RELIGIOUS VALUES AND POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY — AUSTRALIA AND THE QUESTION OF JERUSALEM: 1947–1950

Chanan Reich

Australia's crucial role in the UN decision of 9 December 1949 to internationalize the whole city of Jerusalem and Bethlehem emanated from the mistaken belief of the Minister of External Affairs, H.V. Evatt, that many Catholic votes could be won by that initiative. The campaign in Australia to that end by some quarters in the Catholic Church clearly demonstrates very obvious anti-Semitic attitudes within its hierarchy. The policy of the Liberal-Country Party government regarding Jerusalem reflects the dilemma of a government forced by circumstances to continue pursuing a policy which it had fundamentally rejected.

The history of the attempts to internationalize Jerusalem provide interesting lessons in the nature of domestic and international politics and the way in which religious values and prejudices can be mobilized for political ends. The Australian angle of the campaign to internationalize Jerusalem provides an insight into the decision-making process of Australian foreign policy during the period when Dr. H.V. Evatt was the Minister for External Affairs in the Labor government and subsequently

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when P.C. Spender became Minister of External Affairs in the Menzies Liberal-Country Party coalition government. It demonstrates that on the question of Jerusalem, Evatt conducted a "one man show," ignoring professional advice within his own department in favor of a policy which he believed could help the Australian Labor Party win the next federal elections. The Liberal-Country Party coalition government which came to office following the December 1949 federal elections was opposed to the internationalization of Jerusalem, but refused to change this policy because it feared loss of face for Australia in the UN. The Israeli efforts in Australia to dissuade the Australian government from supporting internationalization present a fascinating human interest story of a young diplomat from the new State of Israel — Yehuda Harry Levin. He lived with his wife, Ruth, in Jerusalem during the siege and continuous bombardments by the Arabs from March to July 1948, and barely a year later found himself in the role of the first Israeli consul general in Australia, waging a diplomatic battle with a government which had otherwise been supportive of Israel, over its relentless campaign to place Jerusalem and its 100,000 Jews under a UN regime.

Australia's connection with Jerusalem dates back to December 1917 when its 10th Light Horse Regiment, supporting the British infantry, took part in the capture of this city from the Turks. Many Australian soldiers are buried in the Jerusalem war cemetery. Their graves are visited by Australian officials and relatives, and serve as a spiritual link between Israel and Australia.[1] The Jewish community of Jerusalem was ecstatic when General Allenby, the commander of the British forces, entered the city. The liberation of Palestine by the British and the British government's commitment, in the Balfour Declaration, to assist in the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, was considered to be a fulfillment of biblical prophesy. During World War II, several Australian military and political leaders, such as General Blamey and Prime Minister Menzies, visited Jerusalem and the Australian forces encamped there.[2]

Palestine was governed by the British from 1917 to 1948, under a Mandate of the League of Nations, with Jerusalem as its capital. In 1928 the Zionist organizations in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane protested to the Australian government against

the British Administration in Palestine for interfering with Jewish worship at the Western Wall in Jerusalem on Yom Kippur — the Day of Atonement. Consequently, the Australian government conveyed these grievances to the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations.[3] Such conflicts, ostensibly over religious rights, led to violent clashes between Arabs and Jews, and provided the rationale for the demands to place Jerusalem and its holy places under an international regime.

When the British established the Peel Royal Commission to investigate and make recommendations about Palestine, the Australian diplomatic representative in London, Keith Officer, commented in a memorandum to the Department of External Affairs, dated 5 February 1937:

> Jerusalem itself would clearly have to be given a special status in view of the fact that it is a holy city for both Jews and Arabs — and incidently also for many Christian communities not only in Palestine but in Europe and America.[4]

In fact the Peel Report, published in July 1937, recommended that Jerusalem and Bethlehem remain British while the rest of Palestine would be divided between the Jews and the Arabs.[5]

Australia's significant role in influencing the status of Jerusalem came about following Britain's referral of the Palestine question to the UN General Assembly on 2 April 1947. The Assembly consequently appointed an 11-nation Special Committee On Palestine — UNSCOP (including Australia) to conduct an investigation into the Palestine problem. On 15 June 1947 UNSCOP assembled in Jerusalem and heard evidence from the Yishuv's[6] leaders, Weizmann and Ben-Gurion. Several days later, David Horowitz and Abba Eban, the representatives of the Jewish Agency, met with Australia's representatives, John Hood and Sam Atyeo, to discuss, *inter alia*, the status of Jerusalem. Horowitz told the Australians that the Jews would not accept a partition scheme unless the Jewish part of Jerusalem was included in the Jewish state. In contrast, Australia, together with other countries, was in favor of Jerusalem being constituted as a *corpus separatum* — a separate special zone — in which the government would be neither Jewish nor Arab, but international. This arrangement, it was thought, would preserve Jerusa-

lem as a holy city for three religions, provide for the safeguard
of its holy places, and guarantee access to pilgrims.[7]

UNSCOP signed its report on 31 August 1947, including a
unanimous recommendation to terminate the British Mandate
for Palestine. The majority also recommended the partition of
Palestine into Jewish and Arab states and the placement of
Jerusalem under a UN international Trusteeship. A minority
proposed the creation of an independent federal state of Pales-
tine, comprising an Arab state and a Jewish state with Jerusalem
as its capital. Australia abstained on the ground that the task of
UNSCOP was to elucidate the problem and submit facts rather
than make definite proposals.[8] The Jewish Agency supported the
majority report, but had misgivings about the widening of the
neutral area of Jerusalem far beyond the boundaries envisaged
by the Peel Commission.[9]

Following Britain's decision to withdraw from Palestine, the
UN General Assembly resolved, despite opposition from the
Arab states, to set up an ad hoc committee to further consider the
Palestine question. Australia's Minister of External Affairs, Dr.
H.V. Evatt, was elected as its chairman. The Committee con-
cluded its deliberations on 25 November 1947 when the majority
recommended the partition of Palestine but with an economic
union, and that the city of Jerusalem be put under a Special
International Regime. In a historic decision, on 29 November
1947 the UN General Assembly endorsed the majority report
with Australia's enthusiastic support. While the Jewish Agency
accepted the partition plan as the "indispensable minimum," the
Arabs rejected it,[10] and announced their intention of resisting it
by force. Rioting broke out in Palestine and Jerusalem was
besieged by the Arabs. At the same time, the British were
reluctant to intervene.[11]

Most of the Yishuv and its leaders accepted the partition of
Palestine as the most realistic political achievement they could
aim for at that time when the Yishuv constituted a minority in
Palestine, with very limited military power and surrounded by
hostile Arabs. Similarly, they accepted the internationalization
of Jerusalem with great reluctance. The idea of a Jewish state
without Jerusalem — the holy city and ancient capital of the
Kingdom of Israel — where, in 1947, its 100,000 Jewish inhabit-
ants constituted a majority of the total population of 160,000,

caused them great anguish. Being aware of the Yishuv's reluc-
tance, on 24 January 1948 Evatt urged Shertok, head of the
Political Department of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, to
recognize the "special position of Jerusalem and Bethlehem
from the point of view of Christian churches throughout the
world." He assured Shertok that such compliance would con-
solidate support and enthusiasm for Israel.[12]

At that time, the Yishuv's leaders expected that in return for
their acceptance of internationalization, the UN would provide
security in Jerusalem. Instead, the UN was busy in endless
meetings aimed at finding the right formula for Jerusalem and
failed to provide any measure of security for its inhabitants. The
British, for their part, were in the process of evacuating Pales-
tine. The Jewish forces were forced to take immediate effective
measures to protect the Yishuv in Jerusalem and throughout
Palestine. On 1 April 1948 Shertok spoke before the Security
Council about the grave situation in Jerusalem. While the British
allowed armed Arab gangs to control the roads leading to the
city, the UN failed to implement its own decision to establish an
international regime and protect the inhabitants and the holy
places. He warned that if the UN failed to carry out its duty, the
Jews themselves would have to defend themselves and save
Jerusalem from a catastrophe.[13]

