

Edward Said on Jerusalem

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This paper explores the status of Jerusalem as viewed by Edward Said in his political works particularly in his article “The Current Status of Jerusalem” written in 1995 and published posthumously in 2011 in *Jerusalem Quarterly*, the only Arab journal that focuses exclusively on the city of Jerusalem’s history, political status, and future. In his article, Said raises various issues regarding Jerusalem and the Palestinian-Israeli peace process. The article depicts Israel’s policy of Judaizing Jerusalem and its attempts to make Jerusalem its eternal capital. Said tries to expose the Israeli meretricious strategies regarding Jerusalem which begin by projecting an image of what it wants the world to believe and then translating that false image into reality. Said also underscores the fact that both Palestinians and the pan-Arab nation have failed to counteract the Israeli policy of selling to the world the notion of Jerusalem belonging exclusively to Israel, a failure that has enabled Israel to tighten its grip on the Holy City and to curb the Palestinians’, the Arabs’ and the Muslims’ attempts to counterattack on the level of media information. In Said’s view, the only hope for the future is a decent and fair coexistence between the two peoples based upon equality and self-determination. For him, the separation between the Palestinians and the Israelis since 1948 has not led to successful outcomes; a one state—rather than a binational-state solution is, therefore, the more possible way of resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict.

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Biographical Background

Born in Jerusalem in 1935, then part of British-governed Mandatory Palestine, Edward Said was a Christian Palestinian who lived the formative years of his boyhood between the worlds of Jerusalem and Cairo. In an interview with Mark Bruzonsky (1979), Said states: “I was born in Jerusalem; my family is a Jerusalem family. We left Palestine in 1947. We left before most others” (Singh, p. 19). In his article Said notes that:

Much of what today is commonly thought of as “Israeli West Jerusalem” in fact consisted of Arab neighborhoods before the fighting of the spring of 1948, when over 30,000 of their inhabitants were driven out or fled from their quarters ... several months before some 2,000 Jews were forced out of the Jewish Quarter of the Old City. (Said, 2011, p. 60)

Said and his family left Jerusalem when it became too dangerous to remain in the crossfire between Arabs and Jews over the city’s future. Like other Palestinian families throughout Palestine, Said’s family lost its property and rights as a result of the 1948 war. Dispossessed and displaced from Palestine, Said went to the United States in 1951 to complete his education.

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After the Arab defeat in the catastrophic June War of 1967, Said became engaged in the Palestinian national movement that began first in Jordan and then spread to wherever the Palestinians lived. After 1968, Said began to write “as someone who felt himself to be directly involved in the renaissance of Palestinian life and politics” (*Politics of Dispossession* 1994, p. xiii). Said’s numerous writings included 5 works on Palestine: *The Question of Palestine* (1979), *After the Last Sky* (1986), *Blaming the Victims* (1988), *Peace and Its Discontents: Essays on Palestine in the Middle East Peace Process* (1996) and *The End of the Peace Process: Oslo and After* (2000), none of which has been translated into Arabic although most of them have been translated into several other languages.

Said’s writings drew great response worldwide particularly among expatriate Palestinians and Arabs as well as some Americans and Europeans who were concerned to bring about reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis. Said was considered the most articulate and visible advocate of the Palestinian cause in the United States, a position which earned him many enemies. Katz Cindi and Neil Smith (2003) observe that:

He [Said] took criticism from both sides [Arabs and Israelis].... His university office was at various points protected by campus police. ... In a disgraceful obituary, *the New York Times* painted Said as a terrorist or at least a terrorist sympathizer, “the professor of terror”, as one extremist magazine wrote. (p. 636)

In addition to being dubbed “professor of terror” by the rightwing American magazine *Commentary* in 1999, the same magazine accused him of falsifying his status as a Palestinian refugee to enhance his advocacy of the Palestinian cause, and of falsely claiming to have been at school in Jerusalem before moving to Cairo and later on to the United States. Said reports that as a result of his activities, he and his family were under death threats, his office was vandalized and sacked, and he had to endure being called a terrorist and even a “a professor of terror, an anti-Semite” (*Politics of Dispossession*, 1994, p. xix). Even more, attempts were made to offset Said’s claim of a Palestinian or a Jerusalemian birthplace. For instance, the Israeli scholar, Justus Reid Weiner, ardently tried in an article in *Jerusalem Letter/Viewpoints* (2000) to show that Said’s childhood home was in Cairo, not Jerusalem.

