

The Lasting Legacy of Six-Day War -- How Six Days Changed the life of Palestinians, Israelis and their Relationship

Ziling Chen*

China

*Corresponding Author: Ziling Chen, China

Abstract: *Within six days in June 1967, Israeli armies defeated the combined forces of Egypt, Syria and Jordan. This war was later named the Six-Day War, or Third Arab-Israeli War. This paper examines the lasting legacy of the Six-Day war in the life of Palestinians and Israelis economically, politically, and religiously. The long-term Israeli occupation resulted in Palestinian displacement, impeded the development of the Palestinian economy, as well as created division within Israeli society. Although the war ended, the conflicts persist, most notably in the Old City of Jerusalem. Due to its sacred nature, the Old City became the center of religious conflicts after the Six-Day War.*

Key words: *Israelis, Jerusalem, Palestinians, Six-Day War*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Six-Day War of 1967 represents one of the most consequential events for the international politics of the Middle East in the twentieth century. With well-trained troops and skillful leadership, Israel destroyed Egypt's Air Force within three hours. Over the next five days, Israel tripled the size of its territory and managed to occupy Gaza, Sinai, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights. What started as a short war between Israel and its neighbors, turned into an event with long-term consequences for the political climate in the region. Most notably, the war resulted in Israel permanently occupying the West Bank, the city of Jerusalem and several religious sites in the Old City. The occupation immediately escalated the political and economic tensions between Israel and Palestine. Furthermore, the past fifty years of diplomacy has shown that the results of the war continue to pose one of the greatest challenges for creating lasting peace in the Middle East.

To more accurately gauge the long-term effects of the Six-Day War, this paper examines three of its legacies, starting with the effect that the subsequent occupation of the West Bank exerted upon Palestinian life. Thereafter, the paper discusses how the war has left its mark on the city of Jerusalem. Finally, the paper analyzes how the Six-Day War has created a deep rift among Israelis resulting in a struggle over Israeli identity. Examining these legacies demonstrates that the conflict has not only divided two peoples and two states, but has also led to significant divisions within Israeli society.

1.1. The Background of the Six-Day War

In order to analyze the long-term effects of the Six-Day War on Arab-Israeli relations, it is necessary to understand the political situation leading up to the Six-Day War and its immediate aftermath. The underlying reason for the outbreak of the Six-Day War was a general hostility of Arab states toward the newly founded State of Israel. The hostile attitude was even exacerbated by the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union who chose to support different sides in the 1960s. Although Israel was established in May 1948, it has never been welcomed or acknowledged by the surrounding Arab states. Instead, Arabs viewed the creation of the State of Israel as a violation of Arab and Palestinian land-rights. Initially, a UN enacted partition between Zionists and Palestinian Arabs defined Palestinian territory as the region between Egypt and Jordan (Harms and Ferry, 89-90). Gradually, however, large swaths of Palestinian land came to be controlled by Israel (Kenyon et al.).

The Israeli occupation and expansion led to tensions in the surrounding Arab states who were now faced with a surge of displaced Palestinian refugees. When Israel subsequently began to flaunt its alliances with the West, Arabic antagonism toward Israel reached a new pinnacle as the Jewish State was now perceived to be an agent of western imperialism. The enmity was exposed during the Suez

Canal Crisis led by President Nasser in Egypt (Harms and Ferry, 104). At the same time, the US and the USSR entered the conflict as they had become increasingly cautious about their vested interest in the Middle East. While the Egyptian President Nasser gained strong support from Russia both economically and militarily, the US backed Israel due to Nasser's non-compliance (Harms and Ferry, 104-106).

The ensuing arms race made a bloody confrontation inevitable and eventually led to the Six-Day War. However, the outcome of this war was decidedly shaped by President Nasser's brinkmanship. It was Nasser who initiated action to assemble troops in the Sinai and closed transportation on the Strait of Tiran that connected with Israel. Surrounding countries were then all mobilized and militarized. Before war was officially declared, Nasser signed a pact with Syria and Jordan, obligating them to take up arms in the military conflict. The resolutions released by the United Nations did little to prevent the war from happening as they were ignored by both Israelis and Arabs. Similarly, the Security Council found itself powerless since the conflict in the Middle East was overshadowed by more pressing events such as the war in Vietnam (Harms and Ferry, 109-111).

The situation eventually inflamed with the declaration of war on June 5, 1967. The Six-Day War had begun. Within three hours after invading Egypt on June 6, Israel tripled its size to include Gaza, Sinai, the West Bank and the Golan Heights. Israel had suffered the death of about one percent of its population, but the land of Palestine they owned increased strikingly. Initially, the UN had allotted 56 percent of Palestine to Israelis and 44 percent to Palestinians. After the war, what left for Palestinians was 22 percent of Palestine's land while 78 percent came to Israelis' hands. Jordan was the first to accept a ceasefire although it initially refused to sign the agreement. Syria and Egypt followed suit and surrendered on June 10 (Harms and Ferry, 98). The war came to an end six days later on June 11, when Syria also accepted the ceasefire.

