

Jerusalem

Past and Present

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1. Overview

Jerusalem is not merely a city in Palestine it is one of the great religious centres of the world, sacred to three major religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. It is also known to the Arabs, who ruled there for over 1,200 years, as 'al-Quds' **القدس** ('the Holy') or 'al-Quds al-Sharif' **القدس الشريف** ('the Holy Sanctuary').

1.1 Political Importance

It has also acquired great political significance through the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Under the Ottomans it had by the 19th century become 'the heart and nerve centre of the Palestinian body politic'. (Asali) and this intensified during the period of the First World War when the Arabs aspired to freedom from the imperial powers. However, when the Jewish settlers arrived from Europe, they saw the capture of Jerusalem as essential to their territorial ambitions. These competing claims have made the city a symbol of the national aspirations of both sides.

1.2 'A Separate Entity'

In recognition of its significance the United Nations, when agreeing a Partition Plan for Palestine in 1947, designated Jerusalem a *Corpus Separatum* - a 'separate entity' which was to be governed under a special international regime, administered by the United Nations. [General Assembly Resolution 181(11)A]

1.3 Ethnic Cleansing and the 'Judaisation' of Jerusalem

The United Nations plan was never implemented because in April 1948 - six weeks before the British were due to end their rule in Palestine - Zionist forces began to execute military 'Plan Dalet' under which they planned to seize far more territory than was allocated to them under the Partition Plan. This also included the whole of Jerusalem. Ethnic cleansing, intrinsic to Plan Dalet at that time, continues to this day. The present Palestinian population in Jerusalem is a shadow of what it once was with Arab East Jerusalem under extreme pressure at this time.

1.4 The Question of Jerusalem - A Key Issue

Despite the fact that Israel, which now has absolute control over Jerusalem, claims the city as its capital, it is not recognised as such by the United Nations nor by foreign governments who still refuse to set up their embassies there. Moreover, the Palestinian leadership, which came to accept the proposal of two states side by side, continues to insist that East Jerusalem must be the future capital of a Palestinian state. They will not negotiate otherwise. For this reason Jerusalem, together with the Right of Return of the Palestinian refugees and the illegal Jewish settlements is one of the three key issues requiring a just resolution if the conflict is to end.

2 Origins

The earliest reference to *Ur Salem*, a settlement founded by the Canaanites, was found in the so-called Amarna Texts, written in the Bronze Age on clay tablets found in Egypt.

2.1 Transformation

Throughout the centuries since, Jerusalem, like Gaza, has known many rulers: the Assyrians, Israelites, Babylonians, Greeks, etc. have left their mark. However, it was when the British took control of Palestine under the *British Mandate*, ending over 1200 years of Arab and Turkish Muslim rule, that the greatest transformation has taken place. It has been a double trans-formation, both political and social: Political - replacement of Arab rule by Zionist newcomers; Social - 'modernisation' whose physical, demographic and cultural changes "... have enveloped and almost over-shadowed the Arab character of the city."

3 The British Mandate

"Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far greater import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land." - Confidential memo from Lord Balfour, 11th August 1919

1917 was a fateful year for Palestine. In November the Balfour Agreement, by which the British Government recorded its commitment to the creation of a Jewish 'national home' in Palestine, was issued.

On 9th December General Allenby entered Jerusalem. Four years later, in 1922, the 'Mandate for Palestine' was issued by the League of Nations.

3.1 Invisible Palestinians

British Mandate policy and practice were guided both by the spirit and by the letter of the Balfour Agreement, the entire text of which was incorporated into the wording of the Mandate. In neither document are the Palestinians once mentioned by name.

They are referred to as the 'non-Jewish communities' even though they constituted 90% of the population. Reference is made to their 'civil and religious rights' but not to their 'national and political rights'. By contrast, national and political rights were ascribed to the Jewish minority who were recognised as a people even though they were only 10% of the population.

3.2 Political Repression

While the majority indigenous Arab population was ignored as a national or political entity, the League of Nations ordered the British to encourage Jewish immigration and settlements and help them create national institutions. The situation which developed was one of outright political repression of the Palestinians and advancement of the *Yishuv* (Jews resident in Palestine).

3.3 Jewish Autonomy

Although state power rested entirely in British hands, the Jewish community was allowed total internal autonomy. This came to include :

- fully-fledged representative institutions, including those dealing with taxation and finance
- control of other apparatuses of internal self-government
- an army, the Haganah
- internationally recognised diplomatic representation abroad through the Jewish Agency.

This amounted to a para-state, dependent upon but separate from the mandatory state.

3.4 The Iron Cage

Elected Palestinian Deputies had attended the Ottoman Parliament from 1877 to 1914, while a substantial degree of Palestinian autonomy had also been customary under the Turks. Despite this, under the Mandate, Palestinian representatives were denied access to any of the functions of state power and were also prevented from exercising any form of political self-organisation. They were forbidden to have a Parliament, a cabinet, any form of nationwide representative body or even officials tasked with special responsibilities. This repressive framework imposed by the British seemed designed to prevent any form of Arab self-determination. It was, in the view of author Rashid Khalidi, an 'iron-cage'.

3.5 'Colonial-Settler Regime'

The regime in Palestine, where the British High Commissioner, stationed in Jerusalem, was the highest and sole source of authority in the land, was in stark contrast with other ex-Ottoman countries of the time such as Iraq, Lebanon, Syria or Transjordan. In these countries the status and political participation of the indigenous population was never in question, even though they had to submit to a period of imperial rule. The refusal to recognise the Palestinians, while encouraging the growth of an immigrant minority whose leaders had promised to defend imperial interests, bore all the hallmarks of a 'colonial-settler regime'.

For over twelve years the Palestinians were patient. Their leaders made peaceful overtures to the British reminding them of the promise they had made to grant Arab independence in return for Arab support in the First World War. They invoked international consensus on the 'rights of small nations' as expressed in US president Woodrow Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' and Article 4 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. However, these pleas were all ignored by the British. By the mid-1930s, angry at the inferior status being imposed on them, frustrated at British intransigence and alarmed at the increasing numbers of Jewish immigrants arriving in Palestine, Arab patience finally gave way and they rose in revolt.