Said was an ardent defender of Islamic civilization and Arab culture. Long a vehement critic of Israel’s policies toward the Palestinians, Said was also a strong opponent of the Oslo Peace Agreement between Palestinians and Israelis. Said objected to the postponement of the issue of Jerusalem among the other sensitive issues which were left for more negotiations in the future. He supported Yasser Arafat but he became a bitter critic of Arafat after the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords between Israel and the PLO, believing that the agreement gave the Palestinians too little territory and too little control over it and, among other bad effects, made the situation regarding Jerusalem even worse (*The End of the Peace Process*, 2000, p. xix). Participating as an active member of the Palestine National Council, Said was not in full agreement with the majority vote of the council which carried the motion: divide the historical Palestine into two states, one Israeli and one Palestinian with East Jerusalem as its capital. Instead, he was a resolute supporter of a one-state solution. For him, “both peoples have to feel that they can and have to live together as equals—in rights, equals in history and suffering—before a real community between the two peoples will emerge” (*Politics of Dispossession*, 1994, p. xlviii). Believing that separate Palestinian and Jewish states would always be unworkable, he advocated a single binational state that includes Israelis and Palestinians. In his interview with Cindi and Smith (2003, p. 638), Said defends his view of a one-state solution: “We should have a state in which all citizens have one vote, the way the South African model worked to end apartheid. Failing that, you’re going to have a perpetuation of the conflict in one form or another”.

Discussion

The focal point of Said's writings on Palestine and the peace process is Jerusalem. One of his major political works is an article about the status of Jerusalem delivered at a conference on Jerusalem held in London on 15-16 June, which remained "lost" until it was published in *Jerusalem Quarterly* in 2011 with a short introduction by the Palestinian American historian Rashid Khalidi. Since then, the article has not been receiving the critical attention it deserves. It is on this article that the bulk of the discussion will be focused in this paper. One of Said's major insights in his article is his precise exposition of Israeli policies in Jerusalem since its occupation of the city and other Palestinian territories in 1967. In his introduction to Said's article, Khalidi convincingly argues that Said intelligently exposes the method of operation regarding Jerusalem that Israel has systematically pursued since 1967. This Israeli policy, Khalidi says, "consists in first projecting an essentially false image of what it wants the world to believe, and then acting decisively to make that vision a reality. Thus declarative policy preceded actual transformations on the ground." (qtd. in Said, "Current Status of Jerusalem", 2011, p. 57). This strategic policy centered on swallowing up Arab East Jerusalem, turning its population into a minority via intensive colonization and separating it from its hinterland in the West Bank (ibid., p. 57).

Said had been a sharp critic of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) information policy which he saw was inadequate in carrying out its message to the United States whose media had always been biased in its reporting of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. He argued that instead of communicating the PLO's two-state solution on mutual recognition, American media continued to show how the PLO was dedicated to the destruction of Israel and as an obstacle to the peace process. Nevertheless, Said believes that this situation can be changed as there is a large segment of the American populace who are not familiar with the truth of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. As he writes in *The End of the Peace Process*,

There is an important sector of the [American] population that is perplexed and angry that Israel should be getting away with so many infractions of what are stated U.S. policies, policies about human rights abuses, proliferation weapons of mass destruction, illegal annexation of territory, and so on. (p. 247)

It is this group of the American public that Said urges the Palestinians and the Arab governments to attend to as a potential alternative to "policy makers" and "senior officials" (p. 247).

Said's article emphasizes the role of information and the media manipulated by Israel to shape and influence world public opinion as a way of achieving its political objectives, spurious though they are. Said highlights the Israeli policy of dispossessing the Palestinians and replacing them with Jewish settlers, a policy which has gone by without any serious opposition. Said states that over the 50 years since its annexation in 1967, the demography, topography, and historic aura of Jerusalem have been forcibly changed. Yet, the world has heard very little about the suffering of the Palestinian majority in the Eastern part of the city in the way of this process. Said ironically maintains that what has actually been communicated of this unpleasant history to the outside world is a cheerful pioneering, humane enterprise, without regard to what it has done to its Palestinian population (Said, "The Current Status of Jerusalem", 2011, p. 59). These ideas are echoed in Said's other political works such as *The End of the Peace Process: Oslo and After* (2000) where Said writes that:

The Zionists grasped the importance of opinion in the modern world, and sought to influence the largest possible number of people in the West by bombarding them with images of Israel as a pioneering democratic state, built on empty, neglected, or uninhabited land, surrounded by violent Arabs who wanted to drive Jews into the sea. (*The End of the Peace Process*, p. 247)

Even more, the Israelis have resorted to a subtle policy of deceiving the world about their acts leaving the world to view Israeli acts with a sense of admiration and appreciation rather than opposition and condemnation (Said, "The Current Status of Jerusalem", 2011, p. 60). Said admits that there have been a number of United Nations resolutions protesting unilateral Israeli measures taken in the city, but these have been deterred by Israeli intransigence and the American reiterative vetoes. Israel has converted Jerusalem from what used to be a multi-cultural, multi-racial, and multi-religious city into a principally Jewish one with an exclusively Israeli sovereignty (ibid., p. 60).

