.⁴² Stephen Cohen, a social psychologist trained in small-group encounter techniques, coordinated the separate research teams in Israel, Egypt, and the occupied territories.

At meetings in New York in the summer of 1981, the team leaders developed a detailed questionnaire and agreed on how to conduct the surveys. A joint training session was held in New York in January 1982, and parallel sets of interviews were conducted in Israel and Egypt in March and April 1982, just before Israel's withdrawal from Sinai. The Egyptian team, under the leadership of Sha'alan of al-Azhar University and Qadry Hefny, a social psychologist at Ain Shams University, conducted a supplemental survey in May 1982, immediately after Israel's withdrawal but before the invasion of Lebanon. Israel's crackdown in the West Bank and Gaza in April 1982 and tension over the invasion foreclosed the possibility of the Palestinian team carrying out their part of the research. Nonetheless, a limited sample was made in Gaza and among Palestinian students in the United States.

The research sought to show how each side perceived the other at the same point in time: the negative as well as the positive images, the areas of conflict as well as potential cooperation. The researchers wrote up their findings in separate papers, some of which were presented at conferences in Europe and the United States. Most of the papers, however, were not published, and Cohen never wrote a synthesizing volume. The academic value of the study remained limited, since its results were not disseminated. Moreover, in the wake of the Israeli invasion, the Egyptian and Israeli researchers broke off contact with each other. The long-term impact of this project was minimal.

The final project, on infectious diseases, involved the Research and Training Center on Vectors of Disease, established at Ain Shams University in cooperation with the health ministry, the Military Medical Academy, and researchers from Cairo University and the Canal Zone University.⁴³ In December 1981, the Center received a grant from USAID to conduct research on three diseases that threaten humans and livestock in the region: Rift Valley fever, malaria, and leishmaniasis. The Sanford F. Kuvshinov Center for the Study of Infectious and Tropical Diseases, Hadassah Medical School, Hebrew University, was contracted simultaneously to carry out collaborative research on the same diseases. Later, filariasis and rickettsia were added to the research program. The \$5 million joint program was managed by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Washington, D.C.

The impetus for the project came, in part, from an outbreak of Rift Valley fever that killed a thousand Egyptians in 1978 and decimated cattle. After Egyptian and

Israeli specialists attended a meeting at NIH headquarters, they expressed interest in sharing information on insect-borne diseases. An Israeli scientist noted later: "Mosquitoes have a flight path that recognizes no international borders."⁴⁴

The Egyptian component of the study particularly stressed field research and the development of an early-warning system for outbreaks of vector-borne diseases. For example, studies were conducted on mosquito and sandfly distribution and density at sites in the Delta, Ismailiyya, Fayyum, and the oases of Siwa and Gara.

In addition to research and field testing, five workshops were held at Ain Shams University between November 1982 and January 1986, in which Israeli and American scientists participated. Nearly ninety published scientific articles resulted. Moreover, three conferences were held: the first in Stockholm in June 1982, the second at Aswan in October 1983, and the third at Shores, Israel, in April 1985.

Israeli researchers attended the conference in Aswan, but only two of the twelve Egyptians scheduled to go to Israel actually went. Sherif al-Sayid, principal investigator and head of the department of entomology at Ain Shams University, commented afterward: "We were very ambitious. We wanted 10 or 12 Egyptians to attend. But we have a lot of sensitivities at the universities." He indicated that criticism by student groups and pressure from the doctors' union caused them to withdraw.⁴⁵

In a presentation to USAID, al-Sayid noted that scientific cooperation needed a favorable political climate and could not itself "initiate such a climate." He cautioned: "Bearing in mind the sensitivities and complexities involved, scientific cooperation should not be pressed too hard on the parties involved." Rather, the funding of "parallel but independent research activities" under the auspices of American institutions is the preferred mode. "The scientific communities involved should not be imposed on one another but should naturally seek out one another when given the proper opportunity. . . . Cooperation is needed to solve common health problems as well as to assist the peace process and solidify a lasting peace . . . [but] a five-year period is too short to wipe out the generations of regional distrust."

Overall, the number of joint research projects remains limited. Agriculture has been—and is likely to remain—the principal field of collaboration. Egyptians in other fields are wary of dealing with Israelis and prefer to expand their international scientific contacts with counterparts in the West and the Arab world.

Assessment

Normalization remains a term without an agreed-upon definition. Egyptian officials have seen normalization as adherence to the letter of the peace treaty, implementation of the various protocols, and the maintenance of a correct—but not particularly warm—relationship. They have strongly rejected any idea that normalization means special ties to or a preferential status for Israel. According to this definition, Egypt has behaved correctly: Israeli tourists have traveled freely in Egypt, frequent air and land transport has been available, oil has been sold at an agreed

price, and the Israeli Academic Center has functioned without restriction. The government has argued that it could not compel its citizens to cooperate with Israelis: any trade, tourism, or cultural relations would have to take place gradually and on a voluntary basis. Where there are mutually beneficial interests, as in the field of agriculture, contact will develop of its own accord. Where there are political, economic, or psychological barriers, relations cannot be forced.

This definition has been unsatisfactory to most Israelis, who have viewed normalization as establishing close bonds between the two countries. Many Israelis saw the willingness of Egyptians to befriend them as a sign that they were accepted in the Middle East and that the peace had become rooted. They criticized the Egyptian government, claiming that it “brazenly reneged on the spirit of the normalization” aspects of the treaty when it froze relations in 1982.⁴⁶ They accused the government of fostering popular hostility and preventing its citizens from visiting Israel. Those Israelis failed to connect Egypt’s coolness toward them with their own government’s actions in Lebanon and on the West Bank.

Some Israelis perceived that linkage quite clearly. Ezer Weizman, former air force commander and subsequently minister-without-portfolio in the national government, commented in 1984 that Egypt had made a “giant move” in signing the peace treaty with Israel, and that Israel’s own behavior had been responsible for a large part of Egypt’s subsequent reaction: “We didn’t take the autonomy issue seriously; we said ‘no more war’ and went ahead and made war; we went into Lebanon . . . and we killed and bombed—and then we have the effrontery to complain that Egypt is returning to the Arab world!”⁴⁷

Weizman’s views were echoed by Shimon Shamir, when he returned to Israel after directing the Academic Center in Cairo: “Seeing my own country from Egypt through the eyes of Egyptians was not a very pleasant experience. . . . Jewish terrorism, racism, and . . . expansionism” were most evident, along with Israel’s failure to make “this peace the cornerstone of a whole structure of peace in the region.”⁴⁸

In 1986 there were still very few positive signs, and the situation was unlikely to improve unless the Israeli attitude toward the Palestinians were to change fundamentally so that the Egyptian-Israeli relationship would become one aspect of a comprehensive peace. Since such a transformation was, and remains, unlikely, the bilateral relationship appears bound to remain circumscribed and cool.

(December 1986)

NOTES

1. Joel Beinin, “The Cold Peace,” *MERIP Reports*, no. 129 (January 1985): 5. On Sadat’s views, see *Washington Post (WP)*, April 28, 1980; and Zahid Mahmoud, “Sadat and Camp David Reappraised,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, no. 57 (Autumn 1985).

2. Interesting analyses of Mubarak’s situation were written by Muhammad Sid Ahmed and Hasan Nafaa in *al-Ahram al-Iqtisadi*, March 8, 1982; *International Herald Tribune (IHT)*, March 24, 1982; a survey of university student views was provided by Abdul-Moneim al-

Mashat, "Egyptian Attitudes toward the Peace Process: Views of an 'Alert Elite,' " *Middle East Journal* 37, no. 3 (Summer 1983).

3. *Jerusalem Post*, international edition (*JPI*), April 19 and May 13, 1986; *Egyptian Gazette*, April 8, 1986; *al-Sha'ab*, April 15, 1986.

4. *Al-Sha'ab*, March 18, 1986.

5. *Middle East Times*, December 21, 1986. The trip by 32 tour agents is mentioned in Marie Christine Aulas, "The Normalization of Egyptian-Israeli Relations," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 5, no. 3 (Summer 1983): 231.

6. *Wall Street Journal*, March 8, 1984.

7. Reuters, March 14, 1985; Associated Press, July 25, 1985; information from Egyptian diplomats and the Israeli embassy's press attaché, Isaac Bar Moshe, September 2, 1986. On subjective reasons for Egyptians' not traveling to Israel, see Tourism Minister Fuad Sultan's comments to *al-Ahram*, August 5, 1986; and Makram Muhammad Ahmed column, *al-Musawwar*, May 3, 1985.

8. *Wall Street Journal*, March 8, 1984.

9. Associated Press, July 25, 1985. On Shendi's visit, see *Journal d'Egypte*, August 22, 1985, and *JPI*, August 31, 1985. *JPI* (August 3, 1985) reported that one group of Egyptian tourists was currently in Israel and ten more groups were being organized.

10. *JPI*, March 29, 1986; *IHT*, March 21, 1986.

11. *JPI* (July 16, 1986) reported the delay in Sultan's visit; the visit was covered in *Journal d'Egypte*, August 4, 1986, and *JPI*, August 16, 1986.

12. *Jerusalem Post* (*JP*), April 11 and 14 and November 8, 1985; *JPI*, February 22, 1986; *Journal d'Egypte*, August 8, 1984; Reuters, July 14, 1985; *al-Ahram*, March 10, 1986.

13. On early trade contacts, see *Financial Times*, October 6, 1981; Beinín, p. 6; and Aulas, pp. 230–32. Aulas provides addresses in Cairo for some Israeli firms, such as Soleh Boneh construction company, Haifa Fertilizer and Chemical Company, and Ravit Irrigation Supplies Company. *WP* (April 28, 1980) reported that 10,000 chicks arrived at the Cairo airport in the hold of an El Al plane.

14. Extrapolation from figures provided by the press office, Israeli embassy, September 2, 1986. See also *New York Times* (*NYT*), December 4, 1983; Agence France Press, March 23, 1986; and *JPI*, September 20, 1986.

15. *IHT*, September 12, 1982.

16. Beinín, p. 7.

17. *JPI*, April 13, 1985.

18. *JPI*, June 8, 1985. On the agricultural delegation, *al-Sha'ab*, August 26, 1986. The technical and political debate in Egypt on plastic greenhouses is summed up in *Middle East Times*, September 28, 1986. *Al-Wafd* (October 9, 16, and 23 and November 6, 1986) critiqued Wali's seizure of the plot on Dahab Island. *Al-Ahram* (December 18, 1986) analyzed the technology in a full-page story (without mentioning Israeli involvement).

19. Israeli Defense Forces radio and *Ha'aretz*, June 15, 1986. The latter also mentioned third-party deals, neutral banks, and the joint-venture project. The petrochemical deal is also mentioned in *Middle East Times*, December 21, 1986.

20. *Al-Sha'ab*, March 18, 1986.

21. Israel radio broadcast, quoted by *al-Ahali*, November 26, 1986. The opposition newspaper further claimed that Shahal requested the construction of a pipeline to connect Egyptian natural gasfields near Alexandria to Israel's power station in Ashqelon. *Al-Ahali* called this part of Israel's quest for regional domination and for "integration not normalization" with Egypt.

22. *WP* (December 28, 1979) reported that the *Jerusalem Post* hoped for large-scale circulation in Egypt since there was a sizable foreign community there and the only local English-language newspaper, the *Egyptian Gazette*, had a poor quality. Several Hebrew-language newspapers as well as the *JP* became available in Cairo, but Israel only allowed the government-funded *al-Anba* Arabic newspaper to be sent to Egypt. None of the East Jerusalem press, nor the Communist *al-Ittihad* of Haifa, was permitted. Sadat allowed the

semi-governmental daily newspapers and weekly magazines to be sold in Israel, and Mubarak extended this to the opposition press.

23. References to Fawzi, the minister of culture, and the student trip come from Aulas, pp. 234–35; private communication, for urologist; on Sha'alan, see his letter, *JPI*, January 23, 1981, and his later letter published August 1, 1981, in which he criticized Israel's policies toward the PLO in Lebanon and the Palestinians on the West Bank. This list is not exhaustive. See, for example, *JPI*, August 21, 1983, for a reference to an Egyptian artist, Amal Choucri, who visited Israel. For Israelis' meeting with Egyptian writers and journalists in Cairo, see Amos Elon, *Flight into Egypt* (New York: Pinnacle Books, 1981).

24. Stephen P. Cohen and Edward E. Azar, "From War to Peace: The Transition between Egypt and Israel," unpublished essay. The Israeli participants were Dedi Zucker (Peace Now), Shimon Shamir, Gabriel Cohen, Gabriel Warburg, and Amnon Rubinstein (member of Knesset).

25. *October*, November 9, 1980. The Israelis were Shimon Peres, Abba Eban, Chaim Bar Lev, Israel Gatt, and Yosef Beilin. The Egyptian participants were Mustapha Khalil, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Mahmud Mahfouz, Ibrahim Hilmi Abd al-Rahman, Mansour Hasan, and Anis Mansour.

26. *October*, June 6, 1982; *al-Sha'ab*, September 11, 1984; discussion with Sha'alan, August 21, 1986.

27. Bein, p. 5.

28. *WP*, August 15, 1980.

29. The program Interns for Peace placed Jewish volunteers in Arab villages in northern Israel. Plans for an international workcamp were halted by Israel's invasion of Lebanon.

30. *Al-Akhbar*, July 7, 1986; *WP*, July 20, 1986; discussion with Sha'alan, August 21, 1986.

31. The five projects were conducted by Raphael Givon (who had been in charge of archaeological research in Sinai during Israel's occupation), Victor Levy (Hebrew University economist), Zion Shorer (librarian, Jewish National Library, Hebrew University), Nehemia Levtzion (historian, Hebrew University), and Uriel Rappaport (professor of Jewish history, University of Haifa), as reported in the *IAC Bulletin*, no. 1 (Fall 1982). That issue also stated that two Egyptian students went to Israel for research (p. 1). *Bulletin*, no. 3 (Winter 1983–84) said that 20 subjects had been researched in the first year and a half of the Center's operations, ranging from musicology, Biblical studies, and medieval Jewish and Islamic analyses, to contemporary Egyptian literature. Eight studies were detailed in that issue. The quotations from Shamir came from *JPI*, November 24, 1984.

32. The squash players were Musa Halal (*JPI*, March 2, 1985) and Gamal Awad (*JPI*, February 22, 1986).

33. Reuters, January 25, 1985; *IHT*, January 24, 1985; *JPI*, February 2, 1985. On Israeli participation in international conferences, the executive protocol of the cultural agreement (October 29, 1981) stated in Article 31: "The parties shall notify each other about the international conferences . . . which convene in their countries . . . they will encourage the participation of their representatives and scientists in such meetings."

34. Discussion with Warburg, September 8, 1986. *Bulletin* (no. 6 [Fall 1985]) reported that 65 Israeli academics stayed at IAC till July 1985 and 12 seminars were held in AY 1984–85, of which five were summarized in the *Bulletin*. *Bulletin* (no. 7 [Summer 1986]) stated that 11 seminars were held by Israeli scholars in AY 1985–86.

35. *JPI*, August 3, 1985; Tahsin Bashir, August 24, 1986; Bar Moshe, September 2, 1986.

36. Personal discussions and correspondence with Yavin, 1979–80.

37. *JPI*, January 4, 1986; *al-Ahali*, February 19, 1986.

38. "Patterns of Agricultural Technology Exchange and Cooperation in a Similar Ecosystem: The Case of Egypt and Israel," Research Proposal, January 1984. The \$3.49 million total was subdivided: \$1.41 million to the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), \$1.433 million to the Hebrew University, and \$647,000 to the U.S. coordinator. Key Egyptians

involved were Yehia Mohieddin, undersecretary, MOA, and Nabil Habeshy, senior researcher, Economic Research Institute. The director of the Plant Pathology Institute, Mustafa Hathout, with Kamal Y. Mikhail and Moukhtar Satour, visited Israel in 1981 and arranged for the Israeli scientists who had pioneered in solar heating to visit Egypt in July 1981 to help set up preliminary experiments. *Al-Ahali* (June 4, 1986) mentions PATEC, CALAR, and the disease and marine sciences programs.

39. Midterm evaluation by RONCO Consulting Company, Washington, D.C., September 1984; *Arid Lands Newsletter* (Office of Arid Lands Studies, University of Arizona, no. 22, September 1985, pp. 2–13) details the CALAR research; draft proposal for an extension of the grant (January 28, 1985) and final version (April 30, 1985); *JPI*, March 30, 1985, and February 8, 1986. The Egyptian members of the CALAR steering committee are Muhammad Dasouqi, under secretary, MOA, and Dr. Adel al-Beltagi, associate professor, Ain Shams University.

40. Quotations from *JPI*, March 30, 1985; midterm evaluation, appendix six, p. A–45; midterm evaluation, p. 2; and draft proposal, January 28, 1985, p. 141.

41. *AID Congressional Presentation FY 1987*, Annex II: Asia Programs, p. 399.

42. See unpublished papers by Hefny, “Perceptions of Egyptian-Israeli Relations” (presented at Middle East Institute, annual conference, Washington, D.C., September 1983) and Sha’alan, “Collaborative Social Research and the Involvement of Political Psychiatry,” June 1986. The Israeli team was led by Ephraim Ya’ar (Tel Aviv University, president of the Israeli Sociological Association) and Michael Inbar (sociologist, Hebrew University). Six thousand interviews were conducted in all, of which 530 came in the first round in Egypt and 305 in the second round.

43. “Epidemiology and Control of Arthropod-Borne Diseases in Egypt,” presentation by al-Sayid to USAID, April 23, 1986; *NYT*, May 5, 1985; *JPI*, May 4 and 11, 1985. *Al-Ahali* (June 4, 1986) charged that leishmaniasis spread in Egypt after Israel’s invasion of Lebanon. However, according to *The Middle East* (London, October 1986, pp. 65–66), it is a skin disease passed from the desert gerbil to humans via the bite of the sandfly and is most common in new towns on desert land, as in Sinai and at Agami, near Alexandria. In addition to this study, the director general of the Israel Health Ministry came to Egypt in late April 1985 to attend an international conference on infectious diseases; *JPI*, May 4, 1985.

44. *NYT*, May 5, 1985.

45. *Ibid.*; al-Sayid presentation, May 23, 1986, pp. 12 and 15.

46. Yosef Goell, *JPI*, October 19, 1985.

47. *Yediot Ahronot*, November 2, 1984.

48. *JPI*, November 24, 1984.

PART TWO

**Israel and
the Palestinians**

5.

Arabs in Israel

Mark Tessler

On the eve of Israeli independence in 1948, the population of the territory that was to become the Jewish state was about 1.35 million, of which approximately 600,000 were Jews and roughly 750,000 were Arabs.¹ The Arabs were part of a larger population of nearly 1.3 million Palestinians, residing in Gaza, the West Bank, and parts of Transjordan, as well as the area encompassed by Israel after 1948.

Whether Palestinian Arab society was sufficiently mobilized and integrated to constitute a meaningful political community has been a subject of disagreement. On the one hand, Palestine had long been a backwater of the Arab world, and it remained in this state throughout the nineteenth century. Its population was small and unevenly distributed; much land was out of cultivation, with the countryside insecure in the face of raids by Bedouins, Druzes, and others; and there was almost no professional or middle class interposed between a parochial peasantry and the small and feudal landowning elite. Moreover, though politically conscious leadership did emerge in the twentieth century, motivated by rising fears of Zionism and by opposition to the British Mandate, which was established in 1922, and while these leaders participated in numerous political activities inside Palestine and also represented their society in the broader political arena of the Arab Middle East,² the elite was deeply fragmented on the basis of religion and family. Also, the dominant nationalist orientation of this elite was pan-Arabist, rather than purely Palestinian; and, equally important, this leadership class was representative of the traditional feudal order that existed in Palestinian Arab society, giving it an interest in the maintenance of a social system characterized by gross inequities between the peasantry and the ruling class and leading it to fashion a nationalist movement that was almost devoid of social content.³

On the other hand, by the early years of the twentieth century, Palestinian society was being socially mobilized in important ways. The political consciousness of the masses was raised by the growing conflict with Zionist immigrants, and here at least leaders and followers did make common cause. Moreover, by the late 1920s it was Palestinianism rather than pan-Arabism that was the ideological core of a growing national movement. In addition, important educational advances took place following the establishment of the British Mandate, and Palestinians were soon to become highly educated by standards that at the time prevailed in the Arab world.

About 20 percent of school-age children were attending public or private educational institutions by the 1930s, and 30–35 percent were enrolled in the years following World War II. Finally, while education was beginning to produce a new middle class, urbanization and the entrance of the peasantry into the salaried labor market was eroding feudalism and producing a proletariat that had the beginnings of political and social consciousness. Thus, at the very least, it seems reasonable to conclude that nation-building was well under way in Palestinian society prior to 1948.

The political and social evolution of Palestinian society during this period was both stimulated and constrained by Zionist and British activity. But the course of this evolution was radically altered when the Arabs rejected the 1947 United Nations resolution recommending that Palestine be divided into a Jewish and a Palestinian Arab state, with a special international regime to be created for the city of Jerusalem. In the fighting that followed, Israel established itself as a sovereign political entity but the territory proposed for a Palestinian Arab state was lost. Most was incorporated by the victorious Israelis, who captured for their new state the lower Galilee, parts of the northern and western Negev and a corridor extending through western Jerusalem. The remainder passed into the hands of neighboring Arab states.

The West Bank and East Jerusalem were held by Transjordan, which annexed them formally in 1950 and reconstituted itself as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The Gaza Strip came under the administrative control of Egypt. The 1947–48 war also resulted in the displacement of much of Palestine's Arab population. Approximately 600,000 of the Arabs in the territory over which Israel now had sovereignty abandoned their homes, with Arabs and Zionists each charging the other with principal responsibility for this exodus. About one-third fled to Gaza, about one-third to the West Bank, and most of the remainder distributed itself in approximately equal proportions in Transjordan, Lebanon, and Syria. Though some were integrated into the countries where they sought refuge, most, in the early years at least, remained stateless, lived in squalid refugee camps, and depended heavily on subsidies from charitable organizations and from the United Nations.

About 160,000 Palestinian Arabs remained in the independent Jewish state, and these individuals who had thought of themselves as part of the majority in Palestine were suddenly transformed into a small and dependent national minority. With Jewish immigrants continuing to come to Israel, principally from the Arab world after 1949, the Arabs constituted only 12 percent of the total Israeli population in 1950; and by 1955, despite a rate of natural increase approximately twice that of Jews, they had declined to 11 percent of the population.

The difficulties of Arabs in Israel also reflected a number of other factors. First, some of the Arabs remaining in Israel had experienced an internal relocation. Though they had not left the country, they had fled their homes during the 1947–48 war and later either were prevented from returning, presumably for security reasons, or found that their homes had been razed or occupied by Jewish settlers. As a result, they either resettled in neighboring villages or were forced to occupy the homes of others who had fled, most notably in the urban areas of Acre, Jaffa, and Nazareth. Here, as internal refugees, they were in unfamiliar circumstances, they were divorced from their traditional social and economic institutional connections, and, in

the cities, they were unable to obtain legal title to their new dwellings, which were held by the state as absentee property.

An even more serious problem was that the Arabs who remained in Israel were generally from the poorest and most disadvantaged sectors of Palestinian society. The Arabs who left included almost all of the Palestinian elite and the vast majority of the educated middle class. The result was a disorganized and leaderless Arab population, cut off from the rest of the Arab world and poorly prepared to deal with life in Israeli society.

A third factor contributing to the difficult situation of Israel's Arab population was communal fragmentation—based on religion, village, and extended-family divisions—and the absence of national organizations serving the Arabs. The demographics of religion were not very different from what they are today. About 17 percent of the population is Christian, and these Arabs are divided into Greek Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and a number of other denominations. Over 60 percent of the Christians live in urban areas, and the majority of the remainder live in large Arab villages. Another 8 percent of Israel's Arabs are Druzes, most of whom live in villages on the Carmel and in lower Galilee. The remaining 75 percent are Muslims, the majority of whom live in rural villages and about 12 percent of whom are Bedouins in various stages of nomadism. In addition to these divisions based on religion and residence, most villages were dominated by one or more *hamulas*, or extended-family patrilineal associations. These associations had long been the basis of social and political authority at the village level, representing a system wherein the elders of one or several *hamulas* were self-appointed managers of village affairs and also mediators between the village and the outside world. But the *hamula* system tended to function as a conservative political machine, perpetuating economic dependence on a privileged elite, retarding the development of political consciousness, working to block the emergence of a new elite which might threaten the prevailing social structure, and generally contributing to the fragmentation and parochialism that characterized Palestinian society in Israel after 1948. The result of all these considerations is that the Arab minority in independent Israel was small, disorganized, and divided, unprepared for life in its new political environment and unable either to formulate coherent policy objectives or to work in a coordinated fashion for the betterment of its situation.

An understanding of the situation of Israel's Arab population also requires an examination of the political orientations of the Israeli government and of Jewish society, for these, as much as or even more than the circumstances of the Arabs themselves, have determined the position in which the Arab minority finds itself today. Three broad and somewhat contradictory orientations represent the attitudes of the Jewish state toward its involuntary non-Jewish minority; and these define the ideological context in which government policy toward the Arabs is fashioned and in which Arab society itself has evolved.

First, Israel self-consciously declares that it is a state for Jews. It is to serve as the spiritual center for the Jewish religion and for Jewish culture and it is to serve the needs of individual Jews both within its borders and throughout the Diaspora. Its flag, its national anthem, indeed its very name symbolize this intention. The

state's Declaration of Independence is equally clear, stating, among other things, that "it is the natural right of the Jewish people, like any other people, to control their own destiny in their sovereign State" and that "we hereby do proclaim the establishment of a Jewish State in the Land of Israel." In 1950, the state further amplified its intent with the passage of the Law of Return. This law offers automatic Israeli citizenship to Jews anywhere in the world who choose to immigrate to Israel; and the law is particularly resented by Arabs in Israel since it appears to give foreign Jews, who may not even be interested in Israel, a claim on the resources of the state that exceeds that of native-born Palestinians, including those who are residing in their place of birth and are even Israeli citizens. Finally, as part of its mission to serve world Jewry, the state of Israel works with international Zionist organizations. These include the Jewish Agency, which is responsible for immigration and the absorption of immigrants; the Jewish National Fund, which is responsible for land development in Israel; the Keren Hayesod, which raises funds for Israel abroad; and the World Zionist Organization, which works for "the unity of the Jewish people and the centrality of Israel in Jewish life."

Arabs charge that these legal and institutional arrangements are by definition discriminatory against Israel's non-Jewish citizens, a charge that at least some Jewish Israelis vigorously deny. At the very least, however, these provisions mean that substantial amounts of state resources are devoted to tasks that non-Jews consider irrelevant; that cooperation with Zionist organizations permits the government of Israel to eschew or limit developmental activity in certain areas, leaving this work to organizations that serve an international Jewish constituency rather than one composed of all citizens of Israel; and that the tying of Israel's national identity to the religion of the majority precludes Arab integration into the mainstream of Israeli life, preventing Arabs from sharing fully in the normative basis of statehood and collective legitimacy and necessitating for them a separate and unavoidably inferior political status. As one observer sympathetic to Zionism concluded with respect to the latter consideration, "Both Jew and Arab are aware that the Arabs are not truly welcome. Few Jewish tears would be shed were all of Israel's Arabs to voluntarily leave the country. Israel's ideology, however much it has come to be an ideology of nationalism, is still a Jewish ideology." Thus, for example, "the notion of an Arab president of Israel is rejected by the Jewish population because of its historic impropriety, and because it would introduce fundamental doubts about the reasoning behind Zionism and about the most basic understandings of what Israel and Israeliness mean."⁴

Israeli policies toward the Arab population are also affected by the country's defense needs. In the early days of statehood especially, the position of Arabs living within Israel remained unclear so far as matters of security were concerned. Israel's military strength, though tested and found adequate in the war of independence, was a matter of grave concern given the hostility of the Arab world to the Jewish state; and Arabs living within Israel were regarded as a potential fifth column, with the ability to threaten state security in several ways. After all, these Palestinians had only a few years earlier been part of a people against whom the Zionists were fighting. Moreover, they were related by family ties as well as by nationalism to

Arabs outside Israel. Indeed, many of the Arabs lived in areas along the border with Jordan, giving those who might wish it an excellent opportunity to engage in espionage and smuggling and to assist in infiltration.

The result of Israel's preoccupation with security needs, and of its general doubts about the loyalty of Arab citizens, was the imposition in 1948 of a military governmental administration over Arabs living in border areas, an area defined so as to embrace most of the Arabs in Israel. The military government soon became controversial, however, both because at least some prominent Israelis asserted that there was no clear connection between effective border control and the existence of the military government and because most Arabs, and at least some Jews, claimed that the suspension of civilian law was resulting in harassment and the abuse of power, unrelated to legitimate security needs. Indeed, some Arab critics went so far as to claim that the real purpose of the military government was to "expropriate Arab lands, interfere in Knesset elections and prevent the formation of an Arab political movement."⁵ The military government was also vigorously defended, of course, and motions of termination introduced in Israel's parliament were beaten back in the 1960s, though once, in 1963, by only one vote. In 1966, the military administration was finally terminated, ending what at the time was by far the most serious specific grievance of Israeli Arabs vis-à-vis the state.

The distrust of Arabs that the military government symbolized continues to affect the status of Israel's non-Jewish citizens. For example, while Druzes and Bedouin Arabs are liable for military service, the vast majority of Muslims are precluded from serving in the army; and, although they may volunteer, most Christians do not serve either. Except for a very few, Arabs thus remain outside the Israeli Defense Forces, which is a highly prestigious institution in Israel and obviously central to the state's existence. This exclusion from defense of the state contributes further to the isolation of Arabs from the Israeli mainstream, enlarging the psychological and emotional distance between Arabs and Jews. It also means a loss of many economic benefits, such as access to government loans and subsidies, which are often available only to veterans. Finally, independent of military service per se, Arabs are excluded from working in many scientific, technical, and industrial professions because, it is argued, these are related to defense. This is in a society where the defense industry pervades a great many sectors of the economy. All these policies, regardless of whether or not they are necessary for reasons of security, contribute to the marginality of Arabs in Israel and reinforce bad feelings and mistrust between Arabs and Jews.

A final Israeli orientation toward the Arabs must also be mentioned, and this involves efforts by the state to ensure the welfare and political rights of non-Jewish citizens. Israel's Declaration of Independence states that "even amidst the violent attacks launched against us for months past, we call upon the sons of the Arab people dwelling in Israel to keep the peace and to play their part in building the state on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its institutions." The rights of Israel's Arabs, including political equality and an entitlement to government assistance in the fields of education, health, development, and social welfare, were also enacted into law in the Basic Principles of the Gov-

ernment Programme, approved by the Knesset in 1959.⁶ Thus, within the limits mentioned above, Arabs in Israel are, at least in principle, full members of the national community. They vote in all elections on an equal basis with other Israelis; and they regularly elect at least some of their own to Parliament, there usually being six or seven Arab members of the Knesset. They also have access to the major national trade union, the Histadrut, which they join in large numbers and which provides considerable benefits;⁷ and Arabs receive state support for their schools, where attendance in the lower grades is compulsory, as it is for Jews.

Israel is a democratic society and both Jews and non-Jews enjoy full civil rights. Arabs have complete freedom of worship, for example, and their respective religious communities have jurisdiction over religious courts and places of worship, with the salaries of religious judges and clergy paid by grants from the state.⁸ Arabs also have freedom of expression. They publish a number of Arabic-language newspapers; and Arab criticism of the government, as well as criticism by Jews, is tolerated within broad limits and is accordingly expressed with frequency and vigor.

What needs to be added to this account of Israel's concern for the rights and welfare of its non-Jewish citizens is its official philosophy of cultural autonomy and separate development, a kind of institutionalized pluralism, as it were. The state both permits and encourages the development of Arab culture, as well as the use of Arabic in education and other aspects of Arab life. Arabic is also an official language of Israel, in which some of the programs on state-run radio and television networks are broadcast and into which Knesset proceedings are simultaneously translated. Other aspects of the policy of separate development are the existence of different educational systems for Arabs and Jews, which involve separate curricula as well as different languages of instruction, and a separate section for Arab affairs within the Histadrut and most government ministries. In the latter case, for instance, there is a special advisor to the prime minister for Arab affairs. Also, the Labor Party, which ruled Israel from 1948 until 1977, for many years sought Arab votes not by asking that non-Jews vote for Jewish candidates or by including Arabs on its slates of nominees but rather by creating separate, affiliated lists of Arab candidates. In all of this, at least so far as theory is concerned, there is a positive attitude on the part of the Jewish state toward the creation of a beneficial partnership between its Jewish and non-Jewish citizens. It is true that institutional and cultural separation reinforces other policies that keep Arabs out of the Israeli mainstream. Yet complete assimilation would not be desired by the minority any more than by the majority, and in the context of this separate development the government has committed itself to the principle of protecting the welfare and freedom of its Arab citizens.

Israel's ideological and institutional structures define the context within which its Arab minority has functioned and evolved since 1948. The state is democratic, pluralistic, and officially committed to the equality of all citizens. But Arabs are peripheral to the mission of the state, and many Jews distrust Arabs, being at war with the Arab world in general. Moreover, since the Arabs are an involuntary minority, they are viewed by the state as a potentially destabilizing factor which

must be effectively controlled.⁹ Beyond this, since independence Israel's Arab population has been small, leaderless, divided, and disorganized, giving it little ability to influence its own development. The character and evolution of Israel's Palestinian Arab minority, which have been shaped by the interplay of these conditions and constraints, may be comprehended by examining its economic, political, and sociocultural circumstances.

Economic Underdevelopment

There are pockets of severe poverty and, on a broader scale, many serious economic and social problems disproportionately affecting Arabs in Israel. In the rural areas, some Arab villages have no roads, electricity, or running water. Some do not even have sanitary well water. The precise number of such villages is not available, but it is generally agreed that only a small minority of Israel's Arabs live in such circumstances. On the other hand, the problem should not be minimized. According to one estimate, as late as 1971 about half the Arab villages in Israel were without electricity.¹⁰ Moreover, the government is aware of the plight of these villages; indeed, residents often possess letters from government officials promising to look into complaints and to do something about the situation. But since these promises are often unkept, with officials explaining that it would be inappropriate to take action until a master plan for village development has been prepared and approved, apparent indifference on the part of the government increases the bitterness of those who must live with this poverty.

More common in the rural areas are villages where the level of backwardness does not approach that described above but where serious social and economic problems exist nonetheless. In one large village, for example, the local council called for a school boycott, because many children were attending classes in rented rooms and the government had frozen funds for a promised new school. An additional common complaint is the presence of open sewers in many villages. A more serious problem, complained of by the residents of numerous villages, is the loss of land for building. The land surrounding many Arab villages has passed into the hands of the state, and communities are thus unable to expand, creating overcrowding either by limiting the construction of new homes that are needed to accommodate population growth or by requiring that homes be built close to one another on very small lots.

The other area of serious Arab poverty is in the urban slums, most notably in Acre, Jaffa, and parts of Haifa, but also in sections of other towns. Here all the standard manifestations of urban poverty are to be found. With respect to education, for example, the dropout rate is extremely high and the quality of education is such that even some primary-school graduates are functionally illiterate. Although the origins of these educational problems are complex, Arabs often charge that at least part of the problem is attributable to the government, which spends substantially less per pupil in the Arab sector than in the Jewish sector, which offers inadequate training facilities for Arab teachers, and which certifies Arab instructors even when

they clearly are unqualified.¹¹ Another set of urban problems pertains to crime and drug abuse, which are increasingly serious and are beginning to affect the living conditions of entire neighborhoods. Perhaps the most serious problems pertain to housing. Overcrowding is rife, with large and extended families often living in only two or three rooms. Many also live in badly dilapidated or even condemned houses, in conditions which are often dangerous as well as unpleasant and unsanitary. Indeed, many of the currently inhabited structures are scheduled to be razed. Again, as in the villages, the plight of urban slum dwellers is not unknown to the government. Residents of Wadi Nisnas in Haifa, for example, gained national publicity for their cause some years ago by threatening a tax revolt. Following journalistic reports and an official investigation, the government promised to improve housing and other social services. Five years later, however, as recently as 1980, none of these promises had been kept.

One aspect of the housing situation deserving special mention is that many residences are not owned or controlled by their occupants, even though the latter have in some cases lived in them for more than thirty years. Since these dwellings were abandoned by fleeing Palestinians in 1947–48, after which they were occupied by their present tenants, most of whom had fled their own homes in other parts of the country, the structures in question are regarded as absentee property and are controlled by one of several companies under the aegis of the Israel Lands Authority. The rights of nonowning tenants are in principle protected in several ways. Their rent is low and they cannot be evicted, for example. Also, the Lands Authority will in theory pay half the cost of authorized repairs and will give an established tenant two-thirds of the price should the house be sold. But occupants do not control their homes. They cannot sublease or transfer occupancy during a period of absence and they need official permission to effect major repairs or to sell the property.

State control of housing is of concern to Arabs in many urban areas. They believe there is a wide gap between theory and practice so far as their rights as nonowning tenants are concerned and that this contributes substantially to slum conditions. Moreover, this situation has placed Arabs in a position of extreme vulnerability, as illustrated by events in Jaffa and Acre, where the government has been able to use its control of housing to carry out policies which Arabs believe intensify their impoverishment. In both cities, the government has sought to build tourist complexes in areas inhabited by Arabs; and it has therefore used its control of housing to encourage migration. The construction of new houses has not been permitted; and, even more important, authorization to make repairs has rarely been given and many existing buildings have been marked for destruction. This has meant that residents must either abandon their homes, make illegal and unrecoverable investments in repairs, or continue to reside in unsatisfactory and sometimes deplorable conditions until their dwellings are finally razed, at which time they will receive nothing for their homes and be forced to find new quarters in other towns with only a small government relocation subsidy to assist them. Added to the problem is that Arab inhabitants have been given no say in formulating development plans for their communities and have been discouraged from thinking that they might share in the benefits of this development. As a leading Jewish architect working in Acre re-

marked, "the conditions of the Arabs are intolerable and the State housing corporation could not care less. At none of the meetings where plans were being fashioned for the future of the old city were representatives of the local population present."¹²

The preceding suggests that Arabs in Israel often live in very difficult social and economic circumstances and that they regard the government as responsible for much of their plight, both because of its policies as well as its neglect. On a national scale, however, the disadvantageous conditions of Arab society are best understood in relative rather than absolute terms. For one thing, despite the important gaps that remain, very real gains have been made in such fields as education and health. Arabs participate in and are served by the national health-care program, for example. They have also made major gains in education, especially at the lower levels, since Israel's independence. Another consideration is that work is plentiful in Israel and unemployment among Arabs is accordingly low. Though most Arabs work in construction or related fields involving manual labor, pay is good and many Arabs thus earn high salaries and have considerable purchasing power. The resultant material well-being is visible in the villages particularly, where many new houses have been built and where substantial quantities of durable consumer goods are also present. Most important, this prosperity is not confined to the elite and a few entrepreneurs but rather is shared broadly by much of the working class.

Further helping to put the position of Arabs in perspective is the fact that some Jews also face serious economic problems. There is a severe housing shortage facing Jews in the major cities, for example, and there have been public demonstrations and sit-ins staged by frustrated Jews in Tel Aviv and elsewhere. Similarly, Jews from slum areas, such as Neve Eliezer outside Tel Aviv, have echoed the Arabs when complaining of empty government promises and an insensitive bureaucracy. In Kfar Shalem, also outside Tel Aviv, the situation for Jews resembles that of Arabs in Jaffa and Acre. While the government has wanted to raze this slum area and replace it with new apartments and a park, Jewish residents have complained about the inability to obtain licenses to build or repair and about the demolition of residential units when no alternative housing is available in the area.

Even after the social and economic complaints of the Arabs have been put into perspective, it remains the case that they face a number of serious problems that do not confront Jewish citizens of Israel. First, the balance between relative prosperity and relative poverty is quite different in the two communities. As the selected measures shown in Table 1 reveal, there is a large gap between the positions of Arabs and Jews on virtually every indicator of status and well-being.¹³

In addition to the magnitude of the social and economic gap, Arabs face a number of constraints on their material advancement that do not affect Jews. One of these is the limited amount and range of public assistance that is available to Arabs. As mentioned, the amount of per capita state aid to education is much less for Arabs than for Jews. Similarly, although precise figures are difficult to obtain, it is widely acknowledged that government transfers to local communities for administrative and development purposes are very much higher in Jewish towns than in Arab villages. One knowledgeable Jewish observer estimates that per capita state ex-

TABLE 1
Selected Measures of Status and Well-Being

	<i>Arabs</i>	<i>Jews</i>
Median number of years of schooling	5.9	9.5
Percentage illiterate	24.4	8.1
Percentage with some college education	4.9	16.6
Percentage in scientific, managerial, professional and clerical jobs	14.3	41.4
Percentage of families possessing a refrigerator	53.8	98.3
Percentage of families possessing a telephone	7.0	52.2
Percentage of residences with one or fewer persons per room	14.6	51.1

penditures for normal administrative services are ten to twenty times higher in the Jewish sector than in the Arab sector. Jewish communities are also sometimes designated as development areas, which qualifies them for large-scale government investment in both industry and housing. This is unknown in the Arab sector, however, where the most that can be pointed to is a handful of cottage industries that have been jointly financed by private citizens and the government.

Jewish localities and institutions also frequently receive funds collected and administered by international Jewish organizations, monies which are allocated both for broad development or settlement projects and for the support of important institutions such as schools, professional training centers, and the like. The funding available from these sources is substantial and very little of it reaches Israel's Arab population. Some institutions, such as schools, do serve individual Arabs as well as Jews, even though the number of Arabs involved is usually very small. Also, there are a few programs designed specifically to benefit Arabs, such as a recent WIZO course in Nazareth at which 120 Arab women were taught fashion design. But much more common is the wide range of projects, from the construction of housing facilities to agricultural-development schemes, that are of direct benefit only to Jews. And most important, it is virtually impossible to find examples of funds collected by international Jewish agencies being invested in the economic and social infrastructure of the Arab sector.

An additional constraint confronting the Arabs is that many economic benefits in Israel are available to veterans and, as noted, most Arabs are excluded from military service. One such benefit is the availability of mortgage money, something that is generally difficult to obtain in Israel without participating in a program offered by one's employer or the government. Thus, for example, while young couples may qualify for loans from the Office of Housing, benefits in the summer of 1979 were about three times higher for veterans than for others. Another example of this phenomenon is a government proposal to give cost-of-living compensation to large families, as part of a plan to fight inflation by lifting subsidies on basic commodities.

When the government announced that compensation would be available to families with four or more children where at least one family member had served in the army, the local council heads from Galilee Arab villages sent a formal protest to the minister of labor and social affairs. They also charged in their petition that payments by the National Insurance Institute disproportionately favored veterans.

Discrimination against Arabs in housing and employment is another factor producing economic and social inequality. Such discrimination is illegal, of course, but it appears to be fairly widespread nonetheless. In mixed Arab-Jewish cities, Arabs are unwelcome in many neighborhoods. They charge, and many Jews acknowledge, that there is complicity on the part of Jewish residents and real estate firms to limit Arab movement into these areas. One Arab reported, for example, that after answering several advertisements and being informed that the apartment he was seeking had been sold, he told prospective sellers that he was a Jew of Arab origin and thereafter encountered far less difficulty. Similarly, another reports that he has been made to feel unwelcome in the Jewish town where he works and has rented an apartment and that he has had great difficulty getting his name on any of the waiting lists for the purchase of apartments under construction. Yet another reports that Jewish neighbors tried to buy back his recently acquired apartment when they discovered it had been sold to an Arab.

Incidents of this type are often reported with respect to employment as well. Arabs frequently describe good relations with Jewish co-workers or even superiors, but they are nearly unanimous in the view that they can expect very little professional advancement. They add, with bitterness, that instances where Arabs are given authority over Jewish workers are extremely rare. Some Arab complaints are undoubtedly exaggerated, of course, and even where accurate Jews may also have grievances to report. But even after this is taken into consideration, and with the efforts of the government to increase opportunities for individual Arabs considered as well, it remains the case that there is substantial social pressure against equal opportunity for Arabs and Jews in the Jewish state. Coupled with the previously described institutional obstacles to closing the socioeconomic gap between Israel's Arab and Jewish citizens, this leads to the unavoidable conclusion that Arab problems are not simply the result of their community's poverty and weakness at independence but are also attributable to constraints that structure the national context within which they reside.

There is a final set of observations to be made about the economic situation of Arabs in Israel. Not only have Arabs fared poorly in comparison with Jews, but even where they have fared well the result has not been development. Regular employment and an acceptable level of material comfort for a growing number of Arabs are not insignificant, but these positive achievements should not be confused with the emergence of viable and autonomous economic institutions, with the movement of Arabs into positions of economic influence, with control by the Arab community of its own economic resources, or with the kind of infrastructural investment that is necessary for sustained growth. Thus the problems described above

have not only worked to the disadvantage of individual Arabs, they have also limited the economic development of the Arab community as a whole. This phenomenon can be seen at both elite and mass levels and is particularly striking in Arab villages.

The Arab elite confronts a special set of problems: it is disproportionately small in size, it has had limited opportunities for educational and professional advancement, and it has had little ability to control Arab life beyond the local level. In the decade between 1961 and 1971, for example, at a time when numerous young Arabs who began school after Israeli independence should have been graduating, and with the overall size of Israel's Arab population in the latter year approaching 450,000, only 330 Arab students graduated from Israeli institutions of higher learning.¹⁴ Today, although the number of Arab university students has grown considerably, there are still only a few thousand Arab students on Israeli campuses, and experience has shown many of these will leave prior to graduation. Also, many students, perhaps most, have serious academic problems, due to their weakness in Hebrew and the poor quality of their prior education; and although most begin by studying law, social science, or natural science, the majority eventually gravitate to other disciplines. At Tel Aviv University, for example, about one-third of the Arab students major in Arabic literature. It is thus not surprising that the number of Arabs in graduate or professional school is also extremely small. In fact, in such fields as medicine, it is the rule rather than the exception for Arabs to leave the country if they are determined to pursue their studies. All these considerations have worked to limit the size of the educated elite in Arab society.

Employment is another aspect of the problem, with even well-educated Arabs rarely moving into positions of economic leadership or influence. More than half the Arab university graduates are unable to find work in their fields and end up as teachers in Arab schools.¹⁵ Few are given opportunities to teach in Jewish schools, even as instructors of Arabic, and, more important, few find positions commensurate with their education in industry, government, or research.

One organization established to help deal with this problem is the Association of Arab Engineers, which was founded in 1977, has its headquarters in Nazareth, and in 1980 claimed about 120 members from all fields of engineering, except civil engineering. The main goal of the association is to find suitable employment for Arab engineers; but members report that the organization's job-seeking activities have produced few results and that, like Arab university graduates generally, engineers are frequently forced to accept work outside their field of competence, most often in teaching. Some of the obstacles to Arab professional advancement have already been mentioned. They include the fact that a wide range of jobs are regarded as too closely associated with defense to be offered to Arabs, discrimination in favor of persons who have served in the army, and social pressure against hiring and promoting Arabs over Jews in managerial positions. Also, according to many Arabs and at least some Jews, the government has unofficially but more or less consciously encouraged this situation, in order to stimulate the emigration of well-educated Arabs and to keep Arab society in a state of dependency.

A final consideration pertaining to the Arab elite is that it is rarely called upon

to provide leadership for those institutions that have the greatest impact on Arab society. Thus the heads of the separate Arab Affairs sections that exist in the Histadrut and in the Ministry of Education, for example, are Jews, not Arabs, and this has been the case since independence. The same is true for the prime minister's advisor for Arab affairs. Even the chief of the Muslim Affairs section within the Ministry of Religious Affairs is a Jew, an arrangement that produced a letter of protest from Muslim village local council heads when the position passed from one Jew to another in 1979. Jewish officials who direct the institutions regulating Arab life are bitterly resented, being derisively referred to as *arabistim*. Arabs have also complained that Jewish control of these institutions permits harassment and interference in Arab affairs, citing, for example, the case of a Galilee village which had the accreditation of its high school removed by the Ministry of Education because it refused to dismiss several teachers. Arabs claimed that government opposition to the teachers was strictly political and that the ministry's action was an inappropriate intrusion into Arab education.

Arabs also give other examples of instances where leadership that should properly reside within the Arab elite has in fact been circumscribed. They note, for instance, that for many years the substantial holdings of landed Muslim estates (*waqf*), estimated to be one-sixteenth of all the land in Palestine prior to 1948, were regarded as absentee property and administered by the Israel Lands Authority. Eventually, in response to Arab complaints, the government created local committees to oversee the disposition of this property; but it retained the right to appoint and dismiss committee members, and it also kept decision-making authority with respect to whether jurisdiction over particular parcels of land would be transferred to the committees. The result, according to critics of the system, is that the government has usually appointed poorly educated individuals who are willing to sell *waqf* land after it is released, that land which will not be sold often is not released at all, and that the creation of the committees has therefore not led to an increase in Arab control over *waqf* property but has rather fostered the passage of much of it into Jewish hands.¹⁶

All these factors have come together to deny effective leadership to the community of Palestinian Arabs living in Israel. Although a handful of individual Arabs have amassed substantial wealth or achieved positions of reasonable prominence in such fields as education and government service, Arab elites, on the whole, are few in number relative to the size of their community. They are also a bitter and frustrated lot, unfulfilled in their personal and professional ambitions and resentful at their dependence on Jewish society. Finally, they are economically and politically marginal, rarely occupying positions that enable them to influence or contribute to the development of their society.

If the development of Arab society is limited by problems at the level of its elite, underdevelopment at popular levels is even more striking. Two aspects stand out above all: the absence of investment in industry or in other aspects of an economic infrastructure for the Arab sector and the continuing loss by Arabs of their land. The result is that most Arab villages have been turned into bedroom communities,

with no autonomous economic base or significant source of employment and from which most adult men must commute on a regular basis to jobs in Jewish towns or agricultural settlements.

When asked about the lack of investment in Arab villages, Jewish officials sometimes reply that Arabs themselves must take the lead, using some of the money that they apparently have for the construction of new houses. Arabs respond, however, that in the Jewish sector it is public agencies that provide the bulk of the money for development projects, with private organizations usually operating as subcontractors for the government, and that in any event it is only the state which can construct the infrastructural foundation that is necessary for economic growth. As previously noted, this kind of investment is something the government and international Zionist organizations have regularly worked together to provide in areas they seek to develop for Jews. A related consideration is that public agencies build apartments for Jews in many areas, and these flats can usually be purchased with small down payments and government subsidized financing. Arabs, by contrast, have rarely received this kind of housing assistance, giving them less free capital and making it more difficult for them to invest elsewhere the funds they do have. Finally, although there are some small-scale Arab business ventures relating to service that have been fairly successful, in such fields as transportation and construction subcontracting, for example, Arab entrepreneurs assert that investment in manufacturing would be difficult because distribution and marketing require dependency on the government and on the Jewish sector generally.

It can be argued that not all these impediments to investment and development are as serious as the Arabs perceive them to be, and that the growing skill levels and material well-being of individual Arab workers mean that the seeds of village development over the long haul have in fact been sown. Nevertheless, it remains the case that about 65 percent of the Arab population live in nonurban areas, that Arab villages continue to receive far less public investment and development assistance on a per capita basis than do Jewish localities, that Arab communities have almost never been the targets of special government or internationally funded development efforts, and that a large and growing number of Arab villagers cannot find work where they live and have no choice but to commute to Jewish areas in order to earn a living.

The alienation of Arab land reinforces these tendencies and by the mid-1970s had become the most explosive and politically charged issue pertaining to the economic situation of Israel's Arabs. Land that was once controlled by Arab citizens of Israel had been passing into Jewish hands since the state was established in 1948, and, according to one estimate in 1976, these Arabs retained only 30–40 percent of the holdings they had possessed prior to Israeli independence.¹⁷ Indeed, in the Galilee, which has been the most important area of tension over land, Arab lawyers specializing in land cases claimed in 1980 that Jews now controlled about 85 percent of the holdings which had once belonged to Arabs.

The government has used a number of interrelated mechanisms for acquiring Arab land, all of which have a legal foundation and are justified in terms of either

security considerations or the need for land to develop new communities. One procedure involves control by the Israel Lands Authority of absentee property. Much of the "abandoned" land administered by the Lands Authority formerly belonged either to individual Palestinians who no longer live in Israel, to villages (with land registered in the name of community leaders) whose residents departed when Israel became independent, or, as previously mentioned, to Muslim *waqf* estates. Still, knowledgeable sources claimed in 1980 that the Lands Authority at that time also held approximately 500,000 *dunams* which had previously been owned either by individual Arabs who were still citizens of Israel or by residents of former land-owning villages who continued to live in the Jewish state, sometimes in or near their original homes.

Arab bitterness about the loss of this land has been intensified by the fact that the Absentee Property Law of 1950 does not provide for inquiries about how property came to be classified as abandoned and that, in at least some instances, Arabs who wanted to return to their homes were prevented from doing so by the Israel Defense Forces. Indeed, in some cases, the army demolished Arab homes as soon as they were vacated. Cultivable land held by the Lands Authority is usually leased on favorable terms and a long-term basis to Jewish agricultural settlements, although there are also a few cases where land has been leased to Arab agriculturalists. There appear to be no instances of Israeli Arabs regaining title to land that has been declared absentee property; and faced with this prospect many, perhaps half, have elected to renounce their claims in return for modest compensation, after which the Lands Authority has usually sold their property or transferred jurisdiction to another agency.

Another consideration associated with Arabs' loss of land is the fact that land registration efforts were not completed during the Mandate period. Land titles were granted when ten years of continuous cultivation could be shown and when no competing claims were present. The process of registration proceeded slowly, however, partly because competing claims were sometimes advanced by Arabs and Jews, but principally because of the enormity of the task; and thus much land that had long been worked by Arabs had no formal title when Israel became independent in 1948. Arabs argue that the politics of land registration during the Mandate often forced them into compromises with Jews whose claims were recent and questionable. In the village of Miilya in lower Galilee, for example, Arabs in 1942–43 agreed to cede part of the land their village had traditionally worked so that Jews would withdraw a competing claim, the presence of which would have greatly retarded the registration of any village farm land.

Most untitled land was lost after Israel's independence, however. Some passed to the state immediately after 1948, having been either abandoned or removed from cultivation as a result of the 1947–48 war. Since the land was not formally owned, it was not necessary to regard it as absentee property. Other parcels have been transferred to Jewish ownership with the continuing registration of untitled land. Earlier criteria of ownership continued to apply, but the law was amended to require twenty years of continuous cultivation as a basis for granting title. Also, an expanded

number of Jewish claims were advanced and the venue of title disputes became the Israeli judiciary, which thus far has ruled against Arabs in the overwhelming majority of instances.

In addition to administering absentee property and gaining control of untitled land, the state has also appropriated for public purposes large amounts of land owned by Arabs. In the early 1950s, for example, thousands of *dunams* were taken from Nazareth and surrounding villages to permit the construction of Upper Nazareth, a new community being developed for Jews. The story of Carmiel in the 1960s, as well as that of other Jewish development towns, is similar. The taking of private land for purposes of national development or defense is legal, of course, although Arabs claim that these seizures are a misapplication of the law. They argue that land appropriated for public purposes is supposed to benefit the community from which it is taken, not neighboring communities with which it is competing. Appeals brought by Arabs have been permitted only on the issue of due process, however, not on the principle of an appropriation itself, and the result is that Arabs have had little success in using the courts to resist appropriation. Indeed, when some five thousand *dunams* taken from the Arab village of Umm al-Fahm in 1973 were returned in 1979, because it turned out that not all the land seized was necessary for the state to accomplish its objective of establishing contiguity between adjacent Jewish districts, newspaper accounts reported that this was the first instance since the creation of the state where Arab land taken for municipal purposes had been returned to its owners. It may also be noted that the state sometimes appropriates for public purposes absentee property controlled by the Israel Lands Authority, as well as private and legally titled land.

As emphasized, the loss of land has contributed significantly to the proletarianization of Israel's Arabs.¹⁸ Agriculture was once the economic foundation of most Arab villages, but few of them today have enough land to employ more than a handful of those seeking work. Coupled with the absence of investment in other sectors of the Arab village economy, increasing landlessness has thus defined the economic underdevelopment of the contemporary Arab village and has made the Arab community dependent for sustenance on the sale of its labor to enterprises controlled by Jews. This vulnerability and underdevelopment have in turn been reinforced by the weakness and marginality of the Arab elite, and the overall result is an economic backwardness that goes far beyond the disadvantaged position of individual Arabs compared with individual Jews on per capita measures of status and well-being.

Political Mobilization

The preceding discussion of the nature and dynamics of Arab economic life exposes issues that are intensely political. Unlike politics among most segments of the Jewish population, Arab politics has not been oriented toward the capture and exercise of power; its goal has been rather the development of an ability to influence the political system. On a limited scale, this goal does include more control over

institutions that affect Arab life. But Arabs recognize their dependent position in Israel and, for the present at least, their political efforts are aimed at the articulation of needs and grievances and at the mobilization of support in an attempt to extract more satisfactory policies from the Jewish-controlled political center. The aspects of economic life described above reveal a great deal about the policy issues of concern to Arabs and about the stimuli and constraints affecting Arab political activity.

Although Arab concerns are many, it is probably the issue of land that in recent years has contributed most to their political thinking and political action. Moreover, the aspects of land alienation outlined above, which bear on the process of proletarianization, are only part of the problem. According to laws dating back to the Ottoman period, land that is rocky or otherwise unsuited for cultivation is automatically the property of the state, with any parcel having less than 50 percent of its surface under cultivation being placed in this category. Also, land which ceases to be cultivated and is diverted to other purposes, such as housing, reverts to the state as well. The result is that Arabs cannot acquire title to their traditional pasture land, their use of it depending on the state's not wishing to develop it for some other purpose; and also that the government controls most of the vacant land in or surrounding Arab villages, land onto which these communities must expand as their populations grow and the need for housing increases. Moreover, according to Arabs, this not only expands the range of ways that Arab landholdings can pass to the government but it also gives the state a powerful weapon by which to control Arabs in other areas. The ability to gerrymander land parcels and thereby affect the percentage of surface under cultivation is one example of this. Another is the state's frequent refusal to lease uncultivated land for housing, insisting instead on trading its use for larger cultivated parcels and thereby acquiring still more Arab land. This situation is made worse in the area of housing by the requirement that new houses not be constructed on parcels smaller than one-half *dunam*, meaning that it often is not possible to avoid bargaining with the government by subdividing plots already given over to housing.

The politics of land affects Arab villages in all parts of the country but has been most intense in the Galilee, an area where the state seeks to correct the demographic balance in favor of Arabs by pursuing a policy of "Judaization," which means acquiring Arab land and expanding Jewish settlement. In the early 1960s, the Labor government supplemented its earlier policies of land appropriation by actively asserting its claim to numerous small parcels of rocky land suitable for housing, which it then proceeded to trade for larger tracts of cultivated land in the manner described above. Hundreds of claims were challenged in court, and about one-quarter had been resolved by 1980; but most rulings dealt only with the issue of due process and, according to both Arab and Jewish sources, all had been decided in favor of the state.

This process of land alienation has continued and a case described to the author in one Galilee village illustrates its dynamics. According to informants, the government had asserted in 1979 that several houses built two decades earlier were illegal, because they had been built without authorization on land that became state

property when its owner removed it from cultivation and sold it for construction. The claim was adjudicated in Haifa District Court, which supported the government's position, and in 1980 this ruling was under appeal at a higher level. Villagers said they expected to lose the appeal but that instead of demanding demolition of the houses the government would most likely agree to relinquish its claim in return for twenty or thirty *dunams* of farmland outside the village.

This policy of small-scale land acquisition, though it continues and is a source of great resentment among Arabs, has been overshadowed since the mid-1970s by more ambitious plans to take land for Jewish development in the Galilee. Moreover, these policies have resulted in an atmosphere of more open confrontation in recent years. The announcement that thousands of *dunams* of legally titled Arab land would be appropriated for the expansion of Jewish settlements led in 1976 to Arab calls for a general strike. The government attempted to prevent the strike and dispatched army units and border police to many villages. Ironically perhaps, it also used its control of uncultivated land to try to force some villages to abstain from antigovernment protests, promising to release land parcels needed for housing if villagers would not participate in the strike. Nevertheless, on March 30, which became known as Land Day, large protest demonstrations did occur and violence resulted.

Tensions were raised further in September 1976 with the publication of the controversial "Koenig Document," a confidential memorandum drafted by the man who for twelve years had been the Interior Ministry's senior representative in the Northern District. Prepared in conjunction with local Jewish leaders, the report argued that Arab predominance in the Galilee was a threat to the Jewish state, and it proposed a number of measures for dealing with this threat, including the expansion of Jewish settlement, the suppression of Arab political activity, and the encouragement of Arab emigration. The report also contained disparaging descriptions of Arabs, as well as of Jews who work with them. Although many Jews agreed with the substance of the report, it should be noted that the government took pains to point out that it was a working paper, not an official statement of policy.

The Likud Union came to power in 1977, and its efforts at Jewish development in the Galilee were equal to or perhaps even more vigorous than those of its predecessor. Its programs included increased surveillance of illegal building in the Arab sector, which usually means houses constructed on land that has long been part of a village but which legally belongs to the government because it is unsuited for cultivation. As noted, this surveillance often results in retroactive legalization in return for the transfer of other property. Likud's efforts also included the creation of a number of "lookout settlements," which were built on both state-owned land and land appropriated from Arab villages. These settlements are small Jewish communities, and one of their functions is to ensure that Arab villages do not illegally expand onto land that belongs to the government. It is also hoped that some of them will eventually develop into Jewish villages or towns. Finally, Likud inaugurated a program of subsidized housing to attract Israelis from other parts of the country to existing Jewish towns in the Galilee. The initial indications were that this program would meet with success.

The issue of land alienation in general, and the development of the Galilee for

Jews in particular, as well as a wide range of other issues pertaining to the economic and social conditions of Arab life in Israel, have been the major foci of Arab political activity. It should be noted again that most state action in these areas is legal and that government policy vis-à-vis the Arabs has tended to have broad support among the majority. Indeed, a substantial number of Jews believe the government is too sympathetic to Arabs and too lax in protecting Jewish interests.

On the other hand, Arabs have had considerable freedom to express their own opinions on these issues and to seek political support for their cause. As noted, Arabs publish their own newspapers and many pamphlets and political tracts are distributed widely. In addition, Arabs have had many opportunities to express their views in mainstream Israeli newspapers and on state radio and television, both directly and through news presentations. The Arab guest on a television talk show in 1979, for example, publicly aired his charge that his village had lost much of its land to the state because the Israeli military had forced residents to cease cultivation. Numerous other illustrations could be given, including the vigorous denunciations of government policy that are frequently addressed to the Knesset by its Arab members. The conclusion to be drawn is that Arab spokesmen have had numerous opportunities to criticize the government, and to do so in ways that citizens of a less democratic polity would find unthinkable. Beyond this, Arab freedom of expression has also included the ability to conduct many public demonstrations. Though occasionally opposed, as in the case of Land Day, Arab political rallies have been routinely permitted. Thus villagers marched without incident, and drew news coverage calling national attention to their cause, when in 1980 the government demolished several homes that it claimed had been built illegally. On a broader scale, in 1979, Arab students on five Israeli university campuses held a coordinated one-day protest to dramatize their allegations of discrimination.

Events surrounding government appropriation of 150,000 *dunams* of Bedouin Arab land in the Negev illustrate many of these points. In summer 1979 the government announced it was taking the land for the construction of two airfields, which had to be relocated from the Sinai because that territory was being returned to Egypt. The bill introduced in Parliament had an additional provision, however; unlike previous land-appropriation measures, appeals were to be permitted only on the matter of compensation, not on the seizures themselves. Although there was some debate about whether the fields could not be located in another part of the largely uninhabited Negev desert, the issue of greatest controversy was the disallowance of appeal. Many Jews as well as Arabs criticized the government on this matter. Also, Bedouins were outraged at the small amount of compensation being offered, especially when the government was bargaining over much larger sums with Jewish residents of recently constructed Sinai towns that were scheduled to be evacuated. Independent of the substance of the debate, however, the Bedouin lands issue shows how much opportunity Arabs had to express their grievances and seek support for their position. Following cabinet approval of the bill, Bedouin leaders held a press conference in Tel Aviv and strongly denounced the government. Later, several hundred Bedouins demonstrated outside the Knesset in Jerusalem; and when the resolution was introduced in Parliament, a Bedouin MK, affiliated

with the Labor Party, spoke against the bill and introduced a motion to defer its first reading. The motion was denied and the resolution passed, but protests continued, including numerous public statements issued through the media and another demonstration at the Knesset, this time involving thousands of Arabs from all over the country. The government did not change its policy, but in the end it did agree to defer the bill's second reading until after there had been more study and consultation. The experience of the Bedouin Lands Bill shows the considerable freedom of expression possessed by Arabs in Israel and, although the ultimate resolution of the matter was unlikely to change, suggests that the mobilization of political opinion by Arabs can have at least some impact on the formation of government policy.