3.6 Arab Revolt 1936-39

In April 1936, under the leadership of Hajj Amin al-Husaini, the *Arab Higher Committee* was established in Jerusalem and called for a campaign of civil disobedience. This culminated in a general strike and open rebellion in 1937. The British response to this, the first Palestinian uprising, dramatically revealed the true intent of Mandate policy. In

October 1937 the British disbanded the *Arab Higher Committee* and exiled its members. Palestinian weapons were confiscated and those arrested harshly treated. Meanwhile British officers armed and even trained the Jews who came to form the majority in Wingate's death squads. Jerusalem was the scene of numerous incidents of violence and terrorism with the *Irgun Zvai Leumi* (an unofficial Jewish militia), responsible for a wave of bombings that lasted from 1937 until the outbreak of the Second World War. In October 1938 Palestinian fighters briefly seized control of Jerusalem's Old City but were unable to consolidate their position and the leadership of the struggle passed to the rural population. The British effort to crush the Arab Revolt in Palestine was the largest colonial war of the British Empire in the whole inter-war period. 25,000 troops and squadrons of aircraft were deployed. By the outbreak of the Second World War British imperialism had broken the back of Palestinian political society clearing the way for the post-war triumph of Zionism.

3.7 The End of the British Mandate

As the Second World War was drawing to its close a re-alignment of imperial power was starting to emerge internationally. The Zionists realised that British power was fading and they redoubled their efforts. Acts of violence were now carried out systematically, often by the unofficial Zionist terrorist militias, the *Irgun* and the *Stern Gang*. In July 1946 the *Irgun* bombed the King David Hotel in Jerusalem killing 92 people and wounding 46. The Hotel was the headquarters of the British forces in Palestine and also housed the central offices of the Mandate authority. In June this body had raided the office of the *Jewish Agency* in Jerusalem and had confiscated documents proving the link between the *Haganah* and the Zionist terror groups. The bombing was allegedly carried out to destroy these documents which were housed in the Mandate office.

As an exhausted and bankrupt post-war British state was assessing the continuing cost of the Mandate, it came under increasing pressure from other world powers to relinquish its hold on Palestine. The United States in particular had come to appreciate how useful a Zionist state, willing to assist imperial projects in the Middle East, might be. Both the United States and Russia urged Britain to hand the matter of Palestine over to the newly-established United Nations.

4 Partition

The United Nations set up a 'Special Committee for Palestine' (UNSCOP) which finally opted for a solution which Britain had formerly proposed - partition. Palestine was to be divided into two states with Jerusalem designated a *Corpus Separatum*. On 29th November 1947 the General Assembly agreed the proposal which entered the record as *General Assembly Resolution 181*. Not only was this decision of dubious legality, because taken over the heads of the indigenous population, it also ignored the ethnic composition of Palestine. By 1947 immigration from Europe had boosted Jewish numbers to just under a third of the population. But the Palestinian Arabs, despite years of British repression, still constituted over two-thirds of the population. The Partition Resolution however only allocated 42% of Palestine to the majority population and allocated an exceedingly generous 56% of the land to a 'Jewish state'. Moreover, that 56% encompassed features vitally necessary to the Palestinian economy. The remaining 2% of land around Jerusalem was to be under international control

5 The Battle for Jerusalem

Following the Partition Resolution Jewish forces, in accordance with the Zionist plan, prepared immediately to seize Palestinian land beyond what had been allocated to them by the UN. This included Jerusalem which, despite British repression, was still a predominantly Arab city.

From the first day of January 1948 the Zionists started shelling neighbourhoods in the west of the city. First of all the *Irgun* bombed the Samiramis Hotel in West Jerusalem killing many people including the Spanish consul. Then the *Haganah* started targeting Arab villages on the western slopes of the Jerusalem mountains including Lifta whose ruins can still be seen today. On 11th January the Zionist army blew up the houses and drove the inhabitants out.

5.1 Plan Dalet

At the beginning of April, six weeks before the British were due to leave, the Zionists started executing their '*Plan Dalet*', a blueprint for the ethnic cleansing of Palestine. The plan in the Jerusalem area was to seize as much of the city as possible and to open up a corridor to the coast. This involved the seizure and systematic destruction of Palestinian villages in the Jerusalem area. In the period up to the ceasefire in April 1949 around 750,000 Arabs were expelled from their homes into other parts of Palestine or the surrounding Arab states, where they and their descendants live today.

5.2 al-Qastel

Palestinian guerrillas, led by Abd al-Qadir al-Husaini, commander of the Jerusalem region, attempted to prevent this, putting up a determined resistance. However, on the 9th April, in an unsuccessful fight to hold on to the strategic hill-top village of al-Qastel, al-Husaini was killed and two of his key lieutenants wounded. The loss of their charismatic, courageous leader, a veteran of the Arab Revolt and the most respected Palestinian military figure, was a bitter blow to the Jerusalemites. A further blow was to follow. On the same day the Zionists committed an act of atrocity against a defenceless Palestinian village which is commemorated to this day.

5.3 Deir Yassin

The *Haganah* had given the villagers of Deir Yassin an undertaking that they would not be attacked. For this reason they handed the job of 'cleansing' the village to the 'irregular' troops of the *Irgun* and *Stern* gangs. On 9th April 1948 these gangs burst into the village, spraying the houses with machine-gun fire, killing many of the inhabitants. They then gathered the rest in one place and murdered them in cold blood. The dead included thirty babies. The bodies of the dead were mutilated and a number of women were raped before being killed. A handful of villagers who had been purposely kept alive were then paraded through the streets of Jerusalem before being shot, to demonstrate the ferocity of which the Zionists were capable. The aim was to spread fear and panic among the Palestinian population so as to break their resistance and encourage them to flee.

