



## The Politics of Mainstream Christianity in Jerusalem *Kudüs'te Ortodoks Hristiyanlığın Politikaları*

Samuel J. KURUVİLLA\*

### Abstract

*The rapid development of the Palestinian national struggle from a rebel guerrilla movement in the 1960s and 1970s to an organization with almost all the attributes of an organized state (although, without sustainable national space) in the 1980s and 1990s also contributed to the politicization of the Palestinian Christian church in Israel/Palestine. During this period, certain Israeli policies that included land confiscations, church and property destruction, building restrictions and a consequent mass emigration of the faithful, all contributed to a new restrictive climate of political intolerance being faced by the churches. The 1990s and 2000s saw the start and doom of the Oslo 'peace process' between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as well as the fruition of many Israeli territorial and settlement policies regarding the Old City and mainly Arab-inhabited East Jerusalem as well as the West Bank of historic Palestine. Church-State relations plummeted to their lowest point in decades during this period. The results of the suspicion and distrust created by these experiences continue to dog the mutual relations of Israelis, Palestinian Christians and Muslims in the Holy Land.*

**Keywords:** *Millet (Nationality), Filastin (Palestinian Nationalism), Palestinian Christians and Muslims, the 'Status Quo' in the Holy Places, Arab Jerusalem (Al-Quds), the Palestinian Nakba (Catastrophe).*

### Özet

*Filistin ulusal mücadelesinin 1960 ve 1970lerde isyancı gerilla terörist bir harekettten 1980 ve 1990larda neredeyse bütün özellikleriyle ( sürdürülebilir ulusal alana sahip olmasa da ) hızlı bir şekilde organize bir devlete dönüşmesi İsrail/Filistin'de bulunan Filistin Hristiyan kilisesinin politize olmasına ayrıca katkıda bulunmuştur. Bu süre zarfında, topraklara el koyma, kilise ve malların yok edilmesi, inşaat sınırlamasını içeren İsrail politikaları ve bunların sonucu olarak ortaya çıkan inananların kitlesel göçleri kiliselerin yüz yüze olduğu yeni bir politik hoşgörüsüzlük iklimi yaratmıştır. 1990 ve 2000ler ise İsrail ve Filistin Kurtuluş Örgütü (FKÖ) arasında gerçekleşen Oslo "barış sürecinin" başlangıcının ve bitişinin yanı sıra Eski Kudüs ve esas olarak tarihi Filistin'in Batı Şeria bölgesi kadar Arap nüfusunun bulunduğu Doğu Kudüsü de ilgilendiren bölgesel politikaların ve iskân*

---

\* Dr., Politics & Theology University of Exeter, Exeter, United Kingdom

*politikalarının gerçekleştiğine şahit olmuştur. Kilise-Devlet ilişkileri bu dönemdeki on yıllarda en düşük seviyeye gerilemiştir. Bu deneyimlerin ortaya çıkardığı güvensizlik ve şüphelerin sonuçları Kutsal Topraklarda yaşayan İsraillilerin, Filistinli Hristiyanların ve Müslümanların karşılıklı ilişkilerini baltalamaya devam etmektedir.*

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Millet - Filistin - Hristiyan - Müslüman - Kudüs - Kutsal yerler

## Introduction

Jerusalem's Churches are generally a forgotten aspect of the city's tortured history just as Arab Christians are, in general, a forgotten people in the modern world. There are ten officially recognised Christian Communities in Palestine/Israel. Fifty-seven years of Israeli rule as well as the near anarchic conditions that have prevailed in the West Bank and Gaza over the last 10-20 years has reduced the presence of an always-minuscule minority in these areas. Most Christian demographers from the region now believe that the population in the Old City and its immediate environs is approaching the point of no return when growth becomes unsustainable and it becomes only a matter of time before terminal decline ensues. In the Old City of Jerusalem, Christians have always had a fight on their hands holding to and preserving their ancient rights and privileges. They have had to counter an Israeli regime that has seemed fixated on acquiring as much of Jerusalem as real estate as possible in the shortest possible time. And Jerusalem Churches control at least 25% of Old City territory.

Christians make up only 2.4% of the population of Israel/Palestine.<sup>1</sup> The *Nakba* (disaster) as the Palestinians refer to the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, saw the wholesale expulsion of some 714,000 Arabs from the region which also included 50,000 Christians, Orthodox and Catholic, and this amounted to 35% of all Christians in Palestine.<sup>2</sup> The descendents of these people are now scattered all over the world and include such illustrious figures such as the late Columbia University Professor Edward Said and Dr. George Habash (founder of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-one of the most radical Palestinian Resistance Organizations). Jerusalem hosted Christians belonging to all factions and this was the condition for centuries since the times of the 'Great Schisms' that divided the Church into various mutually contending factions.<sup>3</sup> The Orthodox in Jerusalem and indeed much of the East were divided between those who subscribed to the Council of Chalcedon and those who did not. The Chalcedonian position which was followed by all the East and South European Orthodox Churches was that the nature of Christ was dual in perspective, one human and the other spiritual or divine. The non-Chalcedonians took this to be heresy and contended that in Christ the divine and human nature become one, without any separation, theological confusion or even evolutionary change.<sup>4</sup> The trouble with the Christians of Jerusalem has been that each church was so fractured and small, that every church was very jealous lest the other should secure privileges that the first does not have. This has produced what can only be called a farcical situation where the Churches insisted on the status-quo at all times, even if doing so might hurt their own personal interests.<sup>5</sup>

The churches were more or less free to function as they chose during much of the post-mandate 20th century, as the Israelis were especially willing to facilitate Church freedoms. This was not completely the case as far as the Jordanians were concerned. The main backers of the Israeli state in the West were concerned about this highly sensitive issue. The main line churches in those times (during the 1960s) were still almost exclusively controlled by expatriate European clergy who were largely agreeable to Israeli rule, estimating that a regime

controlled by western Ashkenazi Jewry would be tolerable towards institutions that mainly catered to Christian tourists and pilgrims from the West. The new state itself, seeing more advantage in cooperation than confrontation with the Church, did not to antagonize the Christian leadership openly.

Changes started to sweep eastern Christianity starting with Vatican II in 1962 as the emphasis turned towards training 'native' inhabitants of the east for responsible positions in 'their' Church. Effects of this transformation were not only visible in the Latin Church but also started to spread to the other major Protestant and Orthodox denominations. Palestine's particular position in the worldwide Christian consciousness ensured that it would take some time for indigenous Palestinians to make it to the top. This also meant that as more and more Palestinian clergy and bishops were created, the Church in the Holy land would become more and more politically 'radical' in its conception and worldview. Consequently, there would be more and more visions for conflict between the Church and state, particularly as the local clergy on assuming positions of authority within the Church, came to realize how much the Church had compromised itself with an 'alien' ruling establishment. It could only be expected that this realization had the potential to generate intra-Church conflicts as well as Church-state tensions. Tensions of this sort were witnessed through out the 1980s and 1990s in Palestine particularly among the Orthodox churches, the Greek Orthodox in particular. Intra-Church conflict in the Greek Church had a nasty tinge to it in that there was a clear division in the Church along ethnic lines with the Aegean Greek clergy as well as the Bishop-Patriarch on one side and the Palestinian Arab clergy on the other. The Greek clergy were for a neutral stand in the ongoing Palestinian nationalist struggle, whereas the Arab clergy could not from the viewpoint of loyalty as well as conscience, subscribe to such a position. The same tensions were evident in the different Catholic as well as Protestant churches, though in a much more subdued and hidden manner.

### Early History

With the rise of Islam and the conquest of Jerusalem in 636 CE, symbolized by Caliph Umar Ibn-al-Khatib's *ahd-name* (edict), 'Al-'Uhd al-'Umariyya' to Sophronius, 'Patriarch of the Imperial Nation of the Romans,' guaranteeing the safety and security of Christians and their Holy Places, especially "our subjects the Monks and Priests and their churches and monasteries, and everything under their ownership, and other shrines situated within or outside Jerusalem shall be assured and the Patriarch shall be their head."<sup>6</sup> Byzantine support for the established Greek Church in Jerusalem ceased after the Islamic conquest and the other national churches started to acquire a voice in the management of the Christian affairs of the city. The Fatimid period, particularly under Caliph al-Hakim, saw the destruction and terrorization of Christians and their property in Jerusalem which culminated in the tearing down of the Byzantine Holy Sepulchre Basilica in 1009 CE. With the final split between Eastern and Western Christians in 1054 CE, it was the time of the Crusades to see which form of Christianity would prevail in Jerusalem. The Crusaders expelled the Greek Patriarch and placed a new Latin Patriarch on his seat in 1099 CE. This event inaugurated the official presence of the Latin Church in Jerusalem. Though the Latin Patriarch later left the city when it fell to Salah el-Din in 1187 CE, the Latin presence was continued in the form of the 'Franciscan Custos of the Holy Land,' an ecclesiastical organization formed exclusively to maintain and protect Latin rights and heritage in the Holy City. The Ottoman *Millet* (Nationalities) system that was devised to successively rule large numbers of people belonging

to minority religions was again based on the earlier Omar's rulings. It recognized the autonomy of the Christian communities to run their own internal affairs particularly those relating to religious and civil matters.