For a long time, Arab political activity beyond the local level involved little more than the articulation of grievances and policy preferences. Arab ability to express political views was not matched by an ability to build political organizations dedicated to the defense of these interests. First, Palestinian citizens of Israel have long been alienated from the country's Zionist political parties.¹⁹ Mapam does have a history of addressing itself to issues of concern to Arabs and in the past has had some success in attracting Arab support. Also, Mapai, now part of the Labor Party, traditionally had ties to local Arab politicians, and it has regularly established affiliated lists of Arab candidates during parliamentary elections. Labor's ties to Arab society have atrophied over the years, however, even though party leaders have on occasion announced they would make new overtures toward the Arabs and have set up additional party branches in their communities. Thus, it remains the case that no Zionist party has had much interest in integrating large numbers of Arabs into its ranks, and, accordingly, none has emerged as a meaningful organizational vehicle which Arabs can use to pursue political objectives.

Second, Arabs have at several historical junctures attempted to form their own political party, but none of these efforts has had much success. Several early efforts appear to have failed largely on their own, both because the extremism of their leaders had but limited appeal and also because established rival parties offered voters material inducements these movement could not match. The story of the al-Ard movement in the early 1960s is different, however. The founders of this organization began their efforts to unite Israel's Arabs in a political movement by forming a limited corporation, which the government initially refused to register but whose legality was subsequently affirmed by the Israeli Supreme Court. From 1960 to 1965, al-Ard and the government fought a series of legal battles, revolving around the group's attempt to publish a newspaper and its presentation of a list of candidates for the 1965 parliamentary elections. Eventually the movement was suppressed by the government, however. Late in 1964, the minister of defense signed an order banning the group, and the next year the Central Election Commission refused to register its slate of candidates, a decision that was subsequently upheld when appealed to the Supreme Court. It has been correctly observed that attempts to create a national Arab party were hindered by traditional divisions within Arab society and, as mentioned, by economic pressure from existing political parties. But the al-Ard experience shows that the government, too, has been a factor,

being unwilling to permit freedom of organization to the same extent that it permits freedom of expression.

Given the absence of viable alternatives, the Israeli Communist Party gradually emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s as the *de facto* national party of the Arabs. Prior to this period, most Arab votes in national elections had gone to lists of Arab candidates affiliated with the Labor Party. These were several separate all-Arab lists, which Labor presented in addition to its principal all-Jewish list, each of which offered a different set of candidates designed to win votes among a particular regional or religious segment of the Arab population. Labor controlled the government during these years and, especially at election time, the party saw to it that Arab villages received powerful evidence of its ability to reward supporters and to withhold benefits from rivals. In the 1955 Knesset elections, for example, candidates tied to Labor received 63 percent of the Arab vote. The Communist Party received the next largest number of Arab votes during this period but, looking again at figures from 1955, this amounted to only 14 percent. The disadvantages of the Communist Party, from the Arab point of view, were that it was an ideological rather than a nationalist party, that it was strongly tied to the Soviet Union, that many of its leaders were Jewish, and that it had little patronage to dispense in return for support.

On the other hand, the Communist Party was a non-Zionist organization with ties to Arab society dating back to the Mandate period, and support for it thus appeared to many Arabs to be an appropriate way to express their nationalism and to register general opposition to government policies. Moreover, the Communist Party addressed itself with vigor to Arab-related issues, published *al-Ittihad*, a widely read Arabic-language newspaper critical of the government, and over the years had built up a network of local committees in many Arab communities. Also, the party split in 1965, with most Arabs and some Jews breaking away to form Rakah, or the New Communist Party of Israel, and most Jewish members gradually drifting toward the Zionist left. These considerations, coupled with growing militancy and political consciousness among Israel's Arabs, produced declining support among Arab voters for lists affiliated with Labor, and increasing support for the candidates of Rakah. In the 1969 Knesset election, for example, Rakah received 29 percent of the vote, and this rose to 37 percent in 1973 and to about 50 percent in 1977. Moreover, Rakah's strength was even greater in the urban areas and in large Arab villages. Rakah also scored a particularly important victory in the Nazareth municipal elections of 1975, defeating entrenched candidates supported by Labor and gaining control of the mayor's office and the municipal council. This was especially significant, given that Nazareth is the only all-Arab city in Israel and has long been the center of Arab political life.

In the 1977 national election Rakah entered into a coalition. Known as the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, this coalition included two small Jewish parties from the ideological left and a section of the former Black Panther Party, which was founded to express the grievances of Israeli Jews of African and Asian origin. The coalition obtained five seats in Parliament, one more than Rakah had received

in 1973; but it was generally agreed that the Democratic Front had attracted few Jewish voters, and many Arabs thus wondered about its utility, especially since two of its five MKs were Jews. Nevertheless, Rakah's emergence as a political party which Arabs controlled and could use to pursue their interests constituted a marked change from the years when Israel's Arabs had no political organization at the national level.

An equally striking change has been the emergence of a rival to Rakah's status as the major national political organization of the Arabs. This rival is Ibna al-Balad, or Sons of the Village, which had assumed significant proportions by the late 1970s, even though it took pains to point out that it was a movement, not a political party. The strength and popularity of Ibna al-Balad grew rapidly among Arabs, especially among students and university graduates and in the villages. Indeed, residents of one large village in the Triangle region reported in 1979 that there was considerable tension in the local high school between supporters of Rakah and of Ibna al-Balad. In the urban areas, Rakah continued to dominate. Residents of Arab neighborhoods in mixed Arab-Jewish towns reported that Ibna al-Balad had not made any inroads; and in Nazareth, the center of urban Arab life, Rakah dominated a coalition that included local associations of academics, students, craftsmen, and merchants. Nevertheless, some objective observers argued in 1979 and 1980 that Ibna al-Balad would not finish far behind Rakah in a national election among Arabs.

Although Rakah is supported by a number of radical intellectuals and students, it is today considered a moderate force in Israeli Arab politics, which is a measure of how militant the Arab community has become in recent years. Supporters of Ibna al-Balad acknowledge the Communists' historic role in articulating Arab grievances and they also praise the contribution that Rakah's organizational ability has made, ranging from its work on behalf of coordinated national action, such as the Land Day protests of 1976, to its operation of local development programs, such as the self-help camps it runs in Nazareth for youngsters from surrounding villages. But Ibna al-Balad sympathizers and others argue that Rakah has been unwilling to become a true Arab party. They criticize it for dependence on Moscow, for a preoccupation with ideology rather than nationalism, and for a growing establishment orientation, reflected among other things in its coalition with Jewish parties. They also criticize it for moderation on larger issues of Palestinian nationalism, including a failure to denounce United Nations Resolution 242 and to support the program of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The debates between Rakah and these radical critics are passionate and fascinating and reflect just how much the political consciousness of Israel's Arabs has evolved since the early years of statehood.

Supporters of Rakah respond to their critics not only by citing the party's past accomplishments but also by arguing that progress requires working through the Israeli political system. They also raise difficult questions about the origins of Ibna al-Balad's growth during the late 1970s. To begin, they argue that Rakah's presence in the Knesset has allowed the party to be more effective in advancing the Arab cause and, more generally, they argue that Israel's Arabs cannot hope to make progress unless they win support among Jews for the redress of their grievances.

They claim further that a connection with the Soviet Union has aided Arabs, providing resources for general organizational efforts and also providing scholarships and other assistance to many individuals. Finally, they profess ardent support for the Palestinian cause, including the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, but argue that they also support the existence of Israel, the state within which they live and in the context of which they must continue to struggle for socialism and Arab-Jewish equality.

Rakah supporters also note that Ibna al-Balad has existed since the late 1960s and they raise controversial questions about the movement's sudden emergence as a major political force. Most observers believe that this reflects increased militancy and political awareness on the part of Israel's Arabs, especially in the villages where grievances relating to land alienation and underdevelopment are intensifying. But Rakah adherents and some others suggest that these may not be sufficient conditions, that the government has encouraged or at least tolerated Ibna al-Balad's emergence in the hope of dividing the Arabs and undermining Rakah's growing organizational strength. They add that even if this is not the case, Ibna al-Balad will be much easier than Rakah for the government to infiltrate, disrupt, and eventually suppress; and thus its supporters, however sincere, are actually retarding the Arab cause. They consider Ibna al-Balad's supporters naive for believing they will be able to avoid the fate of al-Ard, whom the latter frequently cite as their spiritual predecessor.

This debate is especially intense in Arab intellectual circles and, regardless of their position, almost all agree that it reflects an important change in the political climate of Arab society. The Arab elite also includes a number of independent professionals, individuals who concur in the criticisms of Rakah but consider its radical opponents misguided and thus have chosen to work with left-of-center Zionist parties. These individuals also agree, however, that there has been a dramatic change in the character and style of Arab politics, a change characterized by militant demands for the redress of grievances and by the emergence of national organizations working toward this end. As recently as the early 1970s, most Palestinian citizens of Israel were still supporting Zionist parties, and most believed they had no alternative but to trade their votes for small-scale economic rewards.

These developments are visible not only with respect to political parties but also in the emergence of other national organizations serving Arab society, several of which have already been mentioned. There is the National Committee of Arab Local Council Chairmen, for example. The committee provides for consultation among leaders of local government and lobbies for Arab causes on a national scale. Another organization is the Committee for the Defense of Arab Lands, which was formed in response to the Galilee land confrontation of 1976. The committee is immensely popular, enjoying support among members of both Rakah and Ibna al-Balad. It is a loose confederation of individuals who are active in Arab politics generally and who use the committee to coordinate opposition to the taking of Arab land. It was the Committee for the Defense of Arab Lands, for example, that organized the large demonstration in Jerusalem protesting the 1979 Bedouin Lands Bill. Another organization, the National Committee of Arab Students, speaks out on Arab issues generally, organizing many activities through its affiliated local campus committees,

and it also addresses itself to the particular grievances of Arab students at Israeli universities, which include inadequate housing and the need for greater academic assistance. This committee also maintains a national scholarship program for needy Arab students, claiming to have dispensed about \$10,000 in grants in 1979. Still another organization is the previously mentioned Association of Arab Engineers, which is based in Nazareth and is concerned principally with problems of employment.

It should be noted that most of these organizations are recent creations which are not yet highly institutionalized, meaning they have relatively few active members, have limited resources at their disposal, and operate on a more or less *ad hoc* basis. Nevertheless, they represent a new force in Arab politics, and the fact that they have limited influence on the national scene is probably less significant than the fact that they exist at all, reflecting efforts to translate consciousness into political action. From this viewpoint it is also important to note the presence of other Arab political organizations. These include, among others, the National Progressive Movement, a Jerusalem-based intellectual union of students and university graduates, which has no formal membership or dues but with which educated young people in many villages identify; Al-Sawt, a Nazareth-based literary society dedicated to research and writing on Palestinian issues, which in 1980 published an evaluation of the Camp David accords and was conducting a study of the possibilities for establishing an Arab university in the Galilee; and a Prisoners Defense Committee, based in Nazareth but co-founded in 1979 by several dozen Arabs from all over the country and a handful of Jews, in order to assist political prisoners and their families.

The evolution of local politics, involving the early predominance of conservative forces and the recent sprouting of more militant political organizations, parallels developments at the national level. As previously noted, local Arab politics had long been dominated by the heads of wealthy and influential extended families, based on patrilineal association and known as *hamulas*; and although they lost their position in the cities after 1948, these *hamulas* sought to maintain their position in the villages following independence. For a time they resisted the formation of popularly elected local councils, the basic unit of local government in Jewish communities; but these councils were eventually established in most Arab villages and they soon came to be dominated by the one or several *hamulas* that had ruled prior to the establishment of the councils. Progressive Arabs criticized the control of local government by traditional elites, arguing that it contributed to the fragmentation of Arab society and that, for the most part, these leaders were more interested in maintaining their own position than in vigorously defending Arab interests. As might be expected, there were also disagreements about the reasons for *hamula* dominance. While some insisted that it reflected the traditional social organization of most Arab villages, many observers argued that the role of the government and the Zionist political parties was also important.²⁰ As previously noted, the government hindered the formation of more radical political organizations, and Jewish parties formed alliances with *hamula* leaders, giving them resources to use in local elections in return for delivering votes in national elections. These arrangements

also existed, and continue to exist, in urban areas, although here influential Arabs receive resources for other purposes in return for their votes.²¹

Hamulas continue to be important in village politics. In some villages they still deliver the majority of votes to Zionist parties, and this is especially true in villages that are small or underdeveloped. Even in some villages where Rakah obtains the majority of votes in national elections, *hamulas* continue to dominate the elected local councils. In one Galilee village, for example, Rakah received 25 percent of the vote in the national election of 1973 and 65 percent in the 1977 election, following Land Day. Yet seven of the nine local council members elected in 1978 represented traditionally important families. One member only was from Rakah and one was independent. Despite these continuities, forces of political change are very much at work. A 1975 survey reported that over 80 percent of the Arabs interviewed believed the political role of the *hamula* to be outmoded. Indeed, most considered the traditional system of local government injurious to Arab interests.²² Also, Rakah has active local committees in many villages and carries out programs aimed at village youth, laying the foundation for future support; and more recently, as noted, Ibna al-Balad has emerged and is growing in many villages as well. Thus, according to informants in one traditionally conservative Triangle village, young people are highly politically conscious and at least two-thirds strongly reject *hamula*-style politics. These informants noted also that both Rakah and Ibna al-Balad are firmly plugged into the activities networks of high school students and other groups. Communist programs, they said, tend to involve participation in village development projects while Ibna al-Balad usually organizes programs aimed at discussion and consciousness raising.

The character of local-level political change is particularly well illustrated by the situation in Miilya, a small Galilee village of about 2,300 Greek Catholic Arabs who have long been regarded as politically quiet. In the late 1960s, the Labor government decided to construct a small Jewish community adjacent to Miilya and selected a site which included several hundred *dunams* of land claimed by the village. This land, according to residents, had been legally registered in 1943 in the name of the village leader, or *mukhtar*, and the heads of 120 other local families. The government won authorization in court to appropriate the land, but the village appealed this decision, and its case came before the Haifa District Court in 1977. At this point a letter was sent to the *mukhtar*, advising him of the hearing; but the man had in fact died some time before and the letter was apparently lost or discarded without anyone else in the village seeing it, the result being the absence of any villagers in court and a decision favorable to the government by default. Villagers had long been unhappy about the loss of their land, saying that they had ceded a substantial amount of territory to Jews in the 1940s, in order that conflicting claims preventing registration of the land now in question might be resolved, and that the state had taken still more land in the 1950s and 1960s. They also recalled that Jewish zealots had come to Miilya in 1973 to establish an unauthorized settlement. After having remained quiet in the face of all these provocations, they were incensed to learn in 1979 that their appeal had been denied without their having been heard and that the state and the Jewish National Fund were preparing to move bulldozers

through the village and onto the disputed land. They said this was hardly the kind of treatment they deserved after a history of trying to cooperate and compromise with the government.

Also during this period, in response to these and related changes in the situation of Miilya, a group of young residents established the Miilya of Tomorrow association, drawing up a set of by-laws and registering their organization with the Ministry of the Interior. Miilya of Tomorrow has several dozen formal members, who pay regular monthly dues, and the group's principal activity is the operation of a community center, which they open to young people in the village three evenings a week. Organizers of the group say their objectives are to acquaint village youth with modern ideas, and especially to promote understanding among individuals from competing *hamulas*; that parents initially discouraged children from attending their center, but that this opposition soon disappeared and forty to fifty young men and women now come to their club whenever it is open; that as a group they are unaffiliated with any national movement, having members with a variety of ideological and political orientations; and that they ran a slate of candidates in the most recent local elections and won enough votes to capture one seat on the village council.

Miilya of Tomorrow is still a minor force in village politics, but its emergence in the late 1970s was a sign of changing conditions and growing political awareness. Moreover, according to its members, its activities are considered serious enough to be of interest to Israeli authorities. They say that all twelve members of their steering committee have had to report to the police station in nearby Acre, to explain the nature of the group and its activities. They also allege being forced to vacate one clubhouse because of pressure exerted by police on the owner of the building.

The link between Miilya of Tomorrow and the land problems of the village came in summer 1979, when Jewish officials decided to move bulldozers through Miilya and onto the disputed land and in response the Miilya of Tomorrow group organized a demonstration to block the road. Police were then called in to permit the earth-moving equipment to pass, and this led to violence that injured a number of people and resulted in the arrest of thirty-six villagers. There were also expressions of outrage by Arabs outside Miilya. The head of the Greek Catholic church in Israel protested to the prime minister, Rakah denounced the government in the Knesset and the National Committee of Arab Local Council Chairmen raised the possibility of a nationwide protest. It is also noteworthy that one television program on the subject produced so much criticism of the government that a member of the Broadcast Authority later called for the show's cancellation. There was no immediate resolution of the Miilya land dispute. The clearing of the site continued, with workers and Jewish National Fund officials soon passing through the village without interference. On the other hand, arrested villagers were released and the government promised that no actual construction would begin until the matter had been reconsidered in court. Regardless of the final outcome, however, these events reflected important changes in the political orientations of the villagers and the formation of new political organizations at the local level.

Growing militancy in the villages, which is a change from the past, is paralleled

by political developments among urban Arabs, where new Arab organizations are also being formed. A good example is the League for Jaffa Arabs, which was established in 1976 in order to seek better living conditions and which by 1980 had about three hundred members and was formally registered with the Interior Ministry. In addition to electing a steering committee, the league established one subcommittee devoted to problems of education and another devoted to housing. The league also conducted a household survey to document the deplorable circumstances of many Jaffa Arabs and then established contacts with journalists and government officials, hoping that by sharing the information collected it would be able to draw attention to Arab problems and to obtain help in solving them. Other urban organizations include local unions of Arab university graduates and of Arab students, which exist in several towns, the Nazareth Association of Craftsmen and Merchants, and the Nazareth Heritage Association, created in 1977 to raise money for needy students.

As at the national level, many of these organizations are poorly institutionalized. They revolve around a small number of highly motivated individuals and they appear to function with considerable informality. In many cases their impact is also limited. Leaders of the League for Jaffa Arabs say, for example, that they are unsure how much their survey will accomplish. The Nazareth Heritage Committee has an endowment that produced only \$1,400 for scholarships in 1979. Finally, most of these groups are only indirectly political, being oriented principally toward the amelioration of social and economic conditions. Nevertheless, the emergence of these and other local organizations parallels the process of political mobilization occurring at the national level, reflecting increased militancy and a determination to translate heightened consciousness into organizational strength. Larger goals, such as the creation of a unified and representative national political movement and the gaining of administrative control over Arab Affairs departments in state institutions, are still a long way from being achieved. But the period during which all but a few of Israel's Arabs were politically docile is rapidly coming to an end.

Social and Cultural Confrontation

The critical mass of Israel's Palestinian population is now substantial. From a base of slightly less than 160,000 in 1948, Israel's Arab population had grown to approximately 550,000 by 1980 and constituted nearly 17 percent of the country's total population. Moreover, the rate of natural increase is over twice as high among Arabs as among Jews, being about 4.3 percent in the former case; and this, coupled with diminishing Jewish immigration and growing Jewish emigration, raises serious questions about whether Jews will even be the majority in another fifty or sixty years.

A second and related factor is growing unity among Arabs in Israel. Distinctions based on residence are breaking down, and in particular the isolation and fragmentation of village society are rapidly diminishing. Many men commute regularly to work in the cities, where they interact with Arabs from other communities and with Jews. Also, village women are being educated in substantial numbers, bringing

them into contact with the outside world in a way that did not occur a generation ago. As these educated women begin raising children, it is probable that patterns of socialization within the family will change and a generation of even more outward-looking individuals will emerge.

The erosion of the *hamula* system, as previously described, is yet another aspect of declining parochialism and division. So, too, is the waning of communal solidarity based on religion. The extent of the latter trend is difficult to evaluate with precision, but a 1975 survey of 350 Muslim and Christian Arabs found that 56 percent were not opposed in principle to marriages among Arabs of different religions and that 69 percent disagreed with the proposition that "Muslims, Christians and Druzes have only a few common concerns and very different needs and aspirations."²³ Relevant in this connection also are recent manifestations of Arab solidarity by Druzes, who have long been regarded as politically aligned with Zionism but who are now turning to Rakah to express their grievances,²⁴ and the potential for political change among Israel's traditionally conservative Bedouin Arabs reflected in the controversy over land in the Negev.

Growing social awareness and political militancy reflect grievances pertaining to the conditions of Arab life in Israel. But the impact of recent developments in the broader, international Arab community, and of changes in the relationship between this community and the Jewish state, have also been significant. The most important of these developments involves the resurgence of Palestinian nationalism, including both the evolution of the Palestinian movement itself and growing support for the Palestinian cause on the international scene, and related events set in motion by the Arab-Israeli wars of June 1967 and October 1973.²⁵ Following Israel's stunning victory in the 1967 War, Arab frustration was intensified, and the political activity to which it led was felt by Arabs in Israel as well as elsewhere. In particular, there was a return to center stage in the Arab-Israeli conflict of Palestinian politicians, men who articulated the national consciousness of Palestinians in a way that had not been done for two decades, who established the institutional foundation for an increasingly strong political movement, and who advanced a controversial but challenging plan for Arab-Jewish cooperation in a "de-Zionized" Middle East.²⁶

Of even greater immediate consequence for Israel's Arabs was the Jewish state's capture in 1967 of the West Bank and Gaza, territories containing more than one million Palestinian Arabs who had not previously been under Israel's administrative control. Contact between Arabs in Israel and the administered territories was substantial after 1967, leading to a renewed sense among the former of their common identity as Palestinians. It also increased their skepticism about the benefits of life in Israel. While Zionists often contend that nowhere does the average Arab have more economic opportunity and political freedom than in Israel, a view of life on the West Bank after seventeen years of Jordanian rule increased the conviction of many Israeli Arabs that this assertion obscures more important truths pertaining to the economic underdevelopment and political dependency of Arab society in Israel.

All these tendencies were intensified after the 1973 Middle East War, in which Israel ultimately won a decisive military victory but which also included military successes for the Arabs and gave the latter some especially important political victories. The legitimacy of a national solution to the Palestinian problem, viewing

TABLE 2
How Well Arab Respondents Consider Themselves Described
by the Terms “Israeli” and “Palestinian”

	Very Well	Fairly Well	A Little	Not at All
Israeli	14%	39%	23%	24%
Palestinian	63%	22%	10%	5%

the Palestinians, in other words, as a people rather than as a collection of refugees with individual problems, gained international currency. Contacts between Arabs in Israel and the West Bank also increased, further stimulating thinking about the identity of the former. And increasingly militant opposition to Israeli rule in the West Bank, including the surfacing of political leaders identifying openly with the Palestine Liberation Organization and the willingness of the local populace to protest actively Israel’s presence in general and the creation of Jewish settlements in particular, also affected the political psychology of Arab citizens of Israel.

These developments interact with and reinforce the economic dissatisfaction and evolving political militancy that have already been discussed, and the collective impact of all these forces can be seen in two particularly important additional aspects of society and culture: the crystallization, or perhaps the recrystallization, of a Palestinian self-identity among Arabs in Israel and the growing hostility between Israeli Arabs and Jews.

Beyond the sense in which they are historically Palestinian, there has emerged in the past few years an assertion by Israel’s Arabs that their social and political identity is defined by Palestinianism, something that was largely unknown in the early years of Israeli statehood.²⁷ The findings of a 1975 survey, summarized in Table 2, show that while many Arabs say the term “Israeli” describes them only a little or not at all, the tendency is very strongly in the opposite direction for the term “Palestinian.”²⁸ Although survey data are not available, it also seems clear that in the wake of Land Day the Palestinian identity of Israel’s Arabs is even stronger. Thus, for example, while a young Arab woman reports that publicly describing herself as a Palestinian on Israeli television produced a furor in 1976, by 1980 Israel’s Arabs were routinely asserting their identity as Palestinians. Also, as mentioned, there is widespread support for a Palestinian state, with most Arabs believing it should be created alongside Israel, but some arguing on behalf of the PLO’s de-Zionization proposal; and there is also evidence that Arabs in Israel are thinking about how they might relate to such a state. Most would undoubtedly be reluctant to move there or to abandon their Israeli citizenship, although in fact only 33 percent in a national survey in 1975 definitively ruled out this possibility. On the other hand, some political activists in Nazareth have suggested that the concept of dual citizenship be explored; and, more generally, 40 percent of the respondents in the national survey said they would definitely want their children to be educated in the schools of such a state.

Identification as Palestinian takes on added significance in view of the growing polarization of Arabs and Jews in Israel. An alternative sociocultural and political

identity is becoming available at the very time that the Arabs' dissatisfaction with their status in Israel is increasing dramatically. The hostility between Arabs and Jews should not be overstated, of course. There are a number of private organizations that promote contact and communication between Arabs and Jews in urban areas, such as the Jewish-Arab circle of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, to cite just one example.²⁹ There are also special programs to increase understanding among Israelis of different religions, such as a twelve-day workshop on race relations attended by twenty-six young Arabs and Jews in 1980. As mentioned earlier, relations between Arabs and Jews at work tend to be cordial, and even politically radical Arabs readily acknowledge that there are some Jews who understand Arab grievances and are working sincerely for the progress of Arab society. After all these observations have been made, however, the fact remains that the 1970s witnessed a marked increase in tension and distrust between members of the two national communities. One study published in 1976 notes, for example, that in the period immediately prior to the investigation there was a "severe drop" in Arab readiness for social relations with Jews, due to a rise in Arab self-esteem and self-assertion following the War of 1973.³⁰

Others report that this tendency continues. For example, a Jewish informant stated in 1980 that he had ceased to visit the Arab village where he used to have friends since his car was vandalized and no one there made any effort to help him. More striking are the statements of an Arab villager interviewed on Israeli television in 1978. The man said that hostility toward Jews is growing rapidly in his village, that already Jews enter the village far less frequently than in the past, and that he would not be surprised if in five years it were dangerous for a Jew to pass through the village. The poor quality of Arab-Jewish relations is also visible in other areas. Relations between Arab and Jewish students on Israeli university campuses can be described at best as correct and at worst as tense, a fact that both Jewish educators and Arab students readily acknowledge. Some add that only the Arabs are hostile, that Jews in reality are indifferent. Nevertheless, it is clear at the very least that future Arab leaders, most of whom have already studied apart from Jews prior to university, are forming no intellectual or social bonds with the Jewish Israelis beside whom they sit in class.

The actions of two Jewish officials in 1979 provide particularly blatant examples of deteriorating Arab-Jewish relations, although both admittedly go beyond interpersonal relations at the individual level. The first concerns a highly publicized statement by the director of Israel's Northern Military Command, to the effect that the Arabs are "a cancer in our body." The statement was made in summer 1979 in a public address to Members of Knesset and officials of international Jewish organizations on a tour of the Golan Heights, a tour sponsored by advocates of annexing the Golan and of intensifying Jewish settlement there and in the adjacent Galilee. This statement by a senior Israeli official produced an outcry from Arab spokesmen and it also produced a sharp rebuke by the minister of defense, after which the director publicly apologized. But while most Jewish officials deplored the incident, many individual Jews expressed agreement with the statement and support for the man who made it.

The second incident concerns the resignation in 1979 of the prime minister's advisor for Arab affairs. Although not regarded as sympathetic to the Arabs at the time of his appointment, the man had protested government inattention to Arab problems and then resigned in protest when his pleas were ignored. Insiders say he was forced to resign and some, including knowledgeable Jewish observers, argue that this was part of a more or less conscious government effort to humiliate the Arabs, in order to provoke a conflict which would permit the suppression of Arab political activity. The accuracy of these controversial interpretations aside, this is the way government policies appeared to many Arabs in the late 1970s. Their viewpoint was articulated by the former Greek Catholic archbishop of Israel, who returned for a visit in summer 1979 after having left Israel five years earlier. At the time of his service he was considered a moderate and a supporter of the government, but now he reported, after talking to Arabs, that the state's "blind policy is fostering extremism and driving Israeli Arabs to hatred."³¹

One additional aspect of changing social and cultural patterns may be noted briefly. This is the religious revival that has recently begun among Muslim Arabs in Israel, especially, but not exclusively, in the Triangle region. This phenomenon is new and its implications are not yet clear, except that it is an extension of events occurring throughout the Islamic world and indicates again the influence on Israeli Arab society of forces operating in the broader Arab arena. Increased prayer and mosque attendance and growing sales of cassettes recorded by sheikhs and imams in Egypt and elsewhere are among the principal manifestations of this trend. According to informants, the movement is particularly strong among young people, including high school students.

In the late 1970s, the movement appeared to have little structure and the motivations of its leaders and adherents were a matter of debate. Interviewed on Israeli television, one spokesman said that Muslims in Israel are opposed to communism and atheism and would like to see a greater emphasis on religion in Israel. He also complained about pornography and said he hoped a Muslim political party could eventually be formed, although he added that the content of the Islamic revival movement is religious, not political. However, while some agreed that the movement was indeed apolitical, and occasionally suggested that it might even be welcomed by the government (because it represents opposition to Rakah and division between Christians and Muslims), many others insisted that the Islamic tendency was gaining adherents precisely because it offers a mechanism for coping with social problems and that it might therefore develop into an important vehicle for articulating economic and political grievances. In any event, the movement has the *potential* to become a significant force in Muslim Arab society in Israel.

An Uncertain Future

The progress of any of these trends can easily be exaggerated. Arabs in Israel are still far from constituting a unified national community. With respect to Arab-Jewish hostility, most Arabs and Jews still interact on a daily basis with courtesy

and tolerance, occasionally even friendship. Nevertheless, the direction of change and the degree to which social and cultural patterns differ from those of the early years of Israeli statehood is clear and pronounced. Moreover, the trends that have been noted reinforce one another. In 1948, Arab society was small, divided, disorganized, and leaderless, making it docile and easily controlled. It was also politically and socially unmobilized, meaning that its expectations were low, that political consciousness was limited, and that it had no clearly articulated and overarching communal identification. Finally, many of its social and economic grievances had yet to crystallize. Villages were still comparatively autonomous and there were very few educated elites desiring professional advancement and opportunities for leadership. Thus, though Arabs in Israel were an involuntary minority and had generalized grievances about the circumstances of Israel's establishment, they had neither the ideological foundation nor the political capacity for challenging their position as individual members of a non-Jewish minority in the Jewish state or for resisting government efforts to keep them politically quiet. Since 1967 and especially since 1973, however, the situation has changed dramatically. The Arabs have become a large minority, with the potential for exerting influence through both regular and irregular channels. They are also increasingly united, ideologically and politically, and in addition they have within their ranks a growing number of potential leaders. Finally, their consciousness and militancy have been raised by increasingly serious grievances pertaining to the conditions of their life in Israel and by external developments that have helped to shape and give ideological content to their identity as Palestinians.

The concatenation of these trends suggests that Arabs in Israel are on a collision course with the government and that, unless things change, the future will bring a crisis in Arab-Jewish relations. It is not possible to forecast whether this will in fact come to pass, but the principal forces that will shape the future can at least be identified by way of conclusion.

First, the form and content of Arab politics will be critical. Arabs are struggling to build a national movement, one that will be able to operate as an effective pressure group in Israel's competitive and multiparty political arena. Despite recent progress, however, institution-building will have to proceed substantially further if the Arabs are to fashion a coherent and representative organizational structure with which to engage in political activity. Equally important, the passionate debates between Arab moderates and militants will have to be resolved, or at least put aside until more immediate objectives are attained. Similarly, agreement on a program of strategy and tactics would also seem to be a necessary condition for Arabs to make their influence felt. Moreover, if these two conditions are not fulfilled, and if present trends continue, not only will Arabs be less effective in exerting political pressure, but there is the strong possibility that some will resort to more provocative and dangerous forms of protest, a development that would play into the hands of Jewish extremists and do harm to the Arab cause.

The content of the political formula and ideology that ultimately gain currency among Arabs in Israel will also be of great importance. Arabs have no choice but

to come to grips with the existence of Israel as a Jewish state, however unfair this may appear to non-Jews who live in a country where the national mission is service to Judaism and to international Jewry. But, within these parameters, Arabs must define for themselves the content of their identity, both in relation to the state of which they are citizens and also as part of the broader Palestinian nation. They must think creatively about the patterns of political identification that are most appropriate for their community; and the character of their future status in Israel will be defined by the content of the formulations they derive, as well as by the growth of their capacity to make the Israeli political system respond to their needs.

A second and equally important consideration that will shape the future is the response of Jews in general and of the Israeli government in particular to the increasingly unmistakable demands of Arab citizens. It is no longer possible to maintain the fiction that most Arabs are satisfied with the political and economic opportunity they find in Israel and that only a few extremists are seriously alienated. In addition, while Israel has long found it possible to contain this national minority, assisting it to a degree but working with equal vigor to ensure that it did not acquire political influence commensurate with its numbers, the state's ability to do this at an acceptable cost is coming to an end. Short of direct suppression, which would subvert Israeli democracy in the short run and probably be ineffective anyway over the longer haul, the government will have no choice but to come to grips with the demands of its restive Arab population.

Israel cannot be expected to change certain of its priorities. The concern for military security and the protection of its Jewish character will continue to come first. But the time is past due for the government to fashion a new policy toward its Arab citizens and, in any event, the neglect, insensitivity, and even harassment of Arabs by the state will have to end if the crisis that looms on the horizon is to be avoided. Moreover, it cannot be claimed that such policies are recent, attributable to the nationalism of the Likud government that came to power in 1977. The seeds of all the problems confronting Israel's Arabs were sown in an earlier era. Only marginally more than the Likud government did the one that preceded it develop and implement a meaningful policy toward the Arabs, one which spoke to needs defined by Arabs themselves and which they also played a part in formulating. Finally, it must be recognized that the government follows the will of the majority with respect to most of its actions toward Arabs and that a new approach will therefore be impossible unless there is also a major effort to generate public understanding of Arab problems and of the need to create an acceptable place for non-Jews in Israel. These transformations will be difficult to accomplish, at either governmental or popular levels, both because a major psychological revolution is involved and because Jewish Israelis honestly feel threatened by Arabs and have their own pressing social and economic problems. Nevertheless, the future will depend on the country's ability to accomplish these psychological and political changes.

International forces are a final factor which will shape the future of Arab-Jewish relations in Israel. Two interrelated dimensions are particularly critical: the reso-

lution of the Palestinian issue and the consequences of the Egypt-Israel peace initiative. The resolution of the Palestinian problem in general, and the creation of an autonomous Palestinian homeland alongside Israel in particular, will greatly affect the Palestinians who are citizens of Israel, giving them new options and choices. Whether this homeland will be an independent and sovereign political entity or whether it will be linked in some way to Israel or Jordan will continue to be debated, although the desirability of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel in the context of an overall peace settlement seems as clear to many today as it did in 1947. In either event, Israel's Arabs will be an obvious focus for the efforts at cooperation and understanding between Jewish Israelis and non-Israeli Palestinians that will be needed. Arabs in Israel will be a bridge between Israel and Palestine, raising their importance and esteem in the eyes of Jews. Israel's Arabs may also benefit from a kind of competition between the two states for their loyalty and labor, increasing their alternatives and stimulating Israel to respond more seriously to their needs. Finally, these Arabs in Israel will be able to draw ideological, political, and possibly even economic support from a national center which articulates and manages the evolution of their Palestinian identity. For all these reasons, a resolution of the Palestinian issue, should it occur, has the potential to reduce tensions between Arabs and Jews in Israel and to interrupt the trends that at present appear so ominous.

Similarly hopeful possibilities are raised by the Egypt-Israel peace initiative. This initiative may of course contribute to a resolution of the Palestinian question, although there does not appear to be much likelihood of any immediate gains in this regard. But even if it fails for the time being to bring about this goal, the initiative has the potential to reduce Jewish fear and distrust of Arabs, and it is not inconceivable that this would increase Israeli sensitivity to the circumstances of the country's non-Jewish citizens. More generally, should Israel's peace with Egypt prove durable, and possibly even be expanded to encompass one or two other countries in the area, Israel's Arabs would find themselves citizens of a state at peace with at least some of its Arab neighbors, and this certainly would undermine many of the forces that are now contributing to the deterioration of Arab-Jewish relations in Israel. On the other hand, if Israel regards its partial peace with Egypt as a respite from international pressure and concludes that it therefore has less need to address the grievances of its Arab citizens, or if the peace process breaks down because the opportunity it provides has not been used to find solutions to more fundamental problems, frustration and anger will mount on all sides and external forces will intensify rather than defuse the tension between Arabs and Jews in the state of Israel.

How all this works out cannot be predicted. But it is clear that Arabs in Israel are no longer the politically quiet minority they were in the early years of statehood and that without major changes in the social and political processes currently operating Arab-Jewish relations in the years ahead will become one of the most difficult and dangerous problems on the Israeli domestic scene.

(January 1980)

NOTES

1. Like most other aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Arab and Jewish sources do not agree on these figures. Arab sources place the number of Palestinians at 800,000–1,000,000, while Zionist sources tend to place it at 600,000–700,000. Similar discrepancies occur, even in scholarly works, with respect to the number of Palestinian refugees that existed after 1948.
2. See William Quandt, Fuad Jabber, and Ann Mosely Lesch, *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism* (Berkeley, 1973), pp. 14ff.
3. See Henry Rosenfeld, "The Class Situation of the Arab National Minority in Israel," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20 (July 1978), pp. 375ff. See also David Waines, "The Failure of the National Resistance," in Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (ed.), *The Transformation of Palestine* (Evanston, 1971).
4. Leonard Fein, *Politics in Israel* (Boston, 1967), p. 61. See also Mark A. Tessler, "The Identity of Religious Minorities in Non-secular States: Jews in Tunisia and Morocco and Arabs in Israel," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20 (July 1978), pp. 359ff.
5. Sabri Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel* (Beirut, 1969), p. 42.
6. See *The Arabs in Israel*, prepared by the Israel Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem, 1961), p. 10.
7. See Jacob M. Landau, "The Arabs and the Histadruth," in Isaiah Avrech and Dan Giladi (eds.), *Labor and Society in Israel* (Tel Aviv, 1973).
8. Muslim law conflicts with Israeli civil law on matters of marriage and divorce. Thus, for example, a man who claims the right of unilateral divorce, as set forth in the *shari'a*, may be liable for fines or other penalties under Israeli law, even though his divorce will remain valid if its legality is upheld in a Muslim religious court.
9. Several writers have noted that consociationalism, the normal basis for stable democracy in pluralist societies, will not produce stability in societies where the minority is involuntary and that the majority usually develops mechanisms of control in these instances. For discussions of this issue in relation to Israel, see Ian Lustick, "Explaining Stability in Deeply Divided Societies: Consociationalism versus Control," *World Politics* 31 (April 1979): 325–44; and Sammy Smootha, "Control of Minorities in Israel and Northern Ireland," paper presented at the 9th World Congress of Sociology in Uppsala, 1978, published in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22 (April 1980): 256–80. Although some mechanisms of control used in Israel are discussed in the present report, this chapter is concerned principally with the response of Arabs to their social and political environment. For a detailed account of mechanisms of minority control in Israel, readers are directed to Ian Lustick, *Arabs in the Jewish State: A Study in the Effective Control of a Minority Population* (Austin, 1980).
10. Rosenfeld, p. 391.
11. There are also serious problems associated with Arab education in nonurban areas. For a detailed study of Arab education, see Sami K. Mar'i, *Arab Education in Israel* (Syracuse, 1977).
12. *Jerusalem Post*, August 17, 1979.
13. The data are from 1974. The table is adapted from Sammy Smootha and John Hofman, "Some Problems of Arab-Jewish Coexistence in Israel," *Middle East Review* 9 (Winter 1976–77): 9.
14. Eli Rekhess, "A Survey of Israeli Arab Graduates from Institutions of Higher Learning in Israel (1961–1971)" (Tel Aviv, 1974). See also Khalil Nakhleh, *Nationalist Consciousness and University Education: The Dilemma of Palestinians in Israel* (Detroit, 1979).
15. Rekhess.
16. For an account of a local Arab organization in a mixed Arab-Jewish town that tried to oppose the work of these committees, see Moshe Shokeid, "Strategy and Change in the Arab Vote: Observations in a Mixed Town," in Asher Arian (ed.), *The Elections in Israel—1973* (Jerusalem, 1975). The organization operated through the mid-1970s but its efforts produced few results and it was largely abandoned by 1979.

17. Aharon Cohen, "Reflections Following 'Land Day'," *New Outlook* 19:5 (1976), p. 48.
18. For further discussion, see Rosenfeld, pp. 392ff.
19. For historical details, see Jacob M. Landau, *The Arabs in Israel* (London, 1969), pp. 71ff.
20. Khalil Nakhleh, "The Direction of Local-level Conflict in Two Arab Villages in Israel," *American Ethnologist* 2 (Fall 1975): 497–516. For a critical review of other studies bearing on this point, see Khalil Nakhleh, "Anthropological and Sociological Studies of Arabs in Israel: A Critique," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 6 (Summer 1977): 41–70.
21. For further details about these procedures, based principally on an earlier period when *hamula* influence was stronger than it is today, see Abner Cohen, *Arab Border Villages in Israel* (Manchester, 1965); Subhi Abu-Gosh, "The Election Campaign in the Arab Sector," in Arian; and Shokeid.
22. See Tessler, p. 370. For more information about the methodology of the survey, see Mark A. Tessler, "Israel's Arabs and the Palestinian Problem," *Middle East Journal* 31 (Summer 1977): 313–29.
23. Tessler, 1977, p. 325.
24. See Walter Zenner and Leonard Kasdan, "The Israeli Druzes: Economics and Identity," *Midstream* 28 (May 1977), pp. 43ff. For additional information, including an account of the Druze Action Committee, see Suhaila Haddad, R. D. McLaurin, and Emile Nakhleh, "Minorities in Containment: The Arabs of Israel," in R. D. McLaurin (ed.), *The Political Role of Minority Groups in the Middle East* (New York, 1979), pp. 94ff.
25. For a summary of the importance of these events in defining historical stages in the political evolution of Israel's Arabs, see Haddad, McLaurin, and Nakhleh, pp. 78ff.
26. For a summary and assessment, see Mark Tessler, "Secularism in the Middle East? Reflections on Recent Palestinian Proposals," *Ethnicity* 2 (1975): 178–203.
27. See Yochanan Peres and Nira Yuval-Davis, "Some Observations on the National Identity of the Israeli Arab," *Human Relations* 22 (June 1969): 219–33.
28. These findings are summarized in Tessler, 1977 and 1978. The former article gives details about the survey and presents an analysis aimed at accounting for individual variations in political identity. For further analysis, oriented toward showing the *direction* of attitude change, see Mark A. Tessler, "Ethnic Change and Non-assimilating Minority Status: Jews in Tunisia and Morocco and Arabs in Israel," in Charles Keyes (ed.), *Ethnic Change* (Seattle, 1981). For additional survey data pertaining to aspects of identity among Arabs in Israel, see John Hofman and Nadim Rouhana, "Young Arabs in Israel: Some Aspects of a Conflicted Social Identity," *Journal of Social Psychology* 99 (1976): 75–86; and John Hofman and Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, "The Palestinian Identity and Israel's Arabs," in Gabriel Ben-Dor (ed.), *The Palestinians and the Middle East Conflict* (Tel Aviv, 1978). Finally, it may be noted that a national survey dealing with these attitudinal questions was conducted in 1976 by Sammy Smootha of the Jewish-Arab Study Center of Haifa University. Smootha's findings are reported in *The Orientation and Politicization of the Arab Minority in Israel* (Haifa, 1980).
29. For a list and description of these organizations, see Harry M. Rosen, *The Arabs and the Jews in Israel: The Reality, the Dilemma, the Promise* (Jerusalem, 1970). At least some of these organizations were no longer active in 1979.
30. Smootha and Hofman, p. 13.
31. *Jerusalem Post*, August 3, 1979.

6.

Palestinian Writings: Closed Borders, Divided Lives

Ann Mosely Lesch

The subject of physical and emotional separation is central to Palestinian literature. Ever since 1948, poets and novelists have focused on the longing to return from exile and to reunite the people with their homeland. This longing is expressed in images of tangible objects: olive trees, orange groves, pomegranates, grapes, and stony fields. It is also expressed symbolically, most frequently with Palestine represented by the lover, father, or mother from whom the writer is separated and with whom he or she longs to merge.

A key theme is the difficulty or impossibility of becoming a complete person when one is living as an alien: some living as aliens inside Israel, where they still have their homes but are treated as second-class citizens and have lost their national identity; others living as aliens in Arab countries, separated from their home and land but retaining their national pride.

The three short stories offered here dwell on this theme. They depict the feelings of refugees who try to escape from the refugee camps in Jordan to return to their homes within Israel. This was a frequent phenomenon in the early 1950s, although most of those people were arrested or shot by Israeli patrols as they crossed the border. The stories also show the malaise of Palestinians living inside Israel and their dream of escaping from the confines of their lives to an imagined freedom in the capitals of the Arab world. And the stories describe how limited the opportunities are for Palestinians to meet across the borders. Until 1967, the Mandelbaum Gate in Jerusalem served as the crossing point for Palestinians living in Israel to enter the West Bank on special passes in order to visit relatives. The Israeli occupation of the West Bank in June 1967 removed that crossing and replaced it by the Allenby Bridge on the Jordan River.

The short stories are a small selection from the writings of Najwa Farah, a Palestinian from Nazareth who has published several volumes of short stories in Arabic. Mrs. Farah was a young woman when the Israeli army overran Nazareth in late 1948. Soon after, she married a young Anglican pastor, the Reverend Rafiq

Farah, and they lived in Haifa, ministering to the small Palestinian community that remained there. In 1965 the family moved to the Jordanian sector of Jerusalem, which fell under Israeli occupation in 1967. A decade later they moved to war-torn Beirut, where they still remain.

The stories come from different collections of Mrs. Farah's writings. "Laila and the Orange Blossoms," written in 1953, was published in *Paths and Lanterns* (Nazareth: Hakim Press, 1956); "The Call of Damascus and the Rebuke of the Pomegranates," written in 1958, was published in *To Whom Is the Spring?* (Nazareth: Hakim Press, 1963); and "Waiting," written in 1965 after Mrs. Farah had moved to the West Bank, was published in *Coming Together* (Beirut: An-Nahar Press, 1972). None of the stories has appeared previously in English.

Mrs. Farah and I worked together to prepare the material. She made basic translations from Arabic and I then edited the texts substantially. This editing was necessary in part because certain references, self-evident to the Arab reader, would be unintelligible to the outsider. In addition, the Arabic originals were lyrical and alliterative, styles that could not be translated effectively into English.

I would like to thank Mrs. Farah for her dedication to our common effort and her kindness to me. I would also like to thank Barbara Harlow, a specialist in Palestinian and Third World literature, for encouraging me to publish these stories. I bear full responsibility for the selection of the stories and for any distortions that may have occurred in the process of editing.

LAILA AND THE ORANGE BLOSSOMS

Jacob ben Josef rose early. He walked into the kitchen, where he found his daughter and her husband sipping tea before leaving for work. He joined them, drinking from his special old cup, and gazed out the window. He loved this scene, finding solace in the view of the orange grove surrounding the house. The fruit trees clustered together, guarded by tall cypresses.

His daughter Tamara and his son-in-law hurried off to catch the bus to Rehovoth. Jacob sat listening to the familiar sounds—the school bell of the nearby nursery, the music from the neighbors' radios, the birds singing in the trees. He inhaled the exquisite scent of orange blossoms.

The orange scent . . . its power made him believe that life was beautiful. Even his retirement seemed worthwhile, for the scent of the orange blossoms made him contented. Perhaps this was an exaggeration. Jacob knew that one must lower one's head when hit and accept what life gives one, without complaint. In the past, life had given him much, but then it took away much more than it had given.

He had lived in the town of Vaudvill in Bulgaria, where he traded in gold. When the political situation changed, there was no place for his kind of work. He admitted that, at least in his own case, he had emigrated because the black market didn't flourish anymore. Others had fled because they were persecuted, but some could have stayed if they had wanted to. In any case, he had found himself with his wife and daughter on a ship taking them to the Promised Land.

He didn't like to remember the trip, nor its aftermath when his wife fell ill with cancer. They lived like strangers in a transit camp, sheltered by a tin hut that was hot in summer and cold in winter. Rain dripped through the roof, dampening the bed where his wife lay. She had known nothing but comfort and a good life in Bulgaria, but now she suffered deep pain, compounded by the sadness of leaving her home. After she died, her photo stood on the bureau, gazing wistfully at him.

His daughter Tamara taught in the camp and met a young man named Avraham who had just arrived from Iraq. Despite the difficult conditions, they married and saved enough money to buy a small house from the government in an orange grove near Rehovoth. They all moved in, carrying their possessions from their earlier lives. Jacob and Tamara brought a carved chest and a beautifully woven carpet that his own father had bought from a Turk years earlier. Some of its sections were worn out, so Tamara ripped it apart, repaired it, and reassembled it. When he looked at the rug, he mused: man can always reassemble the pieces of his past and weave a new pattern. Perhaps the composition is smaller than the first one, but it is drawn from what is good and beautiful from the past, after what is worn-out has been discarded.

In addition to the rug and the chest, they brought embroidered covers for the beds and delicate china teacups decorated with damsels from the Louis XIV period. When Jacob looked at these dancing maidens, he imagined that they protested against living in this simple house, next to plastic plates and glasses. Avraham provided Iraqi rugs and copper jugs, as well as an old Torah with a photograph of a scholarly elder from his family. The little house said much about the earlier lives of its occupants.

Jacob heard footsteps. He turned and saw a young stranger standing near the orchard, and he shouted in Hebrew: "What do you want?" The man didn't seem to understand, although he looked anxious. Jacob thought fearfully: he's an infiltrator—what a bold infiltrator to come in the middle of the day! He didn't know what to do. His tongue froze. The young man suddenly turned and vaulted over the fence into the grove.

Jacob didn't tell anyone what had happened. That night he took his gun and went to the grove. When he found nothing, he returned to the house. But he could not sleep. Late that night he heard a slight noise. Peering out of the window, he saw a shadowy figure near the fence. The person walked to an orange tree and began to dig near it, hurriedly.

Jacob opened the back door and slipped into the orchard, carrying his gun. The young man was bent over the ground, preoccupied with his digging. Jacob pointed his gun at him but then felt a hand grasp him from behind. He didn't dare to turn, fearing it was another infiltrator. But it was Avraham, who gestured to Jacob to leave the matter to him.

Avraham went up to the stranger and spoke in Arabic: "Hands up! What are you doing?"

The young man raised his hands.

"What is there here?"

“Nothing.”

“Admit that you crossed the border to dig up some treasure! Don’t tire yourself with digging. You know that you’ll be jailed for sneaking into Israel.”

The young man raised his head: “If I don’t get back safely, I entrust what is here to your care.”

“You needn’t entrust anything to me. You don’t own anything here.”

“But I do . . . all of it . . . especially what’s here.”

He pointed to the hole, and suddenly collapsed, sobbing. Perplexed, their hostility evaporated, Jacob and Avraham carried the young man to their house.

Avraham returned to the hole. His flashlight shone on a decayed body, reduced almost to bones. Shocked at the macabre sight, he hastened back to the house. As he entered, the young man asked: “Did you see her?”

Avraham understood the despair on the young man’s face; it’s a woman’s body, he thought to himself.

“Did you risk crossing the border so that you could see this sight?”

“Yes.”

“You’re mad!”

“Perhaps.”

“Who is she?”

There was a long pause and then the words came, quiet but explosive: “She’s my bride, Laila, who died on our wedding night, killed by gunfire. . . . It was a terrible night.”

They lowered their heads. Avraham tried to shake off his emotion: “What’s the use of returning? What’s the use of returning to the dead, when you must pay a heavy price?”

“Yes, I tried to convince myself of that. But her call and the call of the orange trees were too strong. I could only hear that voice, day and night, pleading, calling for help.”

As they talked late into the night, Tamara brought tea and asked: “What happened after she died?” And the young man began to describe his past. His name was Ahmad, and the orchard had belonged to his father. The whole family worked there. He knew every inch of it and its scent clung to him. There is no world like the world of an orange grove. There is no scent like that of the orange blossoms. Laila was his cousin. He had loved her ever since they were children. She was small and dark. She had long shiny black hair. Her eyes had thick lashes. When she smiled, dimples appeared on her cheeks. Even her eyes laughed.

Eventually their wedding day arrived and they planned to live in the secluded little house his father had built for him in the orchard. Although there were political troubles at the time, he was preoccupied by his joy in Laila. After the wedding feast they walked alone in the grove, savoring the evening air and the intoxicating scent. Suddenly a shot rang out and Laila fell. Ahmad was stunned. He couldn’t believe this had happened, so abruptly, so senselessly. He carried her to the house, the new house in which they hadn’t yet lived. He wanted to rush to his parents’ home, but gunfire had burst out all around and people were crowding through the orange grove. Bullets whizzed past the house. He stood perplexed, the silent body

lying on their wedding bed, Laila's pale face unaware of the commotion, He was gripped by an awesome loneliness and overwhelming fear. He could not stay here any longer. He gathered Laila up in his arms, carried her to the orchard, and quickly dug in its earth. He laid her body, still clad in her wedding dress, into the shallow pit, and hurried out of the grove. Everyone else had left. The silence was terrible. He felt that he was the only person in a frightening cemetery. At last he caught up with the crowds that were fleeing from Ramla and from his village. He found himself uprooted, a refugee among thousands of others. Some hid in caves. Others obtained tents, but many squatted under trees. After a while he moved further east, to the Zarqa refugee camp near Amman.

The weeks had passed, then years. He remained in the camp, jobless. He dreamed of Laila and the orange grove, and would wake up sobbing. He felt that he had committed a crime by leaving her alone there. When he could endure the anguish no longer, he came back across the border. He believed that if he saw the orchard again and was sure that her body was there, he would find rest—at least a little rest—and that was why he had come.

There was a deep silence. No one wanted to speak. Each person reflected on his own past—Vaudvill, Baghdad, the orchard between Ramla and Rehovoth. Memories and pain. Life starting somewhere else and ending here. Here. They all dreamed of this place. Jacob understood what the orange grove meant to Ahmad for he too had fallen under its spell. And he knew that this was Ahmad's home, as Vaudvill had been his home.

Ahmad broke the silence: "Our house was over there." He pointed to a patch of ground. "There is no trace of it now."

"We didn't know anything about it. We bought this house from the Jewish National Fund."

They started anxiously, hearing voices outside. Could it be neighbors at such a late hour? Ahmad spoke: "I should go. I might cause you trouble."

Avraham interrupted him: "Wait here. I'll go outside to see, and then come back. If I turn on the radio when I return, it will signal that you can jump through the window and escape."

"Thank you. If I don't see you again, I entrust Laila to your care."

They left. He heard the radio. He jumped and ran quickly. A few minutes later, a shot rang out.

The next day the papers reported on a back page that soldiers had killed a daring infiltrator while he was attacking an orchard near Rehovoth. The papers did not add that Laila's grave was strewn with orange blossoms.

THE CALL OF DAMASCUS AND THE REBUKE OF THE POMEGRANATES

It was March, nearly five o'clock in the evening. The quarter was absorbed in its business, like any other quarter in Haifa. Each quarter is a world in itself, preoccupied with its own daily concerns. The vegetable seller felt it was time to close

but delayed a few minutes, hoping to get rid of his leftover produce. Some shoppers were bargaining, trying to convince him that he should give a discount in the evening. In his heart, he agreed. Two young men were quarreling on the sidewalk, and people came from a nearby shop to break up the fight. In a small coffee-house, some men were playing backgammon while others gathered around, excitedly following the rapid movement of the stones. The room was full of cigarette smoke, and music came from a radio. The voice of Fairouz trailed outside, causing passers-by to slow their pace: “. . . Visit me every year. . . .” Housewives stood at their gates watching people moving in the street, shouting to the vendors and listening to the radio. Through small windows, one could see men at home, relaxing in their night clothes with a glass of arak, in which they lost the tiredness and worry of the day.

A young man passed by in his work clothes, his blue jeans smeared with car grease. He hurried into the small house where he rented a room. He was met by a slim young woman with straight black hair.

“Good evening.”

“Good evening, Omar,” she answered.

He went to his room to change his clothes and returned to the courtyard to wash himself in the tub of water. In the meantime the girl prepared supper for him on a small table. One plate held bread and khubaiza, another had olives and pickled turnips, and a third was heaped with oranges. Omar sat at the table absentmindedly, not touching the food. The girl watched him, puzzled. Finally he began to eat. She felt that he was worried and preoccupied. She almost spoke, but suppressed her words and simply sat near him, sensing his presence. Suddenly he pushed his plate away.

“Husniyya.”

She looked up, surprised to hear him speak her name. What could he want to say?

“I must tell you something. I want to fly away, to escape from this country. I can’t stand it anymore.”

She hid her face in her hands. No, anything except this! If he left, her dream would die. She trembled. He had never spoken to her like this before, but he was so preoccupied with his own pain that he didn’t notice hers.

“Husniyya. You should have seen what happened today. We were working in the garage as usual, when a car from the Histadrut drove up and stopped. Some men got out and started searching the garage for Arab workers. We all hid in a back room except for little Hassan, who crawled under a car. The men argued with the garage owner. They accused him of hiring Arabs, who aren’t organized through the Histadrut. Then one of them caught sight of Hassan and pulled him out from under the car. They discovered that he didn’t even have a travel permit. They searched for the rest of us, like cats looking for mice, yelling in Arabic—‘Yalla barra! Get out!’ A strange feeling swept over me. They kept shouting, ‘Get out.’ Yes, I thought, I must get out—out to freedom, to a place where I’ll be a human being, not an unwanted Arab. God’s world is wide. I must leave this place. I’m fed up with travel permits and the military governor’s office where Arabs have to

line up, humiliated, waiting for a piece of paper as though one had to have permission to live. I must leave. I have to get out. Shall I tell you where I want to go?"

Husniyya remained silent, staring at him. She wanted to scream, to pour out her feelings, but he didn't give her a chance. He went on, as though talking to himself: "I want to go to Damascus. I feel I know it already, even though I've never seen it. I can smell its gardens and its marketplace. I want to be absorbed into the city, merge with its crowds, and feel proud that I'm an Arab. Even if I have nothing to eat but the earth itself, I'd prefer that to being humiliated."

He wanted to go on, to tell her about the problems in his village, the hardships his parents had endured when their land was seized. But the look in her eyes made him stop. The look combined challenge, pain, and love. He fell silent.

She spoke quietly but with determination: "Listen, Omar. It's cowardly to leave your country. You aren't the only Arab who is suffering like this. Your leaving won't prevent them from persecuting people like Hassan. Your people are here, on this land."

Husniyya didn't dare say anything more, although she wanted to say much more. She wanted to tell him how this quarter had become a paradise since he arrived, and how deserted it would seem if he left. But she was embarrassed to tell him that.

"What difference does it make whether I leave or stay? I'm only a simple worker. They can fire me any day. No one cares about me."

"But you *do* matter to many people, including some whom you don't even care about."

Omar looked at her, but she lowered her eyes, again embarrassed. He realized for the first time that Husniyya was pleading with him, begging him not to leave her. Hadn't she always been present within him, like a dormant seed? Now the seed was sprouting life, a delicate young plant.

He heard her voice, coming from a distance: "Aren't you going to eat?"

"No. I've lost my appetite. . . . Husniyya, you don't know how bitter I feel, how much I resent everything. I really must leave."

"I can't stop you from leaving, but I've told you how I feel."

The call of Damascus and the call of Husniyya. Omar felt dazed.

Just then Husniyya's mother came in. She was surprised to see them sitting together, as if they were discussing something vital, intended for them alone.

Husniyya spoke quickly: "Omar was telling me what happened today at the garage. Histadrut men came, searching for Arab workers and throwing them out."

Her mother sighed, "That happens so often." She looked down at her hands, swollen from working in water.

Husniyya also looked at her mother's hands. She saw her bent back, her wrinkled face, and felt how exhausted she was.

"Mother, you must stop doing laundry."

"How would we eat?"

"I'll work."

"Stop talking like that. Where's your father?"

"I guess he's still at Abu Farraj's, playing backgammon."

"Where's your brother?"

"He hasn't come home yet."

"That's strange. I wonder why he's so late. Did the little ones nap?"

"Yes. Don't you want to eat?"

"I'm so tired I don't even feel like eating. . . . But I'll try the khubaiza."

The door opened and her father, Abu Said, came in. He looked excited. He had won the game and felt elated, but the gloomy faces in the courtyard jerked him back to reality. He remembered that he had no job, and no future. Before the war, he had worked at the train station in Haifa. Now he had to accept the indignity of letting his wife work. She washed clothes in wealthy Jewish homes while he sat in cafes with other unemployed men. It was true that he was now over sixty, but if he could have kept working until he received a pension, he could have ensured an adequate income for his family.

"You're late, Abu Said," his wife said.

"Yes, I am, but I won the game tonight."

The door opened again and their son Said came in. He looked distressed. Umm Said rushed to him:

"May it be good news, by God's will."

"Yes, good! Certainly! We're finished!"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean I'm finished. The Histadrut came and made my boss fire me."

There was a heavy silence. The look on Said's face worried his parents. They feared that his anger and pain would lead him to do something rash.

His mother tried to ease the tension: "Don't worry, my son. Anyone who is alive will find a living. God will open a door for you in another way."

He turned his face away and answered bitterly: "I know the other way. . . ."

He went out to wash his hands, and came back to join them. They sat, mute, watching his anguished face. The issue for him was not just bread but his dignity and his right to live and work. His face showed hurt pride, not submissiveness or fear of hunger.

He spoke haltingly: "Arab . . . unorganized . . . go home . . . fired . . . good-bye. Is this democracy?"

Umm Said answered: "Calm down, my son. The sentenced must accept the verdict of history."

"Then why don't they admit that we are sentenced men instead of pretending that we are citizens?"

Each one went to bed, troubled. They tossed fitfully. Husniyya felt balanced on the edge of a ravine. On one side was love and life, and on the other, fear and separation.

Two weeks passed. Said could not find a job. He became more bitter and desperate. He began to worry about having no money, but he couldn't bring himself to ask his mother for anything. That would have been too painful.

One morning Said didn't appear at breakfast. They looked through the house and searched around the quarter, but couldn't find him. Then they realized that his clothes and a small satchel were gone. Omar, hearing the commotion, came out of his room.

Umm Said exclaimed: "Omar, where is Said?"

Omar paused, deeply affected.

She repeated: "Omar, has Said run away?"

Omar felt like an accomplice in a crime: "Don't be upset, aunt, he probably hasn't gone far."

Husniyya did not speak, but Omar felt her presence more strongly than ever. He dared not look at her. He felt guilty because he had failed to convince her brother as she had convinced him. He had felt differently about leaving Haifa ever since Husniyya had talked to him.

Abu Said interrupted: "Did you know, Omar, that Said was planning to leave?"

"He did mention it several times. But I always told him it was wrong. Recently he seemed to agree, especially because of you. He said, 'You're right, my parents would collapse if I left them.' When he said that, I felt sure he wouldn't leave. I don't know what could have changed his mind. Something new must have happened, something he concealed from us, that compelled him to escape."

Umm Said wrung her hands: "What can we do now?"

Omar summoned up his courage to look at Husniyya. She was standing still, pale and anguished. Omar felt that they were alone, carrying on a private dialogue that others could never comprehend. It was like a solemn farewell.

Omar left. He had decided to follow Said, to find him and bring him back to his parents and to Husniyya, so that he would not have to see her anguished, her mother suffering, and her father defeated. Perhaps Said hadn't gone far. He was probably still within the country.

Omar failed. When he reached the village where he was sure that Said had gone, he learned that he had already crossed the border into Lebanon. He went after him, recklessly. Just as he reached the border, he heard shots from the Israeli side. He dropped to the ground and crawled behind a rock, but the soldiers had no difficulty finding him. He was taken to prison. Omar couldn't believe this was really happening. The questioning began. They refused to believe his story and tried to force him to confess that he was fleeing from some crime.

At night, Omar surrendered himself to his dreams of Husniyya. He saw her anxious face tossing on her pillow. As he came toward her, her face brightened. The smile reached her eyes even before it touched her lips. She took his hand and found protection in him. The dreams of day intertwined with the dreams of night. But Omar woke up and found himself in prison.

