

Prospects for the Future

In the early 1980s, OPEC members believed their problems were temporary. However, in recent years there have been major oil discoveries outside the Middle East. In 1988, the Soviet Union announced that an oil field near the Caspian Sea had been evaluated as one of the world's largest. In the same year, Brazil discovered the world's largest offshore oil field. This could make Brazil an oil exporter in the 1990s. Important new oil discoveries continue to be made in the North Sea. Continued improvements in the technology for locating and producing oil at ever greater ocean depths add to the prospects of large supplies of oil in the future.

This is good news for the United States and other nations who import oil. Since the United States now imports 50 percent of its oil, oil prices are of great concern to Americans. But as more oil is produced all over the world, Middle Eastern countries will no longer be able to use oil as a "weapon."

The Arab-Israeli Conflict: The Israeli Side

The Jewish Dream: A Homeland in Israel

The roots of the Jewish people in the Middle East are very ancient. When Moses led the Hebrews out of slavery in Egypt to find the "promised land," their history as a nation began. In 70 A.D. the Jewish state came to an end when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. Many Jews left Palestine and settled in other parts of the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe. But the Jews regarded Palestine (Israel) as their true homeland and prayed that they would one day return to their ancient land.

Anti-Semitism in Europe

Those Jews who settled in Europe often found life very difficult. In some countries Jews were able to participate in commerce, banking, and the professions. But in most countries restrictions were placed upon them. They were forbidden to own land, hold political office, or enter many professions. In many countries the Jews could only live in areas that were set aside for them, known as ghettos. In addition, they were forced to pay heavy taxes and even wear special garments to identify them as Jews. The main reason for this discrimination was that the Jews wanted to preserve their religion and traditions. They resisted efforts to convert them to Christianity. Also, the Jews were a minority in the Christian countries in which they lived. As a minority they became a convenient scapegoat (target) for whatever problems existed. During bad times, feeling against them reached such a pitch that they were tortured and massacred. The situation was particularly bad in Russia, where the Jews were ordered to live in ghettos in a specific region and could not move to the large cities. Periodically, there were *pogroms* in which hundreds of homes were looted and burned and many people were killed.

The Zionist Movement

Toward the end of the 19th century there was a great increase in antisemitism in Europe. Many Jews came to believe that the only solution was to have a land of their own. During the 1880s, some Jews left Russia to settle in Palestine, which was then part of the Ottoman Empire. In the 1890s, Theodore Herzl, an Austrian Jew, wrote a pamphlet called *The Jewish State*. This was the beginning of the Zionist movement. Zion is the name of one of the hills

in Jerusalem and it became the symbol for the land of Israel. A Zionist is a person who wishes to have a Jewish homeland in Israel. Zionist organizations were set up in many countries and money was raised. Small groups of Jewish pioneers began to settle in Palestine, where they were determined to create a new way of life. Land was purchased from the Turks and as more people came, towns and cities grew.

The British and Palestine

During World War I, the British Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour issued a document that has become known as the Balfour Declaration. This document stated that Britain would "view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people..." At the same time, however, the British made promises to Arab leaders about the future of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. At the end of the war, with the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, Palestine became a British mandate. This meant that Britain was to rule Palestine until it was ready for independence.

The Arabs Protest

As Jewish immigration increased, the Arabs living in Palestine began to fear that they would soon be outnumbered. They demanded an end to Jewish immigration and the creation of an independent Arab state in Palestine. Many times the Arabs expressed their resentment through violence, attacking Jewish settlements and killing the people.

World War II

In the 1930s, Hitler's persecution of the Jews speeded up the rate of Jewish immigration to Palestine. But just at the outbreak of World War II, in response to Arab violence, Britain severely limited this immigration. During the war, hundreds of thousands of Jews died in Nazi concentration camps. When it became known that the Nazis had killed 6 million Jews, Jewish leaders around the world began to demand the immediate establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. The Jews felt that only by having their own country could they avoid such catastrophes in the future.

A Jewish State Is Set Up

The British realized that they could not find a solution that would be acceptable to both Jews and Arabs. Therefore, they turned the matter over to the recently created United Nations. In November 1947, the United Nations voted to divide Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state. The Jews accepted this solution; the Arabs did not. In May 1948, the new state of Israel declared its independence. As the British withdrew their troops, armies from six neighboring Arab states attacked Israel. Although outnumbered and fighting with inferior military equipment, the new state of Israel proved to be more than a match for the Arabs, who failed in their effort to "drive the Jews into the sea."