The entire period of Turkish rule lasting 400 years saw the three main churches, namely Greek Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox as well as the Latin rite, all jockeying for power and recognition from the Ottoman authorities. And under Islam, the rights, duties and privileges of the churches slowly started to crystallize though the final format that we know today known as the 'Status-Quo of the Holy Places,' would only come about after centuries of conflict and 'warfare' among the churches as well as their supporting Christian powers in Europe. The Sultans in Istanbul were forced to issue repeat proclamations in 1458, 1517, 1538, 1634, 1731, 1757, 1809, and finally 1852, either confirming the edict of 636 CE or on various issues regarding the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and conflicts between the Latins and Greeks for supremacy and control in Christian Jerusalem.<sup>7</sup> The Turks learnt from their mistakes that it would be folly to interfere with the established status quo or to allow Western national-religious influences to play havoc with inter-Church relations in Jerusalem. Thus in 1740, the Ottoman government which was anxious to cultivate French support, disregarded the Greeks who had held the traditional spot of pre-eminence for hundreds of years and gave that position to the Latins. The Greeks were understandably so furious that armed clashes took place in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with Greek and Latin Monks attacking each other with candlesticks and crosses.<sup>8</sup> The most important undertaking given by the Turks to protect the Holy Places in Palestine was the written declaration made by Sultan Abdul Majid in 1852, which officially brought in to being the concept of 'Status Quo,' as a means of guaranteeing and keeping the peace on the ground in Jerusalem.<sup>9</sup> The Status Quo later was internationally recognized by the 1856 Conference of Paris (after the Crimean War), and the 1878 Treaty of Berlin.<sup>10</sup> The Treaty of Berlin stated that

No alteration can be made in the status quo in the holy places.<sup>11</sup>

### **The 'Status Quo' in the Holy Places of Jerusalem**

The Status Quo that determined the Holy Places in the Holy Land was independent of territorial sovereignty. Thus Christians like the Greek Orthodox, the Armenians and the Roman Catholic all exercised rights in the Holy Land irrespective of state sovereignty. The status quo thus comprised three elements:

- 1 a fixed area;
- 2 precise rights; and
- 3 certain groups or individuals to whom the rights belong.<sup>12</sup>

The rights that determined the Status Quo may be on the basis of both written and unwritten legal sources. The rights in turn could be divided into three groups:

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| land | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. those related to the foundation of religious institutions in the Holy</li> <li>2. rights that deal with the particular religious group and</li> <li>3. rights that are connected with the particular Holy Spots.<sup>13</sup></li> </ol> |
|------|--|

Historical conditions, the socio-cultural orientations of the various religious groups as well as the local ruling authority, all determined the actual manifestation of these rights.<sup>14</sup> Basically all occupying powers in Palestine since the Ottomans, namely the British Mandate, the trans-Jordanians, and the Israelis till present have followed the Status-Quo Requirements without major modifications. General Edmund Allenby's speech when he took control of Jerusalem on December 9, 1917 reflected this.

Since your City is regarded with affection by the adherents of three of the great religions of mankind, and its soil has been consecrated by the prayers and pilgrimages of multitudes of devout people of these three religions for many centuries, therefore do I make known to you that every sacred building, monument, holy spot, traditional shrine, endowment, pious bequest, or customary place of prayer of whatsoever form of the three religions, will be maintained and protected according to the existing customs and beliefs of those to whose faiths they are sacred.<sup>15</sup>

Interestingly neither the Balfour Declaration (1917) nor the terms of the British mandate for Palestine drafted by the Council of the League of Nations made any mention of Jerusalem. There was, however, reference to the Holy Places, taking into consideration the manifest Western interest in the pilgrim spots of Palestine. The mandatory power was required to preserve the Status Quo 'subject to the requirements of public order and decorum'.<sup>16</sup> A Holy Places Commission that was to 'study, define and determine' the rights and claims of the various churches and groups with regard to the Holy Places was never formed due to lack of agreement among the allied Powers about its contents.<sup>17</sup> Once the Mandate came into force, the British formulated what was known as the Palestine (Holy Places) Order in Council (1924) under which all issues regarding the Holy Places, with their highly troublesome players and politics were excluded from the jurisdiction of the courts and entrusted solely to the authority of the High Commissioner in office.<sup>18</sup> Again British obligations towards the Holy Places were defined in the League of Nations Mandate, Article 13 which stated:

All responsibility in connection with the holy Places and religious buildings or sites in Palestine, including that of preserving existing rights and of securing free access to the holy places, religious buildings and sites, and the free exercise of worship, while ensuring the requirements of public order and decorum, is assumed by the Mandatory, who shall be responsible solely to the League of nations.<sup>19</sup>

The British, as a so-called Christian power, had no interest in interfering with the Muslim Holy Places of Palestine. This became evident in the closing words of Article 13 that stated that

Nothing in this Mandate shall be construed as conferring upon the Mandatory authority to interfere with the fabric or the management of purely Muslim sacred shrines, the immunities of which are guaranteed.<sup>20</sup>

The Mandate period saw the development of native Arab Churches, especially the Anglican Church in Palestine, which was quite natural. France was reassured by the British that they would not tamper with traditional Roman Catholic privileges in the Holy Land. The British period seemed to denote a welcome shift from the old Ottoman policy of playing one

Church of against the other.<sup>21</sup> The British, and the Jordanians who followed them, insisted on keeping a close eye on the administration of the Holy Places to the extent that

No cause or matter in connection with the holy places or religious buildings or sites in Palestine shall be heard or determined by any court in Palestine.<sup>22</sup>

The British rule saw power concentrated in the High Commissioner's hands as the final political authority and whose decisions were final and binding on all parties.<sup>23</sup> This constituted a major deviation from the later Israeli period when all matters relating to disputes that arise in the Holy Places are treated as a matter of course in the law courts of the state of Israel.

### **The Legal Status of Jerusalem**

A series of riots and disturbances in Palestine from 1929 to 1936 led to a major policy reassessment by the British that were manifested in the 1937 Royal (Peel) Commission report which was the first official document to call for the partition of Palestine into independent Jewish and Arab states. Interestingly, about Jerusalem's Holy Places, the report stated that the partition of Palestine should be subject to the supreme necessity of keeping the sanctity of Jerusalem and Bethlehem untouched and of ensuring free and safe access to them from all over the world.<sup>24</sup> The Royal Commission proposed rather daringly that Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth and the Sea of Galilee region should be made a 'corpus separatum' and be detached from the proposed Arab and Jewish states.<sup>25</sup> The Catholic Churches similar demand possibly dates from this draft report which was naturally rejected by both Jewish as well as Arab leaders in Palestine. The Peel Commission also thought of including a special road access for the Christian Holy Places to the major seaports at Haifa or Jaffa in Palestine. The Christian Holy Places themselves would have the status of a separate enclave under international administration.<sup>26</sup> Interestingly, the November 1947 UNGA resolution on the partition of Palestine included the Jerusalem-Bethlehem area (but left out Nazareth), as a 'corpus separatum' to be administered by the UN. This resolution was obviously guided by the Peel Commission.<sup>27</sup>

The 'de jure' status of Jerusalem was established by UNGA Resolutions 181(II), 194 (III), and 303(IV).<sup>28</sup> These resolutions maintained that the city of Jerusalem would be a 'corpus separatum,' ruled by the UN through what would be a special international régime. In practice, neither the Jordanians nor the Israelis or the Palestinians have acknowledged the practicality of these resolutions. So the situation on the ground in Jerusalem is a 'de facto' situation created first during the armistice that ended the war between Jordan and Israel in 1949, continued during the Israeli occupation of the city in 1967 and later euphemistically reinforced by Israel's unilateral July 30, 1980, proclamation that declared Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel.<sup>29</sup> This law stated that the Holy Places would be protected and that the state had to provide for the development and prosperity of Jerusalem.<sup>30</sup> The UN Security Council condemned this law as a 'violation of International Law.' The Israeli designation of the law as a Basic Law did not seem at all applicable, given the fact that the law did not possess any innovation at all.<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, those who opposed this law of 1980 often sought justification in trying to link the Holy Places and in particular the Christian Holy Places with the internationalization of Jerusalem, as was the case with the Roman Catholic Church till 1968. The Americans gave up this option practically speaking after the 1967 war. The Vatican also,

as has been stated in other parts of this work, switched from internationalization to international guarantees after the 1967 war.<sup>32</sup> Neither Security Council Resolutions 242 nor 338 of November 22, 1967 and October 22, 1973 mention Jerusalem. Jerusalem does not feature in the Camp David Agreement between the Egyptians and Israelis. In 1967, the Knesset passed the Protection of the Holy Places Law of 1967 that legally assured protection of the Holy Places against desecration as well as freedom of access to them.<sup>33</sup> This is the situation that all the Churches of Palestine/Israel and Jerusalem are permitted to recognize. In April 23, 1990, Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens made a statement concerning the safeguarding of the legal rights and privileges of the Patriarchates.<sup>34</sup>

Again, as per a letter sent by the then Israeli PM Shimon Peres in 1993 to the Foreign Minister of Norway, Johan Jorgen Holst, he stated that he

Wished to confirm that the Palestinian institutions of East Jerusalem and the interests and well-being of the Palestinians of East Jerusalem are of great importance and will be preserved. Therefore, all the Palestinian institutions of East Jerusalem, including the economic, social, educational and cultural, and the holy Christian and Muslim places, are performing an essential task for the Palestinian population. Needless to say, we will not hamper this activity; on the contrary, the fulfillment of this important mission is to be encouraged.<sup>35</sup>

