

"Throughout history, Jerusalem has been holy to Jews."

—Yaara Saroussi, 17, Israeli.
Behind her is the Old City,
including the golden Dome of the
Rock (center) and the Western
Wall (bottom right).



Battle for the Holy City

WHY IS PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The limestone walls of Jerusalem's Old City glow warm and golden in the afternoon sun, giving a deceptive serenity to one of the world's most hotly disputed pieces of land. This ancient city is the sacred heart of three major religions—Islam, Judaism, and Christianity—with holy sites that make it a prize nations have fought over for thousands of years. But today, control of Jerusalem is

the last major sticking point on the path to Middle East peace. Both Israelis and Palestinians claim the city as their capital, and neither side is willing to cede authority to the other.

"I think it's impossible to share the Old City," says Kheirallah Bazbaz, 18, whose family traces its Arab roots in Jerusalem back several hundred years. "This is the city I was born and brought up in—it's a part of me. The

way we've been brought up is that land, heritage, and dignity are even more important than life."

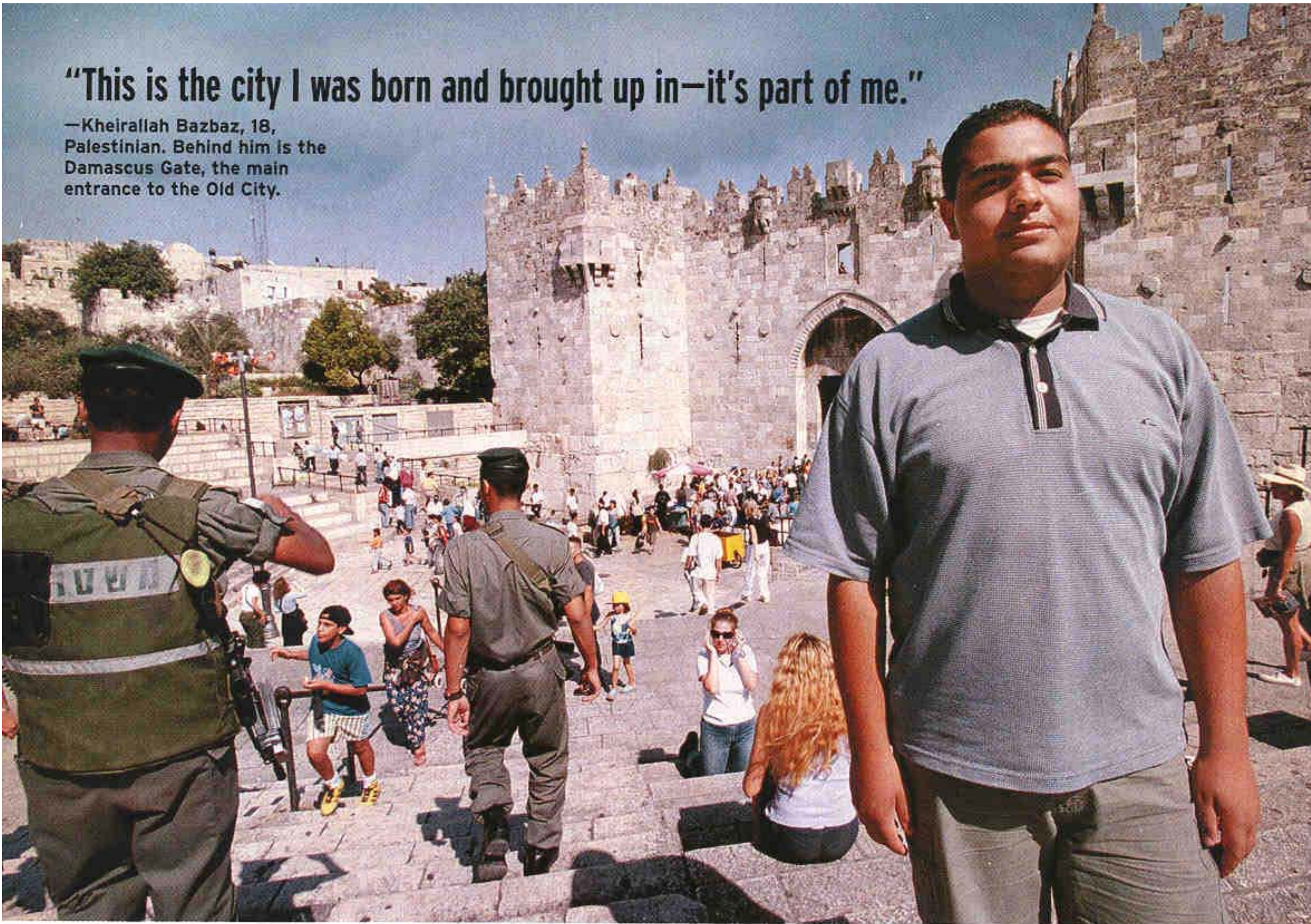
Yaara Saroussi, 17, an Israeli, agrees that the Old City can't be divided. But in her view, "The Old City should stay