Denouncing Israel's strategies in misleading the world about the true nature of its imperialist and expansionist policies, Said expresses his chagrin and disappointment at the failure of Arab and Muslim countries to meet their duties towards Jerusalem in projecting a vision that would encounter this Israeli policy. Though Said constantly reiterates how important it was for the Palestinians and the Arabs to speak clearly to the world about their aims, their hopes, their visions, and their understanding of history, he believes there has been little articulation of any Arab vision for Jerusalem. Consequently, Israeli occupation and settlement enterprises have enabled Israel to tighten its grip on Jerusalem with limited resistance from Palestinians and Arabs though there is nothing to prevent them from fighting back on the level of information. Said, therefore, urges for a more concerted effort to encounter Israeli expansionist and colonialist policies. As he writes: "Not only has there been no Palestinian narrative of 1948 and after that can at least challenge the dominant Israeli narrative, there has also been no collective Palestinian projection for Jerusalem, since its all-too-definitive loss in 1948 and then again in 1967". This situation leads Said to conclude that "an astonishing disparity exists between the two sides [Israeli and Palestinian] in the contest over Jerusalem" (ibid., p. 61).

To put Said's argument in postmodernist/Foucauldian terms, the Israeli discourse or narrative regarding Jerusalem overrode any counter Palestinian or Arab discourse or narrative. Right from the beginning to the present day, the Israeli narrative prevailed and little has been heard from the Palestinians or the Arabs to counter this narrative let alone to tell a different story. What is needed, therefore, is a different discourse of power as an alternative to current Israeli domination. Israel has been exercising power in a way that prevents the Palestinians from advancing their own interests. Said argues that even as two partners engaged in peace talks, Israel has always been exercising power over the Palestinians in such a way that would secure their compliance and prevent them from seeking their own real interests. Said maintains that this has been quite evident in the PLO's signing of the Declaration of Principles of 1993 where Jerusalem, "already annexed illegally, already aggressed against in all sorts of ways, was split off from the West Bank and Gaza and left, or rather conceded, to Israel from the outset of negotiations" (ibid., p. 65). Recognizing the weakness of the Palestinian side in front of the overwhelming power of the Israeli side supported by the US, "the Arabs and Muslims together, plus especially the Palestinians have yet to mobilize their considerable resources to counteract Israel's behavior in Jerusalem" (ibid., p. 65). Israeli-Palestinian power relations, therefore, need to be redefined so as to create more equitable relations between the two opposing parties.

Looking at Said's argument from a postcolonial perspective of which he actually was the true founder par excellence (*Orientalism*, 1978), one can say that there has been some kind of a Palestinian narrative in this long-drawn Palestinian-Israeli conflictual binary, but it has been suppressed and eclipsed by the dominant Israeli narrative. In Gayatri Spivak's terminology, the "subalterns" can hardly speak and their voice can rarely be heard (Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", 1988, p. 24). In Foucauldian terminology, power discourse often

works by “power over” rather than by “power to” (Allen, 2016). As Karlberg explains, “Foucault situates himself squarely within the power-as-domination tradition, and his over-arching project is clearly one of resistance to such expressions of power” (2005, p. 4). According to the political theorist Robert Dahl’s famous definition of power, “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do” (Dahl, 1969, p. 80). However, according to Steven Lukes, power over others can also be exercised by preventing them from identifying or recognizing their own interests (Lukes, 1974, p. 23). In all of these definitions of power relations, we notice the concepts of domination and suppression of the other. Said, of course, understood all these power traditions and posited his concept of resistance so as to counterbalance the influence of a hegemonic or dominant power/discourse (“Foucault and the Imagination of Power”, 1986). In *The End of the Peace Process: Oslo and After*, Said highlights how Israeli governments have tried to “get the Palestinians to agree that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel” (pp. 170-171) and how they want the whole city (East and West Jerusalem) as Israel’s undivided capital, “with the Muslim holy places being extraterritorial to a Muslim authority” (p. 220). That is why in this article Said is actually calling for a more collective and concerted effort that goes beyond the Palestinians, the pan-Arab and the Muslim power.

