

**Archbishop Runcie Lecture to US Graduate Theological Foundation
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Holy Land - Whose Land?

I have chosen this subject for my lecture firstly because I love the Holy Land and am concerned and distressed by the situation in which it lies. Secondly, it is a classic example of a tragic situation, comparable to a Greek tragedy, where the characters find themselves the victims of history and of evil forces outside themselves from which they are unable to free themselves. The characters themselves are not faultless, but the effect of these faults is magnified a hundred times by their strategic position on the checkerboard of history. The similarity to a Greek tragedy continues, in that I, for one, can see no solution other than the massive one of a change in character, the change from looking backwards in revenge to looking forwards in forgiveness. A third reason for interest in the question is the basis in international justice: what establishes the right to a land? Is there any validity in the claim (often made by atheists!) that God promised the land of Israel to Abraham, from Dan to Beersheba, or in the claim (totally at variance with history) that the Jews have 'always' lived in the Land? Lastly, the causes of the impasse lie largely in the muddled theology of anti-Semitism, showing the need for a lucid theology such as the US GTF fosters.

1. Judaism before Zionism (-1897)

The creation of the State of Israel, and the Zionist movement which culminated in this, can be understood only against the background of European and Christian anti-Semitism. A mere glance at medieval history shows that it is shot through with anti-Semitism, accusations of drinking the blood of children, pogroms against the Jews in various nations culminating in the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal in 1492. The tragedy is already at work: the religious texture of European society debarred Jews from normal life and society; the international network of family relationship and the prohibition in the Jewish Law of lending to Jews at interest provided the perfect alternative of banking and financial services before these gained their contemporary respectability; this in turn fed the unpopularity engendered by separatism, which in turn made the Jews more defensive and harder, increasing their competitiveness and need to live on their wits. Bringing this unpopularity to fever-pitch was an important preliminary for any authorities who wanted to plunder Jewish wealth, often under cover of spurious theological arguments.

In English literature these attitudes are amply expressed in those two well-known characters Shylock of *The Merchant of Venice* and Fagan of *Oliver Twist*. Particularly in Victorian literature the Jew is a stock figure with stock properties. My own great-grandfather was the London lawyer on whom Mr Jagger in *Great Expectations* is built, the tricky Jewish lawyer who knew all the secrets of society, and - as his friend Oscar Wilde said - enough to hang half of us. Another example which shows perfectly the Victorian attitude is the Jewish waif in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, whose goodness and gentleness draws all its interest from being paradoxical in a Jewess. Indeed, the very word 'Jewess' has an injurious ring to it, so that it is politically correct to avoid expressions such as 'the Jews' in favour of 'the Jewish people', which is somehow felt to be less hostile.

The career of Sir Moses Montefiore (1784-1885) provides striking examples of the wide spread of anti-Semitic feeling. This prosperous London Jewish banker spent his whole life using his

influence as a prominent member of society in combatting anti-Semitism in a bewildering variety of countries. In 1836 he made his first visit to Jerusalem, and subsequently was responsible for an important survey of the Jews of Palestine, establishing a figure of 6,000 Jews living at that time in the Holy Land, in a state of depression, mostly in Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed and Tiberias. Howard Secker (*A History of Israel*, 1977, p. 24) describes them as ‘an inanimate community, parochial and inbred, almost entirely mendicant, living in a paralysed dreamworld of ancient myths and brooding memories’. Montefiore endeavoured to liven the inanimate community by various helpful donations. In 1842 he sent the first printing press to be used in Jerusalem. In 1854 he established a textile workshop, and in 1857 he had built a windmill which would provide inexpensive flour for the poor - a windmill which is still a feature of the Jerusalem skyline, though the cottages alongside it have now become highly select and expensive artistic studios. His next intervention was in Damascus, then part of the Ottoman Empire, where he sprang to the defence of some Jews who had been accused of ritual murder, successfully securing their release. Five years later he moved on to Russia, where he successfully persuaded the Czar Nicholas to rescind an order forbidding Jews from living within 40 versts of the German and Austrian frontiers. In 1858 he was less successful in the case of well-known Edgar Mortara of Bologna: this Jewish child had been secretly baptised by his Catholic nanny, and was subsequently removed from his Jewish family by the papal police to be brought up as a Catholic. This injustice, not surprisingly, spread fear among the Jews of Italy, but the pope, Pio Nono, refused to discuss the matter with Montefiore (Mortara subsequently became a Catholic priest). Montefiore still had two international interventions to make, one in Morocco, to quiet anti-Semitic riots in Tangiers, and another in Bucharest, where his hotel was besieged by rioting crowds. This is enough to show that active anti-Semitism was a widespread phenomenon.