He yielded to the routine: the voices of the guards barking orders; the screech of the key in the lock; the hard work under the hot sun; the other prisoners around him. Omar began to see himself as his jailers and the outside world saw him. He searched the faces of the other prisoners and found them like his own, caught in the same trap. At first he thought he was the only one who was innocent, but he

soon discovered that all the rest had similar stories, and the same yearning for their people and homeland.

One prisoner in particular became close to Omar. Who was he? What had brought him to jail? Was it love, adventure, revenge, or just bad luck? They began to talk, at first briefly, later at greater length. His name was Salman. A refugee from Galilee. He had lived in a camp in Jordan and known the humiliation of relying on a ration card. He called it the life card. Eight families had shared a tent, separated from one another only by cloth partitions. At night they fixed their bedcovers from discarded tattered cloths. In the morning these cloths were folded away in a corner.

What he had craved most was privacy. The tent was always full of the children's crying, the women's gossiping, and the men's complaining.

He had tried to find work but failed. And he had tried to find privacy, but that was also impossible. He often dreamed that he was still in his own village, walking among the trees in the orchard. One night he dreamed that he was picking pomegranates in a fold of his cloak. He brushed his hand over their soft rosy skins. He opened one pomegranate and its ruby fruit scattered on the ground. A soft breeze rustled through the trees laden with fruit. The scent came back to him. Here was his house, over there his uncle's house. It would soon be dawn. He sensed movement in the house. His uncle called to him: "Is anyone else awake? Did you pick the fruit? It's time for the truck to come and take it to town."

He woke up. What a sweet dream. How lovely to be back in the village. It was calling him. He wanted to go back—to see it, smell it, see the pomegranates hanging on the trees and weighing down their boughs. He wanted to touch the walls of the houses, to touch his past life, and to force the past to confront the new person he had become. This new person would never be complete while he remained, a stranger, in the tents. He had left too much back there in the village—in Galilee, in September, the season of the pomegranates—the dried almonds on the terraces, the strings of golden tobacco, the earthenware oven shaped by his mother's hands from the yellow soil, the cows lowing behind the house, the children shouting and playing, the girls returning from the village well, their dresses as bright as flowers. These memories surged inside him. He wanted to put the pieces of his life back together so he could become a living person again.

He didn't stop for a moment. He grabbed some bread, slipped it inside his shirt, and was gone. He walked west, toward his soul, his country, his village, to pick pomegranates in September. The nearer he came, the more urgent was the call, the more vivid his dreams. He reached the border. He crossed without meeting anyone. After a short distance he heard shots. Could they be shooting at him? He threw himself on the ground. The soldiers surprised him from behind and seized him. Later they questioned him and beat him, but he had nothing to say. He knew only the world of the tent and the crowd of miserable people living there.

Salman fell silent. His face resumed the mask of the prisoner who has learned to accept what life brings. But Omar was excited. This was not the end. He was full of new ideas and questions.

Night came and starlight fell through the prison bars, for the stars are kind and

do not forget even prisoners. Omar had a new vision. He saw in the darkness an entire people: confused, wandering. He saw a narrow road blocked with barbed wire and guns. But the procession of people passed through the barrier without interruption. What troubled Omar was that some were crossing the border in one direction while others were crossing it in the opposite direction. Some wanted to leave; others wanted to return. Why? Why had Said left? Why did Salman yearn to return? Why couldn't each accept his lot? As dawn broke, Omar began to understand: just as a child needs both mother and father together to sustain him and help him grow, so a man needs both his homeland and his own people to nurture him.

WAITING

Aida is standing at the Mandelbaum Gate, in the crowd waiting for relatives to cross from Israel into the West Bank for a brief reunion at Christmas. She doesn't dare tell anyone the name of the person she is looking for. She hardly dares to confess the name to herself. She searches anxiously among the people. She is looking for someone who made last year shine, illuminated by one brief day. Can such a thing be possible? How can one day count for more than all the other 364 days and give her such a glow?

She had waited at the Gate on the same day last year, too. Her mother had sent her from Bethlehem to meet her aunt, who was expected to come from Nazareth for the day. Aida had never met her aunt, and wondered how she would recognize her.

As she stood and waited, the family scenes had distressed her. The pain of separation seemed to burn more deeply on this day of reunion, this Christmas. She discovered that the sense of loss didn't come only from her mother's description of the house and garden they used to have in Nazareth. And it didn't come just from speeches, resolutions, and nationalist songs that she heard on the radio. At the Gate, the tragedy itself was passing before her eyes.

An old man leaning on a stick approaches a youth. When the young man was a child, they had played together in a beloved country, intoxicated by the scent of orange blossom. Now they stand confused, no longer knowing each other. Then, recognition spreads over their faces. The Gate separates the father and son, the man and his land. There is a long embrace, which cannot satisfy the years of yearning. Tears fall. Are they tears of warmth or of sadness for the years of separation? Yes, years taken out of a man's life. Years when the son needed his father's guidance and didn't find him, and the father needed the support of his son and didn't find him. Now they have a brief moment together, and then another separation.

She reflected, as this scene was repeated in many forms: a mother seeing her sons, a brother meeting his brother, a grandmother and a granddaughter. She became

so involved. watching the exchange of greetings, that she merged with the visitors and the hosts.

She was aroused by a voice calling her name: "Oh! There she is! Aida! Aida!"

A friend was pointing her out to a young man. He came toward her: "Are you Miss Aida?"

"Yes."

"I have a message from your aunt. She can't come. Her husband had a sudden kidney pain and was rushed to the hospital. I'm a neighbor of theirs."

"I'm terribly sorry to hear it. We were looking forward so eagerly to her visit. But you must come and visit us today. My mother would be glad to meet you and hear news of her family from you."

"Yes, I'd like to do that. I promised your aunt that I would meet her family and hear all about you."

"Then let's go."

They walked away from the Gate, the land of meetings and farewells. He exclaimed: "It's so beautiful!"

She asked, puzzled: "What do you mean?"

"It's beautiful—amazing—to be here at all."

She remained mystified, as though hearing a riddle. When they stood in the market, he read out the signs over the shops: al-Hajj Mahmud wa-Awlado (al-Hajj Mahmud and Sons), ash-Sharika al-Arabiyya (the Arab Company), al-Khutut al-Jawiyya al-Arabiyya (the Arab Airlines). . . .

"Do you want to buy anything?" she asked.

"No, I'm just looking at the signs in Arabic. How marvelous they are! Signs in Arabic script, with names of Arab owners! In Israel I see nothing but Hebrew signs."

Then she realized what was going on in his mind. The thoughts of a prisoner who is suddenly liberated. The thoughts of a stranger who is transported overnight back to his own country. The thoughts of a dreamer who has reached his love at last.

"Don't you have any relatives here you'd like to see?" She asked.

"No, no members of my immediate family. I have a brother in Iraq, but I couldn't expect him to come so far, and anyway I had no way to write to him. Perhaps some of my cousins live here, but I don't know them. It doesn't matter. Here everyone is my family!"

She felt he wasn't just being polite. He seemed to be confessing something to her.

"Where's your home?" he interrupted.

"In Bethlehem."

"Bethlehem! Can we really go there?"

"Of course. We'll walk to the Damascus Gate to find a taxi. We'd better hurry. The taxis will be crowded. Everyone comes to Bethlehem at Christmas."

"Without a travel permit?"

“What’s that? A permit?” She felt his bitterness, and added: “Forget everything now.”

On the way to Bethlehem he was just as surprised and astonished as he had been in Jerusalem. A car passed. Its license plate read Lebanon. He shouted: “Look at that car from Lebanon!”

She felt a bit anxious. Perhaps, after all, he was mentally disturbed. She answered kindly, like a nurse talking to a delirious patient: “Yes, a car from Lebanon.”

“But how is it possible? All the world comes and goes, and I’m a prisoner in my country. Lebanon! What do I know about it? It’s a symbol in my heart. So are Bethlehem and Jerusalem, and Arabic newspapers, and Arab leaders, and Arab writers. I’ve become a miserable creature, afraid of the light. I’m a dwarf, my personality and freedom are destroyed—except for this. . . .” He pointed to the car radio. “This is my only window to my real world, to my real personality. If it weren’t for the radio I’d be more like an animal than a human being. ‘Kuwait Airlines,’ it announces. What’s that? The stars are nearer to me than Kuwait. The names of the streets and villages in my country have been changed. They’ve built settlements on the ruins of the villages and on the bodies of my people.”

Everyone else in the taxi was silent.

Then one passenger spoke, slowly: “Brother. Don’t despair. You have a role to play and a message to contribute. We haven’t forgotten you. You are in our hearts.”

“No, we’re not in your hearts. You don’t remember us. We’re isolated. We’re lonely. Nobody knows about us.”

“Look, brother. We all live alone. But each place is different. Don’t those who live in the tents feel isolated when they face hunger and thirst, sickness and cold? Aren’t those in exile living alone? We’re a lost generation. But you must not despair. Each one has to struggle despite his loneliness, and turn it into a challenge that will lift him and give him dignity. Isn’t that right, miss?”

“Yes, yes.”

“Then tell your cousin not to despair.”

When the taxi pulled up, her mother was standing at the door, eagerly looking forward to her sister’s arrival. Aida hurried to explain: “Mama. . . . This is a neighbor of my aunt’s. Her husband is sick. She couldn’t come, and. . . .” She realized that she didn’t even know his name. He came to her rescue and said, “Issam.”

“Mr. Issam will tell you everything.”

Her mother received him tearfully: “How I long to see my sister! I wanted her to meet Aida and see our home.”

He turned to try to see Aida through her aunt’s eyes, but by then she had been transformed. She had become an incarnation of his country, freedom, humanity. She was not just a relative of his neighbor in Galilee. Perhaps he gazed too long, for she lowered her head in embarrassment.

She felt moved. She also felt a nervous anticipation, and she found herself counting the hours that remained in his visit, even though he had only just arrived.

She glanced at him and saw he was still searching her face, with a lost look. But despite his sorrow, he seemed strong and proud.

Issam asked: "Can I go into Bethlehem to buy some souvenirs?"

Aida turned to her mother, questioning.

"Why not, daughter? He's a stranger and our guest. I'll delay lunch until you return."

He replied, "Thank you. I really shouldn't trouble you."

"Help him find what he wants. . . . She knows all the stores, and they'll charge you less because she lives here. And buy a present for your aunt."

They went into Bethlehem on Christmas Day. The town was at the peak of its festivities. The bells were ringing and Nativity Square was thronged with visitors. But perhaps, among all of them, he was the only victim of such turbulent emotions.

They were silent a while. Then he started to speak, without explanation, as if he was sure she understood him, "Aida, how can I go on living after today?"

This time she didn't try to console him, for she was asking herself the same question.

He went on: "Look at the mountains, the people, the trees, the bells, freedom, and you with me. I can't take it all in at once. . . ."

They walked away from the streets packed with people.

"Aida. Look at me. I shall always remember your eyes when I'm in my prison. Say something to me. Anything."

"Issam."

"Again."

"Issam."

"That's enough. I don't deserve any more."

"I shall wait for you."

"Impossible. Where? When? How?"

"Where? Here. When? All my life. How? With everything in my power."

"When did this happen?"

"I don't know. I know it happened. It's very real."

Then everything had become confused. The return to Jerusalem. The farewell at the Gate. He turned toward her before he vanished through it. After that, everything seemed desolate. She sought only things that would remind her of the day they had met. She lived the whole of the next year on the memory of that one day.

Then another winter came and cold rain fell. Christmas drew near.

And here she stands, waiting like thousands of others. She doesn't dare open her heart to anyone. She is searching for a man, one particular man. The waiting grows longer. People begin to disperse. She despairs. Then she hears a woman's voice saying, "You must be Aida."

"Aunt!"

"My dear, it was easy to recognize you. You look just like your mother!"

They embrace and kiss. But Aida doesn't dare ask the key question. Finally her aunt says, "Our neighbor Issam returned last year greatly changed. He wasn't allowed to cross this time. In fact, he's under house arrest."

GLOSSARY

Abu Said: “Abu” means “father of.” “Said” would be the name of his eldest son.

arak: an anise-flavored liqueur, similar to the Greek ouzo.

Bethlehem: a Palestinian town on the West Bank, under Jordanian control at the time the story was written but under Israeli rule since 1967.

Damascus: the capital of Syria, viewed as a leading Arab political and intellectual center.

Fairouz: a famous Lebanese singer.

Haifa: a mixed Arab-Jewish city in Israel.

Histadrut: the Israeli Federation of Trade Unions. Until the late 1950s, Arab citizens were not allowed to become full members of the Histadrut and it tried to get employers to replace their Arab workers, who were unorganized and thus cheaper, with Jews.

Jewish National Fund: The JNF, representing the Jewish Agency, was the main land purchaser for the Zionist movement before 1948 and took control over the lands and buildings that belonged to Palestinians who fled during the fighting in 1948–49. These were often leased to Jewish immigrants.

khubaiza: a leafy green plant cooked with onions in olive oil.

kibbutzim: Israeli collective farms.

Mandelbaum Gate: the only crossing point between the Israeli-held and Jordanian-held sectors of Jerusalem from 1948 to 1967.

Nazareth: an Arab town in Israel.

Ramla: an all-Arab town before 1948, from which the residents were expelled by the Israeli army in the wake of the fighting that summer. Subsequently Ramla became a largely Jewish town inside Israel.

Rehovoth: a Jewish town in Israel.

Tulkarim: see entry for Bethlehem. Since Tulkarim was located right next to the border, the residents lost most of their agricultural lands to Israel.

Umm Said: “Umm” means “mother of.” “Said” would be the name of her eldest son.

7.

Israeli Politics and the Palestinian Problem after Camp David

Mark Tessler

The Camp David accords of 1978 not only provided for the conclusion of a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, they also raised the possibility of progress toward solving the Palestinian problem, which was and remains at the core of the lingering Arab-Israeli conflict. By May 1980, however, Egypt and Israel had suspended their attempts to implement the provisions of Camp David applying to the Palestinians, and in particular to the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, and prospects for reaching agreement on any of the outstanding issues appeared slim. Three categories of issues separated the Egyptians and Israelis. First, the two countries had radically different and apparently incompatible positions regarding the meaning of Palestinian “autonomy” and “self-determination,” terms they had both accepted at Camp David. Second, there was intense disagreement about the legality and desirability of Israeli efforts to establish Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. Third, the two countries differed over how the Palestinians should be represented and, specifically, about the relationship of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the peace process.

With the balance sheet of the Camp David accords as yet undetermined, hope mingled with disappointment in the spring and summer of 1980 as observers watched anxiously to see whether Cairo and Jerusalem would find a way to break their impasse over the Palestinian problem; and, in this context, attention was focused in particular on the domestic political scene in Israel. Egypt, with the support of the United States, argued that Israel, in return for peace with its neighbors, must end its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and permit these territories to become the focus for the exercise of Palestinian self-determination. The Egyptians insisted, moreover, that this was precisely what the Jewish state had promised to do when it signed the Camp David agreements. Whether this point of view would be accepted by Israel was problematic, however. Led by the Likud Union and Menachem Begin, the government in Jerusalem had emptied the accords of what Egypt and the United States regarded as their intended content and created an impasse by affirming that

Israel would never surrender the West Bank and Gaza, even in return for peace with the Arab world. On the other hand, there was intense political debate inside Israel, with the Begin government remaining in power by the most slender of margins and the opposition Labor Alignment, as well as parties and factions further to the left, taking a very different attitude toward the Palestinian problem and the occupied territories.

The deep divisions in the Israeli body politic could be seen in the realm of public opinion, as well as in party politics. Turning first to the matter of Palestinian autonomy and self-determination, a 1979 survey found that approximately 60 percent of the Israeli public believed peace with the Arab world would be impossible unless the Palestinian problem were solved. Seasoned political observers estimated that a majority of Israelis, although probably only by a slim margin, would be willing to give up the occupied territories in the context of a proper and comprehensive peace settlement. On the other hand, only a small minority was willing to accept the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. Most favoring withdrawal insisted that their country should retain a limited presence for security purposes and added, also for reasons of security, that the removal of Israeli forces in the West Bank should be accompanied by the reinstitution of Jordanian rule or some similar arrangement that would neutralize the area militarily and politically.

With respect to the issue of settlements, polls showed that about half the Israeli public believed the establishment of new Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza to be an obstacle to the successful conclusion of the Camp David negotiations, and it is noteworthy as well that the proportion of persons favoring new settlements declined during 1979 and 1980. A March 1980 poll, for example, found that 48 percent opposed the creation of new settlements in the West Bank and only 38 percent supported such actions, with the remainder undecided. Still, there was comparatively broad agreement that most existing Israeli settlements, especially in the Jordan Valley, should be maintained for security.

Finally, so far as attitudes toward the PLO were concerned, Israelis had long been, and continued to be, overwhelmingly opposed to any contact with the organization. There was little disagreement on this. Yet some argued that this attitude would change if Israelis became convinced that the PLO was ready for peace with Israel, and a poll in fall 1979 found that about two-thirds of those surveyed supported a dialogue with any Palestinian organization that accepted Israel's existence.

The diversity of Israeli public opinion is a manifestation of the country's considerable ideological heterogeneity, and this in turn is translated into intense competition among major political institutions, especially political parties. To understand the nature and significance of these institutions, both in general and as they pertain to the Palestinian problem, it helps to bear in mind a few basic facts about government and politics in the Jewish state. First, the Parliament, or Knesset, is supreme in Israel; indeed, the country has no constitution which might be considered a higher authority on matters of law. The office of president is largely ceremonial, the leader of government business being the prime minister, who is of necessity head of the largest party in Parliament.

Second, politics in the Knesset is organized around the country's numerous political parties, and if no party controls an absolute majority of the Parliament's 120 seats, as has usually been the case, a coalition of parties with 61 or more seats must be established before government business can be conducted. In one instance, however, in 1973–74, Golda Meir served as prime minister and for a time was unable to construct such an alliance, forcing her to govern without a parliamentary majority for several months. On such occasions, a prime minister is unable to bring any controversial legislation before the Knesset for fear it will be defeated, forcing the government to resign.

Third, in elections for the Knesset, the entire country is treated as a single constituency. Twenty or more parties frequently participate, each submitting a single list for as many of the 120 parliamentary seats as it has any chance of capturing. Voters then cast their ballots for one list or another and, in proportion to the total number of votes it obtains, each party has those sufficiently high on its list declared Members of Knesset. This electoral system, democratic though it is, has frequently been criticized in Israel because it minimizes constituent control over legislators and gives inordinate power to party leaders, who control the preparation of lists. Several reform proposals were under consideration in the late 1970s, including the creation of multiple electoral districts and the requirement that candidates compete as individuals in a particular district, but no change seemed imminent.

Against this centralization of control must be weighed the tendency toward fragmentation produced by proportional-representation elections. Factions within a party, if dissatisfied, may simply form a new party and present their slate to the voters, hoping to capture more parliamentary seats or to acquire greater political influence. The result has been numerous splits and realignments in the history of Israeli parties and the rapid appearance and disappearance of many small parties on the Israeli political scene. Thus, parliamentary supremacy and multiparty politics, with intense competition and bargaining both within and among political parties, are fundamental to the Israeli political system.

Israeli political parties are usually described in relation to their position along a right-left continuum, or, in popular Israeli parlance, along a spectrum from "hawkish" to "dovish." These classifications are somewhat arbitrary, however. Moreover, there is often considerable inconsistency from one political issue to another. A party can be opposed to a hard line on foreign policy, for example, yet be ideologically conservative on matters of internal political economy. There is also a great deal of ideological division within most major parties, reflecting both the historic alliances that have marked their evolution and their attempts to appeal as broadly as possible to a heterogeneous electorate. Third, on a slightly different note, not all parties are equivalent in their political objectives. Labor and Likud are the largest and most diverse parties and are the only two that actually seek to govern. All the other parties, although to varying degrees, are essentially interested in political influence. They seek to capture enough votes to advance a particular platform or, possibly, to become an attractive coalition partner, which will ensure them control of several cabinet ministries and enable them to extend their influence. As of 1980, the National Religious Party, which usually captured 9–10 percent of the

vote and had participated in almost every government coalition since independence, was the foremost example of this kind of party.

Finally, politics and personalities, as well as ideology, are important determinants of a party's policies and behavior. As in any democratic country, winning elections is of paramount importance and it is never forgotten that domestic considerations, and nonideological ones at that, are extremely important at the ballot box. Indeed, the electoral victory in 1977 of Menachem Begin's Likud Union is usually seen more as an expression of discontent with the previous Labor government's economic performance and with scandals within the Labor Party than as an endorsement of Likud's foreign policy platform. Similarly, while Labor's popularity had by 1980 risen above that of Likud in public opinion polls, it appeared that issues of foreign policy, though not insignificant, were a less important determinant than discontent with the country's soaring inflation. Politics within and among parties also reflects the impact of personalities and personal rivalries, especially given that Israel is a very small country which has had a comparatively homogeneous leadership class since independence.

Ideological distinctions must thus be viewed as conveniences at best, explaining differing central tendencies rather than rigid interparty boundaries, and positions on the Palestinian problem, or even on foreign policy generally, are only one of many considerations that shape a party's platform and political alliances or determine the way it is judged by voters.

The Government and the Right

In 1980, Menachem Begin headed a parliamentary coalition based on the 1977 victory of his own Likud party. Likud is itself a union of several smaller political groupings, each of which retains considerable autonomy. Moreover, in order to govern, Likud had been required to form a parliamentary coalition with several completely independent political parties.

The main factions of Likud are Herut, the most important element, which Begin himself had headed since independence and which for many years was an independent political party dominating the right side of the political spectrum; La'am, the smallest and weakest faction, which is ideologically compatible with Herut and which contains a number of individuals who once resided in the conservative wing of the Labor Party; and the Liberals, a formerly independent political party which has guarded its autonomy within the Likud Union and whose principal ideological commitment is to free-enterprise economics. There were also several smaller groups associated with Likud. The major partners of the Likud Union in running the government were the National Religious Party (NRP), Agudat Israel, and the Democratic Movement for Change (DMC). The NRP had for many years participated in Labor-based governments and traded general political support for policy concessions on issues of religious significance. Agudat Israel is a smaller and even more orthodox religious party. The DMC, popularly known as Dash, was founded in 1976 by independent intellectuals and others, as a party of clean government and reform in

the wake of scandals within the previous administration. The party tended to be centrist in orientation and by 1980 had split into competing factions, one of which had left the government.

During the Camp David negotiations, the Likud-based coalition controlled 65 votes in the Knesset, 4 more than the absolute majority needed to govern. Likud itself had 43 of these seats, of which 13 belonged to the Liberals and 4 to La'am. The NRP, Agudat Israel, and the DMC controlled 12, 4, and 6 seats respectively, the remaining 22 of the ruling coalition. This was a slender majority. Moreover, not all Members of Knesset associated with the government gave unquestioning support to the prime minister. For example, two DMC MKs asserted their independence from party discipline in June 1980, stating they would no longer automatically vote with the government but would rather "weigh every issue on its own merits." These and other instances of uncertain support made Prime Minister Begin's ruling coalition extremely fragile and led many to predict that its tenure in office would come to a premature end.

While the institutional diversity of the Likud-based coalition affected the character of government policies on all issues, it is possible to discern two broad tendencies so far as the Palestinian problem is concerned. The more conservative orientation, which was that of most members of the government and tended to dominate official Israeli policy, was associated most prominently with Begin himself and with Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon; and Yitzhak Shamir, a member of Herut and newcomer to the cabinet, was identified with it as well. Shamir, who did not support the Camp David accords or the peace treaty with Egypt, became foreign minister in March 1980. Also sometimes placed in this category were Energy Minister Yitzhak Moda'i of Likud's Liberal Party wing and Yosef Burg, the NRP-affiliated interior minister who at the time headed Israel's delegation to the Camp David autonomy talks.

These men and their supporters strongly desired the perpetuation of Israeli rule over the West Bank and Gaza, notwithstanding their statements expressing a commitment to "full" Palestinian autonomy. Their position left a vast gap between Israeli and Egyptian interpretations of the Camp David agreements, and also constituted a major substantive change in Israeli government policy toward the territories captured in 1967. Consistent with its traditional interpretation of United Nations Resolution 242, Israel had long maintained that it was prepared to make major territorial concessions in return for peace, including a significant withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza. Now, however, Begin appeared to have reinterpreted 242, to the effect that Israel's withdrawal from territories captured in 1967 would not apply to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The hard-line faction of the government conceived of Palestinian autonomy as permanent rather than transitional and argued that it defines a political status which pertains to people but not to the land they inhabit. These positions were set forth in a forceful eighteen-point interpretation of the first Camp David framework issued by the prime minister, in which Begin put himself on record against any territorial compromise in the West Bank and Gaza or any political division of the territory from the Mediterranean to the Jordan. Naturally, this faction, which dominated the

Israeli government, was completely opposed to Palestinian independence. As Burg told an Israel Bonds conference in August 1979, "There is a danger of a Palestinian state growing out of autonomy, and it is my task as chairman of the Israeli delegation to the autonomy talks to prevent that possibility absolutely."

The conservative faction also supported the continuation and expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, and the role of spokesman for this position usually fell to Ariel Sharon. Moreover, though the government occasionally cited security needs in defense of its settlement policy, its position was essentially an ideological commitment, based on historical attachments to a greater "Land of Israel" and a belief in the right of Jews to establish purely civilian settlements in areas that are not of strategic significance. The government viewed settlements not only as an end in themselves but also as a means to cement Israel's claim to the West Bank and Gaza more generally. This, too, was a significant departure from the policy of previous governments, it being Begin's goal to create a network of Jewish investments and interests in the West Bank and Gaza that would make it extremely difficult for any future government to effect a withdrawal from the area.

Finally, with respect to the third Palestinian issue, that of representation, the dominant and more conservative faction within the government was militantly opposed to the Palestine Liberation Organization. It insisted that it would never negotiate with the PLO and expressed disdain for any suggestion that the organization was becoming more moderate. Some observers added that the government was actually worried by reports that the PLO might embrace 242, since this would make it more acceptable to the United States and others and would increase the pressure on Israel to deal with the organization, which it distrusts and abhors.

The rival position, which in 1980 was far less representative of government thinking generally, was personified by Ezer Weizman, a Likud politician who had managed Begin's successful campaign in 1977 and was minister of defense until he resigned in protest in May 1980; by Yigal Yadin, leader of the Democratic Movement and deputy prime minister in the Begin government; and by Shmuel Tamir, another DMC figure who was minister of justice. Until his resignation in October 1979, Moshe Dayan had been associated with this position as well. Dayan, a former military hero, was a popular and independent-minded politician who had served with Labor for many years and then had become Begin's foreign minister after 1977.

Dayan and Weizman were important members of the Israeli team that had formulated the Camp David autonomy proposals, and at least some of the contradictions between these proposals and the conceptions of the Begin government derive from the fact that these individuals did not hold views identical to those of the rest of the cabinet. While Dayan and Weizman were in the cabinet, their comparative moderation provided a limited counterweight to the more hard-line policies of the government mainstream. Weizman, for example, who did not resign until May 1980, criticized Begin for failing to take advantage of an unprecedented opportunity for peace and indicated that he might oppose the prime minister for the leadership of Likud in the next election. Like Dayan, however, Weizman eventually quit the cabinet because of his inability to have a meaningful influence on public policy,

leaving the position of less conservative forces on the political right weaker than ever. Indeed, by summer 1980, most of what little continuing influence this faction had came from the fact that the government's slim parliamentary majority required it to seek backing from Weizman and Dayan and to take care not to drive away the remnant of the DMC.

With respect to self-determination, the moderate faction was opposed to the creation of an independent Palestinian state but seemed genuinely committed to making autonomy mean something, to offering the Palestinians an autonomy that involved land as well as people and gave them control over their own affairs in at least some important areas. The moderates also opposed Begin's attempt to create "facts" in the West Bank and Gaza and strongly criticized those actions of Jewish settlers which deliberately provoked the territories' Arab inhabitants. Moderates on the right did want some Jewish settlements in the West Bank for security purposes, and they accordingly insisted upon a territorial compromise rather than complete Israeli withdrawal. They were not ideologically committed to a "Greater Israel," however, and in 1980 they were vocal in denouncing new settlements as a provocation and a threat to the peace with Egypt. The DMC was particularly critical of the government's settlement policy, and the cabinet saw some heated exchanges on this issue, most notably between Yadin and Sharon.

Finally, so far as the issue of representation is concerned, there was consistent opposition even among government moderates to any dealings with the PLO. On the other hand, in a United States interview shortly before his resignation, Dayan stirred controversy in the cabinet by stating that if the PLO accepted Resolution 242 he would not consider it inappropriate for the United States to establish relations with it. He hinted, too, that he might reconsider his own position on the PLO under these circumstances. These positions, which had considerable backing in DMC and some Liberal Party circles, placed government moderates closer to the Labor opposition than to the mainstream of the cabinet.

The Likud-based government, or more correctly its dominant conservative wing, did not occupy the extreme right of the political spectrum. With respect to foreign policy in general and the Palestinian question in particular, there existed to the right of the government both a number of interrelated political movements and a recently established political party, some of which have grown stronger in the years since 1980. The largest and most important force on the right is Gush Emunim, or Bloc of the Faithful. Gush is essentially a movement of opinion, but its adherents are capable of organizing for sustained political action. They motivate a number of partially independent committees, such as the Kiryat Arba-based Committee for Jewish Return to Hebron; they coordinate activities with other like-minded groups of the extreme right, such as Kach, a small and militantly nationalistic group headed by Rabbi Meir Kahane, the former leader of the Jewish Defense League in the United States, and the Land of Israel Movement; and they not only attempt to influence government policy by lobbying but frequently operate by means of direct action, some of which contravenes established policy or law. In 1980, Gush was particularly active in maintaining and establishing settlements in the West Bank,

persuading Jews from Israel proper to settle in the area and using whatever means it could to acquire land for its settlements.

Operating principally among Israel's religious population, Gush Emunim holds seminars and other special programs for youth and others, attempting to win converts to its cause. In their more impassioned moments, they tell participants that their enemies are the Arabs, who will massacre Jews whenever given a chance; the government, which is more interested in political expediency than Zionist fulfillment; and the intellectuals of the left, who are traitors to Zionism and the most villainous of all. Gush also mounts campaigns to embarrass the government or force its hand, particularly on settlement issues and land seizures in the West Bank. In August 1979, for example, the organization announced that it would soon begin to squat on Arab property near its West Bank settlements, to pressure the government into providing them with land for expansion. Later, it occupied several hilltops and other sites, sometimes pushing through fences the government had built to keep them out or battling Israeli troops sent to remove them. Such actions reflect the considerable organizational capacity and ideological commitment of Gush members, which have made them extremely effective in putting pressure on the government.

According to its critics, Gush has more or less deliberately encouraged the harassment of Arabs in the West Bank, in order to create tension and increase Israeli reluctance to withdraw from the area. In one incident in 1979, Gush militants based in Kiryat Arba tore up Arab vineyards near Hebron, an action that received an unusual amount of publicity because Israeli leftists traveled to the West Bank to replant the vines. More violent incidents, such as a Jewish raid on private Arab homes in Hebron in 1979, were condemned with apparent sincerity by Gush leaders; but even here many feel that the movement has contributed, not altogether unconsciously, to the creation of an atmosphere in which lawlessness and vigilantism can be defended as expressions of patriotism. Moreover, when Jewish extremists in 1980 exploded bombs that maimed two West Bank mayors, many Gush members defended the action, and the movement's leader, Rabbi Moshe Levinger, stated that "I would understand" if it turned out that some Gush followers were responsible.

Gush Emunim was and remains a powerful force on the political right. The movement has full-time organizers and cadres and is known for following through on its program of action. Gush opposes any policy that will weaken Israel's control of the West Bank and Gaza, and in 1980 it distrusted even some conservatives within the Begin government on the Palestinian question. Most of its spokesmen condemned the Camp David provisions pertaining to autonomy, recognizing that their proper interpretation would indeed lead to Palestinian self-determination without external interference and fearing that the government, whatever its reluctance, would eventually resign itself to fulfilling its obligations under these accords. Even the prime minister was not above suspicion in this regard, and indeed some Gush activists believed he had already compromised his principles for reasons of pressure, political expedience, or both. Gush thus used every available opportunity and means to exert pressure against making concessions to the Palestinians.

Beyond Gush Emunim were other groups on the extreme right. One, about which little was known at the time but whose name had been mentioned in connection with the attacks against West Bank politicians in 1980, is Terror Against Terror. This new faction took credit for the bombings and said that it was seeking to drive the Arabs out of the West Bank. Better known is Meir Kahane's Kach, which has a long history of taking the law into its own hands in the pursuit of extremist objectives. Kahane has been detained by Israeli authorities on numerous occasions, and among the activities which contributed to his notoriety in 1979 and 1980 was a plan to blow up Jerusalem's al-Aqsa mosque, Islam's third holiest shrine. Like some Gush extremists, Kach has as its objective the breakdown of communication between Jews and Arabs and an exacerbation of hostility and violence to the point where all prospects for peace, or capitulation from Kach's point of view, would be destroyed. After the attacks on West Bank mayors, a Kach leader, Yossi Dayan, stated that although his group was not responsible he was confident that the attacks were carried out by "good Jews." In addition to its efforts at direct political action, Kach has also attempted to operate as a political party. It submitted lists to the electorate in the 1973 and 1977 Knesset elections, even though in both cases it received only a few thousand votes and won no seats.

A group of a different sort is Tehiya, a political party formed in 1979 which hopes to work within the political system to put pressure on the government from the political right. The party was established by several Knesset members who resigned from the Herut and La'am wings of Likud because they thought the government was making too many concessions on Palestinian issues. Tehiya, which says it will accept only Jewish members, is ideologically in tune with Gush Emunim and argues that the Palestinian problem is not the key to peace in the Middle East. Like many in Likud, they claim that it is rather the Arab world's continuing refusal to recognize the Jewish state that perpetuates the Arab-Israeli conflict. Tehiya accordingly rejects the right of the Palestinians to self-determination, seeing them as individuals with no special claims to nationhood. In addition to its parliamentary contingent, the party was joined in 1979 and 1980 by a number of prominent conservative intellectuals. Participation in the party was also discussed by Gush Emunim leaders, who at first said they wanted to see whether the party had a sufficiently religious orientation and who later expressed support for the party but said they believed their own movement would be most effective if it remained outside the formal political system.

Tehiya's activities in 1980 were mostly polemical and its influence limited. The party was harsh in its criticism of Prime Minister Begin, however, accusing him of being too moderate on the Palestinian issue and too hesitant in expanding Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, and the break between Begin and some of his longtime allies on the political right was significant. Moreover, given the internal divisions within the prime minister's parliamentary coalition, any defection had the potential to threaten the government.

There were other strains and tensions within the Begin government. Most were not directly related to the question of Palestine and some involved moderates as well as conservatives. Nevertheless, the coalition was sufficiently fragile to be

threatened by these disturbances, which accordingly affected government policy and performance in many areas.

One such problem involved Agudat Israel, the ultra-orthodox religious party. The party wanted to tighten the law governing abortion, specifically to delete a provision which permits abortion for socioeconomic reasons, and Likud had promised to make the change when Agudat agreed to join the government coalition. The modification was opposed by Likud's Liberal wing, however, which had originally sponsored the bill, and as early as summer 1979 some Agudat leaders were complaining of broken promises and expressing a desire to resign from the government.

An analogous conflict involved tensions between the Democratic Movement for Change and the National Religious Party over election reform. The DMC was particularly eager to see the development of a broad program of electoral reform, an important element of which would be the creation of multiple voter constituencies. The NRP opposed these reforms, however, principally because its voters were widely dispersed throughout the country. Being a sizable minority in many locations but a majority nowhere, the NRP would undoubtedly lose Knesset seats in any constituency plan that prevented its members from voting as a bloc for a single list. Throughout 1979, the DMC denounced the NRP for obstructionism and criticized the prime minister for inadequate support, saying it wished to have its place within the coalition clarified. The NRP, for its part, stated that the DMC was out of step with Likud and complained that the former party had too many ministries given its small size. It had three, the same number as the larger NRP.

Such disagreements are hardly unusual in politics, especially in Israel, but many considered the level of dissent within the ranks of Likud and its partners sufficient to force the government to resign before the next scheduled election, in fall 1981. This possibility was rendered more probable by splits *within* most political groupings associated with the government. For example, Likud's La'am wing held eight Knesset seats after the 1977 election, but this number was subsequently halved by the defection of the Rafi group, an internal La'am faction composed of men who had once been associated with the Rafi faction of the Labor Party. The Rafi group inside Likud was headed by Yigal Hurvitz, the finance minister, who not only broke with La'am but in 1980 threatened to resign from the cabinet and lead his followers out of government altogether because of policy differences with the prime minister and others. Were Begin to have lost the support of either Rafi or La'am, his government would almost certainly have been unable to survive.

The party with the greatest degree of internal fragmentation was the DMC. Although not formed until 1976, it had captured fifteen seats in the 1977 elections and become the third most powerful party in the Knesset. The party split, however, immediately prior to the Camp David summit, with some of its most respected members departing in the breakaway faction. Known as Shai, this faction was based on the former Shinui (Change) group headed by Amnon Rubinstein, previously the dean of the Tel Aviv University Law School, and it also contained several former Labor Party politicians who had defected to the DMC in 1977. Shai criticized the DMC, and especially its leader, Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Yadin, for compromising principles in return for an opportunity to participate in the government, and

its six MKs went over to the opposition. Indeed, in June 1980 the party introduced a motion in the Knesset calling for new elections, which was narrowly defeated. The DMC had other defections, too, leaving it with only six of its original fifteen MKs, of whom two, as mentioned, stated they would no longer be bound by party discipline. As a result of these considerations, and general voter disappointment with the Democratic Movement, many observers predicted that the life of the party would not extend beyond the next election.

As for the National Religious Party, on whose votes the government coalition was particularly dependent, the party was quite heterogeneous and at least two of its MKs were more ideologically in tune with the foreign policy of the Labor opposition than with that of Likud. On the other hand, a “young guard” within the party was gaining influence, and this faction articulated a platform based on a fusion of religious militancy and territorial maximalism that placed it squarely in the camp of Gush Emunim. These deep divisions within the NRP, known also as Mafdal, an acronym based on its name in Hebrew, raised questions both about the future of the party itself and about the stability of its place within the Likud-led ruling coalition.

In 1979 and 1980, Mafdal sought to preserve its flexibility and put pressure on Likud by making gestures toward Labor, its habitual coalition partner prior to 1977. Many of its most influential leaders also openly criticized the Begin government, stating that their patience with Likud’s social and economic policies was wearing thin and, on occasion, calling upon the prime minister to resign and join Labor in a government of national unity. The credibility of NRP overtures toward Labor was limited by the party’s own internal divisions. Noting that the party was increasingly influenced by younger and more nationalistic members who would find Labor’s foreign policy unacceptable, many analysts discounted any possibility of a revival of the alliance between Labor and the NRP. Nevertheless, expressions of NRP discontent with Likud continued to surface and raise doubts about a parliamentary coalition requiring NRP participation. Moreover, there were conflicts based on a struggle for resources, as well as policy-oriented complaints from both the moderate and the hard-line camps within Mafdal. For example, as noted, NRP leaders strongly criticized the prime minister for allowing the greatly diminished DMC to retain important ministerial posts.

Another internal threat to the government grew out of agitation within the Liberal Party wing of Likud, which assumed serious proportions in 1979. The previously autonomous Liberal Party merged with Herut to form a union known as Gahal in 1965—at which point a small faction splintered off as the Independent Liberal Party—and Gahal in turn became Likud in 1973 when it was joined by several other political movements, which later coalesced into the La’am faction in time for the 1977 elections. The Liberals are strongly committed to a program of free-enterprise economics, and when Likud came to power they were given control of the finance ministry, along with assurances of government support for their social and economic policies. Among the party’s specific objectives were the creation of a second national broadcasting network, legislation authorizing the sale of state-

owned land to individuals, and, of greatest importance in 1977, the reduction of government price controls and subsidies.

Likud support for Liberal economic proposals was slow in coming, however, and Begin balked in particular at subsidy reductions when he learned how much the cost of basic foodstuffs would rise, although some subsidies were eventually reduced in 1979. At the center of the controversy was Simha Erlich, Liberal Party leader and at the time minister of finance. Erlich had said he would resign his cabinet post if government policy did not change and, beginning in summer 1979, younger and more militant elements within the party began urging him to follow through on his pledge. They argued that other Liberal cabinet ministers should resign as well, and some added that the Liberals should pull out of Likud altogether. The party establishment, on the other hand, was not eager to give up its opportunity to govern and resisted the militancy of younger members, polarizing opinion inside the party and creating a situation similar to that prevailing in Mafdal. Privately, many blamed Begin for the problem, saying that the prime minister had provided weak administrative leadership and given inadequate backing to his finance minister. But the rift within the Liberal Party nonetheless deepened throughout 1979, with Erlich finally resigning in the fall; and the seriousness of the situation was reflected in a statement by NRP leader Burg, who said that turmoil within the Liberal Party could bring on new elections, and in the assessment of a senior Herut official, who commented that it could mean "the end of the Liberals as we know them."

Israel has a deserved reputation for intense political competition, and the turmoil that characterized the Likud-based government in 1979 and 1980 was by no means unprecedented. Still, the situation not only affected the internal workings of the government but also its popularity with the electorate. Although the profile of the typical Begin supporter remained about the same—young, a blue-collar worker, a development-town resident, religious, and born in Israel of parents who immigrated from Africa or Asia—the degree of support for the prime minister had declined considerably, from over 50 percent in early 1979, to about 35 percent later in the year, to only 21 percent in spring 1980. One Israeli journalist described the government in late 1979 as suffering from "a collective loss of self-confidence" and a belief that "something has gone wrong with the workings of the government."

The political maneuvering that emerged in response to the decline in confidence these statistics reflect produced three different strategies in 1979 and early 1980. First, some within the government called for a significant reshuffling of the cabinet. Indeed, a few proposed that all cabinet members resign to give Begin a free hand in reassigning ministries. Such a practice runs counter to political tradition, however. Each party or faction considers itself in control of certain ministries and responsible for deciding who shall head them. The prime minister also resisted the idea, not only out of respect for established practice but also for fear it would intensify dissension within the cabinet. Second, there were moves to fashion Likud into a unified party, to merge, in other words, the separate internal structures of Herut, La'am, and the Liberals. This proposition was resisted by many politicians, however, most notably by the bulk of the Liberal Party. Finally, there was talk among

moderates about forming a new centrist party that would oppose the government. Among the elements mentioned in conversations on the subject were combinations of the Liberal Party, the DMC, and moderate elements within the NRP, which could join with Shai and various other independent individuals and factions. Moshe Dayan was also occasionally mentioned in such discussions.

None of these strategies produced tangible results, however. Dissension and turmoil within the ranks of the government continued, as did predictions that this would force the government to call new elections in the near future. On the other hand, many argued, correctly in retrospect, that most members of the ruling coalition would ultimately conclude that they had more to gain by continuing to support the government than by seeking alternative political arrangements. In any event, attempts to understand the attitudes and behavior of the Israeli political right toward the Palestinian problem require attention to the problems and divisions that threatened the stability of Prime Minister Begin's parliamentary coalition during the months that it negotiated with Egypt over the Camp David accords. A case in point is the difficulty the prime minister had in naming a replacement for Ezer Weizman as defense minister. Ariel Sharon, a hard-line ex-general, lobbied hard for the job and was reported to be Begin's first choice; but Sharon was unacceptable to the Liberals, the Democratic Movement, and some NRP leaders. The prime minister then proposed Yitzhak Shamir, the foreign minister, who had been a leader in the pre-independence Jewish underground. When Begin suggested that Yitzhak Moda'i of the Liberals replace Shamir as foreign minister, however, this was unacceptable to the DMC. Also, the NRP had been opposed to putting Shamir at Defense in the first place. Rather than alienate any faction in his precarious coalition, the prime minister, who was already overburdened and in failing health, finally took over the Defense portfolio himself.

Since two religious parties were members of the prime minister's coalition, it will also be instructive to assess the relationship between nationalism and religion and the attitudes toward the Palestinian problem prevailing in Israeli religious circles. Once again, there is considerable diversity. A man of deep religious conviction, Begin tended to be more popular among religious than among nonreligious Israelis. Nevertheless, his orientation, like that of most of his followers in Likud, was more nationalistic than religious so far as the Palestinian question is concerned. He sought Jewish hegemony over all of the Land of Israel primarily because the Jewish people has a historical attachment to this territory and only secondarily, if at all, because he believed controlling Eretz Israel to be the fulfillment of Divine Will.

The substance of this mainstream Likud orientation becomes more clear if compared to that of the ultra-orthodox Agudat Israel party and other similar groups, such as the Neturei Karta of Jerusalem's Mea Sharim district, members of which may be called "true believers." They believe in the Biblical prophecy that the Jewish return to Zion will occur only upon the arrival of the Messiah; and, since this has not yet occurred, they regard present-day Israel as a secular state that simply happens to be inhabited and ruled by Jews. Israel's establishment is not the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy and, similarly, its retention or withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza is strictly a political decision, which is irrelevant from a purely

religious point of view. In other words, the sanctity of the Holy Land is unaffected by the religious affiliation of its temporal rulers, whose authority is purely secular; and, therefore, until the arrival of the Messiah, decisions about the status of the Land of Israel must be made on an evaluation of the secular interests of the Jewish people. In the case of Palestinian self-determination and Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, this means that both are acceptable to the ultra-orthodox if it can be shown that they increase the chances for peace or otherwise enhance the well-being of Jews.

Although Agudat Israel represents only 5 or 6 percent of Israel's Jewish population and does not even constitute a majority among orthodox Israelis, its attitude toward Palestinian self-determination and Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza is similar to that expressed in some other religious circles. One of Israel's two chief rabbis, for example, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, who at the time headed the Sephardic tradition of Israel's Afro-Asian Jews, stated at a conference in Jerusalem in 1979 that in his opinion Jewish (*halachic*) law permits the return of territories taken during war if this results in a true peace. An even more "dovish" view among religious Israelis is found in the Oz Veshalom group, an intellectual movement of opinion that includes some members of the NRP. Oz Veshalom not only embraces the view that to return territory in exchange for peace is consistent with Jewish law, but it also asserts that it is a corruption and a disservice to Judaism to encourage, as have Begin and Gush Emunim, the equation of religion and nationalistic chauvinism.

On the other hand, an even larger number of religious Jews in Israel hold different views, believing that religious law prohibits granting non-Jews sovereignty over any part of the historic Land of Israel and that religion and politics cannot be separated in the case of the Jewish people. Israel's other chief rabbi in 1980, Rabbi Shlomo Goren of the country's Ashkenazi tradition, responded to Rabbi Yosef by saying that "*Halacha* prohibits returning the territory of Eretz Israel, even in cases where lives are in danger if it is not handed over." Similarly, although there is considerable diversity within the National Religious Party, the growing tendency in Mafdal is to believe that Israeli rule in the West Bank must be preserved for religious reasons, in addition to whatever nationalistic reasons may also exist.

Finally, the fusion of religion and nationalism finds its most militant expression in the policies of Gush Emunim, which, as noted, had by 1980 gained support within the ranks of the National Religious Party, traditionally the largest and most moderate of the parties supported by orthodox Jews. Gush does contain some non-religious adherents, but its mainstream is orthodox and the movement self-consciously sees itself as standing for devotion to Torah as well as to building the Land of Israel. Gush supporters also believe that Jewish law prohibits the surrender of sovereignty over Eretz Israel, for any reason, and disallows giving control over even part of it to non-Jews. Moreover, and most important, the attitude of Gush adherents toward what they regard as the Land of Israel is determined by their conviction that the Messianic era has begun. The birth of the modern Zionist movement in the nineteenth century and the independence of Israel in 1948 are seen as signs that God has begun the ingathering of Jewish exiles, and the capture of

additional portions of the Holy Land in 1967 is regarded as another sign. Many within the ranks of Gush Emunim accordingly believe that retention of the West Bank and Gaza and the settlement of these territories by Jews will deepen the spiritual character of Israel and possibly even hasten the coming of the Messiah.

Labor and the Center

The Labor Alignment was the principal opposition party in 1980. It stands for socialist economic policies but, otherwise, is generally regarded as a party of the center rather than of the left. It embraces a considerable variety of opinion, especially with respect to foreign policy, and contains important members who are ideologically in sympathy with parties much further to the left or, alternatively, with many in Likud. Until the Likud victory in 1977, Labor had long dominated the Israeli political scene. In alliance with the powerful national trade union, the Histadrut, the precursors of the Labor Alignment had been the most powerful political force of the Jewish settlement in Palestine prior to Israeli independence; and from 1948 until 1977 the party had been the foundation of every Israeli government coalition.

In 1980, the Alignment, known in Hebrew as Maarach, was actually a union of the Labor Party and Mapam, the latter being a small and essentially autonomous party which is further to the left and which will be discussed more fully later. For all practical purposes, however, the Labor Party controlled the Alignment; it held twenty-seven of the thirty-two seats captured by Maarach in 1977 and had had an even larger margin in earlier parliaments. For this reason, and also because the name "Alignment" was employed by a precursor of the Labor Party in 1965, four years before the initiation of the federation with Mapam, the terms Labor Party and Labor Alignment are sometimes used interchangeably.

The Labor Party, which assumed its present form in 1968, contains three factions. Although one must be mindful that these divisions and labels are somewhat arbitrary, the faction farthest to the left is Achdut Ha'Avoda, which had been part of Mapam until it split off in the mid-1950s. Former Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Yigal Allon, who died in March 1980, came out of this faction, although he later moved toward Labor's ideological center to compete more effectively with political rivals. Achdut Ha'Avoda is the smallest and weakest of the Labor Party's factions.

Mapai is the party's center, and prior to formation of the Labor Party it had been not only the most important of the labor-oriented political movements but also the dominant force on the overall political scene. It was the party of Golda Meir and, for many years, of David Ben Gurion, one of Israel's founding fathers and its first prime minister. As an independent political party prior to 1965, it had more than twice as many seats in the Knesset as its nearest rival, Herut; and as part of the first Labor Alignment, formed through an alliance with Achdut Ha'Avoda in 1965, it had only slightly less than twice as many seats as its closest competitor, the Gahal union of Herut and the Liberals that was formed in the same year. All of Israel's prime ministers under Labor came out of Mapai, although the most recent, Yitzhak

Rabin, is a partial exception. Even Rabin, however, became party leader and prime minister principally as a result of the advocacy of senior Mapai politicians, most notably Pinchas Sapir.

The ideological right of the Labor Party contains some politicians associated with Mapai, but its principal component is a remnant of the Rafi faction. Rafi was formed by David Ben Gurion, who broke with the mainstream of Mapai in his later years and entered a separate list of candidates in the Knesset elections of 1965. Most Rafi members returned to the fold in 1968, when the present Labor Party was formed; and associated with this faction were men like Shimon Peres, former defense minister and leader of the Alignment in 1980, and Moshe Dayan, who left the Labor Party a second time in 1977 to participate in the Begin government. A militant minority faction of Rafi refused to rejoin Labor in 1968 and participated as a separate State List in the 1969 elections, winning four seats in the Knesset; this faction associated itself with Likud in 1973, after Ben Gurion's death, becoming part of La'am for a time and then reasserting its independence and retaking the name Rafi. Nevertheless, an identifiable remnant of the original Rafi core remains in the Labor Party and is at present its third and most conservative constituent group.

Unlike Likud, or for that matter the Labor Alignment, the Labor Party is not a federated union in which the various factions retain autonomous internal structures. The Labor Party factions do signify common historical experiences and informal associations which exert political influence, but the party is nonetheless structurally unified. Moreover, the last Labor prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, was a relative newcomer to the party when chosen as its leader and not strongly associated with any faction. He had no significant record of previous party service, having been chief of staff during the 1967 War and later Israel's ambassador to the United States; and some accordingly interpreted his selection as both evidence of and a contribution to the diminishing importance of factional tendencies within the party. This is probably going too far, but the degree of structural unity within the Labor Party nevertheless distinguishes it from Likud and the Labor Alignment.

Labor lost its preeminent position in Israeli politics in 1977, not because the electorate repudiated its foreign policy platform, but because of scandals and problems within its ranks. Several large misappropriations of public funds by Labor politicians came to light in 1976–77, the consequences of which included the dramatic suicide of Housing Minister Avraham Ofer after press reports accused him of wrongdoing (Ofer's suicide note proclaimed his innocence) and the conviction of national Sick Fund director Asher Yadlin, who was sentenced to prison for soliciting bribes and for income tax evasion and who testified during his trial that other Labor Party leaders had been engaged in illegal fund-raising for the party. In addition, Prime Minister Rabin was himself forced to admit in March 1977, less than two months before the coming elections, that his wife had maintained an illegal foreign-currency bank account in Washington; and, following this admission, he resigned as party leader and took a leave of absence from his office of prime minister. Beyond these problems, internal conflicts among Labor politicians, most notably between Rabin and Shimon Peres, who was elected to lead the party after Rabin's resignation, led to political disarray and an internal "crisis of leadership," which

in turn contributed to the belief among many voters that Labor had been in power too long.

While these factors were responsible for Labor's rejection at the polls in 1977, the Alignment's attitude toward the Palestinian problem continued to represent the orientation of the majority of Israelis, and during the negotiations between Egypt and Israel in 1979 and 1980 it was the principal Israeli alternative to the autonomy proposals put forward by Likud.

Labor rejected the principle of Palestinian autonomy as unworkable, a position the party continues to hold. Like Likud, the vast majority of the Alignment's members viewed the creation of an independent Palestinian homeland as anathema. They agreed with Israelis much further to the political right that a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza would be economically nonviable and politically unstable. It would thus be prone to external influence and, most important, it would be a ready staging ground for terrorist attacks against Israel. But most Labor politicians also recognized in 1979 and 1980 that Palestinian control of the West Bank and Gaza was implicit in the Camp David accords. They agreed, in other words, with Begin's domestic and foreign critics who argued that the prime minister had signed at Camp David a document that envisioned not only Palestinian responsibility for matters of local government but also Palestinian self-determination in a national sense, with control over land as well as people and over a corporate society rather than multiple, atomized individual communities.

The conclusion the Labor opposition drew from this assessment in 1980 was that the Camp David agreements, being faulty in conception so far as the Jewish state is concerned, were bound to end in failure. If, as he had so far done, the prime minister continued to empty the autonomy agreements of their intended content and to insist that self-determination meant little more than administrative control over local affairs, the autonomy negotiations would come to naught. The gap between Israel and its negotiating partners would be unbridgeable. Israel would then have squandered the opportunity for peace offered it by the Sadat initiative and greatly undermined its own credibility in the eyes of its allies, most notably the United States; and indeed this is exactly what appeared to be occurring as the on-again-off-again autonomy negotiations went forward until terminated by Anwar Sadat in May 1980. Labor had expressed this fear as early as the beginning of 1979, joining political forces further to the left in criticizing the Begin government.

On the other hand, Labor argued, were the prime minister to cave in to pressure and agree to give real meaning to the concept of autonomy—if, in other words, he were to fulfill the fears of the Israeli political right by accepting what both supporters and critics had always assumed to be the real substantive content of the first Camp David framework—then Israel would lose its ability to control events in the West Bank and Gaza and the stage would be set for the creation of a Palestinian state. This, in Labor's view, and in the view of most Israelis, would be even more disastrous than a deterioration of Israel's relations with Egypt and the United States.

Labor's position was also sharply differentiated from that of Likud on the issue of settlements. Consistent with the long-standing position of Labor Zionism, the Alignment did not support the historic and religion-based claims to the West Bank

and Gaza that were common on the political right. The only exception concerned East Jerusalem, which Israel had captured from Jordan in 1967 and which the Labor government then in power had immediately joined with the rest of the city and placed under a unified Israeli administration. The Labor government based Israel's claim to the retention and incorporation of all of Jerusalem on the city's association with the Jewish people and the Jewish religion and it began building in and around the city with a view toward reducing its attachment to the rest of the West Bank. Beyond Jerusalem, however, the Alignment did not assert the existence of any inalienable Jewish rights over the occupied territories, even with regard to places of acknowledged religious significance. Likud politicians asserted in 1979 and 1980 that Labor was actually divided on the issue of settlements and that there was latent support within the Alignment for its own policy of expanding civilian settlements and solidifying Israeli control of the West Bank and Gaza. Also, within Labor itself, some "dovish" politicians argued that their party was not forceful enough in condemning the Begin government on the issue of settlements. On the whole, however, the Labor mainstream was and continues to be critical of Likud for asserting a historical and religion-based claim to the occupied territories and for permitting religious zealots to provoke unrest by establishing new communities in heavily populated areas.

Beyond their objection that Likud's settlement policies were undermining the peace process and strengthening the position of Arab opponents of negotiations with Israel, some Labor politicians bitterly denounced the spending of millions of dollars for new settlements in the occupied territories at a time when capital for essential development projects within Israel proper was critically short. Further, and even more important, many argued that permanent Israeli control of the West Bank and Gaza would create serious new security problems for the Jewish state and increase the number of Arabs living under Israeli rule to the point where the country's democratic political system might be threatened and its Jewish character could be diluted. Retaining the West Bank and Gaza, they pointed out, would give Israel permanent responsibility for more than one million additional Arabs. Thus the Labor mainstream considered the Begin government's settlement policy not only an obstacle to continued progress toward peace, but also of highly dubious value in its own right.

On the other hand, the Alignment did regard Israel as having a legitimate and inevitable security interest in the West Bank, from which the narrow lowland coastal strip between Tel Aviv and Haifa, where the bulk of Israel's population and industry is concentrated, is especially vulnerable to attack. Thus Labor had never advocated Israel's complete withdrawal from the West Bank, and after 1967 the Labor government had begun establishing settlements it regarded as necessitated by security considerations. These efforts focused on two areas, neither uninhabited by Arabs but both outside the most important zones of Arab residence. The first was at the foot and along the lower slopes of hills of the West Bank, just to the east of the pre-1967 Israeli border. *Kibbutzim* and other agricultural settlements were established here. The second concentration of settlements was in the Jordan Valley, at the eastern edge of the West Bank, along the Jordan River, which separated the

West Bank from the remainder of pre-1967 Jordan. The establishment of a string of settlements running north-south in the Jordan Valley was the brainchild of former Labor leader Yigal Allon. It was seen as insulating the West Bank militarily, and its development was part of what became known as the Allon Plan.

Alignment policies toward Palestinian self-determination and toward Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza were heavily influenced by United Nations Resolution 242. Until Camp David, Likud and most of the rest of the Israeli political mainstream had also addressed the future of Arab-Israeli relations within the framework of this resolution. Resolution 242 belongs to the conceptual world of Labor, however, and is substantially at variance with Likud's approach to the Palestinian problem. The resolution is deliberately vague on the Palestinian question, calling only for a just solution to what is described as a refugee problem. It does not even hint at any form of collective autonomy or self-determination for the Palestinians. On the other hand, 242 is based on the idea of partition, on territorial compromise and a division of land, and it was thus in opposition to Prime Minister Begin's long-held advocacy of the "territorial integrity" of the historic Land of Israel. Specifically, 242 calls on the Arabs to end their posture of belligerency against the Jewish state and on Israel to withdraw from territories captured in 1967, and the logic of such an exchange remained the foundation of Labor's approach to the Palestinians and the occupied territories in 1979 and 1980.

As mentioned, Labor rejected the Camp David agreements pertaining to the occupied territories as both unworkable and undesirable, arguing that they would lead to the creation of a Palestinian state if taken seriously and would reduce chances for peace and weaken Israel's credibility if treated as a sham. Either way, in the Alignment's view, Israel would suffer. Moreover, should Begin's conception of autonomy prevail and Israel retain permanent control of the West Bank, the result would be a host of new and threatening internal problems. The alternative which Labor proposed, and which continues to be the official position of the party, retains the logic of partition enshrined in Resolution 242. Popularly known as the "Jordanian option," the Alignment advocated Israeli withdrawal from large portions of the West Bank and the return of these areas to the control of Jordan, of which they had been an integral part between 1950 and 1967. This would be done, consistent with 242, in the context of a general Middle East peace and increased Arab recognition of Israel. Labor politicians also frequently added that the West Bank might be accorded regional autonomy within the Hashemite Kingdom, a federation plan that Hussein himself had proposed, and Israel had rejected, in 1972, and in this way the Palestinian desire for a measure of self-determination could perhaps be realized.

Critics of Labor's Jordanian option pointed out that King Hussein had not displayed any interest in such a plan for many years. Hussein had accepted the PLO as the legitimate representative of the West Bank's Palestinians in 1974, renouncing his own claim to speak for the political interests of these former Jordanian citizens, and in the years that followed he improved his relations and coordinated his policies with Syria and the PLO, advocates of complete Palestinian independence. Further, independent analysts noted that Hussein had little incentive to modify his policies

or, for that matter, to enter the peace process in the context of the Camp David agreements. Jordan's economic dependence on other Arab states requires it to avoid action that does not have broad Arab support, and the country's numerous Palestinian citizens could offer serious internal opposition if he were seen as acting against their interests. For these reasons, many believed Labor's emphasis on a Jordanian solution was unrealistic.

Israeli political scientist Alan Shapiro, writing in the *Jerusalem Post* in 1979, criticized the Alignment for thinking that should it return to power it would be able to deal with the Palestinian issue where it had left off in 1977. He wrote that "the problem has changed, but has Labor?" Some Labor politicians asked the same question, and party meetings in 1979 and 1980 occasionally heard calls for a clarification of the Jordanian option or for the preparation of alternative strategies which could be unveiled should King Hussein and the Palestinians themselves continue to reject the Alignment's platform. Despite these doubts, however, the Labor Party mainstream clung to the logic of 242, insisting there was no acceptable and workable alternative for resolving the Palestinian issue and professing the belief that Jordan would eventually reassert its claim on the West Bank.

Labor's alternative to the Begin government's settlement policy may also be seen through the prism of Resolution 242. Prior to Camp David, when discussions about Middle East peace were routinely set within the framework of this resolution, a principal point of contention was the extent of the territorial withdrawal that Israel was to effect. The operative phase, withdrawal from "territories" captured in 1967, was deliberately vague, enabling Arabs to claim that Israel was expected to return to its pre-1967 borders, with only very minor territorial modifications, and enabling Israel to claim that it was sufficient to withdraw from a substantial and reasonable amount of captured territory, not necessarily all or even most.

Under Labor governments prior to 1977, Israel had argued that its territorial compromise in the West Bank would not involve the return of East Jerusalem or the areas of Jewish settlement along Israel's eastern border or in the Jordan Valley; and this remained the Alignment's position on the issue of settlements in 1980, complementing the Jordanian option that was the foundation of its overall Palestinian policy. Based on the Allon Plan, Labor thus proposed, and continues to propose, that Israel should withdraw from approximately 70 percent of the West Bank. It would return the regions in which the Palestinian population is most concentrated, this being the central hilly areas to the north and south of Jerusalem, but would retain control of the unified Israeli capital and of security areas on the eastern and western fringes of the territory.

Given its willingness to return territory to Jordan, there was a degree of fuzziness surrounding Labor's attitude toward settlements. Specifically, in the context of implementing its Jordanian solution, how would Labor deal with the "facts" that the Begin government had worked so hard to create in the West Bank and Gaza? The Alignment openly stated its opposition to new settlements that were not related to defense, and it was also clear on the need to retain settlements seen as contributing to Israeli security, but Labor was not specific about its attitude toward existing settlements, such as Kiryat Arba, and other Jewish interests in the West Bank and

Gaza that were well developed by 1980 but unrelated to security. One possibility was that Labor would advocate their survival as foreign enclaves in a Jordanian state at peace with Israel, although Egypt had been unwilling to accept such arrangements for Jewish towns in Sinai. When Alignment leaders said they would give back "heavily populated" areas of the West Bank (and Gaza) and "ban new settlements but permit existing ones to continue," their statements thus left many questions unanswered.

There was and remains both considerable support and frequent criticism for Labor's approach to the issue of settlements and territorial compromise. Many, perhaps most, Israelis consider the political arrangements envisioned by Labor to be optimal from their country's point of view. Though many feel an attachment to the West Bank, it is likely that a majority—though possibly only a slim majority—would be willing to see Israel withdraw from the area. They agree with Labor that permanent control of the territory would bring many new problems and, more generally, they would regard withdrawal from the area as a fair and acceptable price to pay for Middle East peace. On the other hand, few Israelis advocate a pullout that is any more extensive than the one proposed by Labor. The retention of East Jerusalem is overwhelmingly supported by the Israeli electorate, and most agree that Israel should also retain settlements for security purposes.