Throughout April 1948 the Jewish Agency urged the Austra-
lian UN delegation to push for an early adoption of the Statute
of Jerusalem by the UN Trusteeship Council and the taking of
immediate measures to provide for the protection and eventual
demilitarization of Jerusalem. Shertok warned that in the ab-
sence of international protection the Jewish forces of the Haganah
might be compelled to launch an attack on the Arab quarter of
Jerusalem immediately after the British evacuation. Australia
consequently expressed its support for the protection of the
city.[14] On 29 April the Australian UN delegation informed its
Department of External Affairs that while the Jews urged the
establishment of a large international police force in Jerusalem,
the Arabs would not positively cooperate with such a force as
they would regard it as a means of beginning the enforcement of
partition.[15]

The UN's abandonment of Jerusalem at a time when it was
being continuously shelled and its Jewish population was on the
brink of starvation and thirst, left deep emotional scars on the
Yishuv and its leaders. Abba Eban claimed in his memoirs that
the UN's procrastination was deliberate in order to assist the
Arabs:

> Indeed, since the absence of fighting in Jerusalem would
> have released Jewish forces for other sectors, the UN simply
> allowed the fighting to proceed rather than confer a "mili-
> tary advantage" on the Jews. The Arab governments were
> hostile to internationalisation. They were sure that if the UN
> kept out of the way, the whole city would fall into their
> hands. The Iraqi delegate stated that the Statute for
> Internationalisation was "illegal," that Jerusalem must take
> its chances with the rest of the country, and that the siege and
> denial of water must be maintained not only as a legitimate
> act of war, but even in the event of a truce.

In contrast, Eban described Australia's efforts as one of the
last opportunities which could have put a UN flag in Jerusalem.
This was rejected by the UN and thus constituted "an active
relinquishing of responsibility in a critical hour." The impact on
Israel was profound: "Israel would never forget the lesson. If the
UN would not take responsibility in time of peril, by what right
could it claim authority when the danger was passed?"[16] A
similar sentiment was expressed by Harry Levin, in his diary on
26 March 1948:

> Jerusalem is an island in a hostile Arab sea. And our life-
> line, with Tel-Aviv, lies half-paralysed by their attacks.
> Jamal Husseini[17] warned the UN that the partition line will be
> "a line of blood and fire." It's true already in Jerusalem. And
> under UNO's plan precisely Jerusalem is supposed to be
> neither Jewish nor Arab, but international.

Similarly, Levin wrote on 2 April: "Am less and less inclined
to believe that the solution will come through UNO. We shall
have to work it out ourselves, though God knows at what cost."
On 5 April Levin also expressed a growing degree of skepticism,

shared by an increasing number of the Yishuv's leaders, regarding the sincerity of church leaders' concern for Jerusalem:

> The Arabs have rejected the UN's truce appeal. Church dignitaries abroad are again expressing anxiety about the safety of Jerusalem and the Holy Places; so are statesmen. The smoothness of some of it is beginning to sound offensive. The Jewish Agency has warned the UN of elaborate Arab plans to isolate the city and establish military control over it; it declares that the Jews have counter-plans to resist. It suggests the transfer to Jerusalem of 10,000 Scandinavian troops now on occupation duties in Germany. Not likely! Perhaps UNO might be shaken into action if the Holy Places were damaged. Or are Holy Places only another chequer-piece on the Middle East board?[18]

In his report to External Affairs at the end of the UN session, Australian UNSCOP representative John Hood also expressed the Australian delegation's profound disappointment with the inadequate measures adopted by the UN regarding Jerusalem.[19]

The British Mandate in Palestine came to an end on 14 May 1948, and because Jerusalem was under siege by the Arabs the State of Israel was proclaimed in Tel Aviv instead.

During the Arab-Israeli war, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion of Israel revealed, in several closed meetings, his intention to reestablish Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, as it was in the days of King David. However, because of the sensitive nature of the status of Jerusalem he did not publicize his intentions.[20]

On 20 May 1948 Count Folke Bernadotte of Sweden was appointed UN Mediator and charged with the task of bringing about a peaceful solution in Palestine. At the end of June he proposed to include the whole of Jerusalem in Arab territory, to grant a municipal autonomy to the local Jews, and to provide special arrangements for the protection of the holy places. This proposal, which ran counter to the 1947 UN resolution to internationalize Jerusalem, was vehemently rejected by Israel.[21]

On 7 July 1948 Israel brought to the attention of the Australian embassy in Washington an address by Prime Minister Ben-Gurion to the Israeli Provisional Council in which he said: "The

Christian world has paid lip-service only to the inviolability of
Jerusalem, leaving the Jewish forces alone the task of protecting
its holy places." Ben-Gurion blamed the Christian world for
looking on in silence while the city was savagely shelled by
Moslem forces led by British officers.[22] In a report to the Israeli
Provisional Council on 8 July 1948 Foreign Minister Shertok
stated that Israel was prepared to consider the demilitarization
of Jerusalem under certain conditions and to approve of an
international military force that would protect the city. The
Arabs rejected that scheme.[23] However, in the course of battles
which took place between 9 and 19 July the Israeli forces broke
the Arab siege of Jerusalem by broadening the corridor from Tel
Aviv to Jerusalem and securing access to the city.

Consequently, by the end of July the Israeli government
decided to oppose the internationalization of Jerusalem and to
take control of the Jewish section of the city — new Jerusalem.
Shertok argued that the UN resolution had not been imple-
mented, through no fault of the Israelis who had in fact pressed
the UN to carry out its own decision to bring the city under
international control. He also argued that the Christian world
defaulted in its responsibility for Jerusalem by not lifting a
finger in its defense when the city had been continually shelled
by the Arab Legion under British command and its fall seemed
imminent. He insisted that Jewish arms alone saved Jerusalem
from a relapse to Islamic rule. Shertok severely criticized
Bernadotte for his proposal to transfer Jerusalem to Arab rule in
flagrant contradiction of the UN resolution. He also highlighted
the fact that Bernadotte's proposal evoked no protest on the part
of any Christian power. He concluded, "In all these circum-
stances, we no longer consider ourselves morally bound by our
acquiescence in the Assembly's decision [to] internationalise
Jerusalem, which the UN itself consistently refused [to] imple-
ment and the UN Mediator openly repudiated."[24] In August Ben-
Gurion took further steps to bring new Jerusalem under Israeli
sovereignty when he appointed Dov Yoseph as governor of the
city.[25]

In an attempt to counteract a campaign to discredit Israel,
the Israeli Mission to the U.S., in a letter dated 26 August 1948
to the other diplomatic missions in Washington, refuted allega-
tions made against Israeli officials for having desecrated Catho-

lic churches throughout Israel, and planning to expropriate ecclesiastic property. The Israelis assured the other missions that soon after war had broken out strict orders had been issued to Israeli troops enjoining the utmost respect for holy places and religious institutions and their ecclesiastic personnel. These orders had been substantially fulfilled. Israel expressed regret at "isolated transgressions by irresponsible individuals," which took place in the first weeks of the fighting and military occupation, and before effective security control had been instituted. Most of the offenders had been apprehended and punished. The letter emphasized that in six months of warfare Israeli military operations had not directly caused the destruction of any church or sanctuary, or the death or injury of any ecclesiastic. It added that Nazareth was out of bounds to Israeli troops and that appreciation of this gesture of respect for Christian feelings had been conveyed by Christian clergy to the Minister of Religious Affairs.[26]

Meanwhile, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry submitted a memorandum to Cardinal Gilroy in which it criticized reports in several Catholic newspapers which alleged that Jews in Israel were responsible for damage to Christian holy places. The memorandum, referring to Israeli government statements, explained that the damage to Christian holy places was inflicted by Arab soldiers and not by members of the Jewish army.[27]