Israel: A Modern, Western Democracy in the Middle East

Palestine was a barren wasteland of desert and swamps when the first Jewish settlers began to arrive in the 1880s. These early Zionists brought with them the talents and skills they learned in Europe. They drained the swamps, irrigated the deserts, and planted forests. Their hard work and technology caused the deserts to bloom. Agriculture thrived and a dairy industry developed. Today, Israel is an exporter of fruits and vegetables to Europe, the United States, and other areas.

After the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, hundreds of thousands of new immigrants arrived. Many of them were trained professionals and skilled workers. They turned to manufacturing, commerce, and trade. Their skills turned Israel into a modern, industrial state. Today, many people in Israel have a high standard of living. With the exception of the oil-rich Arab lands, Israel has the highest per capita income in the Middle East.

The Jews who settled in Israel also brought with them the ideas and ideals of Western democracy and culture. They set up a system of government that is a parliamentary democracy, similar to that of Great Britain. Freedom of speech, press, and assembly, as well as many other rights, are guaranteed and protected. In fact, Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East.

Israel, like the United States, is a nation of immigrants. Soon after its independence, Israel passed the "Law of Return." This stated that any Jew who wished to settle in Israel would automatically become a citizen. Jews from almost every country in the world have immigrated to Israel. These people came with different languages, customs, and cultures. It was necessary to integrate them, to make them part of the new country. Special classes were set up to teach the new immigrants Hebrew, the language of Israel. The public schools and the Israeli Army brought people of different backgrounds together. They succeeded in creating a new nation, a new people—the Israelis.

During the 1980s, almost 20,000 Ethiopian Jews immigrated to Israel and since the late 1980s, Israel has absorbed over 300,000 Soviet Jews.

Israel Protects Its Independence

The Arabs refused to accept the existence of the state of Israel. They engaged in many border attacks against Jewish settlements and in terrorist acts inside Israel.

In 1956, Israel and Egypt fought a brief war in the Suez Canal area. The war was in part caused by continued guerrilla attacks from Egypt against Israeli settlements. Israel invaded the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip where the guerrillas were based. The United Nations stepped in to stop the fighting and then set up a U.N. Emergency Force (UNEF) to patrol the frontier between Israel and Egypt.

Between 1956 and 1967, the UNEF succeeded in preventing serious problems along the border between Israel and Egypt. However, there were occasional raids into Israel from Jordan and major attacks from Syria.

"The Six-Day War"—June 1967

In May 1967, President Nasser of Egypt began moving large numbers of Egyptian troops and tanks into the Sinai Peninsula. He demanded that the UNEF peacekeeping force leave

Egyptian territory. Egypt then closed the Strait of Tiran, preventing ships from reaching Israel through the Gulf of Aqaba. At the same time, King Hussein of Jordan gave in to mounting pressure to join the Arab cause.

Israel decided it could not allow the Arabs to strike first and risk fighting a defensive war on three fronts. Consequently, on June 5, Israel launched a "preemptive attack." This means Israel decided to attack first, before its enemies could attack. Israeli planes hit Egypt's airfields, largely destroying the Egyptian Air Force. Mastery of the air enabled the Israeli army to go after the Egyptian ground forces. At the same time, the Israeli army was engaged in fighting the Syrians in the north and the Jordanians in the west. After six days of fighting, Israel won a decisive victory. The Israeli Army occupied large amounts of Arab territory—the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip belonging to Egypt, the Golan Heights of Syria and the West Bank which had been part of Jordan since Jordan annexed it in 1950. The Israelis also captured vast amounts of Soviet weapons and equipment from the Arabs.

The Six-Day War changed the map of the Middle East. It also created problems that exist to this day. Arab bitterness over Israel's victory was intense. Anti-Western feeling swept across the Arab world because of United States support for Israel. Soviet influence in the Middle East grew because the Soviet Union championed the Arab cause. After the war the Soviet Union rearmed the Egyptian, Syrian, and Iraqi armies.

After the 1967 war, there were frequent attacks along Israel's borders. Arab guerrillas entered Israeli territory, planted mines, and killed Israeli soldiers. Israeli troops retaliated.

In August 1970, a ceasefire between Israel and Egypt came into effect. For three years all was quiet along the Suez Canal, which separated the armies of the two countries.