There is one additional matter pertaining to territory and settlements that should be mentioned, even though it is technically peripheral to the Palestinian problem. This is the attitude of Labor Party politicians, as well as other political figures in Israel, toward the Golan Heights. Israel annexed the Golan in 1981, but in 1979 and 1980 the status and future of this territory captured from Syria in 1967 were subjects of intense debate, with some in Labor and elsewhere arguing that Israel should expand and perpetuate its presence in the area. The Jewish state had long proclaimed that its only interest in the Heights is military. It advanced no permanent claims to the area after its capture in 1967, insisting instead that its sole concern was to neutralize the threat of Syrian attacks on agricultural settlements in Israel's northern valleys. Subsequently, however, the situation began to change. When it came to power in 1977, the Likud government expanded Jewish settlements on the Golan and began encouraging the local Druze population to identify with Israel rather than with Syria. Then, in 1979, the Alignment appeared to be abandoning its former position as many of its leading members signed a petition advocating Israeli annexation of the Heights. Annexation was not an official policy of the Alignment, and individual politicians who argued in its favor by no means came exclusively from Labor, although Labor hard-liners were behind the petition.

The reasons for this new thinking in Labor Party circles, and the consequences of these developments so far as the Palestinian problem is concerned, can be seen in several areas. First, Labor's motivation on the Golan Heights issue was to a considerable extent political. The party sought to compete with Likud for conservative votes and to identify itself with policies that would make its advocacy of territorial compromise in the West Bank and Gaza more broadly acceptable. However, that Israel's most established and institutionalized political party considered itself vulnerable because it advocated territorial compromise reveals how deeply

reluctant the Israeli public was to dismantle settlements and withdraw from occupied territory. It also suggests how politically unpopular would have been the advocacy of anything approaching total Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza.

Second, the Alignment was not motivated by political considerations alone; some of its members sincerely believed that it was in Israel's interest to retain the Golan, and they worried in 1980 that Likud, which had accepted withdrawal from the Sinai, might also bargain away the Heights in an attempt to retain the West Bank, the occupied territory which for historic and religious reasons was its principal concern. This attitude reflected the presence in the Labor Party of political "hawks," who were more interested in land than in progress toward peace. According to one commentator on the political left, the Golan issue gave Labor "its own Gush Emunim," elements within the party that were prepared to sacrifice national political strategy to the sanctity of territory. Though not motivated by historic or religious considerations, these elements believed that Israeli security lay first and foremost in militarily defensible borders and they accordingly attached little practical value to policies aimed at improving relations between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

Third, and of most immediate significance in 1979 and 1980, Israel's growing interest in retaining the Golan increased Syrian opposition to the peace process and encouraged that state to use its considerable influence to keep Palestinians and, especially, Jordan hostile to Egyptian-Israeli negotiations. Indeed, in this context, some criticized Labor's overtures toward the Golan as shortsighted, self-defeating, and contradictory, since the Alignment's West Bank policy should have led it to do everything possible to remove obstacles to Jordanian participation in the peace process.

Finally, as for the issue of Palestinian representation, most Labor politicians took toward the PLO an attitude that in general differed little from that of Likud. During the period of the Camp David negotiations, as well as in the years that followed, Labor regarded the PLO as a terrorist organization dedicated to the destruction of the Jewish state and led by men willing to use any means, however uncivilized, to accomplish their objectives. Thus when PLO chairman Yasir Arafat met with Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky in summer 1979, Labor joined with Likud to condemn the meeting in the Israeli Parliament, and Alignment leader Shimon Peres later told a meeting in Sweden of the Socialist International that the PLO could never be a suitable negotiating partner.

On the other hand, Labor's attitude toward Palestinian nationalism is more complex than these observations might imply, and in 1980 it was nuanced both by growing acceptance of the legitimacy of Palestinian national aspirations and by discussion and disagreement within the Alignment about Palestinian leadership. Labor remained overwhelmingly opposed to the establishment of a Palestinian state, but the party had nonetheless come a long way since former Prime Minister Golda Meir's assertion in 1969 that there was no such thing as a Palestinian nation. Many still believed that Palestinian nationalism was a recent phenomenon and that it had emerged largely in response to Zionism and was not a historical force derived from preexisting societal structures and a collective communal consciousness. Nevertheless, a growing number, possibly even a majority, accepted as present-day reality

the desire of the Palestinian people for a national solution to the issue of their political status.

The Alignment also asserted that Israel could not be indifferent to the leadership of the Palestinian community. This leadership, in Labor's view, must be "moderate," a term given meaning by the so-called Yariv-Shemtov formula, named for politicians in an earlier Labor-based coalition government. The Yariv-Shemtov formula stipulates that Israel will accept and negotiate with any Palestinian organization that (1) agrees to live in peace beside the Jewish state of Israel, or, in other words, dissociates itself with the de-Zionization proposals advanced in the Palestine National Charter; and (2) renounces terrorism as a political weapon.

Labor regards dealings with the PLO as precluded by the Yariv-Shemtov formula. In fall 1979, for example, it declined to participate in a conference aimed at Israeli-Palestinian dialogue for fear of encountering Palestinians identified with the PLO. The conference was held in Washington and sponsored by *New Outlook* magazine, a prominent journal of opinion on the Israeli left. The conference invitation provoked much discussion in Labor's councils and some challenged the decision of the party not to permit its members to participate. Nevertheless, the position that prevailed was supported not only by Peres and other party leaders but also by much of the rank and file, including younger elements that had been active in calling for contact with moderate, non-PLO Palestinians.

The Yariv-Shemtov formula defines the official and mainstream attitude of Labor toward Palestinian leadership; but there is also some diversity of opinion about the PLO, revealing just how broad a spectrum of political views is encompassed within the Alignment. Moreover, noting these differing positions, some observers argued in 1980 that fundamental ideological disagreements within Labor had been swept under the rug, confusing voters and sowing the seeds of future party instability.

On the left, some Laborites argued that Israel should start dealing with the PLO, because there can be no peace without a solution to the Palestinian problem and because the Palestinian people accept the PLO as their authoritative representative. As one "dovish" politician stated at a Labor Party meeting in 1979, "We have to set our conditions for talking to the PLO, lest in the end we be forced to negotiate on their terms." The position of the center has already been noted, although critics often charged mainstream Labor politicians with saying different things to different audiences. Peres, for example, sometimes said that the PLO would under no circumstances be an acceptable negotiating partner. On other occasions, however, he said he would deal with the organization were it to renounce terrorism and indicate a willingness to make peace with Israel, fulfilling the Yariv-Shemtov conditions. Finally, on the right were those who consistently asserted that the PLO could never be moderate and who denounced the Yariv-Shemtov formula as a misguided effort which might someday force upon Israel a PLO which is whitewashed but unrepentant, mouthing words for the sake of international legitimacy while remaining as committed as ever to Israel's destruction.

Labor's criticism of Likud's approach to the Palestinian problem found considerable response in the Israeli electorate and the party's political fortunes improved markedly through 1979 and 1980. This probably reflected more disenchantment with Likud than independent enthusiasm for Alignment policy alternatives, but the

political trend was nonetheless clear and significant. The popularity of Labor in public opinion polls steadily increased, and support for Likud consistently diminished. A survey taken in June 1980, for example, showed that Labor would have won overwhelmingly had elections been held at that time. The Alignment would have obtained 63 Knesset seats to 14 for Likud; and, had Ezer Weizman entered the race on his own, he would have received 14 seats and left Labor and Likud with 55 and 16 respectively. The next largest groups would have been the NRP and Agudat Israel, with 10 and 6 Knesset seats respectively.

In the wake of the political activity that accompanied these trends, there was talk of a significant realignment in the partisan structure of Israeli politics. A variety of scenarios was discussed in which one or several of the parties associated with the government would abandon Likud and join forces with Labor to establish a new and more broadly based centrist alliance. The return of the Labor-NRP coalition that had dominated the Israeli political scene for many years is one possibility that was frequently mentioned. Another was a split in the Liberal Party, wherein the more doctrinaire capitalists would dissociate themselves from the party establishment and some of the latter would then make common cause with Labor. The chance of Labor's picking up support from the DMC, from Shai, or from a number of independent centrist politicians, such as Gideon Hausner of the Independent Liberal Party, added to the possibilities. It was generally agreed in 1979 and 1980 that none of these scenarios would be realized in the near future. Yet the fact that they were being actively discussed suggested that existing patterns of party politics were regarded as fragile and that partisan alignments were seen as moving in the direction of Labor.

Although Labor had clearly returned to center stage in Israeli political life, the long-term outlook for these possibilities for partisan realignment was nonetheless uncertain. Nor, despite Labor's standing in the polls, was an Alignment victory in the next election deemed to be inevitable. First, Likud was not without political support. Its followers remained loyal, and their partisan commitments tended to be deeper and more stable than those of the typical Labor voter. Further, as noted, there was considerable doubt about the solutions to the country's problems offered by Labor. This was particularly true in the area of foreign policy, where many feared that the Alignment's approach was outdated. The party's platform remained tied to UN 242 and had evolved very little in response to new developments.

Most important of all may have been doubts about the quality of Alignment leadership. On the one hand, Alignment leaders were familiar faces, associated in many voters' minds with the past rather than the future and, to at least some segments of the electorate, with privilege and vested interest. In this connection one sometimes heard, in reference to Menachem Begin, that even many who strongly disagreed with his policies acknowledged that he was a dedicated and selfless Zionist pioneer, an oldtime leader in the mold of David Ben Gurion and Golda Meir. Current Labor leaders, by contrast, were often regarded as ambitious careerists and political manipulators. Bitter feuds and rivalries among Alignment leaders also hurt the party, bogging it down in personal vendettas, reinforcing voters' perception that it was led by careerists, and diverting its attention from the task of fashioning a coherent and compelling political platform.

Concern about Labor's ability to lead emerged with particular prominence in the second half of 1979, when former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin published his memoirs. Rabin's recollections contained a bitter attack on Shimon Peres, head of the Alignment at the time, and included a charge that Peres was unfit for national leadership. Rabin also cast aspersions on Peres' prior record as minister of defense. Peres denied these allegations, of course, and raised questions about the motives of a man who would make them. Peres also attempted to have the party decide in advance that he would be its candidate for prime minister in the next election. Some viewed Rabin's charges as irresponsible, and in general the party lined up behind Peres. Yet others asserted that there was substance to the former prime minister's allegations and said that, regardless of Rabin's motivations, Peres' qualifications to lead the nation needed to be examined.

The feud between Peres and Rabin has not diminished in the years since 1980, and assessments of the Alignment's fortunes in subsequent elections show that analysts in 1979 and 1980 were correct in calling attention to the leadership crisis within Labor and suggesting that it could hurt the party at the polls. Added to questions that were being raised about the Alignment's foreign policy platform and to Likud's continuing appeal among large segments of the electorate, it seemed best to conclude that Labor's renewed popularity would not displace that of Likud permanently and that future electoral contests would accordingly leave the two major blocs in Israeli politics roughly equivalent in strength and influence.

The Political Left

The third segment of the Israeli political spectrum, the left, is characterized by small size, structural fragmentation, and political weakness. There are a number of political groupings, but each is small and comparatively fragile. Moreover, despite common sentiments on many issues, they have traditionally had little success in combining into a coherent and influential political movement. Indeed, so far as formal political parties and Knesset representation are concerned, many groupings have been short-lived, and splits and realignments have meant that there is little continuity in what is offered to the voters from one election to the next. Thus, though politicians on the left are active and articulate and undertook new efforts to mobilize public support in 1979 and 1980, the left in Israel is politically marginal and dismissed as insignificant by many Israelis.

The United Workers Party, popularly known as Mapam, is by far the oldest party on the left and the one that is closest to the political mainstream. Moreover, Mapam in 1980 was part of the Labor Alignment coalition, not having presented its own slate of candidates in a national election since 1965. Mapam, like Labor, or at the time Mapai, was an important political movement prior to Israeli independence in 1948. Also like Labor, part of its origins and historical strength are rooted in the *kibbutz* movement, a union of agricultural settlements organized along communal and socialist lines and scattered throughout the country. Mapam and Labor also share an association with Achdut Ha'Avoda, which is now fully incorporated into the Labor Party. Achdut Ha'Avoda was founded by Mapam politicians who broke

with their party and then remained on their own until joining with Mapai in 1965 to form the first Labor Alignment.

Most important, perhaps, is the fact that in 1980 Mapam and Labor were part of a common parliamentary union; and, prior to 1977, Mapam even participated with Labor in running the country, making it the only party of the left with experience in the cabinet. For example, Victor Shemtov, co-author of the Yariv-Shemtov formula and at the time head of Mapam, was a minister in the last Alignment cabinet. Finally, Mapam's ideological orientation overlaps with that of Labor. Both parties are historically associated with socialist economics and workers' rights, and Mapam, like Labor, contains a diversity of views on foreign policy issues. Its mainstream is well to the left of center, but it contains a strong minority, associated most notably with its *kibbutz*-movement wing, that takes a harder line and shares the views of the center or even the political right of the Labor Party. Despite these commonalities, Mapam's ideological center is further to the left than that of Labor, and the party frequently takes action which sets it apart from the rest of the Alignment. When Chancellor Bruno Kreisky of Austria met with Yasir Arafat in summer 1979, for example, Labor, as noted, voted with Likud to condemn the meeting in a Knesset resolution; most members of Mapam, by contrast, abstained. Reactions to the 1979 *New Outlook*-sponsored conference in Washington provide another illustration of the differences between the two parties. While Labor voted that its members should not participate, because of the possibility that they would encounter members of the PLO, Mapam, after considerable discussion, authorized participation by its MKs.

Mapam's stance on the Palestinian problem, although characterized by considerable ambivalence and internal division, also distinguishes it from Labor. While it condemned the Begin government's approach to the issue of Palestinian autonomy, it seemed in 1980 to be of two minds concerning the Jordanian alternative advocated by Labor. The party refrained from establishing a platform that would place it in opposition to the rest of the Alignment, and most Mapam members would probably have preferred an arrangement with Jordan, if one could be worked out. On the other hand, many in the party tended to believe that a Jordanian solution was neither workable nor attainable and thus to be willing, in the context of a general Middle East peace, to see a Palestinian state evolve in the West Bank and Gaza. A representative from Mapam stated as much publicly at the *New Outlook* conference when responding to criticism that the party had not been forthright enough on the issue of Palestinian self-determination.

With respect to settlements, Mapam condemned the Begin government's policy of creating "facts" and establishing new settlements in the heavily populated central massif of the West Bank. It also opposed the creation of new settlements on the Golan, as well as the calls for annexation of the area. On the other hand, it supported, and still supports, the unification of Jerusalem under Israeli control, being willing only to grant the Arabs sovereignty over their religious sites. Beyond these established positions, however, Mapam's policies were less clear. Party members claimed there were no settlements associated with Mapam or populated by Mapam members in the occupied territories. They also professed support for Israeli withdrawal to borders approximating those that existed prior to 1967. Yet the party did not call

for the dismantling of established settlements such as Kiryat Arba, which is adjacent to Hebron and a headquarters for Gush Emunim. Nor did it declare itself opposed to settlements that were constructed for security purposes, such as those in the Jordan Valley.

Finally, on the question of representation, Mapam adheres to the Yariv-Shemtov formulation; it will talk with Palestinian groups who accept Israel and renounce terror. In 1980, the party opposed contacts with the PLO and hesitated to authorize its members to attend the *New Outlook* conference for fear that such contacts might result. On the other hand, it urged that Israel be more active in seeking to establish a dialogue with non-PLO Palestinians. Indeed, its abstention on the Knesset resolution condemning the Kreisky-Arafat meeting was based principally on the motion's failure to include a statement expressing support for its advocacy of increased contact with other Palestinian elements.

Mapam has traditionally been Israel's principal left-of-center party, occupying the point of transition between the Labor Party establishment and political movements further to the left. By 1980, however, many observers believed that, despite Mapam's long history and prior government experience, there was a vacuum between the center and the left. Mapam had fifteen to twenty Members of Knesset prior to the formation of Achdut Ha'Avoda in the 1950s, and it had eight to nine MKs until it joined the Alignment in 1969; following the elections of 1977, however, it held only five seats in the Knesset, not much more than many of the splinter parties that regularly appear on and disappear from the Israeli political scene.

Among the reasons for Mapam's declining popularity was its failure to appeal to Jews of Afro-Asian origin, who by 1980 constituted approximately one-half of Israel's Jewish population but who find the party too elitist and intellectual. Mapam also lost much of the appeal it once had among Arab citizens of Israel, whose growing nationalism has led them away from Zionist political groupings. Mapam's declining electoral significance, coupled with the ideological ambivalence within the party, led even many of its long-time supporters to wonder about the future; and some of them were predicting in 1979 and 1980 that the party could soon disappear altogether, its more conservative elements affiliating with Labor and the rest joining political movements further to the left.

The Citizens' Rights Movement is a second small party on the left. The party was established in 1974 by Shulamit Aloni, a former Labor Party member. Aloni is a lawyer known for her work on behalf of civil rights, especially in the areas of religious freedom and women's equality, and these are the issues on which she built her party's platform. In 1974, Citizens' Rights, popularly known as Ratz, captured three seats in the Knesset, which was an impressive beginning. Subsequently, however, after the 1977 election, Aloni was the only MK from her party. Moreover, not only was Ratz's strength in the electorate limited, the party in 1977 lost some of its most prominent members, who went over to other parties on the left, and the movement had almost no grass-roots organization on which to build. Thus, Citizens' Rights tended to be seen as a one-person party, constructed on the strength of Aloni's personality and her political associations.

During the late 1970s, Aloni and Citizens' Rights were more concerned with politics within Israel than with foreign policy questions or the Palestinian problem. Some of her views on the latter issue were reflected in a speech at the *New Outlook* conference, however. She expressed support for Palestinian rights and the creation of a Palestinian national entity and said she would support the Camp David autonomy accords if they were a first step in that direction. She further declared herself opposed to Israeli annexation of the West Bank and to settlement policies formulated with this in mind; and she urged American Jews, who were present in large numbers at the Washington conference, to distinguish between the Israeli people and "lunatic elements" in the government and to assist the Israeli peace movement in opposing the latter. Americans, she said, should not give blind support to all Israeli policies. Finally, Aloni stated that Israel could not negotiate with the PLO, which remains committed to Israel's destruction, and she called on friends of the Palestinian people to influence the organization to change its charter.

In 1980, the mainstream of the political left was Shelli. The party was small and had not done particularly well in the 1977 election, capturing only two seats in Parliament. Nevertheless, the party had ties to most other organizations on the left and it contained some of the most active and best-known personalities in what Israelis often describe as the "peace camp." At the time, Shelli was a collection of several different political factions, each of which had evolved independently as the list of the left-wing parties changed from one election to another. Indeed, the party was technically a federation of these factions, though there was talk of its merging into a unified party.

Shelli's first faction was Moked, a separate political party in the 1974 elections which traced its lineage back to the Israeli Communist Party. The party's immediate predecessor, Maki, was formed when the Communists split into Arab and Jewish sections in 1965. The leader of Moked was Meir Pa'il, a former military officer who was one of Shelli's two MKs. Pa'il also holds a Ph.D. in military history and is former head of the Israeli War College.

The second Shelli faction was Ha'olam Hazeh, named for a prominent Israeli magazine published by Uri Avneri, the leader of this faction and Shelli's second MK. Ha'olam Hazeh emerged as a separate party in 1965 and captured two seats in the Knesset election of 1969. It did not win any seats in 1974, however, and Avneri threw in his lot with Shelli in 1977. In addition to gaining visibility through his magazine, which usually takes antiestablishment political stands, Avneri is known for his book, *Israel without Zionists*, which strongly criticizes Israeli policy toward the Arabs.

Shelli's third faction was composed of a few former members of the Black Panther Party. The party first emerged in the 1974 election and it sought to articulate the social and economic grievances of Israeli Jews of Afro-Asian origin. Despite the very real problems of these Jews, however, the Black Panthers captured no seats in Parliament and thus, in the 1977 election, the party divided and its members formed alliances with other parties. One faction joined with Rakah, the Arab-oriented Communist Party, and the other joined Shelli. Most analysts believe that

the presence in Shelli of former Black Panther members brought few additional votes to the party in 1977, an assessment that has similarly been made regarding the contribution of the Black Panthers to Rakah.

The final element of note in Shelli involved Arie (Lova) Eliav, a powerful personality whose origins were in Labor and who for a time was chairman of the Labor Party. Eliav left Labor and joined Aloni and Ratz for the 1974 election. He came to Shelli in 1977 and for a time was one of its MKs.

Shelli strongly advocated the need for Israel to deal meaningfully with the Palestinian problem, and it took political stands that placed it in clear opposition to Labor as well as Likud. Most Shelli politicians supported the creation of an independent Palestinian homeland; and there was strong sentiment in the party for opening up contacts with the PLO, whether or not it amended its charter. During a parliamentary session in 1979, for example, Uri Avneri extracted from the prime minister a promise to schedule a debate on the idea of a Palestinian state, a promise that Begin subsequently broke when his cabinet overruled him on the matter. Avneri and other Shelli politicians had hoped to use the session to articulate their belief that peace required self-determination for the Palestinians.

Eliav was awarded a peace prize by Chancellor Bruno Kreisky of Austria, and he used the occasion of his acceptance speech to make the same point. He stated his belief that "Israel must recognize the right of the Palestinian national movement to self-determination" and, in the context of a full peace which includes provisions for the Jewish state's security requirements, must "agree that the West Bank and Gaza will comprise the territory upon which the Palestinians will decide their own political destiny." Shelli also occasionally expressed these views in newspaper ads, calling upon Israel to declare its willingness to withdraw from the occupied territories and thereby enable the Palestinian people to establish national independence alongside Israel.

Consistent with advocating negotiation with the Palestine Liberation Organization to bring about peace in the Middle East, Shelli voted against the condemnation of the 1979 Arafat-Kreisky meeting in Vienna; indeed, Shelli politicians had for several years been meeting with PLO representatives in Paris and elsewhere. They had also formed the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, the chairperson of which was Mattityahu Peled, a general in the army reserves and a member of Shelli's central committee. The meetings were originally hosted by former French Premier Pierre Mendes-France, and though conducted away from the public eye the talks were reported in the press and the government of Israel was kept fully informed by Peled and others. Basing their comments in part on these talks, Avneri and Eliav both told delegates to the October 1979 *New Outlook* conference that the PLO's attitude toward Israel was changing, that the organization was moving toward a willingness to make peace with Israel. They then called for a comparable evolution of Israeli thinking, about both the PLO and the creation of a Palestinian state.

In 1980, there was one other important political party on the left. This was the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, which was founded on the strength of Rakah, the *de facto* national party of Israel's Arabs. As noted, Rakah was formed in 1965 when the Israeli Communist Party split into Arab and Jewish sections.

Rakah continued to have some Jews on its ruling council and in 1977 it formed the Democratic Front with the Black Panthers. Moreover, at the time, two of its five MKs were Jewish. But the party received almost all of its votes from the Arab sector, its union with the Panthers was expected to be short-lived, and it was not regarded as a Zionist party, which made it even more peripheral than other left-wing parties in Israel.

Only on matters affecting Arabs in Israel does Rakah have any weight. On foreign policy matters, Rakah closely follows the communist line from Moscow; and with respect to the Palestinian question it supports Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza, in accordance with UN Resolution 242, and the establishment in these territories of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. Rakah's views in this regard are considered quite moderate, for they are not associated with the position of those Arab elements that reject the existence of Israel.

Israeli Arabs in general, and Rakah in particular, are peripheral to the Israeli political left and the Zionist peace movement, as well as to mainstream Israeli politics. Rakah was not invited to the *New Outlook* conference, for example, even though the theme was the Palestinian-Israeli dialogue. Organizers of the conference defended the exclusion of Rakah as a necessary concession to political reality in view of efforts to secure the participation of centrist politicians. They also pointed out that several noncommunist Israeli Arabs were in attendance. Nevertheless, the failure to invite Rakah communicated to many the disinterest of the Zionist left in Israeli Arabs and, more broadly, it indicated the political marginality of Israel's own Palestinian citizens and their principal political party.

Peace Now was a new creation, established in the wake of Anwar Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in 1977, and in 1979 and 1980 it was attempting to give greater unity to forces on the left and to increase their overall importance in the Israeli political equation. Peace Now deliberately describes itself as a "movement," suggesting that it in some ways resembles the antiwar movement of the Vietnam War era in the United States. Its members are linked by shared values and commitments, rather than by formal organizational or institutional structures, and it is run by independent committees in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa and by a national council composed of representatives from these committees and of delegates from other towns and *kibbutzim*. Many of its activities are carried out on the local level, and local committee meetings, which are open to anyone, vary considerably in their regularity and formality. There is no formal membership roster, and estimates of the number of Peace Now supporters varied widely in 1980, ranging from 50,000 to over 250,000. At some of its biggest rallies, sponsored to demonstrate opposition to the settlement policies of the Likud government, 80,000 to 100,000 turned out to march.

Peace Now accepts support from all quarters that agree with what might be called a minimalist platform of peace and reconciliation with the Arabs and the Palestinians. In 1980, its members were opposed to the Begin government's settlement policies; and, since that time, they have remained committed to Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and to the principle that there must be a meaningful solution to the Palestinian problem, which the Palestinians themselves play a part in determining. Beyond this, the movement has kept its program deliberately vague

in order to attract as many adherents as possible and to preserve its flexibility. Its members do not agree among themselves about the desirability of a Palestinian state or of establishing contact with the PLO, for example; but resolving these disagreements, in the view of Peace Now leaders, is less important than attracting as much support as possible. Peace Now also states that it is not in favor of peace at any price. One of its publications says that it regards the secure existence of Israel as a precondition for peace. It adds, however, that its goal is to "prevent the undermining of such security by attempting to found it solely, or principally, on additional territory. Territory is only one of the factors involved in Israel's security, and in Israel's present condition it is not the most important one."

Peace Now is embraced by almost all the political left, with the exception of Rakah, and politicians from Shelli and Mapam were prominent in its ranks in 1979 and 1980. The movement is not based on political parties, however, and some of its most active leaders are not politicians at all. University students have played an important part in running Peace Now, and the movement also claims substantial support within the military. Indeed, Peace Now claims to have considerable support among all segments of the Israeli public. Among religious Jews, for example, it has ties to the Oz Veshalom group, whose members take an active part in many Peace Now programs and which has been vocal in criticizing the settlements established in the West Bank by religious Jews of the political right.

As a heterogeneous and essentially informal movement of opinion, Peace Now's principal vehicles for pursuing its objectives and exerting influence are meetings, conferences, demonstrations, speeches, articles, and the like. Its diverse elements operate either independently or in unison, depending on what seems most productive in a given instance, and its activities thus vary considerably in scope and organization. One forum that is particularly influential, though it is independent and predates the creation of the Peace Now movement, is *New Outlook* magazine. The magazine is published ten times a year and regularly features articles devoted to the cause of Israel-Arab reconciliation. In 1980, *New Outlook's* editor-in-chief and editor, Simha Flapan and David Shaham respectively, were important contributors to the peace movement in Israel. The magazine's editorial council also included prominent members of Mapam and Shelli and other intellectuals associated with Peace Now, as well as noncommunist Israeli Arabs.

One of Peace Now's principal organizational activities during 1979 was a huge march in Tel Aviv in October, at which about eighty thousand turned out to protest the government's settlement policy. According to newspaper reports, dozens of busloads of men and women and youth-movement members arrived from all over the country and marched displaying such signs as "Begin go home" and "The settlement puppet has turned into a monster endangering our future." Peace Now was also strongly associated with the *New Outlook* conference, held in October as well, and its principal objective was to bring together the Israeli peace movement and to allow its members to talk with Palestinians. A petition-signing campaign was yet another activity that was national in scope: the movement claimed in 1979 to have gathered over two hundred thousand signatures on petitions to the prime minister in opposition to his settlement policy.

Peace Now has been active on a small scale, too. When its activists traveled to the West Bank to replant Arab vineyards near Hebron that Gush Emunim militants had ripped out, the publicity—and impact—was considerable. As might be expected, this action was vehemently and bitterly denounced by Gush supporters. Other activities in 1979 and 1980 included meetings between small Peace Now delegations and Palestinian intellectuals from the West Bank; a demonstration by several hundred protesters outside the office of Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon; and a four-day visit to Cairo, as an official guest of the Egyptians, by Dedi Zucker, an educational researcher at Jerusalem's Van Leer Institute and one of the leaders of Peace Now.

The origins of Peace Now are tied up with the Sadat peace initiative and the Camp David accords. The movement was formed in the wake of Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in November 1977, which leaders say convinced them that progress toward peace was possible and stimulated them to seek ways to work actively toward this end. Egyptian-Israeli peace talks broke down in January 1978, partly as a result of Israeli settlement policy, and in March Prime Minister Begin was sent a letter by 350 reserve officers and combat soldiers urging him to respond positively to the opportunity for peace. Specifically, they called upon the government to reject a preference for the establishment of new settlements and the expansion of Israel's borders over peace and good relations with the country's Arab neighbors.

The reserve officers' letter was the beginning of Peace Now, and in the months that followed, the movement held several public demonstrations, with turnouts estimated at thirty thousand to forty thousand. Its most important public manifestation came in September 1978, when one hundred thousand people turned out in Tel Aviv on the eve of Begin's departure for Camp David; and Sadat himself later reported that it was the thought of this Israeli demonstration in support of compromise and peace that sustained him at Camp David during difficult periods, when the negotiations seemed to be hopelessly deadlocked.

The effectiveness and potential influence of Peace Now, and of the Israeli political left in general, are difficult to evaluate, although most observers agree they are limited. Within the formal institutions of government, most notably the Knesset, politicians on the left are few in number and politically marginal. They exert little influence on the making of foreign policy and in 1980, even in the wake of growing public discontent with the Begin government, most observers doubted that their political position would improve much in the near future.

More strength might exist at the grass-roots level, as Peace Now claims on the basis of its successful public demonstrations. But here, too, many analysts are skeptical. They note that while Peace Now is sometimes compared to Gush Emunim, as an analogous pressure group at the opposite end of the political spectrum, the peace movement, unlike Gush, lacks a cadre of committed full-time workers whose energies are dedicated exclusively to their cause. Gush can establish and populate settlements, for example. Its members are prepared to follow through on their commitments and, if necessary, to disrupt their private lives. Most Peace Now supporters, while no less sincere, will turn out for a meeting or a demonstration

but then return to their normal activities and have no further involvement with the movement for weeks.

So far as the Palestinian question is concerned, Peace Now leaders and others on the left themselves identify another obstacle to their effectiveness: the failure of the Palestinians to establish their own political movement dedicated to compromise and peace the way the Israeli left believes it has done in the Jewish state. They note that Peace Now blossomed in the wake of Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and then add that the movement would be able to grow dramatically if similar moves toward reconciliation with Israel were made by the Palestine Liberation Organization. These sentiments were repeatedly and sometimes emotionally aired at the *New Outlook* conference discussed above. As Dedi Zucker expressed it, progress was in the hands not only of Israel but also of the Palestinians. The peace movement, he said, would be able to go forward only if the Palestinians enabled it to give the Israeli public answers to the questions it was asking, such as "Are there Palestinians with whom we can talk?" and "Are there Palestinian proposals for solving the Middle East crisis that do not threaten the existence and Jewish character of our state?"

Simha Flapan, *New Outlook* editor-in-chief, included among his opening remarks at the symposium a call to the PLO to change its charter. He stated that hints of Palestinian moderation were not enough: the PLO "has not officially renounced the aim of 'dismantling the Jewish State' " and it "continues the strategy of war which reduces the chances for an Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation." Yet another speaker articulated the same point, and its relationship to the success of the peace camp in Israel, by saying that Peace Now and the parties of the left were taking risks for peace and it was necessary for the Palestinians to take similar risks.

The expressions of this point of view occasioned strong rebuttals from other left-oriented Israeli politicians, most notably Uri Avneri and Lova Eliav, and from the Palestinians at the conference. Among their arguments were the following. First, the Palestinians are moving toward compromise and both patience and an understanding of their internal political constraints are necessary. Second, it is inappropriate to ask the PLO to make the first move since it is Israel that is the conquering and occupying power. Third, the PLO cannot be expected to respond to calls for moderation from the small and peripheral Israeli left. It is the legitimate and accepted spokesman of the Palestinian people, and it will be responsive only to initiatives from the government of Israel, its political equivalent. Fourth and last, Peace Now itself has not taken as many risks as it often claims. In addition to having relatively little to lose, its own timidity was revealed in the fact that only "moderate" Palestinians without ties to the PLO were invited to take part in the symposium, and Israeli Arabs associated with Rakah were also excluded.

Debates within the Israeli left about attitudes toward the PLO, which Peace Now had deliberately sought to avoid in an attempt to attract as many followers as possible, raised critical issues of strategy and tactics that the peace movement would have to resolve if it were to go forward. At the same time, however, Peace Now leaders were probably correct that their own effort was severely limited by the fact they were perceived to be irrelevant by much of the Israeli public, to be participating in a dialogue without an interlocutor, and that this, in turn, was due to the widespread

belief in Israel that Palestinian leadership was not really interested in peace and compromise.

Whether the Israeli peace movement would be able to expand its influence was an open question. If not, however, it would not be for want of trying. In 1979 and 1980, the political left was making a significant effort to respond positively and constructively to the opportunity for peace that had been offered by the Sadat initiative and the Camp David agreements. Nevertheless, there was little evidence that the parties of the left would fare any better in the next election than they had in the last one or that Peace Now's activities would influence public opinion enough to force Israel's mainstream political parties to modify their positions on the Palestinian problem and the occupied territories.

(June 1980)

APPENDIX Results of Israeli Elections, 1977–1988

<i>Political Party (Leader)</i>	<i>Knesset Seats</i>			
	1977	1981	1984	1988
Kach (Kahane)	—	—	1	—
Moledet (Ze'evi)	—	—	—	2
Morasha (Druckman)	—	—	2	—
Tehiya (Ne'eman)	—	3	5	3
Tsomet (Eitan)	—	—	—	2
National Religious Party (Shaki, Hammer)	12*	6*	4*	5
Sephardi Torah Guardians (Peretz)	—	—	4*	6
Agudat Yisrael (Porush)	5*	4*	2*	5
Degel Hatorah (Ravitz)	—	—	—	2
Tami (Abuhatzzeira)	—	3*	1*	—
Likud (Shamir, Sharon, Moda'i)	43*	48*	41*	40
Ometz (Hurvitz)	—	—	1	—
DMC (Yadin)	15*	—	—	—
Shinui (Rubinstein)	—	2	3*	2
Yahad (Weizmann)	—	—	3*	—
Telem (Dayan)	—	2	—	—
Labor Alignment (Peres, Rabin)	32	47	44*	39
Mapam (Granot)	—	—	—	3
Citizens Rights (Aloni)	1	1	3	5
Shelli (Pa'il, Avneri)	2	—	—	—
Arab Democratic (Daroushe)	—	—	—	1
Jewish-Arab Progressive List (Miari, Peled)	—	—	2	1
Rakah (Wilner, Toubi)	5	4	4	4
Others	5	—	—	—
<i>Total</i>	120	120	120	120

*Joined the initial government coalition. In each case, subsequent party splits and realignments, and individual defections, caused some Members of Knesset to withdraw from the coalition. These changes also modified the distribution of Knesset seats among parties over the course of the period between elections.

8.

Secularism and Nationalism in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Mark Tessler

Three interrelated assumptions guide this analysis of historical, ideological, and political factors bearing on a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. First, both Jews and Arabs have legitimate rights in Palestine. Second, Jews and Palestinian Arabs must be permitted to define for themselves the character of their respective communal identities and paths to self-determination. Third, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must not be seen as a zero-sum game; more important than preparing a balance sheet of the validity of each side's claims and counterclaims is the search for a basis for compromise and reconciliation.

The Nationalism and Nationhood of Palestinian Arabs

The Palestinians insist they are a nation and contend that no solution to the problem of their status, or to the Arab-Israeli conflict generally, will be workable unless it takes account of their national rights. The legitimacy and historical accuracy of these assertions of Palestinian nationhood have been challenged, however, principally by Jewish Israelis and other supporters of Zionism. The United States has also tended to oppose the idea that the Palestinian problem requires a national solution. While the arguments of those who deny that the Palestinians have national rights contain much that is factually accurate, most of their conclusions are flawed or irrelevant. Nevertheless, because these arguments have been expressed frequently and are often influential, it is important that they be reviewed and evaluated.

Observers note that Palestine was a comparative backwater prior to and for the most part throughout the nineteenth century, during the decades of reawakening and defensive modernization in certain other parts of the Middle East. The population had declined to barely 200,000 and much land was out of cultivation, largely because of Ottoman indifference and the insecurity fostered by local feuds and Bedouin raids. Equally important, there was almost no professional or middle class

in Palestine at the time. Beyond a small landowning elite and some ruling officials, the settled population was composed overwhelmingly of agriculturalists, artisans, and petty merchants. These latter circumstances help to explain why the lieutenants of Mohammad Ali, who invaded Palestine in the 1830s in an attempt to extend Egypt's resistance to Ottoman domination, were unable to arouse nationalist sentiments among the local Palestinian population.

Politically conscious leadership did emerge in Palestine toward the end of the nineteenth century, stimulated first by Ottoman reforms and nationalist stirrings in Syria and then by conflicts with Zionism and the British. For some time, however, the content of this consciousness was limited. To begin, Palestine was regarded as a province of Syria, and early Palestinian politics reflected this fact. The goal of most who might be characterized as nationalists was not Palestinian self-determination but the inclusion of their society in a larger independent Arab polity. In addition, there was little attention to the social-structural and political changes that might be necessary for Palestine to develop. Leadership was vested primarily in a small number of wealthy and extended Muslim families, and the fact that the major response to changing conditions emanated from this class made the early politics of Palestinian nationalism conservative and derivative. Finally, most of the Palestinian elite was not hostile to Ottoman rule. Having fared well under Turkish domination, local notables did not want to assist European powers in breaking up the empire. Most sought no more than constitutional reform and greater Ottoman activism in checking the growing Zionist presence.

After World War I, local political clubs sprang up and sent representatives to the All-Palestine Congress, which met annually for a number of years. The congress in turn sent representatives to meetings of Arab nationalists outside Palestine. Nevertheless, though increasingly militant in opposition to Zionism, Palestinian nationalism remained underdeveloped. The elite was fragmented with respect to both family and religion and continued to show little concern for systematic social change. Institutional development was also limited, and unified political action was the exception rather than the rule. Finally, though ideological divisions existed, the dominant nationalist orientation was pan-Arab, and to an extent pan-Islamic, rather than purely Palestinian.

Citing the historical circumstances outlined above, those who would deny the legitimacy of Palestinian nationalism contend that as late as 1948 there had not emerged either a structural foundation or an ideological consensus in support of Palestinian nationhood. Three points may be made in response. First, though factually accurate in important respects, this argument presents a unidimensional and self-serving view of modern Palestinian history. Inter-elite political and policy differences, and even elite conservatism, did not imply an acceptance of the Mandate or of Zionist aspirations and did not reflect a lack of interest in Palestinian self-determination. By the 1920s, there was a specifically Palestinian focus to nationalist activities, and within a few years all major Arab factions were calling for independence. Nor was there an absence of institutional development or of political action that was national in scope. Finally, Palestinian society experienced important transformations during the interwar period. Major advances in education occurred,

and these produced a new and politically conscious middle class. Also, urbanization and the entry of the peasantry into the salaried labor market eroded traditional patterns of authority and created a proletariat with growing political awareness. Thus, despite the weaknesses of its nationalist movement, nation-building was well underway in Arab Palestine prior to 1948.

There is a second response. The state of institutional and ideological development among Palestinian Arabs was not exceptional within the Middle East or other areas under the influence of European imperialism; indeed, if one insists on making comparisons, Palestinian nationalism was more advanced than that of many societies whose claims to self-determination and statehood are today recognized without discussion. An ideological revolution of meaningful proportions was occurring in only a handful of Arab countries, most notably in Egypt and to a lesser extent in Tunisia and Syria. Further, even in these instances, currents of nationalism and modernization had but a slight impact on the life of the average citizen, and established patterns of authority and political economy persisted among much of the elite as well. Finally, beyond these societies, the salience of efforts at political reform and development was even more limited. Thus, the fact that nineteenth-century Palestine was largely unmobilized and devoid of national political consciousness cannot be a basis for asserting that subsequent Palestinian claims to self-determination are less valid than those that eventually emerged in other Arab countries. The development of modern nationalism in the Arab world, in Palestine and elsewhere, has always been an incremental affair.

Nor is the case of the Arab countries significantly different from that of other states in Asia and Africa, or even some in Europe. Many Third World countries that are today independent did not develop a significant nationalist movement until well into the twentieth century. Many were also characterized by fragmented or conservative leadership, by a certain ambiguity about the locus of their territory, and by explicitly pan-national sentiments on the part of their leaders. In view of this situation, some argued after World War II that the decolonization of certain countries should be delayed, until they were "better prepared" for independence. But even in these cases the principle of self-determination was not an issue. Moreover, African and Asian leaders carried the day with their rejoinder that colonialism was not a school for independence and that self-government, even with danger, was their inalienable right. Having admitted these principles for others whose nationalist movements were less than fully mature, one cannot deny them in the case of the Palestinians.

A third response derives from an insistence that the validity of a people's claim to nationhood in the modern sense does not depend on whether or not there happened to reside in its territory a few intellectuals and modernists who articulated a proto-nationalist platform in the nineteenth century. Even if one acknowledges that Palestinian nationalism was underdeveloped prior to 1948, and then adds that similarities elsewhere are perhaps irrelevant, it would not follow that the territory of Palestine might reasonably be expropriated by a foreign power or settlement regime. One recalls in this context the controversial pronouncement in 1936 of the Algerian intellectual Ferhat Abbas, who stated he was not a nationalist because there existed

no Algerian nation. Other Algerians quickly replied that “we have searched in history and in the present and we have undeniably established that the Algerian Muslim nation is formed and exists.” But even if Abbas’ assertion contained an important measure of accuracy, which it did, or even if the modern Algerian nation owed its existence to French colonial rule, which is an oversimplification but also factual to an important degree, in other words even if advocates of Algerian nationalism had been unable to refute Abbas’ statement, the indigenous population of Algeria would still have had the right to be ruled by men and women of their own choosing and to define for themselves the character and identity of their polity.

All of this is true for the Palestinian people as well. The fact that the Palestinians’ sense of nationhood is comparatively recent and is partly a response to the very forces with which it has been locked in conflict is not a basis for asserting that the Palestinians have forfeited the right to reside in and rule over their ancestral homeland, managing their own affairs in accordance with the evolving will and consciousness of the majority of their citizens.

The PLO and the “De-Zionization” Proposal

The national rights of the Palestinians were recognized in the partition plans of the Peel Commission in 1937 and the United Nations Special Commission on Palestine in 1947. At the time, however, the Palestinians and their Arab supporters insisted on independence in the whole of Palestine. As a result, the first Arab-Israeli war was fought in 1947–48; and when armistice agreements were signed in 1949, the territory for the proposed Palestinian state was lost, the largest portion of it having been incorporated into Israel. Also, about 600,000 of the roughly 750,000 Arabs who had lived in the territory subsequently controlled by Israel left during the 1947–48 war, the majority taking up residence in Gaza or the West Bank. Thus, not only was nationhood lost, or deferred, but in addition the Palestinian population was displaced and scattered.

After 1948, the Palestinians claimed the right to return to their ancestral homes and to establish their state. At first, the character of the polity they would establish upon their return was poorly defined; but one notable feature in Palestinian thinking was the absence of any attention to Jewish rights in the area. Following World War I, there had seemed to be the possibility of Arab-Jewish cooperation, when Emir Feisal indicated he would welcome Jews within the Palestinian province of the independent Syrian state he was seeking to establish. Feisal’s vision was naive, however, and had little support among either European powers, local Arab notables, or even Zionists; and thereafter, as tensions increased during the years of the Mandate, most Arab leaders either ignored or rejected the possibility of legitimate Jewish interests in Palestine. Palestinian advocates after 1948 continued this disinclination toward Arab-Jewish accommodation. They maintained that the state of Israel was illegal, the creation of institutions in which Arabs and other colonized peoples were poorly represented and through which Europeans paid their own debt to the Jews with Arab land. They also condoned and even contributed to anti-Jewish rhetoric

of a most virulent sort. There were calls to “throw the Jews into the sea,” to reenter Palestine on “a carpet of blood,” and to conduct a holy war in which “not a single Jew would survive.”

More progressive Palestinian leadership emerged after the 1967 war. The Palestine Liberation Organization, which had been formed in 1964, was given new direction, and its program crystallized in the revised National Charter, which the Palestine National Council adopted in 1968. Notable among the new currents was a strong condemnation of anti-Semitism and calls for the establishment of a Palestinian state which would embrace Israeli Jews as well as Palestinian Arabs. Specifically, in the latter connection, the National Charter called for “de-Zionization” by replacing the political structure of Israel with a “secular and democratic” Palestinian state. The proposal was a dramatic and constructive departure, turning away from tiresome and perhaps irresolvable debates about the origins of the conflict and responsibility for the refugee problem and focusing instead on questions about the future. It asserted that anti-Jewish sentiments were foreign to the true character of Arab nationalism and that Jews and Arabs must work together for the progressive development of Palestine. The Zionist state, according to the PLO, places a barrier between Jews and others. Like some Arab and Islamic states, it is exclusionary or even “tribalistic” in that it serves first the international constituency of a particular group and only secondarily its own citizens regardless of religion or national identity. Israel is therefore to be replaced by a new national community, in which, according to the revised PLO Charter, individual Jews and Arabs will participate as equals and both Hebrew and Arab civilizations will flourish.

Zionists of all persuasions, including the extreme left in Israel, reject the call for a democratic and secular state. Most, though not all, also question Palestinian sincerity. To begin, Zionists assert that the proposal is essentially a propaganda ploy, designed to change the Palestinians’ external image and to win support for the unchanging goal of eliminating Jews from the Middle East. Second, they complain of terrorist acts either condoned or carried out by PLO-affiliated groups. Brushing aside debates about the meaning, locus, and origins of terrorism—which would be unlikely to produce a justification for most attacks on civilians but are nonetheless legitimate normative issues—Zionists insist that the PLO has blood on its hands and is unworthy of serious discourse. Third, Zionists correctly observe that the Palestinians have issued unacceptable and contradictory pronouncements about which Jews have a rightful place in their proposed state. Some statements suggest that only Jews or the descendants of Jews who arrived in Palestine prior to 1947 may claim citizenship, and others suggest that only Jews whose origins in Palestine predate 1917 possess these rights. There are also pronouncements to the effect that all Jews presently living in Israel are welcome in Palestine, but this confusion only adds to the conviction of Jews that the de-Zionization proposal cannot be taken seriously.

No matter how valid might be Zionist objections, the Palestinian proposition cannot be dismissed lightly. There are two reasons for this, beyond the obvious point that any proposition which looks to future reconciliation rather than recrimination about the past is at least a step in the right direction. The first reason is that

the PLO is not a peripheral political force in the Middle East; it is the accepted spokesman of the Palestinian people. It has been recognized by a large and growing number of nations and, most important, Palestinians themselves regard the PLO as their official representative. The writings of Palestinians from all walks of life, the investigations of journalists and academics, the pattern of public demonstrations in the occupied territories, and even the success of pro-PLO candidates in West Bank mayoral elections make this conclusion beyond dispute. The Palestine Liberation Organization stands for the national rights of the Palestinian people, and its proposals are thus the most authoritative expression of the Palestinians' own definition of self-determination.

A second reason for taking the de-Zionization proposal seriously is that it focuses attention on a real and important issue, namely the fusion of religion and politics in Israel. Israel is not a theocracy in the classical sense, but its *raison d'être* is service to Judaism and the Jewish people, including Jews who do not live in Israel; and the Palestinians are correct that this constitutes a rejection of secularism. Among other things, it makes second-class citizens of Arabs in Israel and creates a second political loyalty among many Jews in other lands. To call this "racism," as did the United Nations, is to attach an emotional and politically charged label that works against a rational discussion of the issue. It is reminiscent of the cultural smears advanced by colonial powers to justify their endeavors, the result being a militant rebuttal that hindered whatever self-examination might actually have been in the colonized's own interest. Nonetheless, the Palestinians' characterization of Israel as a nonsecular state is factually accurate and raises important issues about whether political unions based on an association of religion and nationalism are acceptable in today's world, and for this reason, too, the de-Zionization proposal deserves to be taken seriously.

Secularism and Zionism

The desirability of the PLO's de-Zionization proposal, as distinct from the importance of taking it seriously, depends in part upon its compatibility with the substance of those Jewish interests in the Middle East that Palestinians appear to be acknowledging. Like other peoples, Jews are divided about the meaning of their historical experience and about the relative weight of those bonds that give expression to the identity of their community; and evidence can thus be offered by those who would argue that the Jews are a religious group rather than a nation and that there have been many Jewish opponents of Zionism. Yet Jews are more than a religious group in the present-day sense, and most Jews today do support at least a minimalist platform of political Zionism.

From the destruction of the second Jewish commonwealth until well into the nineteenth century, Jews continued to regard themselves as a people and a national community. In their separate and disparate residences, both in Europe and in the Muslim world, Jews had considerable communal autonomy; they lived in accordance with a legal code that set them apart from their neighbors of other religions, that

transcended matters of belief and worship, and that made their society objectively similar to that of Jews elsewhere. Their beliefs and practices also enshrined a collective memory of past political unity and a faith in the future resurrection of their kingdom, both of which bound them to Palestine through the conviction that the Deity had chosen and linked Himself to them in a timeless covenant. There was not much pure nationalism in any of this. Few Diaspora Jews were motivated to return to Palestine, and those who did sought only spiritual fulfillment. Other possible elements in the building of a homeland, such as the transformation of Hebrew into a modern and practical language, were also alien. Most important of all, Jews considered themselves passive before God, whose action the reestablishment of their kingdom awaited. But the Jews were nonetheless a people, *am yisrael*, a nation of believers who in fact believed they had a moral obligation to maintain their solidarity. It may be added that even were this not so, the case for treating Jews as a people with a national right to self-determination, rather than as individuals with only personal civil rights, would not necessarily be weak. To argue otherwise would be to contravene the case previously advanced for Palestinian national rights. But, in any event, the Jewish people did not lose their national consciousness with the beginning of the Christian era.

Jewish responses to the currents of liberalism, modernization, and nationalism that emerged in nineteenth-century Europe were diverse, comparable in many ways to those of Muslims. Some saw these currents as irrelevant and clung to traditional patterns. Others embraced the possibility of change enthusiastically, calling upon their co-religionists to accept the opportunity being offered and to define their place in a new social order. Finally, in between, some saw the potential for change as a challenge; they sought to preserve their heritage but also to improve their political and material circumstances. This somewhat oversimplified trichotomization indicates that in certain Jewish circles a seriously secular definition of what it means to be a Jew was beginning to take shape; and indeed some Jews in Western Europe did assimilate, viewing themselves as individual citizens who happened to be Jewish in polities where all in principle were equal. On the other hand, prominent as were some of its adherents, this kind of secularist thinking never became predominant in nineteenth-century Jewish life.

Toward the end of the century, European anti-Semitism impinged upon the dialogue among Jews of different persuasions and provided the challenge to which modern political Zionism was in the first instance a response. A few early Jewish thinkers, notably Moses Hess and Leo Pinsker, had already issued calls for what in retrospect might be characterized as Jewish self-determination. But it was anti-Semitism that undermined the faith of assimilated Jews and that made a national home an immediate rather than an abstract concern. Advocates of assimilation, including Theodor Herzl and other like-minded Jews, strove to retain their modernist orientation and argued that integration was still desirable. They now added, however, that this must be based on a collective and national, rather than an individual and religious, definition of Judaism, and accordingly that true assimilation was the establishment of a Jewish state within the world community of nations. Those who had earlier regarded the possibility of assimilation as a challenge, or a burden, also

contributed to Zionism, adding what is sometimes called a cultural dimension. They insisted that the Jewish homeland be more than a place of refuge and a state like any other state. It must also be a center for the articulation and practice of Jewish values, for the enrichment and growth of Jewish civilization and, to the devout, for the construction of a moral society which would again make the chosen people a light unto the nations. Though not personally pious, Ahad Ha'Am was the most important early contributor to this cultural stream of Zionism.

During the first part of the twentieth century, modern political Zionism was of limited interest to most of the world's Jews. In Muslim countries, most either remained in their traditional circumstances or were busy defining their place in sectors of society where rapid change was occurring and identification with European influences was an available option. Zionism in these instances, though not totally absent, was a minor force. In Western Europe, the development of the Jewish reform movement and the resumption of assimilationist patterns frequently overshadowed Zionism. Although a substantial and growing number of Jews looked with sympathy on efforts to rebuild a Jewish homeland in Palestine, the task had little immediate relevance in the context their own lives. In Eastern Europe, the upheavals were more dramatic, and tens of thousands of Jews did make their way to Palestine. But a much larger number went to the United States or Western Europe, and many who did go to Palestine departed after a few years, finding the difficulties of life there greater than their commitment to Zionism. Finally, it may be added that Zionists themselves were divided about the character of the society they sought to build. Divisive issues included the degree to which (1) the Jewish state should be based on traditional religious law, (2) Hebrew should be its language, (3) Jewish self-determination could be realized in a territory outside Palestine, (4) Jews should build a society which separated them from the local Arab population, (5) the Zionist state should strive for the in-gathering of all the world's Jews, and (6) the whole of mandatory Palestine was required for the fulfillment of Zionist aspirations.

The concatenation of limited Jewish involvement with Zionism on a world scale and disagreement among Zionists themselves about the content of Jewish nationalism does not mean that Jews after all did come into the mainstream of the twentieth century as a religious group rather than as a national community. Zionism matured and gained strength during the middle years of the century. The Jewish community in Palestine (*yishuv*) developed steadily, and there was consistently rising support for Zionism among Diaspora Jews. Also, though divisions remained, and remain today, a consensus on many Zionist issues emerged. The desired state was not only to be a haven of last resort and a nation like any other that simply happened to have a Jewish majority. It was to have an explicitly Jewish identity and mission. Hebrew would be the national language. The state would attract Jews from all parts of the globe and serve as the moral center of Judaism as a whole. Also, the development of a Jewish state outside Palestine, even as a temporary staging point, was rejected as inconsistent with the fulfillment of Jewish self-determination. Finally, the state would be an autonomous whole, where Jews, in the words of Herzl, were "soldiers, farmers and even prostitutes," as well as merchants, lawyers, and so forth. These developments must be placed alongside whatever ideological secu-

larization took place in the ranks of the Jewish people during the first part of this century.

Since accommodation to the modern era on a national rather than an individual basis was consistent with the Jews' understanding of their identity, even Jews oriented toward assimilation tended to support at least a minimalist Zionist program. While they argued that a meaningful Jewish existence outside Palestine was indeed possible, and then vigorously defended this option for individual Jews, they also increasingly embraced the view that a Jewish state was essential for the well-being of the Jewish people. Admittedly not every assimilated Jew took this position. But it is misleading to discuss the integration of the Jews in the United States and Europe unless it is also recorded that support for Zionism was growing among them. Only pious true believers of the old school, whose numbers and influence were diminishing, had a moral foundation for opposition to Zionism. Moreover, while insisting that man could not act on God's behalf in the establishment of *the* Jewish state, and that modern Zionism from a spiritual point of view was thus a profanation, even many of these Jews accepted the proposition that the establishment of *a* Jewish state in Palestine was a contribution to the physical and moral well-being of Jews.

The diversity of these currents makes it difficult to advance a simple conclusion about developments prior to World War II. Modern political Zionism was still something of a minority movement; but its acceptance and support were growing rapidly, reinforced by the Jews' historic sense of nationhood. The Holocaust and Israel's independence went a long way toward ending this diversity, uniting Jews in support of Zionism, establishing the movement as the authoritative expression of Jewish national aspirations, and reducing the possibility that the Western democratic experience might eventually lure Jews away from their collective solidarity.

It is fascinating to speculate about how things might have turned out differently. Zionists correctly insist that their movement did not begin with the Holocaust and that, no matter how unspeakable the horrors that Nazis and others have perpetrated upon Jews, Jewish national aspirations at bottom are affirmative rather than defensive. Yet it is conceivable that without Nazi atrocities, emerging currents of secularism would have assumed sufficient proportions to produce a new understanding of what it means to be a Jew. Under such circumstances, the state of Israel would have little *raison d'être*, and calls for a democratic and secular state in Palestine would not be, as they presently are, incompatible with the Jews' own definition of self-determination. Another "what if" question concerns the 55 percent of Israel's present Jewish population whose origins are in Muslim countries. Had modernization begun earlier in these countries, or, as in the case of Algeria, had European penetration been deeper, more of these Jews might have come to think of themselves as European and not gone to Israel when Arab-Jewish conflict intensified. Moreover, had Israel been established under different circumstances, fewer Jews might have left the Muslim world and, in their home countries, they probably would have become ardent secularists, with considerable impact on both domestic and Jewish political thought.

But speculation of this sort does not take one very far. One might just as well ask whether Palestinian political consciousness might never have emerged had pre-

Mandate Syria become independent after World War I. In the final analysis, Jews have maintained their historic sense of peoplehood and entered the present era with this solidarity transformed into modern nationalism; they understand themselves as a national community whose self-determination requires a Jewish state. They must admittedly seek to attain their aspirations without denying the rights of others. Nevertheless, it is clear that secularization, de-Zionization, and the protection of individual rights alone are not compatible with the Jewish quest for self-determination. Most Jews, including the vast majority who remain in the Diaspora or criticize specific Israeli policies, strongly support the existence of a state run by and for Jews. A Jewish state responds to the needs of Judaism, as a civilization, a way of life, and a moral system. It enables Judaism to be practiced and, through dialectal interaction with the complexities of the modern world, to grow and become richer. A Jewish state also responds to the needs of Jews, for a defender and, if necessary, a refuge from the anti-Semitism which history has taught them is inevitable.

While striving to explicate the nationalism of Jews, it is neither appropriate nor necessary to ignore the ambiguities that remain associated with Zionism. Conflict between religious and nonreligious Jews in Israel is one salient issue. There is not agreement on the extent to which Israel should be governed by orthodox Jewish law or even, in some instances, about who is a Jew. As a result, questions of religious policy contribute substantially to the dynamics of Israeli politics. Another important issue concerns Israel's failure to attract significant Jewish immigration in recent years. This pertains especially to Jews in democratic countries, where most Jews now live and where there are no important barriers to *aliya*, or immigration to Israel. The problem has been the focus of considerable debate in Israel, especially after a World Jewish Congress commission issued the following statement in February 1981: "The classic Zionist ideology which denigrates the prospects for a secure and meaningful existence in the Diaspora, and which conceives of Diaspora existence as living in exile, is remote from the thinking of most Jews who live in free democratic societies. The persistent hopes and efforts of Israeli leaders and Zionist organizations to achieve substantial increases in *aliya* from Western Diaspora communities cannot be counted on to achieve far greater success than they have achieved in the past." The World Jewish Congress is not a part of the Zionist movement, and even within its ranks the statement was controversial. Yet it touched a sensitive nerve in Israel, and in the discussions it provoked some argued that without Zionism's "denigration of a secure and meaningful Jewish existence in the Diaspora" Jewish identity might be viewed as religious rather than national and Israel's *raison d'être* might yet be called into question.

These and many other issues, including the status of Israel's non-Jewish citizens and the possible participation of Diaspora Jews in policy making in Israel, are important and potentially troubling to Zionism. They indicate that those who support the idea of a Jewish state do not necessarily agree on how to translate their shared vision into a precise political formula. Yet the existence of these issues is not a basis for arguing that Zionism has failed or is being rejected by its followers. The Israeli polity is not becoming any less inextricably Jewish, and the relationship

between Israel and the Diaspora, though sometimes problematic, is strong and getting stronger. These issues simply make it clear that building the Jewish state, or any state, is a difficult and never-ending task. As in the case of Palestinian Arabs, it is for Jews themselves to say whether they are a national community or a collection of individuals and, since they have chosen the former, to define the requirements of their national self-determination. It is for this reason that secularist proposals are destined to be rejected by all but a handful of Jews and that Jews should not be faulted for this rejection, regardless of the difficulty of their alternative path.

This said, it is essential to add that Zionists must be active participants in the search for Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation, acknowledging and addressing the conflict between their own aspirations and the legitimate rights of Palestinians. One thing Zionists must do is stop blaming the victim, an example of which is their attitude toward Arab citizens of Israel. Many Zionists deny the role of the Jewish state in fostering Arab problems and insist that Arab society is simply too "traditional" to advance very rapidly. An even more salient illustration is the rhetoric Zionists often employ to buttress their claims to a state in Palestine and to undermine those of Palestinians. Beyond arguing that uncompromising Arab attitudes prior to 1948 are the principal reason for the Palestinians' later plight, and that Zionism therefore bears no particular responsibility for helping to solve the problem, supporters of Israel also frequently talk about the Jewish state's accomplishments in "making the desert bloom," creating "an island of stability and democracy in a sea of turmoil and authoritarianism," and serving as "an outpost of Western civilization."

The offensive and counterproductive nature of such rhetoric, advanced in the misguided belief that it enhances Israel's moral legitimacy, has been discussed elsewhere. It reflects a colonial mentality wherein right is equated with power and productive exploitation, a doctrine which opposes the principle of self-determination and suggests that dominating or displacing an indigenous population is acceptable, even desirable, if the result is increased efficiency. In addition to being based on half-truths, rhetoric which associates Zionism with such thinking cannot but cost Israel support in progressive circles, obscuring the validity of Zionism's own program. It also lays a foundation for the denial of Jewish self-determination, should the Arabs eventually be able to devote more productive resources to Palestine. Worst of all, the logic of colonialism militates against reconciliation by assigning morality and right to only one protagonist in a conflict situation. Blaming the victim conceives of conflict resolution in terms of control rather than of compromise and the redress of grievances.

A second thing Zionists must do is to take the Palestinians seriously, not as a threat, but as a legitimate political force. They must accept the PLO as the Palestinians' own chosen interlocutor and seek ways to establish a dialogue with the organization. They must also recognize both the validity of Palestinian national aspirations and the centrality of the Palestinian problem in the Arab-Israeli dispute. Finally, Zionists must take seriously the spirit of the PLO's secularist proposals, not embracing their substance, but acknowledging that a fusion of religion and politics does pose problems and, even more, that proposals which invite imaginative

thinking about Israeli-Palestinian accommodation are precisely what is needed in the Middle East. In sum, and above all, Zionists must accord to Palestinians the same measure of seriousness they properly claim for themselves, founded on the principle that each people has the right to select its own representatives and to define for itself the content of its identity and path to self-determination.

Secularism and Palestinian Statehood

Within the Arab world, Palestinian statehood is considered a *sine qua non* for resolving the Arab-Israeli dispute. Support for a two-state solution was made official in a peace plan adopted at the Arab Summit conference of September 1982, held in Fez. Even before the Fez Summit, however, most Arab states had endorsed United Nations Resolution 242, which by the mid- or late 1970s they had come to interpret as offering peace to Israel in return for the Jewish state's recognition of the Palestinians' own right to self-determination and independence. The mainstream Arab consensus in favor of mutual Israeli-Palestinian recognition has also been consistently championed by Egypt. Though criticized by other Arabs for signing the Camp David accords and a peace treaty with Israel, the government in Cairo has consistently called for the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

Many political questions nonetheless surround the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. First, what should be the borders of such a state? Should they be based on total Israeli withdrawal from territory captured in 1967? Should they perhaps go further or, alternatively, might they permit Israel to retain some of the land captured in 1967? A related issue concerns the possibility of a link between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, should these territories indeed be the basis of an independent Palestinian state. Second, would the state be viable and able to maintain its independence, protecting its sovereignty against regional and other powers that might seek to exploit or dominate it? This question has been much debated, although a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza would not be among the least populated or self-sufficient of the countries in Africa and Asia. Third, who would constitute the citizenry of the state? A minor issue in this regard concerns the residents of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, not all of whom would necessarily prefer to return to Israel. More critical is the relation of the state to the Palestinian diaspora, including the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs who are citizens of Israel. No more than one-third of the world's approximately four to five million Palestinians live in the West Bank and Gaza. It had been hoped in the late 1970s that the Camp David accords would provide a framework for fashioning answers to these and other questions; but this hope soon proved to be unfounded, both because the negotiations envisioned at Camp David made no provision for PLO participation and also because the Israeli government emptied the accords of their intended content regarding Palestinian self-determination. Nevertheless, whatever the framework within which negotiations eventually take place, these are the kinds

of issues that will have to be resolved if a Palestinian state is to be established alongside Israel.