On 16 September 1948 Bernadotte presented his report to the UN whereby he reverted to the original UN resolution to place Jerusalem under an international regime. This and his other recommendations caused outrage among the Jews and cost him his life. The following day he was assassinated in Jerusalem by the Lehi — an underground Jewish group. The Israeli cabinet took a further step in annexing new Jerusalem in a meeting on 26 September when Ben-Gurion managed to reverse what he regarded as "a previous stupid decision to prefer an international Jerusalem over a Jewish one."[28] On 6 October 1948 Shertok explained the decision claiming: "Israel cannot confide the safety of Jerusalem's Jews to the UN. Nothing but a Jewish force can assure their protection." He pointed out that holy places could be adequately protected through an international regime for the walled city alone where most of the holy places were

located, while the new city would form an integral part of the State of Israel.[29]

An apparent change in Australia's policy emerged in the course of talks, held between Shertok and Evatt in Paris on 15 October 1948, on the American trusteeship proposal for Jerusalem which advocated the recognition of the status quo of the division of the city into two areas — Jewish and Arab. Evatt reacted with caution and queried about the status of the Christians under that arrangement. Shertok replied that Israel would prefer to have the Old City, which had come under Jordanian rule in the course of the hostilities, placed under an international regime headed by a Christian governor. This, according to Shertok, met with Evatt's approval.[30]

However, in contrast with Israeli expectations, on 22 November 1948 the Australian UN delegation submitted a draft resolution in support of returning to the original UN resolution of 1947 to internationalize Jerusalem and Bethlehem.[31] In a speech the following day, the Australian representative emphasized that Jerusalem, Bethlehem and the holy places of Palestine "cannot be said to be the exclusive property of Jews or Arabs, Christians or non-Christians....[They] engage not only the sentiments, but the sacred interests, of the great majority of mankind." He claimed that the pope was of the same opinion.[32] Subsequently, on 11 December 1948, the UN General Assembly resolved, in line with the Australian proposal, to institute an international regime for Jerusalem.[33] Evatt was rewarded for his efforts on 20 January 1949 when the Archdiocese of Sydney conveyed to him the appreciation of the pope.[34] Despite profound disagreements between Israel and Australia over Jerusalem, the Australian government decided on 29 January 1949 to accord full recognition to the State of Israel, while calling on its government to assist in the internationalization of Jerusalem.[35]

Shertok replied diplomatically that Israel sought an early peaceful solution to all outstanding questions, including Jerusalem.[36] On 2 February 1949 the Israeli government decided to end the military administration in Jewish Jerusalem and take it over. A government spokesman said this did not mark formal inclusion of Jewish Jerusalem within the State of Israel, but for the purpose of administration the city would be as much a part of Israel as Haifa or Tel Aviv. Israeli intentions, however, became

more apparent when the inaugural session of the newly elected Israeli Constituent Assembly took place in Jerusalem on 14 February, marking another phase in the establishment of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. In protest the governments of France, the UK and the U.S. declined the Israeli government's invitation to attend the ceremony.[37] Ben-Gurion reacted angrily to this ban, insisting that the UN could not settle the future of Jerusalem, which had been settled 3,000 years before the UN Conciliation Commission had arrived. He added that Jerusalem is and will remain a part of Israel.[38]

When Evatt was received by Pope Pius XIII on 5 March 1949 the pontiff insisted that "only full internationalization of the city of Jerusalem and not a mere international control over the Holy Places can be of lasting effect." As Evatt's view agreed with the pope's, he promised his support. Later in the year he reassured the apostolic delegate in Australia, "We shall continue to work together for the achievement of this goal so important to the Church and to all Christians as well as being in the long-term interests of Jews and Arabs alike."[39] On 29 March 1949 the *Melbourne Age* described the transfer of five Israeli ministries from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem as "one more step in the plan to make Jerusalem the capital of Israel."

From May through July several Catholic priests from New South Wales (NSW) urged the Australian prime minister, J.B. Chifley, and Evatt, to take diplomatic action, together with other countries, to bring about the internationalization of Jerusalem. On 22 May Rev. M.J. Higgins, the Wentworth Parish priest, wrote to Chifley: "I have spoken to my people of the danger to which these Sacred Places are open. I have reminded them of the abuses to which they were subjected at the hands of Jews during the course of hostilities, and have referred to what might be further expected at their unchristian hands."

In a detailed reply to Higgins on 8 June Chifley outlined Australia's role in the formulation of the UN policy on Jerusalem since 1947 and assured Higgins that the government would continue to watch the question very closely. It is interesting to note that Chifley refrained from commenting on Higgins' blatant anti-Semitic outbursts, but drew his attention to Israel's proposal to establish a UN international regime concerned exclusively with the control and protection of the holy places in

Jerusalem and other places in Israel. He also mentioned Israel's willingness to repair the damage which, according to the Israelis, was "inflicted on religious buildings and sites in the course of the war launched by the Arab States."[40]

In his speech to the Knesset on 15 June 1949 Shertok denounced what he described as "a smear campaign against Israel alleging danger to the Christian holy places at the hand of the Jewish state," by Catholic newspapers and other Catholic quarters. He reaffirmed Israel's commitment to the freedom and security of religious institutions of all faiths, to the preservation of the holy places and the existing rights of all churches.[41]

On 21 June Evatt stated in parliament that Israel and Jordan should assist the UN in the internationalization of Jerusalem. He claimed that Israel had given an undertaking on that matter when it applied for membership in the UN and that Australia supported Israel's admission despite objections by some countries to admit Israel before Jerusalem had been internationalized. During the debate in parliament the Australian Labor Party (ALP) backbencher, Kim Edward Beazeley, opposed Evatt's view when he argued that the Israelis could claim that it was really a domestic matter, but Evatt insisted that internationalization must be carried out.[42]

When Israeli consul general Yehuda Harry Levin met with Dr. John Burton, Australian secretary of the Department of External Affairs, in Canberra on 17 August, Burton admitted to Levin that pressure from Catholic dignitaries in Australia had increased of late, demanding the internationalization of all of Jerusalem. Levin explained the Israeli position on the subject and added his own feelings as a resident of Jerusalem who had lived through the siege. He explained also that most of the holy places were under Arab control and that as far as the few that were in the Jewish-held area were concerned, his government "would readily acquiesce in some form of international surveillance that, however, would not impinge on its sovereignty in new Jerusalem." According to Levin, Dr. Burton thought that "if it were brought home to the Catholics of Australia that the Jews were not averse to international safeguards for the Holy Places, they would be less claimant about internationalization."

After some pressure by Levin, Burton agreed to divulge, in confidence, the identity of the Catholic leaders who had been

pressing the issue. When Levin met with Evatt later on that day, Levin stressed that when Israel originally agreed to accept the principle of international regime, it did so only in deference to the overwhelming consensus of Christian world opinion and only after a great inner struggle.

> We never imagined that the lives of the 100,000 Jews of Jerusalem and the deep stakes of Judaism and the Jewish people in the Holy City might thereby be imperiled. We certainly did not conceive that the Christian world would stand aside while the almost defenceless Jews of Jerusalem would be mercilessly battered by the Arabs and the city come within an ace of falling into Arab hands.

