

"IF I FORGET THEE, O JERUSALEM"

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ABBA EBAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS
TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL, FEBRUARY 20, 1950

In the United Nations between October 1949 and February 1950, Israel argued against a statute for an international regime for Jerusalem, and in favor of international supervision for the Holy Places.

A devotion to the Holy City has been a constant theme in the history of our people for three thousand years. In our own generation we have seen the ancient link between Israel and Jerusalem fully restored. Assaulted by the violence which threatened their total destruction two years ago, the State of Israel and the New City of Jerusalem have emerged together from mortal danger to deliverance. They now speak with one voice. The views which I shall express on Israel's behalf are upheld with special fervor by 100,000 Israel citizens in Jerusalem of whose security, welfare and freedom my Government is the responsible guardian.

It is urgent that the views of my Government should enter the substance and atmosphere of this debate. In the last resort, any international arrangements for the protection of the Holy Places must depend for their implementation on the consent of Jerusalem's population, and of the Government in which that population reposes its trust. The idea that any regime for the satisfaction of religious interests can endure amidst an aggrieved, disaffected and turbulent population will be instantly rejected by any serious mind.

Unless Jerusalem is politically contented, it cannot be religiously serene.

The issue of implementation is so powerfully influenced by considerations of consent that I feel a special duty to convey a frank impression of the state of opinion in Jerusalem, and throughout the rest of Israel, towards the Statute which now forms the basis of the Council's discussion.

This attitude rests primarily on considerations of moral principle and political rights. But it owes its special vehemence to the dark memories which the Statute evokes in the mind of everyone in Jerusalem who recalls its history.

The General Assembly on November 29, 1947, "recommended to the United Kingdom and member States" the adoption and implementation of proposals for Jerusalem which were later specified in the Statute. The objective of that recommendation was "to protect and preserve the unique spiritual and religious interests located in the city". The United Nations pledged itself "to insure that peace and order reign in Jerusalem". It undertook "to promote the security, well-being and any constructive measures of development for the residents". The Trusteeship Council was instructed to elaborate and approve the detailed Statute of the City by April 30, 1949. A Governor at the head of a large military and administrative staff was to assume authority in time to secure legal succession immediately on the termination of the Mandate.

Not a single one of these provisions was ever carried out. Within a few days and throughout the ensuing months, the Holy City, theoretically protected by an international status, was plunged into brutal violence which shook the foundations of its life and cast the shadow of death over every family and home. As the danger to Jerusalem became increasingly acute, the retreat of the United Nations from the responsibility which it had incurred became swifter and more decisive. In the Trusteeship Council the representative of Iraq sounded the note of unconditional resistance. He declared that the proposal for the Statute "was illegal and contrary to the Charter and, being in the form of recommendation, was not binding". He went on to say that the Arab Governments were in no way bound and would reserve complete freedom of action. He stated:

"the prestige of the United Nations could not be served by the enforcement of an unjust plan which could only provoke disorder and bloodshed... Jerusalem deserves independence in the same degree as do the people of Palestine. It can be separated neither geographically nor economically from the rest of the country. The fact that it is a city sacred to three religions provides no legal basis for separation".

The statement made by the representative of Iraq on February 18, 1948, is a notable and eloquent utterance containing many observations on the juridical weakness of the Statute. No one would seriously doubt the accuracy of his comments on the recommendatory effect of the General Assembly's resolutions. The weakness of the Arab position lay not in the exercise of a legitimate right of non-compliance, but in the use of armed force to overthrow the recommendation of the General Assembly. It was at this point alone that the violation of the Charter occurred. Thus in April 1948, the United Nations Palestine Commission, reporting its inability to implement any part of the General Assembly's recommendation, including the Jerusalem Statute, wrote:

"Powerful Arab interests both inside and outside Palestine are defying the Resolution on the General Assembly and are engaged in a deliberate effort to alter by force the settlement envisaged therein. Armed Arab bands from neighboring Arab States, together with local Arab forces, are defeating the purposes of the Resolution by acts of violence".

The Arab world had taken up arms not only against the establishment of a Jewish State, but also, with equal fervor and with greater success, against the establishment of an international regime in Jerusalem.