In order to establish a negotiated peace between Israel and Arab states, including Egypt, Syria and Jordan, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 242 on November 22. According to the resolution, Israeli armed forces were required to withdraw from all the occupied territories. Territories included the Gaza Strip from Palestinian territory, Golan Heights from Syria, the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, and the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) from Jordan. Working to maintain a long-term peace in the Middle East, the UN was opposed to "the acquisition of territory by war" (Harms and Ferry, 113). The negotiated withdrawal of Israelis from all of these lands was supported by Jordan and Egypt. However, this request was open to various interpretations. According to the historian Arthur Goldschmidt, Resolution 242 was "a document that was loose enough in its wording to make everyone happy" (Harms and Ferry, 115). The ambiguity in words allowed this document to be accepted and interpreted differently by each side. Israel viewed the clause as a request to return only some of its territory, and thus kept occupying the Sinai Peninsula, while Arab states saw it as a mandate to regain control over all of their lost land (Mørk, 23). The Sinai Peninsula, which continued to be occupied by Israelis after the enactment of Resolution 242, evolved into a source for permanent and inescapable territorial conflict.

Another looming problem was the displaced Palestinian population. Within Resolution 242, the UN simply reduced the plight of the Palestinians to a "refugee problem". This action was interpreted as an attempt to ignore the existence of the Palestinian people and was immediately criticized by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Yet, Resolution 242 was not all bad as it did indeed create a brief period of peace in the Middle East. According to Resolution 242, "all claims or states of belligerency and respect for an acknowledgement of sovereignty" was forbidden (UN Security Council). Hence, the Arabs had to recognize Israel under the clause. To prevent further disorder and maintain contact with the UN Security Council, a Special Representative was also designated by each member of the Secretary General to the Middle East. Overall, Resolution 242 could be viewed as a relatively peaceful way for ending the war without seriously offending any nation. However, as time went on, it became clear that the loose wording had created some conflicts that remained unresolved.

1.2. The Effect of the War on Palestinian Life

One of the unresolved conflicts has to do with the vast changes in the life of Palestinians following the Israeli occupation after the Six-Day War. During and after the Six-Day War in 1967, around

another 325,000 Arab residents fled the fighting that took place in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (CAMERA Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America). Among that number, about 145,000 Palestinian refugees had already fled from their homes during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War (David, 84). At this point, Palestinian refugees could be categorized into three main groups: those who were displaced in and immediately before 1948, internally displaced Palestinians remaining within the area that later became the state of Israel, and those displaced during the Six-Day War (Miftah).

It was not until 1952 that the Israeli government took responsibility for Palestinians who remained within the area which later became part of the State of Israel. Nowadays, 7.2 million Palestinians are acknowledged as refugees according to the definition established in the 1951 Refugee Convention. This definition identifies a refugee as “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion” (UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency). Not only does the Palestinian refugee crisis date back all the way to 1948, they also make up for about one-third of the total 26.0 million refugees in the world, according to USA for UNHCR. As the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR describes, this crisis is “by far the most protracted and largest of all refugee problems in the world today” (UNHCR the UN Refugee Agency).

International communities have taken a number of steps to address the variety of humanitarian concerns that the refugee crisis has brought to the Palestinians. For instance, the United Nations established the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). This agency was established by the UN with the goal of ensuring basic human rights for refugees of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and later conflicts. In fact, UNRWA is the only long-term and the largest UN agency that was ever formed to deal with just one group of refugees from a specific region or conflict. This organization carried out protection and services in 59 recognized refugee camps in five areas: Jordan (where more than half of the Palestinian refugees are living), the West bank and Gaza (where about 37.7 percent of Palestinian refugees are living), Syria (about 15 percent), and Lebanon (about 15 percent). Presently, 4.3 million out of 7.2 million Palestinian refugees have registered their refugee identity with UNRWA. Among the 4.3 million, 33 percent currently live in UNRWA-provided 59 refugee camps (Miftah).

With its ten official and three unofficial refugee camps, Jordan is the only Arab country to grant citizenship to Palestinian refugees. About two million Palestinian refugees have settled in Jordan due to the country’s “open bridges” policy, which presents a gateway from the West Bank to the rest of the world (IRIN News). Unfortunately, however, Palestinians living in other countries are faced with considerable hardship and discrimination. Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, for example, have no access to public social services and are barred from 20 professions. For health and educational services, registered Palestinian refugees rely largely upon UNRWA instead of the local services.

It is only with constant attention and help from the international community that the living conditions of Palestinians have somewhat improved. Today’s refugee camps have changed from temporary tents to concrete houses, and some have access to infrastructure such as water supply, gas and electricity. UNRWA has even extended its assistance from basic services and protection to include education, health care and microfinance. However, some refugee camps cannot keep up with the constantly increasing number of refugees. Jalazone Refugee Camp, for example, was established in 1948 with about 3,500 people. Now, it houses over 15,000 refugees (Action around Bethlehem Children with Disability).

Beyond concern with their living conditions, Palestinians also faced violence, and in some cases even massacres. In September 1982, for instance, thousands of Palestinian refugees were killed by Israeli-allied Phalangist militiamen in Beirut, Lebanon. The event was later named Sabra and Shatila massacre. This massacre created an international outcry such that the UNHCR Executive Committee stated openly to safeguard the Palestinians basic rights. As an example, the committee “expressed the hope that measures would be taken to protect refugees against such attacks and to aid the victims” (Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme). The UN Security Council also unanimously passed the Resolution 521, condemning the massacre and declaring it an “act of genocide” (Ahmed).

By December 16 1982, the UN had identified the problem as a lack of effective international protection towards Palestinians refugees in Resolution 37/120 J. “Deeply distressed at the sufferings of the Palestinians resulting from the Israeli invasion of Lebanon”, the resolution urges the international community to “undertake effective measures to guarantee the safety and security and the legal and human rights of the Palestinian refugees in the occupied territories” (United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 37/120). Indeed, this tragedy not only warned Palestinians of the possible endlessness of displacement, but also cautioned the international communities that they “continued to fail to hold Israel accountable for its violation of international law and to defend the basic human rights of the Palestinian people” (Mohamad). Thus, although the Six-Day War may not have triggered the Palestinian refugee crisis, the conflict led to an exponential growth of refugees who subsequently saw themselves exposed to violence and human rights violations. Despite ongoing humanitarian relief efforts, the crisis remains unresolved up to this day.