Following these events Palestinian morale was at its lowest point and so it was relatively easy for the Zionist army to 'cleanse' more villages. Qalunya, Saris, Beit Surik and Biddu followed Deir Yassin. Traces of these destroyed villages and many others have all but disappeared now beneath forests, planted for the purpose, around Jerusalem

5.4 'Operation Jevussi'

On the 26th April the *Haganah* launched a direct attack on Jerusalem itself, shelling the extensive and affluent Arab quarters in the west of the city. Hundreds were either killed or wounded and more than 30,000 driven out. Many fled to East Jerusalem. Their houses and goods were occupied and looted.

5.5 Looting

As in other parts of Palestine looting of Arab property routinely accompanied the ethnic cleansing. Neither town nor village was spared but particular targets for the looters were the old Arab buildings of great architectural beauty and the businesses, property and goods of the richer Palestinians.

5.6 British Inaction

With only one exception, the British did nothing, or worse, disarmed any Palestinian who had a weapon, promising them protection from Zionist aggression - protection which never materialised. By the time the British High Commissioner left the city on 15th May, thirty-nine Palestinian villages and eight Palestinian neighbourhoods in the Greater Jerusalem area had been ethnically-cleansed.

5.7 Jordanian Arab Legion Intervenes

By mid-May, having gained control of West Jerusalem, the Jewish forces were poised for a three-pronged attack on the Old City. However, it was only a last-minute intervention by the *Transjordanian Arab Legion* which prevented them from doing so. The Legion also defended adjacent modern quarters to the north and east, keeping them out of Zionist hands. In the fighting the ancient Haram-al-Sharif and the Dome of the Rock sustained some shelling and mortar fire and several worshippers were killed. The Jordanians were opposed to a Zionist takeover of Jerusalem and even to 'internationalisation' on the grounds that the city belonged rightfully to the Arabs. Despite this, they did not attempt to occupy any parts of Palestine which the UN had earmarked for the Zionist state, nor did they attempt to take over the whole of Jerusalem but only to prevent the *Haganah* from seizing the entire city.

6 A Divided City

By the 18th July when a truce negotiated by UN mediator Count Bernadotte had been declared, Jerusalem had become a divided city. Its two halves were separated by walls and barbed wire with a single crossing point, the Mandelbaum Gate. The Palestinians driven out of West Jerusalem were not allowed to return to their homes - those that were still standing - so in response the Jordanian authority prevented the Jews from going to the 'Wailing Wall'. A number of Jews living in the 'Old City' also fled to the west of the city. There were desecrations. The Zionists destroyed the historic 7th Century Muslim cemetery in Mamilla, burial ground of famous Arab scholars, mystics and warriors.

6.1 Population Displacement

The dislocation and depletion of Jerusalem's Arabs was dramatic. Even by the end of the Mandate, following years of Jewish immigration, Arabs still constituted approximately half the population of Jerusalem. There were now no Arabs in the western part of the city where previously they had owned up to 40% of the property. If one adds to this those Arabs who fled from the Old City and those who were driven out of villages close to the municipal boundaries or from the Jerusalem sub-district, then the figure of displaced Arabs is near to 80, 000. (Source: *Asali* p.259)

6.2 UN Failure

UN representatives had arrived in Jerusalem in May 1948 to start establishing the 'international administration' but had been largely ignored. They then became onlookers as the Zionists proceeded with their 'cleansing' and Jerusalem effectively became a partitioned city.

6.3 Count Folke Bernadotte

An honourable exception was the UN 'special mediator' Count Folke Bernadotte. Since his arrival in May he continued to work for a united city. Disturbed by what he saw he put forward a proposal in June that Jerusalem be governed by an Arab authority with strong local autonomy and guarantees for Jewish access to holy places. He issued a revised plan on 16th September calling for the internationalisation of the entire city under UN auspices in conformity with the 1947 UN Partition Resolution. However, he was assassinated by the *Stern Gang* the following day.

Despite the fact that the UN failed in its responsibility to defend the Palestinians, they still formally adhered to Resolution 181. In May 1949 Israel was only admitted to the UN on condition that it complied with UN policy. Israel agreed to this, was admitted but then failed to honour its promise. *It was not however expelled from the UN.* Following this, in January 1950, the Zionists, now calling themselves Israelis, buoyed by the failure of the UN to hold them to account, proclaimed West Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and moved their government buildings there.

Meanwhile, In September 1949, the *UN Conciliation Commission for Palestine* (CCP) had put forward a compromise solution between internationalisation and the *de facto* partition which was rejected by all sides. A similar proposal was put forward again in April 1950 with the same result. After that the UN made no further attempts to alter Jerusalem's new situation until Israel's capture of the remaining Arab section in 1967.

6.4 The Jordanian Administration

The Jordanians had been defending East Jerusalem since May 1948 and in December of that year King Abdullah of Jordan convened an assembly of Palestinian notables which ratified Jordan's authority. In April 1950 the parliament officially approved the annexation by the Hashemite Kingdom of what remained of Arab Palestine including East Jerusalem. The Jordanians assumed this position one may say by default. British political repression of the Palestinians during the Mandate period and the decimation and dispersal of the Palestinian leadership when they attempted to resist had produced the desired result. The Palestinians were ill-prepared to withstand the combined strength of imperialists and Zionists who were prepared to wrest their country from them. Even though the Jordanian rulers were not a disinterested party, nevertheless they were the only Arab force at the time capable of standing up to the Zionist juggernaut and so played an important role. During their tenure of East Jerusalem they

- contained further Israeli expansion
- maintained internal order
- helped administer the city, introducing modern improvements where possible
- maintained the shrines and enabled the city's architectural fabric to survive
- helped preserve the historic character of the ancient city
- promoted tourism and commerce
- developed commercial districts

6.5 The Israeli Administration

In contrast to the Arab experience, the Jews of Palestine had been encouraged by the British to organise politically and to participate in government. It was with comparative ease therefore that after cleansing West Jerusalem of its Arab inhabitants, they were able quickly to set up there all the trappings of state: a parliament, tax and financial institutions, various government departments, including a department of education whose first task was to draw up a school curriculum giving a Zionist version of events.