Evatt inquired further about Levin's personal experiences during the siege. When Levin replied that that tragic experience had given an entirely different significance to the future status of modern Jerusalem and that no Jew could envisage its defense entrusted to any but their own people, Evatt, according to Levin's report, nodded sympathetically. He added, however, that growing Catholic pressure was being applied on him for internationalization. Levin stressed that after the history of the past eighteen months, the Catholics' legitimate concern could only be with the holy places under Jordanian control, which were mainly outside new Jerusalem.[43]

When Levin and Burton met again a week later, Burton inquired whether Levin had any information of the Vatican's intentions regarding internationalization. Burton told Levin that External Affairs had heard from London of a scheme being worked out for the internationalization of the whole city, with special rights for the Jews in the new city. Levin claimed that Vatican circles themselves were not unanimous about internationalization, and that figures like Cardinal Tisseront saw how unrealistic the proposal was and realized that even from their own viewpoint internationalization would turn Jerusalem into a "cockpit of international and sectarian intrigue." Levin repeated Israel's stand and Burton persisted in his argument that Australia felt itself bound to support internationalization. However, after further argument, Burton conceded, according to Levin, that perhaps the internationalization of the holy places alone

might be interpreted as meeting the spirit of the original inten-
tion of the UN in the light of the changed circumstances. But he
felt strongly that in that event, it would have to be settled in the
committee stage and not be allowed to come up for open debate
by the Assembly.[44]

When Levin met with Evatt on 8 September 1949, Levin
claimed that the Jerusalem Committee of the UN Palestine
Conciliation Commission was inclined against internationaliza-
tion and would propose a scheme based on the partition of the
city between Jews and Arabs, with a UN Commission exercising
a limited functional role mainly in the supervision of the holy
places. He asserted that only two or three Latin American states
would press hard for internationalization. Evatt insisted, how-
ever, that any solution must satisfy the Vatican that internation-
alization was being realized while giving the Jews the control
that they wanted. Evatt agreed with Levin's suggestion that it
would be desirable to defer discussion in the Assembly on this
problem, and that he would instruct the Australian delegation to
the UN to keep in close touch with Eban.[45]

The Jerusalem Committee of the UN Conciliation Commis-
sion published its plan for an international regime for Jerusalem
on 13 September 1949. It recommended the partition of Jerusa-
lem into two demilitarized zones, Jewish and Arab, with exten-
sive administrative autonomy for each zone, as well as the
establishment of a commissioner, to be appointed by the UN,
who would supervise the holy places, demilitarization, and
human rights.[46] In his address to the General Assembly on 26
September Eban rejected that plan, in particular the intention to
bar settlement of Jews from outside Jerusalem in the city. He
repeated Israel's willingness to place the holy places under
international control, and called for full international recogni-
tion of the political status of the government of Israel in Jerusa-
lem.[47]

A discussion paper of the Department of External Affairs
dated 3 October stated that while internationalization was

> theoretically...the most perfect...in view of developments
> over the last two years and the present factual situation, it no
> longer appears applicable. The Conciliation Commission
> Plan, while containing certain undesirable features, e.g., the

division of the city, contains the least danger of military conflict. The division of the city has been a reality now for some time....It is difficult to understand church criticism of this plan, or, for that matter, of the proposal that Jerusalem should be incorporated in a Jewish State. Jerusalem has never been an international area and access to Holy Places has apparently always been subject to a guarantee by one government or another. It would appear that the church is making political capital out of the Assembly resolution of 1947. There is no valid reason why the Church which, in the past, has apparently accepted guarantees from the Ottoman Empire should not accept guarantees from Jewish or Arab States. Finally from the point of view of stability in the area, incorporation in the Jewish State might be the best solution. The State of Israel under young, nationalistic and competent leadership should assure a progressive future for the city."[48]

Another discussion paper warned against the implementation of the Conciliation Commission plan and argued that the holy places should not form a very important element in the ultimate settlement for the city. It advocated guarantees by existing administrations in Jerusalem to preserve existing rights in the holy places.[49]

A further challenge to the Australian government policy came again from Beazeley on 11 October, who argued that Australia should accept the reality of the division of Jerusalem and support the internationalization of the holy places alone. Evatt rejected Beazeley's suggestion and reaffirmed his commitment to *corpus separatum*.[50] Evatt's policy was described by Comay, Director of the Commonwealth Division of the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a letter to Eban as follows: "He feels obliged to be more pious than Pius for home consumption, but hopes that some face-saving compromise will emerge...which would not interfere very much with the de facto situation."[51]

From October to November 1949, the Catholic Holy Name Society pursued a vigorous campaign which, at least on one occasion, expressed some extremely anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist views. The bishop of Bathurst, J.F. Norton, addressed a rally in Gulgong, near Bathurst, on 9 October, in which he denounced "the Zionist State backed by international finance," whose sol-

diers had "profaned six churches, smashing crucifixes and statues...and ill-treated religious people...." Norton emphasized the significance of the campaign for internationalization of Jerusalem within the historical context of the Crusaders' battles to win the holy places back from the infidels.[52]

In a last minute attempt to persuade Australia to support the Israeli position, Sharett,[53] in a letter to Evatt on 6 November 1949, expressed his complete sympathy with those who were anxious to preserve and ensure access to the holy places. He maintained that Israelis were in fact

> the principal sufferers in that respect from the failure of the UN to extend effective protection to Jerusalem and its Holy Places. All the ancient synagogues and religious colleges in the Old City have been practically razed to the ground since the surrender of the Jewish Quarter to the Arab Legion. For nearly two years access to the Wailing Wall, our oldest religious shrine, has been denied to us.[54]

An External Affairs paper dated 11 November described Israel's position as "very reasonable."[55] Despite Israel's pleas, and professional opinion within the Department of External Affairs, Australia submitted a proposal at the UN on 21 November 1949 for the complete internationalization of Jerusalem.[56] This caused great consternation in Israel and the Australian Jewish community. The NSW State Zionist Council organized a mass rally which was addressed by Levin, who explained Israel's position.[57]

Subsequently, Evatt refused to meet Levin personally, but indicated through Abram Landa, adviser to the Australian delegation at the UN, that he could not go any further because he had consistently been on public record in favor of internationalization, and because of an election commitment and a decision by the cabinet, of which nine out of nineteen ministers were Catholics. He insisted that Israel could still get control of the area it wanted if his resolution was adopted.[58]

On 23 November Evatt urged the apostolic delegate in Sydney to express support, together with the Catholic hierarchy in Australia, for the Australian government's initiative at the UN. He complained that while the American Catholic hierarchy had

issued a statement approving the Australian approach to Jerusa-
lem, nothing was written about it in Australia. Copies of this
appeal were also sent to Cardinal Gilroy, Archbishop Mannix,
and Archbishop Duhig. Evatt also sent telegrams explaining the
Australian position to H.W. Moll, president of the Australian
Council for the World Council of Churches and other church
leaders.[59] In order to counteract these activities Levin met with
Bishop Pilcher, a well-known ardent supporter of Israel, who
consequently undertook to write to a number of his friends on
the Council of Churches and give them "the real facts of the
Jerusalem situation."[60]

On 3 December 1949 a rally of the Jewish citizens of Jerusa-
lem declared in a telegram sent to Sharett: "There is no power in
the world that will be able to impose foreign rule on our capital.
With blood and hunger we have redeemed Jerusalem, and we
shall not yield to this order...." The mayor of Jerusalem, Daniel
Auster, declared: "There will be no cooperation between us and
the representatives of the UN Trusteeship Council if they come
here. Jerusalem's 100,000 Jews are uncompromisingly opposed
to internationalization." Chief Rabbi B.Z. Uziel, prompted by
the gravity of the moment, appeared for the first time in a cinema
hall on the Sabbath, and said that only Israeli rule could be
established and accepted in Jerusalem."[61]

At the UN Abba Eban tried to persuade several heads of
delegations to vote against internationalization. He highlighted
the opposition by Jordan, the U.S. and the UK to it and warned
that any attempt to carry it out would "involve the disintegra-
tion of Jerusalem's institutional life, the collapse of its security,
the repudiation of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement, the
severing of the city's economic and financial arteries, and the
imposition of a regime of subjection to which its people, having
achieved their full independence, are opposed." He also warned
that the influence and prestige of the UN would suffer as a result
of "the adoption of a solution incapable of being imple-
mented...."[62]