An Israeli flag flies over East Jerusalem.

"This is the city I was born and brought up in—it's part of me."

—Kheirallah Bazbaz, 18, Palestinian. Behind him is the Damascus Gate, the main entrance to the Old City.



SO IMPOSSIBLE? TO FIND OUT, LOOK NO FARTHER THAN JERUSALEM, A CITY SO SACRED NEITHER ARABS NOR JEWS CAN BEAR TO SHARE IT.



A Palestinian woman prays before the Dome of the Rock.

under Israeli rule. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel just like Washington, D.C., is the capital of the United States. Throughout history, it has been holy to Jews."

For years, the competing claims to Jerusalem have proved so difficult and sensitive that peace negotiators simply refused to discuss it. But after 20 years of peace talks, Israelis and Palestinians have finally begun to tackle the problem. As *UPFRONT* went to press, the

two sides had given themselves until September 13 to reach a final peace agreement, including the future status of Jerusalem. If no agreement is reached, Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat says he will declare a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, effectively ending the chance for peace. Once again, the future of Jerusalem is mired, as ever, in the city's difficult past.

LAYERS OF RELIGIONS

Although the city sprawls over 41 square miles, the most contentious area in dispute concerns the walled Old City, covering just half a square mile. There, the holy sites of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity overlap, one on top of another. (See map, page 19.)

For Jews, the holiest landmark is the

Western Wall, all that remains of the Second Temple, the central place of Jewish worship in the biblical era. Above the Wall, where the temple once stood, are the al-Aqsa Mosque and the gold-leafed Dome of the Rock, one of the holiest sites in the Muslim world. The dome shelters the rock where, according to Islamic belief, the prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven. That same rock, according to Jewish tradition, is where God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. Just a few blocks away stands the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, where Christians believe Jesus was crucified and buried.

Reported by *New York Times* correspondent JOHN KIFNER and JOEL GREENBERG in Jerusalem.



CAMP KIDNAP: How are Palestinian teens preparing for the future? This summer, 25,000 attended special summer camps to learn the arts of kidnapping, ambushing, and using assault rifles. Here, masked teens stage the mock kidnapping of an Israeli official.

King David established a Jewish capital in the Old City in 1000 B.C. Later, the city was conquered by the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Egyptians, Syrians, and Romans. Christian Crusaders captured it in 1099. Muslims took it back in 1187. The Ottoman Turks, who seized control in the 1500s, built the city walls that remain today.

After years of conflict between Jews and Arabs over the land (see "Roots," opposite), the United Nations voted in 1947 to split the area equally between the two peoples and make Jerusalem an international city under UN control. Arabs rejected the plan. When Jews declared an independent Israel in 1948, Arab states attacked the next day. A cease-fire split Jerusalem in two, with Jordan controlling the eastern half and the Old City.

In 1967's Six-Day War, Israel recaptured East Jerusalem and declared the entire city its capital. In the years since, Israelis have expanded Jewish settle-

ments in East Jerusalem, making it harder to find a way to redivide the city.