7 Zionist Takeover 1967

In 1967 another watershed in the history of Jerusalem occurred. During the 'Six-Day War' East Jerusalem was only thinly defended by about 5,000 Jordanian soldiers. On 5th June the Israeli forces launched their attack and by noon on 7th June they had taken over the 'Old City'. They then proceeded to 'cleanse' it, ordering hundreds of Palestinian Arabs out and demolishing their homes.

7.1 Destruction of the 'Moroccan Quarter'

One of the residential areas destroyed was the 800 year old Maghariba Quarter. On the 8th June the Israelis bulldozed it, reducing it to rubble. It has now become the plaza by the 'Wailing Wall'. This and similar acts of destruction breached the Geneva Convention but were only the first steps in a process of 'urban renewal' that within years would change the face and skyline of the city.

7.2 Looting

Though atrocities were few, there was widespread looting. Following closely behind their army, Israeli looters robbed houses, shops and mosques. They removed the priceless Dead Sea Scrolls from the Palestine Archeological Museum. These acts too breached the Geneva Convention.

7.3 Violation of International Law

On 28th June, in violation of the Hague Convention of 1907, Israel annexed East Jerusalem. They called it 'municipal reunification'. However, they dissolved the Arab Municipal Council and exiled the Mayor, Ruhi al-Khatib to Jordan. Other Palestinian city officials were to follow. Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Dayan set about re-integrating the two parts of the city: walls and barbed wire came down, utility lines were joined, Israeli identity cards issued and taxes assessed. The United States protested these illegal acts but was ignored by the Israelis who were busy creating new 'facts on the ground' to ensure their permanent sovereignty over the entire city.

7.4 Demographic Changes

In 1947 the population of the Jerusalem area was almost equally divided between Arabs (51%) and Jews (49%), with about 40% Arabs in the Municipality itself. However by 1967, owing to ethnic cleansing and Israeli gerrymandering of boundaries, the Arab population was now only a quarter of what it once was.

According to the deposed Palestinian mayor, Ruhi al-Khatib, some 60,000 Arabs fled in 1948 and another 5,000 became refugees in 1967. If children were brought into the equation, he estimated that some 100,000 Arab Jerusalemites were now in exile. Meanwhile, between 1967 and 1975, Israel succeeded in bringing 35,000 Jewish immigrants into the city.

8 The Expansion and 'Judaisation' of Jerusalem

Now in control of the whole city, in direct breach of the Geneva Convention, the Israelis drew up plans in accordance with the general Zionist goal in Palestine of having "Maximum Land and Minimum Arabs". The plan for Jerusalem was to extend its borders so it could provide a platform for more expansion on the West Bank and at the same time to 'de-arabise' the city and the surrounding area. This was to be accomplished by a programme of gerrymandering, land and property seizure, settlement building and landscape changes, together with the imposition of harsh, discriminatory measures against the Arab citizens of Jerusalem.

8.1 New City Boundaries

One of the first actions of the new Israeli municipal authority, in co-operation with the Israeli government, was to extend the boundaries of the city. Prior to 1967, most of the area comprising present-day Jerusalem was not part of the city (West or East), but rather part of the West Bank. Immediately following the end of the '6-Day War' Israel illegally annexed East Jerusalem together with the lands of 28 surrounding villages. The aim was to establish a continuous 'corridor' comprising over 70,000 dunums (1 dunum = 1000 sq. metres) of land stretching from the edge of Bethlehem in the south to the Governate of Ramallah in the north. The new borders were approved by Israel's government that year and reaffirmed in 1980 when the Knesset passed the 'Basic Law' on Jerusalem which stated that: "Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel".

8.2 Illegal Settlement Construction

Soon after the annexation of East Jerusalem the Israelis started constructing high rise apartment complexes on the land they had seized to the east of the city. These housing estates - French Hill, Ramat Eshkol, Ramot, East Talpiot and Gilo - illegal under international law, either displaced, engulfed or crowded long-established Arab homes.

Several miles farther east, on the slopes leading down to the Jordan Valley, another settlement with a clear strategic purpose was begun. Ma'ale Adumim was completed in 1975 and has now become so large that it extends across the West Bank, threatening to cut it in two.

Over the years roads have been constructed connecting these various settlements but only the settlers and other Jews may travel on them. The Palestinians must make use of older bye-ways or tracks. In 2004 Ariel Sharon announced a permanent plan to annex several large settlement blocs, including in particular those that choke off East Jerusalem from its West Bank hinterland.

8.3 Gerrymandering

In setting the borders, the objective was to strengthen Israeli sovereignty over the city by creating a Jewish majority. Thus, demographic considerations were decisive, and planning considerations were only of secondary importance. In order to ensure a significant Jewish majority, the primary consideration was to prevent the inclusion of heavily-populated Palestinian areas within Jerusalem. Whereas several Palestinian villages were placed outside the city, some of their lands were included within the city's new borders, examples being Beit Ikxa and Beit Hanina in the north, and detached areas lying in the municipalities of Bethlehem and Beit Sahour in the south. Villages and neighbourhoods were therefore divided - one part remained in the West Bank, and the other part was annexed by Israel.

8.4 Land and Property Seizure

Special laws had been passed by the Knesset in 1950 to facilitate the seizure of Palestinian land and property. If a Palestinian individual or organisation were deemed to be 'absent' according to definitions laid down by the Israeli government, then their land or property would be placed in the custody of the State. The 'Custodian of Absentee Lands' passed the land it had confiscated in the Greater Jerusalem area to the *Jewish National Fund* which in turn passed it on to various 'settler groups' like 'Elad' who are devoted to the 'judaisation' of East Jerusalem.

8.5 Shepherd's Hotel

A striking example of the outcome of this policy reached its dramatic conclusion in January 2011 when the 'Shepherd's Hotel' in East Jerusalem, a property belonging to a past Arab leader, Hajj Amin al-Husaini, was bull-dozed to make way for new Jewish settlements. The Israeli government had acquired the building through 'The Order Regarding Abandoned Property'. They had then sold it to an American casino magnate, Irving Moskovitch, a prolific purchaser of Arab properties in Jerusalem, who then ordered its demolition. Relatives of al-Husaini appealed but typically to no avail.