1.3. The Impact of the Six-Day War on Palestinian Economy and Access to Water

The loss of territory and the subsequent isolation of those Palestinians who chose to remain in the area had a considerable impact on the Palestinian economy. This impact is particularly visible when it comes to the distribution of water. Countries in the Middle East have always suffered from chronic water shortages due to the hot and arid climate (Holm et al.). The control of water resources, therefore, is of central importance for any country in the region.

Soon after the Six-Day War, Israel took control over the water supply in the West Bank. In November 1967, the Israeli authorities issued Military Order 158 prohibiting any independent construction of new water infrastructure by Palestinians. To maintain Israeli hegemony over water, Israel destroyed the previous water cisterns of Palestinians, and restricted Palestinian’s building of new wells and pumps. In most cases, the drilling rights were denied. If a Palestinian sank a well without permission, Israeli armies would halt the construction. These restrictions allowed Israel to gain control over the water supply in the area (Amnesty International).

To support Israeli citizens, the Israeli state-owned water company Mekorot established its own supply route by digging wells, building pumping stations and equipping taps in the West Bank in 1982. The system built by Mekorot further drew the attainable water from distant springs, such that Palestinians were forced to purchase water from Israel. However, this was not always done under fair conditions. The supplying pipes built for Palestinian areas were much smaller in diameter compared to their Israeli counterparts (McInerny). Furthermore, instead of charging the same subsidized price for Israelis, Mekorot charged Palestinians 4 to 10 USD per cubic meter, which could make up half of a family’s monthly income (Amnesty International).

When the demand of water was high, many Palestinian households routinely received decreased supply or went completely without water as the supply of Israeli settlements in the West Bank took priority. The water supply is further endangered by contamination, salinity, and over-pumping, which makes the groundwater increasingly unsuited for human consumption and agriculture. The tanker trucks, which were the only way to survive, provided water that was about 15 times more expensive than that provided by the municipalities (Rouyer). Al-Haq researchers from the UCLA Center for Middle East Development observed that during most of the time, “only 50 percent of Palestinian households in the West Bank are supplied with water on a daily basis” (McInerny). In the extreme hot summer of 2016, the “basic” need of Israelis could be satisfied but “The areas of Nablus and Salfit were specifically targeted and went without running water for about a month” (McInerny).

With the sovereignty over water, Israel not only diminishes the Palestinian standard of living, but also interferes with the overall development of Palestine’s economy. After the Six-Day War, Palestinian farmers access of the Jordan river was denied. Instead, the Jordan river was claimed to be “closed military areas”, and all existing pumps and irrigation ditches were dismantled. One fertile area, about 650 km² along the western side of the Jordan River, was enclosed as well. It was reported that this area played a significant role in off-season output before the war (UNCTAD, 13).

However, irrigation is essential for farming operations in the Middle East. In comparison to the 990 mm of the average earth’s annual rainfall (Mason et al.), the West Bank has only 450 mm to 500 mm annual rainfall (Fanack Newspaper). In 2005, the total water withdrawal in the Occupied Palestinian Territories reached at about 418 million m³/year, of which 189 million m³ or more than 45 percent

were used for agriculture. Still, only 7 percent of land was under irrigation and these lands produced about 53 percent of the total agricultural production in the West Bank (AQUASTAT).

To a certain degree, Palestinian farmers have responded with resourcefulness and resilience. They adapted their selection of crops and have developed strategies to cope with the lack of water. Since rainfall occurs mainly between October and April, winter vegetables with high productivity, like tomatoes, cucumbers and eggplants, became the main crops. Some farmers diversified crops in greenhouses to reduce the evapotranspiration. Unfortunately, full efforts do not always lead to a full harvest. Thousands of acres of arable land grew infertile. In a conversation with Amnesty International, Issa Nijoum, a farmer with a field on the outskirts of Al-Auja village, stated that: "Even the Palestinian Authority does not realize that this used to be a centre for agriculture... People are left with no options. In 1967, when the Israeli authorities started taking the water it was like a sickness in a body... slowly the land dried up" (Amnesty International). As a result of the water shortage, an increasing number of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories began to face food insecurity (Melgar-Quiñonez). During the 1970s, agriculture still played a dominant role in the Palestinian economy, providing considerable alleviation to unemployment and 36 percent of the GDP. Since the Six-Day War, however, agriculture's role in the economy has declined. In 2000, agriculture contributed only 9.5 percent of the GDP. Closely related to the economy, the unemployment rate increased to 26.1 percent in the West Bank and 35.2 percent in the Gaza Strip (AQUASTAT).

It is undeniable that seizing control of a basic resource like water could considerably interfere with the growth of Palestinian agricultural economy. The international communities made their standpoint clear regarding the water resources dispute. According to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) established by UN General Assembly, Israel's use of West Bank water is a "clear and gross violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1945" (United Nations). And still, up to this day, Israel is holding onto its control of the water supply in the area.