A new phase in the agony of the Holy City was soon to begin as the armies of the Arab States stood poised for invasion to commence at the precise moment when the Mandate would end. By the end of May the Jewish quarter of the Old City had fallen amidst the destruction of its ancient synagogues, and the banishment of its people. At any moment it appeared that the New City must also succumb. Surrounded on four sides by superior forces, its food supplies dwindling towards the point of famine, with artillery directed toward residential areas taking a hideous toll of life, Jerusalem endured the perils of warfare augmented by the horrors of siege. The supreme torment was the forcible denial of the water supply from the coast. Bombardment, starvation, pestilence and thirst haunted the life of the city at the lowest point of its fortunes since the destruction of the ancient Temple. The Jews of Jerusalem amidst the debris of their homes and beside the graves of their sons looked expectantly towards the United Nations which but a few months

previously had assumed responsibility for their "security and welfare, their peace and order and constructive development".

As the scene shifts from Jerusalem itself to the sessions of the United Nations, we discern a contrast of fantastic proportions between a grave responsibility solemnly assumed - and a resolute determination to do nothing for its fulfilment. The Trusteeship Council, having brought the Statute to a point where it could be adopted and applied, met on March 19, 1948 to accept a proposal to postpone any discussion of the Jerusalem question for a further six weeks. Meanwhile our representatives in the Security Council reiterated their urgent appeals to isolate Jerusalem from the general conflict by a specific assertion of United Nations responsibility. Their appeals fell on deaf ears. On April 1, 1948, Mr. Sharett informed the Security Council that if the United Nations abandoned Jerusalem to its fate, its population would naturally take all the measures which they deemed necessary for their survival and defense. Syria and Egypt, who represented the Arab world in the Security Council, reiterated the Iraqi theme that the Statute was illegal, that Jerusalem must take its chance with the rest of the country, and that the siege and denial of water must be maintained not only as a legitimate act of war but even in the event of truce. No action was taken. "Security, well-being and constructive measures of development" together with the reign of "peace and order" were clearly not available from the Security Council. Perhaps the General Assembly, as the author of this solemn international commitment, would rise to the occasion and provide these desirable things?

The answer came on the afternoon of May 14, 1948. The General Assembly met in special session to determine whether to assume responsibilities in Jerusalem. The Resolution of 1947 had not in itself created United Nations sovereignty in Jerusalem; it had only recommended certain processes which, had they been duly accomplished, would have resulted in the effective succession of the United Nations to the authority previously exercised in the city by the Mandatory Power. That authority, however, could arise not from the adoption of the Resolution but from its implementation; and more especially from the effective installation of a government to take over by May 15, 1948.

The opportunity was decisive and irrevocable. It was deliberately cast away. The General Assembly accepted the view of the United States and Iraq that it would have to act before the expiration of the Mandate at 6 P. M. that day if it wished to establish a legal basis for United Nations authority in Jerusalem. After a discussion under specially expedited procedure, unique in the annals of our Organization, the General Assembly *emphatically* rejected first a Guatemalan proposal that the Statute be admitted to the Agenda and ratified as it stood; second a United States-French proposal establishing an interim "Government of Jerusalem consisting of a United Nations Commissioner and such officers as may be appointed by him or by the Trusteeship Council"; and third an Australian proposal described by its author as a last attempt to "establish a link of any kind between the United Nations and Jerusalem". This proposal would have empowered a United Nations Municipal Commissioner to undertake executive responsibilities in Jerusalem. By this comprehensive rejection, the General Assembly had repudiated its previous intention in the most specific terms. Knowing that a British Act of Parliament terminating the Mandate would take effect in a matter of hours, the General Assembly refused to step into the breach.

The juridical effect of these events was that the Jerusalem area lost its mandatory government on May 14 and that the General Assembly simultaneously decided not to confer any other international capacity upon it. It was not a passive default, but an active relinquishment of responsibility in a critical hour.

The moral implications are even graver. The General Assembly knew that failing a tangible assertion of its interest in Jerusalem, military invasion from the neighboring states would converge upon the Holy City and overwhelm its besieged and isolated Jewish population. The question was whether or not the United Nations should implicitly open the gates and pass by on the other side; or whether it should impose at least a theoretical barrier to invasion. The General Assembly decided to open the gates. At six o'clock when the Mandate expired, the representative of Iraq arose exultantly to cry "the game is up". The General Assembly had lost its right of succession.