When Israel made peace with the Jordanians, the Peace Treaty of October 26, 1994 stated that Holy Shrines in Jerusalem. When negotiations on the permanent status will take place, Israel will give priority to the Jordanian historic role in these shrines.<sup>36</sup>

### **The Greek Orthodox Church (GOC) and Patriarchate of Jerusalem**

The GOC was the oldest of Jerusalem's churches and sometimes known as the 'mother of all churches.' The Jerusalem Patriarchate traced its origins to St. James, brother of Christ. It was the Fourth Ecumenical Council of the Unified Church that in the year 451 CE made the autocephalous Church of Jerusalem a full Patriarchate, fifth in chronological order after those of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch.<sup>37</sup> Among the Churches of Palestine, the Greek Orthodox had pride of place as one of the largest and the wealthiest of denominations. In the city of Jerusalem, the church was one of the main property owners with even the Israeli Knesset being located on land leased from the church. In Palestine and Jerusalem in particular, the Arab Orthodox have always formed the largest Christian community.<sup>38</sup>

The British Mandate period before the *Nakba*, generally seen as the crux of all developments in Palestine, was considered a good period for the Churches in general. A supposedly Christian regime was in power, for the first time in almost a thousand years since the end of the last Crusader kingdom of Palestine in 1291 AD. This period saw the revival of the clergy-laity controversy in the GOC, between the Greek clergy and monks on one side and the Palestinian Arab laity on the other. The Mandate authorities tried to keep a neutral stand but under Greek pressure seemed to favour the status quo and the situation where the clergy were on top. In spite of constant appeals from the pro-Arabist lobby within the British establishment as well as from the prominent Arab citizenry of Palestine, the mandate authorities did not feel the need to interfere in the status quo and consequently the conditions remained as they were favouring the Greeks in the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, the pre-eminent Greek monastic group in Palestine.

Conditions somewhat changed after the *Nakba*, though the Greek Church probably lost the most of all the Churches of Palestine, being the Church with the most members. The Jordanians were again inclined to support the nationalists in the internal struggle in the Church between the Greeks and Arabs. It was only intense Greek lobbying that helped the Greek monks to keep their privileges. The situation again reverted to status quo when the Israelis came into control of the Holy Places with the Greeks acquiring the upper hand again in the court battle. The status quo has continued more or less unchanged to the present day.

### **Greek-Palestinian clergy-laity Issues**

Problems in the Greek Orthodox Church, or as local Palestinians would call it the Arab Orthodox Church, have a long history dating back from Ottoman times and probably before that as well. The area that we today call Palestine has had this name since at least Roman times when the area extended to parts of today's Jordan as well. The Jerusalem Greek Orthodox Patriarchate's territorial jurisdiction also extended over the same region. As a result, the concept of '*Filastin* (Palestine)' was particularly important for the Christian Orthodox of Palestine. This concept intensified in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as great power politics intruded into the Levant and the Russians started competing with the Greeks and other Europeans for the hearts and minds of the indigenous Christians of the Ottoman Empire. All the issues basically compounded in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century into an overwhelming demand by the local population for a greater say and control in the affairs of the Patriarchate as opposed to the Greek demand that the 'Status-Quo' be maintained in this relation as well.

The British Mandate authorities in their dealings with the native Arab Orthodox were often confronted by the dual forces of resistance to the Greek domination of the Patriarchate as well as rising support for the Palestinian national movement within a greater Arab self-consciousness.<sup>39</sup> The laity as loyal Palestinians have never been able to isolate themselves from general Palestinian aspirations which included the liberation struggles against the British and later the Zionists. In fact Orthodox Christians were often in the forefront of the nationalist struggle against the mandate as well as in exile as part of the PLO and other liberation organizations. The Greek Patriarch and clergy ruling in Jerusalem and isolated within the narrow confines of the Greek speaking Orthodox world, often could not understand or empathize with such radical aspirations on the part of their laity. The laity if allowed would have been willing to set up an autonomous Arab Orthodox church controlled by local people as was prevalent in other parts of the Middle East, notably Syria and Lebanon.

The status of the Jerusalem Patriarchate (as the first Patriarchate in Christendom older than even Constantinople) within the Greek world as well as the Holy Shrines that it controlled, epitomized by the Churches of the Holy Sepulchre and Nativity and the monastic Greek group known as the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, always prevented the local laity from gaining control over their own church. All these factors contributed towards the Greek clergy adopting a decidedly unenthusiastic approach towards the rise of Palestinian nationalism as well as (in some cases) collaborating more than was necessary with the 'enemy' Israelis. The clergy were afraid that the development and growth of Palestinian statehood would naturally result in shifting the balance of power within the church from the Greek side towards the native Palestinian leadership.



The self-perceived pre-eminent duty of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, the Greek monastic order that controls the affairs of the GOC in the Holy Land, has always been to ensure that the Holy Places are open for pilgrims, Greek and other European and that services are conducted in Greek, the holy language of the church. The needs of the indigenous Christian population have always played second fiddle to these grand aspirations on the part of the foreign clergy. It was this division between the Patriarchate and the local Arab faithful that resulted in the growth of other denominations in Palestine, in particular the Melkite Greek Catholics and the various Protestant groups. As of now, the Latins and Greek Catholics combined to form a majority of the local Christian population. These groups have the advantage of having substantial numbers of indigenous clergy, and a liturgy based on the local language as well. It was interesting to note that on the political stage in Palestine, the clergy of non-Orthodox Melkite and Uniate Churches have traditionally been much more active as well as pro-Palestinian while the Orthodox Churches like the Greeks and Armenians have remained reticent in this regard. This in turn has contributed to a subtle shift in the political influence of the Uniate churches, much in excess of their actual strength on the ground.

Memories of the 1948-1967 Jordanian era certainly remained fresh in the minds of many Greeks when the Trans-Jordanians sought to indigenize the Church leadership. The Jordanians in 1958 tried to Arabise the GOC leadership by passing laws that stated the newly appointed Greek bishops had to be Jordanian citizens and conversant in Arabic while Arab bishops must be ordained and appointed to the synod of the Church. The first ever Arab bishop was elected to the Confraternity that controlled Greek Orthodox religious interests in the Holy Land.<sup>40</sup> The Greeks got around these laws by a series of diplomatic maneuverings, quiescent as well as not so much so in that they were relieved when the Israelis replaced the Jordanians as the ruling authorities in Jerusalem. The Orthodox Church in Jerusalem remained the only church that has refused to fully Palestinianise itself in accordance with ground realities. The clergy were even willing to appeal to Athens to support their position vis-à-vis certain political disputes that the Church was involved in with the Israelis as well as the PNA (Palestinian National Authority).

The Greek Church in Jerusalem has been governed by Law No. 27 issued by the kingdom of Jordan in 1958. The organization, management, and representation of the property of the Orthodox Patriarchate were fully controlled by this law. The law's jurisdiction was asserted to run in Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian territories.<sup>41</sup> The Orthodox Churches refusal to conclude any sort of legal agreement with either the Israelis or the Palestinians as the new purveyors of the status quo ensured that the Jordanian law still held force though this may not be recognized per se by either of the two parties listed above.

A peculiarity of the Greek Church was that whereas the clergy was preponderantly of Cypriot Greek origin, the laity was Palestinian Arab in ethnicity. This was often an excuse for unwanted conflict within the Church itself. The Church leadership being composed almost entirely of Greek clergy has often felt that cooperation and even compromise with the ruling authorities was better to the path of confrontation followed by the Palestinian Arab laity in their relations with the Israeli authorities. In this context, it was interesting to note that the Greek conception of local laity was as Arabic speaking Orthodox which was in keeping with the Eastern Orthodox world view of the common brotherhood of all Byzantine origin people. The laity, on the other hand, were always determined to exert their identity and separation from the Greeks as Arabs.<sup>42</sup> The Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, the pre-eminent Greek monastic

order that controlled affairs of the Greek Church in Jerusalem was still not entirely open to members of the Palestinian Arab community. The clergy saw themselves as serving the worldwide Orthodox community in safeguarding the holy places while the laity's grouse was that the clergy could not speak Arabic. Such discrimination has caused members of the church to redefine their community as the Arab Orthodox Church. The clergy, particularly those of Greek origin took particular care to appear apolitical thereby further angering a laity that was actively involved in all the agitationist activities involved with a full-fledged freedom struggle.<sup>43</sup>

### **Israeli Land Pressures**

Both the Armenians as well the Greeks have faced land pressure from the Israelis, more so, because both these churches continued to possess lands that they never took care to develop. Both together owned some of the prime real estate of the Jerusalem landscape. The leadership of both churches had taken the highly unpopular step of selling and leasing church-lands to the state, a policy highly repugnant to the laity of the respective churches. This controversial process however culminated in the early 1990s in what became known as the St. John's Hospice incident that involved the take-over of the St. John's Hospice building in the heart of the old city by a group of fanatical settlers of the Ateret Cohanim faction.