In his article, Said outlines the Israeli policy regarding Jerusalem and identifies the procedures which Israel has been using to achieve its envisioned objectives. He highlights the geographic, the demographic, the historical and the cultural factors that have been implemented by Israel to change the nature, the sovereignty and the identity of Jerusalem. For him, the usurpation, the conquest, and the annexation of Jerusalem have been part of some discrete and contrived Israeli policies designed to remove Palestinians, erase their traces and consign them to legal and institutional non-existence (“The Current Status of Jerusalem”, p. 62). Said observes that one month after the occupation of Jerusalem in 1967, the barrier between East and West Jerusalem was eliminated, and the city’s municipal boundaries were set at twenty-eight square miles, an area that included the Eastern part of the city, and over the years, the two halves of the city were welded or joined together (ibid., p. 62). Said adds that until 1995, the Palestinians of East Jerusalem

were allowed to build on about ten to fifteen percent of the land... and the city is now surrounded by a ring of massive ... Jewish settlements that dominate the landscape, stating the provocative idea that Jerusalem is, must be, will always be a Jewish city, despite the existence of a sizeable, albeit disabled and encircled Palestinian population. (ibid., p. 62)

Predicting the ominous future plans of Israel for Jerusalem, Said cites the Dutch geographer Jan De Jong who states that:

[Jerusalem] will extend from Beit Shemesh and Mod’in in the west... to a few miles from Halhoul and Hebron in the south, to beyond Ramallah in the north, to within miles of Jericho in the east. This vast area that Israel conventionally considers Metropolitan Jerusalem comprises approximately 482 square miles, of which three quarters are situated within the West Bank. (qtd. in Said, ibid., p. 62)

Thus, in its expanded form, Jerusalem accounts for twenty-five per cent of the West Bank. Even more, the annexed Palestinian residents “are not citizens, cannot vote except in municipal elections, and have the legal designation of ‘resident aliens’” (ibid., p. 62).

Reiterating his belief in the strategic importance of Jerusalem in the peace process, a belief which is actually echoed in his other political writings on Palestine, Said points out that this persistent and systematic Israeli policy regarding Jerusalem has been carried out as a result of Israel’s awareness of the importance of

Jerusalem for the future of the West Bank and for the possibility of any future peace settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian issue. He writes:

East Jerusalem is the hub of the West Bank; any design terminally to fortify, isolate and incorporate it into the scheme of "separation" now being pursued by the Labor government in effect means amputating it from its natural connections with the rest of the Palestinian territories, as well as gouging out a gaping hole in the territories which would permanently impair them. (ibid., p. 63)

Cutting off Jerusalem from its natural connections with the rest of the Palestinian territories would consequently facilitate the acquisition and stealing of Palestinian lands. Said argues that since 1967, there has been a concerted policy and a premeditated plan to dispossess the Arab inhabitants of Jerusalem and turn them into a numerical minority while building up a fortified Jewish presence that will totally marginalize all the city's other Arab-Muslim myriad actualities. Aided by the US threats to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, Israel seems undeterred in its transient policy to Judaize Jerusalem. The plan is nothing less than to dispossess Palestinians and turn them into a numerical minority, at the same time building up, interposing, and implanting a fortified Jewish presence that will either dwarf or totally marginalize all the other of the city's myriad actualities (ibid., pp. 64-65).

Throughout his article, Said uses the term "Judaization of Jerusalem" to describe the process that Israel has followed to transform the physical and demographic landscape of Jerusalem towards a fundamentally Jewish city under Israeli sovereignty primarily by creating the largest possible Jewish majority. For Said, the creation of a Jewish majority in Jerusalem has always been a high priority of the Israeli government, after 1948 in West Jerusalem and after 1967 in East Jerusalem. The aim is to remove Palestinians, erase their traces and consign them to legal and institutional non-existence. One of the means of Judaizing Jerusalem has been to restrict the building permits given to Palestinian Arabs. Israelis, on the other hand, have been encouraged to build new homes in the city. Israel is keen on pursuing its socially rejectionist policy and "has seized on the land, the past, and the living actuality of interrelated cultures and traditions in order to sever, carve out, unilaterally possess a territory and a place that it asserts is uniquely its own" (ibid., p. 63). Via the Jerusalem Law (1980), Israel united the city and expanded the city limits to include adjacent parts of the West Bank. Israeli law was applied to the areas and the inhabitants of the lands annexed by Israel. Palestinian refugees were disallowed return and Jewish Israelis occupied many of the homes left by the refugees. Palestinians who had remained in East Jerusalem until then were offered full Israeli citizenship. Those who declined citizenship were given permanent residency status. The rejection of the "Right of Return" for Arabs is motivated by the intention to maintain a Jewish majority, in Israel as well as in Jerusalem.