In Australia, the Zionist Federation and several rabbis ex-
pressed their "deepest concern at UN Internationalization pro-
posals" to Prime Minister Chifley.[63] On the other hand, Sydney's
Catholic Weekly praised Australia's high-principled attitude,"
which the paper contrasted with "Jewish intransigence" and

British and American weakening in the face of Jewish pressure.[64]
A similar line was taken by the *Sydney Morning Herald*.[65]

On 9 December 1949 the UN General Assembly adopted the
Australian draft resolution to internationalize the whole city of
Jerusalem and Bethlehem by a majority of 38 to 14 with 7
abstentions. In favor were Australia, the Soviet bloc, Arab and
Muslim countries, some Latin American countries, and others.
Britain and the U.S. voted against on the grounds that it was
impractical. The fact that it was Australia which submitted the
proposal and last minute pressure by the Vatican, tipped the
balance in favor of internationalization.[66] In his analysis to the
Knesset on 3 January 1950 Sharett claimed that governments of
Catholic countries were placed in an impossible position by the
Australian draft resolution: "If Australia which is largely a
Protestant country well-known for its sympathy towards Israel
has taken this line, how can a Catholic country lag behind." He
insisted that without the Australian initiative it would be diffi-
cult to imagine the creation of such a variegated front as that
which finally gained so large a majority.[67]

The resolution had the opposite effect on Israeli policy than
intended by its supporters. Ben-Gurion's camp prevailed from
then onwards over the more moderate line of Sharett. It encour-
aged Israel to hasten the transfer of all government departments
to Jerusalem and to declare the city the capital of Israel, in the
hope that these accomplished facts would gradually lead to
world recognition of the changing state of affairs in Jerusalem.
The *Palestine Post* correspondent at the UN went as far as to
claim that "the Australian resolution might, in the long run, help
Israel....What if the more moderate Conciliation Commission
plan had passed instead, with the support of the US? Would
Israel not have then been in a more difficult position?"[68]

Evatt's success at the UN did not save the Labor Government
from defeat at the federal elections. According to Dalziel, "it
was doubtful whether Rome had influenced many electors to
vote Evatt's way."[69] A few days after the UN Resolution and the
ALP's defeat at the polls, the *Melbourne Herald* came out with the
prophetic headline, "Evatt's last act will be an embarrassment to
his successor."[70] Events which were to follow proved the paper
to be correct.

The Liberal-Country Party Government

In marked contrast with the ALP, the Liberal/Country parties, who won the 1949 federal elections, had been hostile to the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine in 1949, and criticized the Labor Government's activities at the UN in support of the partition of Palestine.[71] They also opposed the internationalization of Jerusalem, on the grounds of its impracticality. However, on coming to office a day after the UN General Assembly had passed the resolution, they found it extremely difficult to extricate themselves from it. On 12 December 1949 the *Melbourne Herald* presented the new government's dilemma in a colorful manner: "Dr. Evatt has left a grubby baby on the doorstep of his successor...whose care will be as embarrassing to its foster-parents as its antecedents should have been to its sire. The baby's name is 'International control of Jerusalem.'"

Israel's Reaction to the UN Resolution

Israel's reaction to the UN resolution was swift. On 13 December 1949 in the Knesset (Israeli parliament) Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion described the UN resolution as "utterly incapable of implementation — if only for the unalterable opposition of the inhabitants of Jerusalem themselves." He confirmed Israel's commitment to freedom of worship and free access to the holy places and willingness to safeguard existing rights in the holy places and religious institutions in Jerusalem, but he insisted that, "for the State of Israel there has always been and always will be one capital only — Jerusalem the eternal." Hence, as soon as the fighting stopped, Israel began transferring government offices to Jerusalem and created the conditions the capital needed.[72] The move of government departments to Jerusalem was accompanied on 23 January 1950 by the Knesset proclamation that "Jerusalem was and has always been the capital of Israel."[73]

On 11 January 1950 the Israeli legation in Sydney submitted an aide-memoire to the Australian government expressing its opposition to the internationalization of the Jewish area of Jerusalem with its 100,000 Jews, on grounds that it would cause

great upheaval and be potentially harmful to the safeguarding of the holy places. Instead, Israel proposed international control of the holy places alone, which were mainly located under Jordanian control in the Old City.[74] Israel also opposed the internationalization of Jerusalem on security grounds. It was concerned that such a scheme would deprive Israel of the military potential of 100,000 Jews and compromise the defense of Jerusalem, the Negev, Tel Aviv and the Plains.[75]

The status of Jerusalem was of great religious and national significance to Jews all over the world. The deputy mayor of Jerusalem told a rally of 6,000 Jews in Los Angeles that the UN "will enter the Holy City only over the dead bodies of 100,000 Israeli residents."[76] In a last-minute attempt to dissuade members of the UN Trusteeship Council from passing a detailed statute for the internationalization of Jerusalem, Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett on 31 March 1950 handed a note verbale to all heads of missions in Israel whose countries were members of the Trusteeship Council, including the first Australian minister of Israel, O.C.W. Fuhrman. Sharett warned of the grave consequences that might ensue from the adoption of the Jerusalem statute at the UN Trusteeship Council.[77] The note claimed that the internationalization of Jerusalem would disrupt Jerusalem's institutional life and place its population under an authoritarian regime against their choice. It would have a detrimental economic impact on the city and severely compromise its security by undermining the Armistice Agreements and creating renewed tensions involving the holy places themselves.[78]

At that time Israel was still hoping that the UN could be dissuaded from pursuing the idea of internationalization if its members could learn about the situation in the city firsthand. Therefore, on 3 April 1950 Sharett invited the Australian representative on the Trusteeship Council, John Hood, and other members of the Council to visit Jerusalem.[79] Australia rejected Israel's invitation on the dubious excuse that since Hood had visited Jerusalem in 1947 with the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), there was no point in such a visit.[80] In light of the fact that the situation in the divided Jerusalem in 1949 was totally different from that of 1947, when the British still ruled in Palestine, one suspects that the rejection was based on political reasons.

Israel's Reaction to Australia's Policy

At the end of December 1949 Israel conveyed its profound disappointment and hurt to Australia that Australia — a country with whom the Yishuv had developed very close relations since World War I and who had supported the establishment of the Jewish state — had submitted the draft resolution at the UN to internationalize Jerusalem.[81] The Israeli Department of Foreign Affairs was convinced that without Australia's last minute vigorous efforts, that resolution would not have even been placed on the UN agenda.[82]

As soon as Fuhrman arrived in Israel, Sharett and his staff pressured him to persuade his government to change its policy on Jerusalem. They told him that Israel was fully aware of Evatt's real motive and warned that Israel would ignore the UN resolution.[83] Sharett maintained that since Australia had been behind the impractical UN resolution, the new Australian government should support a more practical solution in line with the UK's policy, and consistent with the exercise of sovereignty of Israel and Jordan in Jerusalem.[84] When Levin met with the Australian secretary of the Department of External Affairs, Dr. John Burton, on 3 February 1950 he drew his attention to the great discrepancy between what Burton had told him in their earlier meeting on 17 November 1949 and Australia's "passionate championship of internationalization which they ultimately adopted." Burton was somewhat embarrassed and maintained that Evatt had kept him in the dark until the end. He himself was opposed to Evatt's policy and told the minister so. "It was damned silly. But there was a tough election fight on, and the Party was worried about its prospects."[85]

The Press

While many Australian newspapers were very critical of Evatt's initiative at the UN to internationalize Jerusalem, some criticized Israel for defying the UN. On 12 December 1949 the *Melbourne Herald* criticized the UN resolution as completely impractical in the face of opposition, not only by the parties involved — Israel and Jordan — but also by the U.S. and Britain.