Several attempts have been made to mediate between the conflicting parties when it came to negotiating access to water. Two key accords were the "Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements" (A.K.A the Oslo Accords). Oslo I was signed in Washington D.C., United States in 1993, and Oslo II was signed in Taba, Egypt in 1995. After negotiations, the PLO, as the representative of Palestine, renounced terrorism and formally recognized the state of Israel. Israel, in turn, permitted a certain degree of Palestinian's self-governance in the West Bank and in Gaza. As part of the treaty, Palestinians would gain greater access to the region's water resources, with at least 70 million m³. The Palestinian Water Authority was established in helping with the implementation of the provision in Article 40 and management of the water resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (AQUASTAT, 11-17). Meanwhile, Israel, Palestine and the United States formed a "Trilateral Committee" with the goal of addressing this problem through the power of international communities.

Hopes were high when both the Israeli and Palestinian parties expressed appreciation for their good working relationship, showing that these two countries could cooperate when it came to solving a pressing problem. However, retrospectively it has been suggested that the actual process lacked practicality when it came to the dispute over water (Rouyer). The Oslo Accords II has divided the West Bank into three divisions. In Area A, Palestinian National Authority was granted the exclusive right of autonomy. In Area B, both Palestinians and Israelis had administrative and civil responsibility. Area C was exclusively ruled by Israeli government. Even though the restriction over water usage in Area A and B was relaxed after negotiations, Palestinians still have no control over Area C. In fact, Area C contains 61 percent of the West Bank Area and 63 percent of its agricultural resources (UNCTAD, 5). Naturally, the largest number of Israelis settlers live in Area C among the West Bank. Because of this, Area C now boasts the best developed water infrastructure (Rouyer).

As this passage has shown, the Six-Day War caused Palestinian territories to be denied to reliable access to water. The restrictions on water interfered with the quality of life and with the economic development of the region. Efforts were made to resolve the issue both in terms of negotiations and through resourcefulness. However, Palestinian access to water remains restricted.

2. THE STATUS OF JERUSALEM AFTER 1967

While the previous section examined the political, geographical, and economic impact the war had upon the relations between Israel and Palestine, the role of religion moves to the foreground when we turn our attention to the city of Jerusalem. The Old City of Jerusalem contains several holy sites which hold significant values for Jews, Christian and Muslims. As a result, the advent of Israeli control over Jerusalem came to play a central role in the political conflict following the Six Day War.

Flourishing with the spirits of Christianity, Islam and Judaism, the holy city of Jerusalem is enshrined internally as the most inviolable place for different nations and sects. Up to this day, religious fervor still regularly leads to clashes between opposing religious groups or between the Israeli authorities and religious extremists. One of the most important watershed moments in Jerusalem's history came at the end of the twentieth century. Early in August 1946, the United Nations had attempted to set the city as a *corpus separatum* (meaning "separate entity" in Latin). In 1948, West Jerusalem came under Israeli control after the first Arab-Israeli War and the east Jerusalem sector was held by Jordanians (Armstrong, 92-93). Things again changed significantly in 1967. The Six-Day War allowed Israel to expand the city boundaries by capturing East Jerusalem, including the Old City, where the focal religious and historical sites are clustered. During the Six-Day War, Israel's main objective was to take control of the Western Wall in the Old City as quickly as possible because the Western Wall was one of the holiest sites in Judaism. At the same time, the Western Wall also held a central place in Islam since it was there where the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven. The Temple Mount (or Haram Esh-Sharif), in turn, was regarded holy by Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike. Being diverse and religiously complex, Jerusalem was accordingly divided into four quarters: the Jewish Quarter, the Muslim Quarter, the Christian Quarter and the Armenian Quarter.

Shortly after the Israeli Knesset declared annexation of East Jerusalem and parts of the West Bank—between June 25–27—international communities stood against Israel's attempt to control and unite the occupied areas. Resolution 242, adopted by the UN Security Council on November 22, 1967, requested the withdrawal of Israelis from all occupied territories in exchange for peace with the Arabs (UN Security Council). Even the US, who provided significant support for Israel during the Six-Day War, warned against any formal legislation to change the status of the city (Armstrong, 636). However, Israel saw itself unable to compromise when facing the question of Jerusalem and its status.

Several steps were taken by Israel to reaffirm its control over East Jerusalem and to create a unified capital. These steps changed the character of Jerusalem and the fates of its inhabitants. Within the first week that the Six-Day War ended, Israel had begun constructing a plaza for the Western Wall. Unfortunately, the construction required the demolishing of the Moroccan Quarter (Harat al-Magharibah). Dating back over 700 years, The Moroccan Quarter originated during the age of the Ayyubids and Mamluks. More importantly, it was home to roughly 619 inhabitants and 100 families. On June 11, the team around Teddy Kollek (the supervisor of the task, later becoming the mayor of Jerusalem) demanded that all the inhabitants of the Moroccan Quarter evacuate their homes within three hours. "The destruction continued for two consecutive nights; excavators and bulldozers worked relentlessly under floodlights to flatten the mainly one or two-story stone and brick-domed residences clustered densely along narrow alleyways... By the dawn of June 12, 1967, the historic neighborhood had been leveled" (O'Neil).