A particularly difficult question concerns Jerusalem. The original UN partition plan called for Jerusalem to have an international status, but the city became divided after the 1947–48 war. Israel annexed the western portion and established its national capital there, although many nations kept their embassies in Tel Aviv to protest this action. Jordan annexed eastern Jerusalem, which included the Old City and most of the major holy sites; and though Amman remained the capital of the country, Jerusalem was the political, intellectual, and economic center of the West Bank. Since 1967, the city has been united under Israeli rule, and successive Israeli governments have sought to increase its Jewish character. There has been an extensive building program aimed at bringing more Jews to the city, and at least some Arab residents have been displaced. Israel has also sought to weaken ties between East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank. Among the justifications Israel offers for its actions are that (1) Jews have always lived in Jerusalem, and since 1882 the city has in fact had a Jewish majority; and (2) Israel protects the holy places of all religions and guarantees free access to worshipers of every faith, something that was not the case when Jordan ruled the Old City. Though most of Israel's arguments are accurate, it is difficult to see how they justify annexation or action to change the city's character. On the other hand, there is room for considerable debate about the most suitable status for Jerusalem should a Palestinian state be established alongside Israel. Internationalization has remained attractive in many ways, although this could in fact mean many different things. Moreover, Israel would want to maintain Jerusalem as its capital, and the Palestinians would undoubtedly want Jerusalem to be the capital of their state as well. Indeed, the Fez Plan of 1982 is explicit in calling for East Jerusalem to be the capital of the Palestinian state to be established in the West Bank and Gaza. Can this be done without repartitioning the city, perhaps in the context of some innovative international or binational administration? Like the issues mentioned above, these difficult political questions will have to be answered if there is to be a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

A question more central to the present inquiry concerns the appropriateness of creating a Palestinian state alongside Israel. Jewish self-determination would not be abridged by a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian problem. Reservations expressed by Zionists are political; their acceptance of the principle of partition in 1947 indicates that Zionism's program of an independent Jewish state in Palestine is fully compatible with this notion. Israel and its supporters might prefer to exercise sovereignty over a greater amount of territory, but the establishment of a Jewish state in only part of Palestine is in no sense incompatible with the normative foundations on which the ideology of Zionism is based. It must be asked, however, whether Palestinian national aspirations can be satisfied by the creation of a state alongside Israel or whether, alternatively, they can be fulfilled only through the establishment of a secular Arab-Jewish state in the whole of Palestine. In other words, does the PLO's de-Zionization proposal represent but one possible solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or, given the essence of Palestinian nationalism,

is it the only way in which the Palestinian people's right to self-determination can be attained?

There are several reasons why the idea of a secular state strikes a responsive chord among Palestinians. One is that the potential for conflict between Muslim and Christian Palestinians may be reduced by divorcing religion and politics. The Lebanese case, which admittedly is not totally analogous, dramatically illustrates the difficulties that may flow from the maintenance of confessional boundaries. An even more important source of support for the PLO's proposal for a secular and democratic state is that it permits accommodation with Jews without the abdication of claims to the whole of Palestine. Some Palestinians may see it as permitting them to return to the homes they left in 1947–48, though this is naive since many have been razed and most others have been occupied (often by Arabs rather than by Jews) for more than thirty years. More generally, Palestinians feel a tie to the entire land of Palestine and are reluctant to abandon what they believe to be their rights in the whole of the territory. It is for this reason that they rejected the UN partition resolution of 1947, and these same sentiments contribute to their present-day interest in proposals that are not based on partition.

Perhaps the most important source of Palestinian interest in secularism is a belief that progress in the Arab world requires an ideological revolution and that nowhere has this been more apparent than in Palestine. Prior to 1947, Palestinian leadership was conservative, fragmented, and self-interested, failing to develop Palestinian society or to prepare it for the confrontation with Zionism. After 1947, the weakness of traditional Arab regimes became further evident, as the Arabs consistently failed to match performance and rhetoric in their attempts to liberate Palestine. Finally, in the 1967 war, out of which present PLO leadership and the revised National Charter emerged, the nadir of perceived Arab impotence was reached. In a fashion reminiscent of Arab thought in the nineteenth century, Palestinians saw clearly the weakness of the Arab world and concluded that without a radical change in established norms and patterns of political organization the present unhappy situation would continue. Secularism and democracy seemed to represent those qualities which were all too often absent in Arab countries and to constitute alternatives to political formulae productive of weakness. Moreover, by turning their unfortunate circumstances into an opportunity for effecting the necessary ideological transformation, Palestinians could not only deal with their own problems but could also become a force for progressive change throughout the Arab world.

Despite the preceding, there are imperfections in the fit between secularism and Palestinian nationalism. First, the former does not appear to be essential to the latter. Palestinians themselves must define the content of their national program. Nevertheless, it seems clear that secularism has been advanced as a solution to a problem, as a strategy rather than as a defining element of the Palestinian national consciousness that has been crystallizing for decades. A nonsecular state run by and for Palestinians would be no less authentic an embodiment of Palestinian peoplehood than the polity envisioned in the PLO's de-Zionization proposal. Indeed, it is onto this basic objective that the notion of a formal separation between religion and politics has only recently been grafted. Thus, whatever the merits of secularism

and other changes in Middle Eastern political economy, such programs and policies are not synonymous with or inseparable from Palestinian self-determination, and a state without them would not somehow be less than fully Palestinian.

A second point is that Palestinians, like Israelis, have a diaspora to which their state would feel attached. This bond is not to be condemned; but it is striking that Palestinians who complain about Israel's Law of Return, for example, because it appears to give more rights to foreign Jews than to non-Jewish Israeli citizens, would themselves have to fashion instruments for conducting relations with fellow nationals in other lands. In other words, Palestinian nationhood would be more extensive than Palestinian statehood, one of the principal problems that Palestinians see flowing from the absence of secularism in Israel. The situation becomes further confused when the presence of Jewish citizens in a de-Zionized Palestinian state is added to the equation, and even more so if these Palestinian Jews, like Palestinian Arabs, were to maintain ties to their own Diaspora. Perhaps there is some bold new concept of statehood that could accommodate this situation, but it is not secularism as commonly defined and it does not involve an absence of the external dimension for which secularists criticize Israel. If secularism means equal claim on the state for all citizens, and beyond this foreign relations that are not prejudiced by considerations of race, religion, or national origin, then a Palestinian state cannot be both secular and dedicated to the needs of all Palestinians.

A related point concerns the place of Arabism in the ideology and identity of a Palestinian state. Palestinian Arabs would presumably wish their state to be Arab in character, dedicated, like other Arab countries, to the interests of Arabism and the greater Arab nation. Whether this can be done without also embracing Islam, as a civilization and historical legacy, is itself a matter of some doubt. Even Christians in the Arab world have often acknowledged that Islam is "the national culture of all Arabs" and that the Arabs thus have "no need to distinguish between religion and nationalism." But beyond whatever Islamic content is inseparable from Arabism, national political identification with Arabism is itself very close to a rejection of secularism in the Palestinian case, since the proposed Palestinian state would contain many non-Arab Jewish citizens. Secularism is absent, it would appear, when the identity of the state is officially tied to the attributes of any group that is not coterminous with the citizenry of the country, regardless of whether that group is religious, racial, linguistic, cultural, or other. Thus, separating only religion and politics will not result in secularism. A truly secular Arab-Jewish state can be achieved only if Palestinian Arabs are prepared to define their Arabism as no more than a personal cultural heritage, which bears no relation to the character, mission, or identity of their polity.

A fourth point is that secularism is an inadequate and perhaps even an irrelevant program for ending the weakness of the Arab world, for leading Palestinians and others through the kinds of transformations that would make them strong enough to confront their domestic and foreign enemies. For one thing, Palestinians should resist efforts to attribute their weakness to social or cultural "backwardness." Critical self-appraisal is welcome and necessary; but the inappropriateness of blaming the victim has already been discussed, and it is even worse when the victim takes

the lead in this venture, exaggerating his inadequacies and thereby accepting responsibility for his exploitation by others. Moreover, not only does this have the undesirable consequence of freeing Zionists and others from responsibility for their acts, it is based on too narrow an assessment of the determinants of power and powerlessness and thus is an inadequate prescription for progress. Powerlessness flows from international political and economic constraints, as well as from internal organizational or social deficiencies. Few Palestinians would contend that the Third World is weak primarily because of its own social backwardness, and they should not accept this proposition uncritically in their own case either.

Two additional observations can be made in relation to this general point. The first is that even though internal reform may be one necessary ingredient in the quest to end powerlessness, it is not clear that this requires a dissociation of religion and politics. The strength of nonsecular Israel would seem to belie any necessary connection between weakness and a rejection of secularism. Some might even argue that a major source of Israeli strength is Jewish *asabiyya*, or ethnic solidarity, which would be weakened or lost were the Jews to become a religious group rather than a national community. In any event, a fusion of religion and politics in Israel has not precluded the emergence of a state which, within the parameters of its Jewish constituency, is powerful, progressive, democratic, and productive. Even allowing for international Jewish and non-Jewish support and for the contribution of Arab citizens to the development of the Jewish state, it is clear that Israel has been able to fashion a strong and dynamic society through internal development efforts which have not required it to become a totally secular state.

The second observation is that the Arab world has at its disposal more effective instruments of development than internal cultural reform. The wealth of oil-exporting Arab states provides considerable resources for domestic development, and oil-induced modernization is indeed underway in many areas, suggesting that secularism, or even ideological revolution in general, is not a necessary condition for ending weakness and dependency. Some ideological guidance may of course be necessary to ensure that resources are used wisely, but here again it is not self-evident that this succeeds or fails as a function of secularism. Also, on a different level, growing oil wealth gives Arab and Muslim countries considerable international political and economic influence and enables them to work effectively toward a broad restructuring of North-South relations, thereby reducing constraints on development in all Third World societies.

A fifth and final point about the fit between secularism and the ideological revolution called for by Palestinians concerns the view of Islam that this doctrine implies. As with any complex normative system, radically different platforms have been justified in the name of Islam. But, without raising impossible questions about the "true" meaning of Islam, it certainly appears that Islam in modern times has often been a force for progressive change. For example, Islam was a unifying force in the construction of successful anticolonial movements in some Arab countries, suggesting that religion can be helpful in mobilizing popular support for desired political action. A more recent and perhaps more compelling example is that of Iran, where Islamic sentiments and institutions were fundamental contributors to

one of the most significant political revolutions in modern Middle Eastern history. The case of Libya, although controversial in many respects, also suggests that a radical restructuring of domestic political and economic relationships is not retarded by the absence of secularism, and in a sense draws its inspiration from a union of religious and political attachments. Finally, one must note that opposition to corrupt and authoritarian political regimes is at the heart of the Islamic resurgence in many Arab and Muslim countries. All of this indicates that Islam can be a force for change as well as for continuity and that meaningful attacks on established patterns of authority and political economy, the foundation of Arab weakness in the Palestinian analysis, do not come only in the guise of secularism.

The preceding is not intended to suggest that secularism is an inappropriate path for the Palestinians or anyone else to follow. But it is not the only path to development. Moreover, while it is for Palestinians themselves to say whether this particular strategy of nation-building is the one they wish to pursue, secularism is not a central and defining component of Palestinian nationalism; it is rather an issue of public policy in debates about the best way to construct a strong and progressive society. Thus, in conclusion, a nonsecular state ruled by Palestinians and dedicated to Palestinian welfare and self-determination would not somehow be a false realization of Palestinian national aspirations and would not be inevitably condemned to weakness and underdevelopment.

Conclusion: The Prospects for Compromise

The preceding pages have argued that (1) the Palestinians are a nation, with legitimate rights to collective self-determination in the form of statehood; (2) the Jews possess these national rights as well and Jewish self-determination is not compatible with the notion of a secular state as the Jewish homeland; and (3) secularism is an option for Palestinian efforts at development but is not a condition which must be fulfilled in order to realize Palestinian national aspirations. This said, it follows that the legitimate rights of both Jews and Palestinian Arabs can be achieved only through compromise, mutual recognition, and, ultimately, the creation of two states in Palestine. Israel must be recognized by the Palestinians and it must be recognized as a Jewish state. Zionists, on the other hand, must accept the legitimacy of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, one that may be either secular or nonsecular as the Palestinians choose but which will live in peace with Israel and which Israel will in turn respect as sovereign and independent. It is hard to envision any other approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that will not bring both continued violence and an abridgement of the just claims of one of the parties.

While a two-state solution was advocated by many during the early 1980s, it continued to meet with rejection in many Zionist and Palestinian circles. Palestinians often sought to establish that the Jews are a religious group rather than a national community, instead of acknowledging that if there are any questions on this matter they are for Jews themselves to address. Also, despite some recent statements in favor of mutual recognition, the accepted and authoritative organization representing

the Palestinian people remained officially opposed to the principle of a Jewish state. Israel and its allies, principally the United States, were just as intransigent, perhaps more so. Both the Likud government and the mainstream Labor Party strongly opposed the establishment of a Palestinian state. They either denied the legitimacy of Palestinian national aspirations or argued that Palestinians should pursue their quest for self-determination in the Kingdom of Jordan, denying to the Palestinians the right to decide for themselves the meaning of their political identity. In a similar fashion, Israeli politicians refused to accept the PLO as the chosen representative of their adversary and persisted in attempts to identify Arab leaders in the West Bank and Gaza who would accept less than a national solution to the Palestinian problem. The United States, Israel's major international supporter, also refrained from endorsing the concept of a Palestinian state, even as a principle which would not be translated into practice except in the context of a general Middle East peace; and the United States withheld recognition from the PLO as well and resisted efforts at the United Nations to incorporate language about Palestinian national rights into Resolution 242.

Unfortunately, supporters of both the Zionist and the Palestinian Arab causes found ample grounds for attacking one another. Each offered feigned devotion to historical accuracy, ideological purity, or both in order to reject the aspirations of the other. Each also buttressed its position by pointing to the intransigence of the other and to certain deplorable political actions of its adversary, all of which led most observers in 1981 and early 1982 to conclude that it would not be easy to find a way out of the vicious circle of hostility and mistrust. The Palestinian de-Zionization proposal, even though it falls short on substantive grounds, is noteworthy precisely because it attempted to break with existing patterns of mutual recrimination. It accepted the reality and even the legitimacy of Jewish interests in Palestine and called for discussion about the future rather than the past. Sadat's trip to Jerusalem in November 1977, which ultimately resulted in the Camp David accords and the Egypt-Israel peace treaty, was a similar departure. Sadat called for a break with existing patterns and proposed a dialogue concerning the future. Many observers believe that the Egyptian president began his overture toward Israel with no intention of making a separate peace and that he signed at Camp David a document he sincerely believed would lead to the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. In this analysis, it was the determination of the Begin government to empty the accords of their intended content, which ultimately produced the resignations of the two Israeli cabinet members most deeply involved in the forging of the agreements, that prevented the Camp David accords from producing a solution to the Palestinian problem.

Is there among Israelis and Palestinians the political will for future bold strokes, for efforts at compromise based on a dialogue that accepts the principles of self-determination, mutual recognition, and a two-state solution? In the period between the signing of the Camp David accords and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, it was difficult to be optimistic, although there were also some bases for hope. In the Arab world, the majority accepted UN Resolution 242. Arabs demanded Israel's more or less complete withdrawal from territory captured in 1967, including East Jeru-

saalem, and they wanted a national solution to the Palestinian problem. But, under these conditions, it appeared that most would accept the right of the Jewish state of Israel to live in secure and recognized borders and in peace with its neighbors. The rejectionist Arab states that dissociated themselves from this position were few in number, divided among themselves and, in some cases, open to compromise.

The Palestinians themselves appeared divided and ambivalent. The official position of the PLO remained the de-Zionization proposal, which denies Israel's right to exist as a separate, independent, and Jewish state. Yet there were persistent rumors and statements to the effect that many PLO leaders would accept the Jewish state of Israel under the conditions outlined above. For example, Palestinian calls in 1979 for a revision of Resolution 242 were accompanied by strong indications that the organization would then endorse the amended resolution. Other illustrations include the 1979 statements of European socialist leaders Kreisky and Brandt, who met with PLO Chairman Arafat and then expressed confidence that the PLO's ultimate goal was *not* the destruction of Israel.

On the other hand, as Zionists were quick to point out, PLO leaders always pulled back from public advocacy of a two-state solution. Following the Kreisky and Brandt statements, for example, the PLO held a news conference in Damascus and reiterated its uncompromising attitude toward Israel. Also, in June 1980, al-Fatah adopted a platform stating that it sought to liberate Palestine completely and to liquidate the Zionist entity. This was in addition to the continuing intransigence of more militant and "revolutionary" elements within the PLO, such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, led by George Habash. These latter elements were less ambiguous in their rejection of a two-state solution in Palestine, and they also appeared militantly committed to secularism and ideological transformation as ends in themselves, whether or not they happened to be desirable from a purely Palestinian point of view. One could perhaps argue that these men were revolutionaries first and Palestinians second.

Turning to Israel, the political will to accept Palestinian statehood, to treat the Palestinians as Jews themselves demand to be treated, was extremely limited. The Likud government showed itself unwilling to make any serious concessions to Palestinian self-determination, despite criticism from the Israeli right that it had given away too much at Camp David. Under the leadership of Menachem Begin, it intensified its effort to "create facts" in the West Bank and Gaza, establishing a network of Jewish settlements and interests that was intended to reduce any possibility of Israeli withdrawal in the future. The centrist Labor Party also wanted to retain much of the West Bank, though it claimed to be concerned only with security and not with the "historical Jewish rights" that preoccupy Likud. Labor also favored the incorporation into Jordan of any territory from which Israel withdrew and was adamantly opposed to the creation of an independent Palestinian state. Among Israeli Jews there remained only the small and fragmented political left, which claimed to recognize Palestinian national rights but advocated compromise that for the most part stopped short of accepting Palestinian statehood or even negotiations with the PLO.

Was it possible that all this would change? Or were the prospects for compromise,

mutual recognition, and the establishment of two states in Palestine perhaps greater than has been suggested? As mentioned, many believed the mainstream of the PLO was ready to recognize Israel, if only there were some indication that Israel would compromise as well, and observers of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and in Israel also tended to conclude that a substantial majority were not committed to the destruction of the Jewish state and would accept a Palestinian state alongside Israel. Most of these Arabs did not believe the creation of Israel was justified, but many accepted the Jewish state as a fact and were prepared to come to terms with it. With respect to Israel, many suggested that intransigence was based primarily on distrust of Arab motives and only very secondarily on expansionist impulses. The Zionist left in particular argued that Israeli attitudes would change substantially if Palestinian statements and actions made it clear that there were a willingness to accept Israel's permanent and secure presence in the Middle East, and they pointed out in this connection that prior to Camp David Israelis had been overwhelmingly opposed to withdrawal from Sinai but after the Egypt-Israel peace treaty a substantial majority supported the policy.

While the preceding suggests that it was not inconceivable that both Israelis and Palestinians would move toward acceptance of compromise and support for a two-state solution, it seemed much more likely during the winter and spring of 1982 that the impasse would remain and that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would continue to be characterized by confrontation and violence. There would be a great deal of political and diplomatic activity in the future. But, if the pessimistic conclusions of the present analysis are correct, most of this activity would not be directed toward conflict resolution or even a reduction of distrust. It would rather reflect the jockeying of each side for international support and the action each side took to parry the political and ideological thrusts of the other. Thus, while the basis for a settlement seemed clear to many outside observers, namely, that Israelis and Palestinians should accept one another's right to self-determination, with each recognizing that its adversary has a valid and legitimate claim on the same political rights it demands for itself, developments since camp David suggested that there was little immediate likelihood the parties themselves would find a way to move toward negotiations based on this formula.

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9.

Israel's Drive into the West Bank and Gaza

Mark Tessler and Ann Mosely Lesch

Will Israel make its control over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip permanent? Can the momentum of its drive into these areas be reversed? Events in 1982–83 gave these questions special urgency, preempting discussion of the modalities of Israeli-Palestinian mutual recognition and a two-state solution.

Many believe that if the government of Prime Minister Menachem Begin succeeds in its attempt to lay a foundation for the exercise of Israeli sovereignty over the territories, then movement toward peace will end and prospects for Arab-Israeli accommodation will be dealt a blow from which they will not recover for a decade or more. This was the assumption underlying the peace initiative launched by President Ronald Reagan on September 1, 1982. The president expressed the view that the momentum of peace must be revived before Israel's creeping annexation on the West Bank and in Gaza reaches the point of no return.

Can the Begin government's policies be brought to a halt and Israel persuaded to redefine its thinking about the territories? While the answers to such questions will not be known for some time, attempts to accomplish these objectives will continue to be a major preoccupation in the months ahead.

Creeping Annexation

The Israeli government has consolidated its hold on the West Bank and Gaza through a multifaceted strategy, including the rapid expansion of settlements and the legal incorporation into Israel of East Jerusalem and Israeli-settled portions of the West Bank and Gaza. It is also implementing a version of autonomy for the Arabs that is intended to undermine nationalist influence and promote a compliant local leadership. Finally, the Begin government is taking active steps to suppress those Palestinian institutions that organize or even express opposition to these policies. These efforts have converged over the past 18 months as a coherent Israeli strategy and they have accelerated since the invasion of Lebanon in summer 1982.

The Likud government headed by Prime Minister Begin assumes that the West Bank and Gaza are part of the historic land of Israel and that Jews have an innate

right to settle and exercise sovereignty over the land. The government has placed Israeli settlements in the heavily populated highlands of the West Bank and amid the congested refugee camps in Gaza, breaking up the Arab areas into atomized segments. Since Likud came to power in 1977, at least 70 settlements have been built in the West Bank and 10 in Gaza, more than twice as many as were constructed during the decade of Labor rule that followed the territories' capture in 1967. The current total of almost 115 settlements, excluding the high-rise suburbs around Jerusalem, is expected to increase to 130 by 1985. Even more important, the number of Jewish settlers living in the territories, apart from the 75,000 Israelis living in East Jerusalem, has increased almost tenfold, from 3,000-4,000 under Labor to about 30,000 at present. The government claims that the settler population of the territories will increase to 100,000 by 1985, and the Jewish Agency has laid plans to equalize the Arab and Jewish populations on the West Bank by the year 2000.

The character of the settlements is also changing. After several years of having a makeshift appearance, marked by temporary housing and limited infrastructure, many settlers today live in attractive and well-built villas and apartment complexes. Trees planted when the first settlers arrived are beginning to mature and small-scale industries are emerging in some communities. Moreover, most settlers moving to the territories today are not ultra-nationalists motivated by ideological zeal. They are ordinary Israelis lured by the attractiveness of the communities, by their short commuting distance to major towns within Israel and, above all, by housing subsidies and other financial incentives the government provides to encourage relocation.

In addition to accelerating the establishment of settlements, the government has transformed their legal status. Since 1979, all settlements have been incorporated into five regional councils, whose jurisdiction is based on Israeli municipal and district law. Since May 1980, settlers on reserve duty are placed in the military unit nearest their settlement, thus ensuring that they do guard duty over the neighboring Arab town. In 1981, municipal and rabbinical courts opened in the town of Qiryat Arba, which adjoins Hebron and is the largest Jewish community on the West Bank. The net effect of these changes is to apply Israeli law to the residents of Jewish settlements and to undermine the territories' status as occupied land.

On June 30, 1980, the Knesset voted that unified Jerusalem was the capital of Israel, a move that was criticized by the governments of Egypt and the United States as violating a tacit understanding that no change would be made in the territorial status quo during the autonomy talks agreed to at Camp David. The Jerusalem issue precipitated a break in those negotiations and the withdrawal of all embassies from Jerusalem in September 1980. It also underlined the Israeli government's determination to exercise exclusive sovereignty and control despite concerted international opposition.

Beyond insisting that the autonomy arrangements negotiated at Camp David did not apply to East Jerusalem, the Israeli government put forward its own interpretation of what autonomy meant for the West Bank and Gaza. Moreover, not only did it argue on behalf of definitions and understandings that Egypt and the U.S. claimed were erroneous, it proceeded to implement policies derived from its own views

prior to the conclusion of the negotiations. The autonomy plan developed by the Israeli government is based on the assumptions that (1) Arab autonomy should be personal, not territorial; (2) the self-governing authority should have administrative but not legislative powers; (3) the Jewish settlements should be subject to Israeli jurisdiction, law, and administration, not to the authority of the Arab autonomy council; and (4) Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza should be asserted at the end of the transitional period, thereby precluding the establishment of an independent Palestinian Arab state in those territories or any other political arrangement requiring Israel's withdrawal.

In order to ensure their version of autonomy, the Israeli government adopted two new approaches to the Arab population in the fall of 1981. First, the civil and security functions of the Military Government were divided and special Israeli civil administrators were appointed for the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This move corresponded with the Israeli negotiating position which held that the Military Government would be withdrawn but not abolished. Second, many elected municipal and village councils were disbanded and a network of Israeli-appointed and -funded but Arab-staffed Village Leagues was fostered on the West Bank. By mid-1982, the Begin government had dissolved nine Arab municipal councils, specifying that its actions were not being taken in response to civil unrest but rather to correct a fundamental error made by the previous Israeli government in allowing these officials to be elected to their positions. The functions of dismissed mayors and dissolved municipalities were turned over to Israeli administrators and the Village Leagues. In addition, numerous headmen in villages, towns, and refugee camps were replaced by men willing to cooperate with the civil administrator and the leagues. In the fall of 1982 a federation of Village Leagues was established, which aspired to unify and coordinate Israeli-sponsored leadership throughout the West Bank.

Taken together, the establishment of the civil administration, the fostering of compliant Arab political structures, and the ouster of elected representatives were designed to compel Palestinians to accept the Israeli version of autonomy and to make the outside world believe they did so willingly. The head of the Israeli civil administration, Res. Col. Menachem Milson, was explicit about the political transformation of the territories that he sought. He wrote and stated that his policies would drive out supporters of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and bring to power an alternative local leadership that would accept limited autonomy under Israeli sovereignty.

Severe restrictions have been placed on the operation of Arab universities and schools in the West Bank and Gaza, including a requirement of obtaining annual operating licenses, loyalty oaths from foreign faculty, and restrictions on the purchase of books and library materials. (More than twenty faculty and staff from an-Najah National University in Nablus were compelled to leave the country in the fall of 1982 as a result of these pressures, although the application of the loyalty oath was tacitly suspended after U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz publicly condemned the requirement, comparing it to the restrictions on universities in the United States during the McCarthy period.) Palestinian universities have also been

closed for intermittent and sometimes extended periods. Other measures include censoring, closing, or limiting the distribution of Arabic newspapers published in East Jerusalem; banning the entry of certain books into the territories; placing restrictions on travel, sometimes as a form of house or town arrest for individuals considered troublesome and sometimes for whole communities as a form of collective punishment; and frequently harassing Palestinians simply to demonstrate the forceful presence of the Israeli army. This intensified and systematic suppression of dissent should be regarded as an integral part of Israel's strategy for molding the West Bank and Gaza to fit its concept of self-rule.

Even though Israel has had to divert massive resources to the war in Lebanon, the effort to dominate and absorb the West Bank and Gaza continues unabated. In fact, the two efforts are closely linked in the mind of the Israeli government. Government spokesmen seeking to justify the Lebanese invasion have repeatedly expressed their belief that the PLO must be destroyed and Palestinian hopes for independence eliminated before the residents of the West Bank and Gaza will accept the Israeli version of autonomy. Former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, architect of the war, wrote candidly in late August 1982: "Today, with the P.L.O. terrorists gone, I believe Palestinians will come forward prepared to negotiate with Israel on the autonomy plan proposed by Prime Minister Menachem Begin."¹

The U.S. Role

In the context of these accelerating efforts to absorb the West Bank and Gaza, and to imprint a new political stamp on the map of the Middle East, the Reagan Plan came as a severe shock to Israel. Its premises diverged radically from current Israeli assumptions and actions; the initiative committed the prestige of the American president to "an orderly transfer of authority from Israel to the Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza." The plan also came at a critical moment in Israeli-Arab relations. Opponents of Israel's drive into the territories, both within the Jewish state and among Palestinians and other Arabs, increasingly argue that only resolute action by the United States can induce the Begin government to modify its policies. The Reagan Plan raised cautious hopes that the United States might be willing to use its considerable leverage over Jerusalem and press for the realization of this objective.

In the past, the American government has sought to preserve a semblance of neutrality in the Arab-Israeli conflict by avoiding the presentation of detailed blueprints for a solution. Instead, Washington has enunciated basic principles and proposed negotiating forums through which the interested parties could reach their own terms of agreement. The United States backed the principle articulated in the United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 of November 1967 that Israel should withdraw from territories occupied in the June war in return for gaining peaceful relations with its Arab neighbors. Similarly, Washington supported the concepts of autonomy and a transitional period set forth in the Framework for Peace developed at Camp David in September 1978. In each case, it was content with agreement

on deliberately imprecise general principles, or what is frequently known as “constructive ambiguity,” and left the precise meaning and terms of the agreement to be negotiated later.

In line with these stands, the U.S. has tried to create negotiating contexts through which the parties could reach agreement. These have sometimes involved making the U.S. an active intermediary among the protagonists, along the lines of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s “shuttle diplomacy” from 1973 to 1975. The forums have also included the multilateral Geneva conference, which convened briefly in December 1973 and which the Carter administration sought to revive in 1977, and the Camp David accords of 1978, which paved the way for the Egypt-Israel treaty of 1979.

The United States is not the detached observer that these approaches might presuppose. The Middle East is vital to American national security, and the U.S. not only strives to project its power onto the region but also has concrete interests which it seeks to preserve. Moreover, contradictions among some of these interests impair Washington’s ability to realize them simultaneously. U.S. interests in the Middle East are closely tied to its need for access to oil from the Persian Gulf, which in turn leads Washington to seek the security and stability of the states along the Gulf and of Saudi Arabia. The U.S. also seeks to foster a friendly regime in Egypt, the largest Arab country, which controls the Suez Canal and potentially dominates the northern half of the Red Sea. A third American preoccupation is to ensure the survival of Israel. Finally, in the context of these interests, the global Soviet-American rivalry is reflected in a dual concern to limit the Soviet presence in the Middle East and to avoid direct conflict with Moscow in times of crisis in the region.

America’s deep-rooted concern to guarantee Israel’s existence sometimes conflicts with its interests in access to oil and in assisting friendly Arab regimes. Washington has become involved in diplomacy to resolve the Arab-Israeli dispute, but this often reduces the credibility of American assertions of its objectivity and impartiality. For example, when the U.S. has proved unwilling to use leverage over Israel, the Arabs have usually assumed that Washington favors a diplomatic outcome that is to Israel’s advantage. Further, the U.S. has provided Israel with extensive military and economic resources, to enable the Jewish state to guarantee its own security. In the context of a continuing failure to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, such actions keep American relations precarious with the oil-rich states and offer the Soviets opportunities for influence among Arab countries that might otherwise keep their distance from Moscow.

The Palestine issue has been the most difficult aspect of the problem for the U.S. to confront. The U.S. has been ambivalent toward the application of self-determination in Palestine: the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination, upheld by Washington in relation to other Third World peoples, has been denied to the Palestinians partly because of the existence of a rival claimant, Israel, to which the U.S. is deeply committed. This contradiction is difficult for American policy makers to admit. They have frequently tried to square the circle with such formulae as the January 4, 1978, Aswan Statement—which would “enable the

Palestinians to participate in the determination of their own future”—and Camp David’s reference to the “legitimate rights” of the Palestinians.

Washington has also set rigid and self-imposed limitations on contact with the Palestine Liberation Organization, the internationally recognized representative of the Palestinian people. In a memorandum of understanding that Kissinger signed with Israel on September 1, 1975, the U.S. pledged not to recognize or to negotiate with the PLO so long as the latter organization does not recognize Israel’s right to exist and does not accept UN Resolutions 242 and 338. While legally this does not rule out informal dialogue with the PLO, American presidents have placed a narrow construction on the formula and have refused any contact. Moreover, they have not demanded a reciprocal pledge of recognition of the Palestinians from the Israeli government. This asymmetrical formulation has been a persistent irritant in American-Arab relations and has hampered the U.S.’ pursuit of its objectives in the Gulf and in key Arab regimes such as Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia.

The Reagan Plan

The Reagan Plan of September 1, 1982, can be seen as an extension and consolidation of the U.S. commitments to Resolution 242 and to Camp David, as well as a further effort to resolve its various diverse interests in the Middle East. President Reagan urged that since the PLO has evacuated Beirut and there is now an opportunity to rebuild Lebanon, “we must also move to resolve the root causes of conflict between Arabs and Israelis,” especially “the homelessness of the Palestinian people.” “The question now is how to reconcile Israel’s legitimate security concerns with the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.” Reagan sought to reassure the Israelis by stating that “the U.S. will not support the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza”; but he then reassured the Arabs by adding, “and we will not support annexation or permanent control by Israel.” He emphasized that “it is the firm view of the United States that self-government by the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan offers the best chance for a durable, just and lasting peace.” In addition, the president spelled out more precisely the American understanding of certain items from the Camp David autonomy agreements. He called for “the immediate adoption of a settlement freeze by Israel” and for “participation by the Palestinian inhabitants of East Jerusalem in the election” of the self-governing authority. Most significantly, he stated that full autonomy must give the “Palestinian inhabitants real authority over themselves, the land and its resources.”

Secretary of State Shultz specified further, in congressional testimony on September 10, that the U.S. does not recognize unilateral acts with respect to final-status issues. Thus, in the case of Jerusalem, for example, the city should remain undivided but “its status must be determined through negotiations.” Similarly, the secretary indicated that the future of Israeli settlements must also “be determined in the course of final status negotiations.” Continuing his discussion of the settle-

ments, Shultz added that “we will not support their continuation as extraterritorial outposts, but neither will we support efforts to deny Jews the opportunity to live in the West Bank and Gaza under the duly constituted governmental authority there, as Arabs now live in Israel.”²

The Reagan Plan can be distinguished from past American diplomatic efforts in two key respects. First, it placed the full weight and prestige of the U.S. presidency behind a well-articulated plan, not merely a set of broad principles. In this regard, the president’s initiative gave explicit recognition to the inadequacy of previous diplomatic approaches based on constructive ambiguity. It proceeded instead on the assumption that successful negotiations require attention to desired substantive outcomes, not only to matters of procedure and to the forum of negotiations.

Second, the Reagan Plan came at a critically important moment, just after the U.S. negotiated the evacuation of the PLO from Beirut and before the diplomatic situation in Lebanon could freeze. The plan tried to compensate for the lack of a coherent Middle East policy in the previous years of the Reagan administration. The U.S. had allowed the autonomy talks to break down and had responded only mildly to Israel’s annexation of the Golan Heights and its acceleration of settlements. Moreover, this inertia was undermining Washington’s interests in the region and had contributed to a dangerous buildup of tensions in the area, especially with respect to the Palestinian issue. At a time of growing consensus that firm U.S. action was necessary to revive the peace process and to stem the drift toward confrontation and violence, the Reagan Plan was an opportunity to reestablish American credibility, to stop the escalation of regional tensions, and to reopen the door to negotiations for a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace.

The Israeli government reacted swiftly and angrily to the Reagan Plan. Begin termed it “an affront to Israel,” and an emergency session of the cabinet on September 2 unanimously concluded that “on the basis of these proposals (the government of Israel) will not enter into any negotiations with any party whatsoever.” The cabinet did reaffirm that it would continue to participate in the autonomy talks under the Camp David formula.

The Israeli government’s critique is based on its own understanding of Resolution 242 and Camp David, an understanding that differs fundamentally from the interpretations of all the other signatories, including the Israeli Labor Party, which was in power when 242 was drafted and subsequently endorsed by the Jewish state. Likud maintains that the withdrawal clause in Resolution 242 does not apply to the West Bank and Gaza, since the territories have been liberated rather than occupied and since they cannot be legally claimed by Jordan. The government also argues that the Reagan Plan deviates from Camp David by calling for a halt to settlements, by rejecting Israel’s annexation of East Jerusalem, and by contesting Israeli sovereignty over the territories. In rejecting the Reagan initiative, Begin thus reaffirmed that the West Bank and Gaza would never revert to Jordanian control, and on September 5 the cabinet underlined its determination by allocating \$18.5 million to erect new settlements in the territories.

In contrast, Israeli opposition leader Shimon Peres initially called the Reagan

Plan “a basis for dialogue with the U.S.” The Labor Party, which Peres heads, has consistently acknowledged that Resolution 242 applies to the West Bank and Gaza and has been willing to yield sovereignty over most of these territories to Jordan in the context of a peace settlement. Indeed, Peres noted the resemblance of the Reagan Plan to the long-held Labor Party position that negotiations should be conducted with Jordan on the basis of relinquishing substantial territory on the West Bank in return for recognition and peace. He objected, however, to any diminution of Israeli sovereignty in East Jerusalem. Later, Peres substantially qualified his statements, arguing that no Israeli settlements should be uprooted.

Most Arab leaders reacted to the Reagan Plan cautiously but relatively favorably. The president’s statement was timed to have a major impact on the Arab League summit, which met in Fez on September 8, and to strengthen the hand of those leaders who sought to legitimize a diplomatic effort in the wake of the Arabs’ demoralizing defeat in Lebanon. Even PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir Arafat stated carefully on September 3: “We do not reject [Reagan’s ideas] nor do we criticize them.”

The eight-point Fez plan, which was signed by all twenty Arab heads of state at the meeting, called for the dismantling of Jewish settlements and for Israel’s withdrawal to its pre-1967 borders. It further proclaimed the right of the Palestinians to self-determination under PLO leadership; backed the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, with East Jerusalem as its capital; and called for compensation for those Palestinians not wishing to return. To implement these objectives, the Fez plan proposed that the West Bank and Gaza be placed under United Nations supervision for a transitional period of several months and that the Security Council guarantee the peace and security of all states in the region, including the Palestinian state.

The conference host, King Hassan II, termed the Fez plan a first step toward nonbelligerency with Israel. Similarly, King Hussein of Jordan told the BBC on September 13 that Fez recreated an Arab consensus on the foundation for a just and durable peace. He stressed that Fez was compatible with the Reagan Plan, which he welcomed as “very constructive” and “very positive.” George Shultz then returned the compliment by calling Fez “a genuine breakthrough” and observing that the Arab states had condemned neither the United States nor Israel and had in fact implicitly recognized the Jewish state in their resolution. Even the Syrian president signed the Fez statement. Only Libya and Egypt did not attend the meeting: Libya because its leader rejected the diplomatic route and Egypt because it had not been readmitted to the Arab League.

To a considerable extent, the U.S. administration anticipated that Arab and Israeli reactions to the Reagan Plan would diverge widely. Coming on the heels of the invasion of Lebanon and the traumatic siege of Beirut, the plan was designed to thrust to the fore fresh and clear ideas for a political resolution and to shake the parties out of their fixed positions. Thus the plan sought to create conditions in Israel and the Arab world that would make a peace agreement possible. To reverse

the growing polarization and generate this kind of momentum, however, certain verbal and practical steps are needed to convince the parties that the U.S. is serious in its endeavor and that there is indeed an alternative to unending conflict.

To reassure Israel, Washington must continue to affirm its commitment to Israeli security and defensible borders. Reagan underlined in his speech that “America’s commitment to the security of Israel is ironclad” and commented that, before 1967, “the bulk of Israel’s population lived within artillery range of hostile Arab armies. I am not about to ask Israel to live that way again.” Equally important is emphasis on the requirement that the Arab leaders negotiate peace treaties with Israel, not merely military disengagements.

Threefold American moves are necessary to maintain Arab support for the Reagan Plan, or for any U.S. peace initiative: reemphasized opposition to unilateral Israeli changes in the status of the occupied territories; a dialogue with the Palestinians; and a coherent policy in response to Israeli military strikes against Arab territory. On the first point, Washington needs to reaffirm its opposition to Israeli efforts to incorporate the territories into the Jewish state. It needs to stress the illegality of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza and to emphasize its belief that they present serious obstacles to a negotiated solution. The U.S. must further take concrete steps to press for a modification of Israeli policy, or at the very least dissociate itself from the financing of a policy that is inconsistent both with America’s interest in the region and with the cause of peace more generally. Along these lines, measures to monitor the spending of American funds by Israel could put teeth into the prohibition against their use in the occupied territories.³ Alternatively, Washington could cut back aid in proportion to the amount that Israel spends on settlements.

Second, the U.S. would significantly reassure the Arabs if it were to enter into a political dialogue with the Palestinians through the PLO. Such contact would help those elements in the PLO and the Arab states who support the use of diplomacy. So far, Washington has accepted the idea that non-PLO Palestinians would be connected to a Jordanian negotiating team. It continues to balk at closer contact with the PLO, however.

Third, Washington should react promptly and effectively to unilateral Israeli military moves against the Arab states. The U.S. has been inconsistent in the past. When Israel bombed the Iraqi reactor in June 1981, the U.S. merely backed a verbal condemnation of Israel by the UN. In contrast, a high-level American emissary interceded to negotiate a ceasefire in Lebanon following Israel’s bombing of Beirut in July 1981 and subsequent artillery duels along the border. There was also a sharp contrast between Washington’s strong response to the Israeli drive into South Lebanon in March 1978 and its inaction in the opening weeks of the Israeli invasion in June 1982. This inconsistent behavior encourages the Arabs to interpret U.S. inaction as support for some of Israel’s military moves. Moreover, the Arab perception of American bias toward Israel is reinforced by the fact that even strong expressions of U.S. displeasure are rarely accompanied by serious efforts to use American leverage over the Jewish state, such as withholding or reducing military aid or banning the sale of antipersonnel weapons (such as cluster bombs). More consistent

and forceful responses to Israeli military strikes would give an important signal to the Arab regimes seeking to work with Washington.

Obstacles to the Reagan Plan

While many had hoped that the Reagan Plan would halt Israel's drive into the territories and stimulate new movement toward peace, there have in fact been major obstacles blocking the path toward a negotiated settlement. One problem is that delays in negotiating the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon have forced the postponement of talks concerning the West Bank and Gaza, giving the Begin government more time to create facts in the territories. The linkage between the Lebanese and Palestinian problems derives in part from the assumptions of the Reagan Plan itself. Assuming the PLO's departure from Beirut to be the key to stability, the president sought to capitalize on the resolution of the Lebanese conflict which he judged to be imminent. He apparently did not realize the complexity of the situation and greatly overestimated the momentum toward peace in Lebanon. Equally important, the linkage between Lebanon and the occupied territories has been stressed by the Arabs (especially King Hussein), who see the Lebanon negotiations as a critical test of U.S. credibility as a mediator. In the final analysis, however, this situation only benefits Israel. The sequential linking of talks over Lebanon and the territories has meant the postponement of the latter, and this in turn has given the Jewish state more time to consolidate its hold on the West Bank and Gaza and has compelled the U.S. to consume substantial political capital on the Lebanon negotiations, diminishing its ability to press Israel on Palestinian issues. If the Reagan Plan is to be pursued seriously, President Reagan must initiate two-track diplomacy and not delay talks on the West Bank until a comprehensive agreement is reached on the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon.

Another increasingly important obstacle is the matter of timing. The next campaign for the U.S. presidency has already begun, making it difficult for Reagan to put much pressure on Israel. Since negotiations on the West Bank and Gaza have not started, Reagan will be hesitant to press for them during his campaign for reelection. Moreover, it will be difficult for him to use military or economic aid as a lever on the Jewish state; overt measures to constrain Israel would be translated into a loss of campaign funds and a reduced possibility of reelection. Because of this situation, and despite an increasingly critical public image of Israel, Congress has continued to vote high levels of aid to Israel, in recent years even higher than those recommended by the administration.

A third problem is the need to establish a negotiating forum. At present, none is accepted by the parties. Reagan called on the Arabs to join the Camp David peace process, but Arab leaders have consistently opposed that forum and have little inclination to retract their opposition. Moreover, Egypt is disillusioned with the Camp David autonomy talks, which have been stalled for two years. It is also not clear that the Begin government would rejoin the autonomy talks, both because

it objects to legitimizing Jordan's role in any negotiations concerning the West Bank and because it opposes the presence of Palestinians selected by the PLO in the negotiating team. Nevertheless, no clear alternative exists. The Geneva conference aborted five years ago and Israel would probably block its revival. If Washington has to begin anew the laborious process of creating a negotiating forum, the onset of substantive talks is likely to be delayed indefinitely.

Washington has always avoided confronting the Palestinian issue directly, preferring instead to approach it through Jordan or Egypt. Yet this also reduces the prospects that the Reagan initiative will yield tangible results. If Washington continues to insist that Hussein alone can represent the Palestinians and denies the PLO authority to name the Palestinian representatives to negotiations, then the conceptual breakthrough necessary to establish the foundation for a lasting, legitimized peace in the region will not occur.

There is a final reason why the Reagan Plan has been and is likely to remain ineffective in halting Israel's drive into the West Bank and Gaza. Notwithstanding Israel's overwhelming dependence on U.S. military and economic aid, Washington has not exercised effective leverage over Israeli foreign policies. Thus, Jerusalem is justified in its confidence that it can defy the U.S. with relatively little cost. The implantation of Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza has been the most visible symbol of this defiance. American criticism of Israel has been largely verbal and symbolic, such as temporarily withholding the delivery of certain weapons or advising Begin that he should not visit the U.S. until Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon is negotiated. These gestures may call into question the special relationship between the U.S. and Israel, but they do not tangibly affect Israel's economic and military strength. If Washington were to attach conditions to economic and military aid, it would probably find such leverage effective in compelling the Begin government to recalculate its priorities and recognize its vulnerability. This is unlikely, however, both because of Israel's influence on the American political process and because the U.S. is ideologically committed to keeping Israel militarily strong.

The Israeli Political Scene

The political scene in Israel is highly polarized, both in its institutional context and with respect to public opinion. At the level of institutional politics, Prime Minister Begin's Likud-based coalition has a slim majority in the Knesset. In spring 1982, several motions of no-confidence tabled in Parliament failed to pass by only a slender margin. More recently, the war in Lebanon has widened the gulf between those who support the government and those in opposition. There was broad support for the original invasion, whose proclaimed objective was to drive PLO forces out of southern Lebanon, but the expanded and protracted operation that subsequently developed has been far more controversial and has reinforced the political cleavage within the Jewish state.

Political division has not deterred government efforts to lay a foundation for

permanent Israeli control of the West Bank and Gaza. Far from concluding that it would be inappropriate to proceed on so vital and controversial a matter in the absence of a clear mandate, the prime minister and his colleagues approach their task with a special urgency, being determined to tie the hands of any future government. They seek to create a network of Jewish interests and investments which will make even partial withdrawal a political impossibility, no matter what coalition of political parties comes to power.

In contrast to Likud and its coalition partners, especially Tehiya and elements within the National Religious Party, the opposition Labor Alignment advocates territorial compromise on the West Bank and Gaza. Labor also points out that its disagreement with Likud continues a longstanding ideological debate among Zionists. Likud is heir to a tradition of territorial maximalism, which asserts that Zionist fulfillment requires control over as much of the historic Land of Israel as possible. Alternatively, Labor argues that while Israel requires secure and defensible borders, the quality of life in the Jewish state is otherwise more important than the quantity of territory controlled. This has historically been the position of the Zionist mainstream.

Labor contends that Likud's quest for sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza harms the Jewish state. It charges, first, that Likud is squandering Israel's first real opportunity for peace. Israel's policies embarrass Egypt and make it difficult for President Hosni Mubarak and other Arab leaders predisposed toward peace to defend the principle of accommodation with the Jewish state. Labor believes that movement away from peace, even partial peace, costs Israel far more than it gains through territorial expansion.

Even more fundamental in terms of Zionist thinking, Labor argues that retention of the West Bank and Gaza threatens the Jewish character of the state, since it means incorporating into Israel their 1.3 million Palestinian residents. Coupled with the 650,000 Arabs who already live in Israel, this would make Jews a near-minority in their own country; and, given differential fertility rates, Arabs could be an absolute majority within a generation. Only by driving Palestinians out of the territories could this situation be avoided, but this is both morally unacceptable and politically impossible in the opinion of the Labor Alignment. Nor, moreover, is it advocated by Likud. Finally, Labor sees insoluble dilemmas even in the short run. Suppression of Palestinian political life debases the democratic character of Israel and undermines the humanity of Jews. Yet to grant significant political rights to an involuntarily subject Arab population would permit Palestinians to work through legitimate channels to change the policies and character of the Jewish state.

Thus, Israeli critics oppose retention of the West Bank and Gaza because they believe this would deal a serious and perhaps fatal blow to the prospects for peace, with the onus for continued belligerency resting squarely on Israel, and also because they believe it would undermine the democratic, the humanistic and, above all, the Jewish character of their country. Weighed against these costs, the gains of territorial maximalism seem trivial.

Labor's advocacy of territorial compromise stops short of what most observers believe will be necessary for peace—namely, Israeli acceptance, in the context of

a comprehensive peace settlement, of *complete* withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza and of political arrangements for the territories determined by the Palestinians themselves. But while these principles are not at present advocated by the political center any more than by the right, most observers nonetheless consider it essential to tip the political balance from Likud to Labor. The logic here is that unless there soon comes to power a government committed to flexibility in the West Bank and Gaza, which will halt the creation of facts before the hands of future Israeli governments are tied, then any hope at all for a negotiated peace arrangement will be lost for the foreseeable future.

Institutional polarization between the right and the center is mirrored at the level of political opinion. There is almost no support for any change in the current status of Jerusalem, for either redividing the city or giving Palestinians more than administrative control over religious sites. Nor do many advocate a complete return to the pre-1967 borders apart from Jerusalem. Finally, all but a handful oppose concessions that would lead to an independent Palestinian state governed by the PLO. About 90 percent of the Israeli public is agreed on these three points.

Nevertheless, Israeli public opinion is deeply divided between those who favor retaining all of the occupied territories and those who accept the principle of territorial compromise. The precise relative weight of these two orientations is difficult to determine; it fluctuates over time and varies from one dimension of the issue to another. The government's policy of expanding Jewish settlements and suppressing Palestinian nationalism appears to have the support of the majority. Yet a poll in January 1983 indicated that slightly over half the population would support withdrawal from a substantial portion of the West Bank and Gaza in return for Arab recognition of Israel. The conclusion to be drawn, despite some inconsistency and imprecision, is that the country is roughly evenly divided between those who do and do not share the Begin government's ideology of territorial maximalism.

Scenarios for Political Change in Israel

The most commonly proposed scenario for turning Israel away from its present policies centers on ways to bring the Labor Alignment to power. One way would be for several of Likud's coalition partners to break with the prime minister and agree to participate in an alternative Labor-based government. In this case, Labor could assume power without new elections. This is not likely, if only because at least two and possibly three factions in the present coalition would have to select this course in order for Labor to generate the necessary parliamentary majority. It is also made unlikely by the ideological gaps between Labor and some of Begin's partners. On the other hand, there are strains within and between parties on the right that could push Israeli politics in this direction, and so it should not be ruled out completely.

More probable is an electoral test between Labor and Likud. Balloting is scheduled for 1985, but the prime minister may call early elections, given his continuing popularity in the polls. In any election, Labor's fortunes will be influenced by two

kinds of considerations. First, a majority of Israelis will have to be convinced that the country has more to gain than to lose by endorsing the principle of territorial compromise in the West Bank and Gaza. Second, Labor will have to convince the public that it offers capable and dedicated political leadership.

Israel's cost-benefit assessment of territorial compromise will be affected by events in the international arena, such as U.S. pressure and the behavior of relevant Arab actors. In the domestic context, however, the most critical factor will be the extent to which Israelis are persuaded by what Labor calls the "demographic issue," the contention that Zionist fulfillment is incompatible with the permanent incorporation and control by Israel of a large non-Jewish population. Likud and other territorial maximalists discount this problem. They assert that the high Arab birth rate will decline as the territories experience social and economic development through incorporation into Israel; that many Arabs will prefer to leave rather than to remain in the Jewish state; that retention of the West Bank and Gaza will stimulate Jewish immigration from abroad; and that autonomy arrangements will simultaneously satisfy Palestinian desires for self-rule and preserve the democratic character of Israel. If Labor can convince the public that these contentions are unrealistic, and that territorial maximalism really does threaten the ideals on which Zionism is based, it will have a chance to become again the dominant force in Israeli politics.

The other critical factor is public judgment about the quality of Labor leadership. The party's current head, Shimon Peres, does not rate high in the esteem of the public, and Labor's leadership problems are compounded by a widespread perception that its principal politicians and their lieutenants are more concerned with personal advancement and interpersonal jealousies than with dedicated service to the nation. Likud's Begin, by contrast, generates grudging respect even among many who deplore his policies, as a man of deep conviction who has devoted his life to his vision of Zionism. To return to power, Labor must change the public's perception of its leadership potential, and many believe this can be done only by calling upon someone new to head the party.

Can Labor persuade the Israeli public by its advocacy of territorial compromise and allay popular doubts about the quality of its leadership? Most polls indicate the party is still a considerable distance from achieving these goals, and thus the betting is that Labor will not return to power any time soon. Even if it did, would the Alignment have the ability and the will to alter significantly Israel's policies on the West Bank and Gaza? Labor spokesmen, for example, usually talk of a freeze on *new* settlements. They give scant indication of any intention to dismantle or even halt the infrastructural development of those already in place. Moreover, a substantial number of settlements are populated with Labor supporters, and some settlement construction is being done by the Labor-dominated Israeli Federation of Labor (Histadrut). These include new communities in the hills of the West Bank, from which Labor has traditionally been prepared to withdraw, as well as in the Jordan Valley, where Labor has long advocated an Israeli presence for security purposes. Most important, the political center of gravity is shifting within Labor. Left-oriented members are on the defensive, and the Alignment mainstream is increasingly situated between the center and the right, rather than between the center

and the left. The result of all these considerations is an increasingly vague and restrictive definition of exactly how much territory is to be conceded in return for peace, and this development is critical to any judgments about whether a governmental shift from Likud to Labor has the potential to end Israel's creeping annexation.

A second scenario for political change in Israel has emerged in recent months. Rather than focusing on possible sources of strength for Labor, some suggest that developments within the Likud bloc itself could produce either fragmentation on the right or ideological shifts that might affect Likud's future electoral prospects.

One relevant issue in this regard concerns Likud leadership. Begin has frequently expressed a desire to retire from politics, and the death of his wife in November 1982 has intensified this inclination. The prime minister's health also remains problematic, and he appears emotionally drained by the mounting casualties that have resulted from his government's policies in Lebanon. Thus, there is concern about who will carry Likud's mantle in the post-Begin era. [In fact, Begin resigned and retired from politics. Parliamentary elections were held on July 23, 1984.] Former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, long disliked by the Likud establishment, may have been damaged irreparably by the Kahan Commission report on the massacre in Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps. This leaves Housing Minister David Levy and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir as the current frontrunners. Levy and Shamir are at opposite ends of the Likud ideological spectrum, however. Levy is a relative moderate and Shamir a hard-liner who opposed the Camp David accords. Levy's camp is reported to be seeking the return to Likud of former Defense Minister Ezer Weizman, another moderate. Shamir, on the other hand, may be aided by the possibility that Tehiya members will rejoin Likud prior to the next election, strengthening hawkish elements within the party, and by the appointment of Moshe Arens to replace Sharon as defense minister. Arens is another hawk who opposed Camp David, and who may eventually emerge himself as a candidate for leadership. One implication of all this is the possibility of greater ideological polarization with Likud, such that should one faction become dominant it could either alienate the other or reduce the party's electoral appeal.

Another concern in coalition circles is the possible dissolution of the National Religious Party. The NRP had twelve Knesset seats prior to the 1982 elections, but its mandate was cut in half in the balloting, partly because of the defection of religious voters of Afro-Asian origin but also because many religious voters inclined toward territorial maximalism concluded that either Likud or Tehiya could better represent their views. Polls in summer 1983 show the NRP may lose still more seats in the next election, and the party has thus been strongly urging the prime minister to serve out his mandate and to resist the advice of coalition elements favoring early elections.

At present, the NRP is increasingly split between hard-liners who argue that Jewish law forbids Israel's relinquishing sovereignty over any part of the Land of Israel and those who favor territorial compromise. This split has been deepened by differing reactions within the party to events in Lebanon and also by different

assessments of how to recapture the allegiance of religious voters. Should these divisions lead to the dissolution of the party, NRP moderates would presumably drift toward Labor, something that worries Likud, given the coalition's already slender parliamentary majority. NRP hawks, on the other hand, would probably join Likud, where, along with a reintegrated Tehiya, they would shift the ideological balance further to the right. As mentioned, this might drive some moderates out of the party or, more probably, narrow the range of the Likud's appeal to the public.

Another possibility for change on the right derives from the courses of action open to Ariel Sharon, assuming he can retain his personal popularity among pro-Likud segments of the electorate. Even without the Kahan Commission report, which led to his removal as defense minister, Sharon would have faced strong opposition to any effort to head Likud. Now, he may decide to seek his political fortunes outside the party. Were Sharon to join forces with Tehiya, the party might prefer to remain apart from Likud; and, if it were also joined by NRP hawks seeking a new institutional home, it could capture as many as ten seats in the next election. One consequence of this would be to shift the whole political spectrum further to the right, possibly giving Tehiya and Sharon a critical balancing role in Knesset politics. Alternatively, it could further fragment the right side of the political spectrum and enhance the opportunities for a centrist bloc based on the Alignment. These possibilities are, of course, recognized by Begin, who has accordingly sought to avoid a political confrontation with Sharon. They may also discourage Begin from calling early elections.

There is one final scenario for an internally induced change in Israel's annexationist policies. This does not involve any rearrangement in the structural or ideological character of the political system. Rather, it is based on the possibility that the Begin government will be forced to back away from its espoused goals because Israel's resources will be inadequate for the task. Two kinds of resources are particularly critical: money and settlers.

Most settlers going to the West Bank and Gaza today are responding to economic incentives offered by the government—namely, subsidized housing in pleasant new communities within easy commuting distance of Jerusalem or Tel Aviv. Less than half the settlers in the territories today are religious nationalists from Gush Emunim, who move out of ideological conviction and are prepared to live for prolonged periods under harsh conditions. Nor are there many remaining faithful that the movement can call upon to swell the Jewish population of the West Bank and Gaza. Thus, the Begin government will be successful in attracting additional Jewish settlers only to the extent that it can find funds to construct the housing and other facilities necessary to lure newcomers.

The cost of putting a Jewish family in a new settlement is approximately \$100,000. Since the government's goal is to bring 75,000 new settlers (or 20,000 families) to the territories by 1985, it will need approximately \$2 billion. This is an enormous sum for a country as small as Israel, and it is necessary to ask whether the country can find the money and whether its citizens are prepared for the cuts which will be necessary in other areas. In the first connection, support from overseas

Jews and U.S. economic aid will be critical, giving these actors considerable leverage to affect Likud's ability to achieve its objective. In the second connection, diminished expenditures for social services will probably fall hardest on those who have in the past been staunch supporters of Likud, namely, Afro-Asian and younger Jews, especially in development towns and working-class urban neighborhoods. In sum, Likud could be constrained either by lack of money or by economic fallout from the practical consequences of reallocating funds.

So far as the availability of settlers is concerned, immigration from abroad has remained limited in recent years and so most settlements must be populated with Jews currently living in pre-1967 Israel. The problem is that the government is in effect encouraging Jews to move away from areas inside Israel where, in the past, it has sought to build up the Jewish population. One such area is the Galilee, which has an Arab majority and which the government has stated must be "Judaicized." Another area is Jerusalem, which also has a large Arab population and to which the government seeks to give a more Jewish character. If the absolute or even the relative size of the Jewish population declines in these and other key areas as a result of government policy, Likud may become more vulnerable to Labor's accusation that territorial maximalism undermines Israel's Jewish character.

In sum, financial and demographic constraints make it at least possible that Likud's effort to build an unshakable foundation for permanent Israeli control of the West Bank and Gaza will lose momentum on its own, without any major domestic political changes.

Political Trends in the Arab World

The war in October 1973 marked a high point in Arab military and diplomatic coordination and effectiveness. The joint Egyptian-Syrian attack—supported financially by direct grants and politically through oil production cutbacks and oil sales boycotts by Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states—demonstrated the impact that a concerted Arab drive could have on attaining the Arabs' political desiderata vis-à-vis Israel. The effort compelled the United States, for the first time since 1967, to make a serious effort to negotiate a settlement based on UN Resolution 242. The war also called into question the invincibility of the Jewish state's military power and the wisdom of its retaining all the territories captured in 1967.

Arab cohesion broke down nonetheless under the pressure of negotiations. By shifting from multilateral talks to bilateral shuttle diplomacy, U.S. Secretary of State Kissinger maximized the particular interest of each Arab state in relation to Israel and minimized the impact of the broad consensus. This approach enabled Egypt and Syria to regain parts of their territory in 1974 and 1975, but it sidestepped the central issue of the conflict, the Israeli-Palestinian dilemma. In the mid-1970s, in response to the second Sinai accord negotiated by Kissinger, Syria tried to consolidate the northern front against Israel. It formed an alliance with Jordan and sought to dominate Lebanon through its military occupation in 1976. But the friend-

ship with Jordan proved to be short-lived, and the occupation enmeshed Syria in the factional strife within Lebanon.

The Camp David formula, finalizing a bilateral Egyptian-Israeli peace, was the logical outcome of this process of fragmentation. Whatever the original intentions of its architects, the accords signed at Camp David further divided and weakened the Arab world. In particular, Camp David heightened Syrian, Jordanian, and Lebanese fears that they would be left alone to face Israel's military might and that a solution to the Palestinians' plight would occur at the expense of Jordan and Lebanon, rather than on Palestinian soil. By 1980, Jordan had thus turned to Iraq and Saudi Arabia for support, and Syria's isolation had deepened as a result of the Iraqi-Iranian war. Syria was the only Arab state to back Iran in the war that Baghdad launched in September 1980.

In the wake of this growing fragmentation and weakness, one result of Camp David was a hardening of attitudes among Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and other Arab states that had been moving toward acceptance of Israel within its pre-1967 borders. In the early 1970s, for example, King Hussein of Jordan had proposed a peace plan similar to that now advocated by President Reagan, based on Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, regional autonomy for the territory as part of a federated Jordanian kingdom, and Arab recognition of Israel. After Camp David, Jordan and other conservative monarchies found themselves lined up with the hard-line states of Syria, Iraq, and Libya, since they could not accept the idea of a separate Egyptian-Israeli peace and of limited self-rule for the Palestinians on the West Bank.

Camp David also challenged the Palestinians. While seeming to offer them an improvement over the status quo, the terms of the agreement denied their right to self-determination and differentiated between those living in the occupied territories and the majority living outside. The latter were not conceded any role in the settlement.

Following the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat on October 6, 1981, the new president, Hosni Mubarak, took steps to reintegrate Egypt into the Arab consensus. He used his country's continuing diplomatic relations with the Sudan and Oman to open lines of communication with Saudi Arabia and Iraq; he offered military aid to Baghdad; and he emphasized Egypt's support for nonalignment, rather than its special ties with the United States. However, he also adhered carefully to the peace treaty with Israel, gradually establishing bilateral cultural and economic relations and ensuring that Israel's final evacuation of Sinai would be completed on schedule in April 1982. Mubarak argued that these policies were compatible. He insisted that Egypt would return to the Arab fold on its own terms and asserted that the Egyptian experience showed politics and diplomacy, rather than rejectionism or military confrontation, to be the best way to win concessions from the Jewish state.

Mubarak's foreign and domestic critics rejected these arguments, claiming that Egypt's policies were not only dividing the Arab world in its struggle against Israel but also increasing the legitimacy of the Begin government's actions in the territories in the eyes of the international community and even the Israeli electorate. In particular, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon—launched barely six weeks after the Sinai

withdrawal—placed Cairo in an acutely embarrassing position. It offered additional evidence that Egypt, the largest Arab state, was paralyzed and neutralized. The government kept its ambassador in Tel Aviv throughout the Israeli siege of Beirut. Only when public outrage peaked after the massacres in Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps did Mubarak recall the ambassador and subsequently announce that he would not return until an agreement was reached on Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon. Even more tangibly, Egyptian oil continued to be shipped to Israel, providing essential fuel for its tanks and bombers. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon also confirmed the impotence and fragmentation in the Arab world as a whole. To Arab nationalists, failure to counter the invasion was final proof that disunity made the Arab world an easy target for Israel.

