

Chapter 1

Introduction

A Walk Across Jerusalem

On the day of my arrival in Jerusalem in early June 1999, I took a long walk across the city to explore my new environs. I crossed from the predominantly Jewish residential neighborhoods of West Jerusalem to the hub of Arab East Jerusalem, just outside the Damascus Gate of the Old City. Although the May Israeli election season had long since passed, frayed political posters still plastered billboards, buses, and city streets. As I walked by a bus stop in downtown West Jerusalem, an election poster caught my eye. The large poster depicted a dove flying over a scenic, pastel-colored depiction of the Old City. A caricature of Ehud Barak, dressed in full military habit, sat on the dove's back. The dove's words floated over the skyline of the Old City: "General Barak, bring us peace."

I continued walking eastward. Soon, the language, dress, and customs of the people on the street shifted dramatically, as if I had traveled thousands of miles instead of a few blocks. On the main commercial street in Palestinian¹ East Jerusalem, Salah el-Din Street, I came across another political poster. The red,

¹ In keeping with their own identity labels, I call the Arab East Jerusalem residents "Palestinians," referring to a distinct ethno-national political group. These people, however, are officially citizens of the State of Israel, residing in the area of East Jerusalem annexed by Israel after the 1967 War. "Palestinians" are a national group of Arabs living in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, the State of Israel, and neighboring Arab states. This essay deals with the current status of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, rather than the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole. It focuses on the Palestinian women peacemakers of Jerusalem and Ramallah (a West Bank Palestinian town north of Jerusalem) and the Israeli women peacemakers of Jerusalem whom I interviewed during the summer of 1999. See Appendix A: Research Methodology for a description of the interview process and a complete list (pp. 172-173) of the Israeli and Palestinian interviewees.

green, white, and black poster (the colors of the Palestinian national flag) pictured a map of Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, with the city of Jerusalem identified as the capital. It read, “No Justice, No Peace.”

The contrast between the Israeli and Palestinian conceptions of peace exemplified by the differences between these two posters would eventually become the main focus of my analysis. The Israeli poster implied that peace (with Palestinians and other Arabs) could be “brought about” as the result of the agency of leaders or a change of political climate. By contrast, the Palestinian poster made Palestinian justice prior to any vision of peace. The Palestinian poster implied that “justice” meant attaining an autonomous Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital.

I began with the idea of investigating the particular characteristics that women brought to the peace efforts. It was not until I had thought more extensively about the issue that I came to see that my main findings involved women’s versions of these two different, and sometimes conflicting, visions of peace. I have called the Israeli vision “peace with care” and the Palestinian vision “peace with justice.”

My interest in Palestinian-Israeli peacemaking attempts, particularly less traditional ones, motivated this project. Academic attention has lately focused on finding innovative ways of resolving, or at least negotiating, international conflicts such as the hundred-year Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Some feminist theorists suggest that typical female traits, learned skills, or even diplomatic styles might offer a creative approach to peacemaking. The early work of Carole Gilligan

suggested that caring, concern, relatedness, and responsibility might play a greater role in the moral actions of women than men. Subsequent theorists, from Sara Ruddick to Jean Bethke Elshtain to Francis Fukuyama,² have looked with hope to women peacemakers to utilize this “ethic of care” — and its constitutive moral elements — in resolving international conflict.

Popular feminism, in the United States and elsewhere, has also embraced a gendered ethic of care, inspired by the hope that women can now wage peace where men have waged war. Recently, the Kennedy School of Government hosted a two-week conference on “Women Waging Peace” and *Ms. Magazine* featured a cover story, “Women Activists: On Preventing War and Making Peace.”³ Looking to women as potential peacemakers has historical precedents, in the early feminist pacifism of Jane Addams and Virginia Woolf, for example.⁴

I came to Jerusalem in order to investigate whether Palestinian and Israeli women could bring a more creative, personal, and successful approach to peacemaking at the grassroots than their (mostly male) diplomatic leaders, who

² See Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989); Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1989); and Francis Fukuyama, “Women and the Evolution of World Politics,” *Foreign Affairs* 77, no. 5 (1998): 24-40. These issues will be explored in Chapter Five. Recent scholarship on women in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has primarily explored the intersection between gender and the state. Less attention has been given to the role of women as grassroots peace activists. Both Cynthia Cockburn, *The Space Between Us: Negotiating Gender and National Identities in Conflict* (London: Zed Books, 1998) and Simona Sharoni, *Gender and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: The Politics of Women’s Resistance* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1995) focus on the women’s peace movement in Israel and Palestine, although their work addresses the period immediately before and during the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords, from 1993-1995. As the political climate has shifted dramatically in the past three years and the situation facing women grassroots peacemakers has changed, Cockburn and Sharoni’s observations must be updated.