The inhabitants of the Moroccan quarter were not the only families to experience displacement. Following the demolition of the Moroccan Quarter, the Israeli Knesset went ahead and enlarged the boundaries of municipal Jerusalem. The Knesset zigzagged around areas with large Arab populations, ensuring that Jewish residents would make up the majority during elections. Because of the gerrymandered boundaries, the Arab population in the city dropped to only about 25 percent. As the current website of the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs shows: "Some 1.8 million people, comprising some 24 percent of Israel's population, are non-Jews" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

Surprisingly, instead of dropping continuously, the number of Arab populations in the city kept steady in the following period. The reason behind was that the Arabs who remained in East Jerusalem were motivated mainly by the principle of *Sumud* ("steadfastness perseverance"). Defying Israeli attempts to drive Palestinians out of Jerusalem developed into a form of resistance, or to put it into other words: "existence is resistance" (Alhelou). Fedayeen (freedom fighters), Mutaradeen ("wanted

Palestinians by Israel”) and the first Intifada in 1987 were tangible demonstrations of Sumud (Alhelou). Palestinians’ determination in fighting against Israeli government’s oppression was shown, but the effect of Sumud regarding Palestinians’ life quality in Jerusalem was minimal. At first, many Palestinians refused any form of acknowledgement in Israel’s sovereignty, so they held onto their residence status in Jerusalem rather than applying for Israeli citizenship. However, in 1995 the Ministry of the Interior began revoking the residence status of East Jerusalemite, arguing that they had to provide evidence that the Old City was indeed the center of their life. This marked another trend of decline in the number of Palestinians in the city. In subsequent years, a record number of Palestinians lost their resident status. In 2008 alone, 4,577 East Jerusalemites had their residence status revoked according to Interior Ministry statistics obtained by Hamoked. This was nearly four times more than in any year since 1967. In fear of losing permanent residency status, applications for citizenship jumped from 1,025 to 1,656 — a 61 percent leap and by far the highest increase since 1967 (Lieber). Since 2003, about 14,629 of the 330,000 Arabs living in Jerusalem have applied for citizenship, but Israeli authorities have approved fewer than 6,000. “Israel claims to treat Jerusalem as a unified city, but the reality is effectively one set of rules for Jews and another for Palestinians,” said Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. “Entrenched discrimination against Palestinians in Jerusalem, including residency policies that imperil their legal status, feeds the alienation of the city’s residents” (Human Rights Watch). One could clearly see that after the Six-Day War in 1967, Palestinian residents in Jerusalem experienced a significant degree of disruption to their lives starting with the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem. Still, the public is paying close attention to the right of residence of thousands of East Jerusalemites. The Supreme Court ruled on March 14, 2017 that the status of Palestinians living in East Jerusalem is unique by virtue of the fact that they are “indigenous inhabitants” (in the words of Justice Mazuz), which is why their expired status of residence should be restored.

Interestingly, the occupation of Jerusalem contributed in revealing the first rift in Israeli society, as Israelis struggle to reconcile their patriotism with the more religious aspects of Zionism. Following the war, a chain of clashes erupted over the status of the holy sites within Old City. Comparing themselves with Jordanians who had denied Jews access to the Western Wall before the Six-Day War, the Israeli government promised Muslims and Christians continued access to their holy sites. To verify the assurance through action, Moshe Dayan acknowledged, on June 17, the “religious sovereignty” of Muslims to continually control the Temple Mount. Meanwhile, Jews were forbidden to pray or hold services on the H̄aram to make up for Israel’s overall sovereignty in the city. This attempt, however, failed in every respect. Muslims objected to this decision because they viewed that to agree was to accept Israeli occupation. Religious Jews were outrageous in losing their control over the holiest site in Judaism. As a result, the fuse was lit within Israeli society. The rift between secular Zionists and religious fundamentalists became visible a few weeks after the Six-Day War. In 1967, Gershon Salomon founded an extremist group, which refers to itself as “Temple Mount Faithful”. This group refused to accept the ban on Jews entering the Temple Mount as they were committed to rebuilding the third temple. The first violent confrontation associated with this movement occurred as early as August 1967, when a group of yeshiva students led by Rabbi Shlomo Goren fought off the Israeli police and the Muslim guards to gain access to the Temple Mount. The Israeli government closed Goren’s rabbinic offices, to stress their continued support for the Muslim control of the Temple Mount. Yet, controversy was soon sparked again when Israel’s minister for religious affairs, Zerah Wahrhaftig, claimed that demolishing the Dome of the Rock and Aqsā Mosque was Israel’s legal right as “The Temple Mount had belonged to Israel ever since David had purchased the site from Araunah the Jebusite” (Benvenisti, 288-89). Clearly, none of the parties involved were open to compromise. As a result, the conflict intensified over time.

One illustration of this can be seen in how secular Jews, religious Jews and Muslims became embroiled in acrimonious debates over management of the Western Wall. Since the Western Wall had turned into a major tourist attraction where visitors not only came for praying, the ministry for religious affairs decided to fence off a new praying area in front of the wall. However, secular Israelis opposed the ministry for religious affairs in denying other Israelis’ access to the new praying area. In the meantime, religious Jews began to excavate the basement of the Tanziqiyya Madrasah and declared every area they cleared to be a holy place. Facing the excavation, Muslims deeply worried about whether the undermining of the sacred area would be disrespectful and even cause damage to

the Tanziqiyya Madrasah (Armstrong, 690-691). A poll conducted in May 1995 for the Israel-Palestine Centre for Research and Information showed that 28 percent of Israeli Jews could envisage some form of divided sovereignty (Armstrong, 707). Although the Israeli government exhausted all efforts in finding a viable compromise, the rift over access to the religious sites of Jerusalem exposed deep divides between Israelis, Arabs and different religious sects.