The Palestinians in particular suffered a profound blow as a result of the Israeli invasion. The PLO was severely damaged by the loss of its military and political base in Lebanon. Dispersed over a dozen countries, it now risks permanent fragmentation. The removal of the PLO has also left Palestinian civilians in Lebanon unprotected, while those in the West Bank and Gaza feel more isolated and vulnerable to increased Israeli pressure. Recognizing the risks now facing his people, Yasir Arafat labored to reestablish an Arab political consensus, along lines that would accept negotiations with Israel and rapprochement with Egypt. He helped to write the eight-point Fez Declaration and during the winter of 1982–83 engaged in three complementary sets of activities: enhanced coordination with Jordan, re-inclusion of Egypt, and isolation of the rejectionists.

The coordination with Jordan began to take shape at Fez, where Hussein and Arafat discussed the concept of confederation and the holding of a referendum of the West Bank and Gaza to enable residents to express their political preferences. By late November, the two leaders had agreed that their goal should be confederation, although PLO spokesmen tried to downplay the concession by calling it a confederation of two equal and independent states under a single presidency. In January 1983, they also agreed to form a joint negotiating delegation, whose Palestinian members would receive the PLO seal of approval but would not be PLO officials. However, the Palestine National Council, which convened in February, avoided explicit support for the proposed Jordanian-Palestinian negotiating team. This was the first serious indication that powerful elements within the PLO would seek to block the Arafat-Hussein concord.

On the Jordanian side, Hussein calculated that he had more to gain than to lose by participating in this diplomatic initiative, even though he had, since 1974, enhanced the political and economic position of his kingdom by disclaiming interest in the West Bank and accepting that the PLO was the sole representative of the Palestinians. On the one hand, the king recognized that he now had maximum leverage over the Palestinians, that joint negotiations could further improve Jordan's stature in the region, and that they could also forestall fragmentation and radicalization within the Palestinian movement, which in turn might threaten the stability of his own regime.

On the other hand, Hussein was deeply concerned over Israel's rapid absorption

of the West Bank and Gaza. This was not only closing the door to the territories' return to Arab control, it could also compel large numbers of West Bank residents to leave for the East, overwhelming Jordan's resources and destabilizing its political system. Most alarming to Hussein was Israel's reference to Jordan as the Palestinian state and his fear that Israel would try to topple him in order to implement that view.⁴ Thus, cooperation in negotiations with the PLO offered an attractive means to reduce the danger from Israel, while simultaneously insuring PLO approval for any concessions made during negotiations and gaining support from West Bank residents. Lurking in the background was Hussein's memory of the assassination of his grandfather, Abdullah, after he had made substantial territorial concessions to Israel in bilateral negotiations some thirty years ago.

While these considerations inclined both Jordan and the PLO to seek rapprochement, the connection between them remained uneasy. Within Jordan, as within the PLO, the prospect of joint negotiations and an eventual confederation was controversial. Palestinians feared that the king would dominate them, as he did before 1967, and that their dream of Palestinian statehood would be lost forever. Jordanians, for their part, feared the reverse: that the Palestinian majority in the confederation would relegate East Bankers to a minority position and perhaps eventually remove the Hashemite monarchy.

The reinclusion of Egypt in the Arab consensus was also an important objective of Arafat. In a frank interview, Arafat admitted that "there is no substitute for the leading role of Egypt."⁵ Egypt's support for the Palestinians, he stressed, is essential if the Arabs are to regain their political balance in relation to Israel. Even maintaining peace, he averred, requires "building up the force able to protect peace. . . . It is not fair that the region lives with the worry that Israel will act in Amman or any Arab capital as they did in Beirut, or that they will launch a surprise raid on Sinai. No one can achieve a just and equitable peace unless he has a force capable of protecting it. . . . Even the Egyptian-Israeli peace . . . cannot be protected while Israel's military capacity develops at this frightening rate."

Despite recognition of the importance of Egypt, Arafat did not seek to coordinate policy with that regime and did not visit Cairo. He was constrained by a desire to dissociate himself from the Camp David process, by the objections of PLO hard-liners, and by the hesitation of Mubarak, who wanted the PLO to temper its criticism of Egypt and Camp David and to issue a statement of conditional recognition of Israel before Arafat made an official visit.

Finally, Arafat sought to isolate the rejectionists within the PLO and to minimize the influence of hard-line states such as Libya and Syria. During the fall of 1982, leaders of Palestinian groups such as Syrian-sponsored Sa'iqa, Ahmad Jibril's Popular Front-General Command, George Habash's Popular Front, and Naif Hawatmeh's Popular Democratic Front issued declarations from Damascus and Tripoli denouncing Fez and criticizing Arafat's talks with Hussein. Libya was too far from the front line to provide anything more than financial and rhetorical support for these groups, but Syria could offer them political and military bases close to Palestine and carefully controlled access to the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon.

In spring 1983, Arafat's effort to reestablish a moderate political consensus among

the Arab states, isolate Syria, and contain the hard-liners within the PLO broke down. The slowness with which Lebanese-Israeli negotiations were pursued gave Syria time to strengthen its military position, largely through a well-publicized increase in Soviet personnel manning SAM missile sites within Syria and also by allowing Fatah forces to filter back into the Bekaa from their various countries of exile. The U.S. failure to follow up the principles of the Reagan Plan with practical diplomatic initiatives also undermined Arafat's effort. Moderate Arab regimes were uncertain about the seriousness of the U.S. initiative and hesitant to commit themselves unequivocally to it. Saudi leaders, for example, while clearly anxious to foster an Arab consensus behind a Jordan-PLO rapprochement, were unwilling to reduce their financial aid to Damascus so long as American intentions and capacity remained in doubt.

In April, the PLO Executive Committee abruptly rejected Arafat's terms for negotiations in tandem with Jordan. Soon after, several Fatah commanders in the Bekaa rejected Arafat's directives, apparently fearing that he was on the verge of ordering the evacuation of Palestinian forces from their last major military stronghold in Lebanon. Syria allowed the Fatah dissidents to build up substantial power, thereby demonstrating to Arafat that he could not ignore Syrian influence and could not pursue a negotiating track that ran counter to Syrian wishes. Coupled with Damascus' rejection of the Lebanese-Israeli accord, these movements increased the visibility of the Arab hard-liners. At the same time, however, they risked causing irrevocable divisions within the PLO, permanent partition of Lebanon, and renewed instability for the precarious new regime in Beirut.

Scenarios for Arab Action

Politics in the Arab world will be shaped by the broad opportunities and constraints that exist in the Arab political environment, by the attitudes of Arab political leaders, and by the susceptibility of various Arab countries to the behavior of external actors, notably the United States and Israel. Arab action in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian problem could unfold in conformity with one or a sequence of the following three scenarios: first, the emergence of a consensus behind a multilateral peace process; second, the formation of a consensus behind a hard-line posture and a long-term buildup of military forces; and third, fragmentation and balkanization of the region.

The first scenario is the one toward which Arafat and the leaders of Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq struggled in 1982–83. A consensus based on the Fez Plan and a Jordanian-Palestinian negotiating team could have had the diplomatic leverage to induce Washington to act on the principles articulated in the Reagan Plan. However, the consensus itself was dependent on the U.S.' responding to the Arab initiative both by expressing a willingness to negotiate with the Palestinians and by taking effective steps not only to engineer Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon but also to put brakes on its construction of West Bank settlements and its suppression of political activity among the Palestinians living under occupation. Hypothetically, the scenario would also entail the expansion of political contacts between

Palestinians and Israelis. This would enable those Israelis who endorse recognition of Palestinian national rights to gain increasing legitimacy and credibility and thereby widen the political debate within Israel. In time, these approaches could weaken support within Israel for the retention of all the territories and improve the prospects for negotiations based on the principles of territorial partition and mutual recognition of national rights. They could also further isolate the rejectionist states in the Arab world, limiting their ability to play a spoiler role, and enhance the Arabs' confidence in their ability to attain a balanced and peaceful coexistence with the Jewish state.

Under the best of circumstances, the moderate Arab consensus would be very fragile. If diplomatic obstacles were placed in its way, it would be bound to disintegrate. The initial cause of breakdown would be a failure of resolve on the part of Washington. If that hurdle were overcome, however, a second major obstacle would be Israel. If the Israeli regime remained impervious to Arab peace initiatives, staved off American pressures, and insisted on territorial aggrandizement based on military domination, the Arab regimes would have difficulty maintaining their common front for long.

In practice, the consensus broke down in the spring of 1983, long before Israel was tested. Washington's tardiness in tackling the Palestine issue, its failure to devise a strategy for limiting Israeli absorption of the West Bank and Gaza, and its continued inability to deal with the PLO, all weakened the credibility of the posture of the moderate states. Events in Lebanon also contributed to the failure of this scenario. The Lebanese-Israeli agreement came too late to serve as a launching pad for a broad peace initiative, and in fact helped to present Syria with a pretext for asserting a militant alternative.

In the second scenario, the front-line Arab states (Egypt, Jordan, and Syria) would shift to a posture that would rule out negotiations with Israel in the short term. They would conclude that the balance of power, being overwhelmingly in Israel's favor, makes it impossible for them to attain even their most modest political goals through negotiation. Instead, a steady, concerted buildup of Arab military power and industrial strength would be required. Only after a decade of such effort could the Arabs expect to match Israel—and the time required would be even longer if Washington continues its special military and economic ties with the Jewish state.

As part of this strategy, the Arab regimes would seek to wean themselves from their dependence on the U.S. and diversify their sources of military and economic support, turning selectively to West European states, Japan, and the Soviet Union. They would establish military industries and possibly begin to develop a nuclear capacity. This would require considerable coordination and cooperation among the regimes and an unprecedented level of domestic social mobilization. The states would also have to be prepared to sustain military strikes from Israel, designed to destroy Arab military installations and to disrupt the common front.

This second scenario is not likely to be realized, both because Israeli military strikes might undermine the consensus and because necessary coordination and mobilization might prove impossible to engineer. Furthermore, any consensus that is achieved would be difficult to maintain. One or more of the allied regimes might overbid and press for premature action against Israel. Alternatively, one or more

strategically situated states might break with the alliance and make a separate arrangement with Israel. In any of these situations, the result would more likely be fragmentation and polarization rather than a return to the previous consensus behind a diplomatic peace initiative.

The third scenario would occur on the heels of a breakdown of either the moderate or the militant consensus. Moreover, this is a very strong possibility at present, with Lebanon occupied and fragmented, Syria isolated, Jordan fearing invasion, and Egypt neutralized. If these front-line states remain divided in relation to Israel, the Israeli-Arab power imbalance would magnify and the Jewish state would be able to impose a *pax israeliana* on the region. Under these circumstances, Israel might also encourage the division of some Arab countries into their ethnic or religious components. It might not only foster Maronite, Druze, and Shi'a enclaves in Lebanon but also renew its support for Kurdish insurgents in Iraq and Southern secessionists in the Sudan. The risks of balkanization would thus be very real in the Middle East.

In this scenario, the PLO would probably fragment, with the mainstream nationalists losing ground to small, ideologically cohesive, militant groups. Each would ally itself with an Arab regime willing to provide a territorial base and financial support. Some would also return to international terrorism, directed against Israel, the U.S., and those Arab states deemed to have betrayed the Palestinian cause.

Although Israel would benefit from this scenario, the interests of the United States would suffer. Given a fragmented regional system and rapidly changing alliance patterns, Washington would find that it could not develop stable relationships or be confident that its economic and political interests would be protected. For outside powers as well as for the Arabs themselves, this would be a disquieting and destructive period.

Looking to the Future

The Arab-Israeli conflict reached a critical point in 1982. By then, Washington's financial and military support for Israel and its sponsorship of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty had helped to create a marked power imbalance between Israel and the Arab world. Israel's invasion of Lebanon demonstrated that it can strike at will when the Arabs are weak and the U.S. is indecisive. Similarly, the steady integration of the West Bank and Gaza into Israel and the suppression of indigenous Arab political action there cannot be stopped so long as the Arabs lack a unified diplomatic strategy and Washington refrains from exercising effective leverage over Israel.

The Reagan Plan placed the prestige of the president behind a comprehensive peace initiative that would terminate Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and create a Palestinian entity linked to Jordan. In order for the plan to attain credibility and achieve results, Washington must not only continue to assure Israel of its unshakable support for the survival and security of the Jewish state but must also assure the Arabs that it will move beyond rhetoric and press for change in

several critical areas. Regarding the latter, it must increase efforts to halt the expansion of Israeli settlements, open a dialogue with representatives of the Palestinian people, and respond more forcefully and consistently to Israeli military strikes against Arab territory.

Many obstacles block Washington's path. These include the postponement of negotiations about the West Bank and Gaza because of delays in the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon; the lack of a negotiating forum accepted by the parties; and especially the political barriers in the United States which prevent the president from exercising his potentially considerable leverage over Israel and from initiating contact with the PLO.

The possibility that currents within Israel itself will cause a shift in that country's policies toward the West Bank and Gaza involves three different scenarios. One concerns the prospect that the Labor Alignment will wrest power from the present Likud coalition of Prime Minister Begin. A second is the possibility of political change inside the coalition, involving increased fragmentation and polarization and greater political weight on the extreme right of the ideological spectrum. Finally, there is a chance that the economic cost of constructing settlements will prove too heavy a burden for the government or that there will not be enough Jewish settlers to populate the territories, thereby constraining the Likud from realizing its goals.

Likud's replacement by Labor will depend in part on whether the electorate accepts the latter's arguments that Israel has lost a unique opportunity for peace with Egypt by its actions in the territories and in Lebanon, and that the Zionist character of the state will be undermined by the absorption of the Arabs living in the West Bank and Gaza. Considerations of the relative quality and credibility of the Labor and Likud leadership, as well as other factors not related to foreign policy, will of course also come into play in an actual electoral contest. Even if Labor does come to power, however, there will be severe constraints on its ability and will to alter the status quo. Even dovish Laborites do not support a complete withdrawal to the pre-1967 borders and dual sovereignty over Jerusalem. Further, the cost constraints on building settlements are likely to be decisive only if the U.S. reduces its financial backing for Israel and thus compels the government to make hard choices among its priorities. In sum, with Israeli electoral politics in the process of both polarizing and moving to the right, internal brakes on the annexationist policies being pursued by the Likud government will most likely be of only limited significance.

Scenarios for the Arab world involve, first, the creation of a consensus that would back a multilateral diplomatic initiative; second, the adoption of a long-term strategy to build up military and economic strength, in order to redress the balance of power; and third, fragmentation and balkanization. Given the current power imbalance, the effectiveness of the first option would depend largely on Washington's willingness to help create the conditions under which negotiations will result in Israeli withdrawal and the exercise of some form of Palestinian sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza. If the peace route fails, Arab regimes would be apt to pursue the second approach, which would require a degree of inter-Arab cohesion and internal mobilization that in the past has only been achieved in rare moments. Moreover,

many regimes would be vulnerable to Israeli pressure and inducements. Finally, if the militant front cracks, as is likely, the third scenario would become dominant. Fragmented, the Arab world would be easy prey to Israeli military encroachment. There would also be increased risk of internal political and economic instability.

In addition to the actions of the Arab world in general, the behavior of Palestinians in the occupied territories will also be important. As will be discussed more fully in chapter twelve, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza can exert pressure for change by maintaining active resistance to Israel's creeping annexation and simultaneously demonstrating that they are prepared for peaceful relations with the Jewish state if the latter will return to its pre-1967 borders. Resistance will deny credibility to the Begin government's contention that most Palestinians accept the autonomy scheme offered by Israel. Alternatively, it will lend credibility to those Israelis who assert that retention of the territories is not in the interest of the Jewish state. Finally, resistance may discourage some potential Jewish settlers from moving to the West Bank and Gaza. Coupled with expressions of Palestinian readiness for peace with an Israel that renounces expansion, these actions could lead more Israelis to conclude that permanent control of the territories is neither desirable nor practical.

Although the odds are against it, it is possible that some combination of these stimuli would be effective in bringing about a change in Israeli policy. This would probably require the coming to power in Israel of the Labor Alignment, with the change reflecting a modification in the attitudes of the Israeli electorate brought on, in part, by increased U.S. economic pressure, continued conflict with Palestinians in the territories, and intensified Arab efforts to achieve a negotiated and comprehensive peace. If this kind of scenario were to play itself out, it would then be necessary for the Jewish state to move beyond a freeze in its current settlement drive. Israel's new leaders would have to be able and willing to set in motion a process of gradual disengagement from the territories, and they would have to commit themselves to complete withdrawal in return for peace with the Arab world.

Should there be significant movement in this direction, a new constellation of Arab-Israeli relations might evolve. Instead of increasing polarization and hostility, the possibility of coexistence and mutual accommodation would reemerge. The Egypt-Israel treaty would no longer be an isolated, aberrant act, but would rather be a model for other bilateral treaties. Israel would be able to receive guarantees of security and opportunities for economic interaction with its Arab neighbors. Forces within the Jewish state which argue that Israel need not remain a beleaguered island would be strengthened and the irredentist drive for the "whole land of Israel" would be contained.

The long-term stability of such a situation would depend substantially, however, on the way in which the Palestinian issue is handled. If Israel retains control over land and water resources or if Jordan becomes the dominant authority on the West Bank and Gaza, the Palestinians would be estranged. Only genuine Arab control and sovereignty over the territories and Palestinian self-government there would reconcile them to the partition of Palestine and recognition of Israel. Many Palestinians and other Arabs already support this goal; but their interest in reconciliation

will not endure unless a halt to Israel's annexationist drive is accompanied by speedy progress toward the exercise of Palestinian self-determination. Whether this is in the form of a fully independent state or association with Jordan need not be determined at present, so long as it is understood that the matter must be determined by Palestinians themselves, with no restrictions other than their acceptance of Israel. In sum, Israeli withdrawal is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for stability and peace. Palestinian and Arab support for the Reagan initiative and other efforts to negotiate a settlement with Israel are predicated on the assumption that there will also be recognition of the political aspirations of the Palestinian people, and their favorable predisposition toward peace will give way to renewed belligerency if these expectations are unfulfilled.

This matter is not only of concern to Palestinians; it has important implications for Jordan as well. Jordanians would be the minority in a political association between themselves and the Palestinians, and the latter could exert considerable pressure on the Hashemite regime for political and economic favors. Even more important, the dynasty of King Hussein could itself be threatened, if Palestinians choose to attach importance to the fact that the Hashemites are outsiders whose rule was imposed on the area by the British after World War I; and this challenge could conceivably come from an independent Palestinian state as well as from the autonomous Palestinian region of a federated Jordanian kingdom. Whether any of this would actually result in either political instability or a change in the character of the Jordanian state would depend in substantial measure on the political attachments of those Palestinians who fled to the East Bank after 1948 and who, along with their descendants, have for a generation constituted the majority of Jordan's population. The strength of their political identity as Palestinians and the depth of their loyalty to King Hussein would be of critical importance in such a situation.

Finally, if there is serious progress toward solving the Palestinian problem, it will be necessary to address the concerns of Syria in order to increase the chances that peace will endure. Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria in 1967 and extended its law to the territory in December 1981. Returning the Golan to Syria, or working out some acceptable formula for compensating Damascus, would be the major unattended territorial issue once negotiations aimed at resolving the Palestinian problem have been placed on track. The importance of dealing with this issue derives principally from Syria's role as the leader of the rejectionist camp within the Arab world and from its capacity to exert pressure on Jordan and Lebanon. The regime in Damascus thus has the ability to promote instability in the region and to weaken any Israeli-Arab accommodation. Alternatively, if peacemaking can be extended to give due consideration to Syrian interests, the prospects for a durable peace would be truly bright. For all these reasons, movement toward resolving the Palestinian problem would focus increased attention on the Syrian dimension of the Arab-Israeli dispute.

Unfortunately, it is not likely that these issues will move toward the center of the political stage. It is more probable that Israel's annexationist drive will continue unabated and the Jewish state will achieve *de facto* or *de jure* sovereignty over the

West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Even though Washington failed to react strongly to Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights, and even though Israel defied worldwide condemnation of its annexation of East Jerusalem, *de jure* annexation of the West Bank and Gaza is likely to cause a strong reaction by the United States and Europe. Partly for this reason, overt *de jure* annexation is less likely than a continued acceleration of *faits accomplis*. Either way, however, the result will be an end to prospects for Arab-Israeli accommodation for the foreseeable future and a new and more grim set of problems for Middle Eastern actors to confront.

Within Israel, annexation has many opponents who argue that Israel is not only forfeiting all prospects of peaceful integration into the Middle East but is also diluting the Jewish character and Zionist vocation of the State of Israel. It remains to be seen whether the most grave predictions of these Israelis will be realized in full measure, but permanent retention of the West Bank and Gaza will indeed push critical new problems to the fore in the Jewish state. Jews will be a near-minority in their own country and the state's Jewish identity will thus be threatened, raising deep doubts about the future of Zionism. In addition, Israel will probably be forced to turn away from political democracy, preferring to deny equal rights to all members of society rather than make Palestinian inhabitants of the territories full citizens with massive power at the ballot box. Permanent control of a large and involuntarily subject Palestinian population will also create serious problems of stability and security, undermining the quality of life in Israel even more. Finally, internal polarization within Israeli Jewish society will increase, as those who are urging their government to renounce annexation in order to avoid all these problems become more alienated from the ruling coalition and more alarmed at the long-term implications of its policies.

Palestinians of course also fear annexation by Israel. Since the Israeli government does not intend to "de-Zionize" the state, the Palestinians assume they will be denied citizenship rights and forced into ghetto-like living areas, dependent on Israel for their daily employment. They would also be subject to severe measures of control in the name of security, including, at the very least, restrictions on their freedom of organization and movement and possibly even speech. The highly controversial military authority that Israel created to govern its Arab citizens between 1948 and 1966 is a model for Palestinian thinking about the circumstances in which they would find themselves. Finally, Palestinians fear they might even be expelled from the territories in which they live. Such an expulsion would probably come gradually, through expropriation of land, reduced employment opportunities, closure of educational institutions, and imposition of onerous taxes. Some Israeli extremists advocate less subtle incentives for Palestinian emigration. Their ideas do not at present carry much weight, but to the extent that a large Palestinian presence in the Jewish state produces the kinds of dilemmas mentioned above, more Israelis may be attracted to their arguments. Expulsion could thus occur in a more dramatic fashion, possibly through large-scale forced evacuation under the cover of military hostilities with Jordan or Syria.

Jordan is equally concerned about the implications of annexation, which explains why King Hussein has supported the Reagan Plan. As mentioned, Palestinian self-

determination in association with Jordan poses problems for the Hashemite regime. Jordan has in the past gained political capital and economic advantage by downplaying its interest in the West Bank and recognizing the PLO as the legitimate representative of Palestinians in the territories. The regime in Amman now calculates, however, that greater danger lies in Israel's current annexationist drive. On the one hand, annexation would inflame the Palestinians and propel their problems onto the East Bank. Palestinians would turn their attention to Jordan as they search for a territorial base to continue their quest for self-determination and to pursue their struggle against an expansionist Jewish state; and, from the Jordanian point of view, there is a danger that this could result in the kind of internal conflict that the country experienced prior to Hussein's expulsion of the PLO in September 1970. There is also the danger of a more direct threat to the Hashemite dynasty, depending in part, as mentioned earlier, on the political sentiments of Jordan's own Palestinian population. Finally, all of these concerns would be greatly intensified if, for whatever reason, large numbers of Palestinians were to leave the West Bank and Gaza and resettle in Jordan.

On the other hand, there will also be heightened Israeli scrutiny of Jordan as *de facto* annexation runs its course, especially if the Palestinians are successful in establishing a political presence on the East Bank. Israel might try to weaken the Palestinians through military strikes, which of course would be destabilizing for Jordan as a whole. The hawkish Israeli regime might also use the allegation of a Palestinian threat as a pretext for occupying the vulnerable eastern part of the Jordan Valley, across the river. In this connection, it is relevant that early Zionism claimed Jewish rights on both sides of the Jordan and that the Revisionist wing of the Zionist movement, to which Menachem Begin is heir, has never repudiated this position. Finally, the Israeli government already proclaims that the Palestinian problem can be resolved entirely on the East Bank. Therefore, even if a strong Palestinian presence is not established in Jordan, Israel might take unilateral action in an attempt to advance its claim to the international community that the Palestinians possess a state and thus have no legitimate claims against Israel. This would involve taking steps to replace the Hashemite regime with a docile, Palestinian puppet government.

Overall, annexation would confirm rejectionist views in the Arab world and undermine trends toward coexistence, and here Egypt in particular would face major dilemmas. Continued adherence to the peace treaty with Israel would undermine all of Mubarak's efforts to reintegrate Egypt into the Arab world, would give much additional ammunition to the many domestic opponents of the Mubarak regime, and, above all, would leave Israel more free than ever to pursue whatever designs it wishes, on the East Bank, in Lebanon, or elsewhere. Alternatively, however, if Cairo abrogates the treaty, or even engages in stronger diplomatic action—for example, withholding the delivery of Sinai oil—there will be serious dangers as well. Under these conditions, Israel might reoccupy a portion of the Sinai, or the U.S. might reevaluate the utility of its special relationship with Egypt and its massive aid package to that country, either of which could produce serious domestic fallout.

Even if Cairo accepts these latter risks and returns to the Arab fold in an attempt to present a united front in the face of Israeli expansion, it is unlikely that there

would be sufficient Arab cohesion and might to force a change in the policies of the Jewish state. Coordination of diplomatic ventures and the construction of an integrated and effective military capacity would be extremely difficult to achieve, and the more probable result, as suggested earlier, would be increased bitterness and division within the Arab world. Thus, if Israel does indeed adhere to and realize its annexationist ambitions, not only will the opportunity for peace—present briefly in the late 1970s—be lost for decades to come, but all of the major Middle Eastern actors will also be confronted with serious new problems which will make the region a continuing source of tension and instability.

(June 1983)

NOTES

1. *New York Times*, August 29, 1982, p. E19.
2. See also the exegesis by Alan J. Kreczko (a legal advisor in the U.S. State Department), "Support Reagan's Initiative," *Foreign Policy* (Winter 1982/83): 140–53.
3. See Ian S. Lustick, "Israeli Politics and American Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1982/83): 393.
4. See Trudy Rubin, "Why Hussein Hurries for Mideast Talks," *Christian Science Monitor*, January 25, 1983, p. 1.
5. *Al-Musawwar* (Cairo weekly magazine), December 31, 1982.

10.

Gaza:

History and Politics

Ann Mosely Lesch

Driving through the Gaza Strip on a clear spring day, I am struck by the sharp contrasts.¹ The vivid blue Mediterranean Sea sparkles in the sunlight. Richly festooned date palms cling to the sand dunes rolling in from the beach. High-school students pace up and down the shore, earnestly memorizing textbooks in preparation for their final exams. Then I turn a corner and confront the densely packed shacks of the refugee camps: sewage running down the narrow alleys, children playing in the dust, and adults staring suspiciously as my unfamiliar car passes.

Gaza—a mere dot on the map but a microcosm of the tangled and anguished Israeli-Palestinian dilemma. At least 600,000 Palestinians live on the 370 square kilometers of the Gaza Strip, the majority of them refugees who lost their homes in 1948 when Israel was established. Their former fields and citrus groves are now tended by Israeli farmers.

In June 1967 the Gaza Strip—along with Sinai, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights—was occupied militarily by Israel. Since then, only Sinai has returned to Arab rule, as a result of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty of 1979. In contrast, the prospects for the other occupied territories to be freed become daily more remote. In the Gaza Strip, for example, Israel has taken over a third of the land, moved in 1,400 settlers, and tied the Palestinian economy to Israel. Nevertheless, the Palestinians still long for independence, and the refugees continue to dream of returning to their homes.

Gaza evokes a sense of sadness, time lost and hopes dashed. It also screams with anger, when the tension erupts into demonstrations and desperate outbursts. Gaza can shimmer with the laughter of children and the songs of women at a joyous wedding, but its somber mood is more frequent and pervasive.

Palestine before 1948

The Gaza Strip is an artificial entity, forty-five kilometers long and about eight kilometers wide. On the west it lies along the Mediterranean Sea, on the south it

borders the Egyptian Sinai peninsula, and on the north and east it adjoins Israel. The Strip has no historical identity, although it was part of the ancient Philistine state and its towns continued to be way stations on the coastal route between Egypt and Syria.

Gaza's strategic importance, occupying the narrow belt of land between the sea and the Negev desert, was recognized by the British in World War I. Their forces besieged it for two years, until the Ottoman defenders fell in the autumn of 1917. The British then moved rapidly north to capture Jerusalem and wrest Transjordan, Syria, and Lebanon from the Ottoman Empire.

When the British control over Palestine was legitimized by the League of Nations in 1923, Gaza became a small subdistrict within this territory. During the thirty years of British rule, the Arabs continually challenged its terms, particularly the political and economic privileges accorded the Jewish community. The Jewish residents, organized through the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency, viewed Palestine as their historical patrimony: the site of the ancient Jewish kingdom and the seat of their dream of reassembling as one people and recreating an independent state. Moreover, persecution in Russia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and harsh discrimination in Germany during the 1930s followed by atrocities during World War II made Jews fear for their physical survival and seek a haven in Palestine. From 1917 to 1947, the proportion of Jewish residents in Palestine increased from 10 percent to 32 percent, almost entirely as a result of immigration. They developed a cohesive political and military structure and a strong economic base, separate from the indigenous Arab residents and aspiring to diametrically opposed political goals.

The United Nations Partition Plan of November 22, 1947, proposed that two states be established, given the apparently irreconcilable demands of the two peoples. There would be a Jewish state and an Arab state, with Jerusalem as an international zone. According to this plan, Gaza would be incorporated into the Arab state, along with a part of the Negev desert. However, both the Jewish Agency and the Arab leaders challenged the plan: the Palestinians rejected it outright, on the grounds that 55 percent of the land was designated for the Jewish residents, who owned only 7 percent of the land surface and comprised only a third of the population, and that there should be a unitary state for all of Palestine under majority rule. The Jewish Agency accepted the idea of partition in principle, since Jews would benefit significantly from it. Once the Arabs rejected partition, the Zionist movement felt free to gain a larger share of the territory for the Jewish state.

During the winter of 1947–48, the Jewish military forces defeated the irregular Palestinian guerrillas and pushed the Arab residents out of major population centers such as Jaffa and Acre. After the State of Israel was proclaimed on May 15, 1948, and Arab armies joined the battle, the Israeli army succeeded in conquering half of the territory which the partition plan had assigned to the Arab state, including the coast north of Gaza town and all of the Negev. By 1949, when armistice agreements were signed with Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, Israel controlled 77 percent of Palestine, and 780,000 of the 1.3 million Palestinians had fled. Only the West

Bank and the Gaza Strip remained under Arab rule. The West Bank was incorporated into Jordan, and Gaza was administered by Egypt.

The Gaza Strip under Egypt

In the wake of the fighting, about 280,000 Palestinians crowded into the Gaza Strip, which was garrisoned by the Egyptian army. The territory of the Strip was only a third of the size intended under the partition plan. Moreover, its 80,000 indigenous residents were totally unprepared for and unable to cope with the influx of refugees.

Gaza town had about 36,000 residents and served as a port for the grain-growing Negev; but it had been dwarfed by the major ports at Jaffa–Tel Aviv and Haifa. Khan Yunis was the only other town within the Strip, serving as the market for surrounding villages and *bedouin* (nomad) encampments. Rafah was merely the border post with Egypt and the last stop on the railway before it crossed the Sinai desert. The local economy in the Strip was based on citrus, dates, grapes, melons, grain, livestock, and poultry, but in 1949 it was nearly destroyed: villages in the north of the Strip, such as Beit Hanun, and to the east of Khan Yunis and Rafah lost their agricultural lands to Israel; the *bedouin* lost their grazing lands in the Negev; and Gaza port lost its hinterland.² Refugees camped on the beaches and huddled in the orange groves.

In time, eight refugee camps were set up and administered by the United Nations Refugee Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), in which residents could obtain basic housing, food rations, medical care, and schooling. Life was harsh. At least half of the labor force was unemployed, and jobs in the orange groves and grape arbors were arduous, low-paying, and only seasonal. Not much work was available in the port, in fishing, or in trade, but some jobs were obtained through UNRWA or the Egyptian army and administration.

Refugees with money or skills left the Strip, leaving behind the dispossessed villagers who had no alternatives. Moreover, classified as stateless persons, Palestinians found it difficult to travel. Lacking passports, they had to obtain special permits from the Egyptian authorities to go abroad. The first exit permits for work were not issued until 1952, when two thousand laborers and teachers were allowed to go to Saudi Arabia.³

From 1948 to 1967 the Gaza Strip was ruled by an Egyptian military administration. Although Egypt had helped the Palestinians to form the All-Palestine Government in Gaza in 1948, it soon became afraid of Israeli retaliation and closed that Palestinian office.⁴ The Egyptian military governor controlled the civil as well as security functions of the Strip. He appointed municipal and village council members, intervened in employment practices in the public schools and health services, and closely regulated commerce.

The two periods of Egyptian rule (1948–56 and 1957–67), separated by four months of Israeli occupation from November 1956 to March 1957, were quite

different. In the first, Egypt was primarily concerned about maintaining security and reducing the refugee burden. In the second, the government also showed some interest in improving Gaza's economy and allowing Palestinian political institutions to emerge. These policy contrasts reflected internal circumstances in Egypt: the early 1950s witnessed political instability, the overthrow of the monarchy in July 1952, and the gradual assertion of the primacy of Gamal Abdel Nasser among the Free Officers. By the late 1950s, Nasser had consolidated his rule, instituted major social and economic reforms, and emerged as the leading political figure in the inter-Arab arena.

In the early 1950s, Egyptian military commanders in Gaza tried to prevent refugees from infiltrating back into Israel—whether to return to their homes to get possessions or crops, to attack Israeli settlements, or to transit to Jordan—knowing that any infiltration would invite Israeli military retaliation. One such attack occurred in August 1953 when the Israeli army's special Unit 101, commanded by Ariel Sharon, raided Bureij refugee camp late at night. As described by an Israeli participant, two four-man squads entered the refugee camp from opposite directions, shooting inside the houses where people were sleeping. The residents fled to the center of the camp only to be attacked by the Israeli squad coming from the other side, throwing hand grenades and shooting with machine guns. At least fifty Palestinians died in the raid, and many more were wounded.⁵ The next day, the residents rioted against the Egyptian army's failure to protect them and demanded arms for self-defense. Instead, such raids caused the military to reinforce security measures: banning travel east of the main road at night, ordering soldiers to shoot on sight any person found near the armistice line, and reinforcing its special guards inside the refugee camps.

The Egyptian government also studied ways to reduce the number of refugees living in camps.⁶ Plans were made to transfer some refugees to the northern Sinai coast, near El-Arish. But the refugees opposed these plans, since they would then be moved out of Palestine itself and would be farther from their homes. Underground political groups in the Strip—notably the Communist Party and the right-wing fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood—helped to organize and channel the refugees' demands. The government jailed many political activists, often placing them in Egyptian prisons under harsh conditions, but it also canceled the projects to relocate refugees.

The Israeli raid on February 28, 1955, was a turning point in Egyptian-Israeli relations.⁷ The raid was justified by Israel as a reaction to infiltration by a Palestinian commando unit. But the raid was not merely a quick strike against the Egyptian army base at the entrance to Gaza town, as the chief of staff had assured the Israeli cabinet. Rather, it was a massive attack on the town, which left thirty-nine residents dead and as many wounded. More important, it wrecked delicate contacts between Nasser and Israeli Prime Minister Moshe Sharett. Sharett lamented that the raid signaled "a decision on our part to attack on all fronts" and would "cause grave political and military complications and dangers."⁸ David Ben Gurion—the fiery former prime minister who had assumed the defense portfolio only ten days before

the raid—welcomed it as an opportunity to torpedo Sharett's diplomatic efforts. By late March 1955, Ben Gurion was even urging the cabinet to attack and occupy all the Gaza Strip.⁹

The Egyptian government came under increasing pressure to allow the Palestinian residents to arm themselves to confront Israel. Thousands demonstrated in the streets of Gaza on March 1, demanding weapons. In May, Nasser agreed to establish bases in the Strip for training guerrilla commandos, and, in September, he announced a major arms accord with Czechoslovakia. These moves signaled a serious effort to build up Egypt's military forces and Nasser's disillusionment with diplomatic efforts.

Ben Gurion replaced Sharett as prime minister in November 1955 and promptly heated up the rhetorical and military atmosphere. On April 4–5, 1956, Israel bombarded Gaza town with 120-mm mortars, which killed fifty-six civilians and injured at least one hundred others.¹⁰ Subsequent Palestinian retaliation was used as one of the pretexts for the invasion of Gaza. The main opportunity for Israel, however, arose after Egypt's nationalization of the Suez Canal in July 1956. The British and French governments then agreed to join Israel in invading Sinai and occupying the canal in November 1956. Although international diplomatic pressure forced Britain and France to leave the canal, Israel refused to relinquish Gaza and Sinai until the United States compelled it to withdraw in March 1957.

During the second decade of Egyptian rule (1957–67), greater attention was paid to the economic problems and political needs of the residents of the Strip. The port at Gaza was improved and allowed to serve as a "free port" for the import of consumer and industrial goods. These were then transported—legally or illegally—across Sinai to the population centers of Egypt. This trade benefited a few wealthy Gaza merchants and fostered corruption both locally and within the Egyptian administration.

Some of the same Gaza families also benefited from the rapid expansion of citrus production and export. Whereas only 1,500 acres of citrus groves existed in the Strip in 1948, nearly 17,500 acres were planted with citrus by 1966. Bilateral trade agreements with Arab and East European governments provided a guaranteed market for oranges. Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, for example, imported a quarter of the Gaza citrus crop in the early 1960s. As a sign of the economic improvement, the Palestine Bank opened in 1961. Through its loans, it helped to improve small industries, agriculture, and trade.¹¹ Nevertheless, employment for refugees and lower-class residents was scarce: Egyptian public works projects, UNRWA jobs, fishing, and seasonal agricultural labor remained the sources of livelihood, supplemented by UNRWA rations and by remittances from family members who were working abroad. Citrus growers took advantage of the abundant supply of labor to pay low wages to workers. Per capita gross national product (GNP) in 1966 was only \$80.

The Egyptian government carefully limited the expression of political views in the Strip. A legislative council was established in late 1957, but it was chaired by the Egyptian governor general and included all the members of the executive organ.

When Nasser subsequently formed the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) as the sole political party in Egypt, he allowed local branches to be set up in Gaza. In 1961, a constitution was promulgated for the Strip, elections were held for the ASU branches, and then these branches elected half the members of a legislative council in 1962. The other half were appointed by the governor general, but the chairman was a Gaza Palestinian, Haidar Abd al-Shafei. Despite the council's limited powers, he encouraged members to pose difficult questions to the executive and to articulate local grievances.¹²

The government also allowed residents to express their feelings as Palestinians. A major conference of the Palestinian student organization was held in Gaza in 1963.¹³ The relatively moderate resolutions that Egypt wanted passed were swept aside, however, by militant calls for armed struggle against Israel and for establishing an independent Palestinian political identity. Those demands were sponsored by participants representing Fatah, an underground group formed in Kuwait in 1959 but drawn largely from Gaza youths who had participated in the early 1950s' student and commando groups.¹⁴

Egypt continued to try to foster a more moderate expression of Palestinian aims through Arab League sponsorship of the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1964. A large contingent of Gaza residents participated in its founding conference in Jerusalem in June 1964, and Abd al-Shafei resigned from the legislative council in Gaza to become one of the key aides to PLO Chairman Ahmed Shuqayri. In 1964, Egypt also allowed a Palestinian trade union to be formed in the Strip and the next year let the PLO's Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) open military training camps for refugee youths. The Egyptian government still harassed members of Fatah and of political movements such as the Communists and the Muslim Brotherhood. Members of a Fatah cell were arrested in February 1965, for example, while planning a raid into Israel.¹⁵

The armistice line between the Strip and Israel remained quiet during this decade, patrolled by the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF). Although the PLA units trained in the use of light arms, they did not undertake any operations against Israel. At the time of the June 1967 War, the PLA consisted of two lightly armed brigades and some tank and artillery support.¹⁶

The war itself was prompted by events unrelated to Gaza: the heating up of the Syrian-Israeli border, raids across the Jordanian armistice line, and finally Nasser's request to the UN to remove UNEF. He replaced UNEF with Egyptian forces on May 21 and announced a blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli ships the next day. Israel responded with a three-front attack on June 5. All of Palestine, as well as a portion of Syria on the Golan Heights and the entire Sinai peninsula, fell under Israeli control.

Israel launched its offensive within the Gaza Strip with an attack on Khan Yunis, where PLA units were dug in. Its forces then fanned south to Rafah, where the Egyptian Seventh Division was stationed, and north to Gaza town. The town fell during the night of June 6, following an Israeli air strike and a full day of street fighting. Sniping continued until June 10, one day after the Egyptian-Israeli ceasefire had ended the hostilities.¹⁷

Resistance to Israeli Occupation

Israeli occupation caused another seismic shock to the Palestinians. At first, the residents of Gaza assumed that the occupation would be brief, resembling the four months' Israeli rule in 1956–57. But this time the disarray among the Arabs, the division between the superpowers, and the determination of the Israelis presaged a lengthy period of domination. Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol stated bluntly in July 1967: "Israel intends to keep the former part of Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip."¹⁸ Defense Minister Moshe Dayan concurred: "The Gaza Strip is Israel's and steps will be taken to make it part of this country."¹⁹

At the time of the June War, an estimated 385,000 persons lived in the Strip. But the Israeli census of September 1967 counted only 356,200, and the total shrank to 325,900 by the end of 1968.²⁰ This decrease was not the result of flight during the war, since Gaza residents were bottled up in the Strip with no way to flee. Rather, it was the result of a systematic Israeli policy of encouraging people to leave in the months following the war. Buses were even provided to transport people across Israel and the West Bank to the bridges leading to Jordan. Some who left were women and children who wanted to join their husbands working abroad; others were afraid to remain under Israeli rule. In contrast to this exodus, a mere 5,000 persons were allowed to return to the Gaza Strip during the six-year period from June 1967 through 1973 under the "family reunion" scheme.²¹ The population of the Strip regained its prewar level only in 1974.²²

Although the local inhabitants were initially stunned by the occupation, a fierce guerrilla movement sprang up quickly.²³ Substantial quantities of light weapons remained in the Strip from the Egyptian army and the PLA, and the members of the PLA blended into the refugee camps and poor sections of the towns. The guerrillas used these congested quarters as sanctuaries and also hid in the dense orange groves. They lobbed grenades at Israeli military vehicles and civilian cars, threatened those Arabs who cooperated with Israel, and tried to disrupt daily life. They attacked buses carrying Arab laborers to work in Israel, shot at post offices and Israeli banks, and threw Molotov cocktails into the markets. Civil disobedience spread widely in the Strip: students demonstrated in the school yards and streets, adults boycotted Israeli goods, and lawyers refused to practice in the Israeli military courts. Leading politicians voiced their support for the guerrillas and demanded the end of occupation. Some landowners sheltered commandos in their orange groves or even in the basements of their houses.

Israel retaliated swiftly. Soldiers shot at the student demonstrators, rounded up youths in the marketplaces after grenades were thrown, and interned prominent politicians in isolated bedouin encampments in Sinai. These included Abd al-Shafei, the former chairman of the legislative council and aide to the PLO chairman, who was held in Sinai for three months during 1969. Nearly three hundred prisoners were deported to Jordan in 1970–71.²⁴

A systematic crackdown began in January 1971. After two Israeli civilians were killed by a grenade, Ariel Sharon, by then commander-in-chief of the Southern

Command, dismissed the mayor of Gaza, Ragheb al-Alami (who had been appointed by Egypt in 1964) and removed the entire municipal council. He placed refugee camps under twenty-four-hour curfews, during which troops conducted house-to-house searches and mustered all the men in the central square for questioning. Many men were forced to stand waist-deep in the Mediterranean Sea for hours during the searches. In addition, some twelve thousand members of families of suspected guerrillas were deported to detention camps in Abu Zeneima and Abu Rudeis in Sinai. Within a few weeks, the Israeli press began to criticize the soldiers and border police for beating people, shooting into crowds, smashing belongings in houses, and imposing extreme restrictions during curfews.²⁵

In July 1971, Sharon added the tactic of “thinning out” the refugee camps. The military uprooted more than thirteen thousand residents by the end of August. The army bulldozed wide roads through the camps and through some citrus groves, thus making it easier for mechanized units to operate and for the infantry to control the camps. The policy also promoted the long-range aim of dispersing the refugees.²⁶ Those whose homes were bulldozed had to find shelter elsewhere, and many were removed to relocation sites in northern Sinai.

The army crackdown broke the back of the resistance. Large numbers of guerrillas were killed in gun battles in the camps in July and August 1971, and it became increasingly difficult for the remainder to find sanctuary and to move within the camps. They were also running out of arms and ammunition, since they depended on weapons stored there in 1967 and had no way to replenish them. The head of the forces of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Ziyadh al-Husayni (who was also a former PLA major), died while in hiding in November 1971.²⁷ By the end of the year, the guerrillas were fragmented, although scattered incidents and threats against collaborators continued.

Resumption of Political Life

After Sharon ousted the Gaza municipal council in January 1971, Israeli officers ruled the town directly. The council formerly had limited authority, but it at least served as a platform for the leading Gaza families. Under the British, members of the Shawwa family had been favored as mayors. The Egyptians suspected some of the Shawwas of being pro-Jordanian or even pro-Israeli, and built up the Rayyes family as a counterweight. Thus, when Israeli officials approached both Zuhair al-Rayyes and Rashad al-Shawwa to become mayor in September 1971, in an effort to end direct military rule, Rayyes rejected the offer but Shawwa welcomed the opportunity. Shawwa brought together a municipal council composed of prominent merchant and landowning families, who were dismayed by the guerrilla movement in the camps since it challenged the traditional social order as well as the Israeli occupation. Moreover, they were anxious that economic life resume, for unstable conditions had had a disastrous effect on the picking and marketing of the citrus crop.

Shawwa tried to broaden the base of support for the council by organizing the circulation of a petition that urged him to become mayor. At least six thousand residents in Gaza town signed the petition, many of them clients or relatives of council members. Shawwa used this "referendum" as a basis for arguing that he had not been appointed by Israel but had been chosen by the people. He also refused to accept a salary as mayor, to underline his independence. Shawwa then went to Beirut to try to win the PLO's acquiescence in the resumption of the Gaza municipal council. He claimed that only the Popular Front refused to endorse the council, arguing that the military rebellion must continue and no political compromises could be made with Israel.²⁸

As mayor, Shawwa tried to tread a fine line between the Israeli occupiers and the Palestinian residents. He worked to revive the economy, concentrating on opening transport lines to Jordan so that citrus could be shipped to Iran and the Arab countries and so that residents could travel abroad. He called on the United Nations to "rescue and protect"²⁹ Gaza from Israel and denounced Israeli statements that they would never leave the Strip. But he alienated much of his Palestinian constituency by openly supporting King Hussein of Jordan. In particular, Shawwa backed the monarch's proposal for a federation of Gaza, the West Bank, and Jordan, in which Gaza would serve as Jordan's outlet to the Mediterranean. Palestinians were bitter toward the king for cracking down on PLO forces in Jordan in September 1970 and were in no mood to accept Jordanian rule. Moreover, those Gazans having economic and administrative ties to Egypt opposed breaking that connection.

Buffeted by criticism and pressure from all sides, Shawwa found a face-saving excuse for Israel to dismiss him. In the fall of 1972, the military ordered him to extend the municipal services of Gaza to the nearby Shati refugee camp. Refugees feared that integrating the camp into the town would cause them to lose their special legal status as refugees and undermine their right to return to their homes inside Israel. Thus Shawwa's refusal to obey the Israeli command received popular support. Faced with an ultimatum to merge the services within three days, Shawwa continued to refuse and was dismissed on October 22, 1972. Israel reinstated direct military rule, and no other politician dared to step forward to assume the mayor's post. Despite a brief upsurge in violence, people were too scared to react strongly. Shawwa himself commented: "The people here are depressed, almost numb from doubts about their future."³⁰

Once the military resistance in the Strip was contained, the Israeli authorities sought ways to establish local-level institutions while keeping overall control and policy making in their own hands. The Israeli military governor had assumed all the powers of the former Egyptian governor general. Israeli officers headed the departments of education, social welfare, and health, with Palestinian employees carrying out the day-to-day functions in these offices. The appointed municipal councils in Khan Yunis, Deir al-Balah, and Rafah were maintained, along with eight appointed village councils and *mukhtars* (headmen) in the refugee camps.³¹

After the failure of the experiment with Shawwa's municipality, the military government decided to encourage residents to form committees in the various quar-

ters of the town and the neighboring Shati refugee camp. Eight local committees were set up, and plans were made for a general council drawing together the committees. But the plan aborted when the leading candidate for the council head, who was also chairman of the Shati camp committee, was assassinated on February 11, 1973. The next day, shots were fired at Shawwa, who had agreed to chair a committee in one of Gaza town's quarters. The members of six of the eight committees immediately resigned, and elections for the council were canceled.³²

Direct rule by Israel continued until October 23, 1975, when Shawwa was reinstated as mayor. Shawwa said he resumed his post only when Israel agreed to freeze the order to integrate Shati camp into the town. He also argued that he sought "to save the Arab character of Gaza and not let some crass Jewish officer run our affairs."³³ Shawwa's return coincided with an election campaign in the West Bank: municipal councils there were elected, rather than appointed, and pro-PLO slates won overwhelmingly in April 1976. PLO supporters hoped that these municipal councils could serve as a base for an eventual Palestinian state in the occupied territories. Thus, the return of an Arab mayor to his post in Gaza was welcomed in principle, but some nationalists maintained that the Gazans should insist on elections rather than acquiesce in the system of appointment.

There was a broad revival of social and cultural activities at this time. In late 1972, Abd al-Shafei founded the Red Crescent Society, which provided free medical care, opened a community library, and hosted cultural and political debates.³⁴ The Women's Graduates Union, Lawyers' Association, and YMCA also became active. Shawwa himself formed a charitable society and constructed a (still unfinished) municipal cultural center, using funds donated by Saudi Arabia. Through the municipality he made some improvements to the town's infrastructure, adding new sewage lines, upgrading roads, and improving the central market. But some residents felt that he concentrated his efforts on the better-off residential and commercial quarters, and many resented his collecting a fee from every person who needed a *laissez-passer* to leave the Strip. Termed "Shawwa passports," these documents were required to enter Jordan and gave the mayor considerable leverage over Palestinians throughout the Strip.

Nationalist feeling peaked in September 1977 when a broad range of political figures joined in signing a petition that called for an independent Palestinian state in the occupied territories under the leadership of the PLO.³⁵ Signatories included conservatives such as Mayor Shawwa and Sulaiman al-Astal, the appointed mayor of Khan Yunis, as well as outspokenly pro-PLO leaders Abd al-Shafei, Fayez Abu Rahmeh of the Lawyers' Association, and Yusra Barbari of the Women's Society. In general, however, the level of political activity remained much lower in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank, where middle-class professionals formed the core of political activists. This reduced activity resulted partly from the fear instilled by Israel's crackdown in 1971, but it was also caused by the smaller number of middle-class professionals in the Strip, and by the cleavage between the indigenous elite in Gaza and the mass of refugees.³⁶ The Gazans might be content with independence in the Strip, linked to the West Bank, but the refugees still dreamed of returning to their homes inside Israel.

Reactions to Sadat's Initiative

The historic visit by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to Jerusalem in November 1977 stunned Gaza. Although some politicians initially hoped that Sadat would seek a comprehensive settlement of the Palestine issue, nearly all rejected separate Egyptian-Israeli negotiations. Sadat did meet with four Gazans in Jerusalem on November 21, 1977, including Shawwa and the appointed mayor of Deir el-Balah. The elderly Sheikh Hashem Khuzundar headed a delegation to Egypt in December, but many people dropped out of the delegation when they realized that the PLO opposed Sadat's solo diplomacy.³⁷

When Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin unveiled his plan for Palestinian "autonomy" in the West Bank and Gaza, the Palestinian residents overwhelmingly rejected the plan and denounced Sadat for considering it. Begin's plan would have kept control over land, water, and Jewish settlements in Israel's hands; withdrawn but not ended military government; established only an administrative council for the Arabs, not a policy-making government; and retained internal security and prisons in Israeli hands. The residents of Gaza as well as those of the West Bank would have to choose between Israeli and Jordanian citizenship, and, after five years, Israel would demand the right to exercise sovereignty over both territories.

The Camp David accords of September 1978 referred to the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, called for Israeli military withdrawal, and offered the hope of ending the occupation after a five-year period of self-rule. Nevertheless, substantial elements of Begin's plan were incorporated into the Camp David concept of autonomy. As a result, the residents of Gaza were dismayed by Sadat's acceptance of Camp David, opposed his signing a separate peace treaty with Israel, and disbelieved his assertion that autonomy could be the first step toward independence.

A unique public rally was held at the YMCA in Gaza in October 1978. It was unique in part because it brought together Shawwa and Abd al-Shafei, members of appointed municipal and village councils and leaders of nationalist charitable societies, and participants in both trade unions and chambers of commerce. It thus represented the broad spectrum of views in the Strip. The rally was also unique because it was the only one ever allowed by Israel in Gaza. The participants issued a carefully worded declaration that combined a strong rejection of Camp David with a clear indication that they anxiously sought a comprehensive diplomatic accord.³⁸

Shortly after this rally, all further public meetings were banned and the activities of certain political figures were constricted. Abd al-Shafei was almost continuously prevented from traveling outside the Gaza Strip, and the Red Crescent Society was threatened with closure if it sponsored political discussions. Only a handful of Gazans continued to back Sadat: Sheikh Khuzundar led a second delegation to Egypt in the fall of 1978 and the mayor of Khan Yunis visited Cairo in February 1979. The latter visit was primarily concerned with economic rather than political issues, however, since it included two prominent members of the Gaza citrus board who were seeking Egyptian help in establishing new export markets for their citrus and in reopening the Palestine Bank, which had been closed since 1967.

There was virtually no support in Gaza for Sadat's proposal that autonomy be established initially in the Strip and then applied to the West Bank.³⁹ The "Gaza first" plan was attractive to the United States government because it avoided the thorny issues of Jerusalem, holy places, and Israeli settlements in the initial phase of autonomy. Gaza's historic and religious significance for Israel was much less than that of the West Bank, and only a relatively small number of settlements existed in the Strip at that time. However, Begin insisted that the overall principle of autonomy be first negotiated, although it might then be applied in Gaza before the West Bank. This approach had no appeal to Sadat or to the U.S., and so the idea was dropped in mid-1980.

The mood within the Strip was increasingly explosive. Sheikh Khuzundar was assassinated on June 1, 1979, and several local politicians were killed during the winter of 1980–81. Some of these were involved in an Israeli-sponsored network of mukhtars, but others apparently had underworld connections.⁴⁰ The bitterness and frustration at the diplomatic impasse were articulated by Shawwa: "Israel may be able to control the territories for decades more, but it will not be able to change the people's belief in their right to their own independent state—a Palestinian state. [Even] a moderate [like me] is not prepared to be a slave under the yoke of the occupying regime."⁴¹

Gaza exploded in late November 1981, following the imposition of two new Israeli measures.⁴² First, the structure of Israeli rule in the West Bank and Gaza was altered by the establishment of a "civil administration" parallel to the military government. This civil administration was designed to assume responsibility for all nonsecurity functions, such as education, health, and social welfare. The change appeared to alter the legal status of the territories and to be a step toward a unilateral imposition of Begin's autonomy plan. Civil administration was introduced into the West Bank on November 1, 1981, amidst widespread protests and strikes. The changeover in the Strip came on December 1. The "civil" administrator was actually a military officer, Col. Yosef Lunz, a former military governor in the West Bank.

Second, Israel imposed a special excise tax on independent professionals. On November 25, tax inspectors raided several medical clinics, where they confiscated the accounts and arrested two dentists. The next day, the 300-member Doctors' Association called a strike. The association, which included 220 physicians and dentists and 80 pharmacists and veterinarians, closed all the private clinics and pharmacies in the Strip. Since other professionals feared that similar excise taxes would be imposed on them, the lawyers' and engineers' unions promptly called a strike in solidarity with the medical profession.

Following the initiative taken by these professions, Shawwa announced a municipal strike on December 2 in protest against both the excise tax and civil administration. For most people, the issue was not so much the particular measures taken by Israel as their opposition to occupation as a whole and their fear that Israel was trying to destroy the social fabric and force the residents to leave.

These fears were compounded when the Israeli government reacted sharply to the strike. Under the orders of Defense Minister Sharon, Colonel Lunz welded shut the doors of 170 shops, closed 18 pharmacies, and imposed heavy fines on merchants

and professionals. After an eleven-year-old boy was fatally shot in the chest by soldiers in Rafah during a student demonstration on December 7,⁴³ a six-day curfew was clamped down on the town and adjoining refugee camp. Two hundred persons were arrested during a demonstration in Jabalya refugee camp, and four schoolboys were wounded by soldiers in Beit Hanun village. These military excesses fanned the flames and helped to spread unrest throughout the Strip.

After two weeks of turmoil, an informal Gaza action committee—composed of Shawwa, representatives of the doctors, lawyers, and engineers, and members of the chamber of commerce—negotiated an end to the strike. It terminated on December 16 with an Israeli promise to postpone the application of the excise tax. However, civil administration was retained, and the tax was instituted a few months later. The professionals had lacked the organization and funds necessary to sustain a longer strike.

Shawwa and the municipal council continued to boycott Colonel Lunz, in line with the refusal by all the mayors in the West Bank to cooperate with civil administration. Israel forced a showdown on the issue in spring 1982: the mayors of the leading West Bank towns were dismissed for refusing to meet with the civil administrator and were replaced by Israeli military officers. In a show of solidarity with the mayors, Shawwa augmented his boycott by partly suspending municipal services on May 4. He refused to go to his office and instead held the meetings of the council in his home. On July 7, the military governor ordered Shawwa to cancel the municipal strike, return to work in three days, cooperate with the civil administration, and refrain from political activities. The municipal council rejected this ultimatum on July 8, and Shawwa was dismissed the next day. The rest of the councilors were removed in early August, and the Israeli Ministry of Interior took over the municipality.⁴⁴ Once again, Israel reverted to direct rule and gave up its pretense that local administration should be in Arab hands.

In the meantime, tension had escalated in the Strip during late March and April. Arising in conjunction with the problems facing the mayors in the West Bank, the public was inflamed by a report that an Israeli military officer had tried to rape a fifteen-year-old schoolgirl in Rafah. Residents tried to protest by holding a general strike on March 24, which was forcibly suppressed.⁴⁵ Subsequently, the shooting of Arab worshippers by a Jewish militant on April 11 outside al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem triggered heated protests throughout the Gaza Strip as well as the West Bank. This violation of the most holy Islamic site in the country led merchants to call a complete strike and students to demonstrate in the streets. Both female and male students at the Islamic University in Gaza were beaten by soldiers who encircled and entered the campus. During a lengthy curfew in Jabalya refugee camp, soldiers shot holes in the water tanks on roofs (depriving residents of their only source of drinking water) and entered houses to rough up the inhabitants. Military vehicles, with their guns pointing into the entrances, were stationed outside mosques during the Friday noon prayers. In four separate locations, worshippers were shot as they left the mosque. In the Amal quarter of Khan Yunis, soldiers even fired into the mosque during the prayers, shattering glass, wounding worshippers, and killing one youth.

Ironically, this “uprising” (as Gazans termed it) occurred just as the final steps in the Egypt-Israel peace treaty were being implemented: Israel evacuated Sinai on April 25, 1982. The return of Sinai to Egyptian sovereignty coincided with a major outburst among the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Since then, residents have felt a deepening despair. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the forced evacuation of the PLO from Beirut, and the accelerated establishment of Jewish settlements in the Strip all lead Gaza toward a political dead end. The weak strategic position of the Arab world vis-à-vis Israel provides little hope that a new road will open for the people of Gaza and for the Palestinians as a whole.

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NOTES

1. I would like to thank Joan Mandell and Thomas Neu for their detailed critiques of an earlier draft as well as to thank the Palestinians with whom I discussed the situation in Gaza. Several of them are cited in the notes. I also appreciate the comments on a later draft by Charles Butterworth, Elizabeth Taylor-Awni, and Milton Viorst.

2. Sarah Graham-Brown, “Impact on the Social Structure of Palestinian Society,” in Naseer H. Aruri (ed.), *Occupation* (Belmont, Massachusetts: Association of Arab-American University Graduates [AAUG], 1983), p. 227.

3. Jan Metzger et al., *This Land Is Our Land* (London: Zed Press, 1983), p. 183.

4. Abu Iyad with Eric Rouleau, *My Home, My Land* (New York: Times Books, 1981), p. 137.

5. Uri Milstein, *The Wars of the Parachuters* (1969) and Meir Har Zion, *Chapter of a Diary* (1969), as quoted by Israel Shahak in “Sharon: The Honest Zionist,” *al-Fajr*, Jerusalem, August 16, 1981. See also the eyewitness account by Muin Basisu, *Descent into the Water* (Wilmette, Illinois: Medina Press, 1980), p. 22.

6. Basisu, pp. v, 24, 29.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 31–38; Nadav Safran, *From War to War* (New York: Pegasus, 1969), p. 45; Abu Iyad, p. 22.

8. Livia Rokach, *Israel's Sacred Terrorism* (Belmont, Massachusetts: AAUG, 1980), p. 42, quoting the diary of Moshe Sharett.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 43–44, 48.

10. Abdallah Franji, *The PLO and Palestine* (London: Zed Press, 1983), p. 94.

11. Interview with Hashem Ata al-Shawwa concerning citrus and banking issues, Gaza, May 15, 1984.

12. Interview with Haidar Abd al-Shafei on the legislative council and formation of the PLO, Gaza, May 14, 1984.

13. Franji, p. 98.

14. Abu Iyad, pp. 22–29; Basisu, pp. 54, 61, 74.

15. Abu Iyad, p. 43.

16. Safran, pp. 46, 334.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 339.

18. *Jerusalem Post*, July 10, 1967.

19. *Christian Science Monitor*, July 7, 1967.

20. Janet L. Abu Lughod, “The Demographic Consequences of the Occupation,” in Aruri, pp. 258–59.

21. Brig. Gen. (Res.) Aryeh Shalev, *The Autonomy* (Tel Aviv: Center for Strategic Studies, Paper No. 8, 1980), p. 148.

22. Abu Lughod, p. 258.
23. Ann Mosely Lesch, *Political Perceptions of the Palestinians on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip* (Washington, D.C.: Middle East Institute, 1980), p. 41.
24. Ann Lesch, "Israeli Deportation of Palestinians from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, 1967–1978," *JPS* 30 (Winter 1979): 104, 110; *Christian Science Monitor*, February 3, 1971.
25. *Haaretz*, January 12 and February 19, 1971; Rafik Halabi, *The West Bank Story* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981), pp. 78–82; Lesch, 1980, p. 42.
26. *New York Times*, August 31, 1971; Metzger, p. 184; Mary Khass, interview in *MERIP Reports* 65 (March 1978): 20–21.
27. Husayni was hiding in the basement of Rashad al-Shawwa's house. Shawwa had unsuccessfully tried to negotiate an amnesty and deportation for Husayni and some other guerrilla leaders. Husayni apparently committed suicide when faced with the choice of surrendering or going back underground. Lesch, 1980, p. 43; Halabi, pp. 83–85; interview with Rashad al-Shawwa, Gaza, May 15, 1984.
28. Interview with R. al-Shawwa, May 15, 1984.
29. *Washington Post*, April 28, 1972, cited in Lesch, 1980, p. 44.
30. *New York Times*, October 24, 1972, cited in *ibid.*, p. 45.
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32. Lesch, 1980, p. 47.
33. Halabi, p. 87.
34. On the society's activities, see Emile A. Nakhleh, *The West Bank and Gaza* (Washington, D.C.: AEI, 1979), pp. 37–40.
35. Lesch, 1980, pp. 90–91.
36. Metzger, pp. 129, 186.
37. Lesch, 1980, pp. 15, 98; *Jerusalem Post*, international edition (*JPI*), December 20, 1977.
38. Quoted in full in *JPS* 30 (Winter 1979): 199–200.
39. Shalev, pp. 58–62; Lesch, 1980, p. 21; *JPI*, May 25, 1980.
40. *JPI*, December 28, 1980.
41. *Davar*, August 17, 1981.
42. Interviews with R. al-Shawwa, Abd al-Shafei, and Fayez Abu Rahmeh, May 14–15, 1984; *Haaretz*, December 6–15, 1981; *Davar*, December 9–12, 1981; *Maariv*, December 9, 1981; *JPI*, December 13, 1981; Halabi, p. 62.
43. *Jerusalem Post*, December 8, 1981.
44. *Al-Fajr*, May 7, July 16, July 30, August 13, 1982; *JPI*, July 11, 1982; interview with R. al-Shawwa, May 15, 1984. An Arab official in the Interior Ministry, Hamza Turkman, managed the municipality under Israeli supervision.
45. *Davar*, March 25, 1982; *JPI*, April 18, 1982; Jerusalem Hebrew radio broadcasts, April 14–16 and 28–29, 1982; *al-Hamishmar*, April 23, 1982.