The Jews of Jerusalem, engulfed in death and famine, fighting against dire odds for sheer survival itself, had little time to reflect on the deliberations of those who had promised them "security, well-being, peace and order", but five months ago. The Security Council, the Trusteeship Council and the General Assembly had left them no room for misunderstanding. Their alternative was now clear. They must either sit back, paralyzed and inert, while military conquest, anarchy and starvation engulfed their homes; or they must summon up their own energies to fight for their homes and their future at Israel's side. They chose the latter course. When their prospect of survival hung on a thread, at a time when parents wondered if they would see their children wither from famine before their eyes, the life-line thrown from the State of Israel reached the beleaguered city. On the first trucks of the convoys reaching the city with water and food were inscribed the Hebrew words "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its cunning". The people of Jerusalem were not forsaken or alone.

Once bare survival was assured and the siege heroically broken, there began a rehabilitation which has sustained its momentum ever since. In that process a relationship grew up between the State of Israel and Jewish Jerusalem which has now reached full and organic integration. It is a relationship of duty and sacrifice; of mutual responsibility and common aspiration. The city was cut off from its main route of supply; the Government of Israel built an alternative road under heavy enemy fire. The city was threatened with pestilence and thirst; the Government of Israel renewed its water source. Jerusalem was falling apart in anarchy and dissidence through lack of recognized organs of government; the Government of Israel established a separate military governorship to be succeeded by a civil administration, which later merged in a complete union with the rest of Israel. The economy of the city had been struck a nearly fatal blow; the Government of Israel began to pump its life-blood back. Institutions were restored, buildings repaired, damaged areas cleared, industries established, financial subsidies lavished upon the city by the hard-pressed Israel Treasury. Jerusalem was spiritually darkened by a sense of solitude, insecurity and neglect; the Government of Israel made it the scene of the

most solemn and historic moments celebrating the deliverance of Israel and Jerusalem alike. Thus the swift withdrawal of the United Nations from direct governmental responsibility and the advance of the Government of Israel towards the assumption of that responsibility were parallel and simultaneous. Every chance had been given for the United Nations to assume its responsibility and authority. When the opportunity had been irretrievably cast away and further hesitation would have spelled destruction, the vacuum of security and law was swiftly and permanently filled.

Meanwhile the echoes of the Statute for Internationalization continued to die away. The General Assembly in special session had ignored the Statute and the work of the Trusteeship Council. On July 29, 1948, when the Soviet Representative proposed that the Council should proceed with the adoption of the Statute, his one vote alone was available in support of his motion. The Belgian proposal that the Trusteeship Council should forget about the Statute indefinitely was overwhelmingly carried.

In the ensuing weeks the Mediator and the Palestine Conciliation Commission both regarded the Statute as too obsolete a document to merit their attention. The General Assembly in December 1948, evidently considering the Statute to be neither valid nor relevant, called for the preparation of an entirely new scheme over the period of a year. The Statute, with all its associations of illusion and suffering, receded into oblivion. Nothing was heard of it again until, to the general astonishment, it reappeared abruptly in a draft resolution one November morning last year. The rest is recent history leading to our situation today.

The attitude of the people of Jerusalem to this Statute is powerfully influenced by these experiences which are indelibly engraved upon their hearts. Any idea that they can have security or well-being for themselves and their city without the maintenance of their union with Israel has been banished forever from their minds. They cannot justly be asked to dismantle their free institutions in favor of imposed tutelage. Their allegiance goes out to the flag of their people, around which they fought their way to survival against

overwhelming odds. Their natural loyalty is committed to their Government which rescued them from wild carnage and rallied their city with firm and reverent hands into the dignity and peace of Jerusalem's reviving life today. There is no example in history of a people, having once achieved union with its own natural and kindred government, voluntarily turning back to semi-autonomy under outside control. The Charter provides for no contingency whereby a self-governing community can become a dependent territory.

Above all, the people of Jerusalem ask the Trusteeship Council, in the light of the history which I have recalled, to direct to itself a decisive moral question: "Having been unable to provide Jerusalem with government, security and subsistence when it needed them with desperate urgency, can you now come on the scene to disturb the government, security and subsistence which we have consecrated with our own sacrifice and toil?"

The Council appears already to have noticed the paradox whereby the Arab states that killed the Jerusalem statute by violence now cry aloud for the resurrection of their victim. When I recall the violence let loose upon Israel and especially upon Jerusalem the combined power of the Arab League, and when I reflect on the vehemence with which those same States asserted their right to question the mandatory force of General Assembly recommendations, the spectacle of Dr. Jamali as the disinterested defender of international virtue becomes much less impressive than it would otherwise be.