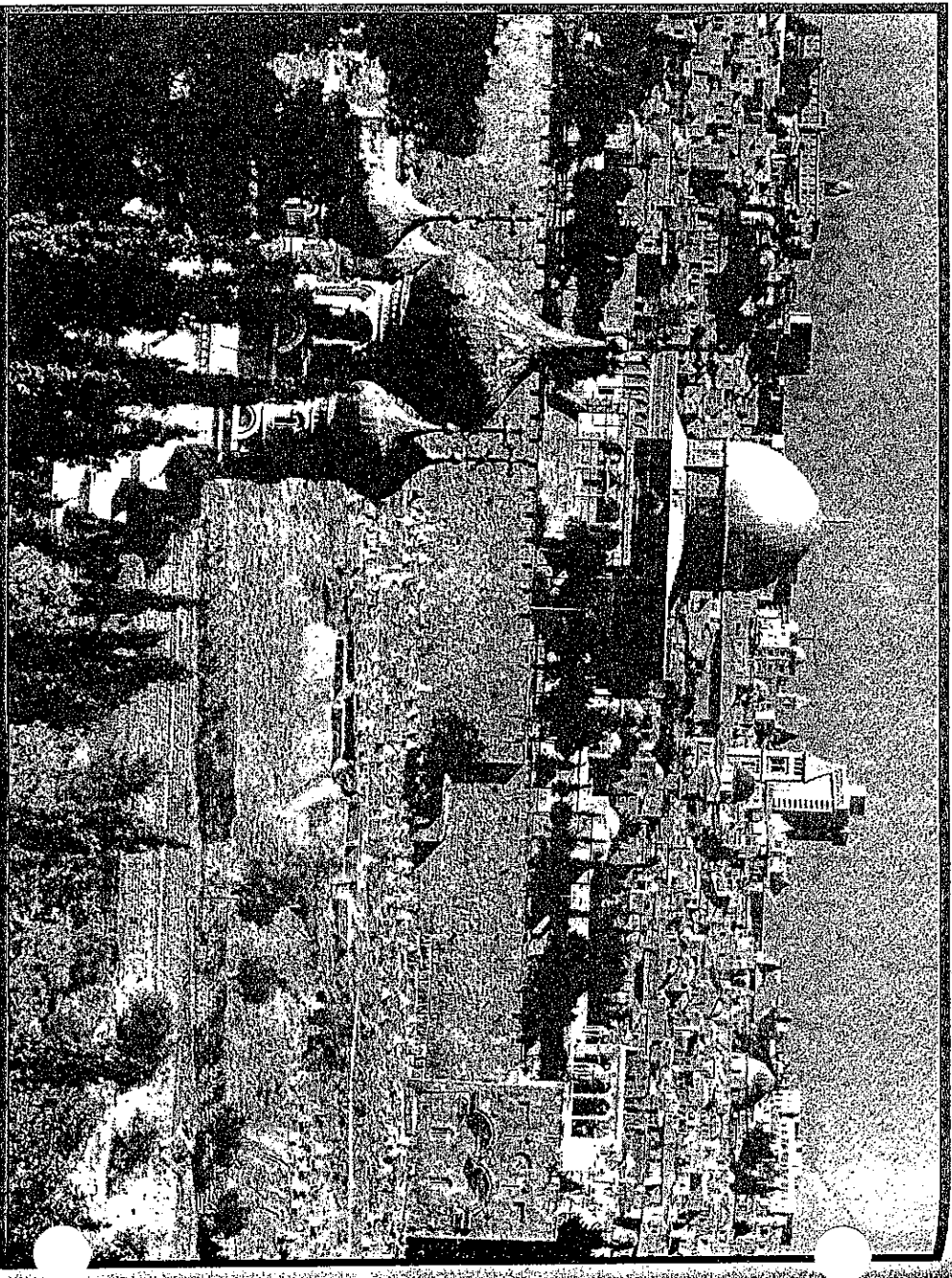
Jerusalem

Jerusalem is a city that is sacred to people of three religions: Jews, Christians, and Muslims. For Jews, it is the holiest of all places. The Western (Wailing) Wall is all that remains of the ancient Temple of Jerusalem. It is the holiest site in Judaism. The Jewish people have a deep emotional attachment to Jerusalem. They regard it as the cradle of their culture, their religion, and their nation. King David made Jerusalem the capital of ancient Israel.

During the war of 1948, Arabs and Jews battled for control of the city. As a result of the fighting, the Israelis gained control over West Jerusalem, also known as the New City, while Arab armies occupied East Jerusalem, known as the Old City.

An armistice agreement signed by Israel and Jordan in 1949 gave each side control over the area held by its armed forces. For the next 19 years Jerusalem remained a divided city. Part of the city was Israeli and part was Jordanian—a wall and barbed wire separated the two sides. In December 1949, the Israeli government voted to make West Jerusalem the capital of Israel. For 19 years the government of Jordan did not allow Jews to enter East Jerusalem and visit the sacred sites there.