³ “Women Activists: On Preventing War and Making Peace,” *Ms. Magazine*, August/September 1999, 12-35.

⁴ Jane Addams traced women’s “certain pang about [war],” and their “curious revolt” against war to their experience as mothers. See Jane Addams, quoted in *My Country is the Whole World*, ed. Cambridge Women’s Peace Collective (London: Pandora Press, 1984), 86-87. See also Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (New York: Harvest/HBJ, 1966).

continued to be frustrated at the negotiating table. *The Jerusalem Link* became an obvious practical case study for this research. Founded in 1994, The Jerusalem Link is the largest women's joint peace activism organization in Palestine and Israel. The Link joins two independent extra-parliamentary women's groups, the Palestinian Jerusalem Center for Women (JCW) and the Israeli Bat Shalom. While both the JCW and Bat Shalom cater specifically to the women of the Palestinian and Israeli communities respectively, they also join together in support of shared political principles, to sponsor joint activities, and to register joint political protests.

The Jerusalem Link's objectives assume a connection between women and peace in line with this strand of theoretical and popular feminist thinking. The Link's website, printed material, and public addresses highlight the organization's focus on women's rights, the advancement of peace, and the relationship between these two issues. Their joint declaration of principles calls on both Palestinian and Israeli women "in the region and elsewhere to join in making *our* vision of peace a reality."⁵ It implies that women's political positions and their strategies for resolving conflict may be different from those of men. The Jerusalem Link hopes to "enable an articulate and audible joint women's voice on core issues related to the conflict."⁶

⁵ Emphasis mine. "The Jerusalem Link Declaration," <<http://www.batshalom.org>> and <<http://www.j-c-w.org>>. I give the full URLs for all of the websites cited in this thesis, preceded by the link from the website homepage. Consult the Bibliography for more information about the electronic sources. See Appendix E for the new Jerusalem Link Declaration, updated in late August 1999.

⁶ "What is the Jerusalem Link?" <<http://www.j-c-w.org>>.

My analysis relies primarily on the thirty-one interviews that I conducted with Palestinian and Israeli grassroots peacemakers.⁷ I began by interviewing both Palestinian and Israeli women affiliated directly with the Jerusalem Link: board members, paid staff members, and volunteer activists. I traveled back and forth between the Bat Shalom office in West Jerusalem, located in the fashionable Emek Refaim shopping district, and the Jerusalem Center for Women's office, located in a middle-class suburb called Beit Haninah. A residential border neighborhood, Beit Haninah spans both Arab East Jerusalem and the West Bank. In fact, the Jerusalem Center for Women's office is located exactly at the Israeli military checkpoint, a small tin hut marked only by a prominent blue and white Israeli flag.

I participated in protests, conflict resolution seminars, political coffeehouses, and leadership training programs, some sponsored independently by either the JCW or Bat Shalom and others co-sponsored for both Palestinian and Israeli women participants. I attended a Bat Shalom board meeting and two lectures on political issues. I soon realized that, in order to understand the work of the Jerusalem Link, I would need to research the political context of this organization. Thus, I began to interview male and female peacemakers from other peace organizations, based in Jerusalem and Ramallah. I explain my methodological decisions regarding the interview process in Appendix A.

⁷ I interviewed twenty-seven women and four men. In their interviews, the Palestinian and the Israeli women defined the term peacemaker differently. I allow for two separate understandings of this term by the Palestinians and the Israelis and will discuss the differences and their implications in Chapters Two and Three.

A Short History of the Jerusalem Link⁸

The origins of the Jerusalem Link can be traced to the first international Palestinian-Israeli Women's Conference held in Brussels, in May 1989. The Brussels conference brought together top women politicians and activists from Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) leadership. At the conclusion of the meeting, the women participating drew up a declaration of principles affirming their commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The declaration recognized the rights of all the region's people "to live with dignity and in security, ...the right of the Palestinian people to self determination alongside Israel, ...[and] the right of all sides of the dispute to choose their legitimate representatives."⁹ At the time — three years before the official signing of the Oslo Peace Accords — these political principles, as well the mutual recognition implied by a joint meeting between Palestinians and Israelis, were considered radical by both communities. The Palestinian leadership had yet to formally recognize Israel as a state. Israeli law prohibited seeking contact with members of "terrorist organizations," including the PLO.