It was, however, at the end of the century that the threatening atmosphere deepened, in the east with the Russian pogroms of 1882, and in the west with the Dreyfus affair. Captain Dreyfus, a French Jewish army officer seconded to the Ministry of Defence, was accused and in 1894 condemned to life imprisonment on the notorious Devil’s Island. This affair dominated French politics for a decade, and is a perfect example of the way matters Jewish subserved other interests. French society was split between Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards, in which the unfortunate officer was merely a pawn. The Dreyfusards (such as Emile Zola, with his celebrated pamphlet, *J’accuse!*) were the champions of individual liberty, while the anti-Dreyfusards championed the cause of the older order of traditional military values. One highly significant factor in this affair was that the trial was covered by a journalist named Theodor Herzl, subsequently to become one of the moving spirits in the creation of Zionism and the revival of the Hebrew language.

Accordingly, the first Zionist Congress took place in Basel in 1897. There were 197 delegates, of whom 4 were from Palestine. Its connection with the preceding series of threatening events is seen in its expressed purpose, ‘to lay a foundation for the home which will give the Jewish nation a shelter’. The means of achieving this must have been ill-defined. Thoughts were already turning to Palestine, for ten years before 26 families had joined together to found a short-lived agricultural colony at Petah Tikva. This was soon abandoned, and never had the support of the Jerusalem rabbis, who feared that self-help would detract from the hand-outs which the depressed community in Jerusalem was receiving. More determined efforts were made in the period 1884-1900, when Baron Edmund de Rothschild spent \$6 million on agriculture and French agronomist advisors in the region of Rishon le Zion. After the Basel congress appeal was made to the British Government, who suggested first the peninsula of Sinai (but a survey wisely

reported back that Sinai as ‘uninhabitable’), then Argentina, and finally - with superb high-handedness - Uganda in 1903. The Jews would be satisfied only with a biblical land, and in 1909 occurred the unforgettable scene when 12 Zionist settlers stood on the sands just north of the ancient port of Jaffa and mapped out the future city of Tel Aviv - named after the Hebrew translation of Herzl’s novel *Die Altneustadt*, in which he set out his blueprint for a Jewish state.

2. The Balfour Declaration to Independence (1917-1948)

Every British child and many others have been captivated by the romantic story, so brilliantly filmed, of Lawrence of Arabia, his brilliant espionage under the guise of archaeology, his championship of the Arab cause as he worked with Hussein, the Caliph of Mecca, to detach them from the Ottoman Empire as the sick man of Europe was on his deathbed, and set up the Arab Kingdom at Damascus. Childhood is hardly complete without reading his great book, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, at least in abridged form. The less romantic diplomatic bargaining going on in Whitehall and the Quai d’Orsay was the Sykes-Picot agreement which put the regions which are now Syria, Iraq and Galilee temporarily under the mandate and protection of France. It was, however, vital to the British to maintain a land presence in the area, both to protect British interests in the Suez Canal, largely owned by the British, and to provide a staging-post on the overland route to India, that jewel in the crown of the British Empire.

