



The Transformation of Jerusalem: A Historical Background, 1948-2011

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Expanding the boundaries of Jerusalem in all directions has been an ongoing process since 1948, intended to create and formalize a "GreaterJerusalem".

That process involved massive tampering with the city's territorial and demographic character, its historic and cultural legacy, it's architectural

Integrity, and its very identity. To accomplish that, numerous illegal actions were taken, including annexation, settlement building, ethnic Cleansing and house demolition. A plethora of subterfuges continued to be enforced in order to restrict Arab population growth,

utilizing building permits, zoning procedures, residency rights and road construction.

All of this has been part and parcel of a systematic attempt to make the city a predominantly Jewish metropolis, and to dwarf its Muslim-Christian-Arab character, thus bringing to an end a long period of religious and ethnic toleration, co-existence and Inclusiveness.

Three distinct phases of this transformation can be discerned since the establishment of Israel in 1948:

Phase One 1948-1967-Israel used its 1948 conquests to consolidate its hold on the Western Part of Jerusalem. It extended its jurisdiction to nine Arab villages and neighborhoods, which together made up the bulk of what has become known

as West Jerusalem. The villages included Lifta, DeirYasin, EinKarem, and Al-Maliha. The urban centers annexed to West Jerusalem were Talbiya, Al-Qatamoun, upper and lower Baqa'a, Mamila, and the Abu-Tour Musrara quarter. Together, the four villages totaled 28,486 donums of land (1 donum equals 1000 sq. meters or roughly one fourth of an acre), 90 percent of which were owned by Palestinian Arabs. By the time of the 1949 armistice, this occupied territory made up the bulk of the 38,000 donums, which became Jewish West Jerusalem. Over 30,000 of the inhabitants of the occupied Arab villages and urban centers around Jerusalem were driven out by force or fled the outbreak of violence, several months before 2000 Jews were forced out of the Jewish quarter in the OldCity by the Jordanians. Meanwhile, the only Jewish sectors of Jerusalem lost to Jordan in 1948 were MountScopus, the Jewish quarter and the Western (Wailing) Wall inside the old city. Jordanian East Jerusalem was comprised of a mere 6000 donums of land.

Phase II: 1967-1997: having consolidated its control of West Jerusalem after 1948, Israel used its 1967 conquest as an opportunity to extend its jurisdiction to the Jordanian-ruled East Jerusalem, and to enlarge the boundaries yet another time to add numerous new Arab villages and neighborhoods. More than 25 percent of the area known as the West Bank was expropriated and incorporated into a newly-created greater Jerusalem. The

Physical barriers between East and West Jerusalem were removed. The Moghrabi section of the Old City was totally razed with its 350 homes for more than 700 residents, who were subsequently expelled in order to accommodate a new plaza in front of the Western Wall.

Defying U.N. resolutions, the Israeli Knesset adopted three legislative acts on June 27, 28 and 29, 1967, extending Israeli law to the occupied Eastern sector of the city and enlarging the municipal boundaries of "united" Jerusalem, which had suddenly grown from 44,000 donums to 108,000 donums (approximately 29,000 acres).

According to Sarah Kaminkar, an Israeli town planner in the Jerusalem municipality, the new land grab constituted 70,500 donums (about 17,500 acres) which had almost doubled what had been quadrupled in 1948. Israel managed to avoid adding about 80,000 Arabs to the population of the expanded city by not applying its amendment to the Law and Administration Ordinance to the Arab villages of Abu-Dis, Anata, Hizma, Beitlksa, Beit Hanina, and al-Ram, as well as the Qalandia refugee camp and the neighborhood of Bethany. To bolster the Zionist dictum of acquiring the land without the people, Israel carried out a general census of the entire newly occupied territory, including Jerusalem on July 25, 1967. All residents who were away working, visiting relatives or touring were

considered absentees and thus denied their right to reside in the City. That was also applied to the Palestinian civilians who either fled the fighting or were persuaded to board the Israeli buses waiting to take them to the Allenby Bridge. An estimated number of 100,000 lost their international right to belong to their national patrimony. The process of dispossession, displacement, dismemberment, disenfranchisement and dispersal, which was savagely applied to the Palestinians in 1948, was systematically re-enacted after 1967. For Jerusalem and its surroundings, the objective was to create a huge Jewish metropolis that would disrupt the territorial continuity of the West Bank, keep the Arab population to manageable proportions (30% by the recently revealed government plan) and preempt any sovereign existence for the Palestinians there.

To operationalize that imperative, Israel mobilized varied resources and utilized legal gimmickry that would facilitate the passing of Arab land into Jewish ownership, and then making it off limits to Arabs. During the past three decades, more than 33 percent, or about 16 square miles of the expanded Arab East Jerusalem areas were confiscated. East Jerusalem which was a mere 4.3 square miles of 4% of all of Jerusalem prior to 1967, is now 48 square miles or 63% of the newly redefined Jerusalem-expanding eleven

fold. The land confiscated from the West Bank is now part of a non-negotiable Jerusalem, and is not therefore an issue for discussion if and when the final status negotiations begin.

Phase III, 1998-present, which created the “umbrella municipality” on June 25, 1998 has simply formalized what has become “greater Jerusalem”. It extends **Jerusalem’s jurisdiction from a territory of 48 square miles to 72 square miles**, by incorporating the illegal settlements of GivatZe‘ev to the north, Ma‘aleAdumim to the East and Betar and Efrata to the South. The new Jewish population thus added, plus the 142,000 apartments for Jews only will accomplish Israel’s demographic balance of 70 percent Jewish majority and a tolerated Arab minority of less than 30 percent.

Such an enterprise, which flies in the face of numerous U.N. resolutions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Convention (1949) and even the Oslo Accords, may last 20, 30 or even 50 years; but it will not last forever. For it is being driven by the engine of power and hegemony. Ethnic cleansing and apartheid-style living, which have already been discredited in the world, will ultimately crash head on with the norms of universality humanistic pluralism. It is not likely that the Jewish ideals of tolerance and conciliation will remain alienated for ever from the Israeli political agenda. It is not likely that the Palestinian people will remain reticent in the face of steady conquest proceeding under no-war

conditions. The future of Palestine/Israel will be more secure when all the inhabitants of that land, Muslims, Christians and Jews, can feel equal under the law and can co-exist in a society free of population quotas, by-pass roads, and discriminatory legislation-a society which can give dignity to every single human being.