

Abstract

In Jewish religious thinking, Palestine, and Jerusalem in particular, occupied a high status. Jewish colonization of Palestine, on the other hand, formed the backbone of Jewish thinking (ideology). The religious nature also characterized this Jewish ideology. Therefore, the Zionists colonization plans have targetted Jerusalem since the beginning of Jewish colonization blitz of Palestine. Montefiore residential quarter was the first Jewish form of colonization in Palestine.

To have full control of the Holy City, the Zionist movement used all means at its disposal and received full British support during the British occupation of Palestine (1918-1948). When the Partition of Palestine was announced, and the Israeli-Arab war broke out, Israel was declared as a state and made Jerusalem its own capital. This action signaled a new wave of Jewish colonization of Jerusalem.

After the 1967 June war, Arab East Jerusalem fell in the hands of the Israeli occupation forces. In 1982, during Menachem Begin's term of leadership, Israel announced its annexation of East Jerusalem and officially declared Jerusalem as its "unified capital". To reinforce this status of Jerusalem, Israel has taken a number of measures, both administrative and practical, to control the city. For example, it introduced and passed a number of laws all aimed at the Judaization of the city. Israel also waged a campaign of massive land confiscation from the Palestinian Arabs especially between 1967-1993. During the same period, it controlled some 48% of land belonging to Palestinians. It also established 15 Jewish colonies on an area which amounted to 39.9% of East Jerusalem land. It also closed 44% of its land and declared it "green areas" or reserve land for future Jewish colonization.

The massive Jewish colonization in Jerusalem has rendered political, economic, demographic and social changes in the traditional character of Arab Jerusalem. The demographic change has formed the core of Israeli policy in Jerusalem which aims at making the population of the city dominantly Jewish and the Arabs only a minority. This means the creation of a new political reality in the city which makes it impossible to change in any future negotiations.

The Palestinians have strongly resisted the Jewish colonization policies in the city. However, this struggle has remained moral. It has never risen to the occasion of paralleling the massive colonization of the Arab city by Jews. In other words it has had so far little influence on the ground.

After 1967, the European and American positions changed towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Americans' and Europeans' policies stood against Jewish colonization in Jerusalem given their economic and political interests in the region and the then new international balance to face the then Soviet Union stance which had supported the Arabs' political positions pertaining to the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, the European and American public political positions, defying Jewish colonization in Jerusalem, was accompanied with financial support to Israel, particularly from America and Germany. Israel pumped most of European and American money in the Jewish colonies. The American and European understanding, sympathy, tacit support and even collusion are crystal clear in the international arena, such as the UN. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and given the weakness and divisions among the Arab countries, the American and European have backed down in their anti-colonization positions, in their policy concerning the status of Jerusalem and even in their positions in the UN.