The opportunity to maintain this foothold was provided the Balfour Agreement. A variety of motives combined to produce the Declaration. The first was the sense of a debt to Judaism: both Lloyd George (Prime Minister) and Lord Balfour (Foreign Secretary) had been raised on the Bible, and Balfour at least is documented as admiring Jewish scientific and artistic achievements, and considering that Christianity had never adequately repaid the Jews for their gift of the Bible to Christianity. Balfour was especially close to the brilliant chemist, Chaim Weizmann, whose invention of acetone had become so important in the war effort. Lloyd George, the passionate Welshman, was cleverly drawn on by Weizmann’s likening of Palestine to Wales, ‘a little mountainous country’. A second motive was more practical: it was also hoped that a firm move by the British Government would weaken the support given to Germany by its strong and distinguished body of Jews, as well as increasing the loyalty of the Jewish Legion in the British Army. The Declaration itself, signed by Balfour on November 2nd, 1917, is now regarded by many as the root cause of all subsequent trouble: ‘HM Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object’. The meaning of ‘national home’ was crucial, and Balfour clearly understood that this would mean the eventual ‘establishment of an independent Jewish State’ (Kenneth Young, *Arthur James Balfour*, 1963, p. 392).

British involvement in Palestine was stabilized and confirmed after the War at the Versailles Peace

Conference, at which the oversight of the political development of the parts of the defunct Ottoman Empire were entrusted to the European powers. Syria and Lebanon were entrusted to France and Palestine to Britain. Lloyd George insisted that the land of Palestine should include Galilee, allotted by the Sykes-Picot agreement to France: the biblical limits of the Land were ‘from Dan to Beersheba’. Quite what this meant was not clear to Lloyd George, for an archaeological map had to be produced for him to show that Damascus, was not included within these limits; it lies a hundred miles to the north of Dan. In the prevailing atmosphere of brotherhood and idealism the dark side of the arrangements did not go unnoticed, but was brushed aside. In an interview with the American Jewish Judge Brandeis Balfour showed that he

was aware that Britain was building for an eventual Jewish majority in Palestine, which would in due time solidify into a Jewish State. An American commission which made the assessment that this could not occur without bloodshed was carefully muzzled and suppressed.

The course was set, from both inside and outside the country. The first governor of Jerusalem, already from the time General Allenby respectfully dismounted from his horse to enter the city in 1917, was Sir Ronald Storrs, a skilled and urbane negotiator and basically an Arabist of the Foreign and Colonial Service. Himself scrupulously fair and brilliantly holding the balance between the hostile parties in promoting the development of culture and civilisation in the city, he underlines constantly in his memoir (*Orientalism*, 1937) the uncompromising stance of the Jews and their refusal to recognise the rights of other parties to the deal. It is hard to avoid a comparison to the biblical accounts of the entry of the Israelites into the promised land under Joshue: the Israelites are simply unaware of any rights of those already in possession of the land. The divine promise authorises them totally to disregard any rights of the sitting inhabitants. The attitude of the British government is shown by the fact that in 1921 he was succeeded by Sir Herbert Samuels, a Jew. In the following year also Winston Churchill, now Colonial Secretary, announced that the sole criterion for limiting Jewish immigration was the 'economic absorptive capacity' of the country, without any mention of Arab rights. The purchase of land from the Arab inhabitants was increasing at an alarming rate, funded by the Jewish Agency massively supported by American Jewish money. The temptation of ready cash in exchange for the rigours of subsistence-level farming led to huge displacement of Arab farmers, who then saw their land burgeon and develop through the combination of injection of capital, modern methods and First World diligence and skill. The immigrants were determined to realise on the arid and stony ground their dream of a land flowing with milk and honey. Before long the seeds of armed strife were sown, whether from jealousy or from fear of further displacements, in attacks on the burgeoning Jewish settlements in Galilee.

Throughout the late 1920s the groundswell of Arabic discontent ebbed and flowed. It was not until the 1930s that it broke loose. Perhaps the decisive moment occurred already in 1931, in what has been described as 'one of the most tragic and divisive errors of the century' (Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, p. 438). Ernest T. Richmond¹, a comparatively inexperienced official in the British administration, persuaded the newly appointed Grand Mufti of Jerusalem to stand down in favour of Haj Amin, despite the fact that Haj Amin had already served a prison term for political agitation. Any future possibility of reconciliation was blocked by this appointment, and Haj Amin even travelled to Germany to give active support to Nazi moves against the Jews. The photographic exhibition of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem shows picture of him negotiating with Ribbentrop.