In July, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak proposed giving each side authority over different sections of Jerusalem, including parts of the Old City. Arafat rejected the plan. Young Jerusalemites like Kheirallah and Yaara

say it would have been impractical. "Demographically, and the way the streets are laid out, there is no way to divide one neighborhood from the other," says Kheirallah. "Jews would be afraid to walk in the Palestinian sector," Yaara adds. "There wouldn't be control over the border and everyone could cross with a gun or a bomb."

One way to solve the problem, suggests Rami Friedman, director of the Jerusalem Institute, is not to solve it. "It sounds crazy, but it's very practical," he says. "There is so much history, so much religion, so much nationalism embedded in that one square kilometer, that any solution will create more conflict than you had already."

He may be right. But in what amounts to a glimmer of hope for peace in the next generation, Kheirallah and Yaara both acknowledge that any agreement must allow all religions free access to their holy sites. Says Yaara, "You can't measure for whom the place is more holy." ■

For more information on the Middle East peace process, visit UPFRONT ONLINE at:

nytimes.com/upfront

1920: British Mandate



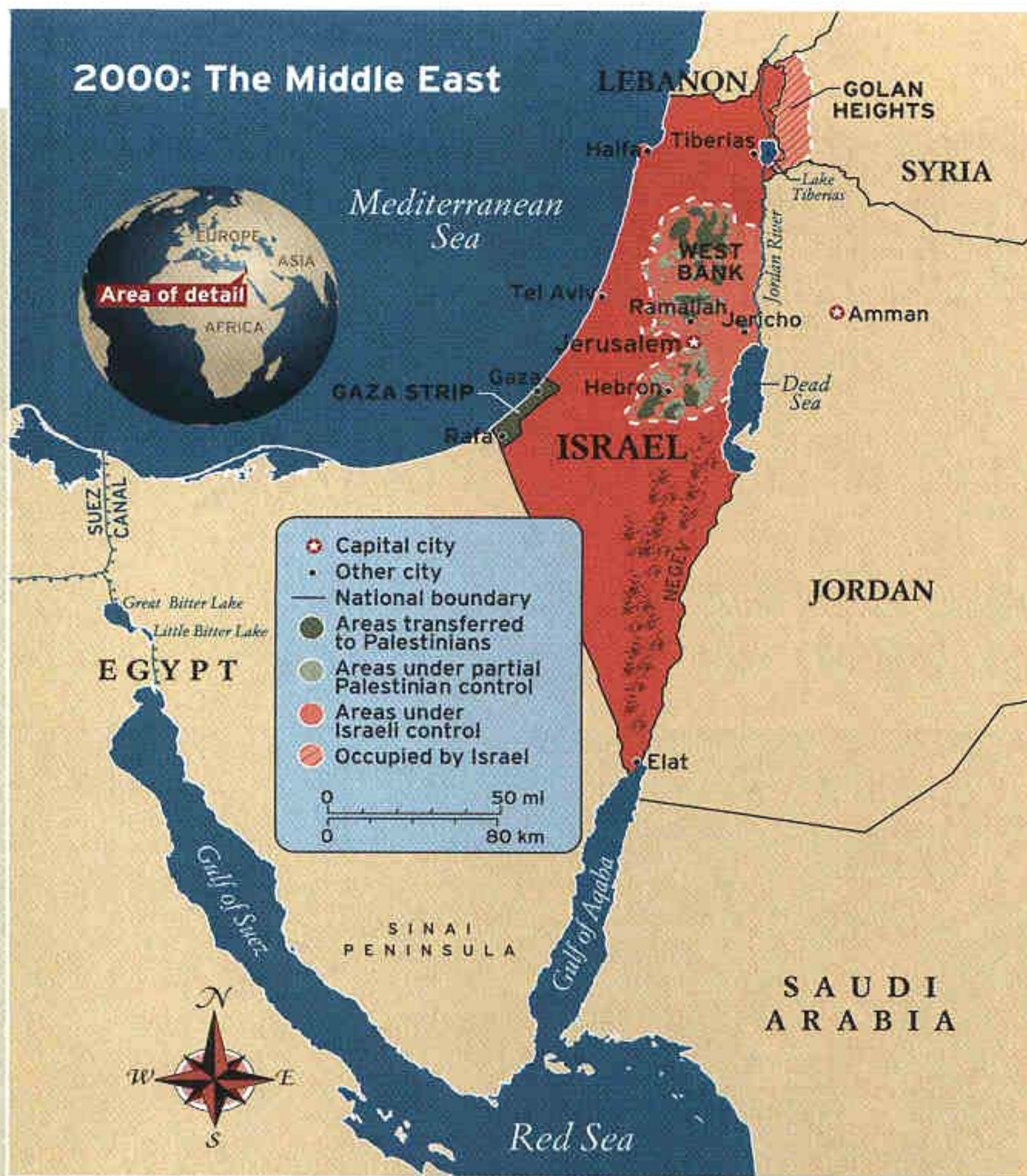
1947: UN Partition Plan



1967: After the Six-Day War



RINA CASTELNUOVO/NY TIMES PICTURES



Syria are planning to attack, Israel strikes first. Jordan joins Egypt and Syria. In six days, Israel wins a sweeping victory, seizing Jerusalem, the West Bank, Golan Heights, and Sinai Peninsula.

1969: Arafat becomes chairman of the PLO.

October 1973: Egypt and Syria launch a surprise attack against Israel on Yom Kippur, the holiest Jewish holiday. Israel defeats them.

1979: Israel and Egypt sign a peace treaty. Israel returns Egyptian land captured in 1967 in exchange for peace. The agreement establishes a framework for Palestinian self-rule, but the PLO rejects the plan.

1987: Palestinians, frustrated with Israeli rule, begin a protest called the *intifada*, marked by stone throwing and labor strikes. Israel responds harshly, drawing sharp criticism at home and abroad.

September 13, 1993: Israel and the PLO sign the Oslo Accord. Israel grants the Palestinians self-rule in Gaza and Jericho, and agrees to a time line for further negotiations, in exchange for peace.