Indeed, civil disobedience in the city has never ceased since the Six-Day War. What started out as civil strikes quickly escalated into a series of violent attacks in and around Jerusalem. Extremist members of Yasir Arafat's Fatah party organized a terror campaign and claimed that violence is the only response to occupation. This was followed by an attack on November 22, 1968 when a bomb killed and injured several visitors in a crowded supermarket. In the years to come, the Israeli public was faced with frequent terror attacks including the bombing of the British consulate, a terror attack at the Hebrew University, and a bombing at the Western Wall. In revenge for the attack, hundreds of Israelis marched onto the street and smacked every Arabs they encountered. Without dealing with the problem of how to share their home, attacks continue to happen in recent years. On January 8, 2017, three female soldiers and one male soldier were killed, and 17 others were wounded in Jerusalem by a Palestinian man ramming a truck into them (Stuff).

Even well beyond the aftermath of the Six-Day War, the control of Jerusalem remains a contentious question. In his 1995 speech addressing recent demonstration, PLO representative Faisal Husseini stated: "I dream of the day when a Palestinian will say 'Our Jerusalem' and will mean Palestinians and Israelis, and an Israeli will say 'Our Jerusalem' and will mean Israelis and Palestinians" (Carey and Shainin, 67-68). Although leaders like Menachem Begin and organizations like the UN have continuously fought to establish peace in the sacred city, a satisfactory solution has yet to be found. In this respect, we are still waiting to see the end of the "war" that followed Israel's victory in 1967.

3. ISRAELI-JEWISH IDENTITY AFTER THE SIX-DAY WAR

The prolonged conflicts following the Six-Day War has caused Israelis to question its success. Consequently, one could argue that the aftermath of the Six-Day War has not only divided Israelis and Palestinians, but has also caused a rift among Jewish Israelis.

In the period leading up to the Six-Day War, Israelis did not have full confidence in their military power since Arab nations had gained increased support from the Soviet Union following the Suez Canal Crisis (Harms and Ferry). President Nasser blocked the Strait of Tiran from Israel, showing his determination in "eradicating" the State of Israel. Meanwhile, it was hard for Israelis to seek support from the US when the Civil Right Movement caused a surge in Black Anti-Semitism such that some of the major black organizations openly refused to support Israel (Carson). Jewish Israelis were now deeply worried that they were at the brink of a second Holocaust. The sense of impending doom strengthened the Israeli resolve to save their land and their lives. Klein Halevi, the author of "Like Dreamers," stated that, "There was an emotional trajectory that united Jewish people in a way I don't think we've ever seen since the revelation at Mount Sinai 3,500 years ago" (Sales).

When the Six-Day War turned into a legendary victory for Israel, both the Jewish and the Israeli sense of community intensified. "That was a miracle," said Yoel Ben Nun, a veteran of the Six-Day War. After the end of the Six-Day war, Yoel Ben Nun told his commander it felt like two millennia of history had been reversed in the six days of war. "The meaning was that for 2,000 years the people of Israel were in exile - persecuted, tortured, subjected to anti-Semitism. Those 2,000 years were over." With his deep understanding of the suffering that Israelis had endured, Yoel Ben Nun recognized the Six-Day War as the divine resolve to bring the people of Israel home. "That's how I still feel today," he said (BBC News).

While Yoel Ben Nun's sentiments are commonly found among older generations of Israeli soldiers, many Israelis have also begun to doubt the narrative of the Six-Day War as a total victory. Peace seemed to be pushed further away since Israelis took Gaza and the West Bank from Jordan during the Six-Day War. Regarding the problem of who to control the areas, innumerable conflicts were ignited. The situation only became more complicated over time as the international communities tried to maintain peace in the region (mostly in giving control back to Palestinians). For example, in November 1967, the UN passed Resolution 242, in which Israel was asked to withdraw from territories occupied in the recent conflict. Nevertheless, because of the loose wording of the

resolution, Israel did not feel compelled to return all of the territories it had occupied (Harms and Ferry). The Separation Barrier built right after the Second Intifada in June 2000 not only fragmented the Palestinian community in West Bank, but also laid the groundwork to further entrench Israeli annexation. Although the International Court of Justice (ICJ) determined the construction of the barrier was fairly illegal on 9 July 2004, the wall still stands there (The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories).

Repeated attempts to regain control over the occupied territories continues to cause violent confrontations between Palestinians and Israelis. Having grown exhausted by witnessing and participating in Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian territories, many Israelis have chosen to protest their government's involvement in the control of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. For example, in June of 2020, thousands of Israelis protested in Tel Aviv against Netanyahu's plan to annex 30 percent of Palestinian land in the West Bank (Gatenby). The area where Netanyahu plans to annex is part of Zone C, mainly Jordan Valley except for the town Jericho which belonged to Zone A in the accords. However, Jericho would be separated from other Palestinian communities geographically according to the plan, so Netanyahu's "will" of keeping a land for Palestinians might not work at the end. Since this plan has now gained recognition from the Trump administration, Basil Khalalah, one of the protestors, said when being interviewed: "We are saying that it would ignite the whole region, and it will fuel the misery, the suffering and the abrasion of the Palestinian people." Speaking of the reason why the government shouldn't do that, Angela said in front of the camera, "It will not be able to be said in the future of Israeli democracy, we are losing all of our friends and influence in doing this." Several other protests are also on-going with the number of attendances being limited to 1,500 due to the coronavirus (Shezaf).

Now, two opposed opinions began to divide the Israeli society. During the protest in Tel Aviv against violent ruling on the Gaza border on April 1, 2018, two groups of Israelis appeared in gatherings. About 300 Israelis expressed their opposition by holding up banners while other counter-protesters waved Israeli flags and shouted "Israel belongs to Jews". It was not the only case, a car stopped when seeing protesters holding banners of "Stop the Massacre" in the West Bank, the driver then yelled: "We killed 20? We should kill 20 more!" Meanwhile, many left-winged Israelis are very much worried about the ongoing plan (Bouman). They hope the government could reach a goal of full annexation, but not "part" of the annexation.