This situation was changed by the "Six-Day War," during which the Israelis captured the Old City. The Israeli government acted quickly to make East Jerusalem a permanent part of Israel. On June 27, Israel's Parliament voted to annex East Jerusalem. Soon after, a program of construction and resettlement was begun. The Israelis built new housing developments, commercial centers, and government and university buildings. Jews were resettled in and around the Old City.



Jerusalem, a city with history important to three religions: Christianity, Judaism, Islam.

~~At the same time, Israel promised that the religious rights of all people would be preserved. The government passed the "Protection of the Holy Places Law." This law stated that Israel would safeguard the holy places of all religions; that Christians and Muslims would have freedom of access to their Holy Places; and that each group would administer its own shrines.~~

~~Since 1967, Israel has insisted that the question of Jerusalem is different from that of the other occupied territories, that Jerusalem is not negotiable, and that it will never give up any part of Jerusalem.~~

The Arab-Israeli Conflict: The Arab Side

The Arabs see Israel as a foreign nation situated in the heart of the Arab world. They consider it a great injustice that people with an alien language, culture, and religion have taken over land that the Arabs regard as theirs. The area that is now Israel they call P

time. The Arabs claim that for centuries Arabs lived in Palestine and, therefore, Palestine should be an Arab state.

As you read, during World-War I, Great Britain made many conflicting promises regarding the Middle East. It promised the Arabs independence in the Arab lands that belonged to the Ottoman Empire. It issued the Balfour Declaration, saying it would view with favor a Jewish national home in Palestine. At the same time Britain and France made secret agreements to divide the Middle East into "spheres of influence"—areas that each one would dominate.

For a short time after the Balfour Declaration was issued, some important Arab leaders expressed their support for Jewish settlement in Palestine. Sherif Hussein, the chief spokesman for the Arabs at that time, called on the Arabs in Palestine to welcome the Jews as brothers and to cooperate with them for their common welfare. His son, the Amir Feisal, met with Jewish leaders in London and told them, "No true Arab can be suspicious or afraid of Jewish nationalism." In 1919, Feisal and Dr. Chaim Weizman, leader of the World Zionist Organization, signed a document assuring the Jews of their right to free immigration into Palestine and to settle on the land. Feisal came to the Paris Peace Conference in February 1919 to demand independence for the Arabs. He agreed that Palestine should be considered separately from the other Arab lands since this was the area set aside for the Jews.

Arab Opposition to a Jewish National Home

By the middle of 1919, Arab nationalism was growing throughout the Middle East. The Arabs saw their hopes for independence frustrated by Britain and France and felt betrayed. At the same time Palestinian Arab nationalism was slowly developing. The Arabs claimed that British promises for Arab independence included Palestine. Arab opposition to Zionism increased.

In 1919, Arab nationalists met and issued a statement opposing the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine and opposing "Zionist migration to any part of our country."

The Arabs felt that Jewish immigration had been forced on them without their consent. They were afraid that if this immigration continued, they would end up living as a minority under Jewish rule. The Arabs also feared that the Jews would dominate Palestine and that their own culture would become subordinate and eventually disappear. In addition, the Arabs regarded Zionism as another form of Western imperialism that they had to fight to protect their heritage.

The 1920s

Arab opposition to a Jewish homeland expressed itself in constant unrest in Palestine. During 1919, there were anti-Zionist demonstrations and riots. In 1920 and 1921, Arabs attacked a number of Jewish settlements, killing many Jews. Rioting in Jerusalem and in Jaffa resulted in many deaths. The Palestine Arab Congress met in 1920 and in 1921 and called on Britain to put an end to the policy of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. The Arabs demanded: (1) an end to Jewish immigration into Palestine; (2) an end to Jewish land purchases; and (3) full Arab self-government in Palestine. Arab unrest in Palestine continued throughout the 1920s.

The 1930s

In the 1930s, Palestine nationalists began a guerrilla war against the British and the Jews. In April 1936, the nationalists called a general strike. Its purpose was to force Britain to end Jewish immigration and land purchases and to grant the Palestine Arabs self-govern-

ment. The strike turned into open rebellion and bands of armed guerrillas were organized. The guerrillas received active support from the neighboring Arab countries. "Committees for the Defense of Palestine" sprang up in Syria, Egypt, Iraq, and Transjordan and Iraqi volunteers arrived in Palestine. Before 1936, the other Arab countries had not been very involved in the Palestine dispute. During the 1936 revolt, interest in the Palestine problem was awakened. Support for the nationalists in Palestine grew steadily.