The necessity for an agreed solution is dictated not only by the principles of the United Nations and by the absence of any alternative within the Charter, but also by the special objectives which we all seek to attain. The protection of the Holy Places under United Nations authority is a religious objective sought reverently by countless multitudes throughout the civilized world. It cannot be imagined that such a sublime objective could ever be secured through political suppression leaving bitterness and rancor in its wake.

But the sentiment of Jerusalem's population, though a primary consideration, is not the only factor which determines whether the Statute is now capable of implementation. The Council is not dealing with abstract principles. We have a project for establishing

institutions of government, security, administration and law in a specific territory. Now this territory is not a vacuum. It happens that this territory already contains institutions of government, security, administration and law - institutions deeply rooted, effectively administered and most passionately cherished. When the Statute was drafted it was designed to provide the immediate succession to an expiring regime and thus to establish institutions where none were presumed to exist. Today, however, you cannot establish a governorship or a legislature, a council or a court without somehow accomplishing the disintegration of established institutions. There are no functions unexercised. There are no vacant areas of jurisdiction. The laws, the taxes, the regulations, the judicial processes, the culture, the language, the national and religious customs of Jerusalem are those which it holds in common with Israel as a whole. Indeed, from the earliest days in the development of modern Jewish society in the country, all the concerns and activities of that society have radiated from Jerusalem as their natural center. Its population of 100,000 occupies exclusively those parts of the city constructed outside the walls of historic Jerusalem during the past eight decades.

The fact that scarcely a brick or a house or a street in the greater part of the Israel area of Jerusalem today even existed eighty years ago makes it difficult to contend that the area is of such venerable significance that it must become an international trust.

There are some who, on first thoughts, might be tempted to suggest that this complex and active pattern of institutional life ought not to have come into existence. These laws and taxes, these councils and courts ought not to be there; for they constitute an obstacle to the arrival of the institutions described in the Statute. I hope that what I have said about the developments in the past two years is sufficient to disprove such a contention. It is not easy to suggest with any seriousness that the people of Jerusalem should have lived in a sort of Nirvana for the past twenty-two months, suspended in a vacuum of chaos without government and order, in case the discarded Statute should one day come to life and claim its jurisdiction. My Government has no doubts whatever concerning the complete legitimacy of the political and judicial institutions of Jerusalem. International law contains no definition of lawful authority which does not wholly apply to the status of Israel in Jerusalem

today. This authority proceeds from the people. It is based on consent. It is freely accepted and voluntarily obeyed. It operates effectively without challenge. It is recognized in a valid international agreement concluded at the behest of the Security Council. Its development did not even compete with any previously existing authority or with any other authority lawfully attempting to assume the burden of government.

When the General Assembly on May 14 voted not to establish any government in Jerusalem, it could not have expected that the people of Jerusalem would therefore live in a jungle. When the Security Council, between February and May 1948, firmly declined to organize the city's defense, it must have expected that the city would see to its own security itself. When the Trusteeship Council repeatedly refused to apply a system of administration and law in the early half of 1948, it cannot have imagined that Jerusalem would go on indefinitely preserving a separation from its environment. In that negative sense the United Nations has contributed to the integration and union which mark Jerusalem's life today.

I therefore submit that the Trusteeship Council should report that the adoption of the Statute would commit the Council to the process of destroying free institutions as a prelude to the imposition, against the popular will, of other institutions which could not even be established two years ago. This would be the precise opposite of the role played by the Trusteeship Council everywhere else in the world, where it seeks to develop tutelary regimes into free institutions inspired by local initiative and consent. Indeed, the spectacle of a principal organ of the United Nations occupying itself, at this crisis of civilization, with the cancellation of liberty, tranquillity and civic order in a modern urban residential area whose people and institutions are doing no harm to any living soul – would excite surprise and, perhaps, even ridicule in world public opinion, which rightly expects our Organization to rise to high levels of rational purpose.

The Charter designates three categories of territory to which the Trusteeship System may ever apply, provided the necessary agreements are drawn up. The first category refers to territories under Mandate. It cannot be contended that the Jerusalem

area is now under Mandate, in face of a British Act of Parliament terminating the Mandate nearly two years ago and a simultaneous decision of the General Assembly by its vote on May 14, 1948, not to become the successor regime. It is not necessary to prove that the Jerusalem area does not belong to either of the other two categories referred to in Article 77. This area was not detached from an enemy power in the Second World War; and is not now being voluntarily placed under the Trusteeship System by one or both of the States responsible for its administration.