Once the Six-Day War and the occupation was remembered as a point of pride. In recent years, however, many Israelis feel uncomfortable when considering the growing casualties on both sides of the conflict. Immediately after the Six-Day War, Israelis were proud for gaining victory and finally finding recognition as a state. As time passes by, many Israelis are plagued with feelings of guilt as they find themselves confronted with the suffering of Palestinians whose life has been permanently upended by war. Contrary to the effect of increasing cohesiveness among Israelis, the Six-Day War and its aftermath now affects unification in people's minds in a negative way.

4. CONCLUSION

Six days in June 1967 profoundly reshaped the political playing field in the Middle East. As this paper illustrates, the Six-Day War has a lasting legacy in the Middle East and continues to impact the lives of Israelis and Palestinians alike. Although the war ended, conflicts persist. Most notably Palestinian's livelihood has faced major disruption through displacement and the long-term occupation. Religious conflicts continue to erupt in and around major landmarks in the Old City of Jerusalem. Even within Israeli society, the war left its permanent mark by creating a division that leads to conflicts. The war ended quickly, but several generations of Israelis and Palestinians continue to struggle in the wake of its aftermath. Every decision the government has made to resolve the conflict has caused a ripple effect that created more strife. This paper was written with the sincere hope that future leadership in the Middle East will find it within its power to craft a resolution that will lead to a lasting peace by respecting the rights of every individual.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] Harms, Gregory, and Todd Ferry. *The Palestine-Israel Conflict - A Basic Introduction*. Pluto Press, 2008.
- [2] Kenyon, Kathleen Mary, et al. "Palestine." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Palestine>. Accessed 13 November 2020.

- [3] Mørk, HuldaKjeang. *The Jarring Mission - A Study of the UN Peace Effort in the Middle East, 1967-1971*. University of Oslo, 2007.
- [4] UN Security Council. "The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, UN Security Council Resolution 242 (1967)." An Interactive Database, 1967, <https://ecf.org.il/issues/issue/121>. Accessed 15 October 2020.
- [5] CAMERA Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America. "The Six-Day War - Long Term Effects - Arab Refugees." *The Six Day War*, <http://www.sixdaywar.org/content/refugees.asp>. Accessed 10 November 2020.
- [6] David, McDoWall. *Palestine and Israel: The Uprising and Beyond*. University of California Press, 1989.
- [7] Miftah. "The Palestinian Dispossession – Frequently Asked Questions." Miftah, 2003, <http://www.miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=2036&CategoryId=4>. Accessed 9 October 2020.
- [8] UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency. "1951 Refugee Convention and Protocol Relating to The Status Of Refugees." CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES, 1951, <https://www.unhcr.org/5d9ed32b4>.
- [9] UNHCR the UN Refugee Agency. *United Nations: State of the World's Refugees 2006*.
- [10] UNRWA, 2006. *The United Nations and Palestinian Refugees, United Nations: State of the World's Refugees 2006*.
- [11] IRIN News. "Palestine refugees: locations and numbers." *The New Humanitarian*, 2010, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/report/89571/middle-east-palestinian-refugee-numberswhereabouts>. Accessed 18 October 2020.
- [12] Action around Bethlehem Children with Disability. "JALAZONE REFUGEE CAMP." Action around Bethlehem Children with Disability, <https://www.abcdbethlehem.org/what-we-do/jalazone-refugee-camp>. Accessed 18 October 2020.
- [13] Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme. "UNHCR Executive Committee Conclusion No.27 (XXXIII) - 1982, "Military Attacks on Refugee Camps and Settlements in Southern Africa and Elsewhere."" UNHCR the UN Refugee Agency, 1982, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/exconc/3ae68c4417/military-attacks-refugee-camps-settlements-southern-africa-elsewhere.html>. Accessed 20 October 2020.
- [14] Ahmed, Nasim. "Remembering the Sabra and Shatila massacre." *NederlandsPalestinaKomitee*, 2020, <https://palestina-komitee.nl/remembering-the-sabra-and-shatila-massacre/>. Accessed 21 October 2020.
- [15] United Nations General Assembly. 37/120. *United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. United Nations General Assembly, 1982. UNISPAL*, <https://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/5833950B4BA618DF852560D90051E13A>.
- [16] Mohamad, Nabil. "Remembering the Sabra and Shatila massacre 35 years on." *Aljazeera*, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2017/9/16/remembering-the-sabra-and-shatila-massacre-35-years-on/>. Accessed 26 October 2020.
- [17] Holm, Donald August, et al. "Arabian Desert." *Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Arabian-Desert>. Accessed 28 September 2020.
- [18] Amnesty International. "The Occupation of Water." *Amnesty International*, 2017, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2017/11/the-occupation-of-water/#:~:text=The%20legacy%20of%20Israel's%2050,of%20clean%20and%20safe%20water>. Accessed 30 October 2020.
- [19] McInerney, Peggy. "Water and collective punishment policies in the Occupied Palestinian Territory." *UCLA International Institute*, 2017, <https://international.ucla.edu/Institute/article/173493>. Accessed 19 September 2020.
- [20] Rouyer, Alwyn R. "The Water Accords of Oslo II: Averting a Looming Disaster." *Middle East Policy*, vol. 7, 2008, pp. 113-135. *ResearchGate*, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/230493837_The_Water_Accords_of_Oslo_II_Averting_a_Looming_Disaster.
- [21] UNCTAD. *The Besieged Palestinian Agricultural Sector. UNITED NATIONS*, New York and Geneva, 2015. UNCTAD, https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/gdsapp2015d1_en.pdf.
- [22] UNCTAD, https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/tdb64d4_embargoed_en.pdf. *United Nations. ISRAEL'S POLICY ON THE WEST BANK WATER RESOURCES*. New York, 1980. United Nations, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-206852/>. Accessed 10 September 2020.
- [23] Mason, Basil John, et al. "Climate." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/science/climate-meteorology>. Accessed 15 November 2020.
- [24] Fanack Newspaper. "Climate and Rainfall in Palestine." *Fanack Water*, 2015, <https://water.fanack.com/palestine/climate-and->