The St. John's Hospice incident and resultant revelations of the extent of Government support for the settlers caused a lot of heart-burn among the Church groups, particularly those that had not been averse to dealing with the State authorities in the past. That these incidents should have taken place during Easter week was another cause for shame and alarm. If the Israelis would not hesitate to conduct such outrages during a period when the attention of the worldwide Christian community was focused on Jerusalem, then there could be no time when the property and wealth of the Churches was safe. This act of aggression against the status quo also helped to change the attitude of the clergy of the Brotherhood towards the Israeli state. After this incident, the Church was forced to take a more serious note of the nationalistic aspirations of the Palestinian people who formed the laity of the Church. The Greeks who held the upper hand in the 'Status Quo' that controlled intra-church relations with specific reference to the Holy Places, were a little more circumspect in this issue when compared to the Latin's or even the Armenians. They had good reason to be circumspect, as the Israelis never missed an opportunity to try and break up any purported unity among the churches.

The St. John's Hospice incident revealed a hitherto not often revealed aspect of international politics with respect to the Christians of Palestine/Israel. American politicians, Congress members and Church leaders were particularly irritated by the revelations of the extent of covert government funding for the fundamentalist Jewish group to take over the building situated right next to the Holy Sepulchre Church in the heart of the Old City. It was quickly understood from this move that any covert or in this case rather circumstantially public action by Israel to alter the mosaic that makes up Jerusalem's multi-religious character would have repercussions in the US and this in turn might cast a shadow on the ability of the American state to bankroll the Jewish state. American Jewish organizations warned Israel at the time of negative political ramifications. Indeed, it might be even possible to link the suspension by the Bush Senior regime of loan guarantees to Israel worth a couple of hundred million dollars in 1990 to the ill-will caused by this incident, along with other causes of displeasure. In fact, it has been opined that

No other development .....would vex religious America more deeply than tension in Jerusalem with religious overtones.<sup>44</sup>

### **Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem**

Traditionally seen as ‘the successor’ to all the interests that western Christians have exhibited in the Holy Land, the Latin Patriarchate of today has certainly been able to shake off the Crusader stigma that has caused them a lot of problems in the past. The Catholics of Palestine owe their present Patriarchal status to the Ottoman Statute of 1847 that re-established the Latin patriarchate of Jerusalem. The Latin Catholics developed rapidly afterward and by the early mandate period had become the second largest Christian community in the Holy Land. The end of the mandate saw the Latins poised as the community with the widest network of institutions among all the Christian Communities of Palestine. The clergy and upper hierarchy of the community during this period were solidly expatriate.

It was only after the *Nakba* that the indigenization of the clergy started to take effect. This was in part due to the exigencies of the new situation with an Arab nationalist government, in power in Amman as well as the new guidelines that proceeded from Rome after Vatican II. Despite having a preponderance of Arab parish priests since the middle of the twentieth century, the Latin Patriarchate had to wait till 1987 for a native Palestinian (albeit, a heavily Europeanized one), to become Patriarch. As in the case of the Greeks, the popular demand for an Arab Patriarch to lead the Catholic faithful in the Holy Land met with heavy opposition from the European Catholic Orders based in Jerusalem and other parts of the Holy Land. Even now, few of the orders have a significant local component. As in all the previous cases, post-1967 the Israelis also were not sympathetic to this demand for obvious reasons. In keeping with Catholic traditions world wide, all tensions and conflicts within the Church remained low key and did not tend to become public issues like the Greek or even Anglican case.

The Uniate Churches of Palestine provided quite a different picture from that pertaining to the Latin Church. They have had a much longer history of indigenization, being Churches that have traditionally kept outside the tentacles of Rome while accepting Roman suzerainty. The main Uniate Churches active in Palestine include the Maronite Church and the Greek Catholic (Melkite) Church. These two Churches are unique in their level of indigenous (political) development, with the full level of ecclesiastical hierarchy from deacon to Bishop-Patriarch being ethnic Arab. The Melkites had a long grievance against the Latins, growing back almost to the establishment of the Patriarchate in 1847. The Melkites felt that they were the true Catholics of Palestine and the Latin Church was an unwanted interruption into what was in effect their own territory. The fact that the Latins managed to acquire vast funds and support from Rome and the West did not help matters at all. The Greeks felt excluded with good reason, as the Latin Church grew to become the second largest denomination in mandate Palestine. During the Jordanian Era, the Arab roots of the Church stood it in good stead, as the Church was able to establish good relations with the Arab nationalist government. Many of the Melkite Church leaders and bishops have distinguished themselves as fervent Arab Nationalists. This proved a drawback with the later Israeli administration in marked contrast to the Maronites, another Arab Christian group that developed good relations with the Israelis as an adjunct to the secret Israeli-Maronite alliance in Lebanon. In 1974, prominent Melkite Bishop Hilarion Kaputji was even jailed for a period on the charge of gun running for the PLO.

Convicted to a period of fifty-seven years in jail, he was released in 1977 reportedly on the personal appeal of Pope Paul VI.<sup>45</sup> Kaputji later stated that Jesus Christ was the first fidayi and that he was just following His example.<sup>46</sup> Since the late seventies, the Melkite Church has settled down into a role as the Arab Nationalist opposite of the Greek Orthodox, a position that the Church seeks to fulfill with distinction.

Like the Greek Orthodox, the Latins too have a laity, largely Palestinian; with a clergy that is mainly foreign (Italian) in origin at the upper levels. Unlike the Greeks, however, the Latin's today are made up of a large number of delegations, sects and groups each charged with a particular duty within the context of the Catholic Church's role in the Holy Land. It is interesting to note that just one of the many orders in Palestine today has a native Palestinian cleric as Superior. Similar to the Greek Brotherhood, the Franciscans fulfill the role of Custodians (*Custos*) of the Holy Land with special duties and role as well as space in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Within the broad framework of the Catholic Communion, Eastern Rite Churches such as the Maronite, Greek Catholic (Melkite), Syrian Catholic and Armenian Catholic all function in the Holy Land at the Patriarchal level. In fact, the Uniate Churches along with the Latins form the largest group of Arab Christians in Palestine today. The Uniate Churches are those parts of the Orthodox Church that united with Rome in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and they have a mainly local leadership and clergy in opposition to the Greek Orthodox.

The Vatican's official engagement with Israel began with the signing of the so-called 'Fundamental Agreement (FA) between Holy see and The State of Israel' on December 30; 1993. This agreement paved the way for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two entities. The Accord is most important as it included for the first time, a public declaration on the part of the State of Israel, to its continuing commitment to maintain and respect the 'Status Quo' in the Christian Holy Places to which it applies and the respective rights of the Christian communities there under.<sup>47</sup>

The main provisions of the treaty dealt with the legal status of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land as per Israeli and Vatican law. The agreement included a Roman Catholic commitment to favour pilgrimages to the Holy Land, an issue of great interest always for the Israelis. The Church's traditional right to establish schools and carry out other charitable functions was reaffirmed.<sup>48</sup> It also ensured the Vatican a place in any future Christian role in the administration of the city of Jerusalem. This was enshrined in a secret annex to the main document. The Israelis also got the Catholics to include a condemnation of anti-Semitism, something that is worth mentioning, coming as it does before the 2000 trip to the Holy Land by the late Pope John Paul II, when he made all this quite explicit.

### **The Special Statute for Jerusalem**

The 'Special Statute' for Jerusalem, while essentially a Catholic idea was given all-church approval in the 1994 memorandum by the Patriarchs and Heads of Christian Communities. While still rather a vague document, the Statute does make a point of certain issues. The Christians in a spirit of mutual compromise would prefer any future agreement on the administration of Jerusalem to be drawn up by representatives of the three main religions along with those of the so-called 'local political powers.' Whereas the Vatican has always made it a point to talk about the internationalization of the city in the past, this demand has

now been replaced by the term ‘international guarantees.’ In fact since the end of 1967, Vatican demands for a special status for Jerusalem have stopped short of internationalization of the city. The issue for the Vatican since then has been to secure a special status, again internationally guaranteed for Jerusalem, irrespective of the State that exercises sovereignty over the city as such.<sup>49</sup> This should be understood as polite jargon for the involvement of Western Christian nations as guarantors of the safety and security of the Churches and Christians of Palestine. The document cunningly makes no mention of the area to be covered by the projected Special Statute, possibly from the need to cover Holy Areas in Israel proper as well as trans-Jordan in addition to the Old City and its immediate environs itself. The 1994 Memorandum does not in any way commit itself to mentioning Jerusalem as the capital city of Israel or of the future Palestinian State.<sup>50</sup>

As far as Israel was concerned, the Special Statute envisaged loss of sovereign powers that Israel acquired over the eastern half of the city including the Old City after the 1967 war. In return, recognition of Jewish religious rights, again with international guarantees was offered. Jews were offered seats in formulating laws covering Christian and Muslim Holy Places. The western half of the city was recognized as Israeli.<sup>51</sup>

The long time demand of the Palestinians for recognition of East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine was not supported by the Special Statute. There were allowances for the wider Islamic ‘Ummah’ to be involved in the formulation of laws that regulate the Holy Places. The separation of East Jerusalem from the Western part of the city was a demand conceded on the part of the Churches to the Palestinians.<sup>52</sup>

Regarding Jerusalem, the demands of the Holy See had always been

1. “Equality of rights and of treatment for the three monotheistic religious communities” which would include freedom of worship, access to the Holy Places, respect for the ‘Status Quo,’ and cultural and historical conservation Of the Holy City.”