It was, of course, the flood-tide of the Hitler Germany² which broke the dykes. Hitler's doctrine

¹It is ironical that his grandson, Sam Richmond, was due to come with me on my first party to Israel, which was cancelled by the Six Day War.

²The shrill term 'Holocaust' began to become current only in the 1960s, and Holocaust theology was canonized as a new Exodus-myth in the aftermath of the Six Day War. The opinion of Phillip Lopate, a Jewish writer, is important, 'In its life as a rhetorical figure, the Holocaust is a bully' ('Resistance to the Holocaust', 1989, p. 57)

of the *Herrenvolk* reaped its grim reward, brainwashing the German people into thinking that non-Aryans were somehow inferior³. By 1939 the pressure of terror was such that Britain issued a White Paper limiting immigration to 10,000 each year, plus a bonus of 25,000 refugees, a flood of immigrants which is surely the maximum a country of the limited size and meagre resources of Palestine could absorb. The presentation of this measure in the Yad Vashem Museum of Jerusalem as a second Nazi persecution by the British, as though the refugees were simply transferring out of the frying-pan into the fire, is in itself sufficient proof of the blind prejudice currently fostered in Israel⁴.

In 1945, under pressure of the Jewish vote in America, and also aiming to spare the United States excessive Jewish immigration, President Truman unsuccessfully urged Britain to abandon the White Paper. At the same time Russia⁵ was generously supplying arms to the Palestinians in the hope of increasing their own sphere of influence in the Middle East and eventually driving out the West. It was not long before war-weary Britain capitulated. There were two final straws: the blowing-up of the King David Hotel, the central high command, by Irgun terrorists led by Menachem Begin (the future Prime Minister) and the hanging of two innocent British soldiers in

³A couple of personal notes: my brother-in-law attended the Berlin Olympics in 1936 and still remembers vividly Hitler's awesome power to stir the masses. It will be remembered that he refused to award Gold Medals to Jesse Owen. A Jewish cousin of mine remained in Germany till 1938, but said that by the end she felt somehow dirty and inferior.

⁴Another distorted and harmful element of the Holocaust myth is the concentration exclusively on the extermination of Jews. A more historically balanced and powerful picture would be given by the inclusion of such massacres as the massacre of 2 million Armenians a few decades earlier, the Tutsi/Hutu massacres half a century later, and especially the massacre by the same Nazis of gypsies, three million non-Jewish Poles and millions of Russian prisoners of war.

⁵Russia continued to supply arms and expertise to Syria, with the ludicrous result that Russian-born Israeli tank commanders could listen in on their short-wave radios to conversations of the Russian instructors of the Syrian Army.

retaliation for the execution of three Jews who had attacked the prison at Acre. After five long years of the Second World War, British public opinion in general and British mothers in particular were no longer prepared to see their nearest and dearest shed their blood in such a remote cause. It was, no doubt, an abnegation of responsibility, leaving a vacuum. The last governor of Jerusalem, asked in a press interview on the eve of departure to whom he was leaving the keys of his office, replied, 'I'll leave them under the mat' (14th May, 1948).

3. The State of Israel

The most depressing feature of this survey is that about the last fifty years there is little to be said. It is a phase of unmitigated hostility in which two opponents in the ring slog at each other with brief pauses for breath but no lessening of enmity. Each side treasures its memories and myths of massacre. Three full-scale wars must be catalogued, which changed boundaries but brought no peace.