After 1936, Arab nationalists also received material and moral support from Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. The Nazis and Fascists spread anti-Jewish propaganda throughout the Middle East. They also tried to use the anti-British feeling for their own purposes.

By November 1936, Britain succeeded in putting down the rebellion. The British Government appointed a Royal Commission to study the Palestine problem. In 1937, the Commission recommended the partition (division) of Palestine into a Jewish State, and Arab State, and a British zone. The Arabs rejected the partition of Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish state.

The Arab revolt was resumed in the fall of 1937. Arab acts of terrorism grew in number during 1938 and 1939. At the same time Britain was facing an increasing danger of war in Europe. The British felt that their security would be endangered if the violence in the Middle East continued. Thus they gave in to Arab demands. Britain dropped the idea of partition.

White Paper

In 1939, Britain issued a "White Paper," which severely limited Jewish immigration to Palestine for the following five years. After that, Jewish immigration would depend on Arab consent. A well-known historian claims "these events taught the lesson that the use of violence as a political weapon produced results which otherwise appeared unobtainable."¹

The Problem of the Palestinians

The Palestinian Refugees

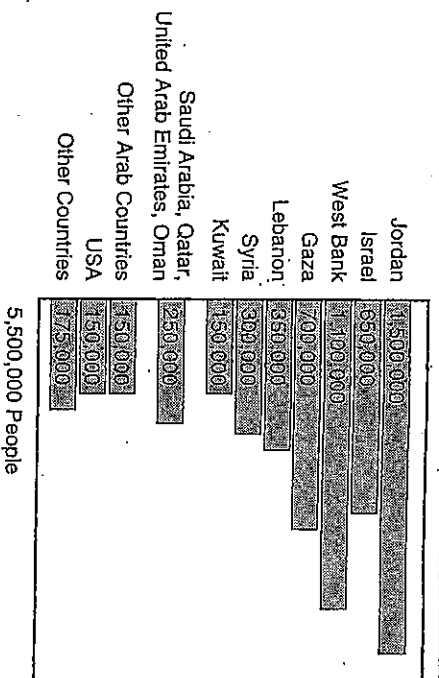
As you read, when the state of Israel was declared in May 1948, it was attacked by armies from six Arab countries. As a result of the war, approximately 725,000 Arabs who had lived in Palestine (Israel) before the war fled to the neighboring Arab countries. These people came to be known as the Palestinian refugees. The Arabs claim that the Palestinians were forced out by the Israelis. Israel claims that the Palestinians were encouraged to leave by Arab leaders who promised them that they would soon return after Israel had been destroyed.

The Palestinians became a people without a country. Israel refused to take the refugees back, claiming their presence would endanger the survival of Israel. The Arab countries, in which the Palestinians found themselves, treated them as second-class citizens. In Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, the Palestinians lived in refugee camps under miserable conditions. The United Nations ran the camps and provided for the basic needs of the refugees—food, medicine, clothing, housing, and education. The Arab countries used the refugees as a political weapon against Israel. The anger and frustration felt by the Palestinians was intense. Many Palestinians became guerrillas. Encouraged by Arab leaders, they took part in bloody raids inside Israel from their bases in Egypt, Syria, and Jordan.

¹J.C. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine*.

Today there are an estimated 5,500,000 Palestinians. This number includes the Arabs who live in Israel, the Arabs of the West Bank and Gaza Strip that Israel occupied in 1967, and the Palestinian Arabs who live in neighboring Arab countries.

THE PALESTINIAN POPULATION



Source: N.Y. Times Magazine May, 1991

Formation of the PLO

Between 1948 and 1964, the Palestinians were leaderless and unorganized. Their cause was argued for them by others. The Arab states took the lead in fighting against Israel while the Palestinians played a passive role. This situation changed after the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was formed in 1964. The PLO is an "umbrella organization" with which various Palestinian groups are associated. The largest of these is al-Fatah, organized in 1959 as a secret organization by Yasir Arafat. Others are the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and Black September.

The goal of these organizations is the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. The PLO has tried to achieve this goal through terrorism and armed struggle. "Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine." For this reason the PLO has trained and organized guerrillas to carry out terrorist acts against Israel. The PLO has also publicized the cause of the Palestinians worldwide in order to receive international support for the creation of a Palestinian state. In 1969, Yasir Arafat was named chairman of the PLO. Since 1973, Arafat has called for the acceptance of the PLO as a government-in-exile.