As a reaction to the Israeli narrative over Jerusalem, Said puts forward a counter narrative. Said is against the Israeli plans to solely possess Jerusalem and in this way deny the religious, historical and ethnic rights of Muslims and Christians to the Holy City. Instead, he envisions a united city that would include all its rightful claimers. He writes:

I think it would be much better to set an example, and provide an alternative to such methods as Israel's by projecting an image of the whole of Jerusalem that is truer to its complex mixture of religions, histories and cultures, than the one of Jerusalem as something that we would like to slice back into two parts. (ibid., p. 66)

He argues that Israel has been embarking on a policy of claiming Jerusalem as its own, disregarding history, religion and culture and regardless of the rights of other peoples or nations. He states that contrary to

the Israeli perspective, “historical Palestine is a seamless amalgam of cultures and religions, engaged like members of the same family, on the same plot of land in which all has become entwined with all” (p. 63). Said also maintains that the question of Palestine should focus not only on the conditions of repossession of land for the Arab population of Israel but also on the right of return for exiled Palestinians. Despite all this, Israel is keen on pursuing its socially rejectionist policy and “has seized on the land, the past, and the living actuality of interrelated cultures and traditions in order to sever, carve out, unilaterally possess a territory and a place that it asserts is uniquely its own” (p. 63). There is no option, Said believes, but for Israel and Palestine to coexist in the same territory. Said views the relationship between Palestinians and Israelis as that between two peoples destined to share the same land, a problem that has to be resolved at the end of the road. The main task is to find a place and to show that the Palestinian land predated Zionism and Israel. Instead of an exclusivist Israeli state, Said offers the alternative of a non-exclusivist, democratic, and secular state, a stand that he has been consistently adopting throughout his writings (ibid., p. 62; Said, *Politics of Dispossession*, 1994, p. xvi; *The End of the Peace Process*, 2000, p. 171).

Rejecting this policy, Said asserts that in its recorded history of 10,000 years, a large series of conquerors, inhabitants and coexisting traditions have maintained their presence whether harmoniously or precariously. It would be illogical therefore to claim that the predominant influence in the city over the whole period had been Jewish. According to historical records, Said maintains, there had been a short Jewish presence before and after the beginning of the Christian era with Jerusalem as the capital of its miniature kingdom, but there has been a longer and more continuous Muslim presence, let alone an intense Christian one too. To claim Jerusalem as its eternal undivided capital to the exclusion of the city’s present Palestinian population and in defiance of its multi-cultural and varied past is a violation of the legal right of the Palestinians and an intransigent defiance of historical records and international laws. Said emphasizes that Jerusalem occupies a special place not only in the Jewish religion and tradition but also in Christian religion, let alone in Muslim religion where it has a special significance perhaps even more special than that of any other religion or ethnic group (ibid., p. 63).

To further bolster his argument, Said draws upon the history of Jerusalem. Said maintains that it would be extremely difficult now to say that the predominating influence in the city over the whole period was Jewish. He admits that certainly for the last 3,000 years there has been a Jewish presence and, for a short period before and shortly after the beginning of the Christian era, there was a Jewish kingdom with its capital in Jerusalem. But there has been a longer, more continuous Muslim presence. One may add to Said’s argument that the long history of Jerusalem began well before it was captured by King David and made the Capital of the People of Israel 3,000 years ago. The original inhabitants of Jerusalem were Phoenician Canaanites from whom the Palestinians descend. Historically speaking, therefore, Palestinians have stronger claims to Jerusalem than the Jews. He argues that Israel’s insistence on excluding everybody else marks a sharp contrast with the Muslim rule of Jerusalem starting in 638 and ending with the Israeli occupation of the city after the 1948 and the 1967 wars.

As well known, after the fall of Byzantine Jerusalem to Muslim forces, Caliph Umar permitted Jews to practice their religion freely and live in Jerusalem. In fact, the Arab/Muslim period, as Said indicates tolerated the presence of Christian, Jewish and other communities in the city with the Jewish population given the most freedom and privileges. During the medieval Crusades, especially during Saladin’s reign, the Jews, in keeping with their alliance with the Muslims, had been among the most vigorous defenders of Jerusalem against the Crusaders. And under the Ottoman rule (1517-1918), the city remained multicultural with a wide variety of

local population and a sacred city for all three Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). Said takes up this historical point and paints a favourable image of pre-1948 Palestine as a place where life was simple, harmonious, and peaceful. This life, he believes, was eroded by the Zionist hegemony and the two Arab-Israeli wars of 1948 and 1967 which destroyed the rich multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious nature of Jerusalem in particular and Palestine as a whole (*ibid.*, pp. 63-64).