In 1948, the day after the State of Israel declared its independence, the Arab nations crossed the Jordan, pushing up into the hill-country which was the heartland of Arab habitation. This was accompanied by blood-thirsty rhetoric, for example from the Secretary-General of the Arab League: 'This will be a war of extermination and a momentous massacre'. The fiercest fighting was to keep open the Jerusalem Corridor, enabling Israel to maintain its foothold in the city which is sacred to three faiths, and which the UN has decreed an international city. After some weeks, hostilities yielded to an uneasy truce, each side having its wounds, its grievances and its refugees. The city of Jerusalem was divided, the Old City, including that centre of Jewish prayer and piety, the Western Wall of the Temple, being part of Jordan, separated from the new city in the west by 200m of No Man's Land. Over half-a-million Arabs had been displaced from their homes and were housed mostly in two vast refugee camps, one just north of Hebron, the other beside Jericho. While practically the same number of Jews fled from Arab countries and were assimilated, the Arab countries took a determined stand against assimilating these refugees, fostering only a spirit of grievance and revenge. Even this year an Armenian friend of mine in Bethlehem met refugees in Lebanon, still grasping the key of their house bulldozed over half-a-century before and crying that their one desire was to return to the home village. On the other side, the spirit of daring and adventure was fostered by such deeds as penetration into the country of Jordan in order to swear the military oath of allegiance atop Massada, the ancient stronghold of the Zealots. Each side had its stories of atrocities. To select only two old and two new of them:

As a detachment of Israeli commandos approached the village of Gush Etzion they came across a harmless old man and spared him, putting him on oath to remain where he was. He slipped back to the village and gave the alarm, so that the Israelis walked straight into an ambush.

In 1956 after some disturbances a curfew was imposed on Arab villages near the frontier. One night villagers from Kafr Qasem were returning 30 minutes late from the harvest and 43 were shot dead.

Perhaps the incident which most shocked the world was the attack by Hamas, the extremist terrorist organisation, on Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics in 1972.

In the spring of 2001, outside the Israeli settlement near Bethlehem, two teenage Israeli boys were battered to death by stones as they played in a cave near their home.

In summer of 2001 the Israelis adopted the policy of assassination of suspected terrorists, cars were gunned down by helicopter gunships, a suspected terrorist was blown up in a telephone box, quite apart from the regular bulldozing of suspected terrorist houses and - even worse - destruction of olive-groves.

Hate, accusations and counter-accusations flow backwards and forwards. They lie treasured in the memory and assume the status of myths. In June 2001 a much respected Greek Orthodox monk was gunned down as he drove back to his monastery, soon after passing through an Israeli check-point. The Israelis accuse the Palestinians, the Palestinians the Israelis.

The second full-scale war was the Six Day War in 1967, after 20 years of uneasy truce and minor incidents⁶. Egypt closed Sharm el-Sheik at the southern end of the Gulf of Aqaba, thus shutting off Israel's one seaport to the south. Israel took this as an act of war and swiftly responded, brilliantly knocking out the Egyptian air force by flying in low from the east (so with the early morning sun behind them) at 8.50am, when all the Egyptian commanders were unavailable in transit on their way to the office. The Syrian air force was also swiftly put out of action, leaving Israel with the complete air superiority which enabled them take over Sinai to the south⁷ and to assume control of the 'Occupied Territories' or the 'West Bank' (the nomenclature differs between Israeli and Palestinian) as far as the Jordan. This also at last gave Israel access to the Old City of Jerusalem and that centre of prayer and devotion, the Western Wall.

Retaliation followed half-a-dozen years later, in the form of the Yom Kippur War in 1973. On the most sacred day of the Jewish Year, the Day of Reconciliation or of Atonement, when the maximum number of Israeli soldiers were at home on leave, and many of them fasting from dawn till dusk, the Arab forces attacked. After momentary gains their discomfiture again followed. A significant territorial change followed, in that Israel annexed the Golan Heights. The possession by Syria of this area to the north-east of the Lake of Galilee had long been an open wound for Israel. Peaceful Israeli settlements in the upper Jordan valley had been exposed to unpredictable mortar and artillery attacks from these heights. These Golan heights now constitute one of the most intractable bargaining factors: Syria regards the return of this territory as the indispensable price for peace, but can Israel afford to accept an indefensible frontier with a potentially hostile neighbour, and to expose itself once more to attack the heights which dominate their plains and villages? In a quarter of a century a flourishing and profitable colony has been built up there, towns with supermarkets and cinemas, a prolific viticultural industry; can Israeli politicians afford to pay the price of ceding all this to Syria?