Jordan and the PLO

Jordan has a larger Palestinian population than any other Arab country. Approximately 70 percent of Jordan's 2,500,000 people are Palestinian. Jordan (Transjordan) was created as a country by the British in 1920 out of territory that had been Palestine. At that time most of its population was Bedouin. However, during the war of 1948 over 300,000 Arabs from Palestine fled to Jordan. In 1950, Jordan annexed the West Bank and East Jerusalem bringing hundreds of thousands more Palestinians under Jordanian rule. When Israel captured the West Bank in 1967, another 380,000 Palestinians moved to Jordan.

The PLO found it easy to recruit, train, and arm guerrillas in the refugee camps in Jordan. During the 1960s, the PLO used Jordan as a base of operations against Israel. Palestinian guerrillas crossed the border into Israel, killing civilians and soldiers and destroying property. Armed clashes along the border were frequent. By 1970, the guerrillas in Jordan

had become so powerful that they were practically a state within a state. The PLO openly challenged the authority of King Hussein. This led to a brief but bloody civil war between the government and the guerrillas. Other clashes between the PLO and the Jordanian army also occurred in 1970.

In January 1971, fighting again broke out between the Palestinian guerrillas and the Jordanian Army and continued during the next few months. In July, the Jordanian Army began a major operation against the guerrilla strongholds. Within weeks the PLO strongholds were destroyed and the guerrilla movement was crushed. The struggle came to an end with the expulsion of the guerrillas from Jordan in July 1971. Although the other Arab governments protested, they failed to intervene on the side of the Palestinians. King Hussein was firmly in power.

The Palestinian guerrillas bitterly resented the actions of the Jordanian government. They referred to the events of September 1970 as "Black September." Several attempts were made to assassinate government leaders. In November 1971, the Prime Minister of Jordan was shot and killed in Cairo. An unsuccessful attempt was made on the life of the Jordanian ambassador in London. In February 1973, a group of Palestinian guerrillas was arrested after entering Jordan from Syria with a plot to overthrow the government.

The PLO in Lebanon

After the Palestinian guerrillas were crushed in Jordan in 1970-71, Lebanon became their last refuge. Beirut became the headquarters of their movement. By 1973, 10 percent of the people in Lebanon were Palestinian. The Palestinians, who were landless, poor, and exploited as a source of cheap labor, soon became more militant. They acquired armaments and used the refugee camps to train guerrillas. As the Palestinian guerrillas grew stronger, other radical groups in Lebanon sought them out as allies. During the Lebanese civil war, which began in 1975, the Palestinians became heavily involved in the fighting. (The civil war in Lebanon will be discussed later.)

The Lebanese government made repeated attempts to bring the Palestinians in Lebanon under its control but was unsuccessful. The Palestinians used southern Lebanon to shell Israeli border settlements with Soviet-made rockets and artillery fire. They also crossed the border into Israel and engaged in terrorist activities. Each attack led to Israeli retaliation. Israeli planes bombed refugee camps in southern Lebanon that Israel claimed were being used as guerrilla bases.

During the next few years the PLO and Israel continued the cycle of attacks and counterattacks.

By the early 1980s, the Palestinian guerrillas in Lebanon had become so powerful that they were practically a state within a state. It was a situation similar to that which had existed in Jordan a decade earlier. The guerrillas had accumulated an enormous arsenal of weapons supplied in large part by the Soviet Union and paid for by Saudi Arabia and some of the other Arab states. The government of Lebanon was unable to control their activities.

In June 1982, Israeli troops invaded Lebanon. Israeli leaders felt it was necessary to destroy the PLO arms buildup that they regarded as a grave threat to Israel's security. Israeli troops captured town after town, while Israeli tanks and fighter planes bombed Palestinian camps in an attempt to wipe out all the guerrilla bases in southern Lebanon. Israel's stated goal was to create a 25-mile zone in southern Lebanon that would be free of Palestinian guerrillas. But it was believed that Israel hoped to completely destroy the PLO.

The Israeli

Invasion—June 1982

Israeli troops blockaded West Beirut and bombed Palestinian targets in the city. The Israelis stated that the bombardment of Beirut would not cease until the PLO removed its fighters from the city. Finding themselves trapped, the PLO had no choice but to give in. The United States helped Israel and the PLO reach an agreement providing for the evacuation of the guerrillas. In late August, approximately 6,000 PLO fighters and their leaders left Beirut to seek refuge in other Arab countries. The PLO had suffered a devastating military defeat.