2. “Guarantees of the three religious communities ability to exist and live in peace, within the context of their religious, cultural, civil and economic spheres.”<sup>53</sup>

The Holy See has never made any secret of its desire for a special status for Jerusalem and the holy sites.<sup>54</sup> As Michel Sabbah, Latin Catholic Patriarch of Jerusalem has declared,

The key of any solution for the future of Jerusalem is sharing and equality in sovereignty as well as in duties and rights.<sup>55</sup>

This was one of the reasons why Vatican communiqués on the Palestine issue would regularly raise the issue of non-fulfillment of half of resolution 181, that on November 29, 1947, had laid out a two-state solution plan, a co-habitual Jewish state and an Arab State, with Jerusalem under a special International Regime.<sup>56</sup> Again UNSC Resolution 242 that ordered Israel to withdraw from the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights, all occupied during the 1967 ‘Six Days War,’ has been regularly referred to by the Vatican, both in lieu of traditional Catholic support for the Palestinian and Arab views on the war and conflict as well. Interestingly, this issue was not raised in the FA, but in the BA with the PNA. The Basic Agreement with the Palestinians made no secret of the call by the Vatican in support of Palestinian self-determination, though couched in the inevitable diplomatist language.

However though the Palestinians went along with the Vatican in endorsing the so-called 'special statute for Jerusalem, internationally guaranteed,' they also made no secret of their eventual opposition to such a plan that would interfere with their long held negotiating standpoint of full sovereignty and authority with East Jerusalem as their capital. The FA with Israel makes no mention of the 'Special Statute.'

Though it would seem that the Vatican might insist on some sort of international statutory instrument to achieve its goal, again in diplomatic terms, it might also be willing to consider the specific issues involving a "bilateral plus" arrangement with Israel. Israel's willingness to affirm existing international instruments such as the November 25, 1981, UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, the 1972 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, and the 1976 Recommendation Concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas all add up to covering the need for so-called 'international guarantees' on the part of the Roman Catholic Church. Again much will depend on incremental development in Israel-Vatican relations and Vatican satisfaction in progress of relations on the basis of the FA. The Vatican's need to 'internationalize' issues relating to Jerusalem will obviously decline as a result of the above.<sup>57</sup>

The Vatican has always resisted the Declaration in 1980 by the Israeli Knesset that Jerusalem was the "eternal and indivisible capital" of the Jewish Nation. It was also interesting that the Vatican allowed itself to issue mutually contradictory statements with both the Israelis and the Palestinians, declaring in the FA that it considered itself a disinterested party in merely political conflicts, and those that dealt with "disputed territories and unsettled borders." This was an implicit and quite clear reference to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the West Bank and Gaza issue. The reiteration in the BA that the Palestinian issue should be solved on the basis of international law and UN Security Council resolutions (242 and 476) seemed to be in direct opposition to the position agreed to in the FA by the Vatican. Article four of the FA commits the Vatican to recognize the Status Quo by its reverse obligation to recognize the temporal regime dealing with the presence of three main Christian denominations in the Holy Land. And Article 12 stipulates that negotiations will continue between the Holy See and the Jewish State regarding certain questions (not mentioned) that were agreed upon in the agenda of the July 15, 1992 meeting. The FA placed a lot of strain on inter-church relations as the other churches thought that the Vatican in collusion with the Israelis was cheating them.<sup>58</sup> The Latins being armed with the FA as well as another with the PLO (PNA) called the Basic Agreement (BA) seemed to be in a stronger position vis-à-vis the other churches to bargain with the ruling authorities. The Vatican had major reasons for being dissatisfied with the Israelis who have been dragging their feet as regards the follow-up to the FA is concerned. Legislation has yet to be introduced in the Knesset to implement the FA a decade after it was signed and the Israelis have refused to carry forward negotiations on a fiscal treaty between the Jewish State and the Vatican.<sup>59</sup> An agreement on the applicability of Church law within Israel was concluded by the Government of Israel and the Vatican in 1997.<sup>60</sup> The Greeks as well as the Armenians have yet to commit themselves to any such agreements or understandings.

The Patriarchs and Heads of Christian Communities issued a memorandum on November 14, 1994, entitled "The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians", in which they stated that, Jerusalem is a symbol and a promise of the presence of God, of fraternity and peace

for humankind, in particular for the children of Abraham: Jews, Christians and Muslims. We call upon all parties concerned to comprehend and accept the nature and deep significance of Jerusalem, the city of God. None can appropriate it in exclusivist ways. We invite each party to go beyond all exclusivist visions or actions, and without discrimination, to consider the religious and national aspirations of others, in order to give back to Jerusalem its true universal character and to make of the city a holy place of reconciliation for humankind.<sup>61</sup>

The Joint Memorandum on 14 November 1994 affirmed the inviolability of the Status Quo as existing. In addition, the FA's restatement of the Status Quo agreements in the Holy Places was meant to reassure the other churches, particularly the Orthodox that the Catholics had no desire to usurp any of their rights in the Holy Land.<sup>62</sup> The Joint Memorandum essentially binds all the churches to formulate a united position on any future developments in the political situation in the Holy Land. The memorandum was also meant to alleviate the intense unease felt by the Greek Orthodox at the agreement entered into by the Latin Patriarchate with the Israeli state via the Holy See.

The Greeks have often indicated that they would prefer the continuance of the Israeli Status Quo to any change that would endanger their traditional superiority in Jerusalem. In short, the Greeks have fears that they will be faced with a Lebanon-like situation where they will have to forego their rights (like the Maronites) as part of a general rearrangement of Church rights in the Holy Land. The traditional fear of the much more powerful Roman Catholic Church is always there for the Greeks. This was one of the reasons for Greek Patriarchs to often maintain that the 'Vatican does not represent us.' Conversely, this declaration when actively carried out by the Latins often resulted in protests from the Orthodox side. Thus, at a conference on relations between Judaism and 'Christianity,' organized jointly by the Israeli government and the Latin Patriarchate, there was no invitation for the other 'Christian' groups such as the Greeks and Armenians. Questions were immediately raised in the Greek press and other media about the Catholic definition of the word 'Christian', as applied to the Holy Land, did this just include the Catholic's of various rites, Eastern and Western, or was it all-encompassing to include the whole gamut of Christianity, Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic.<sup>63</sup> In 1995, Patriarch Diodoros even issued a call for an agreement with the Israelis similar to that the Israelis had with the Vatican, though he was particularly careful to mention that there should be no interference with the Status Quo and established rights and practices. Possibly as a result of intense pressure from his parishioners who were horrified at such a call, nothing came of it and the GOC to this day has no understanding with either the Israelis or, for that matter, the Palestinians.

The Orthodox often cited the issue of the fourth crusade and the sack of Constantinople to show the lack of trust that still colours relations between the Eastern and Western halves of Christianity when referring to Catholic positions on Jerusalem.<sup>64</sup> Taking into account all the fears of Orthodox Christians and Church Leaders in Jerusalem and the Levant in general, the heads of the Eastern Orthodox Churches issued a Patriarchal Message (Bull) at the celebration of the Revelation in the island of Patmos on September 9, 1995, where they stated that

Any discussion regarding changes of the Holy Land's status quo, which was established through the ages by means of international decisions and treaties, cannot and

should not be made without the knowledge of and in the absence of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which has been based there for centuries.<sup>65</sup>

Subsequently, in a highly controversial statement released from London in 2001, Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah revealed the long held Vatican view of the present unsuitability of the 'Status Quo' when he called for it to be revised should Jerusalem ever come into more quiet and peaceful times, with the rider that this should be done in a way that did not compromise or prejudice the rights and obligations of any party involved. He advocated the creation of new mechanisms to overcome the difficulties that arose when it becomes practically necessary to rebuild and repair buildings such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>66</sup> It cannot be said that the other Church leaders quiescently accepted such outspoken views.

### **The Visit of Pope John Paul II to Israel**

A major milestone in Israeli-Catholic Church relations was the visit of the late Pope John Paul II to the Holy land in 2000 AD. This in fact galvanized Israeli public opinion in favour of the Catholic Church for the first time since the establishment of the state of Israel. Pope John Paul II, quite in opposition to his predecessor Paul VI in 1964, made it very clear beforehand that he was going on a journey of forgiveness and reconciliation. He started off his pilgrimage to the Holy Land with a visit to Vad Yashem, the Israeli Holocaust Museum and then proceeded to make an unprecedented apology for all the wrongs done to the Jews by the Christians over the ages. These actions seemed to seek a hitherto unseen empathy with an all too cynical Israeli public that would have been quite happy to discard the Pope's visit as nothing more than an insincere gentile gimmick. The late Pope himself found himself treading a dangerous diplomatic minefield as he could not be seen as diluting the Church's traditional support for the Palestinian people.<sup>67</sup> Majorities of the Catholic faithful in the Holy Land were indigenous Palestinians.

### **The Controversy of the Mosque at Nazareth**

The late Pope's visit found itself in the middle of a controversy over a proposed mosque to be built in Nazareth, right next to the Basilica of the Annunciation, a Church that was doubly important to the Vatican, being wholly in Catholic hands, unlike the other two Churches, the Holy Sepulcher and Nativity in Jerusalem and Bethlehem respectively. Overriding Vatican concerns, the Israelis had authorized the local Waqf to go ahead with the construction of the Mosque, albeit in a delayed and staggered manner, so as to get the Millennium year well over before embarking on what was seen as a highly controversial action in a rather explosive situation. And in fact over the Easter of 1999, clashes took place in Nazareth between Christians and Muslims, which led to a number of casualties, but no deaths. This in turn was highly unusual in a land where all the potential for clashes was between the ruling authorities and the local people, whatever their confessional status. It was a certainly a ripe field for the Israelis to interfere in, especially in the light of their established policy of 'divide and rule.' There were allegations from the Vatican side that the Israelis had sided with the local Muslims under pressure from the nascent Islamic Movement in Israel. The Mosque itself was to be built in the name of Shihab el-Din, believed to be the nephew of the Saladin, and a revered local Islamic saint. Nazareth, contrary to popular perception was a city with a Muslim majority and this also must have been a motivating factor for the Israelis.