8.6 Sheikh Jarrah

'Shepherd's Hotel' was in the Sheikh Jarrah district, a Palestinian area. There have been a number of attempts by settlers during the past few years to seize land and houses there using the legal system. The evicted Palestinian families have resisted bravely, defying the police and setting up tents on the site of their demolished homes.

Government-supported plans seek to penetrate and surround Sheikh Jarrah with Israeli settlements, yeshivas and other Jewish institutions, as well as 'national park land'.

8.7 US Funded Settler Groups

According to an article in the Washington Post, some of the larger Settler organisations, including Ateret Cohanim and Ir David (Elad), both leading the Jewish settler takeover of Palestinian East Jerusalem, are based in New York City. The American Friends of Ateret Cohanim and the Friends of Ir David were founded in New York in 1987. These organisations are tax-exempt in the United States because they claim their purpose is to fund 'higher education institutes'. However their close links with the Israeli military and security services and the ethnic cleansing which their activities facilitate, reveal their true

intent. One noteworthy and consistent donor to Ateret Cohanim is Irving Moskowitz, owner of the now destroyed Shepherd's Hotel. These groups are noted for their arrogant and aggressive behaviour, particularly towards Palestinian citizens, and this has become a major source of tension in the city.

Another source of American funding is the 'Christian Fundamentalist' movement. Organisations like Colorado-based *'Christian Friends of Israeli Communities'* are openly Zionist, basing their support for ethnic cleansing in Palestine on quotes from the Old Testament.

8.8 Landscape Changes

Another justification for seizing Palestinian land or for preventing Palestinians from acquiring land for housing has been the need, according to the Israeli authorities, of creating 'green' areas and public spaces. The 'Ecological' motive has served to camouflage the more fundamental one of ethnic cleansing.

8.9 Intrusive 'Archaeological' Excavations

"Elad is using archaeology as a tool of dispossession"
(Eric Meyers, Prof. of Jewish Studies & Archaeology, Duke University)

Yet another justification is 'excavating' in a search for 'biblical' remains - remains which are claimed to lie, frequently and unsurprisingly, beneath Palestinian homes and buildings. This work is spearheaded by settlers - largely from the US - and sponsored by organs of the Israeli state. The far-right settler group 'Elad' - mentioned previously - has in recent years been targeting the densely populated Palestinian village of **Silwan** which is located just outside Jerusalem's Old City walls. The village sits at the foot of the third holiest site in Islam, the Haram al-Sharif, known to the Jews as the Temple Mount. The settlers have announced openly their intention of taking over the village, of cleansing it of its Palestinian inhabitants and replacing them with Jewish settlers because, allegedly, the area has links to King David.

8.10 Silwan

The settler project of ethnically cleansing Silwan is supported by the Israeli municipal and national authorities, including the Israeli Antiquities Authority. They have encouraged, funded and protected this process. In 2005 Elad received assistance from the Jerusalem municipality which ordered the destruction of 36 houses in Silwan, under the pretext of 'illegal construction and expansion'. Any attempt by the residents of Silwan to resist the take-over of their village has been met by extreme hostility and violence from both the settlers and the authorities who provide cover for them. Residents who have dared to complain have been arrested and threatened with prosecution by the Police. In September 2010 Samer Sarhan, a resident of the Baten al-Hawa neighbourhood of Silwan, was shot and killed by an Israeli settler security guard. No action was taken against the guard, following which intense clashes broke out between the outraged Silwanese and the Israeli authorities. Since then, Israeli police and soldiers have routinely arrested residents - especially children - on the suspicion of throwing stones.

The unrest in Silwan has provided a pretext for the Israeli government to move troops into the village. For the last five months, since Autumn 2010, Israeli military have occupied the rooftop of a building in the heart of Baten al-Hawa, using it as a 'look-out post'. The building houses seven families - a total of 69 people - plus a mosque. The residents of the building, who include schoolchildren, are unable to use the rooftop and are being subjected to systematic harassment by the soldiers who endeavour to make as much

noise as possible, particularly at night-time, thus preventing sleep . The soldiers also cut off the electricity and water supply; break windows by shooting at the building; lob tear gas canisters into the apartments and stairwell and throw dirty water and urine from the rooftop onto the street below. Some of the families can take no more and are planning to move out – effectively forced out.

Despite this, on February 7th, the Israeli Ministry of Defence in Tel Aviv ruled that the military can continue to occupy the building until August 2012. For a full description of this situation see <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article11813.shtml>

The support of the Israeli government for illegal settler activity shows they have no intention of honouring UN Resolutions, nor of recognising the legitimate claim of the Palestinians to have East Jerusalem as their capital. The continuing denial of dignity and human rights to the Palestinians shows also that there is no genuine wish for peace because, as places like Silwan show, ‘trouble’ creates a pretext for seizing more land and property.

According to the Israeli human rights organisation Ir-Amim:

"Silwan is the pillar of a sweeping and systematic policy and process of gaining control of the Palestinian territories that surround the Old City, designed to cut the Old City off from East Jerusalem, and to connect it to Jewish settlement blocs in northeast Jerusalem and the E-1 area. These plans have a decisive political and international significance because their implementation would further complicate the possibility of arriving at a viable agreement between Israel and the Palestinians."

The 'E-1 Area' is situated between East Jerusalem and the huge settlement bloc of Maale Adumim, home to 31,000 settlers. There are plans for 3,500 housing units, an industrial park, two police stations and other infrastructure there. According to an EU report this development is "...one of the most significant challenges to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process" because "...it would 'sever' East Jerusalem... from the West Bank."

8.11 Excavating beneath the Haram al-Sharif

The stability of Silwan is also threatened by the network of tunnels which settlers, backed up by the Israeli government, are digging underneath the Old City. Palestinians and some Israeli organisations, including the Israeli Committee Against House Demolition (ICAHD), believe that the ultimate goal is to create a subterranean access route to attack the Al-Aqsa Mosque and other Islamic shrines in the area. This is an extremely dangerous plan which has the potential to provoke Muslim outrage in countries also beyond Palestine. International organisations such as UNESCO have also expressed their concern.