- rainfall/#:~:text=Rainfall%20ranges%20between%20715%20millimetres,in%20the%20Dead%20Sea%20area. Accessed 5 October 2020.
- [25] AQUASTAT. "Food and Agricultural Organization AQUASTAT -- Occupied Palestinian Territory." Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, 2008, <http://www.fao.org/aquastat/en/countries-and-basins/country-profiles/country/PSE>. Accessed 27 September 2020.
- [26] Melgar-Quiñonez, Hugo. "Determinants of food insecurity in occupied Palestinian territory." *The Lancet*, vol. 393, no. Special, 2019. *The Lancet*.
- [27] UNCTAD. UNCTAD Assistance to the Palestinian People: Developments in the Economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Geneva, United Nations, 2017.
- [28] Armstrong, Karen. *Jerusalem, One City, Three Faiths*. Ballantine Books, 2005.
- [29] O'Neil, Maryvelma Smith. "The Mughrabi Quarter Digital Archive and the Virtual Illés Relief Initiative." *Jerusalem Quarterly*, no. 81, 2020. Institute for Palestine Study, <https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/1650013>.
- [30] Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "PEOPLE: Minority Communities." Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/people/pages/society-%20minority%20communities.aspx>. Accessed 17 October 2020.
- [31] Alhelou, Yousef. "The living spirit of Sumud: Palestinians' form of resistance and steadfastness continues to grow stronger." *The New Arab*, 2019, <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/indepth/2019/10/31/sumud-palestinians-form-of-steadfastness-continues-to-grow-stronger>. Accessed 2020.
- [32] Lieber, Dov. "Dramatic ruling paves way for thousands of East Jerusalemites to regain residency rights." *The Times of Israel*, 2017, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/dramatic-ruling-paves-way-for-thousands-of-east-jerusalemites-to-regain-residency-rights/>. Accessed 2020.
- [33] Human Rights Watch. "Israel: Jerusalem Palestinians Stripped of Status." Human Rights Watch, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/08/08/israel-jerusalem-palestinians-stripped-status>. Accessed 2020.
- [34] Benvenisti, Meron. *Jerusalem, The Torn City*. 1976.
- [35] Stuff, Toi. "Four soldiers killed in truck-ramming terror attack named." *The Times of Israel*, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/four-soldiers-killed-in-truck-ramming-terror-attack-named/>. Accessed 2020.
- [36] Carey, Roane, and Jonathan Shainin, editors. *The Other Israel*. The New Press, 2004.
- [37] Carson, Clayborne. *Blacks and Jews in the Civil Rights Movement: The Case of SNCC*. The Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute. King Institute, Stanford, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/sites/mlk/files/blacks_jews_civil_rights.pdf.
- [38] Sales, Ben. "How the Six-Day War Changed American Jews." *The Jewish World News*, <https://jewishworldnews.org/how-the-six-day-war-changed-american-jews/>. Accessed 2020.
- [39] BBC News. "Six Day War Israeli veteran: 'I saw a miracle.'" BBC News, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-middle-east-40138193>. Accessed 2020.
- [40] The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. "The Separation Barrier." The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, 11 November 2017, https://www.btselem.org/separation_barrier.
- [41] Gatenby, Victoria. "Israel: Thousands rally against West Bank annexation plan." *Aljazeera*, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/videos/2020/06/07/israel-thousands-rally-against-west-bank-annexation-plan/>. Accessed 2020.
- [42] Shezaf, Hagar. "Hundreds of Israelis Protest in Tel Aviv Against Netanyahu's West Bank Annexation Plan." *Haaretz*, 2020, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-hundreds-of-israelis-protest-in-tel-aviv-against-netanyahu-s-west-bank-annexation-pl-1.8943348>. Accessed September 2020.
- [43] Bouman, Kaja. "Hundreds of Israelis protest IDF's deadly use of force on Gaza border." *The Jerusalem Post*, 2018, <https://www.jpost.com/arab-israeli-conflict/hundreds-of-israelis-protest-idfs-deadly-use-of-force-on-gaza-border-547690>. Accessed 2020.

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY



Ziling Chen, is a Chinese high school student studying in Los Angeles. She receives education in two countries, which allows her to view historical events from different perspectives. With her strong passion in Humanities and Social Science, she has been writing papers and scripts based on historical events. Her history research papers have been published in several renowned journals and have been accepted by the International Conference on Global and World History. For Ziling, the study of

Humanities and Social Science is an endless and enjoyable dialogue between the past and the present.

Citation: Ziling Chen. "The Lasting Legacy of Six-Day War -- How Six Days Changed the life of Palestinians, Israelis and their Relationship" *International Journal of History and Cultural Studies (IJHCS)*. vol 7, no. 1, 2021, pp. 32-43. doi: DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20431/2454-7654.0701004>.

Copyright: © 2021 Authors. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.