Since the area is in no way eligible under the Charter for administration by the Trusteeship Council, it is of small importance to reflect that none of the procedures of agreement laid down in Articles 79 and 81 have been carried out. Of greater interest is the comparison between the idea of placing the Jerusalem area under the administration of the Trusteeship Council and the basic objectives of the Trusteeship System as defined in Article 76:

"to promote the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the inhabitants of the trust territories and their progressive development towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned...."

The people of Jerusalem may, with all modesty, claim that their development towards self-government and independence is not unduly slow, and does not require the accelerating processes of the Trusteeship System.

Although the Trusteeship Council is not charged with responsibilities for the maintenance of peace and order, it cannot be indifferent to the need for preserving stability and honoring security agreements everywhere in the world. I therefore draw the attention of the Council to the fact that the attempted implementation of the Statute would undermine public order in Jerusalem and would specifically impair the authority of the Israel-Jordan General Armistice Agreement by which the security of the city is organized. Under that Agreement, which can only be modified by the parties themselves, my Government has undivided responsibility towards its own people and towards the Security Council for the

maintenance of law and order in the greater part of Jerusalem. My Government would not be entitled to regard itself as released from that responsibility by any action of the Trusteeship Council. However, the adoption of the Statute would impair the security of the area, first by reason of the deep resentment which the Statute evokes in the memory and sentiment of our people; and secondly by the explicit encroachment on the authority, title and prestige of the government on whose influence and forces the peace of the city depends. In taking such action the Trusteeship Council would be counteracting the results of laborious efforts invested by the parties, by the Security Council and by the Mediator in constructing an equilibrium of security which has stood the test of many difficulties. In the light of the Security Council's Resolution of August 11, 1949, appealing for the continued maintenance of all the provisions of the Armistice Agreement, the Trusteeship Council would be prejudicing the maintenance of international peace if it adopted any measures inconsistent with that Agreement.

The sole abiding objective of the United Nations in the Jerusalem question is the protection of the Holy Places and sites by the direct exercise of United Nations responsibility. My Government proposes the fulfilment of that objective in a manner consistent with the peace, freedom and welfare of the city. Any particular statute or regime, devised in the past or in the present, is only a means to that paramount end. The means may change, while the end remains inviolate. The means envisaged in 1947 or 1948 for protecting the Holy Places may be replaced or adapted without the least betrayal of the end. When the Jerusalem question first came before the United Nations, it was not in the context of a specific political regime, but in relation to the Holy Places and sites. Indeed, it is noteworthy that the original proposals put before the United Nations by religious authorities asked nothing but effective measures for the protection of Holy Places and religious rights. Thus, on July 15, 1947, Brother Bonaventura, Custos of the Holy Land, made requests of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine which were limited to the international guarantee of religious immunities and which at no point suggested any special political status for the city. He said:

"Should there be a non-Christian State we recommend that measures - international guarantees - be embodied in any arrangement with the new State that may possibly be set up".

In his original letter to the Secretary-General, the Catholic representative expressed Catholic aspirations exclusively in terms of religious guarantees without mentioning any particular political status for Jerusalem as indispensable to the satisfaction of those needs. He said:

"We are completely indifferent to the form of the regime which your esteemed Committee may recommend, provided that the interests of Christendom, Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox, will be weighed and safeguarded in your final recommendations. Primarily, all our sanctuaries should be respected, not only with cold juridicism but with local reverence, and they should be continuously and unconditionally accessible not only to local inhabitants but also to the Christians of the entire world".

In order to satisfy that objective, my Government has repeatedly submitted proposals to international organs. It should be borne in mind that the Holy Places of three faiths in Jerusalem which are of universal concern are located within an area of no more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ square miles, within the Walled City and its immediate vicinity. The Statute would establish international rule over an area of 100 square miles, the greater part of which, including practically all Israel Jerusalem, contains no sites ever defined as Holy Places.

Thus the Statute would attempt to disfranchise, denationalise and subjugate a secular area of $98\frac{1}{2}$ square miles for the sake of Holy Places which it does not contain.