The paper warned that the implementation of the resolution would inevitably endanger Western interests by opening the way to Soviet influence in Jerusalem. The *Bulletin* used a speech by the Australian head of mission in Japan, Hodgson, delivered on 6 January 1950, to attack Evatt's initiative to internationalize Jerusalem, describing it as a "U.N.O. farce." The paper accused Evatt of using Jerusalem as a trick to win the elections.[86] A similar criticism was levelled by the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 12 December 1949 which maintained that Australia "may be allotted more than her share of corporate responsibility if serious trouble arises." The *Adelaide Advertiser* also criticized Australia's initiative at the UN, but the *Hobart Mercury* praised the Assembly's solution, criticized Israel for defying the UN, and warned that "the Jews are determined eventually to gain possession of the whole city."[87] Similarly, the *Sydney Morning Herald* criticized Israel for "cocking a snook at the UN" not long after it had been admitted to that body.[88] Since the Statute of Jerusalem was before the Trusteeship Council, Levin attempted to mobilize the Australian press behind Israel's policy on Jerusalem. But he soon realized that there was no longer any interest in the matter.[89]

The Catholic Church in Australia

The Catholic Church in Australia, under instructions from the Vatican, played a crucial role in Evatt's decision to push through the UN resolution to internationalize Jerusalem in December 1949. When Israel and Jordan decided to ignore that resolution, the Catholic Church and press in Australia continued their campaign to bring Jerusalem under international control. The *Catholic Weekly* criticized the declaration of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, decrying it as a deliberate provocation to the Arab states, a challenge to UN authority, and a threat to world peace.[90] The *Catholic Weekly* limited its criticism to Israel while ignoring the fact that the great majority and most significant holy places were located in the Jordanian section of Jerusalem. Jordan, in contrast to Israel, completely rejected any form of international control over these shrines. The campaign by the *Catholic Weekly*, the Catholic Holy Name Society in NSW, and

some Catholic priests indicates that ignorance and more than a tinge of anti-Semitism had crept into the deliberations and activities of certain sections of the Catholic Church in Australia with regard to Jerusalem.[91]

On 9 February 1950 an emotive headline in the *Catholic Weekly* announced: "Room of the Last Supper is Closed by Jewish Order." The paper complained that the upper room of the Cenacle, hallowed to Christians because Christ is said to have instituted the Holy Eucharist there, had been closed by the Jewish authorities even to priests. A similar article was published by the *Advocate* on 23 February 1950.[92] This complaint was echoed in the Australian parliament on 22 March 1950 by S.M. Keon, the ALP Member for Yarra, Victoria, who criticized Israel for ignoring the UN resolution for the internationalization of Jerusalem and Minister of External Affairs P.C. Spender for avoiding the issue.[93] Consequently, Levin lodged a complaint with the *Advocate* about the inaccuracies of the paper's report. He explained that the Coenaculum, which was located right on the border between Israel and Jordan, was temporarily closed to everyone for security reasons and also to avoid possible clashes between Moslems and Christians. He added that on 20 February 1950 an exception was made after special security precautions had been adopted and a party of prominent Christian pilgrims visited the old Coenaculum.[94]

Levin's concern over Catholic influence in this matter was addressed by acting secretary of the Department of External Affairs Dr. Anstey Wynes who assured him that while Catholic representatives had approached Spender regarding Jerusalem, the minister was not especially sympathetic to Catholics.[95]

The Reverend B. Burgoyne Chapman

In sharp contrast to the Catholic press, Rev. B. Burgoyne Chapman, who had visited Jerusalem in September 1949, supported the Israeli position on Jerusalem. In an article in the *Australian Quarterly* in December 1949 he expressed his "personal shame as...a Christian Minister...for the traditional attitude of the Church," and described the Christian claims on Jerusalem as "an ecclesiastic-imperialist racket," and hypocriti-

cal in the light of the fact that the Jordanian Arab Legion
bombardment of the Jewish sections of Jerusalem in 1948 took
place under the supervision of Christian (British) officers.
Chapman denounced the indifference of the Christian world to
the complete destruction of the Jewish Quarter of the Old City,
including all of its synagogues and a number of churches and
convents, and the loss of Jewish life there. Chapman claimed
that during the battle over Jerusalem in 1948, "one destructive
Legion gun was located by Israel planes as mounted, for safety,
in the compound of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, but the
Jews chose to suffer rather than fire on it." He also sympathized
with Israel's concern that a demilitarization of Jerusalem would
expose the city to the Jordanian Arab Legion surrounding the
city. Chapman emphasized that the Jews themselves were ex-
cluded from their holy places located in the Old City under
Jordanian control. He warned that attempts to internationalize
the city could lead to a Muslim takeover of Jerusalem. They
would then exclude the Jews from the city and subject Christian
pilgrims to a levy for the right to visit their shrines. Chapman
insisted that according to Jesus and the Hebrew prophets, living
people were more sacred than stones and that the proponents of
internationalization were really concerned with vested prop-
erty, ecclesiastic interests, and power politics.[96]

Chapman wrote to Evatt and Spender about the question of
Jerusalem and enclosed his article on the subject. He also met
with the leader of the opposition, Ben Chifley, on 1 January 1950
to discuss the matter in detail. Although Chifley was prime
minister when Australia pushed through the UN resolution to
internationalize Jerusalem, he admitted to Chapman ("not for
publication") that following his deliberations with Kim Beazeley,
an ALP federal backbencher who specialized in international
affairs, he had come to the conclusion that "internationalization
just will not work." Although he himself was a Catholic, Chifley
admitted that the vote on internationalization had been put
through to appease the Vatican. He predicted that the idea
would fade away and advised Israel to ignore it.[97]

Jewish Organizations

The Zionist Federation of Australia, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, and all rabbis, in cooperation with Levin, took part in a campaign against the UN resolution to internationalize Jerusalem. A public mass rally was organized by the NSW State Zionist Council at the Sydney Town Hall on 18 December 1949. It was addressed by Levin who accused the UN of failing to carry out its responsibility with respect to the security of Jerusalem during the 1948 war, and leaving it to its fate. That enabled the Arabs to lay siege to the city and subject it to food and water shortages, devastating bombardments, and sniper fire. While the Jews of Jerusalem cried out desperately to the UN for help, all they got was the echo of endless debates and were left to themselves to fight it out or die. He concluded, "The Jews of Jerusalem will entrust their defence to none other than their own people. They will give their allegiance to no state, to no administration, but their own — the State of Israel." He repeated Israel's commitment to the principle of universal freedom of access to and international control of the holy places. Levin was supported at the rally by Bishop C.V. Pilcher and Rev. B. Burogyne Chapman who said that the churches throughout the world had maintained a criminal silence in those terrible months "when thousands of Jews in the Old City of Jerusalem were slaughtered." A similar rally was held in Melbourne and addressed by Israeli Consul Gabriel Doron.[98] In March 1950 Levin's book, *Jerusalem Embattled*, was published and reviewed in the *Australian Jewish News* in Melbourne. Levin's book is a personal diary of his life in the besieged Jerusalem of 1948.[99]

The Policy of the U.S. and UK

While Evatt acted in opposition to the UK and the U.S. on the question of Jerusalem, the new Australian government decided to work closely with them. The U.S. and the UK opposed the UN resolution of 9 December 1949, but once the resolution had been adopted they refused to recognize Israel's unilateral action in transferring the seat of government to Jerusalem. Accordingly, the UK instructed its minister to Israel, Sir Knox Helm, not to

visit Jewish Jerusalem and approached the U.S. State Depart-
ment in order to coordinate their action and mobilize the sup-
port of other friendly governments, including Australia, for that
purpose.[100] The UK also committed itself to endeavor, in the
Trusteeship Council, to see that the best possible statute for
Jerusalem was worked out and that the resolution was imple-
mented. At the same time the UK saw dangers in enforcement
action, such as through the Security Council, as possibly leading
to the overthrow of the Israeli government and its replacement
by one more opposed to an international statute for Jerusalem.[101]