4. Enduring Problems

The enduring problems of the existence of Israel must be seen on two levels, theoretical and

⁶I myself witnessed from the roof of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Jerusalem in summer 1964 a night battle which began simply by guards on either side taunting one other across No Man's Land.

⁷Peace with Egypt could therefore five years later, at the Camp David Agreements, brokered by the Americans, be purchased by the return of Sinai, now equipped with fine military roads, which at least make coastal tourism a possibility into Egyptian hands.

practical. The theoretical level is a matter of mind-set. To the Arab world Israel is an unwarrantable intrusion, an alien body which has no right to exist in what was for centuries Arab land, from which Arab inhabitants have been forcibly expelled. Israel must therefore be expunged from the map, pushed into the sea. To the Israeli the Land was promised by God to 'Abraham our father' and belongs inalienably to the Jews. The divine promise overrides the transient facts of history, the possession of the land by the Canaanites, the Hellenistic and Roman Empires, the Byzantines, the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem, the Ottoman Empire, the almost total absence of Jews from Jerusalem between 135 AD and the end of the nineteenth century. To the divine promise is added the sheer need of the Jews for a safe homeland. Must not the Christian world make some compensation to the Jews for twenty centuries of anti-Semitism?

An offshoot of this is the presence of religious susceptibilities, which always make problems unpredictably delicate. An old instance of this is amusingly recounted by Edward Keith-Roach in his memoir, *Pasha of Jerusalem*: on Yom Kippur in 1928 the rabbis set up a male/female division at the Western Wall. The Arabs complained to the governor that they had no right to do so, and he removed the structure (plus rabbis clinging to it). There were headlines in the international press, 'Holy of Holies desecrated', 'Worse than 1492', a debate in the British Parliament and a protest by ten thousand Jews in New York. A couple of years ago the Dome of the Rock and the whole Temple Mount were closed for months in protest by the Muslim authorities to the opening of an archaeological passage on the Israeli side of the wall, held to be a religious violation.

The practical problems seem to me three:

1. In 1990 Israel formally annexed East Jerusalem. The UN has always stood out for Jerusalem, sacred to Christianity, Judaism and Islam⁸, to be an international city, so that this annexation is illegal on any grounds. It exposes the overwhelmingly Arab population of East Jerusalem to the annoyance of constant supervision by Israeli soldiers and check-points, to the stealthy proliferation (which I remark each year) of a little synagogue here, a little army post there. It is typical of the carefully-engineered impasse that Israel has invested million upon million of dollars on the embellishment of the luxurious and distinguished apartments and squares of the so-called Jewish Quarter, and now needs to own that part. How much further will it expand?

2. For years now Israel has pursued the policy of settlements in the Arab territories. These take two forms, the first being settlements around basically Arab towns, like Nazareth and Hebron, which control and throttle the traditional inhabitants of the town, leading all too frequently to incidents, especially between the naturally volatile youth of each side. One of the potentially most fertile of these trouble spots is the new settlement of Gilo, built almost within stone-throwing range of Bethlehem and the traditionally activist village of Beth Sahur. The second form of settlement is prosperous, well-found, well-lit, well-paved towns, scattered over the traditionally Arab landscape, often on

⁸The order in which these are stated is, of course, itself electric with implications. I rely for this order on my friend Rabbi Norman Solomon, who regards Christianity as the older religion than Judaism. For him and for many others, just as Christianity begins with the New Testament, so Judaism begins with the Talmud.

waste land, but often also on fertile Arab agricultural land. The largest of these is Maale-Adumim, a walled and fortified town of 100,000 inhabitants, straddling the road between Arab East Jerusalem and Jericho, within a stone's throw of The Israeli Ministry of Agriculture plans to settle nearly a million Israelis on the traditional West Bank in this way by 2010. It is rapidly becoming impossible to find any place which is not dominated by these hated settlements. The longer they remain, the more difficult it becomes to withdraw from them.