The Palestinian Authority on the other hand took an opposing stand to that of the Israelis and opposed the construction of the mosque. The Palestinians accused the Israelis of fomenting Muslim-Christian animosity using this issue. Ultimately the agreement brokered (or imposed) by the Israelis saw a mosque to be built on 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the land, a year after the official stone-laying ceremony. In January 2002, a couple of weeks after construction work had started at the site, the Israeli cabinet reversed the decision that they had taken to permit construction of the mosque thereby exposing them again to the accusation that they had been just playing the two groups against each other as the Palestinians had accused.<sup>68</sup>

The final compromise that was accepted by all parties to the dispute and which had been proposed by the PA as well as the Arab League mediators was for the mosque to be built on land provided for elsewhere in Nazareth. This was saluted by the Vatican's Jerusalem Patriarch Michel Sabbah as a true compromise in favour of peace in Nazareth.<sup>69</sup> It will be apt to note at this point that the Palestinians have also not been averse to undertaking actions concerning the churches that sought to forward their own interests as well as that of powerful backers. In July 1997, the Palestinian Authority forced out a 'White Russian' monastic group from a church in the PA controlled zone of Hebron and handed over the building to the Moscow Patriarchate.<sup>70</sup> This was construed in Israel and among pro-Israeli Christian media groups as an unwarranted interference by the PA in Church Affairs.

### **Armenian Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem**

The Armenians were the third in the troika of major Christian sects that controlled the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as well as other major pilgrimage centers in the Holy Land. The activities of the Church in the Holy Land were controlled by the Brotherhood of St. James, which was made up of around 50 members. Unlike the Greek case, laity and clergy equally shared duties within the Armenian fold, and the Armenian quarter with its church and monastery of St. James was unique in that it provided a mixed residential ambience for monks, priests as well as laity. The Armenians, pre-1948, were a community in a state of both consolidation as well as transition, a process that would continue through the *Nakba* period into the Jordanian epoch. The community had grown exponentially as a result of the Turkish massacres and was quite well settled in Jerusalem and environs as compared to other émigré groups. There was a clear division within the community, between the old set of so-called 'original Armenians' and the new set of Turkish Armenians, many of whom preferred Anatolian dialects of Turkish to their traditional Armenian language. As a highly close-knit group and more-over one that had little or no clergy-laity problems, both being of the same racial creed and stock, the Armenians provided a different picture from what traditionally has come to be associated with Jerusalem Churches and indeed Eastern Churches in particular.

Despite this, tensions have periodically arisen within the church over the issue of Patriarchal elections with the two main Armenian Sees (Archbishoprics) of Eghtmiadzin and Antelias contesting for their separate candidates to the See of Jerusalem. As a Europeanized group (thanks to the many missionary schools established in Armenian inhabited territories during the 19th century), the Armenians did well under British administration, particularly in trade and business. The *Nakba* saw the uprooting of many Armenian businesses particularly in

West Jerusalem and the coastal towns and cities of what had been mandatory Palestine, creating many refugees that either sought refuge in West Jerusalem or went further afield over the Jordan to Amman and then on to the West. The Jordanian period was thus not a good period for the Church, which lost almost half of its original membership. There were tensions with the Jordanian authorities as well that resulted in the expulsion of a Patriarch (as well as a Patriarchal candidate) twice by Amman. The tensions caused by internal rivalry as well as external interference continued after 1967, with the Israelis supporting one faction against the other. It finally took the arrival of an American Archbishop as Patriarchal candidate in 1990 and his succession as a neutral Patriarch for tensions to start to cool down.

The Armenians' existence as a separate ethnic community within an overwhelmingly Palestinian Christian setting almost cost them dear at the Camp David negotiations between Arafat, Barak and Clinton when there were moves to separate the well-defined Armenian sector within the walled city and combine it with the Jewish sector as part of the area that would be under Israeli sovereignty, pending division of the city in a future peace plan. None of the Jerusalem Patriarchs were briefed about the negotiation process or during the talks at Camp David in July 2000.<sup>71</sup> This move to separate the Armenians from their Palestinian and Christian Brethren was alarming enough for the joint heads of the Christian Churches in Jerusalem to send a letter to the negotiating parties at Camp David protesting vigorously against any such move and asking that they also be involved in any future negotiations on the future of the city.<sup>72</sup> The clerics demand to have representatives from the Churches at the Summit was never fulfilled. The Patriarchs however made it very clear that

We regard the Christian and Armenian Quarters of the Old City as inseparable and contiguous entities that are firmly united by the same faith.<sup>73</sup>

The Armenian Government at Yerevan in its position as protector of Armenian communities worldwide also made it clear that it fully endorsed the position of the Jerusalem Patriarchate in this regard. Other than the concept of Christian unity and the natural feelings of community not to become isolated from other brotherly groups, the Armenians were terrorized by concern for their land and property, should they come under permanent Israeli rule as portrayed by the failed settlement at Camp David.<sup>74</sup> The Armenian sector had already suffered the most loss of the three non-Jewish quarters because of its proximity to the reconstructed Jewish Quarter. Barak's move to annex the Armenian Quarter was seen in Armenian circles as just another ill-conceived plan to acquire some more land for the State of Israel in what must be the most contested piece of real-estate in the world.<sup>75</sup> Given a choice, the Armenians, like the Catholics and other Christians, would prefer some sort of 'internationalized status' for Jerusalem under the control of the UN, or other similar multinational entities. This call, of course, goes right back to the 1948 UN Partition Plan for Palestine that placed Jerusalem under a UN supervised 'International Administration.' At that time, of course, the city was divided as a result of war and strategic calculations by the great powers ensured that the city would remain divided till 1967 when as a result of the Six Days War; it came under full Israeli sovereignty. If internationalization is impossible in the given circumstances, then the Armenians have no objection to some sort of joint Palestinian-Israeli Administration, but again with international guarantees for the Christians, like an international arbitration system that would ensure them impartial justice should any form of irresolvable disputes break out with the authorities, whether Israeli or Palestinian.<sup>76</sup> These innovative ideas for solving the

Jerusalem tangle and ensuring equitable justice for all the factions has increasingly been known as the 'Christian perspective' on peace in the Holy Land.<sup>77</sup>

### Protestantism in Jerusalem

The Protestants were relatively new arrivals on the Jerusalem scene but they flourished in the 20th century in spite of the many misfortunes that befell the Christian community in the city. This is mainly due to the patronage that these churches inevitably received from the west and western tourists to the Holy Land. The Protestants of Palestine have had a somewhat chequered existence over the years, with the Greeks and other older churches often begrudging their growth and development. The CMS and other London based missionary groups (as well as those from Germany) actively sought to reconvert the converted so as to speak, seeking members from the Orthodox and Catholic Churches in Palestine. The mandate period helped the Protestants, as the British were naturally sympathetic to the Episcopal Church in Palestine. Many Anglican Church members were quite well educated and formed the cream of Palestine and Jerusalem's 'native' society. The *Nakba* created a void in this church as many of the wealthy Arabs were fled, leaving most of their property behind. The Church found itself divided between a Jordanian side and an Israeli remnant. There were tensions within the Church itself with the hierarchy dominated by Anglo-Saxon clerics deeming it inconsequential to bow to demands from the native laity for an Arab Bishop that would be sensitive to their own national aspirations and requirements. This fight was carried on during the Jordanian era with the national authorities often seeing it fit to support the native side in what was their own legitimate aspiration to governance.

When sides switched again after 1967, the Israelis were interested in ensuring that Episcopal rule remained firmly in Anglo hands. In spite of the availability of educated clergy of Arab origin, the local Palestinians were denied a Bishop of their own, the only ostensible reason being that such an appointment would clash with the expatriate interest in the Holy Land. When finally an Arab Bishop (along with an English Archbishop) was consecrated in 1958, he was found to be a paper tiger with no power what so ever in the prime seat of Anglican authority in Jerusalem, namely St. George's Cathedral and congregation. It took decades of incessant pressure and countless rounds of meetings for Canterbury to finally come round to granting the local Anglican Arab populace an indigenous Bishopric in 1978. And even then a rider was attached, whereby the prestigious St. George's Cathedral and College as well as the pro-Zionist organization, the Church Mission to the Jews (C. M. J) was granted a special status, bringing it under the General Synod of the Anglican Church in the Middle East and the Archbishop of Canterbury so as to avoid the direct authority of a native Arab Bishop. Naturally the attitude of the Israelis to the Church underwent a change after 1976, as a local Bishop could not be expected to be sympathetic to the aspirations of the occupying authority.

The Lutherans in Palestine and Israel also seemed to have gone through a similar experience as the Anglicans though on a much more restricted scale, given the relative size as well as lack of local wealth of the indigenous church. The Lutheran Compromise has been more a case of voluntary segregation with the Arab pastor in charge of the Arab congregation while another European pastor was to look after the English speaking and German speaking faithful. The Church since 1979 has considered it a wholly Arab one, headed by an Arab Bishop with the rather controversial name of 'The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan.'