Similarly, the U.S. gave specific warnings against any pre-
cipitate action on the part of Israel and maintained that it was the
duty of members of the UN to try to make the Assembly resolu-
tion work.[102] The U.S. Ambassador in Tel Aviv had also been
instructed to limit "unofficially" visits to Jerusalem to a mini-
mum and refrain from conducting official business there with
the Israeli government.[103] The U.S. was, however, in favor of a
solution which would combine a degree of international control
with local autonomy for both Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem.[104]
The Australian Department of External Affairs instructed
Fuhrman on 30 December 1949 to follow the British example and
refrain from visiting Jerusalem. Similarly, he was ordered not to
take any action "capable of being interpreted as acceptance of
the Israel government's unilateral action."[105] When the Statute of
Jerusalem was discussed at the Trusteeship Council, the UK
stated its belief that "the crucial question is not revision of the
draft statute, but its implementation....We can give no undertak-
ing that we are prepared to actively assist in the establishment
of a regime which is not acceptable to both major sections of the
population of Jerusalem." The UK warned against any action
"which might have the effect of disturbing the present tempo-
rary stability in Palestine or the placing of obstacles in the way
of achievement of a satisfactory final settlement between the
parties directly concerned."[106] On 9 January 1950 the UK in-
formed Australia that it would prefer the Trusteeship Council to
recommend "a reasonable alternative" to the existing resolution
on Jerusalem, "offering a satisfactory measure of international
supervision of the holy places throughout the Jerusalem area."
It stressed, however, that "any scheme involving special treat-
ment for the Old City only would be unacceptable to us."[107]

O.C.W. Fuhrman

Fuhrman went out of his way to be unusually friendly and informal with the Israelis, pretending that he was opposed to the instructions he was getting regarding Jerusalem — off the record, of course. At the same time he sent scathing reports about Israel and its leaders to Canberra. He relied heavily on the British for information. Despite his denying it, Fuhrman had a history of blatant anti-Semitism, in his position as Australian consul to Shanghai.[108] Fuhrman described Sharett's attitude to the question of Jerusalem as uncompromising and as serving no useful purpose. He reported to External Affairs that he had been warned by Helm that anyone who disagreed with Sharett or officials in his ministry was regarded as anti-Semitic and anti-Israel.[109] However, when Fuhrman discussed the question of Jerusalem with the chief-of-protocol in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Michael Simon, on 27 December 1949, he said, according to Simon: "I cannot really understand what has happened at the UN Assembly. I have never been an anti-Semitic (sic) and I came here quite open-minded; from day to day I become more pro-Israel. Speaking entirely off the record I hope I can ask you soon to reserve for me a suite at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem."[110]

Fuhrman reported in a secret cable to External Affairs on 28 December 1949 that the Israelis had told him, in unequivocal terms, that they would not carry out the UN decision, but refused to be drawn into discussing what Israel would do if a strong line were taken by the UN. He warned that if practical steps were taken to implement internationalization, Israel's resistance would stiffen. Fuhrman claimed that Israel's victory over the Arabs had produced in Israel "a national complex of superiority and arrogance, even intolerance, to any suggestion of external interference with the affairs of the State." He quoted Helm as having described the government of Israel as a virtual dictatorship, with Ben-Gurion and a small clique running the country. The move of the parliament and government departments to Jerusalem was generally unpopular, but it was Ben-Gurion's edict which none dare oppose.[111]

Despite Israel's vigorous opposition to the UN resolution and disappointment with Australia's role in pushing it through the General Assembly, Fuhrman was warmly welcomed by Israeli President Chaim Weizmann, and an editorial of the *Palestine Post* on 4 January 1950 was dedicated to the presentation of his credentials as the first Australian minister to Israel.

Weizmann expressed his confidence that the same measure of understanding and goodwill that had prevailed between Australia and the Yishuv would be achieved on questions which were still outstanding, including that of Jerusalem. As Weizmann's office was located on the outskirts of Tel Aviv, Fuhrman's apprehension about the possibility of having to present credentials in Jerusalem did not arise.[112]

Fuhrman managed to mislead the director of the British Commonwealth Division in the Israeli Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Michael Comay, to believe that he would be willing to influence the Australian prime minister, R.G. Menzies, to change Australia's policy on Jerusalem in Israel's favor.[113] Comay had the impression that "Friend Fuhrman doesn't give a damn one way or another on the merits [of the question of Jerusalem], but is annoyed at having to arrive in these circumstances, and is religiously transmitting home all the criticism [of the UN Resolution] in the Knesset or in the press."[114] Fuhrman, for his part, informed External Affairs of a "clumsy approach" by Comay immediately after he had presented his credentials. Comay had suggested that in order to extricate itself from an embarrassing situation, Australia should put forward some formula at the Trusteeship Council referring the whole issue back to the Assembly on the grounds that Israel would not cooperate.[115]

Fuhrman's ignorance and bias against Israel led to serious distortions in his reports. As a result of his false belief that it was Israel who controlled most of the holy places, he constructed a baseless theory about the supposed "dilemma" of the Jewish state in regard to the Christian shrines. "As Jews, they know that the Christian world would react sharply were they to interfere with Christian affairs. After centuries of life of sufference in Christian countries, they are now in the uneasy position of controlling by right of occupation, much of which is sacred to their former hosts."[116]

Professional Advice by External Affairs

The professional staff at the Australian Department of External Affairs opposed the UN resolution of 9 December 1949, on grounds that it was impractical in the face of opposition by Israel and Jordan. However, Dr. Evatt overruled that advice and Australia presented a draft resolution to the UN Assembly which called for the internationalization of Jerusalem.

Following the adoption of that resolution by the General Assembly the department warned that the implementation of internationalization would require the use of force or economic sanctions against Israel and Jordan. This was unrealistic because of U.S. and UK opposition to the UN resolution. The department also drew attention to the cost involved in establishing a UN regime in Jerusalem — $8 million. It recommended that "a further Special Session of the UN Assembly should be held to discuss ways and means for the implementation of the Statute, or for the purpose of determining some other course of action."[117] It also recommended that the minister review Australia's policy in consultations with the UK, the U.S., and New Zealand.[118]

The department's opposition to the UN decision was even aired in public on 6 January 1950 in a speech by the head of the Australian mission in Japan, W.R. Hodgson.[119] However, while opposing internationalization, the department recommended that Australian Minister Fuhrman be instructed to present his credentials and establish the Legation in Tel Aviv and not in Jerusalem.[120] Fuhrman himself was of a similar opinion — that if he were to present his credentials in Jerusalem, that "would ipso facto be condoning the Jewish claim to Jerusalem as the capital of the state and seat of the Israeli government."[121] The department was convinced that Israel's arrangements with Jordan would only be temporary and that Israel had every intention, in the long run, of controlling the whole of Jerusalem.[122] An External Affairs paper dated 2 February 1950 claimed that Israel's policy of making Jerusalem its capital was "only a first step in an eventual plan of obtaining control over the whole city and even enlarging their territory to the East."[123]

A detailed departmental paper dated 29 December 1949, which was adopted by Spender, maintained that the Trusteeship Council had received a clear direction from the Assembly to

prepare a Statute for Jerusalem as a *corpus separatum*, approve
that statute and then proceed immediately, as the administering
authority designated by the UN, to implement it. Therefore, any
change of Australia's policy would not be directly relevant to
the attitude which Hood should adopt at the Trusteeship Coun-
cil, since the question was governed by the Assembly's resolu-
tion. Therefore, Hood should cooperate in producing the best
possible statute. It emphasized that the UN resolution had been
supported by a cross section of UN members, including the
major Catholic countries, the Arab and Soviet groups, and from
the South East Asian area, India, Pakistan, Burma, China and the
Philippines. No South East Asian or Pacific country opposed the
resolution although both New Zealand and Thailand had ab-
stained. The paper also expressed concern that the UN's prestige
and authority would suffer as a result of defiance to its resolu-
tion to internationalize Jerusalem. It therefore recommended
that, "while it is true that the UN may eventually have to change
its decision, it is important that this should be done in a consti-
tutional way by the UN Assembly." The paper warned that,

> in the meantime, any sign of weakening by the powers which
> have previously supported the Assembly Resolution, may
> not only do harm to the UN but may encourage Israeli
> defiance. Complete capitulation to Israeli views would prob-
> ably make it all the more difficult to uphold UN authority in
> other matters remaining to be settled — e.g. the Arab
> refugees...and negotiations of final boundaries with Arab
> States.