1994: Jordan makes peace with Israel.

1995: Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who signed the Oslo Accord, is assassinated by a Jewish extremist.

1996: Benjamin Netanyahu, a staunch opponent of the Oslo Accord, is elected Israeli Prime Minister. The peace process stalls.

1999: Israeli voters elect Ehud Barak as Prime Minister. He promises to renew the peace process in a spirit of compromise.

2000: Barak offers a plan for divided Israeli-Palestinian control of Jerusalem—the first time the subject is broached in peace talks. Arafat rejects the plan.

The Roots of Conflict

Throughout history, control of Jerusalem has always been decided by violence. Now diplomats are trying to settle the issue through negotiation. Here's the background on the conflict.

1890s: European Jews organize efforts to create a Jewish homeland. They call the movement Zionism. By the early 1900s, 25,000 Jews have settled in Palestine, then part of the Turkish Ottoman Empire.

1900s: As Ottoman rule weakens, Arabs in Palestine want to establish their own nation.

1914: During World War I (1914-1918), Britain promises Palestinian Arabs an Arab state in exchange for their help in defeating the Ottoman Empire. To Jews, Britain pledges support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

1917: Britain seizes control of Palestine. Jewish immigrants continue to arrive by the tens of thousands, leading to clashes between Arabs and Jews.

1947: Support for a Jewish homeland grows

after World War II (1939-1945), when the world learns that Nazi Germany has killed 6 million Jews in the Holocaust. The United Nations votes to divide Palestine into two countries, one Arab, one Jewish, with Jerusalem under international control. Jews accept the plan; Arabs do not.

May 14, 1948: Jews declare the creation of Israel. Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan attack the new nation. Israel wins the war and takes half the land designated for the Arab state. Egypt and Jordan divide the rest. Nearly 1 million Palestinians flee, most ending up in harsh UN refugee camps in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

1964: The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is founded, dedicated to creating a Palestinian homeland and destroying Israel. A civil engineer named Yasir Arafat helps to found Fatah, the leading military component of the PLO, which engages in terrorist strikes against Israel.