In second conference in Brussels eventually led to the official establishment of the Jerusalem Link in 1994. From the beginning, the founding members of the Link recognized the need for separate, independent women's centers, one in East

⁸ For additional information on the hundred-year-old history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as relevant to the political discussion of the Jerusalem Link, see Appendix B: The Jerusalem Link in Historical Context. Space in this thesis does not allow for an overview of this broader history. However, I found this history central to the political positions and deliberations between the two sides of the Jerusalem Link. In Appendix B, I have provided the historical context of the past hundred years of the conflict, attempting to combine the two separate histories often told to me by the Palestinian and Israeli women. Currently, history is employed as a political tool. Thus this historical appendix attempts to clarify the central, often contested historical issues.

⁹ "About the Jerusalem Link," <<http://www.batshalom.org>>.

Jerusalem and one in West Jerusalem. Each would promote peace and women's rights and cater to the needs of its own community. At the same time, the Palestinian and Israeli women would work cooperatively toward the "establishment of a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace between both peoples."¹⁰ With two independent boards of directors connected by a joint steering committee, organizationally, the Jerusalem Link is now considered a model of Palestinian-Israeli coexistence: "separate but linked, similar but independent."¹¹

The Link provides a model to the official negotiators of the peace process and sees itself at the forefront of Palestinian-Israeli peacemaking ventures. The Link has also received international recognition. The *Ms. Magazine* article cites the Link as the main Palestine-Israel women's peace group. Jerusalem Link members represented their regional conflict at the Kennedy School conference on Women Waging Peace. Since 1994, the women of the Jerusalem Link have traveled internationally, presenting their organization as a possible model for other international women's peace groups in Cyprus, Bosnia, and South Africa. Thus, the Link's activities, internal cooperation between and among its Palestinian and Israeli members, and its ultimate success are important not only for the organization itself but also for its role as a leading paradigm of women's joint peace activism. The Link's successes and challenges reflect the radical experiment its members have embraced, as one of the few political partnerships between Palestinian and Israeli activists.

¹⁰ See Sumaya Farhat-Naser (Director, Jerusalem Center for Women), in *Sharing Jerusalem*, eds. Amneh Badran, Daphna Golan, and Jack Persekian (Ramallah: Adwa Design, 1997), 11.

¹¹ "What is the Jerusalem Link?" <<http://www.j-c-w.org>>.

Conflicting Models of Peacemaking

The Palestinian JCW and the Israeli Bat Shalom work in distinctly different political climates that reflect different views about the appropriate and possible role for women in politics. Traditional norms regarding gender roles differ dramatically between the Israeli and Palestinian communities. As I rode the mini van from the Israeli to the Palestinian neighborhoods of Jerusalem, I saw the dress, custom, and the public behavior of women shift dramatically. While women in tank tops promenaded down the streets of the downtown West Jerusalem shopping district, only a half a mile away, in the heart of Arab East Jerusalem, most women were dressed in long skirts, trousers, and long-sleeved blouses — even on the hottest summer days.

When I began talking to the two groups of women peacemakers, I saw how these superficial differences on the street reflected a deeper divide. I also began to question the gendered ethic of care hypothesis — that women were better equipped, better situated, or more capable of overcoming ethno-national conflict. I began to realize that searching for a supposed feminist common ground for peacemaking, in the western sense, did not help explain the issues that were absorbing and creating a rift between the Palestinian and Israeli women of the Jerusalem Link. The gendered ethic of care question posed by Gilligan and other western feminist theorists seemed tangential to the concerns of the women I interviewed. Instead, I found that they faced a major challenge. The dramatic differences between the JCW and Bat Shalom threatened the two groups' already tenuous relationship in

ways that I analyze here as the difference between a vision of “peace with justice” and “peace with care.” I became immersed in the political tensions among the Jerusalem Link board members during the summer months. According to Jerusalem Link members with whom I have corresponded since, these political tensions have yet to be resolved. Gender has not created a full common ground between the two sides of the Jerusalem Link. The organization’s members encounter in different forms the same political disagreements that frustrate the Palestinian and Israeli official negotiators of the international peace process.