11.

Gaza:

Life under Occupation

Ann Mosely Lesch

Israeli Settlements

I am 73 years old. I have lived in Gaza when it was under Ottoman rule. When that passed, the poor remained poor and the rich remained rich, but they all remained here. The British ruled over us; they left and we stayed. The Egyptians followed, they tortured some of us, then they left and we stayed. The Israelis are the first who want to take away our land.

Rashad al-Shawwa¹

The Gaza Strip was low priority in the Israeli settlement drive until 1978.² In the first decade of Israeli rule, the Jewish state's attention was focused on the Golan Heights (where twenty-six settlements were constructed by mid-1978), the West Bank (fifty-four settlements), East Jerusalem (twelve suburban blocs), and Northern Sinai (thirteen settlements). Only five outposts had been placed within the Gaza Strip by the summer of 1978, and all of those outposts were paramilitary *nahalim*. (A *nahal* consists of a small group of soldiers who perform their military duty at a settlement site, helping to prepare the infrastructure as well as undertaking guard duty.) The Gaza *nahalim* lacked economic roots and stable populations. Only one had historical significance: Kfar Darom (7 on Map 7; subsequent parenthetical references are also to Map 7) was located on the site of a settlement set up in 1946 and overrun by the Egyptian army in 1948. Otherwise, the Labor government that ruled Israel until May 1977 had preferred to surround and contain the Strip, rather than to place vulnerable civilian settlements within the congested and volatile zone itself.

This Israeli policy changed after Camp David. The accord with Egypt committed the Likud government to evacuate all the settlements in northern Sinai, leaving the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip directly adjacent to the Egyptians in Rafah and El-Arish. No longer able to surround the Strip, the government decided to place substantial settlements amidst the Arab residents. This policy shift was paralleled in the West Bank, where the government began to construct settlements near major

Arab towns. In both territories, the aim was to create such an interlocking grid of Jewish and Arab communities that the residents could not be disentangled in any future diplomatic negotiations. The settlements would thus make it impossible for the Palestinians to carve out a state in the West Bank and Gaza. Moreover, the settlements would isolate the Arab towns from each other, thus preventing coordinated political action.

The strategy led to the creation of several blocs of settlements within the Strip: one bloc in the north; another in the south and west; and small clusters in the center.

The Northern Bloc. At present, there are two settlements at the north end of the Gaza Strip, adjoining the Eretz industrial zone. (The Eretz zone [4] was established by the Labor government in 1972, but the settlements are new.) Eretz consists of a substantial number of Israeli repair workshops and factories, which hire Arab laborers from Gaza. The government wanted Arab firms to locate there as well, but only two were willing to do so.³

The first settlement, Nisanit (3), was set up as a military post in 1978 and became a nahal on April 28, 1982. This date was picked because it marked Israel's independence day, and fell only three days after Israel had completed its evacuation from Sinai. The regional rabbi of Qatif (10) declaimed at the dedication ceremony that Nisanit is the name of a wildflower that "clutches to the ground, takes root rapidly and deeply . . . then it takes such a deep hold on the ground that it cannot be eradicated."⁴ The message was clear.

The second settlement, Alai Sinai (meaning "toward the Sinai"; 1), is located near the Mediterranean shore and will become a recreational center for religious tourists. In the winter, the residents will rely on hothouse agriculture and workshops complementing Eretz. Although only a small cluster of prefabricated buildings is now at Alai Sinai, it is planned to house three hundred families as well as tourists. A third settlement, Nevets Sala (2), is to be located just south of Alai Sinai and to have a similar structure and size.

These settlements merge on the north with the new Netiv Ha'Asara settlement, which is inside Israel, and thus contribute to blurring the pre-1967 armistice line. Netiv Ha'Asara is one of the settlements relocated from northern Sinai to Israel after 1982; the settlers used their substantial compensation money to build large villas overlooking the sea and to invest in plastic-covered greenhouses for vegetables and flowers. On the east, the growth of the settlements is blocked by Beit Hanun village, with 15,000 residents. Its citrus groves cover the northeast corner of the Strip. On the south, the settlement bloc is apt to press in the future against the dense Palestinian residential areas of al-Atatra, Beit Lahiya, Jabalya, Sheikh Radwan, and Nazla. Beit Lahiya has some 20,000 residents, and the refugee camp of Jabalya (A) houses 42,000 persons. The resettlement quarters recently established for refugees—Sheikh Radwan (AA) and Nazla (BB)—are still relatively small, with 3,700 and 740 inhabitants respectively.⁵ However, the villages and camps are crowded and lack space for expansion.

Qatif Bloc. Along the southern part of the Mediterranean coast from Swedish Village (DD) north almost to Deir al-Balah, some 7,500 acres of state land are being used

to establish a thick belt of settlements. Known as the Qatif Bloc, it contains nine sites either inhabited or under construction. Since the land is mostly sandy, with high dunes stretching into the interior, a sophisticated hothouse agriculture is being developed. Vegetables and flowers are being grown under plastic covers, and some light industry is planned.⁶ Palestinian farmers' vegetable plots near the shore are now threatened with expropriation, since the settlers want to transform the coast into a summer resort.

Netzer Hazani (9) was founded in 1973 as a *nahal*. The rest were established after 1977 and all are religious nationalist in political orientation. Neve Dekalim (12) is to become the center for the bloc, and will contain a supermarket, bank, commercial offices, and recreational facilities.⁷ Neve Dekalim already houses a *hesder yeshiva*, a college where students combine religious studies with military training. This yeshiva moved there from Yamit in northern Sinai in 1982 and now has 120 students, with plans to double in size. At present, about 800 persons live in all the settlements in Qatif Bloc; another 450 persons live temporarily in nearby settlements within the Strip, awaiting the completion of their houses. The settlements are still small: 39 families (300 people) live in the oldest, Netzer Hazani, and 20 families (84 people) live in Qatif (10). Ganei Tal ("dew gardens"; 11) is the largest with 42 families (242 people).

The terminus for the canal between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea, which the government approved in 1981, will be located within the Qatif Bloc at Nahal Qatif D (8).⁸ At present, the *nahal* has a small jetty and tourist beach, but a large installation is expected to be erected. The canal will then pass east across the Strip into Israel: the government may seize a belt of cultivated land on the east side of the north-south highway for this purpose. A security post or a settlement might be established at the abandoned United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) base called Delhi Camp, close to the armistice line. No plans have been announced as yet, however, and funding for the canal remains problematic.

The Qatif Bloc is already pressing on Palestinian residential areas. The bloc envelops Khan Yunis town (population 170,000) and refugee camp (27,000; G), and the Amal resettlement zone (1,300; CC), blocking further expansion. At the southern end, the Israeli government is trying to evacuate a small settlement of Palestinian refugee fishermen, called Swedish Village (DD), since it occupies a corner along the border with Egypt.

Qatif as a whole might be expanded to link with Kfar Darom (7) toward the north and Morag (18) to the east. Kfar Darom is one of the original settlements, on the site of a pre-1948 *kibbutz* (collective farm). Since 1982, it has hosted a four-year college for Torah studies supervised by the Ministry of Education, and its religious orientation predisposes it to merge with the Qatif settlers. Furthermore, the pre-1948 road from Deir al-Balah to Israel has been reopened and could serve as a route for these settlers to travel to and from Israel, bypassing Arab towns and refugee camps.

Expansion in the southeast, through Morag, would be more difficult since the area is dotted with Palestinian hamlets and fields. However, a new east-west access road to Israel has been built, midway between Khan Yunis and Rafah, and settlement

along that line would separate the two major Arab population centers in the southern part of the Strip. This would also reduce the isolation of Morag, an early settlement that currently has an elementary school which serves the whole Qatif Bloc. Morag also hosts groups of settlers who will move to Mitzpe Atzmona (17) and Bedolah (15) when their permanent homes are finished. Thus Morag, like Kfar Darom, is already merging functionally into the Qatif Bloc.

Gaza Town. A cluster of settlements known as Netzarim (6) lies four kilometers south of the town of Gaza, and a new settlement site is being prepared to the east at Tel Montar (5). Netzarim was the second settlement constructed in the Strip, originally as a *nahal*, in February 1972. It became a *moshav* (cooperative farm) in 1980 and cultivates land expropriated from the large and influential Abu Middein bedouin tribe in 1971. A new *kibbutz* bearing the same name was established nearby in 1980, and both settlements now seek additional land. They have been constricted into a 175-acre plot because the surrounding area is heavily cultivated with grapes and fruit and the Arabs have individual titles to the land. Nevertheless, Netzarim is trying to press east toward the highway, north to Sheikh Ajlin, and south to the archeological site at Tel Ajjul. Some Palestinian farmers have already received notices that they will not be allowed to cultivate these lands beyond the current season.

The settlement point at Tel Montar was formed on April 3, 1982, when a small military post was transformed into a *nahal*.⁹ The site has major strategic value, since it is located on a high point that overlooks Gaza town and dominates both the main east-west and north-south roads. It secures Netzarim's road access to Israel and also provides an alternate road to Beersheba for the Northern Bloc settlers. Nahal Tel Montar now covers fifteen acres of a fifty-acre plot—partly expropriated from the Shawwa family—and could expand east to encompass the pre-1967 airstrip just inside the armistice line. Already, Arabs are not allowed to build in that eastern sector. This would also complete the containment of Gaza town (population about 182,000) as well as the refugee camps of Shati (B; 32,000) and Jabalya (42,000).

Refugee Resettlement. All along the Mediterranean coast and the border with Egypt, Israel's imposition of a security zone is forcing some Palestinians to leave their homes. The ruling has affected Shati camp and Deir al-Balah camp (F), which crowd along the Mediterranean shore, and has had an impact on Rafah, which straddles the international border with Egypt.¹⁰ As soon as Israel completed its withdrawal from Sinai in April 1982, the army bulldozed a fifty-meter-wide strip along the border in which it placed watchtowers and barbed-wire fences. In May 1982, more than three hundred houses—all of blocks G and D of the forty-thousand-person Rafah camp (H)—were demolished. The evacuees had to relocate in Tel al-Sultan (EE) and rebuild their houses from scraps saved from the demolition.¹¹

A year later, from August to October 1983, another wave of demolitions in Rafah camp and town forced more people to move to Tel al-Sultan, which is now the largest resettlement project, housing 4,130 persons.¹² The army also tore down some orchards belonging to residents of Brazil camp (GG; population 1,022) and,

as noted, is trying to close Swedish Village: thirty-two of its one hundred houses have been bulldozed, but the residents obtained a High Court injunction to prevent the demolition of the remainder. The village was founded in 1965 by a Swedish UNEF unit to house refugee fishermen who were living in Rafah camp; the site next to the beach was more convenient for them. Because it is located on government land, the villagers are apt to lose their court case and will have to accept financial compensation for their relocation. Already some Israeli maps mark the site as Qatif-F, indicating that it is intended to be the southernmost settlement in the Qatif Bloc.

Canada camp (FF) poses a special problem. Established by Israel in the 1970s on a former UNEF base to house some people evicted from Rafah, it is located on the Egyptian side of the border. Since April 1982, its five thousand residents have been in limbo. Because they are not Egyptians, the Egyptian government expects them to be relocated back into Gaza and has set aside funds to compensate them for the move. Israel is loath to let them return, however, and has delayed finalizing an agreement with Egypt on relocation terms. In the meantime, Israel refuses to allow the camp residents to cross the border to continue their jobs and schooling in Rafah, and families must communicate by shouting at each other across the barbed-wired border.

Israel today controls 28,450 acres in the Strip, 30 percent of its land mass. The government uses that area almost entirely for settlements and their special access roads; only 475 acres are reserved for army bases.¹³ In contrast, before 1948, Jews owned only 200 acres in Gaza subdistrict, the current site of Kfar Darom. Although barely 1,400 Israeli settlers live in the Strip now—largely in the Qatif Bloc—the infrastructure is being laid for a major expansion. Qatif Bloc could double in size by 1985–86, and plans call for 1,000 families (5,000 individuals) in the Northern Bloc.

In 1982, the Jewish Agency's Settlement Department urged the government to transfer 100,000 Jews to the Strip, but a more realistic estimate would be 10,000 by 1990–95. These numbers must be balanced against the Palestinian population: numbering at least 600,000 at present (of whom about 400,000 are refugees), this population will grow to 700,000 by 1990–95, barring a major emigration wave.¹⁴ The juxtaposition of these densely packed, poorly serviced urban agglomerations with the spacious and economically flourishing settlements invites a major explosion: on the one hand, the militant Palestinian nationalists and, on the other, Jewish religious nationalists, each viewing the Gaza Strip as part of their own promised land and each viewing the other as illegitimate aliens.

Palestinian Social Forces

Gaza has experienced dramatic changes in its social and economic life over the past decades, reflecting the political transformations to which its people have been subjected. The 80,000 population of the quiet coastal belt swelled to 280,000 after 1948 and then grew gradually to 385,000 over the next nineteen years. After a downturn in 1967–68 following Israeli occupation, it has risen to 600,000 today,

of whom 75 percent are refugees. Originally rural in character, the Strip is now 85 percent urban if one includes the refugee camps.

The Strip has only 125,000 indigenous residents (that is, those who lived—or whose parents lived—there before 1948).¹⁵ These include a small number of large landowners and merchants who have invested in citrus, hold the major interests in trading firms and the Palestine Bank, and established the few substantial industries that exist in the Strip. These families dominate Gaza politically as well as economically. Indigenous residents of the middle class own shops in the towns, work as teachers, doctors, or lawyers, or operate smallholder farms. The poorest crowd into the Shajaiya and Zaitoun quarters of Gaza town, where services are minimal and the men rely on day labor in the town or in Israel. Conditions in those quarters are materially worse than in the refugee camps, where the United Nations Refugee Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) provides basic social and medical services.

Although refugees have their basic needs met in the camps, their avenues for advancement have been limited. Many have gone abroad for professional or skilled employment, and some have obtained professional or administrative posts through UNRWA. Most, however, depend on unskilled or skilled jobs in agriculture, industry, and construction; many now work inside Israel. Few refugees have gained politically prominent roles in the Strip. Rather, they still tend to be viewed as outsiders. This gap between refugees and indigenous residents is markedly different from the situation in the West Bank, where the distinction between refugees and locals has blurred over the years, to the extent that several towns have elected refugees to their municipal councils and refugees are active in local professional and charitable organizations.

The population of the Gaza Strip is very young: half of the residents are under age 14. There is also a distinct sex disequilibrium. In 1973, for example, only 41 percent of the residents in the 25–49 age group were male, reflecting the large numbers who had gone abroad to work or were deceased.¹⁶ For young men, emigration is one of the few routes to financial solvency.

The UNRWA educational system enables virtually all refugee children to attend school through the junior high level, when they transfer to government schools. UNRWA also provides post-secondary vocational and teacher training for young men and women, which facilitates their finding jobs as technicians or educators in the Arab world. In addition, about 1,500 of the 5,000 students who passed the comprehensive examination at the end of high school used to be guaranteed places in Egyptian universities.¹⁷ When this policy was abolished by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1978, as punishment for Gaza's criticism of his foreign policy, the resulting educational crisis prompted Gaza educators to try to establish their own university, since only a small number of Gaza students could be placed in the universities in the West Bank. Because it would have been virtually impossible to obtain a permit from Israel to open a university, the educators based the university on a two-year religious college that was a branch of al-Azhar University in Cairo.¹⁸ The branch, renamed the Islamic University of Gaza, now has 2,600 students in faculties of arts, business, and Islamic law.

Israeli authorities treat the university as a religious institution rather than an

educational one. Its operations are thus tightly circumscribed: any spending must be cleared by the Israeli government, no expansion of its buildings has been allowed, equipment and book purchases from abroad are generally prohibited, and Israel interferes in the appointment of academic staff. Moreover, its Palestinian directors are conservative in their orientation: male and female students are segregated, a dress code is enforced, no Christian students are enrolled, and all students must take a one-year religious-education program before entering the freshman class. Though many Palestinians are consequently critical of the university, there is no alternative within the Strip. Gaza College, a private post-secondary school run by an indigenous Christian family, lacks the resources to expand to university status.

A cleavage within the society between secular and religious orientations has been evident during the 1980s, as Islamic fundamentalism gains adherents in the Strip as well as in other parts of the Islamic world. In part, this represents a turning inward to tradition and faith for sustenance in difficult times and a despair that secular nationalism can achieve tangible results for the Palestinians. It also reflects the attraction of Islamic revolutionary dynamism—epitomized by Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran—and the appeal of a tightly knit brotherhood, based on principles of clean living and devotion. Islamic youth clubs in Gaza, for example, have helped young people stop taking drugs and have provided them with a sense of purpose and discipline.

The three main Islamic groups that function in the Strip are the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwan al-Muslimin), the Party of Islamic Liberation (Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami), and the Islamic Jihad. The Gaza Muslim Brotherhood, a branch of the Egyptian Brotherhood, was active underground in the Strip during the period of Egyptian rule and now calls for a Palestinian state based on Islamic law. The Party of Islamic Liberation, an offshoot of a West Bank-based movement, also endorses the application of Islamic law but rejects Palestinian nationalism, calling instead for unity of the Muslim world. The Islamic Jihad, a small militant group formed by prisoners in Israeli jails, opposes any compromise with Israel and asserts that only a military solution is warranted.¹⁹ All three movements are strongly anticommunist, and much of their energy has been directed against institutions they view as left-leaning, such as the Red Crescent Society in Gaza and Bir Zeit University in the West Bank. In January 1980, a mob of 500–600 men looted the premises of the Red Crescent Society, attacked a restaurant that served liquor, and smashed liquor stores and a movie house.²⁰ In June 1983, busloads of Muslim youths from Gaza drove to Bir Zeit, where they battled with nationalist and leftist students on the campus.

At times it appears the Israeli government supports these fundamentalist groups. In January 1980, for example, the army did not prevent the crowd from attacking the Red Crescent Society and the stores, even though it is capable of responding instantaneously to any signs of civil disturbance. The military also stood back while students clashed at Bir Zeit in 1983. Nevertheless, a group such as Islamic Jihad is apt to turn its energies against the Israeli occupier and to develop militant underground cells. When the religious dimension is wedded to nationalist grievances,

the public can be quickly inflamed, as the spontaneous reaction to the attack on the al-Aqsa mosque demonstrated in April 1982.

Economic Trends

Under Egypt, the economy of Gaza never achieved a balance. The huge pool of labor had few employment outlets. Gaza's port lacked a hinterland. Although citrus production and export expanded dramatically, over half of the gross national product (GNP) came from services via UNRWA, UNEF, and the Egyptian army. In 1966, per capita GNP was only \$80.²¹ The immediate impact of the occupation was to exacerbate unemployment: many service jobs vanished, trade with Egypt halted, and the port was closed. Moreover, since the combined GNP of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip was only 2.6 percent of the Israeli GNP in 1967, it was inevitable that they would be sucked into the Israeli system if the occupation endured.²² Israeli economic practices—some planned and others occurring by chance—underlined the Strip's dependency. These practices included prohibiting the sale of most Gaza products within Israel, flooding the Gaza market with Israeli goods, restructuring Gaza's agriculture, and encouraging Arab laborers to work in Israel.²³

The Balance and Composition of Trade. Before June 1967, Gaza had no trade with either Israel or Jordan; all its trade was overland to Egypt or through the Gaza port. The port was used to export citrus to Eastern Europe and to import consumer goods for transit to Egypt.

In 1968, after less than a year of Israeli rule, none of Gaza's trade went to Egypt and the port remained closed. Instead, 28 percent of Gaza's exports went to Israel and 72 percent of its imports came from Israel. Another 18 percent of Gaza's exports passed through Israel and the West Bank to Jordan and other Arab countries. The remainder went to Eastern Europe in fulfillment of pre-1967 citrus contracts. Since Israel allowed export across the Jordan River to Arab countries but forbade virtually all imports by that route, only one percent of Gaza's imports came from Jordan in 1968.²⁴

A decade later, in 1978, the shift in trading patterns was even more pronounced. Two-thirds of Gaza's exports went to Israel, 26 percent to Jordan, and 7 percent to other countries, the contracts with Eastern Europe having been terminated by that time. In contrast, 91 percent of imports came from Israel and nothing was imported from Jordan.²⁵ Gaza exports were primarily citrus, with some vegetables, dates, and strawberries going to Israel. Citrus exported to Jordan was sold as fresh fruit, whereas most of the citrus sold to Israel was used for canning and juices.

When a group of Gaza merchants tried to obtain permission to set up a factory for juice concentrate within the Strip, using surplus and low-grade oranges, Israel initially refused the request, then attached a long list of conditions. These included informing the government where financing for the factory was coming from, not using any PLO funds, locating the factory in the Eretz industrial zone, and selling

its products only through Israeli exporters. Finally, the government allowed the group to purchase a defunct factory from Israel for \$1 million, but would not let it buy new equipment or sell the product inside Israel. The investors, doubting that the factory can be economically viable under such restrictions, have not yet set it up.²⁶

The shift in trade can be expressed another way. In 1978, the Strip had a negative trade balance with Israel of \$-99.8 million, which increased to \$-119.8 million by 1980. In contrast, the Strip had a positive balance of \$32.9 million with Jordan in 1978, but this dropped to \$27 million in 1980 owing to a decrease in citrus exports.²⁷

These figures indicate that Gaza imports from or through Israel virtually all its consumer goods and even agricultural produce. Israel imposes high customs duties on imports and heavily subsidizes its own agricultural produce through cooperative networks. Israeli eggs, poultry, and vegetables can sell at lower prices than local produce. Thus, Gaza merchants merely channel Israeli goods into the Strip, and local industries engage primarily in subcontracting for Israeli firms.

Gaza industries have been particularly hard hit by Israeli competition. Only eleven firms employ more than ten workers, including two soft-drink bottling companies, eight seasonal citrus packing plants, and factories for furniture, plastics, textiles, sweets, perfume, and bricks. Most factories are small-scale operations with low capitalization, and depend on Israel for their raw materials and often for subcontracting. This dependency has been particularly marked in textiles and clothing, which employed 2,342 workers in 1979 (more than half of the industrial workers within the Strip).²⁸ Subcontracting is prevalent in other fields as well: cane furniture factories, for example, import their cane from Israel and are then required to export 90 percent of the finished product back to the Israeli supplier. Similarly, the Israeli Maskit firm controls the raw materials, marketing, and design for woven rugs.

A 15 percent excise tax, imposed in 1976, and soaring inflation erode the profits of merchants and factory owners. Gazans have no way to hedge against inflation, since the Israeli shekel is the only legal tender in the Strip. (In contrast, the Jordanian dinar still circulates legally in the West Bank and provides the main means of saving.) Even the Palestine Bank, closed by Israel in 1967 but reopened in August 1981, can conduct business only in shekels. The bank directors have taken a case to the Israeli High Court to challenge this restriction, since the bank had been allowed to handle dollar and sterling accounts before 1967 and since the three Israeli banks functioning in the Strip use foreign currency as well as shekels.²⁹

Restructuring Agriculture. Israel adopted several measures to alter Gaza's agriculture. The government prevented farmers from exporting to Israel any items that competed with Israeli produce and imposed restrictions on the planting of certain other produce. As a result, the output of melons, onions, grapes, almonds, olives, and fish has decreased. Farmers need a permit to plant trees; a similar regulation was issued in 1983 for the planting of vegetables but has not yet been enforced in the Strip.³⁰

Pressures have been especially severe on the citrus sector, the backbone of Gaza's

agricultural production. Oranges, lemons, tangerines, and grapefruit cover nearly 17,500 acres and constitute half of the Strip's agricultural output, 70 percent of its agricultural exports, a third of the cultivated area, and 55 percent of the value of agricultural production.³¹ Nevertheless, the government has almost never permitted farmers to plant new trees, even to replace old, nonproductive ones. In 1976, the government stopped providing development loans and working capital for citrus, and, in 1982, the entire development budget for Gaza was canceled.

Farmers had planted many new trees during the early 1960s, so citrus yields peaked in 1975–76 at about 237,100 tons (1.3 tons per acre). At least 500 acres of old trees had to be uprooted by 1980 and the yield of other trees began to drop. Thus production decreased to 168,500 tons by 1980–81 (.96 tons per acre) and to only 153,000 tons in 1982–83 (.87 tons per acre).³²

As the trees have aged, the size and quality of the oranges have declined, and they have become less marketable abroad. Jordan and other Arab countries are thus less interested in purchasing Gaza citrus than in the past and will not give any special privileges to Gazans. The contracts with Eastern Europe ended in 1975, and Iran, which gave priority to Gaza citrus from 1975 to 1979, stopped importing Gaza citrus when the Shah lost power. Israel prohibits the export of Gaza citrus to Western and Eastern Europe and even to Asia, since it would compete with Israeli citrus. Israel can also close the Jordan River bridges at will, thereby ruining the perishable produce. This technique has been used to punish prominent merchants for their political views and to remind them of the leverage Israel can apply.³³

The government has encouraged production of some specialized items, such as strawberries and dates. Farmers in Beit Lahiya village say that they were ordered to grow strawberries rather than potatoes; otherwise, they would have been prevented from using their land and well. Strawberries are marketed exclusively through Ashkelon port by the Israeli export firm Agrexco, which pays the local farmers in shekels. Israel has encouraged date-seedling distribution and production because date trees are economical in their use of water, can tolerate relatively high salinity in the soil, and do not compete with Israeli produce. No permits have been given for planting mangos and avocados, which are also grown in Israel.

There have been a few indigenous efforts to improve agricultural production and marketing. The Deir al-Balah vegetable cooperative purchased its own truck so that it could sell its vegetables directly to wholesalers and stores, bypassing the Israeli middleman. The cooperative also established a vegetable-seedling nursery, making it no longer necessary to purchase all its seeds and seedlings from Israel. In contrast to these successful initiatives, the Khan Yunis Agricultural Marketing Cooperative, although allowed to resume operations in 1981, still has not obtained Israeli approval to create a bulldozer-tractor unit or purchase machinery to upgrade the packing of vegetables for export.

The government has had an ambiguous approach to fishermen, who are virtually all refugees living in Shati camp and Swedish Village. On the one hand, Israel allowed one of the two fishermen's cooperatives in Gaza to set up an ice-packing house so that fish could be kept cold before being trucked to factories and restaurants inside Israel. It was also allowed to purchase a refrigerated truck, which enabled

it to sell fish directly in Ashkelon. On the other hand, the government refused to let the cooperative open a sardine canning factory that might compete with factories inside Israel.

In any case, there has been a drastic drop in the fish catch. This is largely because the area available for fishing has been severely curtailed and is now only a quarter of its pre-1967 size. The military prohibits fishing boats from sailing within seven kilometers of the northern border of the Strip, south of Rafah, or more than twelve kilometers out to sea. Given the limited catch possible, the expense of maintaining nets and overhauling boats, and the difficulty of winching the boats onto the beach every day, the number of fishermen seeking licenses has dropped from 1,400 to 1,000, and not all of those actually take their boats out to sea.

Restrictions are also placed on water consumption. Forty-five percent of the Strip's agriculture is irrigated, and 90 percent of water use in the Strip is for irrigation.³⁴ Water is therefore a precious commodity. Since there are no catchment basins to hold flood waters, farmers depend almost entirely on the aquifers that underlie the Gaza Strip and the eastern Negev. The increasingly serious problem of overpumping has caused an intrusion of sea water into the aquifers and an increase in salinity of the water. This in turn affects the quality of the citrus and the potability of the water. Experts have concluded that pumping needs to be curtailed by 30–60 percent in order to stem the intrusion of sea water.³⁵ Thus, Israel's virtual freeze on permits for water drilling and its strict water allotments are necessary for the long-term benefit of the economy. Nevertheless, as one Israeli expert noted, that freeze has affected only Palestinian farmers, not Israelis.³⁶ Israel continues to sink wells to the east of the Strip, thereby damaging the Strip's aquifer. Moreover, Israeli settlements within the Strip consume a growing amount of water.

One benefit to agriculture has come from the greater mechanization and labor efficiency evident in the farms of the Gaza Strip. Before 1967, agricultural wages were low and farmers had little incentive to mechanize. Following the occupation, alternative employment opportunities opened up within Israel. Local agricultural employment dropped, indirectly increasing efficiency—since much of the labor had been redundant on the farms—and promoting mechanization. The number of tractors in the Strip grew from only a dozen in 1968–69 to 636 in 1979–80.³⁷ Correspondingly, there was a shift in the proportions of wage labor and owner labor on farms: from 65 percent wage labor in 1968–69 to 78 percent owner labor in 1979–80.³⁸

The annual rate of growth in income from agricultural production from 1968 to 1981 was a respectable 6.1 percent. Agriculture as a percentage of GNP dropped, however, from 28.1 percent in 1968 to 12.3 percent in 1980, largely a result of the massive shift of the labor force into Israel.³⁹

Arab Labor in Israel. In 1970, approximately 10 percent of the Gaza labor force was employed in Israel, but by the mid-1970s, the proportion had jumped to one-third. At present, more than 40 percent, about 40,000 people, work in Israel, including 26,000 workers who are registered with the official labor exchanges and another 14,000 who work illegally.⁴⁰ Wages inside Israel were five to six times those within the Strip, thus making such employment irresistible. Moreover, it

became easier for laborers to travel to Israel when in May 1972 the government discontinued the requirement that all Gazans present police permits at the roadblocks controlling the exits from and entrances to the Strip.

The composition of labor from Gaza employed in Israel has shifted significantly over the past decades. In 1970, according to official figures, 47.4 percent of the laborers worked in the construction trades, 40.7 in agriculture, 8.5 percent in industry, and 3.4 percent in services (restaurants, gasoline stations, and garbage collection). In 1980, 44.2 percent continued to work in construction, but only 18.1 percent held agricultural jobs. Industry's share had increased to 21.1 percent, and employment in services had expanded to 16.6 percent. These figures may nonetheless be somewhat misleading. They do show a trend toward more stable employment patterns, such as the long-term factory workers in Netivot, the busboys in Tel Aviv restaurants, or the municipal garbage collectors in Rishon leZion. But they do not include most of the day-labor jobs, which are concentrated in agriculture and construction and are not registered with the labor exchange. These are the most exploitative jobs and have caused the greatest outcry within Israel.

Every morning before dawn, men, women, and children congregate at Ashkelon junction, just north of the Strip, in the hope that an Israeli employer will hire them for a day's or a week's work.⁴¹ Although it is illegal for children under age sixteen to work, children are hired for \$5–6 a day. Adults earn at most \$15. They must provide their own food and pay for their transport. They have no medical protection or even any guarantee that they will be paid at the end of the day. An Israeli labor manager for a construction firm in Ashkelon spoke candidly to an Israeli journalist about the conditions:

Children don't have to be registered at the labor exchange and we don't pay social benefits for them. One usually pays them once a week in cash. The younger they are, the harder they work. . . . Of course, the children are cheaper. IS 500 a day. The grown-ups receive up to IS 800 a day, and the professional ones IS 1500–1800 a day. They work nine hours a day with a half-hour break. We don't supply food. How do I choose them? I come to the junction, ask how much they want, find out what experience they have, and choose those who seem strongest.⁴²

A young Arab laborer standing nearby listened to the manager and then commented bitterly: "It is like donkeys—the larger the better."

Those workers who have regular jobs inside Israel also face difficulties in their working conditions. Arabs from the West Bank and Gaza are prohibited from staying inside Israel from 1 A.M. to 4 A.M. Thus, they must commute for long hours from their homes to their jobs every day. As a result, employers and workers collude in circumventing the law. Farmers let laborers sleep in huts, abandoned buses, or even in the open under the orange trees.⁴³ The workers may have piped water available to them, but no electricity, latrines, or kitchens. They must cook in tin cans on wood fires in the sand. In towns, workers jam into hostels, sleep on construction sites, or spread out on the floor in restaurants. Catastrophes have occurred when workers were locked into these premises at night. In 1976, for example, three

workers from Gaza were locked into a mattress factory in Tel Aviv in the evening and burned to death when a fire broke out and they could not escape. Police tend to close their eyes when employers lock up their workers, since that method keeps them off the streets at night. The police do sometimes arrest Gazans who try to sleep on beaches or in parks, and they occasionally raid agricultural settlements after 1 A.M. and truck the laborers back to the Strip.

Many residents of the Gaza Strip have benefited materially from work inside Israel. This is evident in the significant increase in purchases of consumer goods over the past dozen years. In 1974, only 13 percent of Gaza residents had an electric or gas cooking stove, but in 1981, 71 percent had acquired such an item.⁴⁴ Similarly, many more now own refrigerators and television sets. This change parallels a growth in the availability of an unlimited supply of electricity, which covered 18 percent of the households in the Strip in 1967 and 89 percent in 1981. Before 1967, electricity was produced by local generators, but now all the electricity comes from the Israeli national grid. While ensuring a relatively continuous supply of power, this system reinforces the Strip's dependency on Israel in yet another tangible way.

The improvement in material conditions should not be attributed solely to cash income acquired through working in Israel. Remittances from relatives working in the Persian Gulf states are a major source. One estimate is that remittances now account for one-third of gross domestic product (GDP) of the Gaza Strip.⁴⁵ Since remittances are in hard currency, they tend to be invested in housing and other long-term improvements. In contrast, wage labor in Israel is paid in shekels, whose value decreases daily, and therefore those wages tend to be spent for food and disposable consumer goods.

The overall impact of Israeli economic policy is to turn the Gaza Strip into a large labor camp. The Strip is a source of cheap labor for Israel, and its internal economic base is continually eroded. The lack of growth in industry and commerce and the squeeze on agriculture constrict its long-term growth prospects, despite the superficial availability of cash and consumer goods. There is evidence that its GDP has actually decreased recently. Israeli statistics indicate the GDP was IS 155.3 million in 1976, grew to IS 162.2 million in 1978 (in 1976 constant prices), but then dropped to IS 144.2 million in 1980 (also in 1976 prices).⁴⁶ This drop was apparently caused by the downturn in citrus production, the loss of northern Sinai, and a slight decrease in employment inside Israel as a result of Israel's own economic problems. Israel's internal economic difficulties are bound to be reflected in the Gaza Strip as it is increasingly enmeshed in the Israeli economic system.

Assessment

Today, Gaza appears at a dead end. Politically, it is frozen. The Gaza municipality, which provided at least some leadership, has been disbanded for two years. Its professional leaders are watched closely and speak guardedly. Its residents have few avenues of protest, aside from outbursts in the refugee camps and in the alleys of the towns. Gaza is heavily dependent upon Israel economically and is affected

by the vicissitudes of the troubled Israeli economy. Israeli settlements press in on the Strip from north and south. Settlement zones constrict the growth of its towns and villages and are already separating the main population centers from each other. This settlement pattern will make it difficult for Israel to leave the Strip and will prevent the Palestinians from retaining the territorial continuity necessary for a sovereign state.

Palestinians nevertheless continue to seek ways to break out of this dead end. Some maintain contact with Israeli critics of the government, in the hope that these persons can either influence the government to change its policy or overturn the government in the next elections. Three prominent Gazans, including Rashad al-Shawwa, went to Tel Aviv in January 1984 to meet with the leaders of Mapam, a moderate socialist party that was a member of the Labor governments until 1977.⁴⁷ The Gazans talked about the need for a dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis, and urged Mapam to oppose the government's settlement policy and its economic pressures on the occupied territories. They also stressed the need for each side to recognize the other's political rights, including the right to independent states alongside each other. In addition, Shawwa spoke at a Labor Party convention in Jerusalem. There he received a cooler reception. In any case, such contacts remain rare and have little impact. Shawwa noted that Mapam has little influence within Israel, and Labor is preoccupied with winning parliamentary elections, not with accommodating Palestinian needs.

Palestinians in Gaza tend to look to outside forces to relieve their situation. They follow closely the debates and conflicts among the Arab states and the PLO. Although they recognize that divisions in the Arab ranks weaken their cause and reduce pressure on the United States and Israel, they disagree as to how these divisions should be ended.⁴⁸ Some support Yasir Arafat's dialogue with Egypt and Jordan as the only practical means to draw the PLO into negotiations. Others are vehemently opposed, viewing the dialogue as a trap for the PLO and a dead end so long as Syria is excluded. In general, they believe that the current diplomatic impasse reflects the present military imbalance between Israel and the Arab states: only if that balance can be redressed will Israel take the Arabs seriously enough to negotiate a territorial compromise. But the imbalance can be altered only if the Arab regimes take a tougher stance toward U.S. policy in the region and if the U.S. modifies its commitment to Israel. Neither shift is viewed as likely, at least in the short run.

Palestinians feel that Israel is fundamentally unable to recognize their existence and rights, because such recognition could call into question its own rights. The result is a policy that ghettoizes the Palestinians and might eventually push them out *en masse*. Nevertheless, some Palestinians question the long-term viability of that Israeli position. Rashad Shawwa opined:

The sooner the Israelis realize that they cannot live in peace in this part of the world without justly resolving the Palestine question . . . the better it will be for Israel and the area. Israel may be able to retain its might for another hundred years, but these will . . . be years of continuous armed conflict and bloodshed.⁴⁹

What kind of a solution do the Palestinians seek? None appears willing to consider the kind of "autonomy" that the Israeli government has offered. This, they feel, would perpetuate their subordinate status under Israeli rule and free the Israeli government to establish more settlements, absorb the territories, and squeeze out the Palestinians. A few persons were willing to consider autonomy if it meant a period of self-rule which would lead to independence, although the Israeli government made it clear it would never allow a Palestinian state to emerge at the end of the transition period. The breakdown of Egyptian-Israeli negotiations on autonomy rendered the debate academic.

Few Palestinians want a union with Jordan. The residents of Gaza have no historic ties with the Hashemite Kingdom—unlike the Palestinians in the West Bank—and they resent the king's past treatment of Palestinians living under his rule. Some, however, envisage pragmatic reasons for establishing a link with Jordan: Gaza needs an outlet through Jordan for its produce, and Gaza could provide a Mediterranean port for Jordan's goods. But these trade ties affect only a minority of the residents of Gaza; the majority would view the advent of Jordanian rule as the exchange of one occupier for another.

Essentially, Gazans adhere to their aspiration for an independent Palestinian state, distant though that may seem. Abd al-Shafei articulated that perspective in a debate with Israelis several years ago.⁵⁰ For "a durable peace," injustices must be redressed and both sides satisfied, he asserted. This would mean "a fair division of the land" and the formation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. He said that Palestinians could accept a transitional period if it would definitely lead to self-determination, statehood, and the removal of Israeli settlements. Once formed, the Palestinian state would recognize Israel. It might even choose to federate with Jordan, but this step could be considered only after its independence was assured.

This aspiration remains distant, not only from the Likud government's position, but also from that of its Labor opposition. Although Labor has been willing to make some territorial concessions to the Arabs, it would keep much of the land under Israeli control, retain the settlements, and oppose the formation of a Palestinian state. Party leader Shimon Peres has consistently backed the establishment of a bloc of Israeli settlements in the southern sector of the Gaza Strip, corresponding to the Qatif Bloc.⁵¹ Under his scenario, only the northern part of the Strip and the central highlands of the West Bank would be removed from Israeli control and be linked to Jordan. Palestinians are thus sarcastic and skeptical about the prospects for any but cosmetic improvement should Labor come to power.⁵² Some even feel the situation could be more dangerous, since they believe that Labor would articulate a moderate line in its foreign policy while in practice retaining the same fundamental policy as Likud.

The short-sightedness and self-contradictions in Israeli policies were reflected upon by an Israeli writer, Amos Elon.⁵³ Calling his people "blind in Gaza," Elon chided them for being blind to the poverty, density, and explosiveness there, and blind to the implications of retaining it within the borders of Israel, where it is fast becoming "the Soweto of the State of Israel." Will Israel continue to turn a blind

eye to the realities of Gaza and to the stark choices that it poses for Israel's own future? The choice made will have a profound effect on the prospects for peace and risks of war throughout the Middle East.

(June 1984)

NOTES

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8. *JPI*, August 24, 1980, April 5, 1981; *Maariv*, June 29, 1981.
9. *Al-Fajr*, April 9 and 16, 1982.
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11. *JPI*, June 6, 1982.
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12.

The West Bank and Gaza: Political and Ideological Responses to Occupation

Ann Mosely Lesch and Mark Tessler

While international attention is focused on the continuing violence in Lebanon and on diplomatic maneuvering among the Palestine Liberation Organization, Jordan, and other Arab actors, the 1.3 million Palestinians residing in the West Bank and Gaza face a steadily deteriorating situation. The Palestinian inhabitants of these occupied territories have only limited ability to resist the expansionist efforts of forces within the Israeli government and of the Israeli settler movement. Nevertheless, recognizing that time is running out, they are searching for ways at least to slow down the Jewish state's drive into their homeland. These Palestinians are also faced with a need to fashion a response to the inter-Arab political currents swirling around them. For a time, this involved the possibility of enhanced cooperation between the PLO and Jordan. More recently, conflict between Jordan and the PLO has buffeted the occupied territories and intensified the dilemmas of their Palestinian inhabitants. The views and actions of Palestinians in the territories are important in both of these areas. They will be a factor in the ultimate success or failure of efforts to secure Israel's withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza and to implement a peace program based on recognition of Israel and Palestinian self-determination. They will also help to shape the evolution of PLO-Jordanian relations and the role that each is able to play in advancing the Palestinian cause.

Recent Israeli Policies

The Israeli government has consolidated its hold on the West Bank and Gaza through a multifaceted strategy, including the rapid expansion of Jewish settlements and the suppression of Palestinian institutions opposing its policies. Although these actions were most intense under the Likud-led government, which was in power until 1984, they continued to be reflected in the policies of the "national unity" government formed following the elections of the latter year.

The position of the Labor Alignment, which since 1984 has shared power with Likud, is that Israel would be willing to effect a partial withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza in the context of an overall Arab-Israeli peace settlement. Under these conditions, Labor advocates withdrawal from Gaza and from the central highlands of the West Bank, in accordance with what is known as the Allon Plan. In addition to insisting that Israel retain significant portions of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Labor shares Likud's strong opposition to the creation of an independent Palestinian state and, also like Likud, refuses to recognize the PLO as a legitimate bargaining agent. Labor characterizes its approach as a "Jordanian solution," since it calls for the establishment of Hashemite sovereignty over any territory from which Israel withdraws. As a partner in the present national unity government, Labor has supported the construction of several new settlements, including three which lie within the territory that Labor would cede to Jordan under the Allon Plan. Labor Alignment officials with responsibility for the occupied territories, most notably Minister of Defense Yitzhak Rabin, have also been vigorous in suppressing Palestinian nationalism, thus continuing the policies of the previous government.

Nevertheless, some Labor ministers have recognized the folly of the policy pursued by Likud in 1982, when it dissolved virtually all of the Arab municipal councils and replaced them with Israeli military officers. By 1985, the national unity government, at the time under Labor leadership, had begun to make contact with Palestinian notables in an attempt to identify candidates who might be appointed to positions of local leadership. Despite the Palestinians' desire to run their own municipal affairs, however, few agreed to serve, since the government would not consider holding elections and allowing the inhabitants of the occupied territories to select the councils freely.

Palestinian Goals

Despite severe restrictions and sanctions, Palestinians have actively and militantly demonstrated that they reject Israeli versions of autonomy and oppose the acceleration of the Jewish state's settlement drive. Following the introduction of civil administration in November 1981 and through the spring and summer 1982, when the elected municipal councilors were ousted, Palestinian political figures and intellectuals protested vigorously, although only limited communications channels were available to them. Even more important, public strikes and demonstrations persisted for weeks, despite the intense repressive measures employed against them. Similar disturbances and public expressions of discontent have occurred since that time, although on a more sporadic basis. By these efforts, Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza have shown the failure of Israeli policies. Contrary to the predictions of some Israeli authorities, the destruction of Arab municipalities and the elimination of the PLO from Lebanon have not resulted in the appearance of Palestinians willing to accept autonomy schemes based on permanent Israeli control

of all, or even part, of the occupied territories. In fact, there is a solid consensus among Palestinians on the rejection of autonomy and on the need for Israel to withdraw completely from the West Bank and Gaza.

The broad goal sought by most Palestinians is the realization of the principle of self-determination, understood to mean that the political needs and aspirations of the Palestinian people must be defined by Palestinians themselves. Further, there is a consensus that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Individuals may identify with a specific faction within the organization, and thus accept or reject what the PLO says on a particular occasion. On the whole, however, most believe that it articulates the national will of the Palestinians. Therefore, the PLO is regarded as both the institutional expression of Palestinian political consciousness and the appropriate instrument of Palestinian self-determination. Finally, most Palestinians in the territories support the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, with its capital in East Jerusalem. The establishment of such a state was called for by the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference, meeting in Fez in September 1982, and was proposed as part of a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

This nationalist consensus has been particularly evident since the October 1973 War. Its spokesmen swept to power in the municipal council elections of 1976, and their views were thereafter articulated vigorously by the municipalities, through the press, and in public rallies. A typical petition, drafted and circulated in 1979, set forth the demands and objectives of mainstream Palestinian nationalists.¹ It stated: "We aspire to establish a just and lasting peace in the region, which can only be on the basis of our people's exercising their right to self-determination and national independence, after the complete withdrawal [of Israel] from all the territories and the establishment of the Palestinian state."

The Israeli government muzzled and then suppressed these views, starting in 1980 with the deportation of two leading mayors and the town arrest of other outspoken mayors, civic figures, and journalists. The heads of the informal National Guidance Committee, which coordinated opposition to the Camp David accords, were placed under town arrest or deported. Then, in the spring of 1982, the committee was formally banned and the remaining mayors who supported it were ousted from their posts. These actions severely crippled the leadership of the national movement. Nevertheless, the nationalist trend retains strong support, as evidenced by outspoken public backing for the resolutions of the Fez summit in September 1982. The nationalists are wary, however, of the 1982 Reagan peace initiative, issued just a week before the Fez summit. The Reagan Plan rejects the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and calls for Palestinian self-determination in association with Jordan. Palestinians consider the Reagan Plan incompatible with their self-determination and independence and fear that a union with Jordan would lead to Hashemite domination.

Relations between the PLO and Jordan improved in 1983, and the two sought to work out a common negotiating position. On February 11, 1985, they signed an accord in which they agreed to work together for the establishment of a Jordanian-

Palestinian confederation. Territories removed from Israeli control would be attached to the Hashemite Kingdom, and the Palestinian inhabitants of these territories would then exercise their right to self-determination in association with Jordan. Nationalists in the territories tended to be skeptical about the PLO's rapprochement with Amman, however. While they would have welcomed any development bringing about Israel's withdrawal from their homeland, most supported the idea of a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation only if it meant the linking of two sovereign and equal political entities. This was also the position set forth by the PLO Executive Committee in an interpretative statement accompanying its endorsement of the February 11 Arafat-Hussein accord.

The break between the PLO and Jordan early in 1986 provided an opportunity to observe the continuing strength of the nationalist consensus in the West Bank and Gaza. In a speech delivered on February 19, King Hussein vigorously denounced Yasir Arafat and suspended coordination between his country and the PLO. The king complained that his own peace efforts had been undermined by the PLO's unwillingness to accept United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338. Following Hussein's address, heavy Jordanian pressure persuaded a few citizen delegations to travel from the West Bank to Amman to deliver messages approving the king's speech. By contrast, there was a groundswell of support for the PLO in the West Bank and Gaza. Those who traveled to Jordan were strongly criticized upon their return. Even local Palestinians normally aligned with Jordan called the speech a mistake and stated that Hussein had been poorly advised about political sentiments in the occupied territories. The assassination early in March 1986 of Zaafer al-Masri, the Israeli-appointed mayor of Nablus, gave further evidence of broad backing for the mainstream nationalist consensus. Al-Masri's appointment had been approved by the PLO, as well as by Jordan; and his death, apparently at the hands of Syria-based Palestinian rejectionists, was an occasion for widespread demonstrations in support of nationalist aspirations. Al-Masri's funeral, characterized by a mixture of grief and political militancy, provided residents of the West Bank and Gaza with another occasion to express both their support for Yasir Arafat and the PLO and their opposition to the policies of King Hussein of Jordan.

Political Trends

Within the nationalist consensus, there are some distinct ideological differences. A small but articulate group adheres to the original PLO goal of a single state in all of Palestine, in which Jews and Arabs would live on an equal basis. Such proponents argue that the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza should only be a tactic, a step toward the creation of a democratic, socialist, non-nationalist state throughout Palestine.² They also sharply oppose union with Jordan, since they view the monarchy as politically reactionary. These advocates of territorial maximalism are found principally in the ranks of Palestinian students and intellectuals. In the university student elections of December 1985, leftist can-

didates who supported this platform obtained about 36 percent of the votes at Bir Zeit University and about 45 percent at Bethlehem University. At the Islamic College of Hebron, they obtained only 7 percent, however, and at an-Najah National University in Nablus, the largest institution of higher learning in the occupied territories, they received 13 percent of the vote.³

Following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and dispersion of the PLO, many Palestinian leftists muted their criticism of the establishment of a West Bank state and stressed the importance of uniting behind the PLO in order to make diplomatic gains and withstand pressure from the United States and Israel. Subsequently, in the wake of armed opposition from Syrian-backed PLO dissidents in Lebanon, the position of these maximalists became more conflicted. Most had for some time articulated the criticisms of PLO leadership that were expressed by the dissidents. Yet they continue to believe that PLO unity is essential, and many also acknowledge the value of Yasir Arafat as a visible and accepted international symbol of the Palestinian cause. They also believe that the dissidents are being manipulated by Syria, which is pursuing its own interests rather than those of the Palestinians.

The estrangement between the PLO and Jordan that emerged early in 1986 has perpetuated the dilemmas of Palestinian leftists, as has the Jordanian-Syrian rapprochement accompanying these developments. While the maximalists are aligned with factions of the PLO that have many complaints about the leadership of Yasir Arafat, they recognize that the organization requires the support of its constituency in the West Bank and Gaza if it is to resist Syrian and Jordanian pressure. They also approve the rupture between the PLO and Jordan and applaud Arafat for not making the political compromises sought by Hussein.

The Communist trend in the occupied territories differs in nuance from both mainstream nationalists and territorial maximalists. The illegal Communist Party, which has considerable support in labor unions, professional institutions, and schools, has maintained an extensive apparatus throughout the West Bank and Gaza, despite continuous harassment and the deportation of key cadres. Although the party's official ideology is not nationalist—but rather is dedicated to the long-term social and political transformation of the region—it nevertheless has consistently supported the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. Since 1948, the party has endorsed the concept of a two-state solution and has recognized Israeli statehood. After the October War, its adherents were the first to urge the PLO to limit its aims to a state in the occupied territories. At present, the Communists support the political goals of the PLO and mainstream nationalists, but they bitterly oppose territorial maximalists, Islamic militants, and supporters of Jordan.

These ideological differences, though important, have not prevented the emergence of a mainstream nationalist consensus. This consensus was evident in the summer of 1983 when 92 percent of the respondents in a public opinion poll conducted in the West Bank expressed support for the PLO and backed Yasir Arafat as the leader of the Palestinian nationalist movement, agreeing that he symbolized their national aspirations and commitment to unity.⁴ In addition, five hundred civic and religious leaders met in al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem in June 1983 to condemn

the rebellion of PLO dissidents under Abu Musa and to denounce Syria and Libya for meddling in Palestinian affairs. West Bank leaders and newspapers called for resolving differences through “democratic dialogue,” rather than through violence. Armed conflict among Palestinians, they declared, splits the PLO wide open and serves only the interests of the enemies of the Palestinians.

Islamic Currents

The Islamic tendency is another distinct ideological orientation. Although most of its adherents do not reject Palestinian nationalism *per se*, they embrace the currents of militant Islam that have emerged during the last fifteen years and they frequently clash, sometimes violently, with more secular-oriented Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. The two most important Islamic movements, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Liberation Party (al-Tahrir), trace their roots back to the early 1950s. Only after 1967, however, did the Islamic tendency assume significant proportions. In addition to being influenced by many of the same factors that spurred the Islamic resurgence in other Arab and Muslim countries, Palestinian Muslims reacted to the secularist currents that gained ascendancy within the PLO at this time and to the growing influence in the occupied territories of Communists and other leftist groups. The Islamic tendency was also given a boost by the creation in 1978 of Islamic colleges in Jerusalem, Gaza, and Hebron. These institutions produced educated young men who have begun to replace older and more conservative imams and shari’a court justices, in many instances bringing a higher level of political consciousness to established Muslim institutions.

Many nationalist and Communist spokesmen charge that Israeli authorities have deliberately given Muslim militants freedom to organize, in an effort to build up a counterweight to the PLO and to increase the division in Palestinian ranks. This appears to have been true in 1979–80, before the Israelis created the Village Leagues as their agents. Palestinian sources also say that financial support for Islamic groups comes from outside the area, often originating in Saudi Arabia and channeled through Jordan, which seeks to use the Islamic connection to enhance its influence in the territories. Saudi and Jordanian support is channeled both through preexisting political groups, most notably the Muslim Brotherhood and the Liberation Party, and through mosques and Islamic charitable institutions. While nationalists rightly point out that Israeli tolerance and Jordanian help have enabled Muslim groups to extend their influence, supporters of the mainstream nationalist movement have also sometimes allied themselves with Islamic militants to make common cause against Palestinian leftists. For example, pro-Fatah groups at Bir Zeit and an-Najah universities formed an electoral alliance with Islamic parties between 1979 and 1981.

Despite these factors contributing to the growth of the Islamic tendency, the number of active Islamic militants remains limited, and the movement itself is divided into various components, not all of which are mutually exclusive. As noted, there are the Muslim Brotherhood, which is by far the largest and most influential faction, and the smaller Liberation Party. In addition, there are an independent pro-

Khomeini group and a pro-Fatah Islamic faction.⁵ But while the Muslim tendency among Palestinians is not unified with respect to either institutional structure or ideological leadership, Islamic groups are well organized and visible, and their popular support appears to be increasing. Their strength lies particularly in rural areas, in conservative towns such as Hebron, Nablus, Jenin, Gaza, and Khan Yunis, and among university students at Bir Zeit, an-Najah, Hebron, and the branch of al-Azhar in Gaza.

It is at the universities that Islamic militants have been most visible and have had their greatest political impact. From 1979 through 1981, partly as a result of their alliance with Fatah, Islamic candidates received a majority of the votes cast in student council elections held at an-Najah, the largest university in the territories, and they also obtained sizable blocs (30–40 percent) in elections held at Bir Zeit. Muslim groups received an absolute majority as well at the various Islamic colleges. They fared poorly only at Bethlehem University, which has a predominately Christian student body. The electoral performance of Islamic student groups declined after 1982, but Muslim militants remained active on most campuses. For example, in fall 1983, Islamic students and professors at Bir Zeit circulated a petition criticizing the university administration for not admitting enough Muslim students. In the student council elections held at the end of 1985, Islamic party candidates again obtained substantial blocs of votes at an-Najah, Bir Zeit, and elsewhere. Specifically, they obtained 36 percent at an-Najah, 25 percent at Bir Zeit, and 44 percent at Hebron, as well as 11 percent at Bethlehem. The Islamic bloc also obtained 41 percent of the vote at an-Najah in the elections of July 1986. Observers report that student support for Islamic groups comes disproportionately from those of village origin and those with family backgrounds characterized by low socioeconomic status. On the other hand, the emergence of well-educated, upwardly mobile individuals favoring a Muslim platform for Palestine could strengthen the Islamic tendency in the future. Among present university students, its supporters include both men and women.

Some adherents of the Islamic tendency see Israeli occupation as punishment for the deviation of Muslims from the true path of Islam. This is the position of most members of the small Liberation Party, for example, whose platform is greater piety and a pan-Islamic solution to the plight of the Palestinians. Many more are inspired by the model of revolutionary Iran, wherein an activist Islamic movement defeated an unpopular but powerful government backed by the United States. The Muslim Brotherhood, the principal Islamic-tendency movement, vigorously opposes the secularism and socialism advocated by Palestinian Communists and some other nationalists but supports the creation of an independent Palestinian state which is Muslim in character. This state would be governed by Islamic law, which would set forth the rights and obligations of non-Muslim as well as Muslim citizens. The Islamic tendency also has its own maximalists and minimalists. Although most want a Muslim-oriented state over the whole of Palestine, some would accept a two-state solution and accommodation with Israel.

Islamic activists have in recent years had ambivalent attitudes toward the PLO in general and Fatah in particular. Most accept the PLO as the embodiment of

Palestinian political aspirations, and most appear to be disposed toward working through the organization to establish the kind of Islamic polity they seek. Islamic groups make it clear that they do not regard themselves as an alternative to the PLO. On the other hand, most Islamic factions have maintained their organizational independence and have refused to come under the PLO umbrella. They have also indicated that they would actively oppose the organization, by force if necessary, were it to insist on imposing upon Palestine a political formula which did not take Islam properly into account. Fatah is perceived as a potentially important ally in the struggle to fuse Islam and nationalism and, as noted, Muslim activists have in the past sometimes allied themselves with Fatah against Palestinian Communists and Marxists. The Islamic tendency thus sees Fatah as a group which is different from Palestinian leftist organizations, and which could play a critical role in orienting the PLO toward a brand of Palestinian nationalism more explicitly tied to Islam. Yet Fatah's intentions are also suspect in the eyes of many Muslim activists. Fatah has resisted all calls for the formal incorporation of Islamic planks into its political platform. Indeed, since 1982, Fatah has been concerned about the growing strength of Islamic movements in the occupied territories and has frequently joined leftist elements to contain the Islamic tendency. This has been visible in the electoral alliances formed at Palestinian universities during the last few years.

Clashes among rival PLO factions in Lebanon in 1983 may have raised the status of the Islamic tendency in the territories. On the one hand, there is great bitterness against the Palestinian dissidents who attacked forces loyal to Yasir Arafat in fall 1983, and these dissidents are for the most part associated with the radical and secular wings of the PLO. The dissidents were also supported by Syria, whose government is oriented toward secular nationalism and has brutally suppressed Islamic militants within its own country. Finally, the Syrians themselves are backed by Soviet Communism, further reinforcing the tendency to see leftist ideologies as a factor contributing to the difficulties of the PLO. On the other hand, PLO loyalists received considerable support in their battles from Muslim elements, including both Islamic-oriented members of Fatah and Lebanese fighters under the command of local Sunni Muslim leaders. Also, in the occupied territories themselves, the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic groups have strongly condemned the moves of Palestinian dissidents against Arafat and the Fatah mainstream, despite the multi-dimensional character of their own attitude toward Fatah and the PLO. All of this has helped Muslim factions to present themselves as defenders of the Palestinian cause and to characterize radical secularists as opportunists willing to sacrifice Palestinian unity for their own ideas and ambitions.

Other recent developments in Lebanon also appear to have enhanced the status of the Islamic tendency within the occupied territories. The role played by Shi'ite Islamic militants in forcing Israel to withdraw from most of southern Lebanon in 1984 has contributed to the attractiveness of Islamic movements in the West Bank and Gaza. In addition, more recently, pro-Arafat PLO forces in Lebanon have been aided by the more militantly Islamic elements of Lebanon's Shi'a community, even though one of the groups besieging Arafat loyalists is the Shi'ite Amal militia.

Supporters of Jordan

In addition to the factions described above, which differ in ideology but concur on the need for a political expression of Palestinian national identity, there are Palestinians who would prefer reunification with Jordan to the establishment of an independent state. They differ from those who see reunion with Jordan as the Palestinians' last resort—as the only way to prevent Israel's absorption of the territories. Some persons in this category are former Jordanian officials, and most come from prominent families with extensive and powerful personal connections to the royal family. Some members of the Higher Islamic Committee in Jerusalem and the leaders of some West Bank charitable and social organizations are also identified with this tendency. For the most part, the pro-Jordanian faction represents the older, pre-1967 West Bank elite. Its numbers are not large, but the resources and personal connections of its members give them substantial influence. Perhaps the most visible and outspoken supporter of Jordan is Elias Freij, the elected mayor of Bethlehem and head of its chamber of commerce. Another prominent Palestinian figure associated with this trend is Rashad al-Shawwa, who was the mayor of Gaza until his removal in the summer of 1982 for refusing to cooperate with the Israeli civil administration.

This faction may have been aided by the war in Lebanon and subsequent developments. In addition to the setback suffered by the PLO, the war spawned the Reagan peace initiative, which has made association with Jordan the framework for diplomatic efforts to remove Israel from the territories and which, for a time, fostered coordination between Jordan and the PLO. The pro-Jordanians drafted the Palestinian Peace Document in November 1982.⁶ Although this document supported the Fez plan and recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians, it also explicitly recognized UN Resolutions 242 and 338, alluded to "positive elements" in the Reagan Plan, and called for mutual recognition by Israel and the Palestinians. Most important, the document backed confederation with Jordan and urged the PLO to authorize Hussein to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians. The document was never officially released and, in any case, failed to obtain many signatures. Nevertheless, it illustrates the approach taken by this faction.

Pro-Jordan politicians emphasize that time is running out for Palestinians in the occupied territories, since Israel has expropriated more than half of the land and has armed the settlers in order to dominate the Arabs.⁷ Given these Israeli policies, they argue, only a closer relationship with Jordan, acceptance of the Reagan initiative, and renewed ties with Egypt can redress the diplomatic balance and reverse the annexationist trend. Following the introduction of the Reagan Plan, those identified with this trend were publicly critical of the Palestine National Council for failing to back the formation of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation or to authorize Hussein to negotiate on the Palestinians' behalf. They acknowledged that only the PLO has the public standing necessary to legitimize the diplomatic process

for the Palestinian rank and file and that without such legitimacy negotiations are destined to fail. Thus, they continued, the PLO's refusal to endorse the method of negotiation and the terms of settlement was providing Israel with a publicly acceptable reason to maintain its drive into the West Bank and Gaza.

Although the mainstream nationalist consensus in the West Bank and Gaza tends to be highly skeptical of the motives and actions of supporters of Jordan, this suspicion was muted, to a degree, by the rapprochement between Jordan and the PLO that took place between 1983 and 1986. When deliberations between Jordan and the PLO occasionally broke down, as in April 1983, for example, popular distrust of the pro-Jordan faction increased. More generally, however, meetings between Hussein and Arafat throughout this period, as well as the agreement between Jordan and the PLO in February 1985, produced a view among many Palestinian nationalists that Jordan and its local supporters might have a constructive role to play in securing Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories. Some nationalists were also apparently impressed with the analysis put forward by pro-Jordan elements, namely, that without cooperation with Amman it would be impossible to halt Israel's creeping annexation before it was too late. Finally, Jordanian support for the PLO in its struggle with Palestinian dissidents and their Syrian backers also improved relations between nationalists and pro-Jordan elements in the West Bank and Gaza.

Nevertheless, these considerations did not completely remove popular distrust of the supporters of Jordan. Nor, certainly, did they lead to a change in the goals of the mainstream nationalist consensus. Although some influential nationalists in the territories did urge the Palestine National Council to accept UN 242 and 338, as part of a package that would bring the PLO directly into the negotiating process, there was little support either for allowing Hussein to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians or for a negotiated settlement that did not provide for Palestinian self-determination. Thus, even under conditions that were optimal from the pro-Jordan perspective, there were clear limits to the support that the faction could muster for its goal.