The importance of the Haram al-Sharif to Palestinians was already demonstrated in September 2000 when Ariel Sharon, in an act of extreme provocation, entered the compound with 1000 Israeli soldiers and police. The inevitable Palestinian protests were met with Israeli gunfire, triggering the 'Second Intifada'. Sharon was a great hero of the settlers and a frequent guest at their fundraising dinners in New York.

9 Discrimination against Arab Citizens of Jerusalem

When the Israelis took over the whole of Jerusalem, they pursued policies consciously designed to weaken the Palestinian community in the City.

9.1 Restriction on Arab Housing

"We will not allow the residents of East Jerusalem to build as much as they need... I do not think the most important goal is to resolve East Jerusalem's housing shortage. Ultimately, even if it is not politically correct to say this, we will look at Jerusalem's demographic situation to make sure that in 20 years we do not wake up to an Arab city." (Yakir Sedev, city official in charge of East Jerusalem)

In contrast to the policy of indeterminate expansion of Jewish neighbourhoods, urban development, including houses, businesses and public amenities has been severely limited in the Arab areas. From 1967-2003, 90,000 housing units were built in East Jerusalem settlements for Jews, most with government subsidies. None were built for Palestinians with public funding. Israeli laws prohibited the selling or leasing of land to Palestinians and at present only 12% of East Jerusalem is available for Palestinian residential use. To build or extend a property requires a construction permit and these are rarely granted to Palestinians. Despite a shortage of 25,000 housing units in the Palestinian sector, the Jerusalem Municipality grants just 50-100 building permits each year for Palestinian housing. If, due to the acute housing shortage, Palestinians risk building without a permit, they face demolition of their property. Since 1967, around 2,000 homes have been demolished in East Jerusalem. According to official statistics, from 2000 – 2008 the Israeli authorities demolished more than 670 East Jerusalem homes. The number of outstanding demolition orders is estimated at up to 20,000.

9.2 Neglect of the Arab Neighbourhoods

Though Arab Jerusalemites have paid taxes since 1967, their areas have been starved of municipal funds. According to a recent EU Report, though Palestinians in East Jerusalem represent 34% of the city's residents, only 5%-10% of the municipal budget is spent in their areas, leaving them with poor services and infrastructure.

9.3 Bureaucracy

The Palestinians are poorly served also when they have to visit government organisations in East Jerusalem, which they are frequently required to do because of the stifling bureaucracy and 'web of procedures' which they are forced to comply with. Their treatment at the Ministry of the Interior where they are forced to queue for hours outside only to be turned away by high-handed officials is typical and in marked contrast to the relaxed and comfortable conditions at the Ministry buildings in the West of the city.

9.4 Uncertain Status

The Palestinians of Jerusalem have been given a special status by the state of Israel. All Palestinians are compelled to carry Identity Cards but those of the Jerusalem Palestinians are different from those of the West Bank. Under Israeli law they are not considered as 'citizens of Israel' but only as 'residents', whose right to residency can be revoked by the state if certain criteria are not met. This status is no more secure than that of a 'non-

naturalised immigrant', even though in the case of Jerusalem it is Israel who immigrated to them! Until 1995 the 'Residency Permit' would be revoked if a Palestinian stayed outside of the city for more than seven years. In 1995 stiffer criteria were introduced without warning. Palestinians now had to prove by production of all kinds of documents that their 'centre of life' was in Jerusalem. According to official figures, in 2005, the Ministry of the Interior revoked the residency of 222 Palestinians. In 2006, that number jumped to 1,363, an increase of more than 600 percent. The latest casualty of this policy is the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem and his family. (See article). Since 1967 13,115 'residencies' have been revoked! (source BT'Selem). It is a practice which has been described as 'quiet deportation'.

9.5 Denial of Social Benefits and Health Insurance

The special status accorded to residents of East Jerusalem also affects their access and entitlement to the benefits which Israeli citizens have. When the Palestinians of Jerusalem claim these benefits they are subject to investigations which breach principles of proper administration and grossly violate the rights of the residents. The investigations are superficial, deny the individual's right to due process and privacy, and are motivated by pre-conceived notions of behaviour in Palestinian society. The investigation takes months, during which the claimant does not receive what they are entitled to. This also applies to health insurance. Of particular concern is the fact that the children of Palestinians have no automatic entitlement to this. *Physicians for Human Rights* estimate that there are currently some 10,000 children residing in East Jerusalem who are not covered by medical insurance.

9.6 Restrictions on Movement

There are areas in Jerusalem itself where Palestinians cannot go. The Jewish settlements to the East of the city, with their 'settler-only' roads always made access to and from the West Bank difficult. Palestinians from the 'Territories' require special permission to enter Jerusalem. By 1998 less than 4% of Palestinians from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip had obtained permission to enter Jerusalem.

9.7 The Apartheid Wall

Now added to this is the huge obstruction of what the Israelis call the '*Separation Barrier*' started in 2002. This huge concrete wall slices through neighbourhoods and divides the Jerusalem area from the West Bank. It particularly affects those Palestinians living to the east of the city and in cities like Ramallah and Bethlehem who historically have ties to Jerusalem. The Wall makes it very difficult for them to travel into Jerusalem for work, for education, for healthcare, or just to visit relatives and friends. The Wall does not follow the 'Green Line' but diverts into the West Bank, taking in 10% of the land. Palestinians who live in this 'no-man's land' are trapped and isolated both from the rest of the West Bank and from Jerusalem

9.8 Political Repression

The whole rationale of the Israeli state is geared towards treating the native Palestinians as 'the enemy'. In Jerusalem there is harsh treatment of 'suspects' and it is not unusual for their houses to be demolished as well. Young people, especially young men, are subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention and torture. The Israeli jail situated in Jerusalem's 'Russian Compound' has become infamous for its interrogation practices. Palestinians are arrested and can even be exiled from Jerusalem for protesting at the various injustices

their people suffer. The latest to be deported is Adnan Ghaneim, of the Silwan Residents' Committee. Over the years those exiled for speaking out have included Palestinian politicians, city officials, newspaper editors and Muslim leaders.