Not all Israelis are of the same stand on the question of Jerusalem. Said mentions in his article that some Israeli politicians and intellectuals are prepared to “declare that Jerusalem was the capital of two peoples and two states” and others who are “dismayed at the unseemly land grabs, the egregious building procedures, the nasty possessiveness of the whole business” (*ibid.* p. 64). On the other hand, he highlights the process of Judaizing Jerusalem which he believes constitutes the main threat facing Jerusalem in particular and Palestine in general. This process of Judaization includes the illegal annexation of Jerusalem, land grabbing, expropriation, buying up land, scaring the Palestinian of the Old City of Jerusalem, etc. This activity has been enhanced rather than thwarted by the United States unlimited aid, its threats to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and employment of its Security Council veto to protect Israel’s aggressive behavior. Moreover, the Security Council has failed to say or do anything to support the Palestinians, and the Arabs and the Muslims have not been able to mobilize their considerable resources to counteract Israel’s behavior in Jerusalem. Said wonders why Jerusalem was originally split off from the West Bank and Gaza and blames the Palestine Authority/leadership “which has in the first instance actually agreed to let Israel do what it wishes in Jerusalem” (*ibid.* p. 65). Arguing that there is a massive Palestinian-Muslim-Christian-multi-cultural reality in Jerusalem, Said does not believe “it is in our interests as a people to introduce another division in a city that has remained ethnically separated albeit municipally glued together in the manner that Israel has done it (*ibid.*, p. 66). For Said, East Jerusalem is part of the occupied West Bank; as such, therefore, it has to be re-connected with the whole issue of liberating Palestinians from the burdens of being under Israeli occupation. For him, Jerusalem is the one place which can be a site of co-existence and sharing between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Therefore, it is necessary to speak of Jerusalem as a city with joint sovereignty (*ibid.*, p. 67). This fact, he maintains, “must be placed before the Arab, Muslim and Christian worlds who after all do have a stake in this business” (*ibid.*, p. 67).

Emphasizing the role of the media, Said concludes that the Palestinian, the Arab, and the Muslim policy on information has been substandard on getting out the truth of the case for Jerusalem to counteract the pernicious falsifications about Palestinians and Jerusalem that Israel has put out (*ibid.*, p. 69). What is needed is a concerted information and media effort “to disprove the fraudulent claim that Jerusalem is, and always was, an essentially Jewish city. ... The facts do not ever speak for themselves. They must be articulated, they must be disseminated, and they must be reiterated and re-circulated” (*ibid.*, p. 67). Said maintains that Israel wants to proceed with its settlement plans all through the Occupied Territories and Jerusalem, and so it is the duty of “diaspora Palestinians, who now constitute the majority of Palestinians in the world, [to] take the initiative on Jerusalem and on the other occupied territories” (*ibid.*, p. 67). Said further asserts that “unless Jerusalem is re-projected and represented as a jointly held capital, not as an exclusively Jewish capital, it will continue to be hostage to Israel’s deeply offensive designs” (*Ibid.*, p. 68). For Said, to suggest that there has been an unbroken 3,000 years of Jewish sovereignty or claim is without basis in historical fact. He believes that because the Palestinians have a just and fair cause, they can get support from other Arab and Muslim as well as Christian countries. “They cannot of course simply go back and seize the land, but they can make all sorts of

interventions and create all kinds of initiatives outside the well-worn paths and the cliché-strewn places. Jerusalem is the hub of all efforts, since it is so central to the land itself, and central also to the ideological struggle” (Said, p. 71). Said reiterates again and again his belief that information has a key role to play in the conflict over Jerusalem:

I do not see how anything can be done to change or inhibit or somehow affect Israel’s measures in Jerusalem without attending to the informational-ideological framework that has been erected around the city by Israel. For it is in the conceptual framework around Jerusalem that Israel is most vulnerable to debate, information, intellectual and moral mobilization by its opponents. (p. 71)

Recognizing the irreversible reality of the occupation, Said acknowledges that the only viable solution left is coexistence. However, he does not think “there can be real peace except between equals, between two peoples who together decide consciously and deliberately to share the land among themselves decently and humanely” (ibid., p. 68). As Halawi (2014) rightly explains:

Said admits that both the claims of a God-promised land for the Jews and of an Arab land for Palestinians must be reduced in scale and exclusivity. This can be done while preserving both the Jewish culture and the Palestinian culture, and all the other diverse subgroups in between.