3. Water is the third point of dispute. Israel's consumption of water far exceeds the supply. A huge pipe conveys water from the Lake of Galilee to the desert of the Negeb, with the result that the level of the Lake has sunk at least 15 metres in the last two years. Plentiful water is necessary for irrigation of crops and gardens, and even for the western life-style (2 showers a day!) of the Israeli population. So serious is the shortage that there is constant talk of buying in water from Greece or Turkey. But it is primarily the Palestinians who go without, and their aquifers which are depleted.

To all these the intransigent Israeli answer is, 'Why not? We own the land.'

5. A Glimmer of Hope Extinguished

A glimmer of hope was lit by the Oslo Accord in 1993. In the strictest secrecy and an intimate family atmosphere the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the leader of the PLO Yasser Arafat met for several days and seemed to achieve grounds for progress. The PLO at last accepted the right of Israel to exist and agreed to renounce terror and both physical and rhetorical violence. Israel, on its side, agreed to withdraw gradually from Palestinian towns, transferring the civil authority to the newly-created Palestinian Authority of 24 members. The first of these towns would be Jericho and Gaza (where it was widely thought at the time that conditions were so appalling that disaster was bound to ensue), followed by Bethlehem, Nablus and Ramallah. Israel also promised to release 5,000 detainees.

These sets of concessions provided a real basis for advance - but no more than a basis. Recriminations soon followed. The Palestinians complained of the slow implementation of the measures, the slow withdrawal from the designated territories, the continuation of the settlements. Israel complained that violence and rhetoric continued. Arafat was branded as a liar whose word was worthless. Palestinian terrorists continued to be sheltered by their own, instead of being extradited and handed over to justice.

First Rabin was assassinated by extremist factions within Israel, then his successor and heir Barak proved unable to provide promised security. As his government, itself riven by faction, teetered on the edge of resignation, violence exploded again with the incursion of Ariel Sharon and his guards onto the Temple Mount, traditionally a No-Go area for Israelis. With this aggressive demonstration of power, the cycle of extreme violence began again, to be confirmed by the election of this same Ariel Sharon to succeed Barak as Prime Minister. What will be the solution?

It is not my intention in this presentation to apportion blame. I can relate only sadness. I end on two detailed notes:

1. Most of this paper was written before my recent stay in Israel. During that stay I did a fair amount of hitch-hiking. Anyone who picks up a hitch-hiker is a kindly and

thoughtful person, and I met many such, some who were even prepared to drive out of their way, but none who found any difficulty with the Israeli stance towards those they whom regard as implacably intransigent Palestinians. The vast majority of people seem simply incapable of appreciating that there are two sides to the question. That said, I must grant that I found one article in *The Jerusalem Post* (3rd September), written by an Israeli living in a Palestinian town, pointing out the inequalities of water and infrastructure: lack of water leads him to take his washing and a supply of water-containers to Jerusalem, which Palestinians cannot enter without permit.

2. The contrast between two pieces, taken from *The Jerusalem Post* and *The Jerusalem Times* of 31st August.

The Jerusalem Post - an advertisement:

FEAR NOT...ISRAEL!

The hypocritical United Nations, who are only united in their hatred of our Jewish Homeland, are plotting their own destruction!!!

Israel will be saved, despite its paltry leaders who respond to 'world opinion' - rather than deliver a forceful IDF response to Arafat's ongoing war of terror against innocent Israeli men, women and children. **Israel will be saved** because G-d has promised to BLESS THOSE THAT BLESS ISRAEL AND CURSE THOSE THAT CURSE ISRAEL.

Now more than ever, when our organisation is called upon to help countless bereaved families whose loved ones were murdered and injured in Arab terrorist attacks, send your donation to...

The Jerusalem Times - leading news article

Israeli forces assassinated Monday the head of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Abu Ali Mustafa, 63, while he was working in his office in Ramallah - 'a very horrible and unprecedented crime. Abu Ali Mustafa was one of the five highest-ranking officials in the PLO and that a senior political leader. The Israelis will pay a very dear price for their crime.'