9.9 Racist Settler Violence

The hostility towards Palestinians on the part of the Israeli state, often expressed in the most strident and immoderate terms by the leaders of that state – politicians, rabbis etc. – are echoed, not surprisingly, at street level. The murder of Hussam Rwidy on the 11th February 2011 is just the latest in a long line of attacks on Palestinians in Jerusalem. The 24 year-old Rwidy was returning home from work with a friend when they were overheard speaking arabic by a group of jewish youths. Shouting “Death to Arabs” the youths pursued them, cutting Hussam Rwidy’s throat and severely wounding his friend Murad Joulani. Although the Israeli police subsequently arrested and charged two youths with this crime, both the police and judiciary sought to cover up the racist nature of the attack, presenting it as a ‘brawl’ among youths. The *Shin Bet*, Israel’s internal security police, imposed a media blackout and sections of the Israeli media downplayed the gravity of the crime. However, according to Palestinian and Israeli human rights groups, there is a pattern to these attacks which they believe to be racist and organised. The perpetrators are mainly young zionist fanatics from the settler communities in Jerusalem who go out regularly looking to demonstrate their right-wing beliefs through this murderous aggression.

10 Diminishing Prospects

The Israeli takeover of Jerusalem has severely limited the 'life chances' of young Palestinians in the city. The 'Israelisation' of the educational curriculum, with its creation of a Zionist historical narrative, together with 'Nakba Denial' and the promotion of the Hebrew language, have hampered the chances of young Arabs going to university in either Israel or another Arab country. And even if the young do go on to higher education, there are few job opportunities to come back to. Career opportunities in the professions - law, medicine, education and engineering - have all diminished.

The integration of East Jerusalem into the Israeli economy has created problems for the Palestinian business community too. Both merchants and consumers have been affected by restrictions on imports, new and higher taxes and having to cope with Israel's high inflation and weak currency.

Palestinians involved in the hotel and tourist trade, backbone of the local economy, faced unfair competition from privileged Jewish enterprises backed up by money from the United States. They also lost business from the Arab world. Palestinian builders have had to deal with land shortage - artificially created by the Israeli government - an unfair permit system and a shortage of investment capital. Palestinian-owned concerns, like the Jerusalem Electricity Company, have faced take-over by the Israelis.

There is a general fear among Palestinians and those who revere Jerusalem's past in all its complexity, including international organisations like UNESCO, that the traditional character of the city is being put in danger by its new rulers. The threat to its Arab architecture and sites has already been mentioned but there is also the introduction of a brash lifestyle, more typical of holiday resorts with seedy bars, prostitutes and insensitive tourists.

11 Jerusalem and the 'Peace Process'

In 1988 the PLO issued its *Declaration of Independence* which stated it accepted that Palestine should be shared by two states and that the capital of the forthcoming Palestinian state would be East Jerusalem. This historic announcement set in train a series of US sponsored 'peace talks' between Israel and the Palestinians. The first of these, the *Madrid Peace Conference* held in the autumn of 1991, set the ground rules for those to follow. The Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, former leader of the *Stern Gang*, was allowed to set the talks agenda. He and his team insisted they would not discuss certain issues: Refugees, Settlements and Borders, Jerusalem, the Occupation and Water. However, these were the core issues for the Palestinians. Given that Israeli expansion was not halted during the period of negotiation, this put the Palestinians in the absurd position of trying to reach agreement over a territory whose borders were constantly changing.

The 'nineties' saw more fruitless talks because of the Israeli refusal to discuss what they called 'final status issues'. The Rabin government actually accelerated settlement expansion. In 1993 he told the Knesset Foreign Affairs Committee that "*Palestinian autonomy will not include Jerusalem*". The same policy was supported by all Israeli political parties, whether of left or right. 'Jerusalem' was excluded from the *Oslo Accords* and from the *'Road Map to Peace'*. Settlement building has never ceased. Since the *Annapolis Peace Talks*, begun in late 2007, nearly 5,500 new settlement housing units have been submitted for public review in Jerusalem, with 3,000 so far approved. This breaches the conditions of the *'Road Map to Peace'* laid out in the talks. There are now about 470,000 settlers in the occupied territories, including 190,000 in East Jerusalem. The prospects for finding peace based on a 'Two-State Solution' seem to be receding.

12 The Response of the International Community

"..all measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, or any part thereof, have no legal validity..." (UN Security Council Resolution 465 passed unanimously on 1st March 1980.)

When in July of that year the Knesset defiantly passed the 'Basic Law' proclaiming Jerusalem (East and West) the capital of Israel, there were protests internationally and more UN resolutions of censure. Any embassies which had thought of residing in Jerusalem quickly removed to Tel Aviv. To this day the international political establishment still does not recognise Israel's claim. As settlement building and ethnic cleansing have intensified in and around the city so human rights organisations, including Israeli ones, have striven to draw attention to the plight of the Arabs in Jerusalem. They have been echoed by the UN, the EU and governments around the world.

At the end of 2010, in a leaked report, the EU condemned Israeli practice in the strongest possible terms and accused the Israeli government of "systematically undermining the Palestinian presence" in Jerusalem. The US government too has been vocal recently in its criticism of Israeli practices in Jerusalem. However, its actions conflict with its words. No concrete action in the form of sanctions has so far been taken against the Israeli government and until that happens there is no prospect of Israel changing course.