The Massacre at Sabra and Shatila

In August 1982, Bashir Gemayel, leader of the Christian Phalange Party, was elected President of Lebanon. Gemayel was killed on September 14 when a bomb exploded. It was not clear who was responsible for the killing, since Gemayel had many enemies. However, the Lebanese Christians and Palestinians were long-standing enemies.

On September 16, Lebanese Christian militiamen entered the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila in West Beirut. They were to round up remaining Palestinian guerrillas and arms believed to have been hidden among the refugees. For the next two days the militiamen went on a rampage, brutally killing hundreds of Palestinian men, women, and children.

Israeli troops were accused of allowing the militiamen into the camps and of not intervening soon enough to stop the killings. The government of Israel appointed a commission to investigate the massacre. Its report found several Israeli generals indirectly responsible through negligence or lack of forethought. The report stated that they should have foreseen that the Christian Lebanese forces who were sent into the camps "to flush out remaining terrorists" might exact vengeance on the population after the assassination of President-elect Gemayel.

The PLO Receives Recognition

During the 1970s, the PLO made a great effort to win international support of the Palestinian cause. It also tried to win recognition for the PLO as the only representative of the Palestinian people. These efforts met with a great deal of success.

The PLO and the United Nations

In September 1974, the United Nations General Assembly for the first time included the "Palestine question" on its agenda as a subject for debate. It invited the PLO to take part in that debate. In November 1974, Yasir Arafat appeared before the General Assembly and demanded the establishment of a Palestinian state. The PLO became the first non-government organization to address a session of the General Assembly.

For a number of years there was a question of who would speak for the Palestinians in any future peace talks. King Hussein and Yasir Arafat each claimed to speak in their name.

In October 1974, an Arab summit meeting was held in Rabat, Morocco. There a resolution was signed by the leaders of all the Arab states naming the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and affirming their right to an independent Palestinian state. King Hussein, under pressure from all the other Arab leaders, signed the resolution.

The PLO and Other Governments

The PLO made steady progress in gaining acceptance by other governments. In October 1974, Arafat met with the Foreign Minister of France. This was the first meeting of a Western leader with Arafat. Later that year Arafat paid official visits to several Communist countries in Eastern Europe. In 1979, Arafat held meetings with Austrian and German leaders

He also visited Spain and Portugal. After the revolution in Iran in 1979 brought the Ayatollah Khomeini to power, Iran became an important supporter of the PLO. Israel, however, has refused to have any dealings with the PLO. Israel claims that the PLO is a terrorist organization and, therefore, refuses to negotiate with it.

The United States and the PLO

Between 1975 and 1988, the United States followed a policy of refusing to talk to or have any dealings with the PLO. This was because of the PLO's involvement in international terrorism and its refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist. But as more nations came to accept the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, there was pressure on the United State to do the same. The U.S. government insisted that it would not talk to the PLO until it officially renounced terrorism in all its forms and accepted the right of Israel to exist in peace and security with its neighbors. Although the PLO was anxious to open talks with the Americans, time and again Arafat and the PLO leadership failed to meet the American conditions.

In 1988, Arafat addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations and called for peace and a just settlement in the Middle East. He also called for a UN-sponsored peace conference. Arafat indicated that the PLO renounced terrorism and recognized Israel's right to exist.

The United States immediately announced that it would open talks with the PLO. Two days later, American and PLO officials met in Tunisia. The American decision was a victory for Arafat and the PLO. It won praise from Arab governments but was criticized by the Israeli government which called it a "dangerous blunder." However, the United States broke off its dialogue with the PLO in June 1990 after Palestinian terrorists tried unsuccessfully to land on a beach in Israel. The United States demanded that Arafat condemn the terrorists. When he refused, the United States broke off relations.

The Intifada

Causes of the Uprising

The term *intifada* refers to the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip that began in December, 1987 and continued into the 1990s. A road accident in Gaza on December 8th in which four Arabs were killed by an Israeli driver triggered the uprising. The underlying cause, however, was Palestinian frustration over the failure to achieve their goals. After 25 years their hopes for an independent Palestinian state seemed no closer.

Within hours of the accident, rioting broke out in Gaza and spread to the West Bank. Thousands of Palestinians, mainly youths, marched through the streets throwing rocks and fire bombs at Israeli soldiers, smashing windows, overturning vehicles, and setting tires on fire on the roads. In East Jerusalem, mobs of Palestinian youths also rioted in the streets.

Israel's Response

The Israeli government, army, and police were surprised by the outbreak and were unprepared for it. Young Israeli soldiers, untrained in riot-control, were sent to contain the rioting. Israeli soldiers responded with force, using tear gas, rubber bullets, and beatings to control the rioters. They shot into crowds. Suspected leaders and agitators were arrested and some were deported. Some Arab newspapers and many Arab schools were closed by the government.