This essay does not systematically compare male and female peace activists, either Palestinian or Israeli. Nor do I attempt to disprove the original gendered ethic of care hypothesis or its essentialist implications that have raised concerns among recent feminist theorists. I asked the women themselves to respond to the gendered ethic of care hypothesis. Some, but not all, registered guarded support for the idea of an inherent connection between women and peacemaking.¹² The lack of consensus on this point among either the Palestinian or Israeli women’s responses is discussed in section II of Chapter Two and section II of Chapter Three. I revisit the debate about the gendered ethic of care more theoretically in Chapter Five.

Rather, in this essay I explore the differences between the Palestinian and Israeli women peacemakers joined in the Jerusalem Link and focus on the political

¹² Carole Gilligan’s book, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), was an important starting point for feminist deliberations about the ethic of care hypothesis. In Chapter Five, I review Gilligan’s major points and other interpretations of the ethic of care hypothesis.

and moral implications of the differences. I develop and explore two models of peacemaking, one based on the role of justice and one based on the role of care — but a care not necessarily correlated with gender. It seems that peacemaking guided by justice differs fundamentally from peacemaking guided by care.

The first problem I encountered during my interviews was the difference between the two groups' definitions of "peacemaker." Understanding the Palestinian and Israeli versions of what constitutes a peacemaker is the broad aim of the next two chapters. In Chapter Two and Chapter Three, I present the women of the JCW and Bat Shalom respectively, as objects of their historical and national experiences, as subjects choosing activities and programs appropriate to their political situation, and as feminists, interested in women's rights. In comparing the two groups, I argue that each not only defines peacemaking differently, but also focuses on different organizational goals and utilizes different strategies appropriate to its political climate. It emerges that the JCW and Bat Shalom employ a different discourse in their peacemaking, specifically regarding each group's understanding of rights. The JCW relies on the collective, national struggle for group rights while the Israelis understand rights with an "other-regarding" orientation.

Chapter Two and Chapter Three, built primarily around my research in Jerusalem, are the cornerstone for this project. They create an understanding of the different peacemaking discourses that the JCW and Bat Shalom embrace. The dynamics of these two models can explain many of the recent tensions dividing the

two sides of the Link in the past year and conflicting strategies often used by Palestinian and Israeli negotiators of the international peace process.

In Chapter Four, I examine the political repercussions of these two clashing models of peacemaking as exemplified in the controversy within the Jerusalem Link on whether to let Israeli women who reside in settlements participate in the Jerusalem Link dialogue groups.

In Chapter Five, I turn to relevant moral theory to examine the ethics underlying these two political models of peacemaking. First, I give some evidence that the Israeli women peacemakers' "peace with care" derives from a strongly held feeling of duty to ameliorate the Palestinian situation. Emotions such as sympathy and guilt, I argue, have a deep connection with the Israeli women's principles of duty. This duty is particular rather than universal, emotion-laden rather than emotion-free, and collective rather than individual, in contrast to classic Kantian conceptions of duty.

Second, with several recent feminist theorists, I challenge the traditional division of moral actions into a dichotomy between "ethic of care" and "ethic of justice." Although my nomenclature for the Palestinian and Israeli women' models of peacemaking borrows the language of "justice" and "care," I do not conceive of these ethical strands as being opposed. Nor do I associate justice with men and care with women, as some theorists, inspired by the work of Carol Gilligan, have done. The appropriation of the ethic of care to the moral behavior of women, in both recent feminist thought and in the Jerusalem Link's own self-description, originally motivated this project. Yet rather than applying moral strategies

embedded in the ethic of care to their peacemaking activities, as some of the feminist theorists might predict, both the Palestinian and the Israeli peacemakers combine traditional components of the ethic of care *and* the ethic of justice. Upon closer examination, care — for their land, nation, and fellow Palestinians — shapes the Palestinian women’s strong principles of justice. For the Israeli women, sympathy for the Palestinians creates justice principles regarding Palestinian rights.

An endeavor that began by investigating the hypothesis that women are distinctly suited to engaging in grassroots peacemaking ended, therefore, in finding the hypothesis not as relevant as I expected to the issues facing the peacemakers in the Jerusalem Link. I conclude that understanding the major differences between Bat Shalom’s model of “peace with care” and the JCW’s model of “peace with justice,” as well as each model’s care and justice components can help the women of the Jerusalem Link resolve their current inter-organizational conflicts. Recognizing the difference in the thrust of each side’s peacemaking models — as well as how the two models interact — can also help inform peace activism more broadly.