June 1967: After learning that Egypt and

Battle For the Holy City

FOCUS: History Arms Both Sides in the Struggle Over Jerusalem

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

To help students understand the background to one of the most explosive issues in world politics today: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over control of Jerusalem.

Discussion Questions:

- For years, peace negotiators side-stepped mention of the future status of Jerusalem. Was that a sound course? Should negotiators have dealt with Jerusalem first? Or were they right to settle other, easier problems before considering the status of Jerusalem?
- Pope John Paul II has suggested that since Jerusalem is holy to three of the world's major religions, the city should be placed under international control. Do you think this plan could work?

CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

Map Study: Refer to the maps, noting mileage scales. The Old City is about a half-mile wide at its widest and less than a half-mile north to south. Have students calculate a comparable area in their community. Discuss how geography—specifically, the area's small size—contributes to tensions. If the Old City were larger, would it be easier to ease the conflict?

Critical Thinking: Britain's link to Israeli and Palestinian history (see 1920 map) is rarely seen as a key factor in the conflict. Note the 1914 entry in "The Roots of Conflict." Did Britain's promise to support independent states for Jews and Palestinians contribute to today's tensions?

Next, consider how other historic events are influencing the thinking of Israelis and Palestinians. What evidence does the arti-

cle provide that supports the views of both Kheirallah Bazbaz and Yaara Saroussi? (Can students think of compromise positions that might satisfy both young people?) How may the three Arab-Israeli wars (see the 1967 map) have influenced the thinking of Kheirallah and Yaara?

(For a transcript of the interviews with Kheirallah Bazbaz and Yaara Saroussi, see *The New York Times Upfront* Web site: www.nytimes.com/upfront)

Debate: Refer students to page 19 and the proposal offered by Rami Friedman. Have students debate the suggestion that the way to solve the conflict over Jerusalem is to muddle along as is. Would Friedman's plan allow both sides to learn to live in peace? Or would Israel's continued control of the city contribute to ongoing uprisings by Palestinians?

They Killed for Kicks

FOCUS: Leopold and Loeb Case Raises a Question: Do Teen Killers Deserve to Die?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

To help students understand that today's debate over executing teen murderers is neither new nor novel. In 1924, the trial of thrill-killers Nathan F. Leopold Jr. and Richard Loeb fueled the same debate.

Discussion Questions:

- Why didn't attorney Clarence Darrow have his clients plead "not guilty by reason of insanity"? Would you have chosen as he did?
- Does the fact that Bobby Franks's murder occurred in 1924—long before videos, rap, and TV—diminish the argument that violent media produce violent behavior today?

CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

Discussion: Ask students why they believe the Leopold and Loeb case still resonates in the history of crime in America.

Tell students that many criminal courts now allow the families of murder victims to testify about how the loss of their loved ones has affected their lives. Should a judge or jury take these emotional presentations into account when deciding punishment? Or should punishment be decided solely on the legal facts? Might the Leopold-Loeb sentences have turned out differently if Bobby Franks's family had testified about the pain they suffered?

Critical Thinking: Have students read Nathan Leopold's statement, on page 31, that he wanted to know what one thinks after having committed "cold-blooded

murder." Does this statement prove that Leopold was mentally ill? If Leopold had been 40 when he made that statement—rather than 19—might Judge Caverly have chosen the death penalty?

Compare and Contrast: Students can compare the Leopold and Loeb defense with the "lackluster" defense afforded Shareef Cousin in "Innocent on Death Row." Should courts ensure that all death-penalty defendants receive counsel as competent as that offered by Clarence Darrow? Why did Leopold and Loeb get one of the best lawyers, while Cousin received such a poor defense? (See question about court-appointed lawyers in Lesson Plan 2.)

Have students write a title, subtitle, and ad for a movie comparing the trials of Leopold-Loeb and Shareef Cousin.