

# JERUSALEM SCENES

The upper Hinnom Valley and the King David Hotel



A good place to view Jerusalem is from the Citadel, close by the Jaffa Gate on the western side of the Old City. From here the views east and west are very different; that to the east is over the close-packed houses and narrow streets of the Old City, that to the west is of the upper Hinnom Valley and the buildings of New Jerusalem rising beyond. As will be seen, much of the area is parkland, with grass, shrubs, and cypress trees spearing the sky. To the left in the valley is part of one of the earliest Jewish housing developments outside the walls, Yemin Moshe, with the Zionist Federation House at the right end. Somewhere in the park area higher up the slope lies a tomb complex dating back to New Testament times and believed to be the tombs of the Herod family.

On the skyline are the buildings of King David Street, one of the main thoroughfares of the city. Here are many important buildings, such as the YMCA and the Hebrew Union Institute, which is the centre for Reform Judaism in Israel. The two prominent buildings in the picture are, however, both hotels, the modern tower block to the left being the King Solomon Hotel and the rectangular one to the right the famous King David Hotel. The original hotel was built in 1929-31. It later became the offices of the British Government and military command.

Here, on 22 July 1946, occurred an event which was to play a prominent role in getting the British to relinquish the mandate, leading to an independent State of Israel in May 1948.

The Irgun, a Jewish terrorist organisation led by Menahem Begin, later prime minister, blew up the building with explosives brought into the building in milk churns, killing ninety-one people, many of them British. (It should be noted, however, that, unlike the Palestinian suicide bombers of today, a telephone warning was given, but the British did not believe it and failed to evacuate the building.) It later became the headquarters of the United Nations, before being restored to become the prestigious hotel that it is today.—*T.B.*