It was in order to avoid this obstacle that my Government has at various times been concerned to examine means of establishing an international regime concerned with the Holy Places. In the Third and Fourth Regular Sessions of the General Assembly the Israel delegation drew attention to the feasibility of extending international rule to the area of historic Jerusalem within which the Holy Places are gathered in a unique concentration, leaving the secular urban areas to pursue their life and freedom unimpaired. In order to secure that international responsibility should extend to all sacred sites in whatever area of the city they are located, my delegation later contributed the idea of an international

control applied not to any specific territory but to the Holy Places themselves wherever they are. My Government further offered to conclude agreements to this effect and to provide for the United Nations to be represented in Israel for the exercise of its responsibility in the Holy Places. It may be that a majority of the members of the United Nations would prefer to see such an arrangement for the Holy Places embodied in statutory rather than in contractual terms. In that event, my Government would be prepared to consult on the form which might be given to a Statute for the Holy Places. We are prepared to explore with the Council and with other parties concerned any avenue which may lead to the effective fulfilment by the United Nations of its responsibility for the Holy Places.

I reaffirm my Government's readiness, apart from arrangements for the Holy Places, to make binding declarations or agreements with the United Nations assuring religious freedom and full liberty for the pursuit of religious education and protection of religious institutions. The United Nations would not be forgiven by history, if presented with a clear possibility of reconciling its primary objectives with the freedom and peace of Jerusalem today, it were to spurn that opportunity in favor of an extremist project which has been associated with constant failure in the treatment of this problem for over two years.

The people of Israel and the Jewish people throughout the world are deeply inspired by the restoration of Israel's independent life in Jerusalem in fulfilment of ancient prophecy. At the same time the solution of the question of the Holy Places in a universal spirit is a purpose which we ardently uphold. While the Christian and Moslem Holy Places were mercifully spared serious damage, the ancient synagogues in the Old City were wantonly destroyed after the end of hostilities. Whereas the Mosque of Omar and the Masjid al Aqsa are accessible to Moslem worshippers and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Church of the Nativity, Gethsemane, the Church of the Ascension, though in Arab hands, are the scenes of devout Christian pilgrimage, the Wailing Wall, the most hallowed Sanctuary of Judaism and the most ancient shrine in the entire city, is barred to all access by worshippers despite solemn agreements and undertakings. In any final settlement to be developed by negotiations out of the Armistice Agreement, the situation affecting the Jewish part of the Old City will surely have to be adjusted.

I am aware that there are some throughout the Christian world who still sincerely doubt whether the destiny of modern Jerusalem as the center of Israel's independence can be harmonized with Jerusalem's universal mission. To them I would suggest that the existence of political freedom in Jerusalem side by side with an international authority for the Holy Places is not only a more expedient and practical solution than that envisaged in the Statute. It is also in every sense a higher ideal. It was as the center of an active political and cultural life, beset by the problems and ordeals of a State, that Jerusalem in antiquity became the home of prophecy and revelation. Only a city alive with movement and ideas could have attracted to its midst the searching minds and spirits who generalized transient events into abiding truths. Prophecy and spiritual searchings have never flourished in a museum. They only arise out of the issues and dilemmas of life. The spiritual heritage which has gone forth from Jerusalem is historically linked with its character as a political center, and with the ancient people who established Jerusalem on what was an obscure Jebusite hill. Surely any sensitive religious insight cannot fail to see some grandeur in the restoration of this people to the city which its own experience rendered famous in the world.

The spiritual ideals conceived in Jerusalem are the moral basis on which modern democracy rests. Would it not be incongruous if the United Nations were to advance the course of democratic liberty everywhere, and yet prevent self-government from taking root in the very city where the democratic ideal was born? Seen in this light, Jerusalem appears above all other cities as a place where democratic institutions most appropriately belong. Out of Biblical ethics came the Declaration of Human Rights proclaiming in its 21st Article that "the will of the people shall be the basis for the authority of government". Less in Jerusalem than anywhere else on earth can this principle be denied fulfilment or set aside.

Our vision is of a Jerusalem wherein a free people develops its reviving institutions, while a United Nations representative, in all tranquillity and dignity, fulfils the universal responsibility for the safety and accessibility of the Holy Places. This is a vision worthy of the United Nations. Our Organization should move at once to realize this harmony and liberate its energies for the issues affecting human survival. Perhaps in this as in other critical periods of history a free Jerusalem may proclaim redemption to mankind.