In both the cases of the main Protestant Churches in Jerusalem and adjoining areas, the politics of patronage and condescension that came into play as a result of the churches having substantial linkages with the West and western Churches caused a considerable amount of tension as well as bad feeling among the local indigenous Christians. The indigenization of the Arab Episcopal Church ensured that any preferential treatment hitherto enjoyed by the Church from the Israelis was at an end (though this would not apply to the non-Arab sections, CMJ, St. George's Cathedral and Church institutes).

Both these churches along with many others (the total number of protestant groups in the city, ranging from the fiercely pro-Zionist evangelical cults to the moderate Episcopal churches numbers around 50) were highly popular with the large numbers of western tourists that continually poured into Jerusalem. The State strongly supported the so-called Christian Zionist groups that have made Jerusalem their home, anxiously waiting for the fulfillment of Biblical Prophecy in the Holy Land. These groups led by the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, were often at daggers drawn with the mainline Churches, which in turn have very little in common with these mainly American-funded movements. On the contrary, the World wide Ecumenical Movement led by the World Council of Churches (WCC) has always supported the Palestinians right to self-determination as well statehood. In this context, the WCC has been an active outside supporter of the Jerusalem Churches as well the local Palestinian Christians. The WCC with 342 member churches around the world apart from the Roman Catholic Church is an influential force in world church politics.

### **Israeli attitude towards the Church in Palestine Today**

Succeeding Israeli administrations seemed to be more inclined to regard local Christians as a pain in the neck and have sought to encourage fundamentalist variants of the Christian faith to supplant the remnants of the great churches of Eastern Christendom. The biblical nature of the Jewish state has always been a powerful rallying point for these 'evangelical' groups. In addition to all this, the intense suspicions with which the various churches, Catholic and various shades of Orthodox as well as old Protestant, have viewed each other through the ages, has made inter-church cooperation, a very difficult proposition to manage coherently.

The Churches of Jerusalem in the post-1990s did not seem to have much to celebrate in their relations with the ruling authorities as well as their status in the Holy Land. Their international relations have also been hampered to a large extent by the happenings of the last five years or so with tourist arrivals in Jerusalem and Bethlehem dropping much below the usual average, curtailing the ability of the Church to portray itself as an essential part of the Jerusalem spectrum, in the eyes of the Israeli authorities. The present uncertainty and high level of violence in the region has ensured almost no tourist and pilgrim arrivals in Palestinian areas. As far as the local Christians, whether Arab or non-Arab were concerned, the main issues in their day-to-day living as well as worshipping have been the tensions caused by the renewal of the Intifada and its indefinite continuance without any sign of a lasting ceasefire in the making. Alongside this, the relations of the Churches with the Jewish state have proceeded over the last ten to twenty years from one of tacit cooperation to that of intense suspicion, if not frustration. This frustration has been directed not only at the ruling authorities, but also at their external sponsors (meaning certain countries in Europe and North America) that seem to

have failed to recognize or even pay due attention to the sensitivities and the traditions of the historic churches of Jerusalem.

Different calculated actions by succeeding Israeli administrations have raised doubts and allegations from the Church side that there is an overall plan to slowly eat away at Church land, either through buying where possible, through the covert manipulation of leases or if all else fails by outright expropriation in the name of state security. As the Arab-Jewish demographic ratio became more and more skewed in favour of the Arabs, when the overall picture is taken into consideration, Church authorities predict on the basis of the experience of the last ten-twenty years, acceleration in policies of property targeting and acquisition as the state moves to ensure that Jewish demographic superiority is not affected in any way. This was particularly significant with respect to the Old City of Jerusalem where the State has always been on the defensive and where there was an active on-going policy of acquiring land in the non-Jewish quarters by virtually any way possible. It was in this context that the state's ability to play off one faction against the other for the sake of acquiring these benefits comes into being. The Churches on the other hand have never been able to formulate a coherent or single policy with regard to territorial acquisition policies on the part of the Israeli State. What has followed in the last two decades or so (out of a hundred and twenty years of Zionist Land Regimes) has been piecemeal policy mainly dictated at the personal initiatives of Arab land committees or concerned Armenian individuals.

The infamous St. John's Hospice Incident revealed the extent to which the Israeli settler regime had been planning a direct confrontation with the churches to take over valuable Jerusalem real estate, in this case, a building that had belonged to the GOC for centuries. In 2002, the 'Baron Der' issue broke out as land owned by the Armenian Church in Jerusalem at Bethlehem traditionally used as a retreat centre for Armenian monks, was cited for take-over and confiscation orders were issued. The Armenian Patriarchate protested to the Israeli Supreme Court as well as alerting the worldwide Armenian Diaspora and Christian community as to the fall-out of this blatant take-over of Church land that had belonged to the AC since 1641. The Roman Catholic Church has had to fight to keep a monastery in the Abu Dis area from being swallowed up by the Wall as well as nearby settlements. In addition to this, outright lease and sale of church lands to the state as well as other Jewish authorities have always created tensions between the clergy associated with these policies and the lay people. This has particularly been the case in both the Greek Orthodox as well as Armenian Church in the last two or three decades.

Inter-Church relations in Jerusalem have been often affected by questions of honour and dignity and who comes first and so on. Thus the Greek Orthodox Patriarch is often the first to claim the 'first among equals' status for himself, with the Ottoman authority as proof of this. The Armenian Patriarch would be equally happy to show his authority as coming all the way from Saladin himself. The Latin Patriarch could claim the support of the Vatican and all of Catholic Europe, behind his privileges in the Holy Land. In spite of questions of who comes first and so on, the churches in the face of a joint threat from a common enemy (the State), has adopted a common platform on major issues and to project a unified stand as necessary for their common survival.

The World Council of Churches has since its formation in 1948 played an active and supporter's role in favour of the Palestinian cause and consequently has often been seen as an

anti-Israeli organization. As evangelical and pro-Zionist Christian groups have acquired a lot of political and financial clout during the last quarter century, the worldwide Christian political scenario is en-route to getting increasingly polarized with the ecumenical against the evangelicals primarily on the issue of Palestine/Israel and Christian support for Zionist projects within Israel. The various uncertainties faced by the churches of Palestine have served to recreate a sense of urgency as well as long-lost unity among them, as a realization dawns that ultimately, they may only have each other for real support. The decline in numbers of the local Christian population relative to the total Arab Muslim population in Palestine /Jerusalem has been the most worrying issue concerning Church leaders over the last two decades or so. From a low of just over 2% of the population, the relative ratio is projected to go further down over the next couple of decades exposing the whole Christian heritage of the region to the danger of being considered just museum pieces for other people to come and admire in disconnection from the surroundings. The actions of the Israeli right wing and the settler lobbies, particularly in the last two or three decades, have seemed to threaten the very existence of the established churches in the Holy City.

The last two decades or so have been extremely volatile and violent in Palestine and needless to say, Israel as well. Thousands of people have been killed and needlessly maimed in what has now bogged down into a case of Middle Eastern attrition warfare. What we have seen in the Holy Land is that cycles of intense violence have alternated with periods of intense diplomacy and peace making, though the 'attrition syndrome' has not allowed peace a real chance as yet. In the midst of all this, the churches have also been active trying to make their presence felt through a series of historic joint declarations reflecting a newfound unity in action as well as deeds.<sup>78</sup>

In this context, it is interesting to note that within the last decade or two, both Catholic as well as Orthodox Patriarchs have publicly issued calls for Palestinian independence, sovereignty and statehood, something that went unrecorded from their pulpits all the years previously.<sup>79</sup> The churches, despite sometimes extremely difficult working conditions, are also in the process of consolidating themselves internally as well as externally networking to form stable international partnerships that would act as buffers in any possible scenario of tension with the Israelis. The various Church groups have also been repositioning themselves to take into consideration the future prospect of a Palestinian national presence in the Old City and its environs.<sup>80</sup> The persecutions faced by the Church, have helped the Church hierarchy to identify more with the laity and their staunchly Palestinian nationalist aspirations as well as to provide a basis for a more meaningful inter-religious Muslim-Christian dialogue and co-operation, which is very important for a suitable status of the Church to be assured in a future state of Palestine.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Bernard Sabella, 'Socio-Economic Characteristics and the Challenges to Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land,' in *Christians in the Holy Land*, Michael Prior and William Taylor (eds.), (London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1994), 33.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Prior, C.M., 'The Vatican-Israel Fundamental Agreement', *Living Stones Magazine*, (Appendix 3a), Issue No. 10, Easter 1994, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Hratch Tchilingirian, 'Dividing Jerusalem: Armenians on the Line of Confrontation', *Armenian International magazine*, October 2000, 40.

<sup>4</sup> Refer 'Oriental Orthodoxy' in <http://www.bellatlantic.net/~vze48txr/OrientalOrthodoxy.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Breger and Idinopulos, 27.

<sup>6</sup> Papastathis, Charalambos. K, 'A New Status for Jerusalem? An Eastern Orthodox Viewpoint,' in the *Catholic University of America Law Review*, 45 (3), Spring 1996, 726.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 726-727.

<sup>8</sup> Marshall J. Breger and Thomas A. Idinopulos, 'Jerusalem's Holy Places and The Peace Process,' The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Paper No. 46, Washington, D. C., 1998, 5-6.