Caitlin Ni Chonail
March 2011

Appendices

A 1 Chronology

- 1917 9th December. British General Allenby enters Jerusalem
- 1922 'British Mandate' of Palestine established by the League of Nations
- 1936-39 Arab Revolt
- 1946 July. *Irgun* bomb the King David Hotel in Jerusalem
- 1947 29th November. UN General Assembly agrees to partition Palestine and to declare Jerusalem a *Corpus Separatum*. [GA.Res. 181]
- 1948 1st January. Zionists launch attack on Jerusalem
April. Zionists launch 'Plan Dalet'.
9th April. Death of Palestinian guerrilla leader Abd al-Qadir al-Husaini
9th April. Deir Yassin massacre carried out by Zionist terror gangs
26th April. 'Operation Jevussi'
15th May. End of the British Mandate.
Arrival of Transjordanian Legion in East Jerusalem
18th July. Truce negotiated by UN mediator Count Bernadotte
17th September. Bernadotte assassinated by the *Stern* gang.
December. Assembly of Palestinian leaders ratifies Jordan's authority over East Jerusalem
- 1949 Israel admitted to the United Nations
September. UN *Conciliation Commission for Palestine* offers a compromise on Jerusalem which is rejected.
- 1950 January. Israelis proclaim West Jerusalem as their capital
Knesset passes 'Absentee Property' law.
April. A 2nd UN compromise proposal rejected
April. Hashemite annexation of remainder of Arab Palestine approved by parliament
- 1967 'Six-Day War'
6th June. Israelis launch attack on East Jerusalem
8th June. Israelis destroy 800 year old 'Moroccan Quarter' making thousands homeless
28th June. Israel announces annexation of East Jerusalem
- 1980 1st March. UN Security Council Resolution 465 censuring Israel for 'judaisation' of Jerusalem. Passed unanimously.
July. Knesset 'Basic Law' claiming all Jerusalem as Israeli capital.
- 1987 Settler groups founded in New York
- 1988 Palestinian Declaration of Independence
- 1991 Madrid Peace Conference
- 1993 Palestinians from the OPT require special permission to enter Jerusalem
13th September. Oslo Accords signed in Washington.
- 1995 Laws on Jerusalem 'residency' for Arabs tightened up
- 2000 Camp David Summit.
September. Sharon undertakes provocative 'visit' to Haram al-Sharif
Second Intifada breaks out.
October. Israeli police kill 30 Palestinian demonstrators.
- 2002 Construction started on Separation Wall around East Jerusalem
- 2003 Knesset passes 'Citizenship Law'. Arabs from the West Bank or Gaza who marry Israelis are not allowed to move to Israel.
Orr Commission Report
- 2004 Sharon announces plan to annex 'settlement blocs'
- 2005 Jerusalem municipality orders 36 houses in Silwan to be demolished
- 2007 Annapolis peace talks
- 2010 Leaked EU report on Jerusalem
- 2011 January. Destruction of 'Shepherd's Hotel'
11th February. Murder of Hussam Rwidy by Zionist fanatics.

A 2 Jerusalem source material

A 2.1 Books

Jerusalem in History (ed. Kamil Asali). Kegan Paul International 1997.
Essays by different international scholars. Excellent objective source.

Separate & Unequal – The Inside Story of Israeli rule in East Jerusalem.
Cheshin, Hutman, Melamed. Harvard University Press 1999.
(Amir Cheshin, an Israeli colonel, was adviser to Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kolleck)

The Iron Cage Rashid Khalidi. Beacon Press Boston 2006.
The struggle for Palestinian statehood.

The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine Ilan Pappé. One World Oxford. 2006.
Essential reading.

Israeli Apartheid - A Beginner's Guide Ben White. Pluto Press 2009.
Excellent introduction.

A 2.2 Documents

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<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/udc.htm>

Palestinian Declaration of Independence 1988
http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Palestinian_Declaration_of_Independenceh

Camp David Peace Proposals 2000
http://www.nad-plo.org/inner.php?view=facts_nego_cmp_ncampdavid1p

Land Confiscation in E. Jerusalem: The Application of Israel's Absentee Property Law
http://www.nad-plo.org/inner.php?view=facts_jerusalem_preleasep

The Historic Compromise. The Palestinian Declaration of Independence and the Twenty Year Search for a Two-State Solution
<http://www.nad-plo.org/news-updates/Historic%20Compromise%20FAQs%20FINAL.pdf>

Map of Israeli settlements, checkpoints and the route of the Wall
http://www.palestinemonitor.org/spip/IMG/pdf/EastJerusalem_closure_March07.pdf

The Jerusalem Trap. The Looming Threat of Israel's Annexationist Policies in East Jerusalem. Report by Al-Haq published 2010
<http://www.alhaq.org/pdfs/Report%20-%20The%20Jerusalem%20Trap.pdf>

EU Report on East Jerusalem 2010
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A 2.3 Articles

'The US Cash behind Extremist Settlers'
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2009/dec/08/us-settlers-hebron-fund-israeli>

'A Tax Break fuels Middle East Friction' - David Ignatius
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/25/AR2009032502800.html>

'Archaeology in Jerusalem: Digging up Trouble' - Tim McGirk 8/2/2010
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1957350,00.html>

'City of David' (effect of 'biblical' excavations on Silwan) Wendy Pullan and Maximilian Gwiazda <http://www.jerusalemquarterly.org/ViewArticle.aspx?id=315>

Article on EU report on East Jerusalem
<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2011/01/201111017121774419.html>.

'Murdered Jerusalem Man subjected to Racism even in Death' (Hussam Rwidy)
<http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article11830.shtml>

'Facing up to Jewish Nationalism and Racist Violence'. Blumenthal & Dana
<http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article11839.shtml>

'Bishop of Jerusalem to take Court Action over Visa Refusal'
<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2011/3/4/ACNS4807>

A 2.4 Films

'Jerusalem – East Side Story'. Dir. Mohammed Alatar 2008

A 3 Useful Websites

Al-Haq	www.alhaq.org
Al-Mubadara	www.almubadara.org
Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign	www.stopthewall.org
Architects & Planners for Justice in Palestine	www.apjp.org/silwan/
Badil	www.badil.org
B'Tselem	www.btselem.org
Ir Amim	www.ir-amim.org
Israeli Committee against House Demolitions	www.icahd.org
Jerusalem Media & Communications Centre	www.jmcc.org
Jerusalem Quarterly (Hawliyyat al-Quds)	www.jerusalemquarterly.org
Palestine Monitor	www.palestinemonitor.org
PalestineRemembered	www.palestineremembered.com
Passia	www.passia.org
Sheikh Jarrah	www.en.justjlm.org
Silwan	http://www.silwanic.net
United Nations on Palestine	www.unispal.un.org