Despite these measures, the Israeli army was unable to crush the revolt. Violence continued throughout 1988 and even increased in 1989. By the end of 1989 more than 600 Palestinians has been killed and thousands injured. Thousands more were in Israeli detention camps. During 1990 the rioting quieted down somewhat, but there were occasional violent eruptions.

Hamas and Other Terrorist Groups

Since the beginning of the intifada, a number of Islamic terrorist groups have emerged in the occupied territories, each claiming to represent the Palestinian people. Their violence is directed at Israelis as well as Palestinians. The most powerful and feared of these groups is the Islamic Resistance Movement, also known as *Hamas*, which means zeal in Arabic. Hamas has won over many young Palestinians who are disillusioned with the PLO's failure to achieve its goals.

Hamas is violently opposed to any compromise with Israel. It calls for an Islamic state in both Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. It insists that "there is no solution to the Palestinian problem except for Holy War." Preaching violence, Hamas incites Palestinians to attack Israelis and Israeli targets. Hamas and the other groups are also responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Arabs suspected of cooperating with the Israelis.

Effect of the Intifada

The intifada has affected Israel in a number of ways. Almost every Israeli family has a son or husband who has been called up for military service in the West Bank and Gaza. They have experienced fear and anxiety. The Israeli economy has suffered some damage. The effect of the uprising on the Palestinians has been disastrous. Normal, everyday life has come to a stop. Many schools are still closed, stores open only a few hours a day, and the curfews force people to stay indoors after dark. The Palestinian economy has suffered greatly. Businesses have lost money because of the curfews and strikes. Many Palestinians who used to work in Israel have lost their jobs because they are regarded as dangerous. This has increased unemployment in the West Bank and Gaza.

The Palestinians, Kuwait, and the Gulf War

Before Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait in August 1990, more than 300,000 Palestinians lived in Kuwait. Many of them were professionals—doctors, engineers, accountants, teachers. Many held vital jobs in oil, banking, and other industries. Others were workers who kept the economy of Kuwait running. The Palestinians in Kuwait were the wealthiest in the Middle East. Many sent money to their families in the West Bank and Gaza and this greatly helped the Palestinian economy.

The Kuwaiti people and government supported the Palestinian cause and the PLO. The Kuwaiti government provided the PLO with hundreds of millions of dollars. Many of the founders of the PLO including Yasir Arafat lived in Kuwait in the late 1950s where they planned and organized their revolutionary strategy.

All this changed with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The PLO, Yasir Arafat, and most Palestinians openly sided with Iraq because Saddam Hussein promised to destroy Israel and create an independent Palestinian state. The Palestinians saw Saddam as their liberator. Many Palestinians in Kuwait collaborated with the Iraqi army. They provided the Iraqi with information that was used to arrest, torture, and kill Kuwaitis.

Iraq's defeat in the Gulf War was a terrible blow for the Palestinians. They paid dearly for backing Saddam Hussein. More than 200,000 Palestinians fled from Kuwait and the were forbidden to return. Many Palestinians still living in Kuwait are unemployed and some fear for their lives. After the war, the Kuwaiti people were very angry with the Palestinians for siding with Iraq. Some Palestinians were stopped on the streets and beaten up. Palestinians suspected of collaborating with the Iraqis were arrested and tortured. Kuwait courts tried accused collaborators and gave out severe penalties, including the death penalty. The government took away many of the social services the Palestinians previously

had, such as free medical care and education. The Kuwaiti government replaced the Palestinians with workers from India, Pakistan, the Philippines, and other countries.

Many of the Palestinians in Kuwait would like to leave but they have no place to go. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Persian Gulf states have refused to admit them. They are unwelcome in Jordan, which took in 200,000 Palestinian refugees during the Gulf crisis. The PLO lost more than \$250 million a year in financial assistance that it formerly received from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the other Gulf states.

Life for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza worsened during the war. Fearing a real threat to Israeli security, the government clamped down on the Palestinians. The West Bank and Gaza were placed under 24-hour curfew that lasted the entire war. Palestinians could not leave their homes except to buy food and medicine. Palestinians from the territories were forbidden to travel in Israel. Because of the curfew and travel ban, most of the 120,000 Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank who worked in Israel lost their jobs. The Palestinian economy, already crippled by the three-and-a-half year intifada, was devastated.

Palestinian support for the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait undermined their cause and lost them world support. Moreover, the war deepened the feelings of hopelessness and despair of the Palestinians.