

Six Days And 40 years

What the 1967 war meant to Israel and the Jewish people.

The Six-Day War in June 1967 was a mighty military victory by a tiny nation that showed the world what motivation and heart can accomplish.

After those six days, Jerusalem was a united city, giving Jews access to the sacred Western Wall of the Holy Second Temple for the first time in 19 years. The widespread photograph of paratroopers praying at that Wall captured the symbolism of the moment for the world.

For diaspora Jews, the decisiveness and swiftness of the Israeli victory, plus the capture of Jerusalem, inspired pride in Israel like nothing before ever had. Rallies were held in support of Israel, record amounts of money were raised for the victorious state, and one of the biggest waves of immigration to Israel began.

But peace seemed even more elusive. Territory gained would be used as a bargaining chip for peace, yet the Israelis' lightning victory shamed the Arab world and made Israel's enemies even more determined to destroy her.

On the 40th anniversary of the Six-Day War, this package of stories recalls the jubilation of victory, assesses the problems still facing Jerusalem and examines the bitter-sweet legacy of pursuing peace.

— Keri Guten Cohen, story development editor



Israeli girls with Jerusalem written in Hebrew on their foreheads and wrapped in Israeli flags join the May 16, 2007, celebration marking the 40th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem.

Really United?

Much still needs to be done to truly unite Arab and Jewish parts of Jerusalem.

Dina Kraft
Jewish Telegraphic Agency

Jerusalem

The group of Jerusalemites tumbled off the tour bus onto streets and hilltops where most of them had never set foot. They were in eastern Jerusalem, home to some 150,000 Arabs and, for most on the tour, an entirely new world.

They took in views of Israel's security barrier, here a hulking concrete wall that divides neighborhoods, and walked the narrow, cracked roads lined with piles of uncollected trash. They marveled that this, too, is Jerusalem.

They also made their way through the contrasting scene of paved roads and tidy, stone-faced apartment blocs that make up the wide swath of Jewish neighborhoods in the east of the city, neighborhoods built between Arab ones since 1967, the fruit of efforts by successive Israeli governments to ensure that the city is never divided again.

As Israel marks the 40th anniversary of the Six-Day War and the reunification of Jerusalem — constantly touted in national slogans as “eternally united” — this group of students and professionals came to see for themselves the Arab neighborhoods of the city where Jews rarely venture.

“I see regression, not progress,” said Michal, a psychologist who has lived in the Jerusalem area for 30 years but had not been to the eastern part of the city for nearly as long. “Jerusalem never seemed united for me. The idea that it is is a fiction.”

She's not alone: A poll of Jerusalem residents by the Dahaf Institute found that 62 percent do not consider the city united.

“They have good reason,” Motti Elmaliyah of the local newspaper *Yerushalayim* wrote of the poll. “When was the last time you enjoyed a stroll on Saladin Street, one of the major arteries in east Jerusalem, and felt at home? Except for a quick trip to eat hummus on Saturday morning in the Old City and getting a tune-up in Wadi Joz, the Jewish residents of the city try not to go to east Jerusalem. That way they also don't have to see the dirt and the neglect there.”

Jerusalem's Future?

The 40th anniversary has brought new attention to the question of what Jerusalem's unity means beyond political sloganeering and what might lie ahead for the city. New statistics show that the city's Arab population is growing faster than its Jewish one.

According to figures from the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, Jerusalem today is 66 percent Jewish and 34 percent Arab. While the Arab growth rate continues to climb each year, an increasing number of Jews, mainly secular ones, are leaving the city, fleeing what they say is an increasingly Orthodox, politically tense and poor city with few economic opportunities.

Jerusalem, these Jews say, is a place that feels less and less like home.

On May 13, Mayor Uri Lupolianski warned the government that the capital could lose its Jewish majority within a decade.

“We won't be satisfied with crumbs,” he said. “We need a comprehensive plan.”

The vast majority of the public, 92 percent, said it is important or very important to maintain a Jewish majority in the city,

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