The way to achieve a pragmatic binational solution is to practice modern citizenship according to which the two sides will share rights and responsibilities under a law that treats all as equal and where citizenship prevails over ethnic and religious chauvinism. By giving the same privileges to all, the nationalistic ideologies and exclusionary dogmas will disappear.

For Said, Jerusalem is the cornerstone of any Israeli-Palestinian settlement. The stubborn question that managed to complicate an already complicated peace process is that of Jerusalem. The complication stems from Israel’s rejection of a shared city in the land of Semitic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In Said’s projected view, Jerusalem stands, in a secular binational state, as the capital of all, with equal and free access to its venues. The capital, just like the rest of the Holy Land, must be protected and governed under secular laws that protect the civil and juridical rights of its people. This humanistic alternative that Said and many other scholars argue for is the alternative to further outrageous colonial partition and/or continuous war. Said concludes that though

Jerusalem, with its thousands of new Jewish residents, its dislodged Arabs, and its illegally acquired spaces is already lost..., it is never too late for a vitalized and energized political will to spring into action, and then maybe, just maybe, a better peace can occur, although it may be not for us here ever to see it with our own eyes. (Said, 2011, p. 72)

Having investigated the various aspects of Israeli policy towards Jerusalem as outlined by Said, it is worth surveying the outcome of Israeli political measures on the ground since the writing of the article (1995). Much of what happened after 1995 regarding Judaizing Jerusalem has been a continuation of Israel’s policy from 1967-1995 with the introduction of even more harmful measures. Successive Israeli governments have been “Judaizing Jerusalem” by continuing most of the measures outlined in Said’s article such as: allotting zones for Jewish construction purposes, subsidizing Jewish construction projects, with the aim of increasing the Jewish population while withholding building permits for Palestinians, curtailing the development of Palestinian areas, increasing the Jewish population by establishing Israeli settlements in and around Jerusalem, and annexation of settlements outside Jerusalem to include them in the municipality. It is worth mentioning that Israeli Prime Minister’s Ehud Barak’s speech on 8 November 2000 recalls what Said had said about Israeli settlement policy:

Maintaining our sovereignty over Jerusalem and boosting its Jewish majority have been our chief aims, and toward this end Israel constructed large Jewish neighborhoods in the eastern part of the city.... The principle that guided me in the negotiations at Camp David was to preserve the unity of Jerusalem and to strengthen its Jewish majority for generations to come. (qtd. in Barak, Online)

The above measures and many others are borne out by several studies on the subject and the United Nations reiterative reports on Human Rights in Occupied Palestinian territories. In what looks like a well-documented and a highly credible Online source, an anonymous article mentions that Israeli political scientist Oren Yiftachel, a sharp critic of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and its continued occupation and colonization of the West Bank, writes in an essay he co-authored with Haim Yaacobi that, "Israel would like the Palestinian residents of Jerusalem to see Judaization as 'inevitable', a fact to be accepted passively as part of the modern development of the metropolis" (qtd. in Anonymous, "Judaization of Jerusalem", Online). Yiftachel writes that by 2001, Judaization in Jerusalem had entailed the incorporation of 170 square kilometers of surrounding land into the city's boundaries and the construction of 8 settlements in East Jerusalem housing a total of 206,000 Jewish settlers. According to the same article, plans are underway to construct a new Israeli settlement in the last piece of open land linking East Jerusalem to the West Bank that will house about 45,000 residents. The article also gives many instances of Israel's policy of Judaization that recall those reiterated in Said's article and in several of his political works as mentioned earlier. These include alterations of the Absentee Property Law to enable the confiscation of "enemy" property, hindering Palestinian reclamation of property in West Jerusalem, reserving as much territory as possible for Jewish use while obstructing Palestinian construction requisite permits, punitive demolition of Palestinian residences and buildings, replacing the Arabic names of streets, quarters and historical sites with Hebrew names, strategic extension of Jerusalem's municipal boundaries and expansion of settlements in Greater Jerusalem to encompass much of the West Bank, disenfranchisement of Jerusalem residents, constructing the Separation Wall to cut off surrounding Arab villages from the city, and excavations at Al-Aqsa Mosque to undermine its foundations (ibid.). All the above measures have continued under successive Israeli governments to Judaize Jerusalem and obliterate its Palestinian identity.