The paper also advised against a public announcement of a
fundamental change in its policy, a few weeks after persuading
the General Assembly to endorse that policy, because that could
lead to criticism by governments which supported the resolu-
tion and by the Catholic Church. The paper recommended a
solution which would achieve the essential objectives of the
Christian, Arab and Jewish religions, and at the same time be
capable of implementation without the use of either sanctions or
force, and with the consent of Israel and Jordan.[124]

These recommendations were conveyed as official instruc-
tions to Hood on 5 January 1950.[125] The department admitted
that Australia had no autonomous interest in Jerusalem and that
its interest was "solely in ensuring as a member of the UN that
the future of the city is settled as soon as possible in a workable
fashion...." The department therefore instructed Hood to sup-
port the adoption of a statute and its reference to Israel and
Jordan, which would throw the onus of implementation directly
upon them and absolve the UN from non-implementation of the
Assembly Resolution.[126] On 28 March 1950 Fuhrman informed
External Affairs that Israel had requested that Australia abstain
at the Trusteeship Council on the Jerusalem Statute and assist in
the reopening of the whole question by the General Assembly.[127]

The New Australian Government's Policy on Jerusalem

A certain change in Australia's position became evident on
20 December 1949 when it abstained at the UN Trusteeship
Council on a resolution expressing concern at the moving of
certain ministries of the government of Israel to Jerusalem. The
Council described that action as being incompatible with the
Assembly resolution and as likely to render more difficult the
implementation of the Statute of Jerusalem.[128] It called on Israel
to revoke measures it had taken to move ministries and govern-
ment departments to Jerusalem.[129]

On 23 December 1949 when Levin met with Spender,
Australia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Spender professed his
ignorance on the question of Jerusalem and asked Levin to
clarify whether Jerusalem bordered on Israeli territory. Levin
drew a map of Jerusalem and Israel and Spender promised to
approach the matter with an open mind.[130] When they met again
in Sydney on 2 January 1950 Spender told Levin that had he been
in office in December 1949 when the resolution was adopted by
the UN, his attitude to the resolution would have been substan-
tially different from that of his predecessor. But now that it had
been adopted, the UN, and for that matter also Australia, which
had been in the forefront of the controversy, could not reverse
their stand without great loss of prestige. Levin maintained that
the UN had before it only two alternatives: either a complete

failure of its resolution, or a more "functional" approach, whereby
the holy places alone rather than the whole of Jerusalem and its
inhabitants would be internationalized. Spender, according to
Levin, was not prepared to commit himself but he did assure
Levin that if a solution which would not damage the UN could
be found, he would support it. Spender sought assurance that
Israel's claim was in respect of the new city only, and asked
Levin to point out on the map the location of the holy places and
the "corridor" linking Jerusalem to the rest of Israel.[131] On 30
March 1950 Australian Prime Minister R.G. Menzies directed
"that Australia approve [the] Statute and its transmission to
[the] parties for implementation as steps in the fulfillment of
[the] Assembly resolution."[132] On 4 April 1950 the Trusteeship
Council adopted a revised statute for the internationalization of
Jerusalem. It was adopted by a majority of nine votes (including
Australia) in favor, none against and two abstentions — the U.S.
and UK.

The Soviet Union did not participate in the voting nor in the
Council's deliberations. Australia, the U.S., Belgium, and the
Philippines offered a joint resolution to submit the text of the
statute to Israel and Jordan for their cooperation. This resolution
was adopted with only the UK abstaining. Proposals by Iraq and
Egypt to appoint a UN Governor of Jerusalem and its demilita-
rization were rejected.[133]

The implementation of the UN resolutions to international-
ize Jerusalem depended on the cooperation of the forces in
control of the city. In the absence of such cooperation, the only
way to carry out the resolutions was through force or economic
sanctions. However, that was not a realistic option in the face of
opposition to the resolutions by the major powers — the U.S. and
the UK. Perhaps the only positive consequence of the UN at-
tempts to bring the city under international control was the
realization by the Israeli and Jordanian governments that they
had to reach an agreement on normalizing life in Jerusalem and
provide a degree of access to the holy places. The beneficiaries
from these access arrangements were Christian pilgrims and the
diplomatic corps.

The new Australian government under Prime Minister
Menzies and Minister of External Affairs Spender was faced
with the difficult task of reconciling a policy which they inher-

ited from Evatt, and to which they were opposed, with their own wish to preserve the prestige of Australia and the UN. It is most likely that had Australia refrained from taking the initiative at the UN regarding the internationalization of Jerusalem in 1949, the whole issue would have been forgotten. However, the pressure exerted by a well-orchestrated campaign of the Catholic Church led Evatt to believe that many votes could be won by the ALP in rekindling that issue. The end result is that, to this day, the international community has not reached a consensus on the question of Jerusalem.

Notes

AA = Australian Archives, ACT Regional office.

ISA = Israel State Archives, Jerusalem.

CNOIA = Current Notes On International Affairs, Australia.

*   The author wishes to thank the staff of the Australian Archives in Canberra and their counterparts in the Israel State Archives (Ginzach Hamedina) in Jerusalem for their assistance.

1.   See, for example, "The Anzac Day Speech," by William Fisher, Australian Ambassador to Israel, 25 April 1992. I thank Ambassador Fisher and his staff for providing me with a copy of the speech.

2.   *Palestine Post*, 4 February 1941.

3.   AA:A981/1 Palestine 8, Part 1.

4.   AA:A981/1 Palestine 8, Part 4.

5.   W. Laqueur and B. Rubin, eds., *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict* (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books Australia, 1984), p. 56.

6.   Jewish Community of Palestine.

7.   18 August 1947, ISA:2270/1.

8.   CNOIA, vol. 18, no. 9, October 1947, pp. 577-585.

9.   ISA:2266/15.

10.   CNOIA, vol. 18, no. 10, November 1947, p. 681; *The Israel-Arab Reader*, pp. 108, 113-122.

11. J. Parkes, *The Story of Jerusalem* (London: The Cresset Press, 1950), pp. 28-31.

12. Cable no. 1025, AA:A1838/2 175/10/1, Part 1.

13. M. Sharett, *B'shaar Haumot: 1946-1949* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1958) (Hebrew), pp. 189-191.

14. Cable UN.297, Australian Delegation UN to External Affairs, 2 April 1948, AA:A1838 T23 191/1/3. Cable UN.343, 19 April 1948, *Ibid*. M. Comay to members of the Jewish Agency Executive, New York, 23 April 1948, State of Israel and World Zionist Organization, Political and Diplomatic Documents, December 1947-May 1948, Jerusalem 1979, document no. 407.

15. Cable UN. 377, AA:A1838 T23 191/1/3.

16. A. Eban, *An Autobiography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1978), pp. 112-113.

17. The representative of the Palestine Arab Higher Committee at the UN.

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43. Y.H. Levin, "Visit to Canberra, Minutes of Interviews at Department of External Affairs on August 17, 1949," ISA, 2582/12.

44. Y.H. Levin, "Visit to Canberra, August 23/24, 1949," ISA, 2582/ 12.

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49. AA:A1838/1 851/12/8, Part 1.

50. *Parliamentary Debates*, Representatives, vol. 204, pp. 1149-1150.

51. 3 November 1949, ISA, 2597/1. 34

52. Copy, *Gulgong Advertiser*, 19 October 1949, ISA, 2443/4.

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