Since the February 19 speech of King Hussein, suspending coordination between Amman and the PLO, tension between Palestinian nationalists and pro-Jordan elements in the occupied territories has increased. In the spring and summer of 1986, Jordan initiated a series of steps aimed at undermining the influence of the PLO in the West Bank and Gaza. For example, Rashad al-Shawwa went on Jordanian television in July 1986 to tell viewers in the territories that they should not allow the PLO to "impose its will" on the Palestinian people. Several weeks earlier Hussein had announced that he would be presenting a plan for Jordanian-sponsored development in the West Bank and Gaza. If Jordan does pump substantial amounts of money into the occupied territories, the political influence of Amman's supporters in the West Bank and Gaza will undoubtedly increase. Unless Hussein can deliver significant movement toward Israeli withdrawal, however—and recent history suggests that this is unlikely—there is not much chance that Jordan's campaign to undermine PLO influence in the territories will meet with any more than limited success. Further, even if Jordanian efforts and other developments should lead to

a rise in Palestinian dissatisfaction with current PLO leadership, this would not translate into a lessening of Palestinian desires for self-determination and independence. The continuing intensity of nationalist sentiments was visible on Palestinian university campuses, as well as elsewhere, in the summer of 1986. Demonstrators burned pictures of the Jordanian monarch and shouted slogans in support of the PLO and its nationalist objectives. Thus, in sum, it is most probable that the pro-Jordan faction in the occupied territories will continue to exercise a substantial measure of influence by virtue of its traditional economic and social resources but, nonetheless, will remain an element of secondary importance in the shaping of Palestinian political and ideological orientations.⁸

The Village Leagues

The Village Leagues, now largely defunct, stand distinctly apart from all of the political trends outlined above. Only the original Village League, established by Mustafa Doudin in Dura village near Hebron in 1978, could claim to be an indigenous Palestinian institution.⁹ The rest of the Village Leagues were created by the Israeli civil administration. In Bethlehem district, for example, a senior Israeli officer spent months in 1980 trying to induce the village headmen (mukhtars) to establish a Village League before one finally agreed.¹⁰ The league members are regarded as collaborators by their fellow townspeople and villagers, but they acquired coercive power when Israel required that they approve community development projects, identity-card renewals, permits for travel, and other essential services. Moreover, after the head of the Ramallah League was assassinated in November 1981, league members were issued guns and provided with jeeps so that they could patrol and search their districts, and they sometimes used their arms to intimidate rivals or harass civilians simply to assert their authority.

Israeli officials argued through 1982 that the Village Leagues represented an authentic political trend in the West Bank. In particular, they were said to speak for rural Palestinians who are discriminated against by the urban residents that dominate the nationalist and pro-Jordan movements. In practice, however, the Village Leagues were unable to strike roots. Aside from gaining the support of some members of their immediate families and clans, the leagues could not claim any substantial constituency. In fact, most participants in their public rallies were compelled to attend and frequently had to be guarded by the Israeli army.

Rural hostility to the leagues was largely the result of their artificial nature. However, it also resulted from the accelerating loss of village lands to Israeli settlements and the Israeli army. In the Hebron district, for example, where the original Village League was formed, 53,000 acres were confiscated in January and February 1983 alone. This included 5,000 acres—most of the remaining grazing and cultivated land—from Dura village, the headquarters of Doudin himself. The Village Leagues' inability to halt such confiscations (and the persistent allegations that some league members had sold land or acted as land brokers) undermined whatever credibility they might otherwise have been able to gain.

As a result, some participants in the Village Leagues tried to distance themselves from certain aspects of Israeli policy and claimed to be genuine nationalists. At a heavily guarded rally in Hebron in November 1982, Doudin coupled his call for mutual Arab-Israeli recognition with a demand for realization of "our legitimate rights as Palestinians" and opposition to any continued Israeli presence or sovereignty in the West Bank.¹¹ He argued that the Palestinians should increase their own presence in the West Bank through "steadfastness": improving services, providing more jobs, and promoting the return of former residents now living abroad. Later, another league leader told a Jewish audience that the presence of Israeli settlers was "an obstacle to peace."¹² The convention that the leagues scheduled for February 12, 1983 (two days prior to the opening of the Palestine National Council in Algiers), was expected to adopt a "peace covenant." Although rejecting the right of the PLO to represent all Palestinians, the covenant would have called for an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza following direct negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel.¹³

This effort by the leagues to achieve some political legitimacy and to distance themselves from Israeli policy was opposed by Israeli authorities, who feared that the leagues might gain a measure of independence. Thus, the convention was abruptly canceled and its organizer was fired as head of a local league by the Israeli civil administrator.¹⁴ This move demonstrated conclusively that the leagues were designed to mobilize support behind Israeli policy and not to articulate indigenous Palestinian views.

By the summer of 1983, Israel had begun to recognize the artificial nature of the Village Leagues and to acknowledge the failure of efforts to create political institutions capable of mobilizing Palestinian support for the occupation and the Likud government's version of autonomy. The Defense Ministry's coordinator for the occupied territories, General Benyamin Ben Eliezer, called them "quislings." Moreover, the Federation of Village Leagues was dissolved on March 10, 1984, and its weekly newspaper thereafter ceased publication.¹⁵

Prospects for the Future

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza seek to be a force for change, to identify and pursue a course of action that will be effective in halting Israel's drive into the territories. They have regularly staged strikes and demonstrations, seeking on the one hand to slow Israeli action and, on the other, to make sure the annexationist actions of the Jewish state receive world attention. Moreover, some Palestinians have attempted to work with Jewish groups that seek to change Israeli policy. They provide these groups with information to use in educating the Israeli public, especially about the more repressive policies of the government. They also seek to demonstrate by their own example the kind of responsible partnership many Palestinians are prepared to embrace, and thereby to lend credibility to the appeal of Israeli moderates to their own electorate.

Judged from one perspective, none of this seems to have made much difference;

and Palestinians in the mid-1980s were deeply frustrated that Israel's drive into the territories was continuing unabated. They also bore signs of physical and psychological exhaustion. Israel's employment of school closings, censorship, and collective punishment, as well as the dissolution of Palestinian political institutions and the use of force to control demonstrations, was undermining the Palestinians' capacity to resist. By summer 1986, many had thus concluded that pressure for change, if it were to come at all, would have to originate outside the occupied territories.

Demoralization was particularly great in the wake of events in Lebanon, both because of the PLO's defeat by Israel and because of the failure of any Arab regime to assist the Palestinians. Relevant, too, was the fact that world attention had shifted to the Lebanese dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict, giving Israel more time and freedom to deepen its penetration into the West Bank and Gaza. The subsequent split within the PLO and the military defeat of forces loyal to Yasir Arafat at the hands of Syrian-backed rebels left Palestinians feeling more weak and vulnerable than ever. All of this produced a heightened sense of isolation and, in some Palestinian circles, internal conflict and bickering. Finally, these feelings were reinforced by the breakdown of Jordan-PLO cooperation and Amman's efforts to undermine PLO influence in the occupied territories (and in Jordan) and by Likud's assumption of leadership of the Israeli national unity government in the fall of 1986.

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have nonetheless made an important contribution to the struggle against Israeli expansion. First, their efforts have generated worldwide appreciation of their cause, which in turn has deepened Israel's international isolation and, in particular, complicated the United States-Israeli connection. Given continuing increases in U.S. assistance to Israel voted by Congress and the strategic cooperation agreement concluded between Washington and Jerusalem, many Palestinians question whether anything will make the U.S. press for implementation of the Reagan peace initiative. Nevertheless, a solid majority of Americans continues to oppose U.S. Middle East policy; many believe, for example, that their country's disastrous involvement in Lebanon was the result, at least in part, of the actions of Israel. Also, U.S. support in 1985 for a Jordan-sponsored peace initiative which included the PLO suggests that the administration realizes it cannot ignore the Palestinian problem or view it exclusively in terms dictated by Israel. Even though the U.S. refused to give the PLO the *quid pro quo* which would have pushed the peace process forward, an important evolution of American thinking occurred. Thus, Palestinian actions which call attention to the authenticity and legitimacy of Palestinian nationalism, and which build recognition abroad of the policies that Israel is pursuing in the occupied territories, do make a significant contribution.

Second, Palestinian actions have made Egypt more aware of the Palestinians' plight, which has become increasingly acute since Camp David. By their efforts, the Palestinians create an incentive for the government of President Mubarak to seek opportunities to advance their cause. Although it continues to articulate its commitment to peace with Israel, Egypt has increasingly frozen the normalization of relations with the Jewish state. Moreover, despite vehement protests from Je-

rusalem, Cairo has made it clear that better relations are dependent on progress toward solving the Palestinian problem. Israel has been particularly incensed at the meetings of the Egyptian president with Arafat, which in turn helped to foster American receptivity to Jordanian-PLO cooperation and to the possibility of a peace process involving the PLO. With its return to the Islamic Conference Organization and its improving relations with a number of key Arab states, Egypt may be in a position to contribute significantly to a new Arab diplomatic offensive designed to put pressure on the U.S. and Israel. Such an offensive is unlikely to materialize in the immediate future, in the wake of the latest rift between Jordan and the PLO. Nevertheless, Palestinians themselves recognize that Egyptian participation is critical to any international effort to secure Palestinian rights; and actions that strengthen Egyptian determination to play such a role are thus important.

Given the critical role that the United States and Egypt must play if more international pressure is to be brought to bear on Israel, any increase in the sense of urgency these actors attach to the problem is a significant contribution. In the final analysis, however, it remains to be seen whether Palestinians will be able to continue their resistance in the face of Israeli repression and thereby keep the issue visible in the international political arena.

If the Palestinians can maintain a measure of visible opposition in the territories, they may also discourage potential Jewish settlers. As noted earlier, most settlers today come to the territories for practical reasons, in response to the prospect of a more comfortable and affordable place to live. Some may be less eager to move if they conclude that life there may be unsafe or unsettled, or that Israeli rule may only be temporary.

Beyond making prospective Jewish settlers think twice, the Palestinians can also work for change by sending other messages to the Israeli public. Israeli public opinion is influenced in part by perceptions of "what the Palestinians really want." Resistance communicates that there is no serious Palestinian support for Israel's conception of autonomy. Forces on the political right, as well as some politicians associated with the Labor Alignment, contend that only a few nationalists, directed by the PLO, are the cause of unrest. If these elements can be suppressed, they add, others will accept and possibly even welcome the development of the territories within an Israeli framework. The Palestinians' ability to explode this myth is particularly critical in the wake of the war in Lebanon, for the previous Likud government justified its expanded operation there partly by insisting that a defeat of the PLO would restore order in the West Bank and Gaza. Palestinian actions which demonstrate this proposition to be false will increase the already considerable number who believe that the costly campaign in Lebanon was a major blunder, and this in turn may tip the political scales in Israel away from Likud in future elections. Further, and of more immediate concern, it will encourage more Israelis to be skeptical about the logic underlying both Likud's and Labor's search for "alternative" leadership in the occupied territories. Palestinians may not be capable of sustaining the kind of fierce resistance they mounted in 1982; but the prospects of

influencing Israeli public opinion will be enhanced if they can find mechanisms for sending these messages to Israel and beyond.

The political equation in Israel will finally be influenced by two other perceptions about the Palestinians, and in these areas, too, the messages that Palestinians send will be important. The first concerns what Palestinians themselves refer to as "steadfastness," a determination not to be driven from the territories where they now reside. The Israeli public will respond to the "demographic issue" articulated by the Labor Alignment and other advocates of territorial compromise, that incorporation of the territories threatens the Jewish majority status in Israel, at least partly as a function of the degree to which it is convinced that Palestinians will not gradually leave the territories as Israelis move in.

The second bears on the debate between Labor and Likud over the principle of territorial compromise. Even many who oppose the territorial maximalism of Likud and other right-wing parties are not fully convinced that peace with the Arabs is possible, that Palestinians and other Arabs would accept the Jewish state within its pre-1967 borders. Messages to this effect have come from the Arab world in recent years, most dramatically from Egypt but from Palestinian and other sources as well. In 1984, for example, Arafat gave an interview to the French weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur*, in which he called for direct negotiations between Israel and the PLO under UN auspices and declared that in such negotiations he would propose mutual recognition between Israel and a Palestinian state.¹⁶ More recently, the PLO indicated that it would accept UN Resolutions 242 and 338 in return for a U.S. declaration recognizing the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. Yet many Israelis remain unconvinced, and it is thus important for Arabs seeking accommodation to continue to communicate this message. Palestinians are sometimes indignant that this should be asked of them. From their perspective, there is already far more moderation in the Arab world than in Israel. Further, the Jewish state, whose secure existence they are asked to recognize, appears to keep expanding. Nevertheless, the political fortunes of Israeli advocates of territorial compromise and withdrawal will ultimately depend on an ability to present credible evidence to the Israeli public that the course they advocate will strike a responsive chord among Palestinians and other Arabs.

Recent political developments inside Israel make these Palestinian messages more important than ever. The 1984 election produced a virtual standoff between Labor and Likud, suggesting that future contests between Israeli advocates of territorial compromise and territorial maximalism will be extremely close. Other important developments include the growth of parties to the right of Likud and strains inside the Herut Party, the dominant faction within the Likud. The former development, reflected in the eight Knesset seats captured in 1984 by ultra-right-wing parties, suggests that the strength of the settler movement is continuing to grow. The latter development, evidenced in the raucous Herut convention of March 1986, includes a strong challenge to party leaders most closely identified with Herut's revisionist brand of Zionism and the concomitant possibility of transforming Likud into a political machine which is less ideological in character. Finally, public opinion polls

have shown a dramatic rise in the popularity of the Labor Alignment and its leader, Shimon Peres, since the formation of the national unity government. These and other recent developments point to the possibility of change in any one of several competing directions, and Israeli perception of what is possible and desirable in the occupied territories is one of the factors that will help to determine the trends that eventually become dominant.

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have suffered a serious erosion of their political status, a constriction of their educational institutions, and alienation of their land. Nevertheless, their sense of national identity remains strong, and its manifestations can be expected to become more vehement in response to efforts to repress and deny its existence. As Israel accelerates the absorption and annexation of the West Bank and Gaza, Israeli-Palestinian relations are becoming dangerously explosive and fatally embittered. Only sustained and concerted diplomatic efforts from outside can halt this catastrophic process, and even such efforts are unlikely to succeed unless support for territorial compromise grows inside Israel. Acting alone, Palestinians in the occupied territories will be unable to halt, and perhaps not even to slow down, Israel's deepening penetration into their homeland. But these Palestinians are nonetheless a critical element in the constellation of forces aimed at bringing about policy change in Israel and encouraging the United States to promote a comprehensive peace settlement. Thus, the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza must continue to seek mechanisms for sending messages to the international community and the Israeli public, and they must endeavor to assure that these messages are perceived in the desired manner.

(September 1986)

NOTES

1. Signed by sixty mayors, municipal and village counselors, and heads of charitable societies, the petition was prevented from being published by the Israeli military censor. Public rallies were only permitted until November 1978, after which the military government banned all public meetings and demonstrations.

2. For example, interview with Abdul Latif Geith, *al-Fajr* (English weekly), November 12, 1982, pp. 8–9.

3. See *al-Fajr*, February 7, 1986. These figures may be contrasted with those obtained by mainstream nationalist candidates, whose *Shebibeh* (Student Youth) faction represents Yasir Arafat's Fatah wing of the PLO. *Shebibeh* obtained: Bir Zeit, 38 percent; Bethlehem, 44 percent; an-Najah, 50 percent; Hebron, 50 percent. Some leftists suggest that their strength at the universities may be underrepresented by these numbers. They argue that some of their supporters vote for *Shebibeh* candidates in order to keep Islamic parties from obtaining a plurality. In elections at an-Najah held in July 1986, *Shebibeh* obtained 48 percent of the vote while the leftist bloc received only 7 percent.

4. A larger and more recent public opinion poll, conducted by Mohammad Shedid in July and August 1986, reported that 93.5 percent of those interviewed agreed that "the PLO is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." The survey, sponsored by *al-Fajr*, *Newsday*, and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, involved face-to-face

interviews with 1,024 respondents in the West Bank (65%) and Gaza (35%). Another item in the *al-Fajr* poll showed that the popularity of Yasir Arafat also remained substantial; he was the preferred Palestinian leader of 78.8 percent of the respondents, with his nearest rival, George Habash, being preferred by only 5.6 percent. For more information, see *al-Fajr*, September 12, 1986; and Mohammad Shadid and Rick Seltzer, "Political Attitudes of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip," *Middle East Journal* 42, no. 1 (Winter 1988): 16–32.

5. A 1982 survey of 150 Muslim students at Bir Zeit University assessed the relative strength of the four Islamic factions. Most respondents expressed support for several of the groups. The Muslim Brotherhood was supported very strongly by 64 percent of the respondents and fairly strongly by almost all of the rest. The percentages for the other factions: Liberation Party, 30 and 60 percent; pro-Khomeini, 30 and 48 percent; pro-Fatah, 14 and 28 percent. The survey, conducted by Emile Sahliyeh, is reported in his *In Search of Leadership: West Bank Politics since 1967* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1988). The 1986 *al-Fajr* poll (see above, n. 4) also contained several items that show the strength of the Islamic tendency within the occupied territories. Only 1.7 percent of the respondents chose Ayatollah Khomeini as their preferred political leader. On the other hand, indicating the growing attraction of the Islamic trend, 26.5 percent stated that if a Palestinian state were established it should be based on Islamic law (*shari'a*). The only political formula chosen by more respondents was "a state based on Arab nationalism and Islam," which was preferred by 29.6 percent. Alternatively, only 10.4 percent expressed a preference for a "democratic-secular" state.

6. The key figures were Mahmoud Abu Zuluf (editor, *al-Quds* newspaper), Hikmat al-Masri (former speaker of the Jordanian Parliament), Anwar Khatib (former governor of Jerusalem), Rashad al-Shawwa (former mayor of Gaza), and Elias Freij (mayor of Bethlehem). The appointed mayors of Jericho and Beit Jala also backed the document, as did Nadim Zaru, former Jordanian minister and former mayor of Ramallah. See *al-Fajr*, November 19 and 26, 1982.

7. See, for example, interviews with Freij in the *Christian Science Monitor*, March 3, 1983, and *Newsweek*, March 14, 1983, p. 60.

8. These judgments are confirmed by the *al-Fajr* poll of July–August 1986, which found that support for King Hussein remained extremely limited. Only 3.4 percent of those interviewed selected Hussein as their preferred political leader, and only 3.2 percent said "supporters of King Hussein" are the preferred Palestinian leaders within the occupied territories. Similarly, only 3.7 percent chose the incorporation of the territories into Jordan as their preferred solution to the Palestinian problem. Finally, 32.9 percent blamed Hussein for the breakdown of cooperation between Jordan and the PLO, whereas only 5.3 percent believed Yasir Arafat to be responsible. Interestingly, the response given most often, by 37.9 percent of the respondents, was that the United States bears primary responsibility.

9. Doudin was an Egyptian official in Gaza from 1948 to 1968, when he moved to Jordan, becoming successively minister of social welfare, ambassador to Kuwait, and an appointed member of Parliament. He returned to the West Bank in 1975. He is sharply criticized by other Palestinians for being the only Palestinian willing to remain in the Jordanian cabinet during and after "Black September" (1970).

10. *Davar*, November 27, 1982.

11. *Jerusalem Post*, international edition, November 14–20, 1982.

12. *Ibid.*, January 30–February 5, 1983.

13. *Ibid.*, 6–12 February 1983.

14. *Al-Fajr*, March 4, 1983.

15. *Ha'aretz*, March 12, 1984, and *al-Fajr*, March 14, 1984.

16. *Le Nouvel Observateur*, May 4, 1984.

13.

Epilogue: Thinking about Territorial Compromise in Israel

Mark Tessler

At the time of this writing, in May 1988, disturbances in the West Bank and Gaza have been sustained for over five months as Palestinians under occupation continue their efforts to send a message to Israel and the rest of the world. The content of this message, made explicit in conversations between Palestinian intellectuals and the numerous journalists who have flocked to the region to cover the riots, can be summed up simply: we exist and have political rights, and there will be no peace until these rights are recognized. [The Palestinians' message also proclaims that occupation is unacceptable and that continued Israeli rule over the West Bank and Gaza, even with provisions for Palestinian autonomy, will be met with continued resistance. These are the grievances and demands that led to the uprising which began on December 9, 1987, an explosion of violence the Palestinians themselves call the *intifada*.]

This is not the first time there have been major confrontations between Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Particularly notable were the persistent and violent clashes that took place in spring 1982, in the months before Israel invaded Lebanon in an attempt to crush the Palestine Liberation Organization. Indeed, one important reason for Israel's decision to hit the PLO in Lebanon was a belief that to do so would undermine resistance in the territories. [In March, April, and May 1982, there were forty-two days of disturbances, with students and others staging protests and, on occasion, confronting Israeli soldiers in a manner reminiscent of the present troubles.] There were also demonstrations and expressions of solidarity among Israel's Arab citizens, Palestinian solidarity being a major theme of the Land Day protests of 1982. During this period, Israel responded not only by confronting demonstrators in the streets but also by disbanding the National Guidance Committee,] a Palestinian organization formed several years earlier to protest the autonomy proposals that emerged from the Camp David accords, and by dismissing the pro-PLO mayors of various West Bank towns.

The protests and riots of the present do have some unprecedented characteristics.

[The *intifada* began spontaneously and has been sustained through the direction of committees that are essentially local in scope.] Also, a leading role has been played, not by professionals, academics, journalists, or other well-known veterans of Palestinian political life, but by young men and women who were born after Israel captured the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 and who are now willing to confront directly the soldiers occupying their homeland. Even Israelis with little sympathy for the Palestinian cause sometimes say they have a new respect for their enemy. The Israeli media rarely describe the protesters as terrorists, as has been common in the past, and one occasionally hears Israeli comments to the effect that these are not the craven and cowardly Arabs described in our propaganda but young people with the courage of their convictions, willing to stand before our soldiers and risk their lives in order to give voice to their demands.

Palestinians feel good about what they are doing. Although it is not yet clear whether their actions will bring meaningful change in the political circumstances of their lives, and while they are in the meantime suffering from Israeli efforts to break their resistance, efforts that include deportation, collective punishment, and random beatings, they are nonetheless encouraged by the political debate that has been rekindled in Israel and by the renewed attention their cause has received in the rest of the world. In this context, the immediate concern of Palestinians in the territories is with whether or not they will be able to maintain their resistance in the face of Israeli efforts to crush it, and thereby to keep up the pressure for some redress of their grievances. Young people in the territories also believe they have effectively seized the initiative in the Palestinian struggle, taking action at a time when most Arab leaders, and to a degree even the leadership of the PLO, have displayed lethargy and a preoccupation with their own position and privilege. Thus, while affirming that the PLO continues to represent and articulate their national aspirations, and that it is accordingly to the PLO that those who would negotiate with the Palestinians must turn, those on the front lines in the West Bank and Gaza sometimes defiantly proclaim that “we support the PLO because we are the PLO.”

[A related consideration is the role of the Islamic trend in the *intifada* and, even more, the fact that nationalists and Islamic militants are working together to carry their resistance forward.] The strength of Islamic Jihad and other Muslim groups had been increasing for some time, but they have now become a major force in Gaza and assumed increased importance in the West Bank as well. In the latter territory, it is also notable that Islamic and nationalist groups cooperate with one another, coordinating and giving direction to the current wave of unrest. It is reported by knowledgeable sources that local coordinating committees assign quotas both to adherents of various factions under the PLO umbrella and to representatives of Islamic-tendency movements. The significance of these developments becomes clear if it is remembered that Israel (and Jordan) encouraged the Islamic trend in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the hope of dividing Palestinian activists and that there were violent clashes between Muslim militants and nationalists during that period.

Yet another development that helps to differentiate the 1987–88 uprising from other recent protests of Israeli occupation is the events that have taken place in East Jerusalem. Since 1967, Israel has worked to isolate East Jerusalem from the rest

of the West Bank. It has also sought an accommodation with the city's Arab residents, offering them considerable freedom of expression and fewer political restrictions than those placed on Palestinians in other occupied areas and asking in return that they keep the city quiet and confine their protests to oral and written statements. Nevertheless, East Jerusalem has been an important center of the recent unrest. A general strike, though not totally unknown in the past, has persisted much longer and been much more extensive than on previous occasions. Even more important, Palestinians have blocked roads and stoned soldiers and police, leading to confrontations that until now had been seen only in other areas. Thus, with Israeli police and Palestinian youth clashing in Jerusalem, and with tear gas in the air and several of the city's neighborhoods under intermittent curfew, the Palestinians have succeeded in bringing their resistance to the Israeli capital.

Another significant consideration is the outpouring of support from the Arab citizens of Israel. Israel's Arabs have articulated their Palestinian political identity with increasing militancy in recent years, and have occasionally staged demonstrations against policies and practices carried out in the occupied territories by the state of which they are a part. But the events of 1987–88 have nonetheless been dramatic and have shocked many Jewish Israelis. There have been a few acts of sabotage and violence inside Israel and, more important, a number of large coordinated demonstrations. [At a mass rally in Nazareth in January, a leading Israeli-Arab politician, Abdulwahab Daroushe, publicly castigated Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin for ordering the use of violence to crush the uprising in the territories,] and then resigned from the Labor Party to which both he and Rabin belonged. With Arab citizens numbering almost 18 percent of the Israeli population, and nearly half of these Arabs voting for Labor, Daroushe's action could have important consequences for party politics in the Jewish state.

Fundamentalism and Its Opponents

[It is too early to tell how the political equation inside Israel will be affected by the *intifada*. In the short run, public opinion has tended to move to the right; there is widespread support for Rabin's tough line and general agreement that order must be restored before underlying problems can be addressed.] Yet many observers and analysts, prominent Israelis among them, believe the problem of the territories has entered the Israeli political consciousness in a way that is shaking the assumptions on which current Israeli policies are based. Whatever its eventual outcome, the uprising that began on December 9, 1987, has made it increasingly difficult for Israelis to take seriously the claim of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and the Likud Union that the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza will accept occupation once they realize that Israel has no intention of withdrawing from any part of the territory and that the "administered areas" can therefore be retained, and eventually annexed, with no significant cost to the Jewish state. Under an "iron fist" policy of occupation pursued by Rabin even before the recent disturbances, substantial portions of Labor have embraced this kind of thinking as well, although Labor's official position is

that part of the territory should be handed over to Jordan in the context of a comprehensive peace settlement. But the wisdom of Likud's thinking, and even that of Labor, has been powerfully challenged by the *intifada*. [Palestinians are telling Israelis that there is indeed a price to be paid for retention of the territories and that the Jewish state can have no peace until it recognizes and comes to grips with the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. Moreover, the Palestinians are seeking to make clear that this price is a high one, that choosing land over peace is a bad bargain from the viewpoint of those committed to modern political Zionism.]

These messages from the Palestinians have given a new credibility and vigor to those Israelis in the Labor Alignment and parties further to the left who have long argued that territorial maximalism is not only irrelevant to the true meaning of Zionism but is also a dangerous inclination, one that has the potential to undermine the very cause to which its advocates are so devoted. A few voices proclaiming the need for new thinking about the Palestinian problem have also been raised inside Likud. Israel's dynamic and highly competitive political system rarely stands still, and the concatenation of the uprising in the territories and election-year politics suggests that 1988 will turn out to be a time of particularly intense political activity. Notable developments in the winter of 1987–88 included a revival and expansion of the activities of Peace Now, the umbrella organization on the political left calling for withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza in return for peace with the Arab world; the defection from Likud of Moshe Amirov, who for several months had his party's approval to conduct discussions with West Bank intellectuals but whose efforts were later condemned by Prime Minister Shamir; and the resignation from Labor of its most prominent Arab Member of Knesset, Abdulwahab Daroushe.

It remains to be seen how these and other recent developments will shape Israeli public opinion and partisan politics in the months ahead. Regardless of the outcome, however, the Palestinian uprising will make it much more difficult for the Israeli political right to address questions about the territories from a purely ideological point of view. Likud and parties further to the right assert that Israel's military security is enhanced by retention of the territories but add that in the final analysis this is irrelevant because Judea, Samaria, and Gaza are part of historic Israel, over which it is the legitimate right of the Jewish people to exercise sovereignty. The more religious in their ranks also argue that returning the territories is prohibited by Jewish law and, more particularly, that their retention is in accordance with God's will and His plan for the Jewish people and mankind. These latter Israelis believe that the Messianic era has begun and that modern political Zionism, however secular a movement it may appear to be, is the instrument God has chosen for the redemption of the Jewish people. Fusing religious fundamentalism, militant nationalism, and territorial maximalism, they believe that Jewish control of the territory will hasten the coming of the Messiah and, in the meantime, deepen the spiritual character of the Jewish state.¹

There is little prospect of a dialogue with these orthodox Israelis or with religious Jews in the Diaspora who subscribe to the latter set of beliefs. Their faith is profound and animates a stream of religious Zionism that is as old as the modern Zionist movement. In the years since 1967, their vision has been translated into action by

Gush Emunim, which distrusts even Likud and has sought through its settlement activities in the occupied territories to force the hand of all secular politicians.² The only basis for attacking the ideological foundation of these Jewish fundamentalists in a manner to which they might feel compelled to respond would be to challenge their belief that the Messianic era has begun, which has historically been the basis for opposition to both secular and religious Zionism by ultra-orthodox Jews. According to this argument, Jews are called upon to remain passive before God; they are not to create the modern state of Israel and expand its borders in His name but are to wait with an abiding faith for the coming of the Messiah. That Jews should take action designed to hasten the coming of the Messiah, and to push along God's plan more generally, is the epitome of arrogance and is tantamount to heresy. Indeed, such actions imply a loss of faith and rupture the holy covenant which, for religious Jews, is the basis for believing that the Jews are a nation of exiles waiting to be in-gathered and restored to the land with which they have a divine and unshakable tie. For ultra-orthodox Jews of the old school, who are today found in Israel's Haredi community, modern political Zionism is thus a contradiction in terms.

Be this as it may, these are not the kinds of ideological or doctrinal issues that will have much impact within Israel. Since all religious convictions are ultimately a matter of faith, pious Jews can debate without resolution the matter of whether or not modern political Zionism is an instrument of the divine will. Further, the ultra-orthodox, who are the only segment of the Israeli polity by which the issue might be raised with moral authority in the eyes of Jewish fundamentalists, constitute only about one-third of Israel's religious Jews and only 6–7 percent of the country's total Jewish population. Moreover, substantial numbers within their ranks have in recent years begun to put aside their theological reservations and to display a new affinity for the politics of Gush Emunim. Thus, in the final analysis, there is little to be said to those Jews who believe it is their religious duty to deepen Israel's control of Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) and Gaza. Such individuals make up 10–15 percent of Israel's Jewish population and they will do all within their power to convince other Israelis that the messages today being sent by Palestinians are irrelevant. One does not calculate costs and benefits where the will of God is concerned.

For Israelis with a less fundamentalist point of view, including some who are pious and many others who are at least traditional in their customs and observance, cost-benefit calculations are relevant, however. While most assert that Jews do have historic rights in the occupied territories, in all of Palestine, they do not necessarily believe that Jews have exclusive rights and they are not opposed *a priori* to the principle of territorial compromise. Of even greater importance, they do not equate the construction of a meaningful Jewish existence in Palestine with territorial maximalism and they believe that the quality and security of Jewish life, the ultimate standards by which the desirability of political actions should be judged, may under certain circumstances be enhanced by withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza. It is in this spirit that Israel's Sephardi chief rabbi ruled in 1979 that relinquishing the territories is not prohibited by Jewish law and that such an action would actually be encouraged from a Halachic point of view were it to save Jewish lives or make

it easier for Jews to live in accordance with God's commandments. Considerations of a Messianic nature are irrelevant here and the Palestinians' message could thus be quite important, provided Jews are convinced that withdrawal from the occupied territories would indeed bring peace.

This ensemble of judgments also responds to the contention that to reject Israel's claim to Judea, Samaria, and Gaza is to deny the Jews' claim to a state in any part of Palestine. This assertion, put forward by both Jewish fundamentalists and secular advocates of territorial maximalism, is designed to force all Zionists to reject partition by instilling a fear that there can be no end to the territory from which Israel must withdraw once the principle of compromise is admitted. In fact, however, hard-liners have deliberately misstated the argument of their opponents. The latter do not claim that Jews have rights in only part of Palestine; on the contrary, they agree that Jews have rights in all of Palestine, rights which lose none of their legitimacy simply because they are based on considerations of history rather than on a belief that the Messianic era is at hand. They simply add that those who have lived in Palestine for hundreds of years since the Jews were forced into exile have rights as well, political rights, and add that it is not only morally responsible but also in the progressive self-interest of the Jewish people to recognize these rights and to seek an accommodation with those who possess them. It is therefore not the West Bank and Gaza per se that are at the heart of their opposition. It is an acceptance of the principle of partition that opposes them to Jewish fundamentalists and to militant nationalists of a secular variety.

Quality versus Quantity

Opposition to the advocacy of territorial maximalism is articulated with particular vehemence by the mainstream of the Labor Alignment and by parties and movements to the left of Labor. The latter category encompasses perhaps 10 percent of Israel's Jewish population, and those associated with this Peace Camp have been increasingly vocal since the onset of the *intifada*. The foundation of the argument advanced by Labor and the left is the "demographic issue," the central elements of which are the notions of partition, Jewish self-interest, and an ultimate concern for the quality rather than the extent of the Jewish-Zionist state. In response to the demographic issue, Labor advocates a partial withdrawal which is unlikely to accommodate Palestinian demands and which therefore leads some observers to assert that the Alignment's compelling analysis of the problem is not matched by comparable wisdom so far as its proposed solution is concerned. In any event, Labor and the left have for some time been calling attention to the dangers of retaining the West Bank and Gaza, and present and past Palestinian actions have been designed to show the Israeli public that these dangers are not an illusion.

The demographic issue revolves around three interrelated contentions. First, annexation of the West Bank and Gaza would threaten the Jewish character of the State of Israel. There can be no meaningful Zionist state without a Jewish majority, a conviction that has been central to modern political Zionism since the early days

of the movement; yet this majority, achieved with so much effort and struggle, would be placed in jeopardy by redefining Israel's borders so as to add to its 700,000 Arab citizens another 1.4 million Palestinian Arabs. This would bring the non-Jewish population of Greater Israel to about 40 percent of the total, and the higher birth rate of these Arabs could well make them the majority within a generation or less. Indeed, in Israel and the occupied territories taken together, there is already an approximately equal number of Jewish and Arab children under the age of five. Second, if the Arab inhabitants of Israel were not given citizenship, or did not choose citizenship should it be offered, they would not be able to vote the Jewish state out of existence but would instead undermine Israel's democratic character.

[While Israel's critics have often claimed that Zionism is racism and that Israel is similar to South Africa, freedom of political expression, organization, and participation for Israeli Arabs has made it possible to show the fallacies of such propaganda.] How tragic it would be, Labor and the left insist, were Israel's policy toward the territories and their inhabitants in fact to lead to governance on the South African model. Finally, an involuntary and subject Palestinian population would pose serious security problems, draining Israel's resources and energies and creating an internal threat more difficult to combat than any challenge yet experienced from the Arab world outside the borders of the Jewish state. The security problems associated with control of a hostile and subject population are clearly evident from the 1987-88 uprising, a fact that many Israelis recognize despite the propaganda of the right, which asserts that the Palestinian rank and file has been pushed to action almost against its will by Arab rejectionists residing abroad and their local agents.

Likud, Gush Emunim, and other advocates of territorial maximalism usually respond by denying that a demographic issue exists. They contend that holding the territories will simultaneously stimulate Jewish immigration and encourage Arab emigration. They also contend that the Arabs would not want Israeli citizenship. But Labor and others convincingly reply that seven years of territorial maximalism under Likud and four years of stalemate under the National Unity government have not increased Jewish *aliya* or even, for that matter, diminished the serious problem of Jewish emigration. They point out, too, that the notion of "steadfastness" is fundamental to the Palestinians in the territories, meaning that the Arabs are determined to remain in their homeland no matter how harsh the conditions of occupation (or annexation) and that it is an illusion to believe the Palestinians will willingly surrender the remainder of their country. Thus, unless Israelis are prepared to use force to remove the Arab inhabitants of the territories, something which even territorial maximalists do not at present advocate, retention of the West Bank and Gaza does indeed involve a demographic threat to the Jewish character of the State of Israel. Should the territories be annexed, it would only be a matter of time before Israel would lose its Jewish majority.

Israelis critical of their government's policies insist that the democratic character of their country is threatened, too. While [it is true that Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza do not want Israeli citizenship] it does not follow that they would willingly accept autonomy under permanent Israeli rule. Their present actions dem-

onstrate this clearly, although in fact their position has been unmistakable since the idea of autonomy surfaced in 1978. If observers are wrong and the Arab inhabitants of an annexed West Bank and Gaza were to demand Israeli citizenship, as some of their leaders have occasionally proposed as a means to force Israel to recognize the contradictions inherent in its policies, the Jewish state would either have to deny equal political rights to a large segment of its permanent and indigenous population or face the prospect of having the Jewish state voted out of existence by Palestinians working through its democratic system. But even if observers are correct and the Palestinians would not claim Israeli citizenship, thus relieving the Jewish state of direct responsibility for their disfranchisement, it is hardly consistent with democratic principles that 60 percent of the population should rule over 40 percent against the will of the latter. Moreover, as some members of the Labor Party told American audiences during the early weeks of the *intifada*, the occupation had already begun to erode democracy inside Israel in significant ways. Contact with PLO spokesmen had been declared illegal and restrictions on press coverage of events in the occupied territories had been imposed. [In brief, retention of the West Bank and Gaza has already forced Israel to sacrifice some of its cherished democratic principles in the name of security, and the situation will be aggravated if the territories are formally annexed.]

The Meaning of Security

Many knowledgeable Israelis discount the importance of the West Bank from a security point of view, charging that it is an emotional argument advanced by those whose real motivation for annexing the occupied territories lies elsewhere. It is reliably reported that many and perhaps most top officials of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) believe the West Bank has very limited strategic value, given the conditions of modern warfare, and the prevalence of this view in Israeli military circles is reflected in the fact that many generals and other senior officers have joined the recently formed Council for Peace and Security, which advocates territorial compromise. Brig. General (Res.) Ephriam Sneh, former head of the Civil Administration in the West Bank, declared in this connection that three Awacs radar aircraft would provide Israel with better early warning than the country's current stations in the West Bank, and some military leaders go so far as to call the West Bank a security liability.³ One argument made in this context is that using the IDF as a police force in the occupied territories lowers morale and disrupts training, thereby making Israel weaker vis à vis Syria, the real threat to its security, and the possibility of a militarily stronger Iraq emerging from the war in the Persian Gulf. Finally, by adding that withdrawal could and probably should involve temporary demilitarization and other arrangements dictated by Israeli security needs, advocates of territorial compromise respond to those who acknowledge that the Jewish state's ability to defeat its enemies does not depend primarily on territorial considerations but who believe that Israel must nonetheless have enough strategic depth to absorb

a surprise attack or the opening of a second front. In line with this reasoning, one Israeli scholar wrote in 1983 that under appropriate conditions the establishment of a PLO-controlled Palestinian state would “probably leave Israel in a better overall position than would a continuing political stalemate or any of the other potential outcomes.”⁴

Israeli thinking about security is not conditioned by military considerations alone, however. Even more significant are judgments about Arab intentions; and, with few exceptions, even Israelis who believe that it would be in the interest of their country to relinquish the West Bank and Gaza and to accommodate themselves to Palestinian nationalism have deep doubts about Arab and Palestinian objectives. Palestinians insist that they are ready for a historic compromise. Although there continue to be diverse voices within the Palestinian community, allowing virtually all shades of Israeli opinion to find statements consistent with the particular interpretation they wish to advance, the mainstream of the Palestinian nationalist movement has in recent years maintained that it would abandon its claim to all of Palestine, however historically justified this claim may be, in return for Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza and recognition of the Palestinians’ right to exercise self-determination in these territories. But while these voices of compromise are heard and increasingly judged convincing outside Israel, there is as yet only a handful of Israelis who believe what the Palestinians are saying. A few powerful statements have been issued in Israel. Yehoshafat Harkabi, for example, former director of Israeli military intelligence and one of the country’s foremost authorities on Palestinian political attitudes, has written that the Palestinians and Arabs are indeed prepared to come to terms with the Jewish state.⁵ Harkabi’s conclusions are not shared by many, however, a judgment that applies to the Israeli political center and even much of the left, as well as to Israeli society as a whole.

Israel’s preoccupation with security is deeply rooted and its historical origins are readily apparent. Jewish history in general and the Holocaust in particular, followed by two decades of implacable Arab opposition after Israeli independence in 1948, have created a strong disinclination to trust the outside world and a determination never again to be dependent on the protection of others. Some Palestinians offer their own interpretation of this preoccupation with security. They say that Israelis have an intimate knowledge of what the Palestinians have suffered and know in their hearts that had the roles been reversed, had the Jews been dispossessed of their land by Palestinian invaders, Israelis would have neither forgiven nor forgotten and would have struggled unceasingly until their rights were restored. Be this as it may, and Jews will certainly reject this analysis, it is indeed the case that most Israelis see themselves as having few options. It is not uncommon to hear even those Israelis who favor a two-state solution express a fear, and sometimes a conviction, that the Palestinians are not fighting for their political rights in a state alongside Israel but rather for the whole of Palestine.

Yet some Israelis also recognize the contradictions to which they are condemned by their own beliefs, assuming, of course, that the Palestinians really are ready for compromise and that Israeli intransigence is forcing both Israelis and Palestinians

to miss a historic opportunity. If giving up territory requires what they judge to be an unreasonable risk, trusting the untrustworthy as many Israelis would say, retention of the West Bank and Gaza is no less a threat to the security of the state. On the one hand, failing to deal meaningfully with the Palestinian problem puts pressure on Egypt to slow or even end the normalization of relations with Israel. It also weakens other Arab regimes predisposed to compromise while strengthening the rejectionist camp, all of which increases the threat from neighboring Arab states. In returning the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt, Israelis allowed themselves to be persuaded that exchanging land for peace would enhance their country's security, that good relations with their neighbors would be more productive of security than a territorial buffer. While this should remain persuasive to Israelis today, failing to deal seriously with the Palestinian problem perpetuates and has the potential to intensify the hostility between Israel and its neighbors.

[On the other hand, as the *intifada* of 1987–88 has demonstrated, challenges to security can come from internal as well as external sources. The Palestinian resistance can and does exact a heavy cost from the Israeli point of view, requiring the deployment of extensive resources and manpower, placing young Israeli soldiers in troubling and often dangerous circumstances and introducing tensions into Jewish society generally, and straining the Jewish state's vital relationships with the United States and other allies.] Indeed, in the latter context, it is notable that in the spring of 1988 the American secretary of state met with two prominent Palestinian Americans who are members of the Palestine National Council. All of these considerations have consequences for the state's security, and to this may be added the growing militancy of Israel's own Palestinian Arabs, citizens who nonetheless identify with the grievances of their cousins across the border. Israel may be able to contain all of these challenges in the short run, especially if Egypt remains at peace with Israel and Iraq remains bogged down in its war with Iran. But Israeli security can hardly be advanced by increasing the militancy and determination of Arabs under Israeli control while handing political and diplomatic gains to rejectionists who challenge the country from outside.

An observation that supports this analysis, reflecting one of the principal gains of the current Palestinian resistance, is the resurrection of the "Green Line" (pre-1967 border) in the consciousness of Israelis. With the distinction between Israel and the territories increasingly blurred in the minds of many, and especially young Israelis who never knew a time when they could not travel at will to the West Bank and Gaza, the Green Line may be said to have faded. The occupied territories were effectively Israeli territory, not legally annexed but nonetheless an area in which many Israelis felt at home. Today this is no longer the case. The area is still available to the Israeli military, of course, and the West Bank can correctly be regarded as a buffer between Israel and Jordan. But the territories themselves are zones of insecurity, areas where Israeli civilians now go as little as possible and where soldiers operate for the most part not to repel potential foreign invaders but to contain a security threat already in their midst.

The problem for Israelis who recognize that holding the territories does not

enhance their security, and may well do the opposite, is the lack of a perceived alternative. Many, in other words, share with more hard-line elements a belief that they and the Palestinians are engaged in a struggle, not for Hebron and Nablus, but for Jaffa and Haifa. Believing that their country is therefore in an impossible position, they forcefully condemn occupation and sincerely lament the policies of their government but ultimately find it impossible to reject the conclusion that the resistance in the territories is a threat to the existence of their country. In most cases, they naively and half-heartedly look to Jordan, hoping that a way might be found to offer part of the West Bank and most of its inhabitants to King Hussein and that this might be a formula for ridding Israel of both its internal and external enemies. Not only is this thinking dated and unrealistic, however, it shows again that the Palestinian uprising of 1987–88 has created external as well as internal problems for Israel. [The *intifada* has made Jordan less willing, not more willing, to deal with Israel over the territories; and while this does not at present constitute a military challenge, it is a political and diplomatic setback that works against the security of the Jewish state.]

In the analysis of the Israeli Peace Camp, the only way out of this dilemma is for the Palestinians to send clearer and more creditable signals, not only to the effect that an accommodation is necessary but also giving evidence that they would accept a two-state solution. To begin, Palestinians are told that they must repeal those provisions in the 1968 PLO Charter which call for the destruction of Israel and its replacement with a democratic and secular state over the whole of Palestine. Israelis say that this and other indications of a willingness to compromise, such as unconditional Palestinian acceptance of United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338, would strengthen the position of those in the Jewish state who advocate territorial compromise, enhancing the credibility of the arguments they advance in domestic political debates and enabling them to rebut more effectively the hard-liners' assertion that there is no one with whom to negotiate. Israelis on the left also sometimes call for a "Palestinian Sadat" in this context, pointing out that their country's deep distrust of Egypt was shattered by Sadat's trip to Jerusalem in 1977 and that widespread opposition to withdrawal from the Sinai, deemed essential for security purposes, almost disappeared overnight. In the view of Israelis predisposed toward withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza, the Palestinians must undertake a similar bold stroke in order to create the conditions for a political and psychological breakthrough.

Palestinians respond that they have made clear their willingness to compromise and charge that the Israeli government knowingly strengthens the hand of rejectionists, calling on Palestinians to take chances for peace but then placing obstacles in the path of those who respond to their call. They point out that there has been a steady and significant evolution of the PLO's political platform, described by a leading Palestinian intellectual as early as 1981 as "movement away from maximalism and in the direction of accommodation."⁶ In 1986 the PLO explicitly offered to accept UN 242, in return for recognition of the Palestinians' own right to self-determination, and Yasir Arafat subsequently repeated earlier statements in which he expressed a willingness to negotiate with Israel and to seek mutual recognition.

Finally, with reference to the Egyptian peace initiative, Palestinians note that Israel did not insist upon a formal disavowal of Egyptian declarations and conventions calling for destruction of the Jewish state before receiving Sadat in Jerusalem. Rather, quite appropriately, it took the position that there could be no more credible repudiation of these declarations and conventions than Sadat's demonstrated willingness to negotiate a peace treaty. And Palestinians remind observers as well that the Egyptian opening did not occur in a vacuum; it was the result of private diplomacy in which Israeli officials sent signals to Cairo and then held a preparatory meeting in Morocco with an emissary of Sadat. At present, by contrast, it is the Palestinians rather than the Israelis who are sending signals, urging the Israelis to give them a response that will strengthen their hand vis-à-vis their own hard-liners. Most Israelis either do not hear or do not believe these signals, however, perhaps conditioned by their own history and circumstances to shy away from the risks they urge Palestinians to take.

Now that Palestinians have captured world attention and resurrected the Green Line, the challenge remaining for Israelis and Palestinians interested in compromise is to persuade Zionist leaders and the Israeli public that the existence of the Jewish state is not at issue. To break the cycle of distrust will be difficult. Each Israeli dismissal of Palestinian offers to trade acceptance of UN 242 and recognition of Israel for a state of their own in the West Bank and Gaza strengthens the hand of those Palestinians and other Arabs who insist that Zionism is by definition expansionist, that the Jewish state actually prefers land to peace and that the struggle with Israel therefore can be only a zero-sum game for the whole of Palestine. This tacit alliance between rejectionists on both sides is tragic, giving each side a credible reason to distrust the other but in the process undermining the long-term security of Israel and condemning the Palestinians to continued homelessness.

With the Palestinians exercising initiative and showing their capacity for leadership and organization, even under the difficult conditions of occupation, and with Israel entering an election-year debate and experiencing at least some new pressure from the United States, 1988 would be a logical time for Israel to declare that it hears the Palestinians and, though remaining skeptical, will give them an opportunity to demonstrate their sincerity. Recognizing the legitimacy of Palestinian aspirations and the Palestinians' chosen representatives, Israel might agree to negotiations in which both sides would be asked to show their good faith in ways the other would find credible. It would be necessary to agree in principle on the general structure of an acceptable outcome and then to negotiate a series of steps by which progress toward this goal could slowly be made. The realization of each step would build confidence and trust, producing a willingness to move closer to the ultimate goal of mutual recognition and a two-state solution. There is little in the present situation, and especially in Israel's response to the current uprising, to suggest that such a procedure will be agreed to and implemented any time soon. Nevertheless, assuming that Zionism is not by definition expansionist and that a majority of Israelis would deal meaningfully with the Palestinians were they convinced that the survival of their state is not at issue, and assuming also that most Palestinians today would be willing to accept a permanent, secure, and Jewish Israel in return for the estab-

lishment of a Palestinian state, then this is the path for which those who would make peace must search.

(May 1988)

NOTES

1. Mark Tessler, "The Political Right in Israel: Its Origins, Growth and Prospects," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 15 (Winter 1986): 12–55. See also Real Jean Isaac, *Party and Politics in Israel: Three Visions of a Jewish State* (New York: Longman, 1981).

2. Ian Lustick, "Israel's Dangerous Fundamentalists," *Foreign Policy* 68 (Fall 1987): 118–39. For a fuller discussion, see Lustick, *For the Land and the Lord: Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1988). See also David Newman (ed.), *The Impact of Gush Emunim: Politics and Settlement in the West Bank* (London: Croom Helm, 1985).

3. See "Generals Dismiss the Security Value of the West Bank," *Ha'aretz*, May 31, 1988. See also "Israeli Officers Argue the West Bank Is a Liability," *Newsweek*, May 30, 1988.

4. Mark Heller, *A Palestinian State: The Implications for Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 147. For a different point of view, see Aryeh Shalev, *The West Bank: Line of Defense* (New York: Praeger, 1985).

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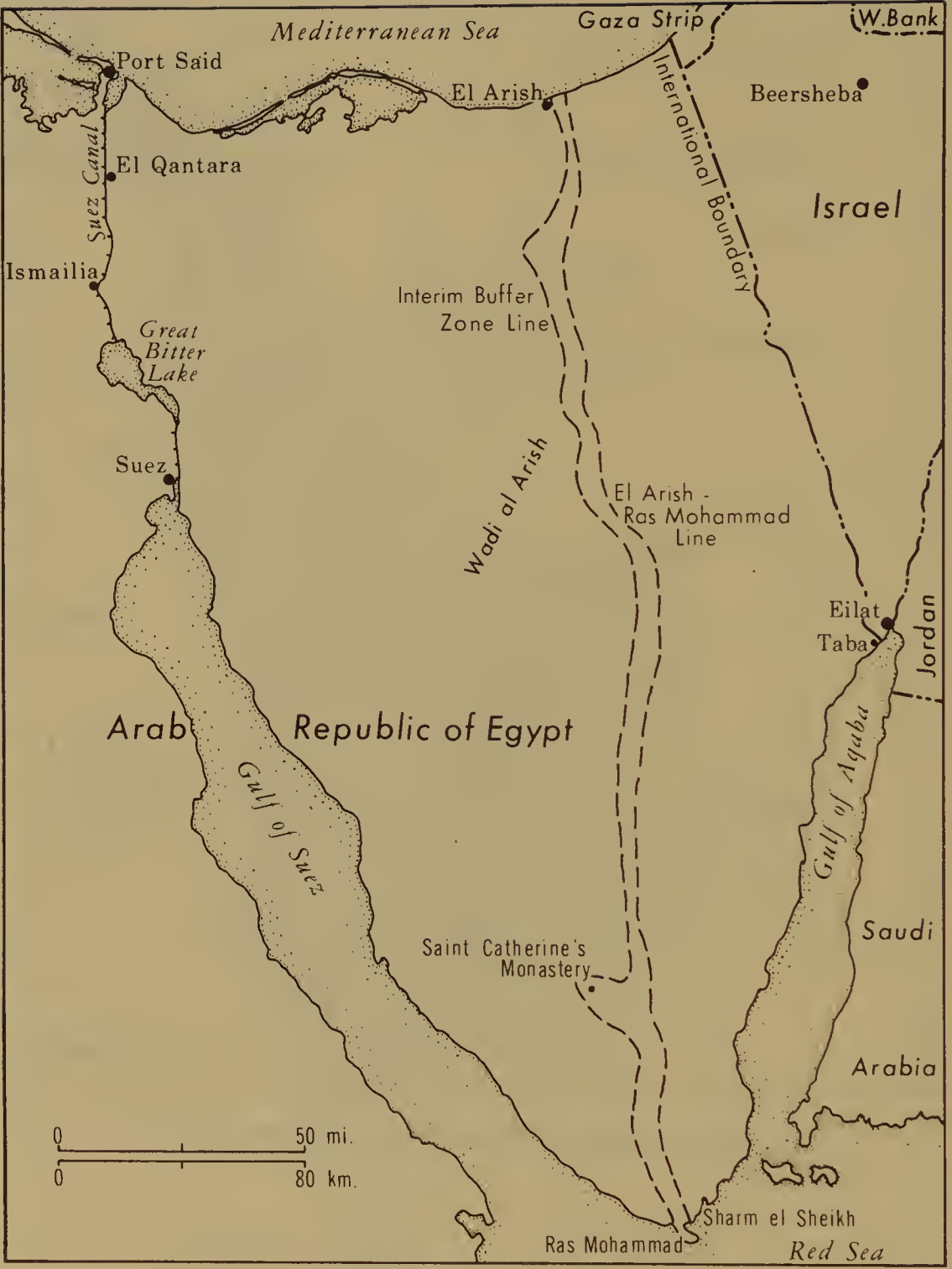
Map 1. Proposed UN Partition of Palestine, 1947



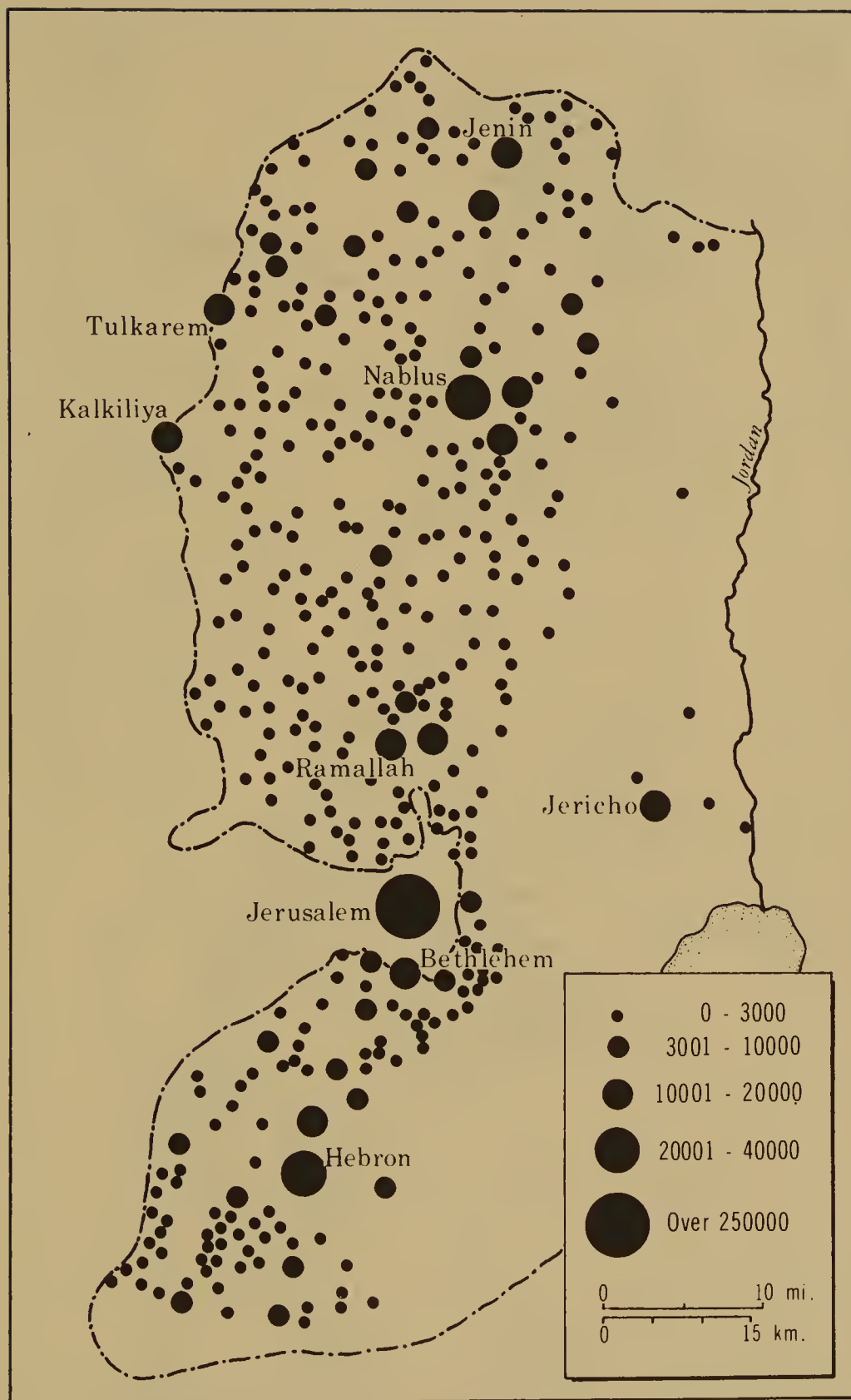
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Map 3. Israel and the Occupied Territories, June 1977



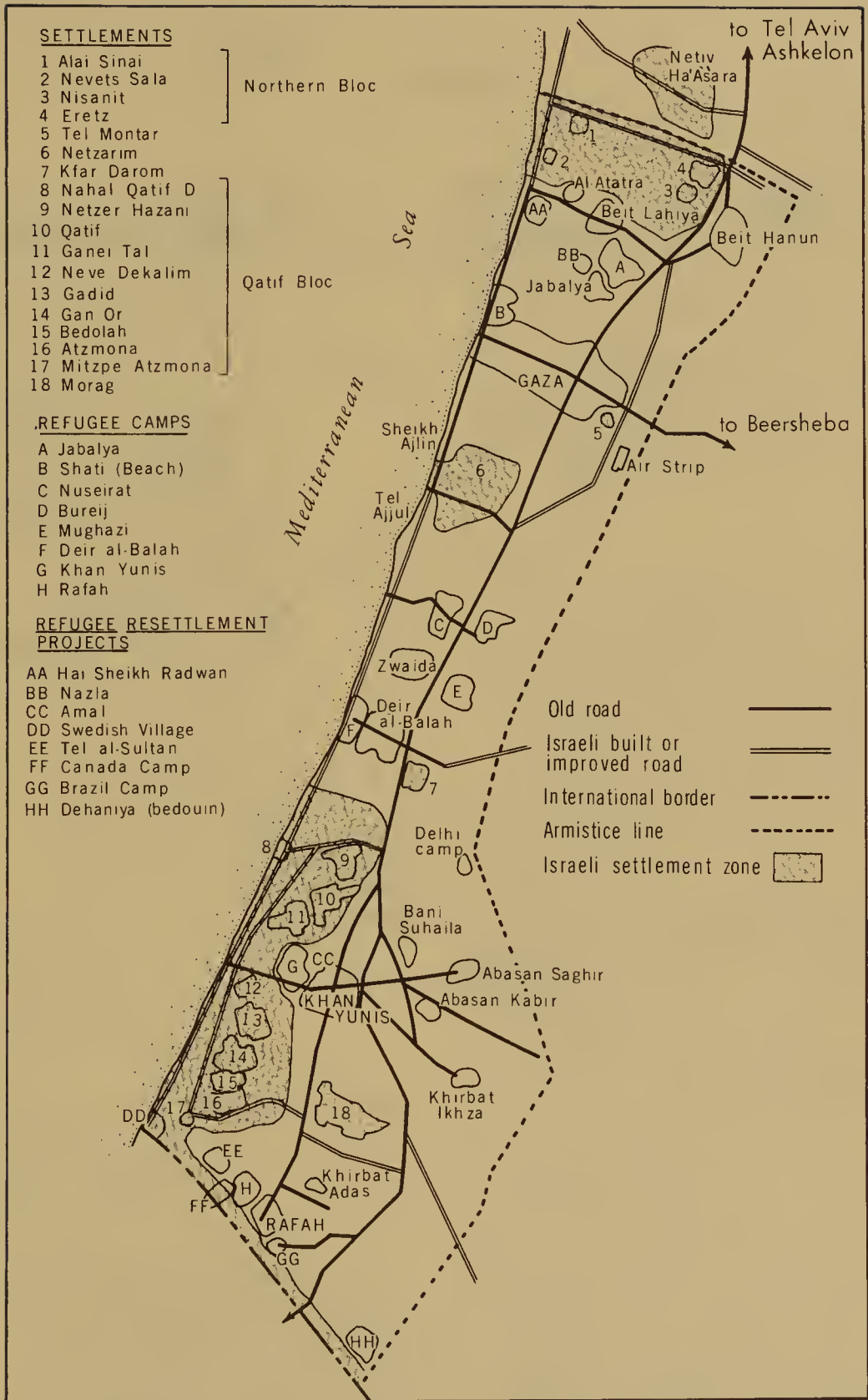
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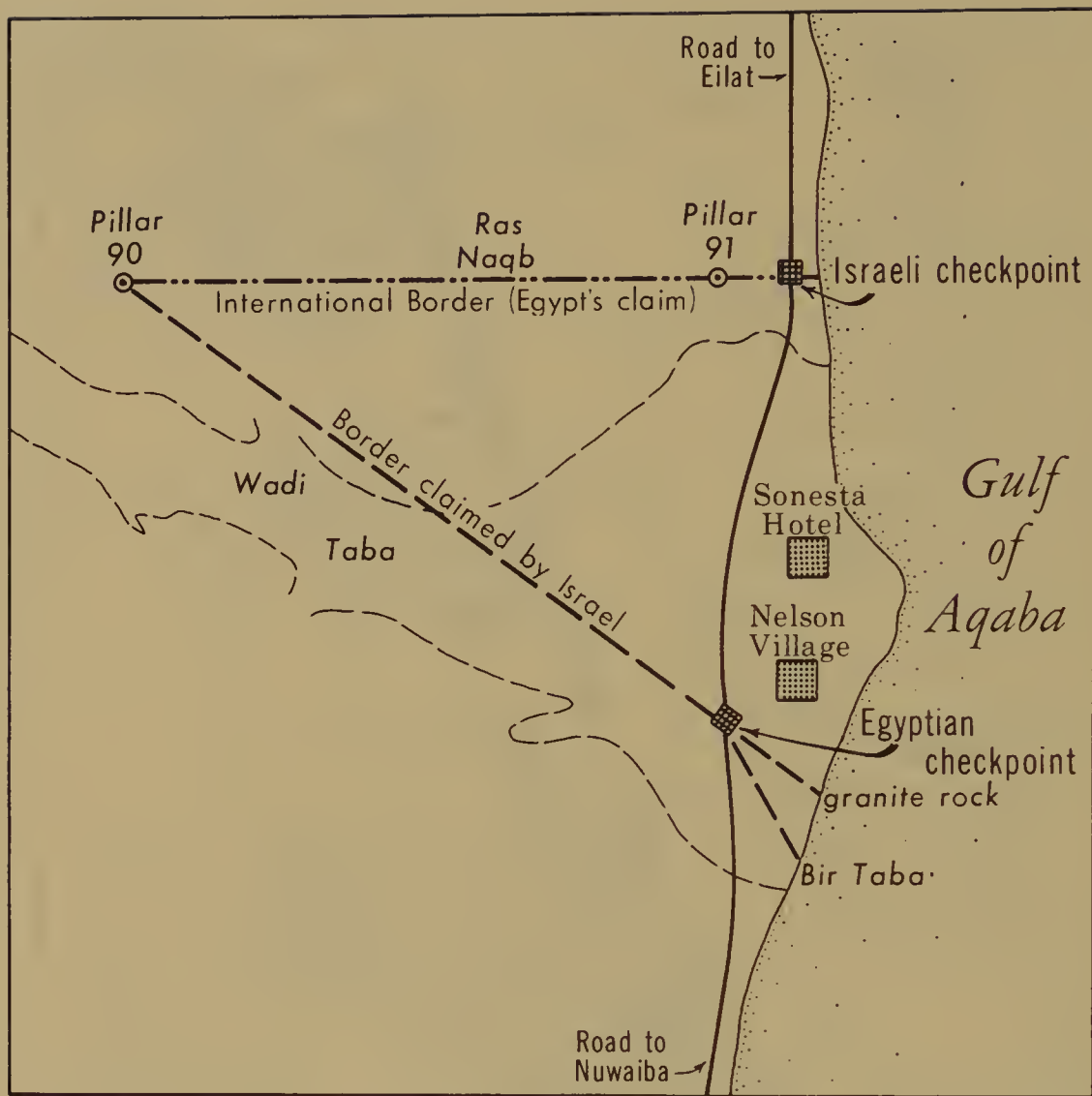
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