United Nations reports on the West Bank including Jerusalem also indicate that Israel has been practicing the above mentioned measures. For instance, the Report by the Secretary-General on Human Rights Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory including East Jerusalem (20th January 2016), contains a list of various restrictive and punitive measures that Israel has been applying in the West Bank including Jerusalem. The measures clearly serve Israel's Judaization and de-Arabization of Jerusalem. For instance, the 1914-1915 report clearly states among many other things that

During the reporting period (1914-1915), Israeli authorities continued to implement restrictions isolating East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank and restricting movement within East Jerusalem. Palestinians residing in East Jerusalem are required to hold Israeli-issued ID cards granting bearers the status of "permanent resident". These ID cards can be revoked if the authorities determine that Jerusalem ceases to be the bearer's "centre of life". ... Hence, Palestinians in East Jerusalem who wish to travel abroad for long periods of time, whether for employment or other reasons, risk losing their residency. (United Nations, 2016, Online)

Additionally, the most recent United Nations report on Human rights in the West Bank including Jerusalem states that:

Since the early years of the occupation, Israel has pursued a policy of establishing illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. With a current total settler population of at least 590,000 in the West Bank (around 386,000 in some 130 settlement in Area C, and 208,000 in East Jerusalem), the population of settlements has more than doubled since the beginning of the Oslo process in 1993. (United Nations, 2017, Online, p. 4)

The report also highlights various incentives towards Israeli settlement policy stressing that the ongoing expansion of settlements severely impedes the exercise by the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination (United Nations 2017, Online, p. 6). This territorial expansion has been paralleled by an increase in the number of the Israeli population compared with the Palestinian population. Basing his figures on various sources, Wadi' Awawdeh, Al-Jazeera net correspondent, states in his Arabic-written article in the Arab journal *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* that in 2016, the population of Jerusalem (East and West parts) was estimated at 870,000 people with 548,000 Israelis (63%) and 322,000 Arabs (37%) (Awawdeh, *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, June 6, 2016), a clear indication of Israel's policy of Judaization and de-Arabization of the Holy City.

On the other hand, Said's criticism of Palestinian, Arab, and Islamic leaderships for their failure to counteract Israeli media has proven to be in place. As Khalidi observes, "Sadly, in the years since his death in 2003, there has been little improvement. There is absolutely no articulation whatsoever of any Arab vision for Jerusalem" (in Said, "The Current Status of Jerusalem", 2011, p. 58). The response to Israeli media and information policy regarding Jerusalem has been weak; limited attempts by Arab, Muslim and international community have been made to obstruct this process but without any concerted, robust effort. However, a few efforts are worth mentioning. In a joint communiqué issued by King Abdullah II of Jordan and King Mohammed VI of Morocco in March 2009, both leaders stressed their determination "to continue defending Jerusalem and to protect it from attempts to Judaize the city and erase its Arab and Islamic identity". Also Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, has been accusing Israel of ethnically cleansing East Jerusalem by building new settlements and demolishing the homes of the Palestinians (Anonymous, "Judaization of Jerusalem", Online). The United Kingdom, The European Union and The United Nations have also been opposing and condemning Judaizing Jerusalem, citing the Fourth Geneva Convention which prevents an occupying power to extend its jurisdiction to occupied territory. Nevertheless, Israel has persistently continued to increase its Jewish presence in East Jerusalem and to weaken the Palestinian community in the city, which the Palestinians insist as the capital of their future state.

Conclusion

In his article, Said points out that since 1967, Israel has employed a persistent process of Judaization of East Jerusalem so as to transform the city into a Jewish metropolis while simultaneously pursuing a program of de-Arabization so as to facilitate its objective of a permanent and sovereign control over the Holy City. Said mentions and discusses various methods used by Israel to Judaize Jerusalem including annexation and/or expropriation of Arab-owned land, development of Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem and limitations on development of Arab neighborhoods. Such policies are aimed to change Jerusalem demographically, socially, culturally and politically. This process has intensified after the initiation of the Oslo Agreements in 1993. Israel has also perused its proclamation of Jerusalem as Israel's "eternal, undivided capital" and hammering this meretricious idea home via the many channels available to it, trying to make this vision a reality. It has also continued in its swallowing up of Arab East Jerusalem, turning its population into a minority even in the Eastern part of the city itself via intensive colonization, and separating it from its hinterland in the West Bank.

Said considers Israel's policies in Jerusalem as examples of colonialism, apartheid, and occupation and suggests a one-state solution as a means of resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

On the other hand, the Palestinians, the Arabs and the Muslims at large have failed to project a vision of Jerusalem that might counter that of a fabricated historically Jewish Jerusalem that belongs exclusively to Israel. Nevertheless, Said believes there is nothing to prevent Palestinians, Arabs and their supporters from fighting back on the level of information. More than twenty years since Said had given his presentation on the then current status of Jerusalem, the Israeli settlement policies in Jerusalem have continued without decreasing while the Palestinians and the pan-Arab nation have made only feeble efforts to redress the balance of power discourse in what looks like a long-drawn Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

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