<sup>9</sup> Refer in <http://www.armenian-patriarchate.org/page2.html>

<sup>10</sup> Ruth Lapidoth, 'Jerusalem-Some Jurisprudential Aspects', in *The Catholic University of America Law Review*, Columbus School of Law, Washington., D. C., 45 (3), Spring 1996, 663.

<sup>11</sup> Breger and Idinopulos, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Papastathis, 724.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Breger and Idinopulos, 7.

<sup>16</sup> Lapidoth, 663.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Breger and Idinopulos, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>28</sup> Papastathis, 723.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Lapidoth, 'Jerusalem-Some Jurisprudential Aspects.' 670.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Breger and Idinopulos, 11.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 669.

<sup>34</sup> Papastathis, 728.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 681.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 725.

<sup>38</sup> Anthony O' Mahoney, 'Palestinian-Arab Orthodox Christians: Religion, Politics and Church-State Relations in Jerusalem,' c. 1908-1925, *Chronos Revue d'Histoire de l'Universit'e de Balamand*, Balamand, Lebanon, No. 3, 2000, 78.

<sup>39</sup> O'Mahoney, 64

<sup>40</sup> Michael Dumper, 'The Politics of Sacred Space: The Old City of Jerusalem in the Middle East Conflict,' (London: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 120.

---

<sup>41</sup> Papasthasis, 728.

<sup>42</sup> Sotirios Roussos, 'The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and Community of Jerusalem,' unpublished conference paper, Elefsina, May 29, 1994, 17.

<sup>43</sup> Michael Dumper, 'The Christians of Jerusalem in the Post-Oslo Period,' Paper presented at the Symposium, History of Jerusalem, Contemporary Research Trends, Jerusalem, December 15-16<sup>th</sup>, 2000, 10.

<sup>44</sup> Larry Fabian, 'The Role Of Religion,' in *US Middle East Policy: The Domestic Setting*, ed. Shai Feldman (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 1988), in Duncan L. Clarke and Eric Flohr, 'Christian Churches and The Palestine Question,' *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 21 (4), Summer 1992, 77.

<sup>45</sup> Paul Charles Merkeley, 'Christian Attitude towards the state of Israel,' (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 72.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Michael Prior, C. M., 'The Vatican-Israel Fundamental Agreement,' *Living Stones Magazine*, Appendix 3a, Issue No. 10, Easter 1994, 2.

<sup>48</sup> Lapidoth, 'Jerusalem-Some Jurisprudential Aspects,' 682

<sup>49</sup> Papasthasis, 729.

<sup>50</sup> Michael Dumper, 'Church State Relations in Jerusalem: The Christians of Jerusalem in the post-Oslo period,' Unpublished paper, University of Exeter, UK.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Renato R. Martino, 'The Holy See and the Middle East,' *American-Arab Affairs*, No. 29, summer 1989, 81.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Statement by Latin Patriarch Michel Sabah of Jerusalem, 'Christianity and Jerusalem: Present and Future Perspectives,' London, January 23, 2001, 8.

<sup>56</sup> Papasthasis, 730.

<sup>57</sup> Breger and Idinopulos, 35.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Breger and Idinopulos, 31.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 731.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Michael Dumper, 'The Christian Churches of Jerusalem in the Post-Oslo Period,' *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 31 (2), winter 2002, 57.

<sup>63</sup> Papasthasis, 730

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 731.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Statement by Latin Patriarch Michel Sabah of Jerusalem, 'Christianity and Jerusalem: Present and Future Perspectives,' London, January 23, 2001, 4.

<sup>67</sup> See 'Papal Visit to the Holy Land,' Speech of Pope John Paul II at Bethlehem Heliport, March 22, 2000. Available online at <<http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk/briefing/0005/0005002.htm>>

<sup>68</sup> Patrick Goodenough, 'Keep Out of Nazareth Dispute, Israel and Muslims tell PA,' *Cybercast News Service*, London, 22 November, 1999, p. 2, web edition available at <<http://www.cnsnews.com/viewreligion.asp>>



<sup>69</sup> 'Patriarch urges Palestine Independence,' *United Press International*, 21 December 1999, in <http://www.highbeam.com/library/doc1.asp>

<sup>70</sup> Karin Laub, 'Foreign Minister asks Police to Monitor Christian Holy Site,' *AP World stream*, December 3, 1996, in Breger and Idinopulos, 30.

<sup>71</sup> Tchilingirian, 40.

<sup>72</sup> Refer statement of the 'Three Patriarchs to the Leaders at Camp David,' Jerusalem, July 17, 2000.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Tchilingirian, 40.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 43.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid

<sup>78</sup> Refer statement of the Three Patriarchs to the Leaders at Camp David, Jerusalem, 17 July 2000.

<sup>79</sup> Patriarch urges Palestine Independence,' *United Press International*, 21 December 1999, in <http://www.highbeam.com/library/doc1.asp>

<sup>80</sup> Michael Dumper, *The Politics of Sacred Space*, 105.

## References

Armstrong, Karen, 'Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths,' (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996).

Atiya, A.S, 'A History of Eastern Christianity,' (London: Methuen and Co., 1968).

Adams, Michael, 'The Church and Palestine,' (London: Center for the Advancement of Arab British Understanding, nd).

Azarya, Victor, 'The Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem,' (London: University of California Press, 1984).

Ateek, Naim Stifan, 'Justice, and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation,' (New York: Orbis Books, 1989).

Bowman, Glenn, 'Muslim-Christian Shared Shrines and the Articulation of Sectarian and National Identities,' Paper presented at the British society for Middle Eastern studies Annual Conference, University of St. Andrews, 1992.

Breger, Marshall J. and Thomas A. Idinopulos, 'Jerusalem's Holy Places and The Peace Process,' The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Paper No. 46, Washington, D. C., 1998.

---

Bertram, Sir Anton and J.W.A. Young, 'The Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem: Report of the Commission on Certain Controversies between the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Arab Orthodox Community,' (London: OUP, 1926).

Bailey, Betty Jane and J. Martin, 'Who are the Christians in the Middle East?' (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2003).

Cragg, Kenneth, 'The Arab Christian: A History in the Middle East,' (London: Mowbray, 1992).

Chapman, Colin, 'Whose Holy City? Jerusalem and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,' (Oxford: Lion Books, 2004).

'Christian Voices from the Holy Land: O Jerusalem,' Publication of the Palestinian General Delegation to the UK, London, December, 2000.

Dumper, Michael, 'The Christian Churches of Jerusalem in the Post-Oslo Period,' *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 31 (2), winter 2002.

-----, 'The Christians of Jerusalem in the Post-Oslo period,' Paper presented at the History of Jerusalem: A Symposium on Contemporary Research Trends, Jerusalem, December 15-16<sup>th</sup> 2000.

-----, 'The Politics of Sacred Space: The Old City of Jerusalem in the Middle East Conflict,' (London: Lynne Rienner, 2002).

-----, 'The Politics of Jerusalem since 1967,' (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

Hummel, Thomas, Kevork Hintlian and Ulf Carmesund, 'Patterns of the Past: Prospects for the Future,' (London: Melisende, 1999).

Haddad, Hassan and Donald Wagner, 'All in the name of the Bible: Selected essays on Israel, South Africa and American Christian Fundamentalism,' PHRC Special report No. 5, (Illinois: Chicago, April 1985).

Israeli, Raphael, 'Green Crescent over Nazareth: The Displacement of Christians by Muslims in the Holy Land,' (London: Frank Cass, 2002).

- 
- Joseph, John, 'Muslim-Christian Relations and Inter-Christian Rivalries in the Middle East: The case of the Jacobites in an age of transition,' (Albany: SUNY Press, 1983).
- Masalha, Nur, 'The Politics of Denial: Israel and the Palestinian Refugee Problem,' (London: Pluto Press, 2003).
- Merkeley, Paul Charles, 'Christian Attitudes towards the State of Israel,' (Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2001).
- O' Mahoney, Anthony (ed.), 'Palestinian Christians: Religion, Politics and Society in the Holy Land,' (London: Melisende, 1999).
- , Goran Gunner and Kevork Hintlian eds.), 'The Christian Heritage in the Holy Land,' (London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1995).
- Prior, Michael and William Taylor (eds.), 'Christians in the Holy Land,' (London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1994).
- Peri, Oded, 'Christianity under Islam in Jerusalem: The Question of the Holy Sites in early Ottoman Times,' (Leiden: Brill, 2001).
- Pappe, Ilan (ed.), 'Rewriting Histories: The Israel/Palestine question,' (New York: Routledge, 2002).
- Rogan, Eugene. L. and Avi Shlaim (eds.), 'The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948,' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- Schick, Robert, 'The Christian Communities of Palestine from Byzantine to Islamic Rule: A Historical and Archaeological Study,' (New Jersey: The Darwin Press, 1995).
- Sizer, Rev. Stephen R., 'Christian Zionists on the Road to Armageddon,' (Surrey: Christ Church Publications, 2004).
- Talal, El Hassan Bin, 'Christianity in the Arab world,' (London: SCM Press, 1998).
- Tsimhoni, Daphne, 'Christian Communities in Jerusalem and the West Bank since 1948: An Historical, Social, and Political Study,' (Westport, CT: Prager, 1993).
- Ye'or, Bat, 'The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam: From Jihad to Dhimmitude,' (London: Associated University Presses, 1996).
-